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STORIES OF THE PAST AND PRESENT: WHAT PRESERVICE SECONDARY TEACHERS DRAW ON WHEN LEARNING TO TEACH WRITING

A Dissertation in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore what stories preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing and how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing. This study encompassed a convenience sample of four preservice secondary English teachers’ (PSETs) learning, teaching, and writing instruction experiences as they engage in invitations (class assignment and researcher’s artifacts) in their Language and Literacy methods course (LED XXX). It utilized a qualitative inductive design. The constant comparison process supported the existing sociocultural activity theory approach.

Findings from this study indicated firstly, that PSETs drew on contrasted stories of past and present experiences in one of three thematic categories: stories about a beloved teacher, about writing, and about authenticity. PSETs invoked different forms of telling their stories, such as sharing informed incidents, disclosing uncertainties, and/or beliefs and expectations. They identified and noted contrasts between their own learning experiences as students and the beliefs they had come to hold about pedagogy via methods courses and preteaching experiences.

Secondly, PSETs contrasted their stories of past and present experiences when engaging in certain invitations (the Problems of Practice (PP) inquiry project, proposal for PP, interview, and prompted reflection writing about the PP) during their methods course. These invitations elicited storytelling and reflection, and PSETs reliving and contrasting of past and present experiences as they retold teacher or learning stories where they articulated their pedagogical practice, beliefs and professional identity.
This study presented ways PSETs think about teaching writing and the kinds of stories they draw on when learning to teach writing in a methods course. These findings are helpful for the academic community, higher education and PSETs because valuable knowledge will aide and familiarize teacher educators with PSETs’ ways of thinking when learning to teach writing. It allows methods course educators to use these assignments to open a nonthreatening space where PSETs articulate their beliefs, values, ideas, and experiences about writing and writing instruction.
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

“Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue. We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed” (P. Brooks, 1992, p. 3).

Introduction

Many teacher education programs lack specific courses emphasizing how to teach writing in a secondary English classroom. Sandra Gibbs of the National Council of Teachers of English stated that very few states require specific coursework in the teaching of writing for certification (NWP & Nagin 2006). This lack of coursework can lead to preservice secondary English teachers’ (PSETS’) uneasiness when teaching writing. PSETS are troubled by the assumption that English teachers automatically know or should know how to teach writing. The reality is that sometimes writing does get left out of these courses. Furthermore, PSETS learning, participation or practice of a writing activity in a methods course does not necessarily transfer to understanding.

PSETs, as preservice teachers, are encouraged to be enthusiastic writing models and to provide authentic reasons for students to write. As models teachers pass on their attitudes about writing to students (Graves & Kittle, 2005). Some PSETs, however, are not comfortable with writing activities. Research shows that teachers who do not like to write, compared to teachers with positive attitudes toward writing, ask their students to write less, focus on grammatical correctness of writing rather than on the process of writing, and shun conferencing with students about writing (Daisey, 2003).
My interest in teacher education was fostered throughout seventeen years of teaching English and mentoring English high school teachers. As a graduate student at The Pennsylvania State University, my research interest continued to be in teacher education, specifically preservice secondary English teachers (PSETS). Through many observations and interactions, I discovered that there were interns that enjoyed writing and teaching writing but felt uncertain about constructing feedback and were unfamiliar with strategies for teaching writing. These interns had ideas about how writing should be taught, but these were based on what they had seen or experienced. Clearly, a good idea alone is insufficient to cause changes in teachers’ perceptions and pedagogical practices (Daisey, 2003, p. 83).

Most preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) have their definition of writing instruction before they enter their teaching training programs. They feel they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and have set out expectations as English teachers. Yet in my experience working with PSETs’ initial methods course, these expectations at some point seem to change. According to Petraglia (1995), “changes in human behavior and consciousness, individual or collective, are mediated by other human beings through the use of tools” (p. 55). These tools can be symbols or artifacts loaded with meaning. PSETs have had exposure to many texts and “historically situated” experiences and interactions, thus encountering internal transformations that in turn influence their understandings of writing instruction and teaching expectations.

For PSETs, incorporating writing experiences in their methods courses that are related to their interests and concerns and made pertinent to their field of study may lead to the acquisition of knowledge and the enhancement of writing instruction. Effective instruction promotes active and meaningful learning. Social constructivist views such as Lev Vygotsky’s stress that social
group learning and peer collaboration is useful (Schunk, 2004, p. 291). Tools derived historically and culturally for the development of higher thinking skills mediate effective writing instruction and writing. Vygotsky’s *Mind in Society* (1978) identifies the distinction prevalent between tools as a means of labor of mastering nature, and language as a means of social intercourse and how they become dissolved in the general concept of artifacts (1978, p. 54).

Vygotsky’s “zone of proximal development,” is where learners engage in tasks with the aid of peers or any tools that improve language learning. Poehner (2008) referenced how Vygotsky and his colleagues accepted Marx’s crucial insight that “human beings shape and are shaped by their environments through concrete activity mediated by physical tools” (leont’ev, 1981). The tools transform our world where the use of tools is an active and creative process. The physical and psychological tools enable PSETs to predict the results of certain actions. PSETs would be acting in intentional and purposeful manners. Mediation forms are essential and transforming. Finally, these physical tools acquire meaning as they converge with psychological tools. The relations and ideas in psychological tools become internalized and these tools are transformed for thinking, learning and writing. These tools offer PSETs a set of affordances that impact how they will act in their teaching and learning environment, thus transforming their environment and themselves.

**How Stories Reflect Development of Teachers**

Life history approaches are widely used in the study of teachers’ lives (Goodson, 1991; Cortazzi, 1992; Hargreaves& Goodson, 1996b; Beattie, 2003; Day, 2004) and of teachers’ thinking and personal and professional development (Carter, 1993; Casey, 1995; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cole & Knowles, 2000, 2001; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Elbaz, 1990; Goodson, 1992a; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Life history approaches include using teachers’
narratives, autobiographies, and other forms of writing in teacher education (Dominicé, 2000; Gill, 2007a; Karpiak, 2003; Day & Leitch, 2001; Goodson & Gill 2011).

Life history and narrative research are not necessarily seen as different approaches but the description of the quality of the studied experience is interpreted differently in each (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Narrative, as an approach, centers on understanding personal experience. This understanding of personal experience extends to the way teachers make meaning of the experience lived and shared. According to Miller (2005), the idea of using narrative in teacher education was pioneered by Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly. For them, narrative is not only the texts we read, but also a way to think about teaching and learning as well as research into teaching and learning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narratives are examined in order to learn how to appreciate the wider context of PSETs’ lives to understand their narrative accounts, and how these personal stories can illustrate their teacher development and teacher identity formation. Kohler Reissman (2008) suggests, that the reported narrative form arguably gives stories more power than even the resistant subversive acts. Telling the story “makes the moment live beyond the moment” (Kohler Reissman, 2008, p.63).

According to Miller (2005), many teacher educators use narrative to better understand how our personal experiences impact what we believe about teaching and how we engage in practice. In the present study, even though I did not set out to collect preservice secondary English teachers’ (PSETs) narratives, I was drawn into the emerging stories that I saw as I reviewed my data. I constantly revisited data and identified the crucial role stories occupied in regards to PSETs’ responses. It was through these narratives that PSETs shared their learning, experiences, identity and conflicts while shaping their understandings of their teacher development. One of the reasons teacher educators such as myself, and others interested in
teacher development, are turning to narratives is it can foster reflection and reexamination of assumptions, and shed light on our implicit beliefs about teaching and learning. I used the terms “narratives” and “stories” interchangeably, but it is Hinchman & Hinchman’s (1997) definition of narratives that I rely on when depicting PSETs’ stories. They define narratives [stories] as:

Narratives (stories) in the human sciences should be defined provisionally as discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/ or people’s experiences of it.

(Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997, p.xvi)

Temporality, meaning, and social encounter are three common features of the previous definition that I refer to as the triadic nature of stories. Goodson & Gill (2011) further explicate these features by noting that they characterize narratives (stories). They share a common assumption that there is a connection between “life as it is lived and life as told in personal narratives” (p.5). Goodson & Gill (2011) define temporality by establishing that “all narratives encompass a sequence of events” (p.4). Meaning is defined as all the “personal significance and meaning[s] are externalized through the telling of lived experiences” (p.4), and social encounters because “all narratives are told to an audience and will inevitably be shaped by the relationship between teller and the listener” (p.4). These three features are salient in PSETs’ stories and complemented by preservice secondary English teachers’ process of self-discovery, inquiry, and growth, which I will further explicate in chapter four.

**Theoretical Framework**

A desire to bring forth the social context of PSETs’ lives while encouraging and allowing a space for individual stories to be told enhances my viewpoint on this topic. My viewpoint is drawn from a Constructivist perspective (dialectical constructivism/ Vygotsky’s
social cultural theory) exemplified in the works of Piaget (1970), Vygotsky (1962, 1978), Bruner (1966), Gagnè (1985) Engeström and Miettinen, (1999) and Bandura (1976). Dialectical constructivism explicates how knowledge derives from interactions between persons and their environments. Constructions are not solely dependent on the external world or the mind. Rather, knowledge is reflective of the mental contradictions triggered by interactions with the environment (Schunk, 2004, p. 289). These constructions were instrumental in my study since data afforded me a perspective of PSETs’ contrasted past and present experiences in different environments. The sociocultural theory and constructivists’ perspectives are examples of scopes I chose because of their relevancy to preservice secondary English teachers’ interpretations and use of tools (semiotic) and expressions of actions and meanings. Applying Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory helps me teach my students to understand and interpret the social context of their experiences and stories as they revisit past and present events that shaped or are shaping their lives and the lives of others. “Vygotsky’s theory is a constructivist perspective that emphasizes the social environment as a facilitator of development and learning” (Schunk, 2004, p. 291). I am interested in exposing PSETs to sharing their stories; explore their learning of writing and writing instruction and fostering experiences where they challenge their thoughts, practices and beliefs. I am also interested in explaining to methods instructors the mediating role stories take in certain tasks. Vygotsky emphasized the influence of socially meaningful activities and its effect on human development. PSETs will be constructing, not simply adopting, adapting or waiting to be ‘fueled’ guidelines, strategies and approaches to teaching writing. When PSETs were engaged in this classroom assignment, stories become a tool that they used to negotiate the task. These PSETs are drawing from these semiotic tools to interpret, mediate and filter through written text that is offered to them in the methods courses.
Following Vygotsky (1987), Leont’ev (1981), Wertsch (1981), and Cole’s (1996) work provided an instrumental framework for studying the conceptual development of PSETs. Simultaneously, I incorporated Activity Theory (Cole, 1996; Leont’ev, 1981; Newman, Griffith & Cole, 1996 and Wertsch, 1991) because it emphasized the setting in which development takes place. It highlights the social and cultural aspects that mediate learning and development in certain contexts, thus allowing understanding of how PSETs’ environments guide or influence preservice and novice teachers. Using Activity Theory as an analytical lens I am able to explore how the assignments in the methods course grant PSETs a means for reflection, tools to mediate learning, and opportunities to share (via assignments & stories) how settings played a significant role in their conceptualization of teaching and professional identity. My intention in incorporating Activity Theory to my theoretical framework relies on its potential to illuminate how PSETs’ narratives express their progression through a series of settings that can mediate PSETs’ beliefs about teaching writing and learning, and consequently their pedagogical practices.

**Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

This qualitative inductive study of preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) in the methods course focused on how they think about the teaching of writing. What stories do PSETs draw on when learning to teach writing in a methods course? In this study, I selected stories as the unit of analysis because these narratives produce, elicit, or express the phenomenon under investigation. One of my primary observations was the triadic nature of these stories. PSETs’ stories were about their student experiences, past and present teacher experiences, and experiences as preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs). These stories were enhanced by a dichotomous nature of the PSETs’ roles as young adult students (that still engage in writing...
activities) and preservice educators (teaching writing). PSETS were also aware of these two identities, and recognized a potential relationship between their ‘actual’ behavior and perceptions about the intentions or beliefs surrounding their actions.

The functional system where PSETs engaged in common tasks was the classroom setting. This setting consisted of PSETs, teacher educator, common tasks, and words that make meaning while “mediating the interaction” (Engestrom, 1987). This mediation involved history and culture that was embedded within each activity, story, and was distinctive of each PSET. An affordance of these class activities was multiple opportunities for PSETs to voice their beliefs, values, ideas and experiences about writing and/or writing instruction.

**Research Questions.**

A. What stories do Preservice Secondary English Teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing?

B. How, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing?

**Significance**

Preservice secondary English teachers need and desire to be taught how to write, how to communicate and how to teach writing (Wang & Odell, 2003). A methods course is a setting that powerfully influences the ways in which PSETs make sense of what they have learned and their appropriated knowledge. The findings of this study will be helpful for the academic community, higher education (teacher educators) and PSETs because valuable knowledge will aide and familiarize teacher educators with PSETS’ ways of thinking. These salient ideas will become accessible in a methods course writing activity. Teacher educators can provide outlets in a method courses for PSETs to articulate contrasted past/ present experiences with writing or
writing instruction, and becoming a teacher. Teacher educators ought to use these narratives to help PSETs “unpack” their “baggage of experiences” (lived or appropriated experiences) while telling their stories. These meaning making words are prevalent throughout the methods course and PSETs’ stories become “teaching moments” where conversations occur about pedagogical beliefs, practices and writing instruction. Hopefully, PSETs will articulate the significance of these experiences, and how these affect their career choice of becoming teachers.

**Dissertation Roadmap**

In chapter 1, I provided a brief overview of the study, including how I arrived at the study, purpose of study, introduce my voice and theoretical lenses that inform and guide the inquiry, data analysis, data interpretation, and the study’s context. I also discussed how stories reflect development of teachers, the focus of my study, introduced terms and relevant literature, as well as the specific research questions.

In chapter 2, I provide a review of the existing research related to the study in terms of writing and learning to teach writing. I review process views about writing, writing as a social construct, writing instruction, and history of models for teaching.

In chapter 3, I outline the methodological framework and procedures I used in collecting data for this study. In addition, I identify how seven preservice secondary English teachers were selected to participate in the study. I also describe how I narrowed down the participant selection to four preservice secondary English teachers, who I selected to further inquire in this dissertation. Finally, I provide a brief explanation about the written assignments in the methods course and how these assignments transform into invitations for the participants.

Chapter 4 answers the question, what stories do preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing and how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in
a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing? I present the results of my data analysis, highlighting participants’ stories of past and present experiences, different forms of storytelling prevalent in participants’ stories, and the inquiry assignment in the methods course perceived as invitations that elicits reflection.

In chapter 5, I summarize findings and discuss how my findings are to be consistent with sociocultural theory. This chapter analyzes the individual and social nature of stories and how assignments are perceived as invitations because of their social force, thus confirming that these invitations have the potential to show participants’ understandings of him/herself, their stories, and above all, to reflect on participants’ pedagogical practices and writing instruction. Finally, I discuss implications for the academic community, methods instructors, teacher educators, and offer suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“American education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts language and communication in their proper place in the classroom. Writing is how students connect the dots in their knowledge.” (National Commission on Writing 2003, p. 3)

Writing/Views on Teaching Writing

Writing is a challenging task, and teaching how to write is a process. Emig (1977) emphasized how writing compared to speech is a much slower process that develops gradually by changes. These changes are encouraged by connecting events or experiences of the past, present, and future to the different meanings they may have in the writers’ lives. “Writing is epigenetic, with the complex evolutionary development of thought steadily and graphically visible and available throughout as a record of the journey” (Emig, 1977, p. 127). PSETs engage in the teaching of writing by developing their ability to make meaning of experiences and connect these to their social environment.

Lortie (1975) further found that teachers have a difficult time overcoming past images from their own schooling and teaching, and therefore might have a limited view of learning (p. 21). Thus preservice students might replicate teaching methods they experienced as students without understanding their teachers’ goals in using them. Grossman & Richert (1988) found that preservice teachers often rely on their memories of themselves as students to anticipate what their own students will be like, using “their memories of their interests and abilities in a particular subject matter to inform their knowledge of student understanding in that area” (p. 11).

For Kennedy (1998), Darling-Hammond (2005, 2006), and North (1997), teacher educators and teaching practices are affected by experiences, assumptions, attitudes, prior
beliefs, and duration of teacher education programs. Kennedy’s studies (1998) established a link between teachers’ beliefs about teaching writing and their own experience with writing. Her research concluded that “the brevity of teacher programs, participants’ prior beliefs regarding teaching and writing, and a minimum amount of programs with coherent vision of teaching do not change participants’ beliefs about learning, writing, and teaching” (Kennedy, 1998, p. 130). Kennedy established the need for teacher education programs that provide opportunities where preservice English teachers “rethink the assumptions they bring with them from their childhood” (1998, p. 183). Darling-Hammond (2005, 2006) reiterated these ideas throughout her research. Her studies posited how “teacher educators need to find ways to help teachers temper their initial ideas about the teaching of writing with new ideas about the teaching of writing” (p. 188). Her studies further develop and help contextualize North’s (1987) description of how teaching practices are passed down. North explained how teaching practices are often passed from one generation to another through conversations or the interaction and exchange of knowledge and pedagogical practices amongst teachers. These studies and research helped me frame my concerns with preservice secondary English teachers learning to teach writing.

**Process Views about Writing**

**Process Work**

Writing instruction is framed from a process-oriented perspective in the class where the research was done. PSETs are encouraged to focus on the processes that writers employ throughout writing rather than to focus solely on the product of writing. This includes attention to cognition, expression and to situatedness. In this process work, students learn to write by developing and refining a piece of writing.
Donald Murray (1968; 1972; 1978) talked about “Discovery Drafts” in which writers use language as a tool of exploration to what they know. Peter Elbow (1973), in *Writing Without Teachers*, emphasized how freewriting expands ideas and gives inexperienced writers confidence that they have ideas worth expanding. “Writing is not just getting things down on paper, it is getting things inside someone else’s head” (p. 76). James Britton’s, *The Development of Writing Abilities*, argued that writing is not merely an expression of individual thought, but a generative process that creates thought itself. The more you write, the more you think (pgs. 11-18). Janet Emig’s (1977), *Writing as a Mode of Learning*, presented a justification for in-class writing, which proved to be a springboard for better class discussions, more focused small-group work, and more thoughtful formal papers.

**Cognitive Work**

Flower and Hayes state, “Process theory and pedagogy have given student writing a value and authority absent in current-traditional approaches” (p. 367). By paying attention to the writing process, student writing is honored in a way that current tradition just corrects writing.

Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981a; Hayes & Flower, 1980) formulated “a model that conceptualized writing as a set of thinking processes that writers organize while composing.” (p. 374). Even though this model was grand it reflected the general problem-solving framework. Writers would identify a problem area and then mentally ‘work’ it out in order to achieve their goals.

Other researchers (Anne Ruggles Gere, Lucy Calkins, Donald Graves, Thomas Newkirk, and others) were examining group behavior as well as cognitive processes. Writing was studied in relationship to its environment. This view allowed PSETs to converge their knowledge of
writing instruction and their thoughts about field experience while constructing their reality through language.

The expressive view included the work of ‘authentic voice’ with advocates such as William Coles, Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie and Donald Stewart. Through this view PSETS would expose their students to creative writing activities where they would stimulate originality, spontaneity and personal growth. Writers personal experiences are validated in school settings and outside, whereas in other views this would unlikely happen. Spontaneity, a quality recognized through Peter Elbow’s *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) demonstrated how through Macrorie’s method of free writing anyone could write spontaneously. Elbow states how “good” writing does not follow rules but reflects the processes of the creative imagination” (23). It is through exposure to writing, in an expressive view, that PSETs encounter revision to shape their ideas and discover themselves through language. This view validates personal experience in school systems that often are not identified or considered.

**Social View of Writing as a Process**

In this study of writing instruction, I emphasize how writing and writers are components of different academic discourse communities. Therefore, as constituents of a historical and cultural process, different environments influence PSETs’ writing and writing instruction. There are a series of research studies examining the social processes of writing in an academic discourse community. Some examples of early researchers that have steadily contributed to the social view of the writing process are: Charles Bazerman (1985), Greg Myers (1985), and from the ethnographic methodology, Shirley Brice Heath’s (1983) analysis of working class and middle class families in the Carolina Piedmont. These researchers and other advocates of the social view of writing as a process establish focus on the individual as a constituent of a
historical and social culture that enables them to gauge the writing process in the familiar world around them. The emphasis on how writing can be understood and interpreted from the perspective of society more than the context surrounding a given discourse is explored in this study.

**Writing as a Social Construct**

Because Vygotsky was a Marxist, he was a proponent of revisionist thinking (Bruner, 1985). For example, he believed that effective instruction is one that promotes active and meaningful learning. Because students must learn to “do” under the guidance of those more competent than themselves entering into a “cognitive apprenticeship” in which “the mental activities of certain kinds of cognitive tasks such as computation, written composition, interpreting texts, and the like are internalized and appropriated by learners through social supports of various kinds” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 52). By working through social supports, teacher educators can offer preservice teachers learning and literacy practices, out of school, with students, in their own cultural worlds, and in informal educational settings, opportunities to venture and identify the significance of activities that display an evolving relationship or interaction between scientific and spontaneous concepts. PSETs identify activities and/or assignments that bring forth students’ spontaneous concepts, developed in their everyday environment, with the scientific concepts of schooling. This is advantageous because concepts of immediate significance (spontaneous) and those of cultural and historical significance (scientific) interact, mature and evolve.

Yuriy Karpov (2003), thoroughly explains Vygotsky’s doctrine of scientific concepts and its implications for school instruction. He explicated two learnings: theoretical and empirical. “Theoretical learning is needed to provide analysis of the essential characteristics of objects and
events while empirical learning is based on children’s comparison of several different objects or
events” (p. 69). Often empirical knowledge paired up with spontaneous concepts lead to
misconceptions. If preservice teachers are taught concepts without establishing dialogic
interactions with instructors, members of the learning community and/or peers, where
spontaneous concepts flourish, misconceptions regarding teaching may occur. Because these
concepts may be learned as random pieces of information, preservice teachers cannot grasp and
use them purposely in learning activities.

**Writing Instruction**

In *Answering Your Questions About Teaching Writing: A Talk with Donald Graves*,
Graves states: “Twenty-four of our states don’t even offer a course of writing for a teacher-in-
training to take” (Graves, 1996). Graves stated this in 1996, and sixteen years later there are
more courses attending teaching writing, but there are still gaps. Precisely, this is one of the
greatest problems I see for PSETs because in-service workshops would not sufficiently meet
their need of getting well prepared to teach writing. What are PSETs to do after entering their
field experience without prior exposure to writing instruction? Supervisors and mentors expect
PSETs to feel comfortable teaching writing and writing strategies that engage their students to
write. For Emig (1977), “Writing represents a unique mode of learning—not merely valuable, not
merely special, but unique” (p. 8). It is through learning how to teach writing that PSETs gauge
writing as an active process of generating ideas, exploring and reinforcement. Emig (1971) had
previously reported in *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* how “school-sponsored
writing experienced by older American secondary students is a limited, and a limiting
experience” (p. 97). PSETs would be exposing students to writing experiences that move them
from passive learners to learners that generate ideas, observations, and emotions. The product of
this process is visible and permits review, intervention, and modification of knowledge as it is learned and put into a framework (Emig, 1977; Fulwiler, 1982; Tomlinson, 1990). Flower and Hayes (1980) further followed Emig’s work by using “think aloud” to establish the difference between proficient and less-proficient writers (p.35). Students were able to articulate their thought as they wrote, thus enabling the researchers to determine that proficient writers were overly aware of their audience versus less-proficient writers who did not invest too much time thinking about their audience. When looking at writing in their studies, Flower and Hayes posited the following: there is a difference between the composing process between writers, writing can be perceived as a problem-solving activity, goals must be set and direct composing, and the composing process is interconnected (1980, p. 44). All of these eventually became tenets of the writing process movement. Through writing instruction courses the teaching of writing is reinforced. PSETs practice writing and teaching writing as a mode of learning.

**History of Models For Teaching**

In search of solutions or strategies to deal with problems surrounding schooling and the teaching of English in classrooms many scholars, researchers and theorists have crafted models for teaching. Different pedagogical approaches are used in order to identify what experienced teachers plan and focus on when unit planning for English secondary classes. This history of models for teaching is relevant to my study because PSETs find themselves walking around with past experiences that reflect the whole history of teaching English. Furthermore, any of these models may be represented in the methods course used for this research because the course is a combination of histories. The array of teachers and curriculum materials we have been exposed to since childhood, and the cultural contexts are reflective of these models for teaching. Crosslin-Stockinger (2007) makes reference to mental models of writing instruction in “Living in,
Learning From, Looking Back, Breaking Through in the English Language Arts Methods Course: A Case Study of Two Preservice Teachers.” This study presents how preservice teachers engaged in active exploration and reflection of their mental teaching models of writing instruction through the writer’s notebook. Preservice teachers enter methods courses with mental models of teachers and teaching (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Hermann & Sarracino, 1993; Lortie, 1975). Methods instructors should be well aware of the mixture of histories PSETs will be walking in and out of the methods courses and classrooms.

**Models for Teaching: Looking at Writing**

The different models of English teaching used throughout this literature review will start off at the Basic Issues Conference of 1959 and move on to the 1965 Dartmouth Conference where English teachers stated their positions about three models of mind and literacy. The *Cultural Tradition Model* (1959) was organized around the triad of language, literature, and composition (Myers, 1996, p. 4). The relevancy this model has with pre-service English teachers writing preparation or with the teaching of writing is distant yet provides a glimpse of hope. At least these theorists and educators are able to acknowledge the importance of composition (writing) in the teaching of English. The Dartmouth’s *Personal-Growth Model* (1965) “emphasized the importance of the ‘spectator’ stance and the writing of stories, poems, and literary pieces: the use of expressive language to discover and learn; and the centrality of the individual and the processes of psycholinguistics” (Myers, 1996, p. 4). The significance of this model relies on the opportunity English teachers are granted to voice the importance of writing as a process much needed in the teaching of writing in the English classes.

The next model that influenced the teaching world and enlightened teachers dealt solely with secondary school English. It was named an *Academic Model* for English. “This was the
underlying premise of the academic resurgence which dominated secondary school instruction from the late fifties till the late sixties” (Applebee 1974, p.185). The Academic Model for English reflected a concern for the conditions in which English was being taught in American secondary schools. Moving away from the Traditional model of teaching (1960) had to happen because the model “had not been a comfortable way for many students to learn to write” (Christenbury 2000, p. 213). The practitioners decided to adopt the Process model for teaching writing. “This model of teaching writing is more closely based on what we know real writers do” (Christenbury 2000, p. 213). The origins of the Process Model take place during the 1950’s yet it wasn’t until Janet Emig (1970) ‘triggered a reconsideration of the traditional way of teaching writing when she focused her research on the actual behavior of student writers as they wrote rather than an idealized conceptual schema of writing” (Christenbury 2000, p. 213). The importance of this model is how writing is appreciated and taught; the search is not in the final product but the process of getting that product. This model also responds to my inquiry about its applicability to secondary English writing classes. The discussions about the training of English secondary school teachers was developed by two Harvard committees (1942) appointed by president James B. Conant. These committees mapped out the difficulties that hindered progression of English secondary teaching and the training of these teachers. This is an important tool because it may answer the question I posed regarding the pertinence and relevancy of models when talking about preservice secondary English teachers’ (PSETs) writing preparation.

In response to these models, the Problem-Based composition (PBL) rooted in the Socratic method and hands on by John Dewey (1966) were considered. It engaged students in sustained cooperative investigations where they were problem solvers. Many literacy techniques were thought of. Digital Rhetoric and the creation of discourse occurred. Printed and screen was used
to enhance the diversity of genres taught. Professors taught preservice teachers how to look for linguistic clues (context clues, guessing, and association). Grammar and semantics were emphasized by videos, web pages and e-presentations. In order to learn the students had time to collaborate with their peers to construct knowledge through problem-solving tasks.

**Teaching Personas**

The ability to use diverse teaching models allowed preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) to complement their learning with mental and graphic representation of the parts of speech, tenses and basic paragraph structure. Increasing the exposure to the English language (listening, reading, writing and creating e-presentations) allowed students to more effectively communicate their concerns and thoughts. Yet, they still were in need of a separation between what McDonald (2002) called Oppressive Correctness and writing rubrics. PSETs needed to acknowledge the ‘teaching personas’ they had to fulfill. This also was challenging for them because teaching, supervising, disciplining and learning could seem overwhelming.

As Jay Parini (1997) points out in an essay in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, we all have “Teaching personas,” whether or not we acknowledge them:

Teachers, like writers, need to invent and cultivate a voice that serves their personal needs, their students, and the material at hand. It’s not easy to find this voice, in teaching or in writing, and it helps to have models in mind. Teachers who are unaware of their teaching personas might get lucky; that is, they might unconsciously adopt and adapt something that actually works in the classroom. But most successful teachers whom I’ve known are deeply aware that self-presentation involves the donning of a mask.
A significant academic and professional situation that hinders language learning, teaching writing and PSETs’ teaching of writing is how mentors and supervisors are presenting contradictory and troubled understandings about how preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) should learn teaching writing strategies before teaching writing. Some misunderstandings deal with expectations about writing and writing instruction. All have learned to write and teach writing differently, thus meeting a common ground may seem troubling.

According to Hudson & Millwater’s study (2007), mentors themselves acknowledged through the survey that they needed to improve on providing viewpoints about current teaching practices, and discussing aims, policies and problem solving techniques for teaching writing. In addition, mentees need to have realistic expectations about their mentors’ time, and focus on their own development of writing knowledge and skills before entering a professional school experience (Millwater & Short, 1999). According to Vygotsky (1962), the task of the instructor is to translate information to be learned into a format appropriate to the learner's current state of understanding.

Learning to Teach Writing

The teaching of writing requires knowledge of how the demands of writing vary depending upon the nature of the task, audience, and genre, among other factors. Lack of this knowledge among teachers may help explain why writing instruction too often reduces the writing process to a lock-step series of discrete stages (Grossman, 2001). Literature on writing teacher preparation includes the following topics as they affect preservice secondary English teacher preparation: current studies relevant to the teaching of writing in methods courses, writing instruction, history of models for teaching and writing as a social construct.
Existing Research on Learning to Teach Writing

Surprisingly, there is not much literature making explicit reference to preservice secondary English teacher writing preparation. Nor is much attention paid to what kind of writing preservice secondary English teachers should engage in their methods courses. The following studies served as markers for my research; in each study, writing and teacher preparation was evaluated from different discourses. First, P. Smagorinsky and M. Whiting (1995) looked at the inclusion of writing instruction in methods course syllabi. Because there was little known about how undergraduate secondary English methods courses were taught in colleges and universities across the country, both researchers collected and examined dozens of syllabi from methods courses to see what books preservice teachers were reading and discussing in these courses, what type of activities were offered, and what experiences did these provide to PSETs prior to field experience. This study shed light on how preservice secondary English teachers were learning to deal with writing because it presented approaches a methods course might take. Analysis of this research increased teacher educators’ awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of approaches common to colleges of education.

Although this study was seen as a marker, I understand how it is different from what I intended in the present study. The syllabi were not documents reflecting student exposure to writing, nor a justification for the approaches used throughout the syllabi of the universities chosen for the study. I am concerned with the prevalent disconnect between what is written on the syllabi, what was actually taught in a class, and how much students take with them. Following Smagorinsky and Whiting’s research on textual analysis of English methods course syllabi, Hochstetler (2009) extended those lines of inquiry by reporting on the syllabi of three colleges and universities in the California area and interviewing three methods instructors.
through case studies. She presented a reconstruction of a history of the field of composition studies over the past fifty years, constructed a brief history of teacher training programs in America up to 1960, and crafted a historical account of how PSETs have been taught through teacher education programs to teach writing in secondary schools in the past century. Even though Hochstetler’s research does not acknowledge PSETs response to syllabi or methods courses nor does it reflect PSETs’ reaction to the historical changes in the discipline of composition, it did present a broad aspect of PSETs’ reflection (through case study) that is relevant to this study.

N. Gallavan and F. Bowles (2007), in “Learning to Write and Writing to Learn: Insights from Teacher Candidates,” presented insightful data as they identified preservice teachers’ concerns regarding PSETs’ writing skills, knowledge and attitude. The researchers applied Babbie’s (1990) written survey to university students in general education. Their first data set collected reflected university students enrolled in general education courses with the responsibility of crafting and completing various written assignments. Their second data set reflected PSETs as teacher candidates enrolled in the methods courses learning how to teach writing and the writing process. Their final data set reflected PSETs’ personal and professional perspective as educated and informed individuals. They must validate the power of written reflections for themselves and their students. Gallavan and Bowles (2007) presented data emphasizing how PSETs “highly value writing and the writing process” (2007, p. 64). These responses reflected a disparity between valuing writing and the writing process while identifying a disconnect present in the necessary connection between assignments, themselves, and life. PSETs’ data reflected insecurities regarding teaching writing effectively and its integration to writing across the curriculum. Finally, PSETs acknowledged that they are “uninformed of the
many benefits writing and reflecting contribute to learning” (2007, p. 67). Gallavan and Bowles (2007) report was foundational for my study because it gave voice to the preservice secondary English teacher (PSETs) candidates through a reflective practice.

Another study that served as a marker for my research was Mark E. Letcher’s study “Developing Secondary Writing Teachers: The Impact of Undergraduate Writing Experiences” (2010). Letcher questioned how, if at all, undergraduate coursework affects the attitudes of preservice English teachers, enrolled in a graduate teacher education program. This study specifically examined if undergraduate course experiences had any effect on the way preservice teachers think about the teaching of writing with their students (Letcher, 2010). This study presented preservice teachers’ actual experiences, teacher education coursework, and attitudes towards teaching and the teaching of writing in various settings they moved through in their process of development. The findings of this study were significant because despite participants’ influential and significant experiences (undergraduate and field experience as graduate preservice teachers) in their personal writing practices and teaching plans, many of his participants “experienced difficulty in transferring those conceptual and pedagogical tools to their actual teaching practice” (Letcher, 2010, p. iii). Even though Letcher’s study was seen as a marker, I understand how it is different from what I am intending in my study. I had no intentions of solely relying on participants’ memories to describe their past experiences with writing. I selected a methods course assignment (later perceived as an invitation) and explicated how it elicited stories. I further interpreted and coded these stories into categories and themes. Letcher’s study presented how participants navigated (or lack of) between departments. My current study did not research variance in settings. The findings from Letcher’s (2010) study, “Developing Secondary Writing Teachers: The Impact of Undergraduate Writing Experiences”
served as springboards for my research where I further inquired about participants’ influential experiences and specific assignments during the methods course.

To summarize, Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995) showed how rare it is for writing to be addressed while Hochstetler (2009) researched on how writing looks in different programs, the historical changes in composition and an account of how PSETs have been taught to teach writing. Gallavan and Bowles (2007) provided voice for PSETs through a physical and psychological tool that enabled them to reflect upon their learning, teaching and practices. Letcher (2010) illustrated how the farther the participants moved from their university coursework setting, the less impact that coursework appeared to have on their classroom practice. He also presented less utilization of theoretical and pedagogical tools from any of their methods classes. The research presented in this report attempts to inform efforts to prepare PSETs to teach writing. In order to analyze and investigate PSETs’ responses I would like PSETs’ stories to be seen as initial markers that will be contributing to a much clearer picture of the teaching of writing in a methods course. I will be focusing on how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing. This research investigates how PSETS are thinking about teaching writing. What stories do they draw on when learning to teach writing in a methods course?

This literature review examined current and seminal research, and process views about writing in order to explain how writing is appreciated, taught and made relevant to teacher preparation programs.
Chapter 3

METHODS

“The qualitative approach requires researchers to develop empathy with people under study and to make concerted efforts to understand various points of view” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 219).

In this chapter, I outline the methodological framework and procedures I used in collecting data for this study. I identify the site and issues regarding participant selection. I then describe my data collection methods and provide a brief explanation about the written assignment (Problem of Practice inquiry/proposal project) in the methods course, and two pieces (interview and prompted reflection writing) that I incorporated into the Problem of Practice activity in order to gather more data. Finally, I explicate the data analysis and issues of trustworthiness.

Methodological Framework

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) emphasize the usefulness of qualitative studies for teacher-training programs. Not only do prospective teachers explore their teaching environment but they should eventually be cognizant of their own values, beliefs and teaching traits and how these influence their teaching and students’ learning. It is through empathy with PSETs’ experience that I am able to ‘see’ emergent ideas and the inherent complexities of interactions occurring throughout their methods course.

The first out of five features of qualitative research as defined by Bogdan and Biklen is that qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher’s insight is the key instrument for analysis. As researchers venture into the particular setting under study, this setting must be understood within context and through time. “You are constructing a picture that takes shape as you collect and examine the parts” (Bogden & Biklen, 2003, p. 32).
Qualitative research establishes that everything can potentially be significant and can further explicate or provide a comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. When in the classroom, I can ask myself why are some PSETs more comfortable with certain teaching to write activities versus other activities? Why are some PSETs drawing upon certain tools when engaged in teaching to write activities? Is there a reason for certain activities being carried out the way they are? All these questions give path to the second, third and fourth features of qualitative research. Qualitative research is descriptive. Researchers are concerned with process rather than outcomes or products and qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively (Maxwell, 2005, p. 215). The last feature “meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative approach because the interest relies on how “people are making sense of their lives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 32).

There are qualitative studies designed to better explicate participants’ perspectives (Erickson, 1986). Qualitative researchers in education can continually be found asking questions of the people they are learning from to discover “what they are experiencing, how they interpret their experiences, and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live” (Psathas, 1973, p. 27). The research questions asked in this study are: what stories do PSETs draw on as they learn to teach writing in a methods class and how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing?

**Qualitative Inductive Design**

According to Strauss and Corbin, the inductive design is evident in several types of qualitative data analyses, especially grounded theory (1990, p. 28). I analyzed my data inductively because I did not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses before
beginning this study. The direction my study took occurred after I had been collecting data, thus categories, subcategories, concepts, storylines, and core categories are grounded in data. When looking at my data and coding it, I used a grounded theory analytical approach. I allowed concepts to emerge rather than approaching with a lens already in hand. In 1967, Glaser and Strauss first introduced grounded theory. Glaser defined grounded theory as a theory based "on the systematic generating of theory from data, that in itself is systematically obtained from social research" (1992, p. 2). Strauss and Corbin’s definition of grounded theory further explicated how data collection continuously evolves new questions for the analysis (1990, p. 7). This definition is clear and concise. For this study’s purpose, I have chosen to enhance it with Charmaz’s definition for grounded theory method. For Charmaz, “grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (2008, p. 2). The goal of a grounded theory study is to “demonstrate relations between conceptual categories and to specify the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerge, change, or are maintained” (Charmaz, 2002, p. 675). The goal of using grounded theory in this research was not to establish relationships but to uncover some of those relationships that can exist between stories PSETs draw on. Using a grounded theory analytical approach to code my data, enabled me to initially code data line-by-line, compare categories and stories (story lines), revisit data and compare it to emergent data, question the theoretical categories data indicated, and constantly compare categories with one another in order to uncover relationships and possible groupings. In this study I did not seek to identify an emerging theory, nor was it evident through the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection, therefore this study is not a grounded theory research.

Using grounded theory to code data contributed to the qualitative inductive design of
this study because frequently reported clear patterns, codes and categories were revealed and used in my data analysis. This aided my understanding of PSETs’ contrasting past and present experiences and stories. This study utilized a qualitative inductive design. I sought for data that would help me explicitly or implicitly identify what stories do PSETs draw on when addressing a methods course assignment known as the Problem of Practice inquiry project and how they navigated this activity. Data was collected and coded while providing further understanding to the main concerns involved in the following questions: (1) What stories do PSETs draw on when learning to teach writing? (2) How, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing?

**Data Collection**

In particular, I collected data on classroom activity observations of the inquiry project (Problems of Practice), interview, prompted reflection writing, and textual analysis of the Problems of Practice project proposal. While working with the Problems of Practice class assignment, I incorporated an initial interview and a prompted reflection writing to gather more data about PSETs and the Problems of Practice inquiry process. The interview had twenty-five questions grouped into four main categories. The purpose of incorporating an interview to the Problems of Practice inquiry project was to allow PSETs to introduce themselves as writers and teachers of writing (if at all). The prompted reflection writing was administered after the completion of the Problems of Practice inquiry project. It was an elicited text that involved PSETs responding to questions in written form. PSETs were able to articulate their opinions about the Problems of Practice inquiry project process.

These descriptions, observations, self-evaluations and interviews revealed

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1 See Appendix D
understandings the participants expressed throughout the decision of using one assignment or another artifact to address writing or writing instruction. I inquired on questions, comments or experiences PSETs drew on, recalled or identified when working with their assignment. At times, I perceived how this assignment or activities (interview and prompted reflection writing) became a mean for PSETs to draw on stories of past and present experiences. When PSETs engaged in this type of assignment or activities, stories became a tool that they used to negotiate the task. I perceived these assignments as invitations for PSETs to recollect and share their past and present experiences while having a space where they could work on their confidence about teaching writing. PSETs’ responses to these assignments made me think about the following questions: What are they remembering and using and could we as educators have done these things better? What memories or experiences flourish in certain teaching to write activities? These questions were useful in helping me explore and further explicate what stories PSETs drew on as they learn to teach writing in a methods class.

**Site of Study**

This study took place in the College of Education of a Northeast region Mid Atlantic state\(^2\). The methods\(^3\) course was LL ED XXX Teaching Language Arts in Secondary Schools II, described in the course catalogue as “Exploration of language, literacy, and culture and development of curricular designs for teaching language arts in secondary schools.” This three-credit course addressed the theory, practice, and implications of teaching the English language arts at the secondary level. As quoted in the LL ED XXX syllabus:

\(^2\) Pseudonym  
\(^3\) Description from course syllabus
The course was the discipline specific component of the secondary Education block taken by majors in secondary Education prior to student teaching. In this course, students explored issues in language, literacy, and culture and development of curricular designs for teaching language arts in secondary schools. Through in-class and out-of-class activities completed both independently and in collaboration, students read about, talked about, and practiced teaching all of the language arts—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. Activities highlighted ways of planning for instruction and ways of assessing student learning as teachers implemented those plans. In addition, students will take up the professional issues facing beginning teachers of the English language arts—issues of professionalism and the teaching role, relationships with students, and how teaching can fit into a life. The course built upon content developed in other courses in the major, including theories of reading, composition, media literacy, and pedagogy.

Students engaged in a variety of writing tasks both in support of developing course content and as a means of making their work public. This writing included, but was not limited to lesson planning, reflective writing on experiences both in the course and in related field experience, and the development of a professional portfolio and inquiry project.

During class sessions, informal writing was used for a variety of purposes such as brainstorming, facilitating collaborative work, and framing discussion. Throughout the semester, students drafted and received feedback on a variety of portfolio components, which were revised and incorporated into a final version of the portfolio due at the end of the course. Portfolio contents varied according to instructor, but examples included statements of educational
philosophy, analysis of student writing from field experience, commentary on unit and lesson materials, reflective writing on reading and writing processes, and professional documents such as lesson plans and letters to mentors and potential employers.

The inquiry project consisted of conducting an inquiry into some “problem of practice” (Whitney, 2010). Dr. Madeline Winston\(^4\), LL ED XXX methods professor, provided the following description for the inquiry project “Problems of Practice Project”:

> “Problems of practice” are issues that come up in your teaching (and, more importantly, in your reflection on teaching) as puzzlements, wonderings, persistent questions or tensions, or “sticky spots” in your practice as a teacher. They are not procedural questions, though concrete practices and strategies may be involved; instead, they are recurrent issues or areas of concern that you struggle with both in your thinking and in your day-to-day life in the classroom.

> Keep in mind that “inquiry” means asking, not answering. Thus the goal is exploratory and interrogative. A good outcome would be a more nuanced and complex view of your problem, rather than an answer to your problem. The point here is not to “solve” the problem. Instead, it’s to give the problem (which is most likely a persistent one in our field) some serious consideration, drawing on your principled reflection from the classroom and outside resources of the field, and to arrive at a tentative place to stand on the matter as you move on to the next phase of your teaching career. You will identify such a problem of practice and focus your attention on it throughout the remainder of the semester.

\(^4\) Pseudonym used to maintain anonymity
As described in the College of Education website (http://www.ed.psu.edu/educ/current-students/undergraduate/majors-and-minors/secondary-education):

Penn State undergraduate teacher education programs are designed to provide students with experiences necessary to become certified teachers of secondary education. Each program specifies entrance criteria and requires 45 credits of directed general education study to begin the lifelong inquiry into subject area knowledge, followed by professional course work and various field experiences including student teaching. Students gain additional practical experience with children and adolescents through volunteer activities or part-time employment in related areas as well as the required courses. Upon successful completion of all requirements for graduation, students receive a bachelor's of science degree. To be certified to teach, students must also meet any test and clearance requirements as specified by The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Participant Selection

I requested access to the Language and Literacy XXX class where I conducted the study between January and April 2011. In January, I observed class activities, administered a consent form\(^5\) while explicating the objectives of my research. Seven students signed the consent form. I evaluated the Problems of Practice project proposal\(^6\) of those interested in the study and selected seven students to shadow and observe throughout the process of researching and crafting the inquiry project based on the fact that these seven participants had proposed inquiries related to writing. All seven PSETs enrolled in the Language and Literacy course (LL ED XXX) showed

\(^5\) Appendix A
\(^6\) Appendix C
minimal diversity (See Table 1). The participants identified themselves as American/White from middle class backgrounds. Five of the participants were females and two males. Five participants stated their desire to teach in suburban, public high school settings. One had no preference and another preferred private over public high school. In addition, four participants referred to their identities as ‘teachers in progress,’ while two considered their teacher identity as ‘present’, and another participant thought his/her teacher identity was under ‘consideration’\(^\text{7}\). Four participants self-identified as writers, two as writers in progress, and one claimed to have the ability to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Discipline Area/Area of Emphasis</th>
<th>Gender/Identity</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Desire to Teach</th>
<th>Identity as a Teacher</th>
<th>Identity as a Writer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>English/Journalism</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American/White</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>Suburban, public, high school</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>English/Writing-Voice</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>American/White</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>Suburban, public, high school</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Jessie    | English/Writing-Building
Relationships | Female          | American/White | Middle class | Suburban, public, high school | In progress | In progress |
| Geoffrey  | English/Social Justice          | Male            | American/White | Middle class | No preference-under consideration | Under consideration | In progress |
| Mathew    | English/Writing-Conferencing    | Male            | American/White | Middle class | Suburban, private, high school | In progress | Yes |
| Rene      | English/Motivation –Class participation-Building Relationships | Female | American/White | Middle class | Suburban, public, high school | In progress | Yes |
| Joelle    | English                        | Female          | American/White | Middle class | Suburban, public or private, high school | Yes | No, but has the ability to be |

\(^{7}\) Consideration- Participant was unsure about becoming a teacher and/or teaching as a career.
possibly become a writer.

I contacted students to better establish the interview process and prompted a reflective writing relationship, believing that “Building the interviewing relationship begins the moment the potential participants hear the study” (Seidman, 1991, p. 37). All seven students scheduled appointments, at their convenience, and answered and recorded their answers for the interview. I then used the Problems of Practice proposal and interview to narrow down my participants based on two categories prevalent in their interviews and inquiry proposals. I compared responses and selected four participants that utilized stories as they responded to prompts or when crafting their Problems of Practice proposal and demonstrated (in responses or via written form) an inquiry for writing or writing instruction. After these four students completed their formal Problems of Practice paper, I collected it and constructed analytical codes, categorized data, and compared it to previous data. I then solicited all four students to fill out the prompted reflection writing.

I shadowed those students that agreed to be participants of the research in one activity where they struggled with the learning of teaching writing (the Problems of Practice project). I observed the general setting and classroom environment while identifying how this assignment elicited stories. I debriefed after each activity and asked retrospective questions, revisited the codes and categories identified in the interviews and traced data. The units of analysis are the stories, and the data sources were the interview, the inquiry project proposal, the prompted reflection writing and final inquiry project paper.

**Research Participant Selection** I transcribed each interview, used line-by-line coding for the Problems of Practice proposals and interviews, and kept a journal with personal memo

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8 Appendix D
9 Appendix F
notes of initial data analysis. I then examined the initial codes of both artifacts (Problems of Practice proposal and interview), compared the initial codes and thematic categories, and revisited data. After thoroughly analyzing PSETs’ responses in each of the two artifacts (interview and Problems of Practice proposal), I coded responses into two categories or criteria that were prevalent throughout data looking for answers relevant to writing and/or writing instruction, and answers that shared stories. All seven participants had inquiries relevant to writing and/or writing instruction in their interviews and Problems of Practice proposals that were the main criterion for my focal participants. I then looked at the storied responses of each participant and selected the four with the most storied answers (see Table 2).

Table 2-Initial Researchers Interpretations of Problem of Practice Proposal and Interview Relevant to Writing and/or Writing Instruction and Stories

Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant to Writing / Writing Instruction</th>
<th>Not Relevant to Writing / Writing Instruction</th>
<th>Stories Prevalent in Answers of Two Data Collection Artifacts</th>
<th>Stories Not Prevalent in Answers of Two Data Collection Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rene</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joelle</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stories Prevalent in Answers of Two Data Collection Artifacts**

4/7 =0.57142857

**Stories prevalent in the interview but not in problem of practice**

2/7 =0.28571429

**Stories Not Prevalent in Answers of Two Data Collection Artifacts**

1/7 =0.14285714
Moreover, I chose participants who provoked my interest because they were in their last methods course prior to field experience. All four had a preference for English and writing and three out of four described their teacher identity as ‘in progress’. The four participants’ storied answers were descriptive, informative, and thoughtful regarding their teacher identities, writing instruction beliefs, and pedagogical beliefs and practices. Their answers also brought forth concerns, inquiries, insights and critical moments that affected and/or influenced their learning to teach writing or their own writing instruction.

**Leah**

Leah provoked my interest and curiosity because she identified herself as a writer with previous experience in academic and non-academic settings. It is because of this that she believed her experience distinguished her from the rest of the cohort and would help her throughout her pre-teaching field experience. This sparked my interest because I felt I thought it was important to know what she relied on when teaching writing.

After her pre-teaching experience, Leah acknowledged that teaching writing (journalism class) was challenging and she didn’t possess certain skills necessary to teach as effectively as her eighth grade teacher. She reflected, “Great I can do this job because it challenges me” and questioned herself – Why did I not know this?”

Leah’s topic for her Problems of Practice inquiry project was: writing conferences in high school journalism and letting students own their work.

**Riley**

My interest in Riley began early in my study. As a participant observer, there were times where I engaged in a few small classroom discussions where Riley would voice her passionate interest in teaching writing. Her sense of confidence as a future teacher and how she authentically shared
her stories regarding her writing and writing instruction were necessary for my study. She considered teaching as second nature to her. I thought it would be beneficial to learn more about her experiences and how they informed her pedagogical practices and beliefs.

After her pre-teaching experience, I was piqued by her reflections that embodied her newly found knowledge, Knowledge appropriated from her mentor-teacher and theoretical-bound knowledge obtained through her participation in the LL ED XXX cohort.

Riley’s topic for her Problems of Practice inquiry project was: small group management and implementation.

**Jessie**

My initial interest in Jessie’s participation in this study came from previous interactions and conversations during the LL ED XXX Teaching Language Arts in Secondary Schools I (emphasis in writing) course I taught the previous year. During my role as instructor, I guided small-group discussions where she articulated the need of caring and building relationships with her future students. She validated the urgency of this with personal stories. When I participated (as an observant-participant/researcher) in her LL ED XXX Teaching Language Arts in Secondary Schools II, she was quick to participate in my research and submit the consent forms.

After her pre-teaching experience, Jessie expressed moments that disrupted her beliefs about building relationships and caring in order for students to want to write or produce significant writing. She shared stories in her interview where she communicated to her mentor teacher observations about particular students and crafted lessons in which she shared her stories to motivate students to generate ideas prior to writing. This difference between her expectations and what she experienced in her pre-teaching experience as well as her negotiations regarding

---

10 Significant- Writing that reflects students’ interests and understanding of concepts.
writing instruction, her experience learning to write, and their incorporation into her teaching stance brought another dimension to my research question where I was able to see how settings played out in PSETs’ teaching and learning, and the affordances granted to them via classroom (methods course) or field experience classroom.

Jessie’s topic for her Problems of Practice inquiry project was: how students’ moods affect their schoolwork and other areas of their life.

Mathew

My initial interest in Mathew’s participation was twofold: 1) a diversification of the participant sample by including a male and 2) a desire to share how he referenced and related his discipline and experience as an athlete to his interest in becoming a teacher. During my role as an observant/participant/researcher in his LL ED XXX Teaching Language Arts in Secondary Schools II course, I observed a small-group discussion where he took pride in sharing his experiences about helping his teammates with their writing. He commented that he felt explaining the writing process was second nature for him. He also expressed concerns regarding student motivation towards writing.

After his pre-teaching experience, Mathew expressed great concern about student apprehension in classroom writing. He revisited his grade school and high school experiences in an attempt to make sense of his pre-teaching field experience. In particular, he reflected on stories about teachers that motivated students and were successful with writing instruction. Mathew expressed concern that excessive discipline in a classroom setting and teachers’ assumption that writing could and should occur in the spur of the moment does not help students
lower their guard\(^{11}\) and attempt writing.

Mathew’s topic for her Problem of Practice inquiry project was: how can the teacher help build confidence in the classroom in order to confront student apprehension.

**Data Collection Methods**

**Problems of Practice Proposal\(^{12}\)**

The Problems of Practice assignment required that PSETs submit a written proposal early in the semester articulating an initial research question and a description of their experiences with that question to date. I collected and analyzed these artifacts. I incorporated a grounded theory(ish) approach using line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006) to identify categories, themes, and patterns of PSETs beliefs about learning to write and/or writing instruction.

**Individual Interview\(^{13}\)**

Individual interviews were used to gain a more in-depth understanding of how PSETs made sense of their experiences with writing and writing instruction. I categorized the questions into the following four areas: PSETs as teachers, writers, teachers of writing, and influences to becoming a teacher of writing. One of my concerns throughout these individual interviews was PSETs wanting to shape their responses according to what they thought I wanted to hear. I attempted to mitigate this problem by remaining as neutral as possible in dress, body language, and restraining from sharing opinions while interviewees were answering their questions. I attempted to maintain questions neutral to avoid question bias. I ordered questions by asking general questions, followed by unaided questions, and positive before negative questions. The

\(^{11}\) Guard-Students’ position of not wanting to express or share their thoughts with teacher or in a classroom setting.

\(^{12}\) See Appendix C

\(^{13}\) See Appendix D
interview was conducted face-to-face with each PSET for approximately forty-five minutes. All interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed. I transcribed each interview and shared the transcription with each interviewee (member checking) because I wanted to be true to their ideas. Participants could add, delete or clarify any ideas.

**Problems of Practice Final**

The Problems of Practice Final project required PSETs to submit a ten to fifteen page final draft during the end of the semester articulating their research question while defining an approach to the problem as PSETs continue their teaching experience. I collected and analyzed these artifacts. I incorporated a grounded theory approach using line-by-line coding, focused and axial coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) to identify categories, themes, and patterns of PSETs beliefs about learning to write and/or writing instruction.

**Prompted Reflection Writing**

This prompted reflection writing was an elicited text that involved PSETs responding to questions I posed in written form. The data collection method was used to elicit PSETs’ thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding the process involved in crafting a Problems of Practice inquiry project. I collected, coded, and categorized these artifacts. I revisited data in eight different passes.

**Analysis**

Charmaz (2008) influenced this qualitative inductive research. My analysis had a constructivist grounded theory cast. According to Charmaz (2009) a constructivist approach places priority on the phenomenon of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data (Charmaz, 2009).

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14 See Appendix D
15 See Appendix F
1990, 1995b, 2000, 2001; Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996). My research studied the how and sometimes why PSETs constructed meanings and displayed certain actions throughout the Problems of Practice Inquiry project. My research sought to understand the phenomenon of what stories PSETs drew on when learning to teach writing in a methods course. Data analysis began while I was collecting data.

The data of the methods course was gathered by identifying a specific writing activity on the syllabus (Problems of Practice project). This assignment was twofold because students were expected to craft a proposal and a final Problems of Practice inquiry project. In my desire to obtain more data, I incorporated an interview and a prompted reflection writing about the problems of practice process to the classroom assignment. I also relied on observations of PSETs interactions with the course instructor during the description of the Problems of Practice task and the class work related to this writing task to revisit data collected.

**Problems of Practice Proposal**

The Problems of Practice proposal initially was used to identify participants for this study. Then it was revisited to determine topics related to writing or writing instruction. This instrument was an initial indicator of PSETs’ interest with stories. I attached labels by coding line-by-line (initial coding) and identified several initial codes that stood out to me. Some of the codes that occurred repeatedly throughout the proposals were: ‘bringing change or becoming changed’ through inquiry, ‘experience or lack of teaching experience’, disruption with writing instruction and experience with learning to write, and ‘student learning’. These codes were useful in helping me to make comparisons, establish relationships, and interpret data in order to further code and seek more data from different artifacts.
Individual Interview

Individual interviews were used to gain a more in-depth understanding of how PSETs made sense of their experiences with writing and writing instruction. I was able to focus-code these interviews. I categorized the questions into the following four areas: PSETs as teachers, writers, teachers of writing, and influences to becoming a teacher of writing. The interview utilized open-ended questions that allowed the participants opportunities to tell their stories and articulate their ideas about writing and writing instruction. PSETs were interviewed at a time and place convenient to them. During the interview, I requested PSETs to say more about any given comment in order to further develop their ideas, thoughts or stories. The interview questions focused on learning about PSETs as teachers, writers, teachers of writing, and influences and challenges. Beyond establishing rapport with the participants, my goal was to foster a comfortable environment where PSETs were at ease and really desired to share their lived experiences. This interview was the “stepping stone” for PSETs to want to disclose stories and articulate their feelings regarding writing and writing instruction. Each interview was transcribed, each transcription was read and revisited, notations of follow-up questions and comparisons were written-up. An advantage of this method for data collection was that I learned how PSETs negotiated their dichotomous identities (undergrad student/post baccalaureate and teacher), talked about their fears, concerns and pedagogical beliefs pre- and post- pre-teaching field experiences, and how they answered through stories that contrasted past and present experiences. The PSETs’ stories worked as springboards to questions, to seek and collect more pertinent data for elaboration, and to identify and refine categories. After the stories were examined, categorized, and compared, tentative ideas about the data were constructed and examined throughout contrasted stories of past and present experiences. Thus, data collection,
coding and categorizing led me to the idea of PSETs moving between contrasted past and present experiences with learning to write and writing instruction.

**Problems of Practice Final**

As I examined these Problems of Practice projects, I aimed to make the properties of the noted experiences in PSETs’ stories reflect the informed incidents, disclosure of uncertainties and/or expectations while revealing the meanings attributed to these. The properties of these categories were straightforward although they provided space for making relationships between categories thus establishing analytical leads. Some specific relevant properties the category of experience had were the reference to previous experiences, jobs, and PSETs as students. These stories were full of contrasted views of past and present experiences linked to beloved teachers, writing and writing instruction, and authenticity. All of these delineated the properties of stories and experiences.

**Prompted Reflection Writing**

This prompted reflection writing was an elicited text that I appended to the class assignment (Problems of Practice inquiry project). It involved PSETs responding to questions in written form. PSETs shared their thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding the process involved in writing and researching for the Problem of Practice inquiry project. As a participant/observer in the LL ED XXX, my sustained presence in the setting allowed me to search for reasons for disparities between observed realities during the Problems of Practice process and written responses in their prompted reflection writings. Revisiting data enabled me to create new codes, code previous codes, compare and categorize codes. This ongoing data analysis occurred until data coding was saturated. Charmaz (2009) posited how “categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of
these core theoretical categories” (p. 113). This saturation helped me compare data and categories, make sense of these comparisons, and identify themes and theoretical categories. It also illuminated my theoretical categories by revealing that PSETs draw on stories when learning to teach writing and the Problems of Practice assignment helped them address the teaching of writing. This data provided the socio-cognitive context in which the unit of analysis (stories) operated. The final draft of the problems of practice was another opportunity where PSETs disclosed their teaching beliefs, concerns and practices. In these writings, preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) were critical about their topic and research, yet realistic of classroom practices.

**Issues of Trustworthiness**

By choosing a qualitative inductive approach for my study, I recognize the intention of this approach to aid an understanding of meaning in complex data from raw data and to develop a model about the underlying structure of experiences or processes evident in the raw data. Through individual interviews, the Problem of Practice inquiry project, and the prompted reflection writing (elicited text), I accessed (as researcher and/or participant) PSETs’ experiences and was able to gain a more in-depth understanding of how PSETs made sense of their experiences with writing and writing instruction.

I also recognized the need to address issues of trustworthiness and credibility. I will reference Guba’s Model of Trustworthiness of qualitative research (1981) because to me it is conceptually sound and has been used by many qualitative researchers, specifically educators, throughout the years. Guba’s (1981) model is based on the identification of the following four aspects of trustworthiness: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. I will discuss truth value, consistency, and neutrality aspects because of their significance in my study.
Truth value is obtained in my study from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived, perceived, and shared by the research participants (preservice secondary English teachers). I precisely revisited data from the interview, Problems of Practice inquiry project, and the prompted reflection writing, elicited text, in order to present accurate descriptions, themes and/or interpretations of human experience and PSETs were be able to select these themes quickly when they responded or during member checking. For example, the themes of beloved teacher, writing, and authenticity were immediately recognized when PSETs were reading (member checking) the transcriptions of their stories. Throughout the data gathering process, PSETs reviewed entire transcripts of all three artifacts (interview, Problems of Practice project, and prompted reflection writing) and added information in order to further clarify their ideas. When narratives were completed, PSETs were provided the opportunity to read their stories and discuss them with me. They could edit or further clarify their ideas. My purpose was to be true to my participants’ voices.

Consistency of the data, that is, whether findings remain consistent if the study were replicated with the same participants or in similar contexts is depicted differently in qualitative research. Guba explains this concept in terms of dependability and “trackable variability” (1981, p. 81), which entails, variability that can be ascribed to an identifiable source. For example, using an interview and elicited text (prompted reflection writing) allowed me to check for consistency of responses over time (after Problems of Practice inquiry and 6 week preteaching experience) and gain increasingly insight about PSETs’ stories and contrasted past and present experiences. While I am hopeful that PSETs answered their questions honestly and not with a purpose of deception, I am aware of this possibility and prepare to mitigate it by having them read transcriptions and the stories that surfaced from their responses. Member checking by PSETs
(participants), or the careful checking of a researcher’s interpretation of the information, was essential to establishing the credibility of this study’s results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I encouraged my participants to engage in member checking throughout the study because by looking at the data, data analysis and my interpretations of their stories and responses, I expected to ensure a fair and accurate representation of their responses.

Neutrality played a significant role in my research because it related to the degree that the findings are a function of the informants and “conditions of the researcher and of other biases, motivations, and perspectives” (Guba, 1981 p. 79). I have worked with neutrality in my research (in order to increase the significance and impact of my findings) by minimizing the distance between PSETs (participants) and researcher (me). This was achieved by prolonged contact with the participants and observations. I had earlier contact with all preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs), as an instructor for a Language and Literacy methods course that occurs during participants 6th semester and previous to PSETs’ field experience and student teaching. The time invested in interacting with the participants, teaching, and advising PSETs regarding their teaching practices has welcomed me as a member of the secondary English Education community.

I was concerned that my previous contact with students and our academic relationship could bring conflicting views to my research. I wanted to respect and value my relationship with my participants, and on the other hand, I felt that it was my duty to provide my readers with an accurate account. Because I was a trusted member of the secondary education community, I was concerned that participants would bring forth their personal disclosures or experiences that could embarrass them or members of the academic community. On the other hand, as a trusted member, I expected students to openly share their experiences and respond honestly to questions
and elicited text. As a former teacher and teacher educator, I believed I could identify with preservice secondary English teachers’ (PSETs) stances, pedagogical beliefs and practices, and that I could honestly and accurately represent their experiences learning to teach writing and their stories about writing and writing instruction.

My own constructivist approach and practice does play a significant role in the way I interpret and view how PSETs construct or reconstruct their experiences as teachers learning to teach writing and/or writing teachers. According to Bogdan and Biklen, “. . . the meaning people give to their experiences and their process of interpretation are essential and constitutive, not accidental or secondary to what the experience is” (1998, p. 25). PSETs’ contrasted view of past and present experiences dealing with writing and writing instruction are essential when trying to determine what stories do PSETs draw on when learning to teach writing. The meanings embedded in PSETs’ responses, stories and interpretations, and their member checking helped me revisit the accuracy of my data interpretation. Although I still acknowledge that my own interpretations of events and words have guided this study, I have worked as best as possible to represent my participants in an honest, true, respectful and accurate manner.

I needed to recognize my own researcher position, due to my previous role as the participants’ instructor (previous year) and a participant-observer in their LL ED XXX (research site). These roles afforded me to teach, observe mock lessons, and sometimes participate of conversations during their required coursework activities in their LL ED XXX methods course. The initial concern regarding students’ participation (or non-participation) and how, if at all, their grades could be affected was mitigated by explaining that their willingness (or unwillingness) along with their responses would not in any manner affect their grades and would not be disclosed to their LL ED XXX professor, unless participants requested so.
In order to protect participants’ identity, pseudonyms were selected (by researcher and participant). Pseudonyms were also used for instructors, mentor teachers, professors, university courses and the university involved. Further, identifying characteristics such as location, grade level or years of experience were only to be used if relevant to the discussion or to distinguish one participant from another, and/or courses (brought by participants themselves). It is my goal that through this study, method instructors learn more about PSETs’ pedagogical practices, beliefs and types of stories drawn on when learning to teach writing.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experiences by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth (Dewey, 1938, p.40).

In this chapter, the research questions, what stories do preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing and how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing were visited. The first research question is examined based on PSETs’ storied responses to artifacts, specifically the interview. A connection and contrast between stories of past and present experiences was established. Experience and or experiences were defined according to PSETs’ contextual realities. This was followed by a discussion of the results of themes related to stories. Research question number two framed PSETs’ perception of methods course inquiry assignment as a tool to address the teaching of writing. I then moved to different forms of storytelling prevalent in PSETs’ stories, and how this inquiry assignment in the methods course perceived as invitations elicit reflection and differences between approaches previously learned and writing as a process. I also incorporated PSETs’ responses to the prompted reflection writing, an artifact that I embedded to the Problems of Practice assignment in order to further explore PSETs’ reaction towards the Problems of Practice project.

I focused my analyses on stories PSETs told. Telling or sharing teacher stories was one way for preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) to gain insight of ideas, issues, and concerns prevalent in their narratives (see Table 5). PSETs revisited an event or a series of events while exploring issues and concerns particular to teaching experiences. As PSETs shared
their stories, they analyzed and interpreted their pedagogical beliefs, practices and expectations.

It was through this telling of their stories that PSETs made sense and preserved experiences.

Table 5: Frequency of Stories for Research Question #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>Prompted Reflection Writing</th>
<th>Total Number of Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A primary way individuals make sense of experience is by casting it in narrative form (Bruner, 1990; Gee, 1985; Mishler, 1986a). In the stream of consciousness involved in the telling
of stories, PSETs reflected, remembered, revisited and (re) discovered the feelings associated with the experience lived or recollected (See Table 8). The expression of feelings through this narrativization not only ‘talked’ about past events or actions, but how PSETs (storytellers) understood the actions and how they chose to express feelings aroused by the meaning attributed to the action or experience.

### Table 8: Final Themes for Analysis in Research Question #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Stories in written text data (PP proposal, Interview, PP, and Prompted Reflection Writing)</th>
<th>Past and Present Experiences (Preteaching, Previous jobs, and PSETs as students)</th>
<th>Beloved Teacher (Building Relationships, Caring, and Former Teachers)</th>
<th>Writing (Writing, Writing Instruction, and Writing Process)</th>
<th>Authenticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question Number One: What stories do preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing?**

**Stories about Experiences, Beloved Teachers, Writing, and Authenticity**

themselves, revisit their previous experiences with teachers and teaching, and raise questions about teachers, teaching and their expectations. The following stories are topic-centered narratives. Reissman (1993), defines topic-centered narratives as stories that are snapshots of past events and are linked thematically. Data presented stories of past and present events; these were thematically coded, categorized and reexamined using experience as an overarching theme.

(See Table 8).

Table 8: Final Themes for Analysis in Research Question #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Stories in written text data (PP proposal, Interview, PP, and Prompted Reflection Writing)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
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<td>107</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PSETs’ Emotions**

**Leah’s story**

At the time of this study, Leah was currently registered in the Teaching Language Arts in Secondary Schools II of the secondary block. She has just finished her preteaching field experience involving six weeks of half-days in a secondary school classroom. She worked before in private and nonprofit companies as a journalist/columnist and writer. When she answered the question about moments or experiences in her LL ED/education program that have influenced who she was as a teacher of writing, Leah chose to tell a story in which she shared her concerns,
thoughts, beliefs, and expectations about transmission, former teachers, and her experience with
lecturing (direct instruction).

I don’t fully buy that transmission is all [that] wrong, but I feel like we are
supposed to think that and we’re kind of trained to say that whether we think it or
not. And instead of teaching the students to discriminate in recognizing the
differences in the styles, and when any style might be appropriate, I think people
come out here thinking like, if I talk [lecture] to students, [bad teacher], and if
anyone else talks to the students, then they are bad teachers, and that’s not true in
every case because I’ve had really great experiences with teachers who talked the
whole time or a lot of the time. It’s not so black and white, and I and I feel like
there is really not [black and white]. It’s really—I don’t know—there is not. I think
that idea gets lost sometimes.

Well, when I grow up and I’m a real teacher, I want to be my eighth grade
English and reading teacher because she was so fab[ulous] and I think everyone
or everybody should teach like her. Because she would push, she pushed us. She
made us do a lot of activities of different things that we wrote in her class all the
time. We wrote about things that were hard for us and we wrote about things that
were easy for us and sometimes she would just give the topic and [we] would
have to write for the whole period. Whether we had anything to say or not, we just
had to keep on writing. We had to respond to art, to poems. We had to write a
play. We had to write our own poems. We did so many things, and I sometimes
hated some of them, but I really liked her, and she talked [to us] and so that
experience of being forced to do a lot of things is helpful. Like nobody is going to
like all of it, but maybe you hit on that one thing that catches your attention. For
example, I have always hated symbolism, I hate symbolism right now, but I found
other types of writing and I enjoyed. (interview 3-28-2011)

Leah’s story provided context for questioning and grappling with the realities of a
preservice English teacher’s expectations. She noted a difference between expectations of
today’s teaching and teachers and teachers’ stories of the past. In this story there were
contrasting views between a story of the past, where Leah’s teacher lectures the majority of the
time and pushed them to write (direct instruction), and how Leah believes that this practice is not
promoted or emphasized in her current teacher education program. She expressed her desire of
emulating her eighth grade teacher and reflected on how her teacher’s practices, that are not
necessarily referred to as effective for teaching or learning, might work for her students as they
worked for her. Leah’s story presented her engagement in a reflective practice where she articulated or attempted to make sense of her experiences in her past and how these positively affected her because she believed that they influenced her writing abilities. A story like Leah’s provided a relevant vehicle for considering the broader issues of learning to teach, such as exploring and evaluating the expectations you have as a teacher and your lived experiences that influenced those expectations.

Riley’s story

Riley had also finished her preteaching field experience in the secondary English education block. She referred to teaching as second nature to her. Riley worked for the writing center of her university and felt that she had strong writing and teaching skills. In Riley’s story, she reflected about her experience with planning and her field experience where uncertainty and authentic teaching reigns.

For example, this semester my mentor teacher, in the third period came to me and he said “plan for fourth period [because] I don’t want to teach.” “You teach,” he said and I was like “okay.” So he had this poem and he said, “how about you teach this poem, they all have it in their book” [laughter] and I said “like all right, sure.” So I read over the poem twice and that’s all the time I had before the students [were] coming for fourth period. I told him “you know I’m just going to be completely making this up as I go along” and he was “Yeah! You’re going to be fine.” So I said okay. I felt fine. So I ended up making a wrong a right. It was awesome. First of all it was awesome because I didn’t fall flat on my face [laughter] that was good. I didn’t stand up there like “umm…” and I didn’t teach for 10 min. and have nothing for the rest of the period. We went right into the lesson until the bell rang because there was involvement. They were learning. It was also because my students are really, really into it. For example we had the discussion going on, it was so cool, and really cool discussions and what I ended up doing was, after the poem was read aloud, I had them free write about what they thought it meant. Just their initial reactions to it [poem], and then after that we had really awesome discussion. I had them turn the paper over and freewrite what they thought it [poem] meant and how it made them feel, and how they felt about it after our discussion. Then I collected them and I read through
them all next period. It was so cool because the first write was like “this is really stupid. I don’t get it.” “I hate this assignment, really hate this.” Then, the second part the students were like “I get it now. It’s about sacrificing for the end.” “I sacrifice for love, and I thought it was really cool, and I get it.” And they said they thought the activity was really cool, and they got it, so for me that was awesome and I didn’t expect it all. Yeah! I mean I think that this is important. I think a lot of good things come out from planning. I know this went well but I still think that a lot of good things come from planning like some of my other teachers did. (interview 3-28-2011)

Riley’s story unveiled her thoughts about planning. She reflected on its importance, but valued the experience of an unplanned lesson. This ambiguity does not create discomfort. These feelings are transformed into a humorous situation where Riley chose to laugh (pure nervousness) and “wing” the lesson. Leah and Riley’s stories present two preservice English teachers sharing and shaping their narratives as an opportunity to talk themselves through critical teaching moments in their experience. As they tell their teacher or teaching stories, they interpret, analyze and clarify the incident while experiencing “self-discovery” (Jalongo, 1992). As they make sense of their actions and experience they also express their concerns, fears, values or beliefs.

**Teacher Identity Through Stories**

These stories not only provide an image of these two PSETs’ emotions, but also of their developing teacher identity. In considering teacher identities, it is important to keep in mind that, although there is a certain amount of stability in how teachers see themselves as teachers, there is also continuous change as teachers transact among particular social-historical contexts (Zembylas, 2003; Danielwwicz, 2001). It is through PSETs’ perception of self and the profession that they craft their teacher and teaching expectations and teacher identity. When ‘building’ their teacher identity, PSETs constantly negotiate among situations in and outside the classrooms. The

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16 Wing-working impromptu
emotions that Leah and Riley expressed were representations of their teacher identity (in formation). Leah would like to be like her eighth grade teacher while Riley negotiates the idea that even though planning is an important component of teaching successfully, unplanned activities can lead to student learning as well as great teaching. Fifteen years ago, Nias (1996) noted that when teachers experience unpleasant emotions, those emotions may or may not threaten their identity by challenging their existing beliefs. This situation not only remains true today, but is also applicable to PSETs venturing into the teaching world and facing the same threats that challenge or question their beliefs.

**Contrasts Between Past and Present Experiences**

PSETs are exposed to the current traditional approach to learning how to write in their academic experience, thus encountering conflicting approaches to learning and teaching writing when they encounter alternative approaches in their teacher education program. George Hillocks (1986) concluded that the current-traditional approach is not very effective in teaching students how to write. Nevertheless, it is the most influential and widely used approach to teaching writing today (p. 116). Hillocks (1986) referred to a current-traditional approach that is characterized by teacher-led discussions and lectures about concepts, sentence diagrams, feedback for student writing coming primarily from teachers, and writing that depends on learning to use grammatical and mechanical conventions (pp. 116-117). PSETs noted a contrast between approaches previously learned and writing instruction practices in their field experiences, and what they are experiencing in their methods courses. Therefore, if PSETs teach writing the way they learned it, an obvious disconnect will occur with the writing instruction taught in their methods course.
Riley’s story

Riley told her story as a preservice secondary English teacher that had been in the classroom for three weeks. As part of her weekly writing instruction activity, students were asked to produce a written product. During the interview (March 28, 2011), Riley answered a question regarding writing instruction by sharing her aspirations and expectations, and moving on to a story where tension developed between stories of the past and present about teachers’ writing instruction practices. It is through the following clauses and sequence of events that Riley’s underlying issues with writing instruction surface.

So I envision my future classroom to umm.. so instead of what my teachers did in high school, which was to assign, a topic and you [would] have to bring in your essay next weekend [because] it’s due. Then they would grade it, and we would get it back. That was it. I want to work on it in class. Somehow give the prompt and give them time in class and model how to brainstorm, and generate ideas, and then I get that in the classroom. I get the kids to brainstorm an idea in a class and everyone has an idea and then maybe the next day working on creating outlines, where we still [are] brainstorming about any particular details and then creating the outline. Just modeling how it’s done and giving them time in class to do it, and then moving on from the outline to writing their first draft, and then umm.. and then doing peer review. What I mean is teaching them. This will be done in class, and self-review is really important too, and I will have competence modeling this with my students, and I know all of this will take a lot of time [laughter] but, having conferences about the writing and also having like clinics, like many lessons like we had in class, like we did in Jacob’s [class] that semester. That was really cool how everyone brings a rough draft and then they’d have highlighters and you would circle all the to be verbs and I feel that I could also just have many clinics with their [my students’] rough drafts that they would bring to class. So really going through it comes as a process, and then, finally after we have done the brainstorming, and the outlining and peer review, self-review, conferences and any workshops, in clinics and then finally submitting a final copy, but also keep the other work they’ve done with that in like a portfolio. So that again I can see as the teacher a collaborative effort and writing as a work in progress, and I’m looking at it…. I’m not only looking at a final product looking at it as a whole. So that’s what I like to do in my classroom. (interview 3-28-2011)

pseudonym
Riley’s story reflects her explicit message (describing writing instruction practices that she has been exposed in her methods block courses and how she truly wants to incorporate these into her teachings) and her implicit message (how little her former teachers provided modeling in writing instruction and how this previous experience has helped her identify and formulate strong opinions about her teaching identity). It is essential to remember, however, that Riley’s story seems to demonstrate how she has chosen to take up the new ideas and incorporate them into her teaching of writing even though these ideas are not reflective of how writing was or is typically taught and understood from the theoretical perspectives that underpin the actual educational system. The approach Riley chose was in her opinion the “right” approach for her in this context.

According to Cross’ (2006) interpretation of the fundamental premise of Vygotskian sociocultural theory, any “activity that we observe in the present can only be understood with reference to the wider social, cultural, and historic context from which that system has emerged” (p. 6). Riley viewed her current encounter with writing instruction as being relevant and pertinent to the needs of her students and their contextual realities. This identity in activity relates to James Paul Gee’s Institution Identity (2000). It is in this Institution Identity that PSETs are identified as a certain kind of person (educators) in a certain position within a given institution (school), thus leading to the enactment of PSETs professional identity.

**Jessie’s story**

Through the sharing of these stories, PSETs searched for deeper meanings embedded in their teacher and individual stories. During this study, Jessie was a preservice secondary English teacher that had completed her fourth week out of six weeks of field experience. She expressed her feelings toward learning to write by sharing a college story (present) that differed from her
past (high school) experience with writing. In the following story, Jessie recalled a new found knowledge where she gained confidence and competence to deal with her own writing and writing instruction. She ‘found’ her voice as she engaged in writing activities in this college course.

In high school I didn’t like to write. I really didn’t like writing because it was like the five paragraph, junk, transition, first, second, third, finally, and I don’t know. It was just not creative. It was read a book, and know about the theme. So when I got to college, in a poetry class that was when… I think like one of those epiphany classes because we talked about the meaning of words. And we talked about Michael’s heart sounding words, like crack, and soft words—soft sounding words—like a lullaby, and realizing just because a poem could be like three lines, but how each word [in the poem] is so important. For example you can like say “fake grin weakens a smile” but it’s like every word is so heavy, so I really…it got me into creative writing and I guess…. I guess even when writing something like expository, I’m just trying to find my voice in my writing so… yeah. (interview 3-28-2011)

Jessie’s story is representative of her growth as a writer. She expresses her interest and attempts to find her voice in her writings. It is through the writing that we discover our “voice,” as we emerge from silence, in our search to discover or rediscover our selves (Lincoln 2002; Lincoln and Denzin 2003; Lincoln and Guba 2003; Richardson 2002). I can see how finding voice is important for PSETs learning to teach writing because it illustrates how an enlightening activity can frame a pedagogical practice where writing can be appreciated and valued. This story of practice transforms into a medium where others can examine the realities of learning and teaching writing.

Mathew’s story

At the time of this study, Mathew had finished his field experience and was looking forward to his student teaching experience. His field experience had helped him reminisce about his high school and college experiences. When asked about moments or events that have frustrated him when learning to write, he shared a story where he remembered being told to write
by teachers who seldom wrote themselves. This event differs from his present methods course experience, where writing is modeled. These qualities make his story exemplify the power of narratives to create a space where critical issues as writing instruction and teacher competency and expectations flourish.

At least, in my experiences in high school and college we are told a lot of what to do by writing teachers, but writing teachers rarely model for us what it is that they want us to do, and I think someone who had the ability do that, would be very effective. And something else, a lot of times when we are practicing something whatever it is, if we're being mentored by someone, we consider our teacher, in whatever it is there is a greater deal of respect that you have for someone that possess the ability to help you complete the task as they are trying to teach you. So, a lot of times, or in class, there are students in class, maybe they wonder “I’m being taught how to write by my teacher, how good of a writer is my teacher?” Well, the methods classes, when we talk about teaching writing, and we’re given a different viewpoint compared to what I was taught in high school. I mentioned that I’ve been doing five paragraph essays since the seventh grade so, six years of that until I graduated from high school, coming in here and I’d have to write a paper and my first responses go with that, and I thought I would, I mean I was always learning but just from the methods courses I was able to learn that you know the five paragraph essay can be confining in the ways that there are other ways that students can learn to write about it. Maybe it’s important to have that structure, balance with, you know with assignments where students can be more creative. We’re taught about wanting students to write as much as they can, not even an amount, just wanting them to write. And, I think I learned some ways to do that. Ways that definitely are different to the ways I was taught. I’ve learned ways to encourage that and I think that was a good lesson in writing.(interview 3-28-2011)

Mathew’s story illustrated how a personal experience with learning how to write framed or referenced his expectations of teaching and writing instruction. His teacher story from the past becomes a setting for examinations of writing instruction and an analysis of pedagogical practices. This setting frames a major difference between what Mathew learned and experienced in the classroom (when learning to write) and what he has been exposed to in his methods courses and personal experiences. This sense of awareness is granted by a source of power originated in the institution. According to Gee (2000), the institutional perspective (I-Identities)
of being a preservice secondary English teacher is put into a “continuum in terms of how actively or passively the occupant [PSETs] of a position fills or fulfills his or her duties” (p. 103). For Mathew, being a preservice teacher followed a calling with duties he attempts to fulfill (teaching writing) to the best of his abilities. He relies on his previous experiences and the authority granted by his college [institution] to implement changes that mark his professional identity.

By recognizing the knowledge he obtained through his methods courses, Mathew is able to increase his understanding regarding the difference between stories of the past (where teachers would tell you how to write and show you a model but lacked modeling) and stories from the present where writing instruction is dealt with through modeling, sharing stories and going through the writing process with students. Mathew negotiates both experiences (past and present) and determines that each one can be effective in certain situations.

As PSETs develop their professional identity they need a space where they articulate their experiences. PSETs have rich theoretical bound knowledge and are attempting to balance theory with practical knowledge. It is in this journey of exploring their knowledge (theory acquired in methods courses) that they confront classroom practices that they deem unacceptable or not necessarily helpful for students who are learning to write or teachers learning to teach writing.

**Jessie’s story**

When sharing experiences from her field experience, Jessie shared a story that underscores practices that are dominant in today’s schooling system. Jessie unpacks her feelings toward writing and writing instruction.

Well, I didn’t have my students write this semester. I mean, yes… one thing, where they looked at pictures–it was literary devices–they have been doing three straight weeks in their PSSA book…. I mean as a teacher I don’t want to teach that. So I’ve printed out pictures from my road trip…umm.. from the
national parks—because we were talking about the national parks the day before—so I have like arches and I had the Golden Gate, Grand Canyon, and I split them up into groups, and I—this is actually turning into the encouraging—that they[students] are really excited to look at the pictures and write a sentence describing the pictures like with a metaphor—just like the lazy cloud rolled across the blue sky—it was so frustrating because they loved it, and I wished—she [mentor teacher] thought that she was a reading teacher and she didn’t think their writing….that writing and reading go together at all, and so that was frustrating. What was emerging was that at the end of that day, the kids were like that was awesome!(interview 3-28-2011)

Jessie expressed her disapproval of writing taught in a formulaic, prescriptive manner, yet she explained how this practice equates to ‘good’ teaching in her past experience as a student and now in her field experience. Her story reflects a point of contention between what she has learned in her methods courses and what she experienced as a student, as well as her shock and disbelief to see past practices in her field experience. This story helped Jessie articulate the relationship she understood between pedagogical practices that are prevalent or mandated in the schooling system while incorporating alternative ways of evoking writing. Jessie was able to question the divide that her mentor teacher established between reading and writing while wrestling with the tensions that arise in teaching. Jessie’s story depicts how she balances the tension between past and present pedagogical practices. Here I am able to see how Jessie gives meaning to her lived experiences by identifying what she knows and what she has learned.

Bakhtin (1986) shares thoughts about how human beings develop the potential of authorship in distinctive manners. He states the following:

“the means by which a specific ratio of self-to-other responsibility is achieved in any given action—a deed being understood as an answer—comes about as the result of efforts by the self to shape meaning out of the encounter between them. What self is answerable to is the social environment; what self is answerable for is the authorship of its responses” (pp. 67-68).
Jessie’s story explicates how she understands what her mentor teacher wants to do when teaching writing and how she negotiates this with what she has learned in her methods courses, thus achieving her goal of incorporating her way of teaching writing. PSETs are conflicted between what they thought they knew and believed and what they are expected to do as preservice teachers in their field experiences. Jessie is steadily developing her authorship in teaching and writing instruction.

Mathew’s story

Mathew shares a similar personal story, where he was troubled by formulaic writing and how his new-found knowledge (acquired in a methods course) has made him revisit these feelings and affirm his learning and beliefs.

I can still go back and remember when I was in middle school or early high school, and I remember we started doing five paragraph essays when I was in seventh grade, and I really didn’t… really make the connection of kind of how to set up a five-paragraph essay. I mean, I understood the basics of it, but you know, they really broke it down into bits and pieces. At first as far as … there is topic sentences and you making this weird map out of your opening paragraph that connected through your body paragraphs and your conclusion. Then how your conclusion was kind of a reiteration of your opening, and it took me a while– maybe a year or two–to really figure out all the different aspects they were asking, and I don’t know if it was because it was so broken down to the basics that I had such a hard… trouble putting them back together again, and I mean, it’s simple to think about it now but at the time, I was wondering about his weird map. How when and why do I put these things in here? If I’m going to talk about it later then, how does it work now? It just didn’t really click and that was frustrating for a while. I think in the methods part of it, we [PSETs] spent a lot of time talking about different, you know, exercises that we can use. We talked about different and new techniques that were… that we can adopt the issue of writing that we may not have had in high school because, things tend to be a certain way and we don’t get introduced to two different ideas, and then in the education program, and this was in my placement, I was able to teach writing more than I had in the past, especially with poetry, and just getting back a lot of poems I saw my students wrote. Seeing everyone of them, I couldn’t get tired of reading everything they gave back to me, but then the ones that were really good, they were off18. Some I just had to see them and I asked my mentor teacher if I could

18 off- awesome
photocopy them. . . . and she said I could photocopy the ones I really liked and I still have them with me, and not really to use again because my mentor teacher told me if I was going to use them again I should write out their names but not even to use them again but just to see what they did and how good some of their work was. It was a pretty awesome experience for me. And I just want to have those almost to be inspired by what they did, I wrote an example on the board of the poem, I did less than some of the stuff they did I like more . . . more than I’d like my own writing and that was fun seeing. Well, the methods classes, when we talk about teaching writing, and were given a different viewpoint compared to what I was taught in high school. I mentioned that I’ve been doing five paragraph essays since the seventh grade so, six years of that until I graduated from high school, coming in here and I’d have to write a paper and my first responses go with that, and I thought I would, I mean I was always learning but just from the methods courses I was able to learn that you know the five paragraph essay can be confining in the ways that there are other ways that students can learn to write about it maybe it’s important to have that structure, balance with, you know with assignments where students can be more creative. Were taught about wanting students write as much as they can not even an amount, just wanting them to write. And, I think I learned some ways to, I’ve learned ways to encourage that and I think that was a good lesson in writing. (interview 3-28-2011)

Mathew’s story depicts the opportunity PSETs have through stories to voice discrepancies or similarities identified between past and present stories that highlight teaching or learning experiences.

**Experience: Meaning-Making Word**

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) define experience as “what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing, and thinking about it” (p.18). PSETs’ daily experiences are contextualized within their narratives. Their stories are individual and the experiences mentioned in them reflect a continuum of emotions, beliefs, values, and practices mentioned in these. PSETS experience is unique and reflective of their teacher identity. PSETs past and present experiences are contrasted in their stories. Experience is a word that ignites reactions. Experience is a concept that PSETs used to influence the formation of their attitudes, expectations, teacher identities, and learning environment. Preservice teachers are influenced by past and present experiences they had as
students themselves. These prior experiences and beliefs is what preservice teachers draw on as the starting point of their emerging and developing pedagogical beliefs and practices (Lortie, 1975). Agee’s (2006) notion of the apprenticeship of observation displays preservice teachers drawing upon experience as a powerful force and artifact in the development of their pedagogical beliefs and practices.

Experience as a meaning-making concept triggers actions and reactions throughout PSETs’ narratives while framing other meaning making words. Beyond framing meaning-making words experience, past and present experiences, delineate PSETs’ teachings and learning. These narratives established a connection between experience (as a vehicle) and the six meaning-making words (as conduits) where each word established or built a connection(s). The meaning making words that reoccurred throughout PSETs’ stories were: beloved teacher, authenticity, teaching, preteaching experience/experience, writing, and writing instruction. After coding, revisiting data, recoding and establishing thematic analysis of the stories these six meaning-making words merged into three themes with experience as the overarching theme. Beloved teacher, writing, and authenticity were recurrent themes throughout PSETs’ stories. These words, when called upon in different assignments or invitations in PSETs’ methods course, were explicitly linked to experience. These patterns seen across these meaning-making words were categorized into themes related to experience. All themes made reference to real-life experiences (appropriated or owned). Some of the meaning-making words transformed into themes.

In the following paragraphs, I will share themes such as beloved teacher, writing, and authenticity that are present in PSETs’ stories and framed by experience.
Themes Related to Experience

To ‘learn from experience’ is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy and suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes a trying: an experiment with the world...; the undergoing becomes instruction-discovery of the connection of things (Dewey, 1916/1924, p. 164).

The experience theme was prevalent throughout PSETs’ stories of contrasted past and present experiences in three artifacts (Problem of Practice project, interview, and Problem of Practice prompted reflection writing) that PSETs participated of in their methods course. The problem of Practice project (proposal and final Problem of Practice paper) was assigned in the LL ED XXX methods course. The other two artifacts (interview and prompted reflection writing) were incorporated by the researcher to gather more information about the participants. Experience was the overarching theme PSETs alluded to when telling their stories. It was the contrasted view between past and present experiences in PSETs’ narratives that I sought out to revisit. This relationship or contrasted view (between past and present experiences) in PSETs’ stories not only referenced experience as the main theme, but patterns of these stories indicated that experience was prevalent in PSETs’ responses as stories. These stories responded to recurring themes and situations that were socially constructed. Throughout the analysis of the various data sources, PSETs’ stories continued to talk about contrasts between past and present experiences, but now experience was seen in social actions and interactions; thus patterns being established about beloved teachers, writing, and authenticity (See Table 8). These patterns were seen as themes related to stories of past and present experiences.

Table 8: Final Themes for Analysis in Research Question #1
Beloved Teacher

“Clearly, human beings do not spring into the world as fully rational, mature choice-makers. We are born entirely dependent on the care of adult others. This suggest that our initial sense of the other is that this other is a “being-for-me.”” (Noddings, 2006, p. 94).

Throughout the following narratives, PSETs share a series of stories where they are looking at beloved teachers from the perspective of how teachers “work” for them or satisfy their expectations. Noddings’ “being-for-me” prevailed throughout PSETs’ stories where they identified and related to teachers that cared for and about them (2006, p. 94). It is in PSETs’ memory that teachers that recognized, challenged, and helped them stand –up or shine remains. PSETs responded to these attentions, recognitions and lessons by seeking, and working hard for their teachers’ approval.

PSETs’ teacher stories portray an amalgamation of their ideal teachers. The majority of the following narratives are presented in traditional classrooms. For PSETs, these teacher possess

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Stories in written text data (PP proposal, Interview, PP, and Prompted Reflection Writing)</th>
<th>Past and Present Experiences (Preteaching, Previous jobs, and PSETs as students)</th>
<th>Beloved Teacher (Building Relationships, Caring, and Former Teachers)</th>
<th>Writing (Writing, Writing Instruction, and Writing Process)</th>
<th>Authenticity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesssie</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
vast knowledge, respect, and love for their profession and students. PSETs define a beloved teacher as (see Appendix E):

a. one that pushes (challenges)
b. cares
c. provides extra effort to help students
d. makes sure the classroom is a creative environment
e. appreciates students
f. is respectful (talks and listens or vice versa)
g. builds relationships with community and students
h. teachers who take their time to help student grow
i. shows respect for students’ work
j. has patience

In the following narratives, PSETs tell their stories by responding to interview questions, elicited text, and written work that inquired about influential people in their lives, most encouraging moment as a reader, and writer and teacher of writing. It is through these invitations and activities of the methods course that I was able to give PSETs moments where they tell their stories while examining their behavior and experiences.

In the interview on March 28, 2011, Leah responded to a set of questions regarding important and encouraging experiences by telling a series of stories. These three accounts capture Leah’s beliefs, values, and pedagogical practices. Leah’s stories suggest that a beloved teacher cares, yet pushes students by challenging them. These stories are layered with differences between past and present experiences. Leah accumulated her past teacher experiences and extended them into her present experiences with hope that past teaching practices can be as effective in her current teaching experiences.

**Leah’s story**

Actually for me, one of the most important experiences in writing was when I was in eighth grade because I had this really great teacher who I just really really liked her and she made us write all of the time and she made us write about things that were really really hard for me to do especially in eighth grade. She
would put a painting up on the overhead and like write about it for an hour and I would like all my gosh I can’t do this I don’t get anything I have nothing to say. She forced us to write way more than I was even comfortable with especially in eighth grade um but I think, for me that was the first time I ever felt that I was good at writing and after that I saw myself as a good writer and I think it was… I became good at writing because I believed I could be good at writing and I think I was good at writing and I have things to learn but it helped me learn. Believing that I was good at writing helped me learn how to write. (interview 3-28-2011)

Well, when I grow up and I’m a real teacher, I want to be like my eighth grade English and reading teacher because she was so fab[ulous] and I think everyone or every body should teach like her. Because she would push, she pushed us, she made us do a lot of activities of different things that we wrote in her class all the time. (interview 3-28-2011)

Leah’s story indicated how she has reinforced her teacher identity (present) with past experiences. Her stories are reflective of moments of awareness. For her, a teacher who is a ‘real’ teacher cares. This caring is demonstrated through ‘tough love’ that eventually will help the student (Leah) believe in her skills and talents. No matter how many influences have “pressed-in” or were brought in their methods course, her mind is set on how she would like to be like her former teacher. Leah’s latter story is reflective of what Alsup identified as “finding and inhabiting these borderlands between discourses” (2006). Leah seems to be grounded in this place where she feels she is becoming that beloved teacher she admires. Meanwhile she faces the feelings of uncertainty and moments of reflective practices prevalent in her field experience.

In the following three stories, Riley recalls stories about past and present teachers that praised and loved. She also emphasizes that not necessarily caring and challenging are qualities of a teacher with a calling.

Riley’s stories

Yeah, I mean like many of my teachers would always praise my writing. I won some awards in middle school for essays that I wrote. Umm… yeah, like I always received so much positive feedback from my high school teachers. It is always encouraging to get good grades, and get compliments from teachers. Just like some of my teachers in this block or my mentor teacher, there are people that
didn’t plan on teaching English and it just ended up happening. Like my mentor teacher, he was a social studies [teacher] and then he couldn’t find a job so he took the Praxis for English and then he started teaching English so that’s all he really has…umm… I know it really happens sometimes. So you can, you know. I think you can. Okay, I don’t think a teacher will ever have every single answer and I don’t think they need to because you can learn alongside your students. If you don’t know something say okay, let’s figure it out. Or for example, I know I haven’t read every single book that I’m going to end up teaching, but it is still my responsibility to educate myself before I teach it. I think that if I know that next year I’m teaching for example, Things Fall Apart, and I’ve never read, that’s okay, but I know I need to read it by summer. I also can put some time into studying it so that I know what I’m doing. Even if things come up that I don’t know, I can still teach myself. I can still learn even though I don’t think I necessarily have a strong background in that area. [Laughter] Yeah, that’s all I have to say about that (interview 3-28-2011).

I mean there is the class about the five traits—Melissa\textsuperscript{19} teaches you the way to correct mistakes that everyone always tells you. For example, you are always taught, you know, voice and tone, and mechanics, organization, and all these different aspects of writing that different people in different organizations term things like trait or whatever. For example, my mentor teacher has Transwall and that works for our students. I think that those things are important. I think the most important thing though is the writer’s voice, and that they [students] are writing with passion, and with their voice. That [voice] is conveyed in their writing. Then, the rest of it you can fairly easily take care of. This is what Melissa talks about. If someone writes… if one of my students wrote a paper that was, [you know] just like beautiful, [you know] like they put a lot of passion in it, but mechanically and structurally it was poor, teachers would seldom overlook that and I know we [student and I] can fix it. Those are things that you could pretty easily fix, because you can teach them. (interview 3-28-2011).

In her stories, she depicts qualities of teachers in her field experience or methods course that did not follow a traditional path or calling. Her first account portrays her reflective stance about stories of the past where her teachers had vocation and followed their calling versus those that conveniently chose the career path and seem quite content with uncertainty. Her second story relates to the similarities between Melissa’s explication of writing traits and what her mentor teacher emphasizes with writing. Even though she believes voice conveyed in her

\footnotetext{19}{Melissa-pseudonym}
students’ papers should be emphasized, reality of formulaic or prescriptive writing still occurs in her field experience. Riley cherishes her newly nurtured belief in valuing the writer’s voice and uses this knowledge to identify and categorize the formulaic/prescriptive practices prevalent in her field experiences. Throughout her stories, Riley is actually reflecting and almost attempting to persuade the reader that it is all right to not know.

In the prompted reflection writing about the Problems of Practice, Jessie was asked about influences on her focus, and she recalled the following stories:

**Jessie’s stories**

My past experiences with my teachers influenced my focus at first because I have had down days where no one noticed [it] but my teachers, and it made a difference when they asked me if they could help. Also, I’ve come to love writing creatively and using that as a way to express myself when I am sad, mad, happy, or more. The other thing is from when I preservice taught; one of the happiest and funniest students had an off day and my mentor teacher encouraged me to talk to him. I didn’t get much out of him, but I hoped that the gesture would make him feel less alone (April 15, 2011).

I had a teacher that we did exercises on diagramming your favorite song and I chose one that wasn’t popular and she cared, and she actually was looking for literary devices, and I thought that was the coolest thing ever. I actually cared what alliteration was, and I actually cared what personification was. I thought it was such a simple topic or assignment, and then I realized I wanted to be an English teacher because of the connections. And English… because I’m good! (interview 3-28-2011).

Like when I found that English is what I loved, then I became so much better at it. Like my 10th grade teacher–we didn’t see I eye to eye–so I didn’t have good grades. So I had her class in 11th grade, and she said she would have never expected me to be that good, and I said you know you took notice in my work since the first day, so… that was awesome. You noticed me. (interview 3-28-2011).

These stories refer to beloved teachers that look up to her students and express true feelings or reveals inner thoughts regarding empathy or sympathy toward students. Jessie’s
stories reveal admiration and respect toward her masterful teachers. She also shares her experience of being recognized and respected which is identified as the pinnacle of her choosing her career. Her second narrative is more of a reflection or self-reflection, where she feels that her professional identity has been nourished. These stories continue to depict a comparison and/or contrast between stories of past and present experiences. Riley still looks back to her former tenth grade teacher to make sense of her present experiences. When these experiences are not prevalent in her present field experiences or learning environments, Riley recalls past experiences to ‘make sense’ of her professional identity.

Riley attempts to balance and ‘establish’ her teaching self and her personal beliefs that constantly surface during her teachings. She reflects upon her life-altering experiences shared in her teacher stories and validates her ‘calling’, not without noting differences between how she was treated as a student (learning to write) and how she is expected to teach her students to learn to write.

Mathew’s story also taps into his contrasted past and present experience, and how he too has struggled with the idea of his successful teachers of the past and teachers he has observed in his field experience (present). When Mathew answered the section of the interview that dealt with expectations, he chose to share a story where he recalled what his teachers attempted to do for him to learn.

**Mathew’s story**

I think back to what they [teachers] wanted to teach me and how they wanted to teach me things, and if they were successful at all when they did that. So I try to think about that and learn what they tried to do, and what could I do better to learn from the experiences that I have with them. Well, yeah I think back to some of the teachers I had in high school, and the successful ones were the ones that counted. Those that put in the extra effort to help us, you know. I think [teachers] in [teaching] writing often to take the easy way out, if they’re doing a peer editing thing, just kind of make sure that it is going on. Make sure
that people are making an effort towards it, not just seeing what is being accomplished, not just looking at that rough draft or dressing up their words onto paper, rather than seeing if you’re actually working on it. The more I think about it, it was the successful teachers that put in the extra work, compared to the not as successful teachers—that kind of take the easy way out (interview 3-28-2011).

Mathew’s story is a reminder of PSETs’ definition of beloved teachers. He gives himself the freedom of explaining how his past and present stories have enabled him to categorize teachers in juxtaposition (successful and unsuccessful). Mathew’s assumptions, choices and beliefs are embedded in this narrative. He remembers stories of the past and present while discerning between pedagogical practices that place students’ needs in the forefront.

These stories demonstrate how preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) are still grasping on to the memories and images of those teachers that influenced their lives, career choices, and helped them construct their professional identities. The images of teachers that care and are knowledgeable, and their lived experience is what PSETs walk into their preservice education with. The teacher education program immediately challenges these complex constructions. First, theory and practice in the methods courses might clash with their early identifications of their beloved teachers. Second, when PSETs start observing and teaching, these are based on their perspective and observations of a single classroom at a time. While all this is occurring, PSETs’ memories of their beloved teachers are still lingering and shaping PSETs’ decision-making and professional identity.

According to Noddings and Shore (1984), love of students, subjects, and teaching/learning does invoke belief. In order to invoke belief, one must have experienced a belief in one’s own ability to find solutions to new problems and the belief that one will encounter students whose lives will be touched and whose lives will affect ours. PSETs reservedly hold on to hope that they too will bring change to students’ lives as their beloved teachers did. “Love in
the classroom is neither naïve expectation nor stoic resignation, but a commitment to the whole experience of learning and teaching (Noddings, 2006 p.171). This commitment is seen in the writing theme, as well as, in the beloved teacher.

**Writing**

“That writing was most fun and rewarding to read that somehow felt most ‘real.’ It had what I am now calling voice. At the time I said things like ‘It felt real, it had a kind of resonance, it somehow rang true’” (Elbow, 1981 p. 283)

When PSETs write their stories they are opening to the possibility of dialogue about teaching, their writing, writing instruction, and their pedagogical beliefs and practices. PSETs tell their stories using a medium that they believe in and are comfortable with. Throughout these stories, PSETs will engage in opportunities where they rethink events, interpret experiences, try to make sense of their stories, and uncover beliefs that may be embedded in stories. These stories lend themselves as critiques of traditional, limited and formulaic practices seen in present and past teacher’ stories and the influence these have on PSETs’ writing instruction beliefs.

Preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) have defined writing using the following phrases or sentences (see Appendix E):

a. Writing is Freedom
b. Keeps PSETs in contact with “real-lives” of students. (Unanimously agreed)
c. Writing is a process
d. It is therapeutic
e. An outlet that helps PSETs attain the freedom that words’ multiple meanings give you.
f. Grants a voice in writing and the power to choose words that represent your ideas and strengths as a writer.
g. A space to be creative

“When students described their most important experiences as readers and writers, they often described classrooms and teachers that seemed to promote these progressive perspectives” (Ritchie and Wilson, 2000). PSETs used writing as a vehicle that enabled them to communicate
personal and individual stories, allowing them to reflect and make sense of their lived experiences with writing or writing instruction.

When asked about influential people and encouraging moments in the interview, Leah responded by sharing stories about a former eighth grade teacher and her students (during her field experience.

**Leah’s stories**

...eighth grade because I had this really great teacher who I just really liked her and she made us write all of the time and she made us write about things that were really really hard for me to do especially in eighth grade. She would put a painting up on the overhead and like right about it for an hour and I would like say, Oh my gosh, I can’t do this! I don’t get anything. I have nothing to say. She forced us to write way more than I was even comfortable with especially in eighth grade. But I think for me that was the first time I ever felt that I was good at writing and after that I saw myself as a good writer and I think it was... I became good at writing because I believed I could be good at writing and I think I was good at writing and I have things to learn but it helped me learn. Believing that I was good writing helped me learn how to write. (interview 3-28-2011)

There is this one time when a few students came to me with questions about the stories. They were working about and were really invested. They cared about making their writing better and they were willing to struggle with it and they did struggle with it. I mean they told me things that were hard for them about what they were writing. They had this story and they could look at the story and they could get to parts of the story where they could say “these are things about the story that are not where I want to be and want to fix them.” My students would say: “I want to make this point but I’m not sure how to make it or do it.” So they looked up to me to fix their writing and the only thing I could do was like tell them to continue writing and then we would sit down and work on their stories together and then in the end the kid would produce a story that was even better than what they had started with and that was really fun. (interview 3-28-2011)

Leah shared her story of a past experience about a beloved teacher that forced students to write, yet gave her confidence as a writer. On the other hand, Leah mentioned a story of her present experience (field experiences) where her writing abilities and writing instruction were
tested, and she felt uncertain as to what to do. Leah deals with her uncertainty by bringing to the forefront her memory of the teacher that ‘forced’ her to write and believed in her writing abilities. Eventually Leah performs recognizably similar to her former teacher, thus demonstrating how greatly influenced her pedagogical practices and beliefs are by her past experiences. According to Lortie’s preservice teachers’ apprenticeship of observation (1975), preservice teachers are greatly influenced by their past experiences as students. These elementary and secondary school experiences encompass much of how preservice students embody their teaching selves. It is in experience that the theme of writing prevails as it stirs up emotions creating tension between PSETs’ stories of the past and present experiences.

When responding to questions or prompts that inquired writing or writing instruction (activities that dealt with Problems of Practice) in the methods course, Riley answered by telling her stories of past and present experiences, and her love, respect and dedication for writing. Her stories talk about her love for writing, the respect she has for writing instruction and writing, and the dedication she sees in the courses she has taken in the secondary education methods block.

**Riley’s stories**

So I have really loved writing all my life. I was always the kid in writers workshop in first grade [laughter, laughter, laughter] my book was like 3 inches thick, and probably spend a little bit too much time from class writing—yeah—but, so yeah I have always loved to write… umm… it kind of unfortunate, unfortunately in college I don’t get to write much, just to me like anymore, like journaling because I just don’t have time because I have to write for school. So most of the writing I’ve done recently is just for school, essays, and stuff like that, and I really really do love to write. Well, I’ve really loved writing my entire life, and yeah, I mean, I think that it is my first reaction to anything—not anything—ummm.. is to write. It helps me get all my thoughts out of my head. Umm… Some people, I think people deal with things differently. Some people will to let out stress exercise, different people do artwork, and I write. So, I’ve been journaling every day for 15 years. I… I make this—and that’s not really writing—but I really literally write lists of everything, to do lists, and things I want to do in life-like
short-term and long-term goals, lists… list of books I want to read things I want to do everything, I live everything. Umm… So, I write if I’m stressed because it helps me get out all my thoughts… umm… just to get all my thoughts out, feelings emotions down on paper—that’s how I do it through writing, but I mean formally, I write a lot for school, always have. I feel like I’ve always been and I quote—a good writer–so I can see myself a good writer. (interview 3-28-2011)

First, my love of writing, and my own experiences developing of the writer when I was very young until today like I said, I have always loved writing and… so that is my number one reason and my number one influence is my love and passion that I have for it. Also, the writing Center, is a huge influence on my beliefs about teaching writing, and huge influence in how I want to teach writing in a classroom when I have my own chance to. Maria’s class, last fall that was on teaching writing—no I’m not trying to get bonus points—but that was very helpful because it was a class on teaching writing, and really did learn a lot from that class and not only in practical ways to teach writing but also we focus a lot on the philosophy behind it. So I honestly really developed a lot of my ideas about teaching writing and writing as a process through LL ED 411… umm… probably more then any other class that Penn State, and then just experiences in random classes, friends, colleagues throughout my life influenced how I became a teacher of writing. (interview 3-28-2011 / proposal 3-14-2011)

I just love seeing how people… like at the writing center how I’ve been able to get people or to work with someone not just edit their papers so they can get an A, but I’m really happy because I’m really helping them become better writers. It’s really cool, even after one session to see how from beginning to end in just half an hour they are able to pick out areas that they need to work on and improve themselves. And they are able to say, for example: “I have to understand what this is and this is what it does and then here’s an example.” Then they’re able to find places in their writing, in the rest of their paper and you know then sometimes they come back and yes! They come and they can talk about this error. So it’s just really rewarding… to see people really actually learning, and also just people that are actually excited—laughter, laughter—at the end is also very rewarding when you see those people were just really thankful, and excited, and pleased. It is really cool.(interview 3-28-2011)

Jacob’s class—that was a really good lesson, Maria’s class. It was very helpful an influencing who I am as a writing teacher. English 250, which is the class I took for the writing center, again incredibly helpful, and that whole experience. I think really, all of the English classes that I took helped me because even if they weren’t necessary classes to teach writing or writing classes, they were still English classes where I was reading and writing, and thinking, and so

20 Maria - pseudonym
21 Jacob - pseudonym
all of those, all of those elements together…umm.. helped me make me who I am as a person, as a writer, as a thinker, and, and definitely influenced where I am now...Umm.. And Madeline’s\textsuperscript{22} class right now, LL ED XXX has a very helpful methods class, where we have discussed and done, and used different strategies, and techniques for teaching reading and writing. It has even been really helpful especially because it’s going along with things that are happening while I’m actually going to the classroom and not necessarily seeing these things applied. So it feels like its okay because I really need to know this right now, and I can apply now more of it in my classroom. Maybe, if I would’ve taken it a year ago it would’ve seem like okay, I’ll remember this a year from now. So it’s been very helpful, and especially when I was teaching grammar. It was really helpful, all of them were very helpful they were great, and I know I would definitely use a lot of the lessons and ideas that she’s taught us in my future classes for sure.

Riley’s stories of past and present experiences reflected the love that she acquired for writing. She used stories of past experiences (childhood) to emphasize that writing was nurtured as part of her life and how these past experiences made her the writer she is now. She feels that her love is and will be her reason for becoming a teacher. She also references methods instructors and professors that have provided models, modeled and inspired her writing and pedagogical practices. These stories of past and present experiences created stressful situations when Riley understands that these experiences with her methods’ instructors and professors are not and will not be the norm, but she believes these experiences will aide her through her novice teaching experiences. She sought out her past experiences to validate her beliefs, values, writing abilities and pedagogical practices.

Jessie responded to the prompted reflection writing (about the Problems of Practice) and interview questions about writing and writing instruction by telling contrasted stories of past and present experiences. She told stories about past experiences that did not necessarily encourage writing and juxtaposed these with stories of present experiences that validated her writing skills, teacher identity, and influenced her writing instruction.

\textsuperscript{22} Madeline-pseudonym
Jessie’s story

I’ve always kept a journal. And I’ll write in it periodically. So, I’ve always liked to write. Umm.. In high school I didn’t like to write. I really didn’t like writing because it was like the five paragraph, junk, transition, first second third finally, and I don’t know, it was just not creative. It was read a book, and how about the theme. So when I got to college, in a poetry class that was when… I think like one of those epiphany classes because we talked about the meaning of words. And we talked about Michael’s heart sounding words, like crack, and or like crackle, and soft words–soft sounding words–like a lullaby, and realizing just because a poem, it could be like three lines, but how each word is so important for example you can fake grin weakens a smile but it’s like every word is so heavy, so I really I, it got me into creative writing and I guess…. I guess even when writing something like expository, I’m just trying to find my voice in my writing so… yeah.

Yes, I love, love… I just, I just… writing I think is so therapeutic. It’s like driving by yourself. It’s kind of like… it kind of reflective, and wished people knew that all the more because you get program so much that writing is constricted that, like people don’t find joy in it or it’s something that’s interesting. For example, I can find some that I will last year, and I didn’t realize that I felt that way. You just write directly… I don’t know. I mean I’ll just try forever sometimes. Sometimes the first 10 min. of it is pointless but then I hit the meet end of it. (7:23)

I’ve always loved writing, but I know that I will be a different teacher of writing than a lot of the teachers I had growing up. I want to have my students divorce the idea of writing as a confined forced activity, but get them to see the therapeutic side to it. I want them to worry less about grammar sometimes, and more about rich diction, creative ideas, and complex characters. I’ve been keeping a genius journal for my seminar class and throughout the semester I have been writing down thought-provoking prompts in which I can give my students not just to have them write, but so I can learn about their personality, interests, and more. This is beyond writing about their favorite sport, but I want to get them thinking on a different level, and then have them turn it into writing.

Beyond juxtaposing past and present stories, Jessie identified conflicts between stories of past classroom experiences where writing was formulaic and the discomfort that she felt. She told stories of not liking writing activities, her own writing, or writing instruction. She then shared a story of an “epiphany,” a moment in her story of present experiences (college and in the methods block/seminar) where she experienced groundbreaking thought-provoking, and self-
reflective experience with learning how to write and writing instruction. Jessie’s response to keeping a journal and attending a college course was ground-breaking because she ‘played’ with words and learned how to teach writing in ways she has never experienced before. Jessie’s stories and the tensions she references are characteristic of how sociocultural theory explicates the relationship between writing and how it has become socially constructed “microgenetically as individuals interact with others on a moment-to-moment basis in activity settings” (Englert, Mariage & Dunsmore, 2006).

Mathew responded to the interview questions about writing and writing instruction by reminiscing about stories of past experiences with writing or writing instruction that seemed fresh in his memory. Mathew chose to revisit past experiences and question these experiences in light of the stories of present experiences he told.

Mathew’s stories

And, I’m sure that this happens to most people but it makes so much more sense to me when I look back on it, and that is almost like give five almost just gone to that time in my life but now, instead of two years ago or year ago. Like my B papers would have been A papers. And things just clicked, and I’m wondering that this is probably part of the writing process, that I should expect to experience, but that’s how it seems to me that whenever I’m looking back at something, it’s always made me… it’s always made much more sense because I learned that so much from the process of doing it rather than what I knew from the get-go. So, that’s frustrating, always so, you know. When you worked hard on something and maybe you didn’t do as well as you wanted to, and then you look back at it and it seems so clear that you should have done better, but maybe it was that learning experience that is the reason why you didn’t do it.(3-28-2011)

I can still go back and remember when I was in middle school or to early high school, and I remember we started doing five paragraph essays when I was in seventh grade, and I really didn’t make the connection of kind of how to set up a five-paragraph essay. I mean, I understood the basics of it, but you know, they really broke it down into bits and pieces. At first, I remember there were topic

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23 played-action of giving words meaning beyond their literal sense.
sentences and you ended up making this weird map out of your opening paragraph that connected through your body paragraphs and your conclusion. Then how your conclusion was kind of a reiteration of your opening, and it took me a while—maybe a year or two—to really figure out all the different aspects they were asking, and I don’t know if it was because it was so broken down to the basics that I had such a hard… trouble putting them back together again, and I mean, it’s simple to think about it now but at the time, I was wondering what they were talking about and what to do with this weird map. How when and why do I put these things in here, if I’m going to talk about it later? It just didn’t really click and that was frustrating for a while. (3-28-2011)

Well, sometimes my teammates would ask me to go over their work, just proofread, whether they’re my close friends that know my major or someone just told them and they want to share their work with what not. I don’t know, but that was kind of like the first teaching of writing that I experienced in my opinion. That has been going on like for a couple of years, what not, and just to feel like you can help people’s writing, feeling that for the first time was probably the best, the most encouraging experience that I know of. To think one of the things that excites me as the teacher of writing. Is the opportunity to see what people are thinking and I’m always concerned with students opening up to me. And I’m excited about that, and I think they are much more likely to do that through writing. a lot of times through writing and I think that is part of the reason I’m interested. (3-28-2011)

Well, the methods classes, when we talk about teaching writing, and were given a different viewpoint compared to what I was taught in high school. I mentioned that I’ve been doing five paragraph essays since the seventh grade so, six years of that until I graduated from high school, coming in here and I’d have to write a paper and my first responses go with that, and I thought I would, I mean I was always learning but just from the methods courses I was able to learn that you know the five-paragraph essay can be confining in the ways that there are other ways that students can learn to write about it, maybe it’s important to have that structure, balance with, you know with assignments where students can be more creative. Were taught about wanting students write as much as they can not even an amount, just wanting them to write. And, I think I learned some ways to, I’ve learned ways to encourage that and I think that was a good lesson in writing. (3-28-2011).

Mathew’s stories of past experiences with writing and writing instruction created a situation of self-reflection because he had to revisit how he had learned in the past and see if his experiences could relate to his newly found writing instruction knowledge. He even revisits his story about present experiences with his athletic community and how he engages in writing
instruction practices displaying his writing abilities, teacher identity and pedagogical practices (relevant to writing instruction). He is content with his present experiences with writing and writing instruction, but cannot part from his stories of past experiences with formulaic writing and throughout his story he sought to come to terms with stories of past experiences with writing and those of present times. The contrast and/or comparison between individual stories of past and present experiences is often posed by the question: How much of our stories from past experiences affect or effect stories of present experiences?

**Authenticity**

“*Teachers prepared with a repertoire of inspiring stories probably also have an advantage in keeping their students’ attention. By acknowledging a wide variety of legitimate interests in their students, such teachers are demonstrating their own commitment to a way of educating that is moral in its procedures as well as its content.*”

(Nel Noddings, 1997, 2006 p.287)

PSETs have developed these common ideas surrounding the concept of authenticity. They have repeatedly defined authenticity as a quality beloved teachers display (see Appendix E). Teachers display their true selves in everyday or difficult situations. They share “real-life” stories, engaging in activities along with students not providing a model but “modeling” the process. According to Brookfield (2006), from the student’s perspective, viewing the teacher as both an ally and an authority is important for successful learning. When describing their beloved teachers that make a difference in their lives, PSETs equate authenticity to trust that teachers will be honest, straightforward and real. Authenticity is perceived in stories that exposed experiences that weren’t ‘picture perfect’ or layered on pity or self-grandeur, but credible. “Colloquially” students often say that such teachers, “walk the talk”, practice what they preach, and have no hidden agenda (Brookfield 2006).
Preservice secondary English teachers valued these stories as genuine and true. They believed that they presented themselves, teachers and events just the way they are. What is fascinating about these teacher narratives is that PSETs revisit them and continuously discover underlying meanings and connections. Leah recalls her teacher stories when asked a question regarding difficulties in teaching writing. Leah revisits present field experiences where she was emotionally high jacked by a students’ illness (seizure) and relied on past experiences as a coping mechanism.

**Leah’s stories**

For me what was hard was just being on all the time. I found that I had days like something happened, like there was a time when a kid had a seizure while I was teaching and had to go the hospital and I just kind of like fell apart for the rest of the morning. Like I wholly blew my lesson and I didn’t care. I was just like I don’t care what you do let’s just hang out because I don’t; it’s not in me. Then there are days when I was just tired and like. You know like I have things going on in my life. And I’m not super distracted but then you know you have 16-year-old kids saying that they don’t care about doing the work, and I was…well in my mind… guess what guys I don’t care either but let’s just suck it up and get through this. But in reality, I told them I wasn’t tuned. I told them the truth. I wasn’t tuned-in after the incident but we had to do the work… for their sake and you know I found that really hard and exhausting. (interview 3-28-2011)

As a student, [long pause] an encouraging thing that happened to me was that I had a lot of professors in college that were very like personally interested in their students. They wanted to know how did you feel about the topics discussed and they really were interested in listening. These professors shared their good teaching moments and moments where situations affected their teachings, but sharing it with us helped the class to move on. (interview 3-28-2011)

Tensions are prevalent in Leah’s first story because she has had no previous conversations with her mentor teacher regarding her students’ health and does not know how to deal with what is happening in her classroom. She feels distraught and does not have her mentor teachers’ input as to what she should do. She is expected to take increasing responsibilities for her students’ well being while she is still emotionally disarmed. Preservice students will draw on
their previous student experiences to deal with altering situations. In this case, Leah recalls how some of the professors shared with her difficult situations and she immediately tells the students that she too is stirred by the incident but that class needs to continue. Leah is attempting to gain insight into the way an ‘expert’ teacher would or could have dealt with the situation. She prefers to emulate the quality of authenticity or truthfulness and share with her students how unsettling this situation was. The differences between her past and present teacher stories is ever present because her past experiences provided a space where conversations occurred while her present field experience is loaded with conversations after events occur.

Riley’s stories display the authenticity theme where her mentor teacher shares true expressions exposing his teacher and personal self in particular moments.

**Riley’s stories**

For example, this semester my mentor teacher, in the third period came to me and ...And he said “plan for fourth period.” “I don’t want to teach…. You teach”, he said–and I was like okay. So he had this poem and he said how about you teach this poem, they all have it in their book and I said all right sure, so I read over the poem twice and that’s all the time I had before the students coming for fourth period. I told him-you know I’m just going to be completely making this up as I go along- and he was Yeah! You’re going to be fine. So I said okay. I felt fine, nervously fine. So I ended up making the lesson wrong, but it was awesome. It was so awesome. What I ended up doing was, what I did was like first all it was really awesome because I didn’t fall flat on my face and that feeling was good. I didn’t stand up there like what am I to do and I didn’t teach for 10 min. and have nothing the rest of the hour. We went right into it until the bell rang because students were involved. They were learning and we had the discussion going on. It was so cool, and really cool discussions and also what I ended up doing was after the poem was read aloud I had them free write about what they thought the poem meant. Just the initial reactions to it, and then after we had really awesome discussion, I asked students to turn the paper over and free right what they thought it meant and how it make them feel, and how they felt about it after our discussion and then I collected them and I read through them. It was so cool because the first rewrite was students saying that this is really stupid. We always have to read and I don’t get it. Why would we have wanted to read this poem at all? They hated this assignment when the teacher assigned it and how could the ‘other’ teacher not see that. They hated this assignment, really hated this. Then for the second part where I asked them what they thought about the
A poem and how if at all, could they relate to it the students were like I get it now. It’s about sacrificing yourself or others. How one sacrifices for love. I thought it was really cool and I get it and they said they pop the activity was really cool and they got it so for me that was awesome and I didn’t expect it all yeah I mean I think that is important. I think a lot of good things from planning come out.

My mentor teacher told me his story about how he didn’t plan on teaching English and how it just ended up happening. My mentor teacher was a social studies teacher and he couldn’t find a job so he took the Praxis for English and then he started teaching English. So you can teach he tells me because I think you can and if I could. Okay, I used to think my grade school teachers had all the answers, but now I don’t think like that. I don’t think a teacher will ever have every single answer and I don’t think they need to because you can learn alongside your students. If you don’t know something say okay, let’s figure it out. Or for example, I know I haven’t read every single book that I’m going to end up teaching, but it is still my responsibility to educate myself before I teach it. So even if things come up that I don’t know, I can still teach myself. I can still learn even though I don’t think I necessarily have a strong background in that.

Riley’s story demonstrated different views between her past and present teacher stories. She recollects how her past teacher stories were inundated with vivid images of teachers as all knowing beings. These images vanish when Riley’s present teacher stories ‘paint’ images of teachers that are ‘real’ and do not know it all, and encourage PSETs to understand that it is acceptable for teachers not to know it all. These images of ‘real’ teachers depict qualities of teachers not as experts but knowledgeable beings that are learning every day. These teachers share stories about legitimate concerns or real-life situations where students are invited into spaces where critical thinking occurs. Some of these stories illustrate opposing views. PSETs, like Riley, are participants of these dialogic constructs where they can revisit and reflect on their beliefs and pedagogical practices.

During the interview (3-28-2011), Jessie answers the question regarding her career choice with a story about what initially ‘drives’ her into the teaching community. She reflects on a teacher story of the past that is juxtaposed with her present teacher story.
Jessie’s story

The reason I’m a teacher from what I’ve learned of being a student is that I know what didn’t work in the past for me. For example, I had a teacher that didn’t care about you and did not connect any of what he taught to your life. I know students hate when you’re [teacher] giving something for no purpose, just because you are wasting time. That is why I want to be a teacher because I really want to make the connections. I know that not everyone likes English, and that’s fine, but if I can get them [students] to find, maybe they can discover like in books, that in fact they do like poetry or they really... maybe they love music and they didn’t realize they can use music in English. So, I just think it’s the best subject because anything you can like, you can tie in to the subject. I mean into writing, traveling, photography anything. For example, I didn’t have my students write this semester. I mean, yes... one thing, where they looked at pictures—it was literary devices—they have been doing three straight weeks in their PSSA book.... I mean as a teacher I don’t want to teach that. So I’ve printed out pictures from my road trip...umm.. from the national parks—because we were talking about the national Parks the day before—so I have like arches. I had the Golden gate, Grand Canyon, and I split them up into groups, and they were really excited to look at the picture and write a sentence describing the pictures like with a metaphor—just like the lazy cloud rolled across the blue sky—it was so frustrating because they loved it, and I wished she [mentor teacher] would stop thinking that she was a reading teacher and she didn’t think their [students] writing and reading go together, and so that was frustrating. What was encouraging was that at the end of that day, the kids were like that was awesome!

Jessie’s story displays how she is able to analyze her past and present teacher stories by not only establishing a binary connection (good or bad) between them, but by making sense of what the story represents in her developing teacher self. Jessie has voiced what her past teacher story affords her; the right to choose not to be like her past teacher and avoid practices that detach students from classroom activities. She embraces her present teacher stories where she identifies conflicting views with her mentor teacher’s pedagogical practices (in relationship to writing) and exploits the opportunity of engaging students in this assisted development where work is meaningful and internalized.

When answering the interview (3-28-2011) about encouraging or frustrating experience, Mathew responds by sharing a teacher story of the past and analyzing how in the present he still
values some of what he learned and incorporates it to his analysis or interpretation of his present teacher stories. When writing his Problems of Practice inquiry final paper, *Building Confidence in the Classroom in Order to Confront Student Apprehension*, he writes about authenticity in terms of genuine relationships with his high school coach because he cared about him, not only as an athlete but also as a young man.

**Mathew’s stories**

I guess, I think back to what they wanted to teach me and how they wanted teach me things, and if they were successful at all when they did that. So I try to think about that and learn what they tried to do, and what could I do better to learn from the expenses that I have with them. Well, yeah I think back to some of the teachers I had in high school, and the successful ones were the ones that counted. Those that put in the extra effort to help us, you know, there were some ways to buy teachers, I think in writing often to take the easy way out, if they’re doing a peer editing thing, just kind of make sure that it is going on.

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And I think back to the teachers where I actually got a lot out of it, and it was teachers that were… that were… they pulled through on all their expectations for us—I can’t think of the word—everything that they asked for was done thoroughly so when I talk about weaknesses of writing or as a writer it would probably be, I don’t plan, or develop early on and off and through their effort because they required it of me, I was able to do that. So, I think that I can learn as a teacher of writing… that in the future if I take those extra efforts that they did, that might be something that determines my success as a teacher of writing because if I demand that for my students, and I follow through on it and then hopefully just hopefully they’ll get a lot out of it, just like the same way I could get more out of it and got more out of it.

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This is why my teaching philosophy states the importance of a relationship based on caring and respect. What really convinced me to buy into the importance of this idea is when I was discussing with a friend the superficial relationships that players share with coaches on the football team here. We noted the genuine lasting relationships we had made with our high school coaches that we long to have with our coaches at college but doubt we will ever see it happen. We also brought up the fact that we would run through walls for our high school coaches and would for our college coaches as well if they would only show the capacity for genuine care and respect for us not just as football players but also as young men. It would certainly be in their best interest to engage us in the common goal of winning to the greatest extent possible, but perhaps like the teacher that doesn’t care about their students above all else, they don’t have the ability to build the right relationships with us either because we can see right through them.
These authentic teacher stories help PSETs and teacher educators explore the principle underlying practices, as they revisit these classroom experiences and confront challenges PSETs communicate their pedagogical beliefs and practices, and build self-confidence professionally. It is a reflective process where the documentation and description of classroom experiences take place. When PSETs revisit past and present experiences, teacher educators are provided with insights as to the teacher–student interaction. If teacher educators provide or foster invitations or activities throughout the methods courses where PSETs are exposed to reflective practices, PSETs can acknowledge, analyze and interpret their experiences. These invitations or activities should foster opportunities where PSETs can enhance their ability to reflect on their lessons, articulate their pedagogical beliefs, values and practices while participating of academic discussions, and critically reflect on the practice of teaching. Teacher educators still have much to learn about PSETs selecting and implementing these reflective practices to teaching practices they are learning in the methods course.

**Experience as a Vehicle**

"*It is not enough to insist upon the necessity of experience, nor even of activity in experience. Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had.*"  
(Dewey 1938 p.27)

Experience is a vehicle of autonomy and voice. The owning or claiming of experience legitimizes teachers’ professional identity. Stories of positive and negative experiences with teachers, subject areas or teaching reflect and validate experience as a vehicle. With experience come entitlements as well as opportunities. When PSETs own or appropriate experience, they use it to make claims. For PSETs experience is the vehicle of ‘voicing’ their knowledge and
concerns. PSETs strongly believe that experience equates to having a better opportunity when teaching comes to play.

Experience can take a person to a privileging status. Preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) claim that experience has positioned them in “special situations” where they can see and know what students and teachers are like. They can participate of conversations where pedagogical beliefs and practices become salient ideas. They have stories they can share that would awe and wonder their fellow PSETs. This person possesses the power of knowing something that not all members have yet crave for. Experience is a vehicle to owning “real-life” knowledge to complement their theoretical knowledge.

Their stories create a space for others to imagine, wonder and thirst the “real-life” settings. PSETs (in their responses) have become storytellers. Their stories are engulfed by positive and negative experiences that can present struggles, tensions and/or conflicting views. “There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences” (Dewey, 1938). The following stories are influential to PSETs learning how to teach writing because they reflect on further experiences that are prevalent in stories where experience is seen as a vehicle of reflection, privilege and identity. For example, Leah’s writing experience at her job enabled her to self-proclaim that she is a writing teacher. She even had certain moral judgments conferred upon her like: deserving of being called a writing teacher because she has taught others how to write (even though it is in a particular genre and setting).

Leah expressed confidence in her writing abilities through her story that depicted her experiences. Leah talks about working for a newspaper, how she felt comfortable writing, and how her supervisors praised her work.
Leah’s story

So then I went to a nonprofit and I thought well, if I worked in a smaller organization then I would like that work better and I wasn’t happy. I finally had a point where I realized it was not the place that I work it was the work that I was doing. It was really really, really boring. I was really, really bored. I sat at a desk and thought that the things I was doing were boring. I actually chose that career path because it dealt with writing. I’ll get to write in Adobe creative and have fun and I will love it. Then when I got into it, I just found like everything was so branded into what the company or the organization wanted to say. It was formulaic and I hated writing articles for the newsletter I had to put together. I just hated the actual work. I liked the organization but the work was so boring. So I came to teaching. [long pause] It’s hard to think about it. [long pause] I had been looking at going to grad school for a long time and I wasn’t able to decide what I wanted to do so I started thinking about what were the things… things in my life that I enjoyed the most. I started to think about the things in my job that I enjoy the most and what I found was that I worked with a lot of volunteers and enjoyed helping them prep for media appearances. I had to help them understand what the organization was about like like… I worked for the American Cancer Society. My boss at the American Cancer Society was fabulous and I think she’s just the greatest. Having her go through stuff I had written and make changes that were so helpful was great. She really knew the difference between like making changes based on personal preference and making changes that really improve writing. People knew their own limited role within that the American Cancer Society. They knew exactly what it was that they did and then they had this vague impression of everything else. But I needed to help her understand that impression more clearly and I realized that one of my favorite things to do is work with all these other people and to teach them basically. So, that’s got me thinking about teaching. I got in touch with a lot of people that were in education, my classmates, into teaching, my college classmates, and just to different people who have really spent their lives in education. We talked about a lot of different things and …and I thought well I’m young I might as well do this now. (interview 3-28-2011)

Leah ends her story by establishing the argument of a ‘calling’ to teaching. Leah feels deserving of her ‘teaching writing expertise’. She sees her writing experience as a vehicle that has granted her mobility in the job market and to some extent voice (expertise). Leah tells a story of how she felt comfortable teaching writing, writing and sharing her writing with others. Though she has not taught in a classroom, she feels that her job experiences and interactions (where writing has been a means of communication) entitle her to take part in academic
conversations that deal with writing instruction. Her story depicts a tension between stories of her past (jobs) and how these influenced her writing abilities, and her teacher stories of the present where (she felt) her writing skills and abilities were not necessarily recognized, respected, useful and or valued.

Riley also expresses confidence in her writing skills and she begins her story with the memory of working for the writing center at her college. She feels deserving of calling herself a writing teacher because she has taught people how to write.

**Riley’s story**

At the writing center, I worked with writing appointments in the mornings. So this one time, this one kid scheduled an appointment about every other week for his English 15. He came in at the beginning of the semester, and we worked on his paper, and we worked on a lot of different things, and he kept on coming back, and he actually said to me one time “this is really cool.” He said like “wow you should be an English teacher” and I would say I am. I thought I was really cool. But he kept on coming back, and it was awesome. For the whole semester until December, he came back every other week, and I could see him getting better as a writer. Like for you, and when he would come back he would be like “see I did this right…like you told me, like we practiced last time.” “I did that in my paper.” and he did. I was like this is so cool. He would be like remember we talked about this last time and look he recalls this is how I use it. I could see like… I could see like… I wish I had a copy of his first paper and his last one because they were so different and he became a much better writer, and he was really using everything we were talking about in his future papers. So it was really, really cool, really encouraging because I feel like our time together was really good for him, and he was really encouraging for me too. So it was just an awesome, awesome, really awesome experience. (interview 3-28-2011/Proposal March 14, 2011)

Riley takes pride in explaining how she was in control of this student’s learning and his writing growth. She voices how the student would ask her for advice, put it into practice and learn. She felt she (through writing) was granted this opportunity to bring change into someone else’s life. She uses her experience as a vehicle to voice her abilities, skills and good doings
when helping others edit or improve their work. She particularly emphasizes a story about a student that visited the center regularly and expressed appreciation and respect for her work with him. Riley voices her success with writing, but understands that these past success stories are not necessarily validated or recognized in the teaching stories of her present experiences. This tension between her past and present stories was prevalent especially in the academic community where she had participation through her field experience. Riley looks back to these stories for comfort and reassurance of her teaching ‘calling’ and her writing instruction knowledge. In reality, she is conflicted by her experiences in her field experience and how not all students genuinely have the desire to learn and or practice writing as a process like her student at the writing center.

Experience provides PSETs with an opportunity to carry out the role of caring and nurturing teacher. This teacher may also be the hero of the stories. Experience elevates the status and sets PSETs with experience far apart from those in search of stories to share. Even though these students share a dichotomous nature, they both feel a need for experience to validate their career choice while being students themselves. PSETs call upon their lived or appropriated experiences to situate themselves in the teaching profession and slowly but steadily join in conversations with people in the teaching community. As PSETs continued telling their stories, I sought out to make sense of the experiences embedded in their narratives, while identifying the reoccurring themes that reflected PSETs’ pedagogical values, beliefs, and practices.

**Research Question Number Two:** How, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing?

Teacher educators as well as faculty throughout higher education share the concern for the quality of the teacher students’ writing, knowledge and skills (Crosslin, 2007; Wang & Odell,
Assignments: Invitations that Elicit Storytelling

Methods courses can offer a series of assignments that provide opportunities for PSETs to articulate and share their concerns, ideas, and pedagogical practices and beliefs. These assignments can be seen as semiotic tools because they trigger actions and reactions throughout PSETs’ narratives while framing meaning-making words. When using the term tools in this research, I am making reference not only to Vygotsky’s cultural objects but also to semiotic tools, concepts acquired during class by instructor or peers, environmentally influenced artifacts, memories, approaches or traits. Wink and Putney (2002) define semiotic tools as “words used to affect our external environment”. The social environment influences cognition through its “tools”—that is, its cultural objects (e.g., cars, machines) and its language and social institutions (e.g., school, churches). Cognitive change results from using cultural tools in social interactions and from internalizing and mentally transforming these interactions (Bruning et al., 1999). These words trigger action or language that work to make meaning (p.152).

I will reference an interview, a specific assignment (Problems of Practice inquiry project) from the methods course, LL ED XXX, and a prompted written reflection that I appended to the assignment. PSETs’ Language and Literacy instructor assigned a Problem of Practice project that was twofold. PSETs had to write a proposal about their inquiry and craft a final Problems of Practice project. As a researcher, I wanted to know more about my participants and their ideas about writing and writing instruction so PSETs provided the time and place (at their convenience) and they answered and recorded their responses. For this reason, I also added
an elicited text (prompted reflection writing) that involved PSETs responding to questions in written form completed after the final Problem of Practice paper was completed. I used this activity to elicit PSETs’ thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding the process involved in crafting a Problem of Practice inquiry project. I have selected the Problem of Practice assignment as a data source because it provides an outlet for preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) to venture into inquiry of any problem of practice that they have thought of, encountered in their preteaching experience or are concerned with (see Appendix B).

Many of PSETs’ answers were storied. I referenced those things that PSETs do not say in isolation, but actually incorporated into their stories. The total frequency of story forms in all three data collection artifacts/tasks was 107. Out of the 107 stories, 69 (.64485981) of these stories were represented in the interview activity. Because the Problem of Practice inquiry project was twofold (Problem of Practice Proposal and Problem of Practice Final paper), I have combined their stories for a total of 29 stories out of 107 (.27102804). Even though this number may seem insignificant, it remained indicative of the usage of stories in situations where PSETs were not questioned, but were inquiring on their problem of practice topic, and/or writing their Problem of Practice Proposal or Final paper.

For example, PSETs may participate of activities where they present or use cognitive strategies not mentioned or discussed in class. PSETs do not solely draw on tools for cognition but they may call upon narratives associated to writing or writing instruction that may or may not influence their learning to teach writing in a methods course. Finally, the fourth assignment was the Problem of Practice prompted reflection writing (see Appendix D). The prompted reflection writing about the Problem of Practice elicited responses from PSETs experience with the Problem of Practice project. PSETs responded to questions in written form enabling them to take
their time in responding and voicing their opinions without feeling the need to defend these.
PSETs’ responses were storied at times. There were 9 out of the 107 stories produced in the prompted reflection writing (see Table 5). Even though this number seemed insignificant, it remained indicative of the usage of stories when responding to certain prompted questions.

Table 5: Frequency of Stories for Research Question #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP Prompted Reflection Writing</th>
<th>Total Number of Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The advantage of being a participant/observer/researcher is that I had first hand accounts of PSETs’ participation during the process dealt in the methods course. I would be able to notice disparities between PSETs’ written responses and my observations of their participation of the process. All this gave way to richer data.

Even though there was no specific response that explicitly stated that PSETs’ interaction with these assignments served as invitations that elicited storytelling, I perceived the assignment and other artifacts as invitations where PSETs drew on memories, experiences and/or stories in response to prompted reflection writing or questions.

**Different Forms of Storytelling**

When interpreting, coding and categorizing PSETs’ stories, I was able to establish three thematic story forms (see Table 10). These story forms were informed incidents, disclosure of uncertainties, and disclosure of beliefs and or expectations. All three forms together equated to 90 story forms prevalent in 107 stories (see Table 10).

Table 10: Frequency of Story Forms in Research Question # 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PP proposal</td>
<td>Interview PP</td>
<td>Promoted Reflection Writing</td>
<td>Informed Incidents</td>
<td>Disclosure Uncertainties</td>
<td>Disclosure Beliefs/ Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Stories</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Informed Incidents

For PSETs even though their life seemed orderly, it could spiral out of control when unexpected incidents occur. It was through these informed incidents that PSETs were able to assume certain structure, take certain direction and/or make sense of the event. MacIntyre believes that narratives can help to explain human action (MacIntyre, 1984). It was through these narratives that PSETs interpreted a series of events that informed their pedagogical beliefs, practices, identities, and ideas. These narratives were selected from PSETs’ Problem of Practice inquiry final project.

Leah attempts to understand the direction her role in writing conferences should take. Her Problems of Practice inquiry final project, Writing Conferences in High School Journalism: Letting the Students Own the Work, affords her individual conferencing with her students and an opportunity to take a stance about her readiness for the task to come.

Leah’s story

While teaching at Williams\textsuperscript{24} Area High School this spring, much of the class structure was not within my control. However, I have been interested in writing conferences for a while and my placement offered an ideal structure to work on my skills in conferencing and as a teacher of writing. My decision to work with students on their writing using conferencing was initially inspired by a research study that found students rarely look at the comments teachers make on the final versions of their papers (Bardine, Bardine, & Deegan, 2000).

During the first four weeks of my placement, we were primarily working on an edition of the Red & White. Throughout this time, I was able to work with a number of students individually on their articles. I spent the last two weeks of the placement teaching lessons I had devised, which included several days for in-class writing and conferencing. As an undergraduate, I worked as a writing tutor and received training in working with students on writing, but I was admittedly rusty and knew I would need to be conscious of what I was doing and saying to students while conferencing.

\textsuperscript{24} Pseudonym
As Leah narrated this story she is coming to terms with the fact that she is going to implement certain practices in her teaching that recently she has not practiced. Her informed incident spoke about her experience with practices implemented when she was a writing tutor and how she believes these practices are helpful. She has reiterated and reassessed her beliefs and how these practices worked for her as a writing tutor and might work for her students as well. She is also conscious of her role and how her practices, actions and words might affect her students, specifically because her skills are a bit “rusty”.

Riley reaffirmed the importance of her inquiry topic, *Small Group Management and Implementation*, in her Problems of Practice final inquiry project. She assessed her contribution to the classes she taught and brought her observations of students’ reaction and interaction when implementing her topic of inquiry as a classroom practice.

**Riley’s story**

This topic is important to me because I have struggled with it and foresee it as a potential area of concern in the future. Currently, I am pre-student teaching two tenth grade classes and three seventh grade classes. So far, I have conducted small group work several times and have witnessed amazing outcomes, but also the issues that I have chosen to investigate. I have seen students use small group time to goof off, socialize, and slack off. I have observed less motivated students sit back and let the more ambitious students lead and do all of the work. I have witnessed some groups finish earlier than others and use their free time to socialize or misbehave. Despite these glitches, I have also seen promising outcomes result from small group time. My students have engaged in the class material, developed their communication skills, and have been able to see things from different perspectives. Many of my small group activities have gone well overall, but I want to work towards becoming a stronger small group leader and improving the issues that have risen during my teaching.

As Riley narrated her story, she looked at her students’ reaction or participation in small groups to access her success, growth, and strength as a small group leader. Through words, Riley ‘painted’ a picture of effective and not so effective small group work. She seemed to be using this story as an informed incident where she forged connections between where she was with this
classroom practice and where she wanted to go professionally. She intertwined this one story to her career aspirations and used it to reflect on the benefits small group work has had with her students.

Jessie’s storied informed incident seemed to be an effective mean for her to disclose her feelings toward certain school requirements and practices. Jessie arranged and organized the subset of events into this one story in a way where she voiced her opinion about these practices and requirements, reflected on her mentor teachers’ practices, and disclosed existing courses of actions she took while teaching.

**Jessie’s story**

Well, I didn’t have my students write this semester. I mean, yes… one thing, where they looked at pictures—it was literary devices—they have been doing three straight weeks in their PSSA book…. I mean as a teacher I don’t want to teach that. So I’ve printed out pictures from my road trip…umm…from the national parks—because we were talking about the national Parks the day before—so I have like Arches and I had the Golden Gate, Grand Canyon, and I split them up into groups, and I—this is actually turning into the encouraging—that they[students] are really excited to look at the pictures and write a sentence describing the pictures like with a metaphor—just like the lazy cloud rolled across the blue sky—it was so frustrating because they loved it, and I wished—she [mentor teacher]thought that she was a reading teacher and she didn’t think their writing….that writing and reading go together at all, and so that was frustrating. What was emerging was that at the end of that day, the kids were like that was awesome!

Jessie disclosed her beliefs about teaching and classroom practices when attempting to actively engage her students in the lessons taught. Jessie brought to the forefront the importance writing, words and word choice had with students’ writing and teachers’ knowledge of what works best for the students. This related to Jessie’s Problems of Practice final inquiry project topic, *How Students’ Mood Affects Their Schoolwork and Other Areas of Life, and How Writing Can be an Outlet*, and explained how writing is important for her pedagogical practices and beliefs. In this case, this storied incident offered Jessie an opportunity for self-discovery where she took a stand, almost theorized the incident and scaffold upon it to reaffirm her pedagogical practices.

Mathew’s informed story came up in his Problems of Practice final inquiry project, *How to Build Confidence in the Classroom in Order to Confront Student Apprehension*. His
combination of incidents in different settings demonstrated his collective experience with teaching. As a preservice secondary English teacher, Mathew established a connection between his life (in preteaching placement) and experiences as an athlete and aspiring teacher. Mathew depicted how both arenas (football field and classroom) shared common practices that empowered and equipped him to take risk and strive for success.

Mathew’s story

The beginning of this topic for my problem of practice started developing on the very first day of my placement. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to each class as they came in throughout the morning and in turn the students had to go around the room introducing themselves to me and telling me at least one thing about themselves. It was an instant awakening for me to see a majority of the students not possess the confidence to mention anything about themselves. I tried to make them at ease even from that moment by saying that it didn’t have to be anything serious, that it could be a favorite book, movie, or music artist but I still found the same apprehension. I immediately became a little worried about what the next six weeks were going to be like and how I would have a good experience with a group that was so hesitant at opening up to me.

For example, as teachers we must at some point stop talking about how we want to teach and what we want to accomplish in the classroom and start learning how to teach and how to accomplish things through our experiences in teaching. This goes for many other trades as well, for example there is sport. The football team at Penn State spends all winter in meetings trying to teach different plays and assignments to its players. The coaches write the subject matter on the board as the players diligently take notes in their notebooks. Afterwards technology is used in the classroom as the instructors show examples of their teachings on video from previous games and practices. There are even end of winter written tests so the coaches can assess who has a strong grasp of the material and can be trusted to play for the team in the fall. At a certain point however spring arrives and the classroom moves from the comfortable and complacent meeting room to the practice field where the all of the players get a hold on the material because everyone is forced to take risks.

Mathew’s story demonstrated how salient his experiences as a football player are and how he transferred these to his teachings. This story contributed to his recognition of his own biases. I perceived this statement as Mathew voicing some of the biases he will carry along with him in his teachings. Knowing how he brought his lived experiences to the forefront of his practices could help him discover the pedagogical ideas and beliefs prevalent in his teaching. He
ends his storied informed incident with a powerful statement about risks. If Mathew understood his interest and experience with risk-takers and taking risks, he then could determine if this “forced to take risks” works for all or some of his students and when is the best moment to bring it up in his teaching.

**Disclosure of Uncertainties**

“*Endemic uncertainties complicate the teaching craft and hamper the earning of psychic rewards. Intangibility and complexity impose a toll; built-in difficulties include assessing performance, balancing demands and relationships, and managing the self under provocation. Although an individual teacher may escape some of the problems we have discussed, it is highly improbable that anyone can avoid them all. Some kind of uncertainty usually accompanies classroom teaching.*” (Lortie, 1975 p. 159)

Dan Lortie’s (1975) *Schoolteacher* focused on teachers and what they thought about their work. Lortie introduces uncertainty, among other important concepts in this study. He presents uncertainty when talking about the presence of students in the classroom. If there are 30 students per class that equates to 30 different possibilities a teacher may have for an interruption of plans. Many of these uncertainties are presented as disturbances and/or disruptions in teachers’ routine. Teachers plan scenarios for their classes on a daily basis and when disturbances and/or disruptions occur, it is very challenging for teachers to predict how their lesson will proceed.

Through narratives that disclose their uncertainties, preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) uncovered their experiences with teaching disturbances and/or disruptions. PSETs interpreted a series of events that caused them discomfort, anxiety and/or difficulty with their pedagogical beliefs, practices, identities, and/or ideas. These narratives were selected from PSETs’ Problem of Practice inquiry final project.

Through this process of inquiry necessary for the crafting of the Problem of Practice inquiry final project, PSETs were able to feel invested in their inquiry topic and teaching while evaluating whether or not the content taught could meet their personal or career goals and needs. PSETs also used the inquiry process to clarify material taught in the classroom or that they should know about or have learned. By disclosing uncertainties, PSETs can clarify content, pedagogical practices, beliefs and/or abilities that can help them effectively craft their lessons. I believe that the inclusion of these narratives in the inquiry process enabled PSETs to have real-
life classroom experiences with their inquiry topic and acknowledge how there is no one answer for their Problems of Practice.

**Leah’s story**

In the beginning of my placement at Williams Area High School, I was approaching writing conferences with limited background in how to conference. Although it was something I had done in the past, I was nervous and uncertain about how to proceed. In my earliest conference with Student A, I spent a lot of our time together telling her what I thought. I made grammatical corrections in her presence, kept the paper and pencil in front of me, and asked her to make changes that I had devised. Overall, this was unsuccessful, and she made few revisions to her initial draft.

Leah decided to share and/or disclose her stories where she felt uncertain as to how to deal with writing conferences on an individual level with one of her students. She was able to acknowledge that her previous experience did not necessary help her during the writing conference activity.

**Riley’s story**

As I have previously mentioned, I noticed this semester that it was sometimes difficult to keep my seventh grade students focused and on task. I thought that this was either because I was not monitoring sufficiently, or they weren’t being held accountable enough. So, during my small group activities, I tried several different strategies to keep each student accountable, through worksheets or packets that every student had to complete and submit, or by using a jigsaw and requiring each student to teach other students what they did and learned. Throughout small group time, I circulated the room and checked in on every group regularly to monitor participation. Yet, despite this, I still noticed that some students just weren’t doing the work, some continued to socialize, and some relied on more motivated students to do the work and then copied their answers.

Riley disclosed her difficult experience of keeping her seventh graders focused. She shares her ability to provide different strategies “to keep each student accountable” and described how her strategies fail to engage and motivate all her students with small group work. She continues to inquire and research small group strategies in an attempt to tackle her problem of practice.
Jessie’s story

During one class period I taught towards the latter half of the six weeks, I immediately noticed how out of it he was. At times I would forget he was even in class that day because he sat there staring at the workbook with glazed eyes. I was teaching cause/effect for my lesson and created a worksheet that the other students were enjoying. Even though he knew it was being collected as an assessment, he was the only one who not only handed it in unfinished, but he only answered four of the fifteen questions in the allotted time. I didn’t know if I should ask anything because I was just a student teacher for a six-week period and figured he wouldn’t respond to me. I asked my mentor teacher if she knew if anything was going on and she encouraged me to ask him because she was concerned as well. I approached him while everyone was working on the worksheet. I asked how he was doing and he simply shrugged his shoulders. Then I asked if he felt ok, and, again, he just shrugged. Finally, I asked him if there was anything wrong and he mumbled he didn’t know without making eye contact with me. I told him if he needed to talk or leave the room he was welcome to. It was a moment like that where I wanted more than anything to help him because it pained me to see a usually bright and cheerful student in a gloomy trance. Luckily he was his usual old self on Monday, but I still wish there was something I could have done then to alleviate his pain at that moment.

This problem has always stuck with me because the student I just talked about is someone I could instantly read and notice when something wasn’t right. However, there are so many students (and will be so many students in the future) that I don’t know well and who don’t talk or participate as much as others. There are students who are always quiet and serious looking. They could be having a good day or a bad day and I wouldn’t know because they didn’t show any outward emotion while there could very well be a lot going on beneath the surface. I realize I can’t help every single student through every problem, it isn’t physically or emotionally possible, but I want to have some ideas in my head as to how to handle these situations as they come. I started thinking about community building, and what kind of atmosphere I would like my future classroom to resemble. How can I create a place where my students realize that I am not just there for a paycheck, but that I am there for them and the period that they are in my classroom is crucial to me?

Jessie disclosed a disturbance and or disruption in her classroom with one student. The story she has shared is meaningful to her personally, but also as a teacher. With this disclosure of uncertainty, Jessie brings to light a classroom situation that often is overlooked. The story served as an outlet for Jessie to question her ability as a teacher to “help every student through every problem” and acknowledge that she will not be able to do so, but she still wants to inquire and
research for strategies or ideas that can help her craft the atmosphere she would like for all her students.

**Mathew’s story**

The beginning of this topic for my problem of practice started developing on the very first day of my placement. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to each class as they came in throughout the morning and in turn the students had to go around the room introducing themselves to me and telling me at least one thing about themselves. It was an instant awakening for me to see a majority of the students not possess the confidence to mention anything about themselves. I tried to make them at ease even from that moment by saying that it didn’t have to be anything serious, that it could be a favorite book, movie, or music artist but I still found the same apprehension. I immediately became a little worried about what the next six weeks were going to be like and how I would have a good experience with a group that was so hesitant at opening up to me. The topic I chose was all but confirmed on the last few days of my placement as I completed a poetry lesson where the students were asked to create a free verse poem on their own. Similar to the occurrence on my first day, around half of the students showed apprehension in different ways as I was describing the assignment and then walking around class helping them get started. I was again disturbed by the apprehension in this case but was also cognizant of the fact that the students giving me a hard time for this assignment were different than the ones that didn’t want to speak on the first day. In researching I came across an excerpt from a book titled “Teaching, Learning, and Study Skills: A Guide for Tutors. “All the students with whom we work express their lack of faith in themselves in some form or other in that they are not clever enough, that they have no potential, that they are out of place, that they are impostors soon to be discovered – generally that they are not good enough.” (Burns & Sinfield) There was a feeling that took over the classroom at these times that I could not quite identify at that moment but after reading from this text I can be sure that it was a feeling of “We are not good enough.” From these observations I was able to ask a few questions that helped me end up at the topic for my inquiry. These included “What is creating this apprehension among students?” and “Why are different students succeeding with different tasks?”

This story represented how Mathew was disturbed by his students’ apprehension and how this disrupted his lessons enough to trigger his inquiry and research on the topic. The story depicted how the apprehension could not be associated to particular students, assignment or activities. Mathew’s disclosure of uncertainty as to how to approach students’ apprehension and
how to help them succeed and feel worthy clarifies how prevalent student apprehension was throughout his preteaching field experience.

**Disclosure of Beliefs and/or Expectations**

*Belief as the third meaning of thought, “something beyond itself by which its value is tested; it makes an assertion about some matter of fact or principle or law. It covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future”* (Dewey, 1933 p.6).

Preservice teachers’ beliefs are well established by the time they attend college (Buchman, 1987; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, 1990; Wilson, 1990). These beliefs developed during Lortie’s apprenticeship of observation, which occurred throughout many years when students were at school. Spending many years at school afforded PSETs to develop their own ideas of what effective teaching, teachers and schooling should look like. The image of ideal students, acceptable and expected behaviors, and strategies to help students learn seemed embedded in preservice teachers’ mindset and ever present in the teacher preparation program.

**Leah’s story**

For the past four years, I have worked as an editor for various organizations. In all of these jobs, I have been the one in charge of the final copy; I am in control of the changes that are made to any articles or materials that cross my desk, regardless of who may have written the original copy. These habits are sticky, and I find that as a teacher, it is difficult for me to relinquish this control and give it to the students. I suspect that I am not the only teacher who has ever felt this way.

It was challenging for me to bite my tongue and let the students tell me what they wanted to do with their writing. However, I know that my students need to learn the process of writing more than they need to learn what I think about writing. They need the chance to practice drafting, revising, and editing their own work. They need to be in control of the whole process, even if they’re struggling.
Leah’s narrative reflected her teaching beliefs and the authoritarian or controlling roles some teachers play into. She shared how difficult it was for her to rethink her actions and shift power with her students granting them access and control over their writing.

Leah’s beliefs and practices were challenged, and she had to rethink, refocus, and repurpose her writing conference activity in order for students to learn and “make progress on their drafts.”

**Riley’s story**

I taught this lesson to three periods of seventh graders. After the first class, I realized some things that I should change and improve for the next two classes. For the first class, dividing them into groups and using the jigsaw went well and they enjoyed it. I think they learned the material better since there was more responsibility on each student individually, to share what they learned with their fellow classmates. Requiring them all to answer questions from the book worked well, because it ensured that each student participated and kept them accountable. I noticed several things that I will change and improve in the future. One, I gave too much time for the first group activity. Although I had included in my plans that the first group would take 8-10 minutes, I did not designate a time in class. Instead, I just let them work until all groups were practically finished. The problem with this was that it took them much longer than I expected, and we did not have time to review at the end of class. Also, some groups finished much earlier than others. Even though I had the "Story Scramble" for them to do when they were finished answering the questions, some groups finished early and then just socialized for a few minutes while the other groups finished. In the future, I will tell my students that they have x number of minutes to complete the activity, and then make them stop and move on when that time is up. This will ensure that we do not end up spending too much time and running out of time for the rest of the lesson. It will also help with the problem of groups finishing at different times, and it will hopefully encourage students to work more intently, since they are on a timer. This lesson taught me that I cannot expect my students to work perfectly on an activity, but that I must model and teach them how, and then encourage focus by building management strategies into the lesson plan.

Riley shared a narrative about her expectations with a lesson that she had added an activity that she had researched (jigsaw) and though it was effective. She incorporated a jigsaw activity after reading about it and believed it would take care of itself. She reflected on the
outcome of the lesson while questioning her own beliefs and pedagogical practices. She comes to
terms with her expectations when she moved into a reflective stance, thus further explicating
how her expectations should have not aimed towards a ‘perfect’ class activity.

**Jessie’s story**

The other example I want to share is one from my high school. There was a student who won the “class clown” and “school spirit” awards. He was the kid you could hear down the hallway laughing and high-fiving all of his friends. He wasn’t necessarily the best athlete or the smartest student, but he was a kid who could guarantee to make you laugh because he was so confident with himself. When asked to write the mandatory “Philosophy of Life” paper all juniors are told to write about their family, childhood, defining moments, and more, his paper didn’t align up with his current personality:

> A couple years ago my philosophy of life would have been all about what I am happy with but I am at a point in my life where I couldn’t care less about my life because I really don’t have something to keep me occupied. I lost my fear of death after she tried killing herself and now I’m just waiting for something to happen. Who knows what it is but something has to happen soon because right now all that is happening is a whole lot of nothing. At least for me it’s been a whole lot of nothing good. I wish I could be happy but I don’t think I can take any more disappointments in my life right now.”

The teacher who assigned this paper read it and knew something wasn’t right and alerted the necessary people. He knew this student really well and also felt guilty because he knew he had caused some of this sadness after cutting the student from the baseball team after the student did two-a-day workouts, lost 25 pounds, and was promised a spot by this very teacher/coach. That same day, the student went into school filled with painkillers for the first time in his life to numb the pain he had been hiding under the façade. Luckily, the right steps were taken at a critical moment and things got better for my younger brother.

Getting a phone call from my mom regarding this, and hearing about my younger brother, who we call “Mr. Personality”, has always stayed with me. It has also affected the way I have thought about teaching adolescent students ever since this moment. This is the reason I find English so fascinating and useful. The power of writing may have saved my brothers life, and it was all because the teacher knew my brother and recognized the changes that only showed up on paper because he was hiding it so well on the surface.

Here, writing became an outlet for someone to be completely honest with his feelings and emotions. Whether it is a philosophy of life paper, daily journal, creative writing log, poetry assignment, or more, writing is a invaluable tool and craft that seems to be underappreciated in schools today. It wasn’t until I arrived at college when I learned to love writing because of an intro to poetry class I had
taken. I learned that I felt better after writing in my journal in a non-structured, non-pressured way. Besides getting to know my students through writing, I also want to divorce them from their previous experiences with the constricted five-paragraph essay. Through my research, I have found a practice that I will be using because I find it helpful to get to know my students' personalities, thoughts, interests, and voices, while alleviating their anxiety of high-stake writing assignments with rigid prompts and assessments.

I always want my students to have a purpose for every activity. “Once students see writing as communicating something valuable to them, our work can begin” (Kittle 57-58). Since I will most likely be teaching in a high school setting, I want my students to be proficient writers for many reasons. SAT’s, college applications, and professional e-mails are just some of the reasons I will bring up in my class. However, I do not want to just stress these “professional” uses for writing. I want to compliment them with the creative reasons like stress relief, creating a story, or writing about the beauty they find. No matter what I teach, even beyond writing, giving my students a firm purpose is one of my main goals.

This story reflected the different situations and settings where PSETs’ beliefs were developed, cemented, and at times tested. Riley not only believes writing is ‘therapeutic,’” she has lived through experiences that left indelible marks in her teaching and personal beliefs. She carried the importance of writing to her preteaching experience and made sure to incorporate it as necessary. Her interest in writing has turned into an inquiry of what works best for students’ creativity to flourish while communicating their feelings.

Mathew’s story

Teachers have a responsibility to build relationships with their students. In my opinion, this can be an impossible task for some teachers because if they don’t happen to truly care about kids, their students will see right through them. I had always stressed the importance of building relationships based on respect between the teacher and students in my teaching philosophy but I had never before delved into why. This idea that students can sense a fraud has come up in different ways recently as the semester has been wrapping up. I first started thinking about it when it came up in my CI XXX class when many students were discussing the need to be “real people” to their students or else they would not gain their respect. This quote came up as I was looking for evidence to support this idea. “Students have excellent radar for phonies and manipulation from their teachers. They are professionals at dealing with it.” (DeRoche) I also thought back to the days when
a teacher gained the reputation of wanting to be “friends” with students in order to gain their approval. These teachers were never given a lot of problems but certainly failed to inspire and in turn engage their students.

This is why my teaching philosophy states the importance of a relationship based on caring and respect. What really convinced me to buy into the importance of this idea is when I was discussing with a friend the superficial relationships that players share with coaches on the football team here. We noted the genuine lasting relationships we had made with our high school coaches that we long to have with our coaches at college but doubt we will ever see it happen. We also brought up the fact that we would run through walls for our high school coaches and would for our college coaches as well if they would only show the capacity for genuine care and respect for us not just as football players but also as young men. It would certainly be in their best interest to engage us in the common goal of winning to the greatest extent possible, but perhaps like the teacher that doesn’t care about their students above all else, they don’t have the ability to build the right relationships with us either because we can see right through them.

Mathew’s episodic stories contributed to ‘building’ a discussion about his teaching beliefs and how his academic and athletic career held true to these. He presented a discussion that took place in one of his teacher education courses regarding teacher authenticity and how he recalled recognizing teachers that wanted to be buddies and how that did not work. According to Mathew, these teachers with ‘wrongful buddy practices’ did not care or respect their students’ learning.

Care and respect are emphasized and depicted as essential and important to Mathew because through these qualities student-teacher relationships are established. His beliefs involving caring and respect had evolved since his high school years where he felt his coaches were genuine and cared thus nourishing a life-long relationship based on mutual respect.

Invitations that Elicit Reflection

“The general features of a reflective experience … are (i) perplexity, confusion, doubt, due to the fact that one is implicated in an incomplete situation whose full character is not yet determined; (ii) a conjectural anticipation -- a tentative interpretation of the given elements, attributing to them a tendency to effect certain consequences; (iii) a careful survey (examination, inspection, exploration, analysis) of all attainable consideration which will define and clarify the problem in hand; (iv) a consequent elaboration of the tentative hypothesis to make it more precise and more consistent, because squaring with
a wider range of facts; (v) taking one stand upon the projected hypothesis as a plan of action which is applied to the existing state of affairs: doing something overtly to bring about the anticipated result, and thereby testing the hypothesis. It is the extent and accuracy of steps three and four, which mark off a distinctive reflective experience from one on the trial and error plane. They make thinking itself into an experience.” (Dewey 1938, p. 152)

I perceived the Problems of Practice assignment, interview and prompted reflection writing as invitations that elicit reflection. I interpreted data where PSETs made a careful examination of their problem of practice, determined how, if at all, could the problem be approached or dealt with, and shared their preference as to what to do with the problem of practice and the desired outcome or outcomes. The total amount of reflections prevalent in these three invitations was 101 out of 107 stories (see Table 6). The elicited reflections embarked interactions that alluded to PSETs’ professional identity, interactions conducive to student learning, the perceptions surrounding theoretically bound and practical knowledge and differences or similarities between approaches previously learned and writing as a process.

After interpreting and revisiting data, I used Schön’s (1987) two types of reflective thinking: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) shared a series of stories where they had to think on the spot in their teaching setting. When faced with unexpected situations or uncertainty in the classroom, PSETs dealt with situations where they identified and addressed a classroom problems or incidents. When these stories are brought to life, PSETs were able to revisit, reconstruct and reinterpret the actions or experience, thus promoting and engaging reflective practice. On the other hand, when PSETs revisited their past and present stories to add sense to their current teaching experience (reflection-on-action), they were gaining insight into their practice and professional identity. This too resulted in a reflective practice where PSETs gave meaning to teaching.
As a researcher, I perceived the Problem of Practice project (proposal and final inquiry) as an invitation for PSETs to reflect-on-action and/or reflection-in-action. Through their stories, PSETs evaluated, revisited, and reconsidered a process, an incident and/or a developing skill in order to make sense of their thought process during the task or incident (reflection-on-action). PSETs’ narratives also reflected about incidents or tasks that they just knew how to deal with because they owned (at hand) the skills or knowledge necessary to accomplish their goals.

Table 6: Coding Categories for Research Question #2 Reflections

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>Prompted Reflection Writing</th>
<th>Total Number of Stories</th>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reflections Prof. Identity</th>
<th>Reflection Student learning</th>
<th>Disjuncture</th>
<th>Writing process/ instruction</th>
<th>Freq. Refl.</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

|       | **29** | **26** | **13** | **24** | **101** |
When revisiting PSETs’ stories, I also incorporated Ross’ (1989) types of reflection. Ross (1989), stated how stories of practice offer a vehicle for teachers to become more competent reflective practitioners in three ways. These were the following:

- Developing reflective processes such as problem-identification and analysis.
- Developing attitudes necessary to reflection such as open-mindedness and introspection.
- Defining the content of reflection such as what teachers think about.

Via stories, preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) were able to articulate or voice problems of practice that permeated or were prevalent in their learning and/or teaching experiences. PSETs’ stories reflected their openmindedness when incorporating practices new or different to what they had been exposed to. This was also relevant in the interactions with their mentor teachers. Finally, I perceived PSETs’ narratives as vehicles where they initiated thoughts about conversations they could have with mentor teachers. Via stories and the reflection embedded or purported in this activity, PSETs could participate of conversations in their field and share what teachers, like them and unlike them talk about.

Via a classroom assignment, where PSETs were taught to inquire about problems of practice (that they were interested in), my incorporation of an interview, and prompted reflection writing about the Problems of Practice process, PSETs were invited to reflect. This activity was not only seen as an invitation, but as an opportunity to revisit, reassess, recognize and reflect PSETs’ beliefs, actions, challenges, and practices, thus examine all of these using different perspectives and their evolving professional identity. I embedded the elicited prompted reflection writing artifact to the Problems of Practice inquiry project as an opportunity for PSETs to reflect about the problem of practice inquiry project process. In Leah’s story she revisited an incident that varied her approach to one-on-one writing conferences.
Leah’s Story

In my class, the revision process happened through conferencing with a student one-on-one after they submitted the first version of their article. “Conferencing means listening carefully to a student’s intention in the writing, reading the draft itself, questioning the student about the next step, and offering suggestions. It means finding out what students are discovering they want to say and helping them reflect on effective ways of saying it. Conferences are often brief and suggestive rather than lengthy and directive” (Milner & Milner, 2007, 354-355). In my teaching placement, I found that letting students have more control over the process was one of the areas where I struggled, especially when I was working with students on articles for the student newspaper instead of a course assignment. I was overly concerned with immediately correcting grammatical errors, which distracted from the focus on the article’s content. Rather than guiding students through the writing and editing process and letting them direct the conferences, I found myself often telling them what I thought they should do.

If I am going to spend a significant amount of time providing my students with feedback on their writing, I would prefer to focus the majority of my energy on a method that is more effective in helping students learn. Students are not learning how to be better writers from corrections I make on their final work; I would prefer to spend more of my time on student writing on techniques that are more effective in increasing learning.

This story portrayed Leah’s thoughts about teaching behaviors, her beliefs and practices to reconstruct this experience and position it in her reality. This story disclosed Leah’s beliefs about care ethics. She reflects on how she needs to work on her teacher practices, specifically the one of “letting students have more control over the writing process” and equated it to caring for students as individuals and students’ learning. As she reexamines her past, she critically assesses the impact these practices had on her students and how these practices were conducive to learning. Leah engaged in a reflection-on-action to determine her pedagogical beliefs and practices. Leah reflected on her pedagogical practice of telling students what she

When Riley wrote her Problems of Practice project, she used a story to express the importance of her topic. I interpreted her thinking via the story as reflection-on-action. It seemed to disclose her topic and how dear it was to her. She relied on her teaching experiences, students
interactions, and mentor teachers’ use of small group work to reflect her desire to risk trying something not so new, but intriguing and accessible to her.

**Riley’s Story**

For example, this semester, I had three periods of seventh graders—the lower level, the average level, and the accelerated students. Thus, the students in each class were on roughly the same level, so I would not even be able to group them this way in most cases. Perhaps in my case, I could adapt this idea and organize groups based on behavior; for example, by pre-arranging groups I could ensure that best friends who never stop talking are not together.

McFadden also always assigns roles within groups, like the recorder and the presenter. She ensures that all students participate by giving them each responsibilities and holding them accountable. My mentor teacher frequently used this strategy, and it seemed to increase productivity and positive results. I think I will use this technique in the future, especially with younger students. However, I do believe that it is necessary to introduce and explain each role to the students at the beginning of the school year, before thrusting them into using roles in groups.

Once this semester, my mentor teacher divided his students into groups and told them to determine a job for each member and gave them an assignment. As they worked, I circulated the room and aided students, and observed that they were confused about the assignment and did not understand what they were supposed to do. My mentor teacher had given the assignment without teaching them how to do it or explaining his expectations, and my students were spending their time trying to figure out what they were supposed to do and trying to assign roles. This taught me that teachers must scaffold prior to giving an assignment. Teachers should conduct a lesson on small group work and the roles involved, and then give clear instructions and expectations before each and every small group activity.

Riley entered a reflective space where she revisited classroom practices and acknowledged how a strategy that was usually effective in promoting student participation failed because it lacked proper instructions and/or clarification of the tasks and/or roles students needed to take part of. It was as if she used this problem of practice moment or situation to establish an ongoing conversation of what she has learned to do and not do when wanting students to learn. By participating of the activity with her mentor teacher Riley was able to legitimize the problem and rely on research to improve her practice and learning. This story reflected and provided
context for Riley to examine, interpret and articulate her classroom experiences as she shared it with her mentor teacher.

Jessie’s story is a good example for preservice teachers’ developing sense of professional identity, voice, authenticity and criticality. Her story was presented in the Problems of Practice proposal and revisited in the Problems of Practice project and used to indicate the importance, urgency and credibility of her topic.

Jessie’s Story

... to start the process of divorcing students from thinking of writing with negative connotations, writing about themselves is something they can all do because they have an unlimited source of information. After all, they are writing about personal experiences that mean the world to them. Another aspect of writing I learned about this semester in LL ED XXX and while researching this paper, I need to find a balance between open prompts. This means I need to have ideas for my students to write about that aren’t too broad where they become overwhelmed, but not too specific where creativity gets restricted. Depending on whether I teach in 46-minute periods, or 83-minute blocks, I want my students to be free-writing at least three days a week to get them in the habit.

These journal entries do not have to always be negative. I want to learn about the exciting moment in my student’s lives, winning an award, making a great play in the game, going on a camping trip over the weekend, getting into their dream school, and so on. The more I read about their interests, passions, strengths, personalities, senses of humor, and voice, the more I will be able to pick up on the warning signs when a student’s mood has suddenly shifted. By creating these bonds with my students, I hope to sharpen my interpersonal skills. This way I will be able to notice behavior changes in their personalities as well as their writing mood and voice. Also, I hope that the more they see that I am investing an interest in their journals, the more they will realize that I do care about each student as individuals, not just a whole class. This way I will be able to build a rapport with each student.

I perceived Riley’s thought process to be one of reflection-on-action, where she revisited her past and present classroom experiences, and her own experience with journal writing. She recognized how some prompts she had thought of were not engaging students to write or participate in journaling. The events Riley identified reflected observations and interactions where she perceived students’ struggles. For me, this story painted a picture with many images
that made Jessie’s priorities clear and displayed how these come to play with her pedagogical practices, beliefs and aspirations.

Mathew too disclosed problems he confronted during his preteaching field experience and how the problem turned into his Problems of Practice project topic. He communicated genuine concerns he had with teaching. He looked at students’ responses (or lack of) to his questions or suggestions and reflected about what, if at all, can teachers do when facing student apprehension. Mathew’s Problems of Practice topic was prevalent from his first day of preteaching field experience and throughout the following six weeks. He acknowledged that even though he seemed to be comfortable talking and encouraging students to share with him anything they believed he should know, he did not obtain any conversation from them. When this situation occurred Mathew decided to draw from previous experience where he learned to give examples of topics (less formal). This was an example of Reflection-in-action where Mathew had to come up (at the spot) with whatever strategies or activities he knew (or had in his bank of teaching strategies) to deal with a situation. Sadly, his ideas flop as well and he received no response at all from his students.

Mathew’s story

The beginning of this topic for my problem of practice started developing on the very first day of my placement. I was given the opportunity to introduce myself to each class as they came in throughout the morning and in turn the students had to go around the room introducing themselves to me and telling me at least one thing about themselves. It was an instant awakening for me to see a majority of the students not possess the confidence to mention anything about themselves. I tried to make them at ease even from that moment by saying that it didn’t have to be anything serious, that it could be a favorite book, movie, or music artist but I still found the same apprehension.

As I questioned the origin of this problem in my classroom and as I spent more and more time in my class, I realized that there were a lot of impressive students. At first, I thought that students might have been more comfortable with interacting with their teacher rather than me. However, once I started teaching and my first lessons were similar in some aspects to my mentor teacher’s lessons, I
found that they were just as comfortable with me. As more time passed, I became aware that the class often followed the same structure and schedule, and that the students had simply become comfortable in the routine they could count on every day. The confidence that they showed in a few situations was there because they were conditioned to become comfortable in those environments, following through with the same tasks. The teacher had set certain goals with the intentions of improving their confidence but had failed to set new ones for the class to keep their confidence growing.

The disappointment that I was faced with here was that I was witnessing students that were confident as learners of short stories and other literature, but to be more honest I felt like I was around students that were confident as learners of study guides and vocabulary worksheets. What I wanted to see was a confidence in themselves not specifically in what they were learning, so that when they were thrown a curveball, even if it was something that should be as easy as saying something interesting about yourself, they would be able to handle it because of a confidence they gained.

In researching the methods and opinions that have been published on developing student confidence in the classroom, I found a number of things that not only confirmed the feelings I was experiencing, but tied into a number of topics from my teaching philosophy. An example of this is the need to build a sense of community through trust and empathy in the classroom. For students to become more confident learners, they must feel comfortable enough in a classroom to engage themselves. It is imperative for students that share a classroom to feel empathy for one another, which will result in a new level of trust from one student to another that they not need fear being hurt or embarrassed by one another.

Mathew seemed to rely on his previous experience as a student and preservice teacher to voice his perspective of teaching and insights about what he knows, believes and practices. Via reflection-on-action he gave meaning to what he believed to be his role in the classroom and enabled him to further question, and research his Problems of Practice topic. This story depicted Mathew’s attitudes and introspection toward student apprehension. I perceived his reflection-in-action via past and present experiences to be necessary for Mathew’s professional growth. He needed to acknowledge the existence of so many strategies and activities teachers need to have in their ‘bank’ and that these can be attained through time. There is not a single strategy or activity that works for all students. It helped him experience his professional growth as an aspiring
teacher, an opportunity to voice his pedagogical beliefs and practices, and identify moments of risks and or uncertainty.

Assignments: Pedagogical Tools for Inquiry

Research Question Number Two: How, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing?

Pedagogical Tools for Inquiry

In this section of my research, I sought to identify the pedagogical tools preservice secondary English teachers use, if at all, to guide or facilitate their classroom practices. Activity theory (Cole 1996; Leont’ev 1981, Tulviste 1991; Wertsch 1991) was useful for understanding PSETs’ process of learning to teach writing, particularly emphasizing how PSETs select and use their methods course assignment, Problems of Practice inquiry project, to inform and/or address the teaching of writing.

Throughout PSETs’ stories conceptual and/or practical pedagogical tools are explicated. Conceptual tools are referenced as principles, frameworks and ideas about teaching that PSETs used to guide decisions about teaching and learning. This also included broad applicable theories, such as constructivism and theoretical principles and concepts, such as scaffolding that served as guidelines for their pedagogical practices.

I selected the Problems of Practice project as the assignment from the methods LL ED XXX, for my research. Specifically, I used it to analyze and interpret how PSETs, if at all, inquire about their teaching of writing. I perceived the inquiry project assignment to be used as a pedagogical tool because in PSETs’ narratives they articulated the need, benefits or use of their problems of practice topic as a practical and/or conceptual tool that would serve as a classroom practice, resource, idea, and/or framework for the teaching of writing.
Leah’s story

For the past four years, I have worked as an editor for various organizations. In all of these jobs, I have been the one in charge of the final copy; I am in control of the changes that are made to any articles or materials that cross my desk, regardless of who may have written the original copy. These habits are sticky, and I find that as a teacher, it is difficult for me to relinquish this control and give it to the students. I suspect that I am not the only teacher who has ever felt this way.

It was challenging for me to bite my tongue and let the students tell me what they wanted to do with their writing. However, I know that my students need to learn the process of writing more than they need to learn what I think about writing. They need the chance to practice drafting, revising, and editing their own work. They need to be in control of the whole process, even if they’re struggling.

The results of my study do not confirm the benefits of using writing conferences, nor are they intended to. I happen to like the procedure because it forces students to write a draft and spend some time thinking about it before revising and turning in a final copy. What I do see in this study is some evidence that teachers must relinquish control of student writing and the writing process in order for students to make progress on their drafts. Student A, is a talented writer and motivated student who made no changes to her article after she lost control of it; while Student B, who frequently resists criticism, was open to suggestion and visibly improved her article after our conference. Student C, struggled throughout the entire process, but was quite willing to explain her ideas to me. After explaining her thoughts and hearing that those thoughts would make a valid review, Student C, was better able to improve her draft. In future writing conferences, I will need to keep in mind that students are perfectly capable of identifying places where they are struggling; I can let them articulate those problems and guide them through areas where they are motivated to revise.

Leah’s story demonstrated that her inquiry process did not lead to an answer for her problems of practice, but did provide her with a reflective stance as to what she needs to do in order to help students learn and succeed with writing conferences and the writing process. She identified a peculiarity she had with “relinquishing control” to students, especially when it came to student writing. She was able to inquire different sources and come up with a way to approach writing conferences.
In this particular story, I interpreted the inquiry project topic, writing conferences, as a practical pedagogical tool that Leah would eagerly use in her classroom because she believed it would help students improve their writing process and writing.

Riley’s story

Through my research, some of my beliefs were reaffirmed and strengthened, some were challenged, and some were changed. My inquiry has enabled me to more deeply consider the complexities of small group work, and has provided me with ideas for improving upon my own small group management and implementation. I know that this is a complicated, large issue that does not have one answer. There are many different ways to approach small group work and many different strategies that are effective. Some approaches work differently for some teachers and in different scenarios. This paper in no way attempts to solve the mystery of how to best use small groups; rather, it sheds light on some of the issues and demonstrates how I have researched and considered this topic in the context of my own experiences this semester and in my attempt to improve and enrich my understanding of and use of small group work in the classroom.

Small group work can challenge students to think, wrestle with, and actively apply the material rather than be passive absorbers of information. Small group work also has the potential to enable students to develop their listening, speaking, and collaborating skills by working together with their peers. Through small groups, students can be opened up to other perspectives and ideas that they would not have otherwise encountered. Teachers and researchers agree with me that small groups can be instrumental in the classroom.

While I have discovered ideas and strategies for managing small groups, I think the most important lesson that I learned is this: a teacher who models, scaffolds, and creates an environment based on inquiry will naturally see more positive outcomes and will have to deal less with managing small groups. All of these techniques to reduce off-task time and keep students engaged are used more when teachers have not established a climate conducive to learning. Therefore, I see my job as a future small group facilitator not so much as disciplining and managing small groups, but as creating an environment that encourages meaningful and engaging small group interactions, and designing small group activities that encourage on-task, focused learning.

Teachers cannot simply divide students into groups with unclear instructions, undefined objectives, ineffective monitoring, and insufficient assessment. In order to achieve the potential rewards of small group work, it is crucial that all teachers investigate the issue.

In the previous story, Riley articulated the need for small group work. She stated how she used the inquiry of her problems of practice topic, small group work, to acknowledge modeling
and scaffolding as a conceptual pedagogical tool. Riley stressed how critical it is for teachers to inquire as a practical and conceptual pedagogical tool in order to provide students with goal-oriented instruction used for classroom practice and to guide decisions about teaching writing, specifically small group work activities.

**Jessie’s story**

This problem has always stuck with me because the student I just talked about is someone I could instantly read and notice when something wasn’t right. However, there are so many students (and will be so many students in the future) that I don’t know well and who don’t talk or participate as much as others. There are students who are always quiet and serious looking. They could be having a good day or a bad day and I wouldn’t know because they didn’t show any outward emotion while there could very well be a lot going on beneath the surface. I realize I can’t help every single student through every problem, it isn’t physically or emotionally possible, but I want to have some ideas in my head as to how to handle these situations as they come. I started thinking about community building, and what kind of atmosphere I would like my future classroom to resemble. How can I create a place where my students realize that I am not just there for a paycheck, but that I am there for them and the period that they are in my classroom is crucial to me?

Here, writing became an outlet for someone to be completely honest with his feelings and emotions. Whether it is a philosophy of life paper, daily journal, creative writing log, poetry assignment, or more, writing is a invaluable tool and craft that seems to be underappreciated in schools today. It wasn’t until I arrived at college when I learned to love writing because of an intro to poetry class I had taken. I learned that I felt better after writing in my journal in a non-structured, non-pressured way. Besides getting to know my students through writing, I also want to divorce them from their previous experiences with the constricted five-paragraph essay. Through my research, I have found a practice that I will be using because I find it helpful to get to know my students personalities, thoughts, interests, and voices, while alleviating their anxiety of high-stake writing assignments with rigid prompts and assessments.

Penny Kittle writes in her book, *Write Beside Them*, about the importance of what she calls “quick writes.” She found out that six (soon to be seven) out of twenty-five students have lost one parent in their life. Most of the students in her class had never written about their reaction to this experience at all. She responds to this eye-opening revelation with, “I shake my head. We’re missing something in teaching writing in high school. We assign topics and students respond by going through-the-motions writing instead of from-the-heart writing that drives them to write well. Emotion is the engine of the intellect; we write more powerfully when it is from the center of who we are” (39). There are examples in the book of some of Kittle’s students’ reactions to the day they lost their parents
and what they would have done differently. It was hard even for me to read because they were filled with anguish and regret. After Sarah, a girl in Kittle’s class reflected on the journal entry she wrote about losing her mother, she commented on the process of writing, saying, “through quick writes, I learned how good writing feels. There is something relaxing about being able to throw yourself onto a page and give up a little of your own story. You walk away a little lighter, a little more refreshed, and that is so rewarding” (Kittle 39).

Going along with Sarah’s reaction, to start the process of divorcing students from thinking of writing with negative connotations, writing about themselves is something they can all do because they have an unlimited source of information. After all, they are writing about personal experiences that mean the world to them. Another aspect of writing I learned about this semester in LL ED XXX and while researching this paper, I need to find a balance between open prompts. This means I need to have ideas for my students to write about that aren’t too broad where they become overwhelmed, but not too specific where creativity gets restricted. Depending on whether I teach in 46-minute periods, or 83-minute blocks, I want my students to be free-writing at least three days a week to get them in the habit.

This story depicted the significance the inquiry project has as a pedagogical tool where Jessie, in retrospect, can analyze her contrasted past and present experiences, and reassess the role writing has in her classroom. As a practical pedagogical tool, Riley uses her inquiry topic to assess her classroom practices. She emphasized how she desires to use open prompts regularly in her classroom.

Mathew’s story

In researching the methods and opinions that have been published on developing student confidence in the classroom, I found a number of things that not only confirmed the feelings I was experiencing, but tied into a number of topics from my teaching philosophy. An example of this is the need to build a sense of community through trust and empathy in the classroom. For students to become more confident learners, they must feel comfortable enough in a classroom to engage themselves. It is imperative for students that share a classroom to feel empathy for one another, which will result in a new level of trust from one student to another that they not need fear being hurt or embarrassed by one another. The idea of creating a classroom environment like this excites me because it provides the chance to teach my students to become passionate, confident, empathetic people as they grow up into adults while having them become more engaged at the same time. I found a teacher in a journal response discussing what students had told him about the need for the class to feel like a group of friends to develop the sense of community. “The students I spoke with also pointed out that teachers can
help students with their confidence problems by creating a classroom community in which students who disrupt classroom discussion by criticizing others know their limits and are immediately stopped or, when necessary, disciplined.” (Nillson) Multiple students in this text mentioned that if issues like these were not dealt with quickly, the sense of community that was being built would quickly diminish along with student engagement.

Teachers have a responsibility to build relationships with their students. In my opinion, this can be an impossible task for some teachers because if they don’t happen to truly care about kids, their students will see right through them. I had always stressed the importance of building relationships based on respect between the teacher and students in my teaching philosophy but I had never before delved into why.

When combating lack of confidence among students, a teacher is likely to find many of the motives from this problem stemming from social pressures that students face and really aren’t sure how to handle at their age. This can cause students to lose a lot of their confidence and lose sight of the person that they were on their way becoming. A new approach to this problem that I found online suggests attacking the problem head on by facing the reality of the situations presented.

“We have argued above that students can experience lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem as a result of an unequal society and the social pressures under which they operate. While this is true, this can be read as a way of disempowering students and confirming them in a victim status. This is not a helpful place for anyone to be. While neither nature nor society is fair, it is not enough for the student to sit back and say well it’s not my fault. To be able to move forward the student must be able to look at any situation in which they find themselves and work out just how they can take control of it – or how they can move forward. For if they just think ‘it’s not my fault’ they stay trapped – if it is their responsibility then they can make things happen” (Burns & Sinfield).

I think this is a very beneficial way to look at a problem such as this one because of the way this approach involves a secondary but still very important message behind it. It sends the message to students that this is the way all tough situations must be handled in life. These problems must be met head on and students must learn that using them, as an excuse for their entire life is not an option.

From my findings at my placement where different students were more comfortable than others with different tasks, I was able to realize the need for teaching in different ways for different learners. Students share their ideas and opinions differently so it is beneficial to create different mediums for students to do this through. For example, an extroverted student may have been more confident with the task on the first day to speak about themselves, but a more introverted student may have been much more successful at writing the poem because they like to express their ideas in that way. I found a few methods in my research that supported this practice. “There are several ways to ‘talk’ in a classroom. I
have watched many talented and quiet students share their thoughts and ideas successfully via non-verbal avenues of communication, such as class-room artwork, one-on-one discussions with peers, and joint writing assignments” (Nillson). By providing opportunities for different types of learners in a class, all students are set up to succeed at their task and gain confidence from doing so. Even when students are working on assignments that are not specifically geared to the way they learn best, they will still be equipped for the task at hand with a greater level of confidence that they developed in other assignments. Teaching this way allows confidence to carry over from one specific method to another, which parallels the way that I believe confidence is developed in one area of interest and can carry over to a different one without any losses.

All of these methods can benefit different learners at varying degrees, but all students can get more out of each as they develop a greater confidence. I come away from this inquiry with a number of discoveries that have confirmed and challenged the original ideas I had that got me started writing on this topic. I have learned new methods that I can apply into my practice the next time I am in a classroom in order to help my students gain confidence and in return become more engaged. Maybe most importantly, I was able to get the gears turning again on my teaching philosophy that had become stagnant from not using it to question anything I had experienced in the classroom. I feel that I made strides as a teacher and as a thinker from these developments that made some substantial changes and enhancements to my teaching philosophy. Originally, I had said that my students must be engaged in my class, and that was all. After this inquiry, I am able to see how and why being engaged is so important as well as how it ties into the rest of the things I discuss in my teaching philosophy. There are a handful of things from this paper that can be pulled right out of my teaching philosophy but they were not the specifically the same before I wrote this paper. Most importantly, the importance of developing student confidence, the topic of this paper, was previously not found in it at all.

Mathew used the Problem of Practice inquiry project as a conceptual pedagogical tool where he further inquired on building relationships, teaching in different ways for different learners, and building confidence. Through this inquiry process, he was able to establish what he believes to be the teachers’ responsibilities and critiquing teachers’ approaches when teaching.

Using his inquiry project as a pedagogical tool helped Mathew reinforce his interest in student engagement and building student confidence to the extent that he will include it in his teaching philosophy. Although the conceptual pedagogical underpinnings of this pedagogical practice have not been consistently implemented in Mathew’s preteaching field experience he
does intend to use them in his own classroom.

**Prompted Reflection Writing**

I incorporated the prompted reflection writing, as an elicited text, to the methods assignments, Problems of Practice inquiry project because I wanted to know PSETs’ opinion about their experience with working on an inquiry project process. I looked at PSETs’ responses to the following two questions in the prompted reflection writing:

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?

**Leah’s responses**

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

I think it’s partly about giving up some control of the process of writing-not looking for students to address a certain thing in a conference, even if it’s what YOU think is most important. Because writing is so subjective, students need to own the process and the product. But that doesn’t remove the teacher from the process-students still need guidance/scaffolding/etc. Relinquishing control does not mean making writing into a free for all.

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?

This semester I had to do actual research with actual people for LL ED XXX, instead of just using a literature review and EC Ning responses to do inquiry, which I think was WAY more difficult, but also much more helpful. I wanted to cop out on this project but I really couldn’t. And it involved my actual students and real teaching, so the project was practical and impacts what I do in my teaching. That said, I don’t know that it would really ‘work’ for everyone to be required to do this kind of inquiry project. I actually think that my 6 weeks of teaching this semester were barely sufficient for me to collect the data that I have, and a lot of people had far less access/control over their classrooms and placements.

In Leah’s responses she acknowledged how she will have to move away from certain habits (relinquishing control to students) that jeopardize students’ learning in the writing
conference. Leah was able to recognize how her Problems of Practice inquiry project process had practical implication for her teaching, and would significantly impact her writing instruction.

Even though Leah realized the impact of the Problems of Practice inquiry project, she understood the process is not suitable for everyone. She also indicated how time constraints can take a toll in achieving successful outcomes.

**Riley’s responses**

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

My stance on writing and the teacher of writing is basically the same as when I began this problem of practice. I did not focus on the teaching of writing for this project, so I did not read literature about that specific issue.

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?

I think this project was helpful because it forced me (in a good way) to closely examine and explore an issue that occurred in my classroom. It enabled me to gain a greater understanding of an issue that is very relevant and practical to me, and I will definitely use the information I uncovered next semester and for the rest of my career. However, I do think the peer review workshop could have been structured better to elicit better results, for I felt like that time was fairly unproductive and helpful for me.

Riley’s response about her stance on writing was daunting to me because she believed that the focus of her inquiry project had nothing to do with the teaching of writing. Ironically, throughout her Problems of Practice inquiry project she referenced how small group work could enhance students’ writing abilities.

Riley identified the usefulness of crafting a Problems of Practice inquiry project because it helped her “examine and explore” issues that occurred in her classroom. She established how she expects to use this relevant and practical applications of group work in her own classroom.
Jessie’s responses

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

I’ve always loved writing, but I know that I will be a different teacher of writing than a lot of the teachers I had growing up. I want to have my students divorce the idea of writing as a confined forced activity, but get them to see the therapeutic side to it. I want them to worry less about grammar sometimes, and more about rich diction, creative ideas, and complex characters.

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?

I’ve been keeping a genius journal for my seminar class and throughout the semester I have been writing down thought-provoking prompts in which I can give my students not just to have them write, but so I can learn about their personality, interests, and more. This is beyond writing about their favorite sport, but I want to get them thinking on a different level, and then have them turn it into writing.

Jessie explicated how the inquiry process supported her stance on writing and writing instruction. Through inquiry and self-reflection, Jessie identified how her writing instruction will differ from her past experience.

Mathew’s responses

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

My stance on the teaching of writing is that it can serve different purposes in the life of a student as well as a teacher. Students need to learn to write in order to communicate their ideas and to prepare for a profession as well as express themselves in a stage in their lives that is difficult for most people. It is a way to express themselves to their teacher, and sometimes it can be the only way.

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?

It is interesting how much you can learn from a project where the idea is not to actually answer the question that is asked. Taking the time to explore questions and thoughts in a project like this allows someone to come away with much more than the description of an inquiry project would imply.

Mathew identified how his stance on writing served different purposes for students
and teachers. He maintained how writing is a means of expression for students that can build relationships between students and teachers.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

“However, we as humans are not just our emotions because we, our narratives and our interpretation of our narratives are always embedded in a given socio-cultural and historical context and in the relationship with those who listen/respond to our stories.” (Goodson and Gill, 2011, p.84)

Conclusions

In this chapter, I will summarize my findings and discuss their implications. Specifically, my focus is to analyze what stories do PSETs draw on when learning to teach writing and how, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing. In this chapter, the narrative that emerged from analysis and comparing, and contrasting (revisiting) data reflects the “relations between conceptual categories and the conditions under which theoretical relationships emerged, changed, or are maintained” (Charmaz, 2002, p.675). Findings in this chapter are presented through the framework of this study’s research question

Findings of the Study

Research Question One

This study’s first research question asked: What stories do preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) draw on when learning to teach writing? From analysis related to this question, several findings emerged.

Finding Number One:

PSETs draw on contrasted stories of past and present experiences in one of three thematic categories: stories about a beloved teacher, stories about writing, and stories about authenticity (see Table 8).
Table 8: Final Themes for Analysis in Research Question #1

As indicated by data, PSETs in this study most often identified and described experiences through three key words that appeared again and again across the data set. Each of these words portrayed a theme. After a seventh, eighth, and ninth pass of the data set, the three key words (themes) remained as descriptors of PSETs’ experiences throughout their stories. PSETs told stories about beloved teachers, writing, and authenticity. As they told stories of contrasted past and present experiences, these stories took one of three forms. Some of the different forms of telling stories employed by PSETs were sharing informed incidents, disclosing uncertainties, and/ or beliefs (see Table 10).

Table 10: Frequency of Story Forms in Research Question # 2
They invoked different forms of telling their stories where they identified and noted contrasts between their own learning experiences as students and the beliefs they had held about pedagogy via methods courses and preteaching experiences. These stories confirmed what Flyvbjerg (2006) described in his work about case studies and narrative; namely, that “good narratives typically approach the complexities and contradictions of real life” (p. 306). While working with their Problems of Practice inquiry project, interview and prompted reflection writing, PSETs identified contrasted storied past and present experiences and were able to reflect on the complexities and contrasted view that each story brought into the formation of their teaching identity, pedagogical practices, and beliefs.

**Research Question Two**

This study’s second research question asked: How, if at all, does an inquiry assignment in a methods course serve as a tool for PSETs to address the teaching of writing? From analysis related to this question, several findings emerged.

**Finding Number One:**

PSETs used an inquiry project classroom assignment as a pedagogical tool to address the teaching of writing.
PSETs told their stories of contrasted past and present experiences when engaging in an assignment (the Problems of Practice inquiry project and proposal for Problems of Practice), an interview and prompted reflection writing about the Problems of Practice assessment during their methods course (Table 9). As indicated by the data set (see Table 8 p. 131), the combined amount of stories prevalent throughout this classroom inquiry assignment, interview and elicited text, was 107. The interview assignment project elicited students to tell stories the most, 69 stories out of 107 (65%). PSETs’ Problem of Practice inquiry project elicited 29/ 107 stories (0.27102804) and even though this number may seem insignificant it demonstrates how PSETs via their inquiry project were able to identify the inquiry process as a conceptual pedagogical tool where inquiry served as a guideline for instructional practices. PSETs stressed (via their stories) attention to how teachers should practice inquiry of classroom practices and strategies, and align these with instructional goals and practices. For example, Riley stated “Teachers cannot simply divide students into groups with unclear instructions, undefined objectives, ineffective monitoring, and insufficient assessment. In order to achieve the potential rewards of small group work, it is crucial that all teachers investigate the issue” (Prompted reflection writing).

**Finding Number Two:**

These assignments elicited stories and reflection about writing, writing instruction, past and present writing approaches, and professional identities.

The data set indicated that these invitations worked in particular ways. They elicited contrasted stories of past and present experiences and secondly, they elicited reflection (see Table 6).
Table 6: Coding Categories for Research Question #2 Reflections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>Prompted Reflection Writing</th>
<th>Total Number of Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reflections Prof. Identity</th>
<th>Reflection Student learning</th>
<th>Disjuncture</th>
<th>Writing process/ instruction</th>
<th>Freq. Refl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was through these artifacts (interview and prompted reflection writing) and the classroom inquiry assignment (Problems of Practice) that PSETs relived contrasts past and present experiences as they retold teacher or learning stories where they articulated their feelings, pedagogical practices, beliefs, and expectations. Each participant selected (PSETs) used the artifacts to recall their contrasted past and present experiences.

These artifacts and the classroom inquiry assignment (characterized as invitations) provided a reflective space. In this space, PSETs used these tools to elicit stories where they
could reflect, articulate their beliefs about their professional identity, and how they learned to write. PSETs explicated how they understood and noted differences or similarities in terms of how to teach writing and writing approaches. The data set displayed in Table 6: Coding Categories for Research Question #2 (Reflections) indicated that the participants (PSETs) combined amount of reflections were 101. This total amount (101) of reflections transferred into 94 % (101/107 stories) of reflections occurring as PSETs participated of this classroom invitation (assignment). PSETs reflected about professional identity 29 times, reflected on student learning 26 times, noted differences or similarities between past and present experiences 13 times, and writing process, writing approaches and writing instruction 24 times.

As PSETs engaged in sharing stories, they re-examined their stories and reflected on their narrative in ways where meaning making occurred. PSETs stories talked about their learning experiences and what they were getting out of it.

**Limitations of the Study**

**Limitation Number One:**

The findings pertain to methods course and not necessarily to field experiences. The sample size and procedures for participant selection, while appropriate for a qualitative study, are insufficient to support generalizations to a larger population of Preservice secondary English teachers in Pennsylvania or beyond.

**Limitation Number Two:**

I was there in the classroom and I had taught these students in the past and so they knew me already as a teacher. Students might have been overtly complacent and attempted to follow my ideas and seek for my approval. Some concerns this could have given rise to were the following: my previous student/teacher interactions might have affected students’ response and
participation in activities. Requesting PSETs to respond in written form and member check their responses of the interview and prompted reflective response for the Problems of Practice process helped mitigate these concerns.

Limitation Number Three:

I sometimes talked to PSETs during the class versus outside the classroom. PSETs’ methods instructor was present; therefore, they may have felt inhibited to talk. This transferred into students that answered questions according to what they believed their instructors or me would expect. This situation was dealt with by encouraging students to discuss amongst themselves and then shared their answers aloud. PSETs’ interactions and participations seemed authentic even though it may have been tailored for the classroom setting.

Limitation Number Four:

When reading PSETs’ stories, there was a difference between life as ‘lived’ and life as told or shared in the narratives. I believed that there was an implicit expectation that these stories must be situated within a linear and coherent plot derived from a western perception of autobiographical accounts. This situation was dealt with by researching ideas about how individuals tell their life and how seldom do these stories follow the universal story’s characteristics. This helped me understand that stories are creations used within certain subcultures, culturally and historically bound, and affected by different discourses.

Implications of Study

Preservice secondary English teachers’ response to the inquiry assignment (Problems of Practice), interview and the prompted refelection writing was through stories. For future research, interviews should be considered as a research strategy incorporated to the methods courses because they were most effective in garnering contrasted past and present stories from
students. In a methods class, teachers should incorporate interviews in assignments to help pull out stories from the students. In order to further the interest for learning and inquiry, we want to use the Problems of Practice inquiry assignment to identify problems in field. Teachers’ participation in the activities is much needed in order to share authentic teaching and learning experiences so that they can effectively help students. I was able to acquaint with students via interactions and different settings.

**Implications for the Academic Community**

The academic community (teachers, mentor teachers and supervisors) will benefit from the findings of this study because they will familiarize with PSETS’ ways of thinking. Hopefully, PSETs will articulate the significance of these contrasted past and present experiences, and how these affect their career choice of becoming teachers. Goodson and Gill (2011, p.119) posit that narrative learning occurs once stories have been shared, there is some kind of negotiation, most often interior, conducted as an ‘internal conversation’ that a person has with him/herself, by which the ‘new’ is incorporated into the existing narrative frame. The opportunity teachers have to interact with PSETs as they are revisiting and/or making sense of their personal narratives is a recursive and collaborative process. Throughout this process (inquiry and reflection) competing meanings and understandings of events in PSETs’ past and present experiences are triggered and shared. These assignments facilitated PSETs narrative exchange therefore fostering dialogue and reflection amongst their academic community. Teachers may also collaborate with their interns (PSETs) in the inquiry of their Problems of Practice topic, thus gaining a different perspective regarding classroom practices.
Implications for Methods Instructors and Teacher Educators

When PSETs revisited contrasted past and present experiences, Teacher educators were provided with insights as to the teacher-student interaction. If teacher educators provided or fostered invitations or activities throughout the methods courses where PSETs were exposed to reflective practices, PSETs could acknowledge, analyze and interpret their experiences. These invitations or assignments should foster opportunities where PSETs can enhance their ability to reflect on their lessons, articulate their pedagogical beliefs, values and practices while participating of academic discussions, and critically reflect on the practice of teaching. Teacher educators still have much to learn about PSETs selecting and implementing these reflective practices to teaching practices they are learning in the methods course. These stories are a powerful way of meaning making for students who aspire to becoming teachers.

Teacher educators can provide outlets for PSETs to articulate contrasted past/present experiences with writing or writing instruction, and becoming a teacher. Teacher educators ought to use these narratives to help PSETs “unpack” their “baggage of experiences” (lived or appropriated experiences) while telling their stories. This inquiry assignment, interview and the prompted reflection writing, as tools, were prevalent throughout the methods course, and the stories they elicited became “teaching moments” where conversations occurred about pedagogical beliefs, practices and writing instruction.

Implications for Future Research

This study fits into a wider research agenda concerning the relationship between teaching writing in field experiences and transferring writing experiences, if at all, to their writing instruction as novice teachers. My next projects will explore how early-career teachers of English draw on or move away from their methods course experiences and university field
experiences in their movement across both physical and intellectual environments of novice teaching. I will focus in particular on the challenges novice teachers face in teaching writing while implementing reflective classroom practices. This focus will be characterized by narrative pedagogy, where these early-career teachers of English will establish conversations with me (as an interlocutor) and write, revisit and reflect their stories while establishing thematic intensity. In this longitudinal study, both parties will engage in deep listening, collaboration, and a challenging exchange while attempting to locate the narrative within the broader historical, political and social aspects of Education. I want these teachers to revisit their stories in order for them to experience new insights, if at all, regarding their initial narratives and be mindful of mobility and the learning journey prevalent throughout these narratives.

My second project will be a study across multiple university sites where PSETs’ stories are located within the broader historical, political and social aspects of education. I will use narrativization and narrative pedagogy to elicit stories that can serve as a mediation tool where preservice English teachers (PSETs) revisit, reflect and write about their writing, writing instruction, their professional identity, pedagogical practices and beliefs, and their experiences as novice teachers.

**Themes Consistent with Sociocultural Theory and Activity Theory**

**Finding Number One:**

When you engage these preservice secondary English teachers (PSETs) in a classroom inquiry project assignment (Problems of Practice), an interview, and an elicited text (Prompted Reflection Writing), stories become a tool that they use to negotiate the task. So the story mediates the task. Because these stories occurred in different stages of PSETs’ lives and different
settings, these settings may in turn mediate the stories and PSETs’ beliefs about writing and teaching writing.

**Implication Number One:**

Methods instructors need to be mindful of the mediating role stories take within the different settings PSETs occupy. It would be helpful if methods instructors understood how the mediating role in stories take place and how PSETs’ negotiations or actions in different settings may mediate their beliefs about writing and teaching writing.

**Finding Number Two:**

PSETs’ narratives displayed personal sociocultural history (ies) and experience(s) that were revisited as PSETs articulated their understandings, learning, reflections and/or face newfound knowledge.

**Implication Number Two:**

The study provides a classroom inquiry assignment (Problems of Practice) and two other artifacts (interview and Prompted Reflection writing) embedded to the methods class assignment. It is important that methods instructors and/or teacher educators see and talk to PSETs about how are they reflecting while engaging in inquiry about their classroom issues and Problems of Practice topic.

**Finding Number Three:**

These narratives presented a dialogic exchange where there was an individual and collective level of experience used to mediate learning.

**Implications Number Three:**

If methods courses instructors offer a space and activities where dialogic exchanges are prevalent and PSETs’ narratives are encouraged and provoked (via assignments and or activites),
they are helping PSETs to think about their writing and writing instruction.

The findings are more transferable to methods course and not necessarily to field experiences. The sample size and procedures for participant selection, while appropriate for a qualitative study, will not support generalizations to a larger population of PSETs in Pennsylvania.

Even though this research is not exactly predictive, it can help the field of education because it shows how stories become tools and how PSETs work with more than the ideas, knowledge and experiences offered in the methods course. In fact the activities we do offer in the methods courses are in many ways filtered and altered by our pedagogical beliefs and practices. These ideas, concepts or practices presented in the methods courses do not transfer to PSETs classroom practices or writing skills magically. Nevertheless educators continue designing and teaching methods courses in a fantasy-like fashion where we believe students simply take up what we offer, and use it, as if they were blank pages.
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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Tools Preservice Secondary English Teachers Daw on When Learning to Teach Writing

Principal Investigator: Elsie Lindy Olan

102 Ikenberry Hall, University Park, PA 16802

elo119@psu.edu

561-207-1121

Advisor: Anne Elrod Whitney

166 Chambers Building, University Park, PA 16802

awhitney@psu.edu

814-863-7602
1. **Purpose of the Study:**

   The Proposed study will investigate what do preservice secondary English teachers draw on when learning to teach writing in a methods course. The research addresses the context

2. **Procedures to be followed:**

   As a regular part of your coursework, you will be engaging in activities that request you to reflect into some problem of practice.

   If you agree to participate in the research project, you would be agreeing to let me collect and analyze the interview and prompted reflection writing responses, inquiry project proposal, and data relevant to your inquiry project (problem of practice you have selected). You would also be agreeing to let us audio- or video-record in-class discussions pertaining all stages of conducting and crafting your inquiry project.

3. **Duration/Time:**

   Participating in the research will take no additional time beyond what you are spending on the inquiry project as part of your normal coursework.

4. **Statement of Confidentiality:**

   Your participation in this research is confidential. The data will be stored and secured on a password-protected computer. Only Elsie Olan and Anne Whitney will have access to the data. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally Identifiable information will be shared. After the study has been closed, I will keep the data for fifteen (15) years. The data will be destroyed by 2025. Your confidentiality will be kept to the degree permitted by the technology used. No guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.
5. Right to Ask Questions:

Please contact Elsie Lindy Olan at 561-207-1121 with questions or concerns about this study.

6. Voluntary Participation:

Your decision to allow your data to be used in this research is voluntary. You can stop the principal investigator from using your data at any time. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

7. Coursework Utilization

___ I agree to allow my interview and prompted reflection writing responses, inquiry project proposal, and data relevant to my inquiry project to be collected and analyzed by the research team of this study, for the purpose of investigating what do preservice secondary English teachers draw upon when learning how to teach writing in a methods course.

___ I DO NOT agree to allow my interview and prompted reflection writing responses, inquiry project proposal, and data relevant to my inquiry project to be collected and analyzed by the research team of this study, for the purpose of investigating what do preservice secondary English teachers draw upon when learning how to teach writing in a methods course.

8. Recordings

___ Th recordings will be stored on password protected computers in the possession of Elsie Olan and Anne Whitney, and only those two people will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be destroyed by 2025
___ I give permission for recordings of class discussions to be used in connection with this research project. I understand the recordings will be destroyed by December 2025.

___ I DO NOT give permission for recordings of class discussions to be used in connection with this research project.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this form for your records.

_____________________________________________   ______________________
Participant Signature                        Date

_____________________________________________   ______________________
Person Obtaining Consent                      Date
Appendix B

Problems of Practice Project

LL ED 412, Fall 2010

Project description:

In this project, you will conduct an inquiry into some "problem of practice" you encounter in your teaching. “Problems of practice” are issues that come up in your teaching (and, more importantly, in your reflection on teaching) as puzzlements, wonderings, persistent questions or tensions, or “sticky spots” in your practice as a teacher. They are not procedural questions, though concrete practices and strategies may be involved; instead, they are recurrent issues or areas of concern that you struggle with both in your thinking and in your day-to-day life in the classroom.

Keep in mind that “inquiry” means asking, not answering. Thus the goal is exploratory and interrogative. A good outcome would be a more nuanced and complex view of your problem, rather than an answer to your problem. The point here is not to “solve” the problem. Instead, it’s to give the problem (which is most likely a persistent one in our field) some serious consideration, drawing on your principled reflection from the classroom and outside resources of the field, and to arrive at a tentative place to stand on the matter as you move on to the next phase of your teaching career.
Appendix C

Problems of Practice Proposal Guidelines

LL ED 412, Fall 2010

Proposal-

In your 2-4 page proposal, please address:

- What “problem of practice” you intend to focus on
- What you know about it/think about it right now
- What questions you have about it
- Why it’s important (for you and in general)
- What resources you might draw upon in your inquiry
Appendix D

Interview Questions

I. Tell me about you as a teacher.
   A/1. What has been your educational path to Penn State University?

   B/2. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

   C/3. What kind of student are you? What kind of teacher are you?

II. Talk about yourself as a writer.

   D/4. How did you learn to write?

   E/5. Would you say that you are a writer?

   F/6. What was the most frustrating thing that happened to you as a student, writer, reader, teacher of writing?

   G/7. What was the most encouraging thing that happened to you as a student, writer, reader, teacher of writing?

   H/8. How do you encourage students to write?

   I/9. Can a student be forced to write?

   J/10. What are your strengths as a writer? What are things you are still working on?
III. Talk about yourself as a teacher of writing.

What do you think of when you hear the following words: Planning, discipline, methods, evaluation?

K/11. How would you rank these in importance to writing and why?
Planning, discipline, methods, evaluation.

L/12. How would you rank these in importance to learning to teach writing and why?
Planning, discipline, methods, evaluation.

M/13. How would you rank these in importance to teaching writing and why?
Planning, discipline, methods, evaluation.

N/14. How can you tell that a person is a good writer?

O/15. Do you consider yourself a teacher of writing?

P/16. What do you like most/dislike most about teaching writing?

Q/17. What qualities do you think an excellent teacher of writing possess?

IV. What has influenced you to become the teacher of writing you are right now?

R/18. Describe your student teaching experience.

S/19. Do you like to be challenged? (Give an example to support your answer.)
T/20. What do you think is the most difficult aspect of teaching today?

U/21. Describe the "best" lesson in teaching writing you have experienced?

V/22. Describe the "worst" lesson in teaching writing you have experienced?

W/23. Have there been moments or experiences in your LL ED/ education program that have influenced who you are as a teacher of writing?

X/24. How, if at all, have your former teachers influenced you as a teacher of writing?
Appendix E

Problems of Practice Project Guidelines

LL ED 412, Fall 2010

You will identify such a problem of practice and focus your attention on it throughout the remainder of the semester.

1) A paper of 10-15 pages that:
   a. Centers on a clearly defined question that grows out of the inquirer’s classroom practice
   b. Discusses the origins of the problem (in your own practice) and its wider roots and significance (for you and for us all)
   c. Explores what scholars and practitioners in our field have written about this problem. Specifically, you should refer to:
   d. Texts from this course and prior LL ED courses
   e. Journal articles such as those published in English Journal, Voices from the Middle, and other professional journals
   f. Other sources such as PCTELA sessions or the EC Ning
   g. Not only summarizes prior scholarship but also brings it to bear upon your own practice and the rest of the material you take up in the project
   h. Draws upon analyses of video from your own classroom which you have analyzed using StudioCode. Note that there is a difference between simply presenting video and offering an analysis of it.
   i. Offers thoughtful conclusions, tentative answers to the research question, and/or directions for future inquiry. The idea is not to settle the questions for all time (impossible) but to orient oneself and define an approach to the problem as you continue in your teaching practice.
   j. Is clearly written and free of errors
Appendix F

Prompted Reflection Writing: about the “Problems of Practice” Project

I.

What did the instructor want you to do?

What do you think are the expectations of this inquiry project and why?

How are you going to meet those expectations?

How did you come up/think/get to the problem of practice?

II.

What did you focus on?

What influenced your focus?

Is there anything that you have changed from your initial problem of practice?

Now that you have reviewed literature, what is your stance on writing or the teaching of writing?

Is there anything that stands out from this process of constructing an inquiry project that you would want to share with me?
Appendix G

In Vivo Codes for Meaning-Making Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN VIVO CODES FOR EACH WORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE---‘real-life’-‘theoretically –bound’-‘expertise-novice relationship’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITING----‘vehicle of expression’-‘means/way’ ‘freedom’ Writing is Freedom, keeps us [PSETs] in contact with “real-lives” of students. (Unanimously agreed) Writing is a process. It is therapeutic. An outlet that helps us [PSETs] obtain the freedom that words’ multiple meanings give you. Grants a voice in writing and the power to choose words that represent your ideas and strengths as a writer. A space to be creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTHENTICITY- “authenticity Is a quality beloved teachers display””. “authenticity is trust. Trust that teachers will be honest, straightforward and real”. Interchangeably used with transparency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANGUAGE---‘making-meaning’-‘choice’-‘aids/ assists’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTIONS---‘feelings’ ‘feeling ok about certain things’-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEECH---‘means of expression’-‘care enough to talk’-‘nonverbal cues’- ‘voice’-‘common ground’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHER---<code>aide</code>-<code>a real person</code> (authenticity)-<code>experienced other</code>- <code>believer</code>-<code>cares</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELOVED TEACHER- `a beloved teacher as one that pushes (challenges), cares, provides extra effort to help students, the classroom is a creative environment, appreciates students, respectful (talks and listens or vice versa), builds relationships with community and students, teachers who take their time to help student grow/ shows respect for students’ work and has patience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHING---<code>expertise through experience</code>-<code>real-life setting</code>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX H

TABLES FOR CHAPTER ONE

Table 3-1: Settings Involved in Research Question One

Table 4-1: Settings Involved in Research Question Two
Table 3: Settings Involved in Research Question One: Preteaching (undergraduate secondary Language and Literature methods course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Collection Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Problem of Practice proposals     | • Inquiry  
• Undergraduate methods coursework  
• Identify problems that may be encountered in preteaching experience | • Removal of Identifiers  
• Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation |                       |
| Interview Responses               | • Participants Background Information  
• Description of self as student, teacher, and writer  
• Establish contextual frame for participant  
• Reactions to methods coursework, specifically regarding to writing instruction, practices of teaching writing, and PSETs’ role as teachers.  
• Reactions to writing instruction in preteaching experience during language and literacy secondary education | • Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation  
• Secure location |                       |
| Problem of Practice papers | • Inquiry  
• Undergraduate methods coursework  
• Identify problems that may be encountered in preteaching experience | • Removal of Identifiers  
• Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation |
| Questionnaire Responses | • Reactions to inquiry of Problems of Practice (PP) process  
• Established goals of Problems of Practice (PP)  
• Established goals of methods coursework | • Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation  
• Secure location |
Table 4: Settings Involved in Research Question Two: Preteaching (undergraduate secondary Language and Literature methods course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Collection Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Problem of Practice proposals | • Identify problems that may be encountered in preteaching experience  
• Established goals of methods coursework | • Removal of identifiers  
• Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation | |
| Interview Responses (Conducted after Problem of Practice proposal) | • Description of self as student, teacher, and writer  
• Establish contextual frame for participant  
• Significant experience(s) with writing and/or writing instruction as students and PSETs  
• Established goals of methods coursework  
• Reactions to writing instruction in preteaching experience during language and literacy secondary education methods course  
• Value of writing  
• Reactions to methods coursework, specifically regarding to writing instruction, practices of teaching writing, and PSETs’ role as teachers.  
• Note or identify differences with learning to write and writing instruction | • Use of pseudonyms  
• Respondent validation  
• Secure location | |
| Problem of Practice papers | • Undergraduate methods coursework  
  • Identify problems that may be encountered in preteaching experience | • Removal of identifiers  
  • Use of pseudonyms  
  • Respondent validation |

| Questionnaire Responses | • Reactions to methods coursework, specifically regarding to Problem of Practice  
  • Established goals of problems of practice  
  • Analysis of Problem of Practice completion | • Use of pseudonyms  
  • Respondent validation  
  • Secure location |
APPENDIX I

TABLES

Table 9-1: Frequency of Stories in Assignment Research Question Two

Table 11-1: Frequency of Reflections in Assignments Research Question Two

Table 12-1: Frequency of Present and Past Experiences in Assignments Research Question Two
Table 9- Frequency of Stories in Assignments Research Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Frequent Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(7) pg 1 story about exp. -/+ 2-story about former teachers + (P) 3-story about former + (P) teachers/writing/authenticity (R) 4-story about teaching writing + (Pr) 5/6/7 Ø 8-story about former job –(P) -experience student seizure + (authentic) (R)(Pr) 9-story methods courses +(Pr) 10- story about former teacher/ identity + (R)(P)</td>
<td>(5) pg 1 – preteaching experience -/(Pr) preteaching experience +/(Pr) (R)(Pr) 3- student /teacher interaction +(Pr) -teacher /student interaction +(Pr)</td>
<td>(2)- interaction w/ instructor +(Pr) coping out of project -/+ ( R)(Pr)</td>
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<td>Riley</td>
<td>(2) pg 1 preteaching student/ teacher interaction+ (R)(Pr) -Informed incident +/-(R)(P)</td>
<td>(26) pg 1- Disclosure uncertainties/ beliefs +(R) pg 2 Professional identity/ Informed incident-(R)(Pr) -Disclosure of beliefs / practices+(R) pg 3 feelings writing+ -Disclosure (R)beliefs/practices+(P) -Informed incidents –(P) pg 4 –Informed incident grade school-(P) -Informed incident PSETs + -Previous experiences-(R)(P) pg 5- Informed incident +(Pr) pg 6 –Informed incident +(Pr) pg 7 –Disjuncture+(R)(Pr) pg 8 Ø pg 9- Informed incident+ Disclosure of practices(Pr) pg 10 –Disjuncture +(R)(P) pg 11- Informed incident + writing/Disclosure+(R)(P) -Disclosure practices +/- -Disclosure beliefs writing+(R)(Pr) pg 12- Informed incident/methods courses +(Pr) pg 13- Informed incident/ preteaching /Disclosure of beliefs &amp;practices+(R)(Pr) pg 14 –Informed incident/ methods courses (LLED 420) +(R)(Pr) Pg 15- Informed incident+(P) -Grade school experience with writing – (P) -Informed incident disclosure beliefs</td>
<td>(2) pg 1 Ø pg 2 - Disclosure practices/ beliefs (Pr)Informed incident +(R)(Pr) pg 3 – Informed incident /Disclosure practices +(R)(P)</td>
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<td>Jessie</td>
<td>(4) pg 1 - Informed incident, student/teacher interactions + (R)</td>
<td>(20) pg 1 - Informed incident, middle school + (R)(P) - Disclosure of beliefs + (R)(P) pg 2 - Informed incident, high school/college + (P) - Informed incident (classroom) - (P) pg 3 - Informed incident/Disclosure practices + (R)(P) - Informed incident (preteaching)/Disclosure beliefs (PSSA) - (R)(P) - Identity, Disclosure beliefs, student/teacher interaction + (Pr) pg 4 - Disclosure practices/Informed incident -/+ (R)(P) - Disjuncture of practices (writing)/Disclosure of practices &amp; beliefs -/+ (P) pg 8 - Disclosure of practices + (R)(Pr)(P) - Disclosure of beliefs -/+ (R)(Pr) - Disclosure of beliefs &amp; practices/Informed incident + (Pr)(P) - Disjuncture related to ideals -/+ (R)(P) - Informed incident preteaching experience - pg 9 - Disclosure of pedagogical practices/Informed incident in grade six -/+ (R)(Pr)(P) - Disclosure beliefs expectations, student/teacher relations + (R)(Pr) - Interactions conducive to student learning + (R)(Pr)(P) - Informed incident/Disclosure of uncertainty -/+ (Pr) - Informed incident (teacher/student interaction) + (R)(Pr)</td>
<td>(5) pg 1Ø pg 2 - Disclosure beliefs/practices + (R)(Pr) - Informed incident + (P) - Informed incident /preteaching experience -/+ (R)(Pr)(P) pg 3 Ø pg 4 - Informed incident high school/ beliefs/practices/experiences + (R)(P) pg 5 Ø pg 6 - Informed incident (412 W) (Pr) Disclosure of practices/beliefs + (PP)(Pr) Pages 7-8 Ø</td>
<td>(4) pg 1 - Disclosure, experience, practice &amp; reflection + (R)(Pr) - Informed incident/past experience high school student/teacher interaction -/+ (R)(P) - Writing, theory/practice (R)(Pr)(P) pg 2 Disclosure pedagogical practices/beliefs experiences + (R)</td>
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<td>Key</td>
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<td>(5) pg 1 - Informed incident – (Pr)</td>
<td>(16) pg 1Ø pg 2 - Informed incident/Disclosure of practices + (Pr)</td>
<td>(6) pgs 1,2 Ø pg 3 - Disclosure of beliefs &amp; practices, preteaching experience (noting something different)/Disjuncture – / (Pr)</td>
<td>(3) pg 1 - Informed incident, student / Teacher interaction + / Disclosure of beliefs (reflection) + / (Pr)</td>
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<td>Disclosure of uncertainties/ beliefs preteaching experience + (R)</td>
<td>pg 2 - Disclosure of expectations &amp; beliefs/Informed incident – / (P)</td>
<td>- Disjuncture teaching practices + (R)</td>
<td>pg 3 - Informed incident/Disclosure of beliefs (R) (Pr)</td>
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<td>pg 4 - Informed incident/Disclosure of practices (writing process)/Disjuncture – / (R)</td>
<td>- Informed incident w team mates (writing process) + (Pr)</td>
<td>pg 5,6,7 Ø pg 8 - Disclosure of practices, beliefs &amp; uncertainties/Informed incident +</td>
<td>- Preteaching experience/Disjuncture w approaches (writing instruction) – / (R)</td>
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<td>pg 9 - Informed incident/ Disclosure beliefs &amp; uncertainties + (P)</td>
<td>pg 10 - Disclosure of uncertainties, high school memories/Disjuncture (R)</td>
<td>- Informed incident, methods about teaching writing/Disclosure of beliefs &amp; expectations – / + (R)</td>
<td>(Pr)</td>
<td>- Disclosure of beliefs</td>
<td>pg 11 - Stories about methods courses/Disclosure of practices – / + (R)</td>
<td>(Pr)</td>
<td>- Disclosure of practices &amp; expectations (R) (present) +</td>
<td>- Informed incident/Disclosure of beliefs +</td>
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Key:
- Positive
- Negative
(R) Reflection
(Pr) Present
(P) Past
(#) Total
Table 11: Frequency of Reflections in Assignments for Research Question # 2

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<th>Professional Identity</th>
<th>Student Learning</th>
<th>Theoretically bound/practical knowledge</th>
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Table 12- Frequency of Present and Past Experiences in Assignments Research Question 2

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<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>PP proposal</th>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Frequent Stories</th>
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<td>Leah</td>
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<td>(7) Present Experiences + 3 -1 Past Experiences + 2 -1</td>
<td>(5) Present Experiences + 3 -1 Past Experiences + 2 -0</td>
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<td>Riley</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>Present Experiences + 1 -1 Past Experiences + 5 -4</td>
<td>(2) Present Experiences + 2 -0 Past Experiences + 0 -0</td>
<td>(0) Present Experiences + 0 -0</td>
<td>(30)</td>
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<td>Jessie</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>Present Experiences + 2 -1 Past Experiences + 9 -4</td>
<td>(5) Present Experiences + 3 -1 Past Experiences + 2 -0</td>
<td>(4) Present Experiences + 1 -0</td>
<td>(33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathew</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>Present Experiences + 3 -1 Past Experiences + 5 -2</td>
<td>(6) Present Experiences + 3 -0 Past Experiences + 3 -1</td>
<td>(3) Present Experiences + 2 -0</td>
<td>(30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key
+ Positive
- Negative
(Pr) Present
(P) Past
(#) Total
VITA

Elsie Lindy Olan

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Language, Culture and Society. The Pennsylvania State University.

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REFEREED ARTICLES


ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW