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## A Hermeneutic Study of Secondary English Language Arts Teacher Candidates' Writing Instruction Experiences in ESOL Methods Courses

Paula Bello  
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A HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER  
CANDIDATES' WRITING INSTRUCTION EXPERIENCES IN ESOL METHODS  
COURSES

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the College of Education and Human Performance  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Summer Term  
2016

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this hermeneutic study was to understand, describe and interpret secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods courses. The study included a purposeful convenience sample of 15 (fifteen) secondary ELA teacher candidates' (TC) attending 4 (four) different sections in 2 (two) ESOL methods courses. TCs were invited to participate in inquiry driven activities including written reflections in response to a literacy questionnaire, oral interviews responding to open-ended questions and focus/work groups' discussions, which allowed them to reflect about their past and present literacy and learning experiences and become reflexive about the application of knowledge and practices in their future classrooms. The phenomenological hermeneutic qualitative design granted the researcher insight into participants' literacy and learning experiences as lived in relationship with their contexts, in a specific place and time.

Colaizzi's (1978) seven-stages data analysis procedure, enabled the analysis and thorough description of TCs' experiences with writing instruction along their schooling and teacher education career. The following thematic categorization of participants' experiences was outlined: a)- TCs' experiences with instruction received and knowledge developed in teacher education programs, b)- TCs' recognition of good and bad practices in educational settings, including planning accommodations in general education classrooms, c)- TCs' experiences with ELs in authentic settings, d)- TCs' awareness process of ELs in schools, and e)- TCs' experiences with and about writing instruction to teach ELs.

Further in depth data analysis guided the researcher into the interpretation of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon of teacher education experiences with writing

instruction. TCs' experiences, drawn from different learning settings (including methods and content courses and field practicum), were articulated thanks to their participation in inquiry based learning activities. This breath of experiences specifically informed TCs' writing instruction experiences while attending ESOL methods courses. TCs' reflective and reflexive stances position them at the center of the educational phenomenon, in which TCs develop from facilitators of classroom communication to facilitators of learning processes and intercultural mediators.

The phenomenon of TCs' lived experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses, and by extension, content area courses and field practicum, needs to be analyzed, described and interpreted in order to develop practices conducive to inform the curricular development of teacher education programs and courses, to better prepare TCs to teach every learner develop knowledge and literacy, paying special attention to ELs' proficiency in English as a second language (ESL).

Models of hard-work and responsibility, I always followed the example of my parents Luis Belló and Marta Zelaya and I would like to thank them for teaching me about the value of studies and the pursuit of my dreams.

The support of my siblings Mariana Belló and Marco Antonio Ruiz Linares as well as that of friends and colleagues during this endeavor, has been incommensurable. To all of them my eternal thanks.

I would like to dedicate this work to my niece Frida and her brilliant future and in memoriam of my father Luis.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My greatest recognition to my supervisor, dissertation chair and mentor, Dr. Elsie L. Olan, whose dedication to the academic profession inspired and guided me to the accomplishment of my objectives. She made a great job as a guide and mentor along this process and was fundamental in the organization of the whole dissertation's committee work.

I would also like to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee members: Dr. Joyce Nutta, Dr. Carolyn Hopp and Dr. Florin Mihai, outside member, for their support and patience during this learning process. Many other professors at UCF offered their unconditional support in my pursuit of academic endeavours and I don't want to forget them, especially Dr. Cynthia Hutchinson, Dr. Thonas Owens and Dr. Rosa Cintron.

The TESOL department also collaborated in granting me access to teacher candidates attending two courses on ESOL content: a)- a course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, and b)- a course on issues in second language acquisition. My gratefulness to the TESOL department coordinator, Dr. Joyce Nutta and to the instructors who supported my study.

My recognition to Dr. Elsie Olan's graduate students for being my second eyes during the process of data analysis and their help as peer reviewers and to the teacher candidates who participated and shared their learning experiences with me.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS**

- CCSS – Common Core State Standards
- CCSSO – Council of Chief State School Officers
- CLT – Communicative Language Teaching
- EBP – Evidence-based practice
- EFL – English as a Foreign Language
- EL – English Learner
- ELA – English Language Arts
- ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- ESL – English as a Second Language
- ESOL- English for Speakers of Other Languages
- ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act
- FL – Foreign Language
- IRB – Institutional Review Board
- K- 12 – K through twelve (Primary and Secondary Education in the United States)
- L1 – Native Language
- L2 – Second Language
- LEP – Limited English Proficient
- LULAC – League of United Latin American Citizens
- META – Multicultural Education and Training
- NAEP – National Assessment of Educational Progress
- NCES – The National Center for Education Statistics
- NGA – National Governors Association
- NCLB – No Child Left Behind Act
- SBE – State Board of Education
- SL – Service Learning
- SLA – Second Language Acquisition

TC – Teacher Candidates

US – United States of America

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Demographic Changes in the US**

The immigrant population has been increasing in the last twenty-five years in the United States of America (US). In 1990, the foreign-born population of 19.7 million people accounted for 7.9 % of the total US population with the majority of immigrants living in California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York or Texas. By 2010, the immigrant population had increased to 40 million that accounted for 13 % of the US population, and spread to other states including Nevada, North Carolina and Washington (The PEW Charitable Trusts, 2014).

According to Beckhusen, Florax, Graaf, Poot and Wardorf (2013) the proportion of immigrants who had any amount of proficiency in English decreased, especially when comparing the immigrants that had arrived in the country in the 1900's to the ones that arrived in the 2000's. Moreover, the United States government has been conducting a laissez-faire policy towards English language acquisition by adult immigrants, despite the positive economic and social results that such policy could bring to the country. This situation has resulted in immigrants living and working in enclosed ethnic communities in which they all speak the same native language and in which they can progress economically in the world of work (Beckhusen et al., 2013).

In contrast, demographic changes have influenced the world of education in a different way. Educators have been required to transform teaching practices at different educational levels across different states in the US (Nutta, Mokhtari & Strebel, 2012). Teachers, school authorities, educational researchers, policy makers, teacher education programs' developers, teacher educators and educational institutions have had to face the challenge of considering and including English learners (EL) in general education classes. Thus, ELs and content area teachers



face a special educational situation in American schools, which needs accurate description and in depth analysis (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta, Strebel, Mokhtari, Mihai & Crevecoeur-Bryant, 2014).

### **English Learners (EL) in General Education Classrooms Today**

Section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), defines a Limited English Proficient (LEP), also referred to as English learner (EL), which is the descriptor that will be used in this dissertation, as an individual who: a)- is 3 through 21 years old; b)- is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; c)- was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; d)- is Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; AND who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; e)- has a migratory status, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; f)- has difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language that may be sufficient to deny the individual — (i) the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3); (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society (NCLB, 2001; Linqunti & Cook, 2013).

The number of English Learners (EL) in American public schools has been growing in the past two decades (Nutta et al., 2012). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2014) reports that the percentages of ELs in public schools have risen between 2002-03 (8.7 %, adding up an estimate of 4.1 million students) and 2011-12 (9.1 %, adding up to an estimate of

4.4 million students). While the NCES reports on students who participate in language assistance programs, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages programs (ESOL), High Intensity Language Training and bilingual education, the majority of ELs in different states across the country attend K-12 general education classrooms together with English proficient classmates.

As regards evaluation, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2014) informs that the academic achievement gap existing between public school students, both in the Hispanic group and the White group (English proficient speakers), has not narrowed both in Mathematics and Reading for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the whole country. The situation of 12<sup>th</sup> graders' ELs' evaluation in Mathematics is worse because their 2013 scores equal 109, which represent a loss of 7 points since 2009 and 11 points since 2005. In comparison, non-ELs' 2013 scores have remained equal since 2009 with a score of 155, which also demonstrates an increase of 4 points since 2005. In reading ELs 2013 scores equal 237 and that remains unchanged since 2009. Non-ELs scored 290 in 2013 and that has remained unchanged since 2009 (NAEP, 2013).

Researchers consider that though beneficial, the multicultural and multilingual reality to which ELs are exposed in general education classrooms, also poses important English language, literacy, and content learning challenges on ELs (Nutta et al. 2012). These challenges are evidenced in ELs' low academic achievement in evaluations as showed in the National Assessment of Educational Progress report (NAEP, 2013). ELs' have also demonstrated increasing feelings of frustration when facing the classroom communication gap that exists between their current understanding and use of English and the grade-level demands of language skills or language demands (listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) in English necessary to acquire knowledge of specific content (Good, Masewicz & Vogel, 2010; Nutta et al., 2014, p.2).

Consequently, scholars have become advocates in the education of teacher candidates (TC) from different teacher education programs, who can teach every student in K12 general education classrooms. Moreover, these TCs need to receive the appropriate education to help ELs improve their proficiency level in English as a second language (ESL), as well as their proficiency in academic content knowledge and literacy (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014). In this dissertation study, TCs are defined as students enrolled in teacher education programs, attending content area courses, methods' courses specialized in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and in field practicum, at the largest metropolitan public research university in a southern-eastern state in the US.

### **Teachers in General Education Classrooms Today**

Literature on teacher education programs focusing on the need to prepare teachers to face the increasing EL-enrollment in K-12 general education classrooms, as well as their low academic achievement in state and national tests has been considered, reviewed and discussed so far. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that these tendencies appear to be projecting into the future (Clair, 1995; Clair, 1998; Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2011; Durgunoğlu & Hughes, 2010; Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Menken, Antúnez, Dilworth & Yasin, 2001; Nutta et al., 2012). However, the emergent literature discussing the new challenges teachers need to face in general education classrooms in public schools, needs to be considered, especially when dealing with the knowledge and practice teachers need to develop to be able to teach ELs in multicultural, multilingual classrooms (Nutta et al., 2012; Culp & Schmidlein, 2012).

## **ELs' Guarantee to Access Quality Education**

Teachers have been mandated to account for ELs' improvement and success in every subject attended in K-12 general education classrooms by laws issued to support and guarantee ELs' access to education and to equal opportunities as their English proficient classmates. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) through *Title III: Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement Act* makes provisions to assist and ensure that ELs, attend classes, develop literacy, academic knowledge in the content areas and proficiency in ESL in order to reach state academic standards at the same academic level of their English proficient classmates. State educational institutions, public schools and other local agencies are entitled to develop quality language-instruction programs for ELs (children and adolescents) and their families and communities. Moreover, the law holds State educational institutions, schools and local agencies accountable for ELs' English proficiency improvement and academic content achievement, which will be assessed yearly (NCLB, 2001).

Teachers are also mandated to apply the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which can offer positive learning opportunities, though also new challenges for ELs (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al. 2014). Sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and released in June 2010, the CCSS establish high quality academic standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts, including content knowledge and skills development to be achieved by K-12 general education students at the end of each academic year. CCSS strive to unify academic standards across the whole country and offer equal educational opportunities to every student. A main outcome focuses on high school students' preparedness to start academic work at universities or join the workforce (Kornhaber, Griffith & Tyler, 2014; Nutta et al., 2014).

On their side, federal states have also developed teaching certification requirements. The State of Florida Department of Education requires that teachers receive the appropriate education and certification to work with ELs populations in general education classrooms. Consequently, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) Endorsement requirements for English Language Arts teachers became part of certification rules in 1990, before the agreement on the Multicultural Education and Training Advocacy (META) Consent Decree was signed (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

Florida's Bureau of Student Achievement through Language Acquisition supports Florida's school districts and schools to comply with federal and state laws and jurisprudence regarding the education of ELs. The Bureau's main objective is to secure comprehensible education for ELs enforcing the compliance with laws and regulations including the 1990 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) et al. and the State Board of Education (SBE) Consent Decree, and the 2003 Modification of the Consent Decree. The Consent Decree protects ELs's rights to have equal access to every program of education being implemented in public schools (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

Accordingly, teacher education programs, teacher educators and curriculum developers have set up to face the challenge of preparing future teachers to understand and be able to teach diverse populations in public schools mainstream classrooms (Lucas, Villegas & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; McGraner & Saenz, 2009; Menken, Antúnez, Dilworth & Yasin, 2001; Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014). In this respect, the Bureau of Student Achievement is in charge of distributing grant funding to provide leadership, coordination and technical assistance related to curriculum and instruction to secure the education of future teachers attending official teacher

education programs, as well as, to provide supplemental scientifically research-based academic and professional teachers' programs across the state (Florida Department of Education, 2015).

President Obama signed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, which reaffirms the Elementary and Secondary Education Act's (ESEA) enforcement of equal educational opportunity for all students. The new law would build on the areas in which education has progressed since 2008 and highlights: a)- state educational high standards to ensure high-school graduates are ready for higher education or the world of work, b)- state secure resources to support struggling subgroups of students, low-performing schools and high schools with high dropout rates, c)- state support for schools to develop their own systems for improvement based on evidence, d)- the reduction of unnecessary, ineffective testing, e)- equal access of more children to high-quality preschool (Executive Office of the President, 2015).

### **Theoretical Rationale: Preparing Teacher Candidates to Reach English Learners**

The work of Nutta et al. (2012) and Nutta et al. (2014) demonstrates advocacy in favor of educating teachers in general and teacher candidates (TC) in particular, who are attending different education programs, as described above, to teach every student in K-12 general education classrooms, and especially ELs in those classrooms. Researchers depart from the premise that preparing TCs with specific content knowledge to teach ELs in varied disciplines and educational levels in K-12 general education classrooms can be beneficial for every learner.

Thus, teacher education programs need to be organized around second language acquisition (SLA) processes including the following areas of knowledge: a)- nature of language and the process involved in SLA, b)- accommodations in instruction and assessment for ELs with different levels of language proficiency, c)- characteristics of discourse and text in TCs'

own disciplines and areas of expertise to support ELs' literacy, academic content knowledge and the development of English as second language (ESL) (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014).

Culp and Schmidlein (2012), on the other hand, introduced reflective questioning as a recommendable practice to prepare TCs to work with ELs. Critical reflection occurs in two ways: a)- guides TCs to become aware of their own culture, as well as to understand their students' culture, b)- helps TCs recognize their biases and beliefs understanding that their views are neither universal nor unique (Culp & Schmidlein, 2012). Different perspectives in teacher education programs intend to educate TCs to work effectively in general education classrooms. As mentioned before, teachers need to be prepared to understand the communication gap, namely the difference existing between subject and grade specific demands in language skills and each EL's personal proficiency level in ESL. Communication gap can also be understood, as the space in which teachers need to work to accommodate and/or differentiate instruction for ELs. If every lesson includes the strategies and adaptations necessary to make curriculum, instruction and assessment accessible for ELs, the communication gap can be narrowed and literacy, knowledge of subject specific content in order to improve academic achievement, and ESL proficiency can be boosted (Good et al., 2010; Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014).

Quantitative research studies have been designed to collect and analyze survey data focused on in- and pre-service teachers' self-efficacy, attitudes and perceived preparation to teach varied disciplines and grade levels in general education classrooms. Data analysis results indicate that teachers generally perceive lack of importance given to specific EL methodology in teacher education programs. Participants mostly considered themselves unprepared to teach ELs and recognized the need for more linguistic and cultural preparation to teach multilingual,

multicultural classrooms (Coady, Harper & de Jong, 2011; Durgunoğlu & Hughes, 2010; Polat, 2010; O'Neal, Ringler & Rodriguez, 2008).

### **Personal Background and Interest in the Study**

Being an English learner (EL) myself, my personal inquiry started around my own efforts to learn English as a foreign language (EFL), activity that I started when I was eleven years old and I have continued up to the present. I have always strived to understand the process of language learning and despite having become an EFL teacher and having taught EFL for eighteen years, the process of language learning and acquisition continues to guide my inquiry.

My doctoral studies have served as a platform to conduct different studies that have helped me develop my inquiry into the process of language learning, the development of a multicultural and multilingual conscious society and the relationships that exist between language, culture and society. Following qualitative research designs, I conducted and co-conducted studies with in-service and pre-service teachers in different social settings, locally and internationally. In particular, this dissertation study was inspired after having conducted a pilot study with teacher candidates (TC) attending a methods course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools. These TCs were enrolled in different teacher education programs at the college of education, at the largest metropolitan public research university in a southern-eastern state in the US.

The pilot study was designed as a phenomenological study about TCs' learning experiences and reflection process while learning about skills and strategies for teaching ELs in general education classrooms. I observed classes, researched with TCs attending face-to-face classes and shadowed instructors in this methods course, which is cross-curricular and attended



by TCs enrolled in sophomore, junior and senior years. Every education program at this institution is infused with specific activities, assignments, and materials designed to educate and prepare TCs in different disciplines to work with ELs in general education classrooms (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014). Moreover, TCs attending English Language Arts, Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education programs are required to attend one course more on issues in second language acquisition.

Under supervision, the pilot study was conducted with TCs attending different sections of the methods' course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, described above, during Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 and the final manuscript detailing the study design, findings and discussions was finalized in December 2015 (Belló & Olan, manuscript under revision). Going a step further, this dissertation study has been designed to advocate for the need to go deeper into researching TCs' learning experiences and reflective processes while attending methods courses, where they are getting prepared to teach English Language Arts to culturally and linguistically diverse students. More specifically, I am interested in investigating the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses.

Additionally, as co-investigator I participated together with my supervisor, in the design of a longitudinal international study to inquire into the lives and work of in-and pre-service teachers working and living in different regions of the world. Designed in various stages of data collection, the study granted participant teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) a non-threatening space where they could reflect about their career paths, specifically referring to the factors that influenced their career choices and their relationships with EFL, the culture and the society in various regions of the world. Data collected, both in face-to-face encounters and via

internet, consisted of written reflections, life stories and histories triggered by a semi-structured questionnaire. Expanding to more teachers around the world, the study also contemplated the gathering of narrative data from pre- and in-service English Language Arts (ELA) American teachers.

Narrative data enabled the researchers to understand the relationship teachers establish with the languages through their contacts with society and culture, as well as, their personal inquiry and language learning experiences. Two manuscripts have been written from data analysis and discussion: a)- Olan & Belló (2016). Understanding teachers' career choices: Narratives from international in-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and b)- Olan & Belló (2016-In Press). The relationship between language, culture and society: Teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) positioning in society.

### **Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand, describe and interpret the experiences with writing instruction that English Language Arts' (ELA) teacher candidates' (TC) had while attending methods courses specialized on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) content. The phenomenon of the experiences with writing instruction as lived by TCs, needs to be analyzed, described and interpreted in order to develop practices conducive to prepare TCs to teach in K-12 general education classrooms, populated by both, English proficient students and English learners (EL). The ultimate goal of this study was to interpret TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending methods courses specialized in ESOL content. It is the hope of the researcher that the study's final results and discussion would inform in the curricular development of teacher education programs and courses, to

include reflective and reflexive activities. These activities would support TCs' preparation to help every learner in general education classrooms develop content knowledge and literacy, paying special attention to the teaching of ELs, who also need to develop proficiency in English as a second language (ESL).

### **Research Questions**

The researcher invited TCs attending two methods courses: a)- a course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, and b)- a course on issues in second language acquisition, to participate in the study. Thus, the research questions that guided this study were:

*Research Question 1: What are teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods' courses?*

*Subset Question 1: What learning experiences inform in the preparation of TCs' writing instruction to teach ELs in K-12 general education classrooms?*

*Subset Question 2: What tasks and/or activities inform the preparation of TCs' writing instruction to teach ELs in K-12 general education classrooms?*

### **Research Theoretical Background: Phenomenology**

Phenomenology of knowledge analyses cognitive experiences by means of their innate content looking for the authentic meaning in their logical concepts. Because phenomenology deals with experiences in their purest existence, Farber (2006) offers an extreme interpretation of Husserl's (1859-1938) views, according to which the natural world and metaphysical objectifications are eliminated, experiences cannot be referred to by means of descriptions, there are no presumptions about people, it raises no questions about ourselves or other individuals and

it makes no hypotheses (Farber, 2006, pp.182-3). Such an analysis produces an intuitive abstract knowledge focusing on the general essence of the phenomenon evident through consciousness (Farber, 2006, van Manen, 1990).

### **Phenomenological Research Approach**

Phenomenology has been established as a solid, radical research approach to science (Creswell, 2013, Farber, 1962, 2006, Moustakas, 1994, Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, 1990).

According to Moustakas (1994) phenomenology can be used to discover knowledge and apply theories into human science. Phenomenology has its roots in a subjective openness, which grants researchers creativity to study experience, of others and of self, by using reflectivity in order to discover the most essential ideas and values that would last in time (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 25-6).

The phenomenological research approach grants researchers the opportunity to question how we experience the world we live in. In phenomenological research, individuals have the intention to question the secrets that constitute the world and by means of theorizing about it, we completely become a part of this world (van Manen, 1990). Creswell (2013) explains how phenomenologists look for the essential, innate meaning of an experience seeking to reduce individual views of a phenomenon. Thus, they can offer the collective meaning and description that individuals develop of the essence in their common lived experiences of that phenomenon (Creswell, 2013, p.76). In order to reach that objective, van Manen (1990) discusses the methodological structure recommended in phenomenological research, which consists of the following steps: a)- recognition of a phenomenon; b)- investigation of experience as lived; c)- reflection on essential themes that characterize the phenomenon; d)- description of the phenomenon through writing and re-writing; e)- pedagogical orientation of the phenomenon; f)-

balance the research context by considering the parts and the whole of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

### **Approaches to Phenomenology: Hermeneutics**

This study followed a phenomenological hermeneutic approach described by van Manen (1990) and Heidegger (1927, 1996) as a human science research approach. Phenomenology describes an approach to lived experience, while hermeneutics provides an interpretation of “texts of life”, i.e. life stories produced by those who experience the phenomenon. This interpretation uses semiotics to develop an appropriate writing approach for the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics (van Manen, 1997).

This study was designed to analyze, describe and interpret teacher candidates’ experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages methods courses. According to Heidegger (1927, 1997) hermeneutic phenomenology understands the experience of individuals who strive to understand their existence in the present world and time, i.e. their *Dasein*, in order to get to know and develop awareness of themselves, their own presence in a geographical place and historical time, as well as, the individual’s relationships with that contextual place and time, and the individuals within that context.

### **Dissertation Roadmap**

In Chapter 1 the researcher provided an overview of the study including an explanation of the study’s antecedents, its theoretical rationale and purpose. The introduction to the study also included a discussion of theoretical background of phenomenological research, the importance of learning experiences and the researcher’s personal interest in the study. A brief reference to the importance of educating TCs to teach every learner in general education classrooms, and

specially ELs, establishes a framework for introducing the study's purpose and the research questions that guided the study.

In Chapter 2 a review of the existing literature and research in writing and writing instruction established the necessary framework to discuss writing in second language. The communion among these areas offered a valuable framework to discuss the importance of writing instruction and writing as a cognitive process which results fundamental to develop the process of academic content learning, ESL proficiency development and writing in a second language (L2).

Chapter 3 included the methodological outline for this phenomenological hermeneutical study. A discussion about sampling methods, data collection instruments' design, data collections and analysis procedures was offered.

Chapter 4 discussed data analysis process passing through subsequent stages in which data was constantly analyzed and reduced. The detailed description of the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses constituted the core of the chapter and offered a thorough discussion of the phenomenon under study in relationship to the main research question, namely what are teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses. Analysis of the subset questions was also offered. First, there was reference to the learning experiences that inform in the preparation of TCs' writing instruction when preparing to teach ELs in K-12 general education classrooms. Second, a discussion of the tasks or activities that inform the preparation of TCs' writing instruction in their areas of expertise in order to teach in multilingual, multicultural classrooms was added.

Chapter 5 offered an interpretation of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon under study, as well as a conclusion in relation to the phenomenon's fundamental structure.

Implications for the academic community, teacher educators, teacher education programs and suggestions for future research were offered. Finally, limitations to the study were specified.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the introduction to the study, I discussed the benefits of organizing teacher education programs around the process of second language acquisition (SLA). It is important to educate teacher candidates (TC) to understand, a)- the nature and process of SLA, b)- the accommodations in instruction and assessment according to ELs' levels of proficiency in English as second language (ESL), c)- the characteristics of discourse in TCs' different disciplines and areas of expertise (Nutta et al., 2012; Nutta et al., 2014). Such preparation is meant to be beneficial for every learner in K-12 general education classrooms. However, the focus of this study was on the education of TCs who would be teaching English learners (EL), who attend general education multilingual and multicultural classrooms (Nutta et al., 2014).

Students in general and ELs in particular need to attend K-12 general education classes and learn and develop academic content knowledge. Furthermore, ELs need to develop proficiency in ESL, are required to accomplish most of the same assignments as their English proficient classmates, sit for state mandated exams and use English language demands at high levels of proficiency. Consequently, it is desirable and expected that ELs: a)- learn and develop grade appropriate levels of proficiency in subject knowledge, b)- use language demands in English proficiently, and c)- develop proficiency in ESL (Nutta et al., 2014).

### **Learning and Writing: Review of Literature**

Learning in the transactive views of John Dewey (1983) and Jean Piaget (1971), refers to the re-organization of knowledge and cognitive acts enlightened by experience as discussed in Emig (1977). When learning and writing, individuals receive re-inforcement and feedback, see relationships and apply hypothesis, integrate cerebral activity, become active, connected and



selective, keep engaged and work respecting their own pace (Berthoff, 1978; Britton, 1970; Emig, 1977; Fulwiler, 1982). Moreover, process writing and learning are connected because they enact transformation of experience through written, graphic, hand-produced symbols. Learning and writing are more efficacious through re-inforcement, which is used by writing involving hand, eye and brain marks to represent learning (Emig, 1977).

Emig's (1977) thesis that "writing represents a unique mode of learning" (p. 122) finds support in the research and writings of the influential psychologists Vygotsky (1962), Bruner (1971) and Luria (1971) who consider "writing as heuristic" (p.122). Heuristics implies that higher order, cognitive processes are favored and developed with the use of language, and more specifically, with the implementation of writing. Language as a system of symbols used to receive and transmit information, becomes key in thought processes, in communication, in learning, knowing and understanding (Fulwiler, 1982). Moreover, language is central to human experience, especially to manipulate and give shape to information by means of using expressive forms of speech, mainly writing (Britton, 1970; Emig 1977; Fulwiler, 1982).

### **Writing as a Cognitive Process**

Since 1980s scholars and researchers have advocated in favor of writing skills development to support and expand learning in every content area (Athanases, Wahleithner & Bennet, 2013; Bangert-Drowns, Hurley & Wilkinson, 2004; Elbow, 1973; Fulwiler, 1982; Graham & Perrin; 2007; Graham, 2008; Sundeen, 2015; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). Proponents of learning content specific knowledge through writing understand it as a means of meaning making, exploring within different subject areas, or promoting self-awareness (National Commission on Writing, 2003; Elbow, 1975; Fulwiler, 1982). Writing is understood as a tool for

learning not merely to show knowledge already learned (Applebee, Lehr & Auten, 1981; Athanases et al., 2013; Fulwiler, 1982). Thus, access to higher levels of education, the world of work and personal promotion are favored by sound-developed writing skills (Athanases et al., 2013; Baecher, Schieble, Rosalia, & Rorimer, 2013; Graham & Perrin, 2007; Graham, 2008; National Commission on Writing, 2003; Sundeen, 2015; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). Writing instruction becomes fundamental in the development of independent thinking, general problem solving and development of learning skills (Emig, 1977; Fulwiler, 1982; National Commission on Writing, 2003, 2006).

### **Main Constructs in Writing Instruction**

The overarching concept of literacy intersects with the ones referring to writing and writing instruction in the analysis of the literature. Literacy can be understood as the ability individuals have to engage with different kinds of texts autonomously, by assigning to, receiving and developing different interpretations from them (Venezky, 1999). Myers (1996) states that literacy includes many social practices, particularly communication practices, which are mandated by political decisions and social status. Communication in this sense includes the use of oral and written texts, visual objects, gestures, tokens, pictorial and alphabetic texts.

Researchers have defined writing in different ways, as a mode of learning (Emig, 1977; Langer & Applebee, 1987), a process of meaning making (Elbow, 1975; Murray, 1987) and development of analytical capabilities (National Commission on Writing, 2003). Teaching and learning to write have been defined as ‘complex cognitive and linguistic acts’ occurring in social, but constrained settings (Troia & Olinghouse, 2013, p. 345). Langer and Applebee (1987) emphasize the centrality of efficacious writing instruction in order to guarantee the development

of thinking processes conducive to the success of individuals in varied educational levels. Thus, TCs' preparation in writing instruction to teach English learners is fundamental to guide ELs develop knowledge and literacy in school subject areas, acceptable academic performance, literacy and proficiency in the English language and in the use of language skills or demands in English (Nutta et al., 2014).

The analysis of literature and research has made apparent how political movements have influenced theories of teaching and learning which in turn have influenced literacy approaches in different school levels (Myers, 1996). This influence is visible in the evolution writing instruction in English has historically had, the way teachers have been instructed to teach writing, the mode of writing instruction in schools and the written works produced by students (Myers, 1996).

### **Writing Instruction: A Historical Overview**

Historically, different models of teaching and learning have influenced the development of different models of writing instruction. A historical analysis can be beneficial in this discussion since it can help provide light as regards TCs' varied experiences with writing instruction in their disciplines and areas of expertise throughout their schooling (Olan, 2012).

The 1900s were dominated by a strong view of language as an object that could be decoded, defined and analyzed (Connors, 1985; Myers, 1996). Over 70 years (1916-1983) the main focus of writing instruction was on prescriptive correctness, analysis of text sections and the avoidance of textual and grammatical errors (Connors, 1985; Letcher, 2010; Myers, 1996). Literacy instruction in general, and writing instruction in particular focused on following (good) model texts paying attention to structure and grammatical correctness. Students wrote grammar

drills, analyzed and corrected sentences, answered questions about texts or wrote summaries from texts. Composition instruction was mainly devoted to writing following sets of techniques and grammatical rules, thus composition required low effort or elaboration (Connors, 1985; Letcher, 2010; Myers, 1996). Myers (1996) further discusses about the low position composition had in English Language Arts college courses and teacher education programs, where faculty would teach Literature theory classes and teaching assistants, composition. The poor level of writing instruction received by teachers attending teacher education programs was reported together with a lack of interest of school authorities in writing instruction in K-12 levels of education (Applebee, 1981, Myers, 1996).

By the 1980s the need to develop higher-order thinking skills in K-12 levels students became prevalent. While teachers were following the literacy trend described above, they had not been successful in helping K-12 students become higher-order thinkers (Myers, 1996). Reports on national language ability surveys conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were published and their results demonstrated the “literacy crisis” the US was undergoing. The movement towards composition as an academic inquiry method in higher education programs had already started in 1949 at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). Since then, writing instruction in K-12 continued to evolve to guarantee students their completion of schooling, access to higher-levels of education and the world of work (Nystrand et al.,1993; Myers, 1996; Witte & Faigley, 1993).

The nature of writing became the central topic of research, particularly of the writing process, and the way in which texts, writers and readers interact in search for meaning (Nystrand et al. 1993). Flower and Hayes (1980) collaborated in order to explain the organization of writing processes, including task environment, the writer’s long term memory, hypothesis and protocol

analysis and model text (Hayes & Flower, 1980). The researchers explained that writing consists of three major processes: a)- planning, b)- translating and c)- reviewing, each of which contains sub processes. In general, the function of *planning* refers to gathering information from the task environment, *translating* includes gathering information from the writer's memory and *reviewing* helps the writer improve the quality of the text produced. From the 1980's onwards, researchers have developed studies applying the process-oriented perspective. Attention concentrates on the tasks performed while writing, instead of solely on the finalized product without disregarding cognitive processes, expression and the situation in which the writing task takes place (Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012).

Cognitive work has become central to the development of higher-order thinking skills necessary to support learning in different areas through writing, as well as the recognition of the writer's own voice and positionality (Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981; Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012). However, from the late 1980's onwards, a new conception of literacy characterized by cultural and social interactions evolved (Myers, 1996; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Researchers' and theorists' understanding of writing and writing instruction evolved from a pure cognitive conception into a social view of learning a language. Theories of learning changed from an individualistic to a sociocultural theory, and installed the conception that human learning develops in social and interactive settings. In this new light, literacy development needed meaningful settings and tasks; the interaction with more experienced peers and different kinds of support that the learner could use to develop learning (Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012).

## **Writing Instruction in the New Millennium**

In the new millennium, the National Commission on Writing, both in 2003 and 2006, as well as researchers like Graham and Perrin (2007), Graham (2008), Kiuahara, Graham and Hawken (2009), Applebee and Langer (2009, 2011), Troia & Olinghouse (2013) recognized writing instruction and writing proficiency were in crisis and proposed the need for a ‘writing revolution’. A new focus on writing and writing instruction intended to re-assign value to language, communication and knowledge development in the classrooms.

The National Commission on Writing (2003 and 2006) and Graham (2008) have offered recommendations for improving writing instruction including the development of: a)- a comprehensive writing policy according to states’ education standards, b)- a district writing plan, c)- writing across the curriculum subjects in all grade levels, d)- writing theory and practice for teachers’ license, e)- improvement in writing instruction in higher education level, f)- courses on how to teach writing for TCs, and g)- new programs to teach writing to ELs.

However, these improvements in writing instruction present the following challenges: a)- more time for writing is necessary, b)- improvement of assessment or measuring results in the standards-base reform movement, c)- integration of technology in teaching and learning writing as connected ideas, words, images and multimedia designs, d)- classroom support and improved writing instruction for pre- and in-service teachers, e)- improved teacher education to teach linguistic diverse classrooms (including ELs) (National Commission on Writing, 2003, 2006). Graham and Perrin (2007), Graham (2008) and Kiuahara, Graham and Hawken (2009), on their side have offered elements of current writing instruction drawn from research which have been found effective in developing writing to favor learning.

While analysis and provisions were being made, literacy development and writing instruction started to focus on standards and accountability across the curriculum. The standardization process changed what needed to be taught and learned in every area including writing (National Commission on Writing, 2006). The US educational system decided on the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that were finally adopted in 2010 by 43 states, the District of Columbia and 4 US territories. The CCSS were regarded as an opportunity for American educational system to establish a clear description of skills and knowledge K-12 students should develop along their years in school, from kindergarten (pre-school) to the last year in high school (grade 12). It was expected that high school graduates would be better prepared for college after schooling based on CCSS and that the whole country would prosper and become more competitive as a consequence of improved educational outcomes (Carmichael, Wilson, Martino, Finn, Porter-Magee, & Winkler, 2010; Sundeen, 2015; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013).

The evolution towards more emphasis on writing instruction is based on requirements for accountability in education and the needs for standardized instruction to prepare students to sit for standardized tests. Thus, the importance external exams have in the decision of content and instruction (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Sundeen, 2015). Criticism of the CCSS have been introduced including: a)- the need to develop and implement effective practices and strategies for writing instruction specially in the later grades, as well as, b)- effective application of evidenced-based practice (EBP) findings in writing and writing instruction (Sundeen, 2015; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013). Even when writing is recognized as central in the teaching and learning of different areas across the curriculum, high-stakes testing has established some constraints to the previously discussed premise that writing is fundamental to learn, to build up knowledge and

new understandings (Applebee & Langer, 2011). More research is necessary in the areas related to current writing instruction strategies and the connection existing between the theory and the practice in real classroom settings (Applebee & Langer, 2011; Troia & Olinghouse, 2013).

### **Writing Instruction Research**

A thematic analysis of theories that offer an analytical framework to describe, analyze and understand writing instruction in college level English Language Arts' methods courses was conducted. Data consisted of eight research studies conducted between 2000 and 2013 (Moore, 2000; Street, 2003, Hochstetler, 2007; Stockinger, 2007; Gibson, 2007; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012; Hundley & Holbrook, 2013). These studies had been carried out with preservice English Language Arts teachers attending methods courses in teacher education programs except for Hochstetler's (2007) study that focused on studying teacher education programs by means of data collected from methods' courses' instructors who submitted their courses' syllabi and participated in interviews.

Preliminary results indicated that researchers had identified clear areas of interest within their theoretical framework discussion: a)- social constructivism was considered as the theoretical umbrella to understand writing instruction and learning as a mediated cognitive process of collaboration, reflection, inquiry and problem solving (Stockinger, 2007; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012), b)- writing was important in learning and cognitive development (Street, 2003; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012), c)- writing instruction was understood as process-oriented to foster competence, skills, knowledge and motivation development (Moore, 2000; Gibson, 2007; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012; Hundley & Holbrook, 2013), d)- teacher education included activity settings where knowledge was socially developed (Moore, 2000; Letcher, 2010; Olan 2012), e)-



preservice teachers personal and professional development process (Street, 2003; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012), and f)- discussion of learning experiences in class meetings (Moore, 2000; Street, 2003; Stockinger, 2007; Gibson, 2007; Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012).

Within constructivism, analyzed research studies discussed different aspects including a)- teachers' attitudes and learning experiences with writing (Street, 2003), b)- teachers' self-confidence and effectiveness to support good competence in writing (Street, 2003), c)- personal growth as writer (Street, 2003, Letcher, 2010), and d)- writing to develop learning and cognition (Street, 2003, Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012). However, more research is necessary to obtain more conclusive views about theory and practice that supports writing instruction and the preparation of pre-service teachers in sound writing instruction methodology.

A thematic analysis of research studies' results indicated that English Language Arts preservice teachers were capable of understanding a)- the importance of their own previous experiences that shaped them as writers and teachers of writing (Street, 2003; Stockinger, 2007; Letcher, 2010; Olan, 2012), b)- the impact of teacher education programs in developing awareness and/or knowledge of writing instruction (Moore, 2000; Street, 2003, Hostetler, 2007; Stockinger, 2007, Letcher, 2010, Olan, 2012; Hundley & Holbrook, 2013), c)- the development of writing process and effective writing instruction (Moore, 2000; Letcher, 2010), and d)- the development of teachers' identity and construction of self-image as teachers of writing (Street, 2003; Stockinger, 2007; Olan, 2012).

The same thematic analysis helped to understand which research results had been contentious. Horstetler (2007) and Letcher's (2010) research studies found that little instruction has been dedicated to writing in English Language Arts methods courses whereas writing instruction was being developed in other classes including reading and literature classes, which

could discuss writing instruction in more depth. Hochstetler (2007) added the need to define writing instruction in order to understand the way in which writing instruction is addressed in methods courses. Letcher (2010) added participants' views as regards their writing practices which are more aligned with accepted practices in their particular schools and districts, rather than with theories and practices developed in coursework.

New trends in writing instruction included new conceptions of writing a)- elaborating alternative ways of organizing writing using technology, b)- difficulty of understanding narrative with images, c)- resistance to non-linear narratives, and d)- conception of digital technologies as support, not as tools for composing texts (Hundley & Holbrook, 2013).

The present discussion about research in writing instruction in English Language Arts' education programs needs to be enlarged with further research studies carried out with TCs in every content area. More research needs to be conducted in order to discuss the connection existing between back-up theories in writing instruction and the results obtained in order to analyze whether this system cooperates in the education of teachers who are prepared to teach writing or fails to do so.

### **The Writing Process: Cognitive Demands in Writing in Native Language (L1) and Second Language (L2)**

Flower and Hayes' (1981) description of the writing process consists of three major processes: a)- planning, b)- translating and c)- reviewing, which do not occur in linear or formulaic fashion, but rather in a personal and recursive mode (Johns, 1990). Moreover, Zamel (1983) stresses the inventive and generative nature of the writing process through which meaning is developed, without disregarding the writer's knowledge about the topic, sense of audience and purpose when writing.

Nold (1981) states that the process of translating demands the writer “to juggle the special demands of written English lying on a spectrum from generic and formal demands through syntactic and lexical ones down to motor tasks of forming letters” (as cited in Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 373). Children and inexperienced writers may feel their short-term memory exceeded due to extra requirements (Nold, 1981, as cited in Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 373). When writers need to pay conscious attention to language demands, including spelling and/or grammar, the process of translating can interfere with planning affecting the writing process (Flower & Hayes, 1981). Some of the constraints of written English can be ignored; however, “one path produces poor or local planning, the other produces errors” and both “lead to frustration of the writer” (Shaughnessy, 1977, as cited in Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 373).

Research by Scardamalia (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1982), investigated children’s strategies to face the cognitive demands of writing. Researchers explain that while well-learned writing skills tend to become automatic and unconscious in adults, this is not so for children. They explain further that “because so little of the writing process is automatic for children, they must devote conscious attention to a variety of individual thinking tasks which adults perform quickly and automatically” (as cited in Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 374). Flower and Hayes (1981) conclude that studies “which trace the development of a given skill over several age groups, can show us hidden components of an adult process as well as show us how children learn” (p. 374).

When analyzing research in second language (L2), Rowe Krapels (1990) reports on seminal research studies by Jones and Tetroe (1987) which align with Flower & Hayes’ (1981), Scadamalia’s (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia’s (1982) research findings in studies with children. Jones and Tetroe (1987) agree that “composing in a second language used “cognitive

capacity” that would be used for other tasks when writing in the native language” (p.46). They also confirm previous research findings that lack of second language (L2) vocabulary can result in use of native language (L1) vocabulary and that the quality of planning in L1 can transfer to planning in L2 (Rowe Krapels, 1990). As Kroll (1990) suggests there are certain features from the writing process in L1 that are transferred into the writing process in L2, thus influencing this process inevitably.

### **Status of Writing in Second Language (L2) Classroom: An international view**

L2 writing in English becomes important in later years of primary and secondary schools grades since it is used mainly as a vehicle for assessment to demonstrate learning in countries around the world in which English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) or as a second language (ESL) (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Moon, 2007). L2 writing in English has been defined in relation to a)- the development of writing motor skills, b)- communication, c)- learning and d)- demonstrating language knowledge in different educational settings around the world (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Moon, 2007; Zamel, 1983). The introduction of L2 writing in English into school settings worldwide has been determined by the role of English in society, linguistic policies and the purpose of teaching English. Aspects such as criteria related to acquisition of basic literacy skills in the first language (L1) or mother tongue, prior to acquisition of L2 literacy, different L1 and L2 writing scripts, the need to acquire new L2 script and desire to read and write in L2 should not be disregarded (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Moon, 2007).

Cummins and Swain (1986) discussed widely the connections existing between L1 and L2 literacy, taking into account positive and negative effects of introducing them simultaneously or separately. On the one hand, when L1 and L2 literacy are introduced simultaneously with

children, it can constitute a great cognitive challenge if the appropriate conditions are not provided. On the other hand, if L2 and L1 literacy are introduced subsequently, learners can build on the learning experiences obtained from having developed L1 literacy skills. This last scenario can be conducive to positive transfer of concepts and learning skills from L1 to L2. However, negative transferring can occur when composition skills acquired in L2 writing are transferred to L1 writing (Cummins & Swain, 1986; Moon, 2007).

Scholars and educators, working in EFL and/or ESL settings, have discussed and agreed that it was beneficial for children to have developed L1 literacy skills, specifically a sound basis of oral skills, before developing L2 literacy (Moon, 2007). It is important to consider that at early stages of L2 acquisition, there is an emphasis in developing bottom-up skills, specially integrating listening, speaking and literacy skills. During this stage, writing instruction is dedicated to decoding and encoding activities, e.g. word puzzles, copying words, fill in the gaps activities, simple spelling tests and handwriting exercises, without disregarding the communicative aspect of writing. In early stages, as well as later, there is a need to provide purposes for writing, as well as, real or imaginary audiences to write to, so that L2 writers learn how to pay attention to language and its communicative force in natural ways. Communicative writing projects may include writing to local newspapers, e-mails to ‘pen-pals’, blogs, websites. Motivation to write in L2 can be affected by writing ability in L1, fear to make mistakes, learning styles or a generalized reluctance to write, especially among adolescents and young adults. As it was discussed with writing in L1, writing in L2 provides insights into L2 language and writing development, it helps learners pay attention to and develop awareness about language, as well as, access cognitive engaging content (Moon, 2007).

## **Approaches in Teaching L2 Writing**

Moon (2007) and Lam (2015) describe three broad approaches to teaching L2 writing (both in ESL and EFL contexts), which have also been applied in teaching L1 writing, a)- the grammar-focused approach, or structuralism, based on sentences and oriented to accuracy including dictation and guided writing tasks (as used in some ESL settings like Hong Kong and Korea), b)- the task-based or communicative approach, or social constructionism, based on attention to purpose and audience for writing, paying attention to the language and mechanics involved in tasks and context, c)- the process-oriented approaches, or cognitivism, based on supporting students to become aware of the writing process, including the production of multiple drafts and supporting peer and teacher feedback along the process.

## ***Teacher Practices in Teaching Writing***

On the other hand, Gilliland (2015) analyzes the role of teachers by describing different approaches to teaching second languages (SL), and approaching writing in a SL. On the one hand “a study skills approach” or more autonomous approach conceives teachers providing learners with a set of tools for writing that can be used in different contexts (Lea & Street, 1998; Raimes, 1991). On the other hand, “the academic literacies” perspective confers importance to social and ideological contexts in which the written language is used to write for specific purposes (Street, 2012).

## ***Writing Process in L2***

Seminal research in process writing in L2 (Zamel, 1983) revealed that composing was not linear, on the contrary it was exploratory and generative, a process in which writers discover and reformulate their own meaning-making learning process. According to Zamel (1983), L2 writing

had been characterized as mostly a)- occurring in linear fashion, b)- focusing mainly on promoting language learning, c)- focusing on form instead of content and meaning, and d)- adopting rhetorical frameworks. Moreover, understanding the demands of different writing tasks, as well as understanding misconceptions as regards tasks' requirements, affect composing both in L1 and L2 more deeply than linguistic demands.

According to Lam (2015) process pedagogy in writing instruction advocates in favor of a)- encouraging the application of direct experiences in the composing process, including exploring ideas within topics of interest and making decisions about communicating these ideas, b)- understanding writing as problem solving process in which discourse is modified as necessary, c)- understanding teaching/learning and writer/reader as dynamic relationships, d)- fostering personal expressions in writing to promote meaning making and self-reflection and e)- developing cognitive skills during the composing process, such as pre-writing and editing (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996; Raimes, 1991; Silva, 1993; Zamel, 1983).

Lam (2015) argues that the degree of application for process pedagogies in L2 writing contexts remains varied. Process writing is commonly practised in L1 settings, whereas its application in L2 classrooms has been recently discussed in large-scale curriculum reform initiatives (Lee, 2011). According to research carried out on the application of process writing in L2 environments, teachers have found contextual and sociopolitical challenges. On the one hand, teachers lack in adequate training, are pressed to prepare students for state and national exams suffer from lack of support in schools and from syllabus constrains (O'Brien, 2004, Lam, 2015). On the other hand, positive claims in favor of writing in L2 classrooms focus on the affective aspects of writing, including increase in task engagement and motivation to write (Lo & Highland, 2007; Lam, 2015).

## **Teacher Candidates' (TC) Writing Instruction to Teach Writing to English Learners (EL)**

Athanases et al. (2013) and Baecher et al. (2013) agreed on the importance of writing for learning and academic knowledge development, as it has been discussed in previous sections, but specially recognized the challenges writing as a language demand imposes on English learners (EL). The importance of educating teacher candidates (TC) to be able to understand and foster English language proficiency and content area knowledge development when working in general education classrooms has been discussed above (Baecher et al., 2013; Culp & Schmidlein, 2012; Enright & Gilliland, 2011; Nutta et al., 2012, Nutta et al., 2014). Athanases et al. (2013) especially discuss the challenges that general teachers from different content areas experience when teaching writing to ELs in general education classrooms.

'No Child Left Behind Act' (2001), discussed in pp. 10 and 13 in the introduction and the ESSA (2015) discussed in page 15, established curricular standards and accountability in U.S. federal education policy and required states to assess comprehensive standards in the content areas (Enright & Gilliland, 2011). Along the same line, the introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010, enforced the influence of macro-level national context mandates on norms and writing instruction in the classroom, and these especially affected ELs attending general education classes (Athanases et al., 2013; Baecher et al., 2013; Enright & Gilliland, 2011).

While scholars recognize that ELs need time and practice to develop writing specific demands, understanding cultural conventions, schools' expectations and developing specific grammar and language knowledge (Applebee & Langer, 2009; Athanases et al., 2013; Kroll, 1990; Schleppegrell, 2004), CCSS press teachers to cover a wide range of contents, teach all students the same standards and prepare them all to sit for standardized tests (Athanases et al.,



2013; de Oliveira & Athanases, 2007; Enright & Gilliland, 2011). Kroll (1990) adds to the previous list her insight into understanding how first language literacy skills support or detract from acquisition of L2 literacy skills.

### CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research has developed traditions that favor the study of human behavior and experience. Qualitative research traditions have developed into distinctive research approaches that can be useful to conduct studies about people's experiences, social and cultural phenomena and communication phenomena within social settings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Merriam, 2002). Natural language provides structures and meanings that mediate in depth analyses of human experience of diverse human and cultural phenomena studied by qualitative researchers (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The qualitative research process is inductive and researchers can build concepts, hypotheses or theories from the data they had gathered from observations, written data and general interactions with research participants in the field. In general, researchers find themes, concepts, categories, hypothesis or tentative theory when analyzing data inductively and present them in rich descriptions. The research context and participants, as well as data collection procedures and analysis are presented by means of thick descriptions (Merriam, 2002).

The role of the researcher in qualitative research deserves special treatment. Merriam (2002) points out to the researcher as "the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis" (p. 5). Qualitative research studies that seek to understand human social phenomena, as mentioned above, need the human element to accomplish that objective. Researchers are functional to qualitative research in fundamental ways apart from data collection and analysis. The researcher provides initial understanding, which can also be extended through verbal and nonverbal communication, can summarize data and look for clarifications with participants to offer an accurate account of responses and examine unexpected responses (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2002). The research design for this study implements a hermeneutic phenomenological

approach (van Manen, 1990, 1997). This study's main purpose is to analyze, describe and interpret the phenomenon of English Language Arts teacher candidates' experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods' courses attended when preparing to teach English learners (EL) in general education classrooms.

### **Theoretical Framework: Phenomenology**

Stewart & Mickunas (1974) start by analyzing the etymological origin of the word phenomenology, which is composed of two Greek words: *phainomenon* (an "appearance") and *logos* ("reason", "word" or "reasoned inquiry"). Consequently, phenomenology can be understood as a "reasoned inquiry" which seeks to discover and understand the essence of appearances. Two important constructs of phenomenology need to be thoroughly defined as well: *appearance* and *consciousness*. Appearance refers to anything of which individuals are conscious; in this sense "appearance is a manifestation of the essence of that of which it is the appearance". On the other hand, consciousness is not considered to be a common object in nature and consequently it cannot be purely analyzed by means of a scientific experimental method (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, p. 3). Psychologists have defined consciousness as what constitutes one's experience at a point in time; consciousness can be compared to what is "presently being thought or felt" (Valle, King & Haling, 1989, p.8).

Consciousness, which is related to an intended object, thus consciousness of something, can be considered a forum in which phenomena "appear" or "are revealed" (Polkinghorne, 1989; Valle *et al.*, 1989, p.11). Consciousness content represents valid data for research, consequently phenomenology offers ample possibilities for inquiry in different academic areas including science and philosophy (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, p. 4). Phenomenological research goes

beyond the positivists' ideal of using a unified scientific method to pursue knowledge and recognizes that the unique characteristics of consciousness require a research design that understands, describes and interprets experiential processes (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Kockelmans (1976) goes a step further by referring to Hegel's concept of phenomenology which includes a description of an individual's perceptions, senses and knowledge obtained from one's own experience awareness. He proposes the development of a process of consciousness guided by science and philosophy in search of "the absolute knowledge of the Absolute" (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 24).

The origins of phenomenology as we know it today, is based on the German mathematician and philosopher, Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) writings and discussions. Husserl defined phenomenology having an academic objective in mind as "the rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear so that one might come to an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience". Husserl (1970) valued direct and immediate experience in the world expressed by everyday language and proposed going "back to the things themselves" defining *thing* as a phenomenon, i.e. anything of which we are conscious (Farber, 2006; Stewart & Mickunas, 1974; Valle et al., 1989; van Manen, 1990).

Van Manen (1990) explains the nature or essence of a phenomenon as the structure that can be studied in order to understand, describe and interpret particular instances of the phenomenon. Thus, phenomenology can be defined as the systematic endeavor to describe the internal meaning of lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 1990). Furthermore, by means of phenomenology individuals refer to phenomena as they are lived and experienced (Creswell, 2013; Husserl, 1970; Valle et al. 1989, p. 6).

Husserl's domain was phenomena independent of and prior to any reflective interpretation (Valle et al., 1989; van Manen, 1990). Thus, he fostered the understanding and analysis of experience as it appears in itself and to the individual who is conscious of it and established the inseparable relationship that exists between experience and consciousness (Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, p. 22-3; Valle et al., 1989; van Manen, 1990). Experience is not explained by means of the external environment of the natural sciences, but by means of the *Lebenswelt* or Lifeworld. This is the world as lived by the person and not an independent hypothetical external entity, separate from the individual. *Lebenswelt* (Lifeworld) is not constructed by consciousness, rather it is co-constructed in a dialogue between a person and the world (Husserl, 1970; Valle et al. 1989; van Manen, 1990).

In his book *Being and Time*, Heidegger (1927, 1996) developed the concept of phenomenology of human existence and the *Dasein*. The German expression *Dasein* means "Being there" and it involves the dialogue that is established between the individual and the world in which he or she lives, thus the *Lifeworld* (Groenewald, 2004, Ramírez-Pérez, Cárdenas-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Jiménez, 2015). Heidegger (1927, 1996) diverted from his phenomenologist predecessors by stating that consciousness was linked to the world as a product of historically lived experience. There was a need to move from understanding phenomenology purely from consciousness to understanding human existence and experience in the world, taking into account individuals' self-consciousness as a continuum within historical and geographical reality. Heidegger stressed the understanding of existence itself and the centrality of the concept of "being there" (Ramírez-Pérez, Cárdenas- Jiménez, Rodríguez-Jiménez, 2015).

Heidegger (1927, 1996) interpreted experience in relationship to individuals' backgrounds, historical meanings of experience and their influence on individual and social

realms (Laverty, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1983). Consequently, the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher who is aware of the afore mentioned influences in his or her interpretations can accomplish the hermeneutic circle, i.e. analyze experiences progressing from sections to the whole of experience looking for the deepest analysis of text as it is possible to obtain (Laverty, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1983).

### **Phenomenological Research Approach**

The comprehensive philosophical background explained above, makes phenomenology a rich research approach (Creswell, 2013, p.77). Husserl established a solid basis on phenomenology used as a radical approach to science (Creswell, 2013, Farber, 1962, 2006, Moustakas, 1994, Stewart & Mickunas, 1974, 1990). According to Moustakas (1994) this new philosophic system inspires researchers to use phenomenology to discover knowledge and apply theories into human science. From his personal point of view, Moustakas (1994) saw phenomenology as having its roots in a subjective openness which grants researchers creativity to study experience, of others and of self, by using reflectivity in order to discover the most essential ideas and values that would last in time (Moustakas, 1994).

The phenomenological research approach grants researchers the opportunity to question how we experience the world we live in. In phenomenological research, individuals have the intention to question the secrets that constitute the world and by means of theorizing about it, we completely become a part of this world (van Manen, 1990). Creswell (2013) explains how phenomenologists look for the essential, innate meaning of an experience seeking to reduce individual views of a phenomenon. Thus, they can offer the collective meaning and description that individuals develop of the essence in their common lived experiences of that phenomenon

(Creswell, 2013, p.76). In order to reach that objective, van Manen (1990) discusses the methodological structure recommended in phenomenological research which consists of the following steps: a)- recognition of a phenomenon; b)- investigation of experience as lived; c)- reflection on essential themes that characterize the phenomenon; d)- description of the phenomenon through writing and re-writing; e)- pedagogical orientation of the phenomenon; f)- balance the research context by considering the parts and the whole of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990).

### ***Approaches to Phenomenology: Hermeneutics***

Two general approaches to phenomenology have been described in the literature: hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) and empirical, transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). The human sciences need a discipline or method to systematize the understanding of human experience. Thus, hermeneutics has been defined as the “science of correct Understanding or interpretation” (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 218). Heidegger (1927, 1996) described hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical methodology used to discover the meaning of “being” and of “human existence” by means of analyzing life’s historicity within existence. Hermeneutics opens the door to discover and interpret meanings, habits and practices of human beings, who live their everyday lives in the real world (Ramírez-Pérez, Cárdenas- Jiménez, Rodríguez-Jiménez, 2015).

Hermeneutics offers guidance towards successful Understanding (with a capital letter that refers to the understanding of meaning) in order to avoid arbitrary or subjective interpretations. To achieve this goal, hermeneutics offers a systematic method including procedures that can help researchers achieve the best interpretation of the phenomenon possible (Polkinghorne, 1983).

This study will follow a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. In addition to the previous introduction, van Manen (1990) referred to hermeneutics as a human science research approach. Phenomenology describes an approach to lived experience, while hermeneutics provides an interpretation of “texts of life”, i.e. life stories produced by those who experience the phenomenon. This interpretation is accomplished by means of using semiotics to develop an appropriate writing approach for the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics (van Manen, 1990, pp.3-4).

### **Bracketing**

Researchers and theorists have established the need researchers have to bracket out their experiences with the phenomenon being studied (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 2013). This is understood as an important step, both in the process of data collection, as well as in data analysis. Colaizzi (1978) indicates that the phenomenological researcher needs to initiate bracketing as a process of self-inquiry, by analyzing the approach and the process of uncovering presuppositions about the phenomenon under study. The researcher needs to explain own experiences, but also beliefs, perceptions, hypotheses with the phenomenon as a means of starting a process of self-inquiry into her own experiences to uncover her original and unique interest in the inquiry.

### **Research Design**

In order to explain my research design, I decided to include Luttrell’s Reflexive Model of Research Design (Luttrell, 2010, p. 161) in the research design section of the methodology chapter (Chapter 3). Luttrell (2010) emphasizes how researchers need to draw from ‘knowledge frameworks’ (p.162), i.e. from a wide range of sources to stress reflexivity always present at the core of qualitative research design.



Luttrell’s model (2010, p. 161) provides a visual aid to understand the intersectionality and interconnectivity of my recursive research design and supported my inquiry into the study of the phenomenon of TCs’ experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses. In the position of the principal researcher, I analyzed and negotiated the relationships established among the research approach selected, i.e. phenomenology, and the different research design components, including research questions, sampling methods, data collection tools, data collection procedures and data analysis methods and applied them to analyze, understand and interpret the central phenomenon in the study.

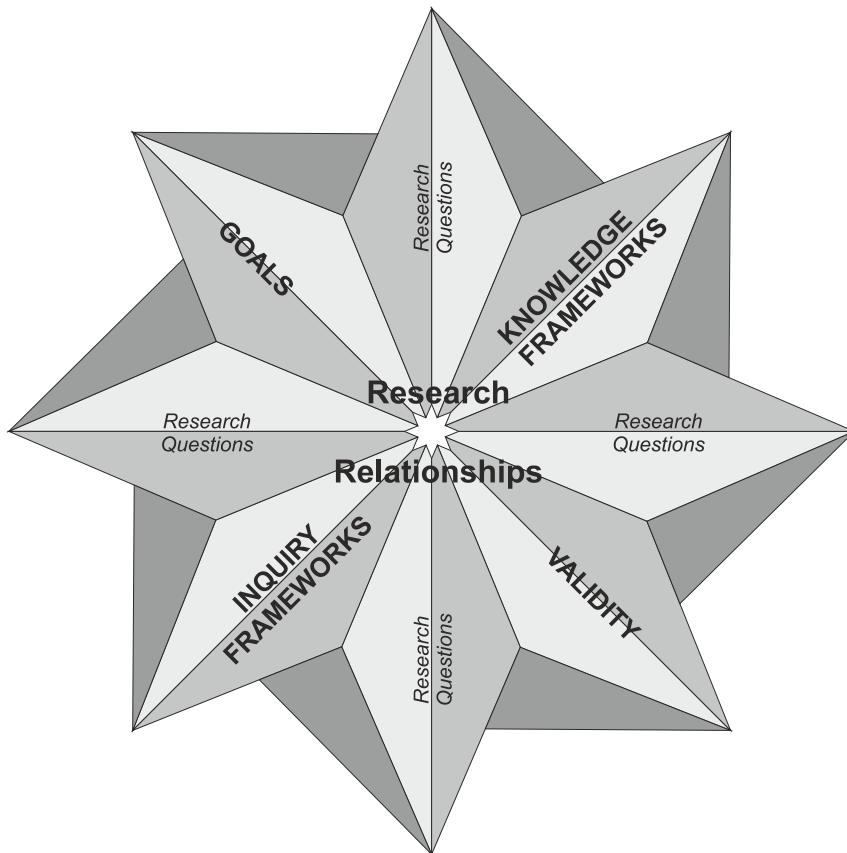


Figure 1. Luttrell’s Reflexive Model of Research Design (Luttrell, W., 2010, p.161)

### ***Population, Sampling and Recruitment***

In a hermeneutic phenomenological research study, participant selection is directed to obtaining a wide range of varied descriptions of lived experiences that will favor the analysis, description and interpretation of the phenomenon being studied (Laverty, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1989; van Manen, 1997). Since the ultimate aim in this study is to understand, describe and interpret the phenomenon of English Language Arts teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) methods' courses, sampling recruitment concentrated on that specific TCs' population. On the first stage, the researcher decided to approach and explain the study's purpose, procedures and possible implications, with the objective of inviting TCs attending sections of two ESOL methods' courses offered in their teacher education programs: a)- a course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, and b)- a course on issues in second language acquisition. The final recruitment objective focused on inviting English Language Arts (ELA) TCs to participate in semi-structured interviews and focus or work groups' discussions, especially taking into account that ELA teacher candidates are mandated to attend the courses mentioned above consecutively.

Teacher candidates (TC) attending every teacher education major program at the college of education, at the largest metropolitan public research university in a southern-eastern state in the US, attend the methods course on theories and practice of teaching ESOL students in schools. The total amount of students, who attend this required course, ranges from 400 to 500 students (in sophomore, junior or senior years) during Fall and Spring semesters. This figure was the estimated population in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, when the researcher and her supervisor conducted a pilot study about the experiences of TCs learning skills and strategies to teach ELs in general education classrooms (Belló, & Olan, 2015, manuscript in revision). The complete

population of TCs attending this methods course is divided into sections (up to 14 sections in total) and the mode of instruction includes mixed-mode (a combination of face to face and online classes) and sections that only offer online classes. The distribution of teacher education programs offered at the mentioned college of education include Early Childhood Education, English Language Arts, Elementary Education, Science Education, Social Science Education, Mathematics Education, Liberal Studies, Art Education, Music Education, Physics, Political Science and Psychology. Moreover, teacher education programs at this institution are ESOL infused.

The population of TCs attending the methods course on issues in second language acquisition amounts to 550 to 600 students, that attend junior or senior years, during the Fall and Spring semesters. The population of TCs attending this methods course is divided into 8 to 10 sections and the mode of instruction includes mixed mode classes (online and face-to-face classes) and online classes. TCs attending the course on issues in second language acquisition are enrolled in Elementary Education, English Language Arts, Early Childhood Education, Teaching English as Foreign Language Certificate and Exceptional Education teacher education programs.

### ***Sampling***

Purposeful sampling, the most used sampling method in qualitative research approaches, was employed to select individuals likely to produce valuable information for the purposes of the study (Creswell, 2013; Gall et al. 2007; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Maxwell, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1989). A purposeful sample was chosen to understand and interpret the central phenomenon being studied, namely English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences while attending ESOL methods courses. Following this discussion, the sampling for this study

was also criterion based, because all participants shared experiences with the phenomenon of writing instruction along their schooling and teacher education careers (Creswell, 2013, Maxwell, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1989).

This particular sample could be considered homogeneous because participants were English Language Arts teacher candidates, who had common experiences, attributes and characteristics, attended sophomore, junior or senior year and were enrolled in one of the following methods' courses: a)- a course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, and b)- a course on issues in second language acquisition. By securing a homogenous sample, the researcher could be confident that the study would describe, analyze and interpret the writing instruction experiences' lived by the average members of the population being studied (Creswell, 2013; Goodson & Sikes, 2001, Maxwell, 2005).

Furthermore, TCs attending ESOL methods courses composed a convenient sample; i.e. the researcher had easy access to these participants. Accessibility was guaranteed since the methods courses were offered by instructors in the TESOL program. Moreover, working with this population did not involve much investment of time, money and effort (Creswell, 2013). Despite the warning against the quality and credibility on data collected from a convenient sample (Creswell, 2013), the decision to include a convenient sampling was grounded on the interest in analyzing, describing and interpreting English Language Arts TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods' courses.

Researchers and authors consulted for this study have varied views in regards to the recommended number of participants that needs to be recruited for participation in a phenomenological research study. Polkinghorne (1989) summarizes psychological seminal research studies with a wide range of variability in number of participants: a)- 325 high school

students' written reflections were collected about the phenomenon of "really being understood" (van Kaam, 1969), b)- thirty interviews conducted about the experience of "being angry" (Stevick, 1971), c)- twenty-five descriptions collected about the phenomenon of "being pleased and displeased with self" (Mruck, 1983), and d)- three participants in a study about the experience of "being suspicious" (Konig, 1979). The researcher has also reviewed phenomenological research studies in education and conducted a phenomenological pilot study with her supervisor. The following summary illustrates the discussion about sampling and the number of participants in the research studies analyzed: a)- one Sioux Indian adolescent boy was the participant in a hermeneutical phenomenological study about his lived experiences attending an alternative high school in the US (Kim, 2012), b)- eight teacher candidates and nine lecturers participated in a study about the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship in teacher education programs in new Zealand (Giles, Smythe & Spence, 2012), c)- six TESOL senior, pre-service teachers from Malaysia participated in a study abroad program teaching English in the Maldives and participated in a phenomenological study about their experiences in the new teaching setting (Kabilan, 2013), and d)- five TCs out of a group of forty, participated in interviews about their experiences learning skills and strategies to teach ELs in general education classrooms, while attending a methods course on theories and practice of teaching ELs (Belló, & Olan, 2015, manuscript in revision).

Creswell (2013) explains that a heterogeneous group needs to be identified in order to obtain as many views of the phenomenon as possible. Such a group may include "from 3 to 4 individuals to 10 to 15" (p. 78). As it has been described, the number of participants required to conduct a phenomenological study cannot be prescribed; however, it usually varies according to the nature of the study and data collected. It is suggested that data continues to be collected until

the point of saturation has been reached, i.e. a better understanding of the experience will not be found by means of further discussion (Laverty, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1989).

As it was explained above, TCs enrolled in different teacher education programs attended the ESOL methods courses selected as research contexts for the study. The researcher explained the study to TCs attending different sections of the courses, observed them, gathered demographic data and administered an open questionnaire to the TCs accepting to participate. Sampling was later narrowed to English Language Arts' TCs, who were invited to participate in open ended interviews and focus/work groups' discussions.

The following general criteria was established to recruit participants for this study: a)- enrollment in teacher education programs, at the college of Education, at the largest metropolitan public research university in a southern-eastern state in the USA, b)- admission to the in English Language Arts teacher education program to be invited to participate in follow up semi-structured interviews and work/focus group discussions, c)- enrollment in sophomore, junior or senior year in their respective plans of study, c)- enrollment in either of two methods courses: a course on theories and practice of teaching ESOL students in schools, and/or, a course on issues in second language acquisition, and d)- enrollment in mixed-mode course modalities during Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters.

The researcher decided to invite TCs attending the methods courses' mixed-mode classes because they favored accessibility to present the research study, as well as observations of TCs' experiences of the phenomenon during face to face classes. The researcher attended to face to face classes that took place at times that did not conflict with her own graduate teaching assistant and student timetable.

### ***Data Instruments and Data Gathering***

Phenomenological studies include a philosophical discussion about the experiences, both subjective and objective, of people who have lived through the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1989). Phenomenological studies include the researcher's reflections and inquiry about the phenomenon, i.e they usually bracket out their own experiences (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1989). In this study, the researcher expressed and explained her personal experiences with the phenomenon, in an effort to bracket herself out of the study and present her interest in the study from her personal inquiry about the phenomenon of writing instruction. These reflections were written down in the researcher's journal and followed the questions included in the questionnaire and open ended interview questions that were later used with the study's participants. Colaizzi (1973) referred to self-reflection as the "individual phenomenological reflection" in which the researcher recognizes her own perspectives and biases with the phenomenon. These reflections were considered during the period of data analysis (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 46; Sanders, 2003).

The complete set of data collection instruments designed for the study included: a)- a demographic document, b)- a literacy questionnaire, c)- semi-structured interview questions, d)- leading questions for work/focus groups discussions, e)- written assignments (modified lesson plan), f)- face-to-face classes observations descriptions. Once the Institutional Review Board (IRB) revised the required protocols and granted the required permission to conduct the study, instructors from the ESOL methods courses described on pages 43 and 44 granted the researcher permission to invite TCs to participate in the study.

As the principal researcher, I explained TCs, prospective study participants, about the research study, invited them to participate and explained the need to sign the informed consent

document that provided participants with the necessary background information about the research study, as well as the opportunity to select their own pseudonym for anonymity. In addition to the informed consent, participants were invited to fill in a demographic document, including information about their education programs, age, marital status, ethnicity, major educational background and family background. For more details, please refer to the appendix section D. The researcher organized data collected during the study period taking into account, names, pseudonyms, course sections and education programs.

A second step in data collection procedures involved the administration of a literacy questionnaire (refer to appendix A) to TCs participants during their first face-to-face classes. This document contained questions that helped participants recall past literacy experiences with writing instruction in general and in their content areas in particular. It also included questions about past experiences with ELs and guided participants to reflect about any teaching/learning experiences they might have had involving ELs. The general literacy questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect valuable data about the phenomenon of writing instruction in different disciplines from a larger number of participants at the same time. Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans & Jared (2006) explain the use of an open-ended questions questionnaire in their study about contributions of home literacy experiences. This instrument had been used in a previous longitudinal study by one of the current researchers (Levy et al., 2006). Such is the case with the open-ended questionnaire in this study, which was the result of a development from a previously used questionnaire in the phenomenological study carried out by the researcher and her supervisor with forty TCs (Belló, & Olan, 2015, manuscript in revision). For more details, please refer to Appendix A.



The next step in data collection procedures involved an invitation to English Language Arts (ELA) TCs attending ESOL methods courses to participate in an oral semi-structured interview that was recorded for data analysis purposes. For more details about the questions included, please refer to appendix B section. Semi-structured interviews are defined as a conversation in which the researcher already knows what she/he wants to find out (Fylan, 2005). However, the whole interviewing process is flexible and open to variations from participant to participant (Fylan, 2005). Depending on the level of interview structure, more open ended, less structured interviews require more time for in-depth exploration of the phenomenon, thus the time of interview duration can vary from half hour or one hour, to several hours. The length of interviews depends on the phenomenon being studied and participants' self-reflections. Some study designs require quite lengthy interviews with fewer participants, whereas others need a greater variety of descriptions from more participants (Polkinghorne, 1989).

In discussing phenomenological interviews, Mishler (1986) as cited in Polkinghorne (1989) defines them as “discourse or conversation” involving “interpersonal engagement” (p.49) between participants and researcher; the participants are invited to share their experiences with a phenomenon and the researcher is in charge of keeping the interview on topic according to the research questions. Kvale (1983) as cited in Polkinghorne (1989, p.49) stresses that the focus of the phenomenological interview is on the experiences of the interviewee with the phenomenon being studied, and not merely on the person being interviewed. It is important that the interviewer centers the attention on the research questions and elicits TCs' descriptions of writing instruction experiences while attending ESOL methods' courses. Those experiences will be complemented with TCs' experiences with writing instruction in their discipline area. The researcher/interviewer needs to provide questions and guidance, so that participants avoid

providing their personal interpretations or evaluations about the phenomenon. The researcher needs to pay attention to new details in the experience, as well as situations and sequences that compose the phenomenon and guide the analysis of its essence or structure (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989).

In this study, participants were invited to participate in an open-ended questions' interview while attending at least one of the methods courses described above. This phenomenological research design included fully open-ended, broad and general questions that allowed the researcher to obtain TCs' in-depth descriptions of the experiences of the phenomenon of writing instruction in ESOL methods courses, with the addition of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in their own discipline area. The participants were asked to reflect about as many details as possible of the phenomenon of writing instruction experiences, including experiences while learning to teach English learners, discourse in their own discipline and working with ELs in real field practicum.

The researcher paid attention not to make any guiding remarks, but added some prompts to obtain additional information. Colaizzi (1978) stresses the fact that interview questions in phenomenological studies need to address the participants' experiences with the phenomenon and not only refer to their knowledge about the phenomenon. The researcher determined that the duration of the interviews were from a half hour to one hour and were recorded and transcribed verbatim to favor the analysis.

Once the oral interviews had been accomplished, the researcher organized the next stage of the study's data collection procedures, namely work/focus groups discussions. English Language Arts TCs attending the methods course on issues in second language acquisition were invited to participate. This is the second ESOL methods' course attended by ELA teacher

candidates (TC) in their teacher education program and they do so in order to obtain their ESOL endorsement certificate.

TCs participants, who attended the ESOL methods' course on issues in second language acquisition, were divided into groups of four or five students according to their teacher education programs. Five groups gathered together, three composed of TCs enrolled in Early Education and Elementary Education teacher programs, one composed of TCs enrolled in Teaching English as Foreign Language teacher program and one composed of TCs enrolled in the English Language Arts education program. All of the groups were invited to discuss about different written examples produced by ELs with different levels of proficiency in English, who had responded to writing tasks in different ways. The written examples were downloaded from the website "Supporting English Language Learners: Tools, Strategies and Resources" edited by the Curriculum Design Supports and Production Branch (CDSP) of Alberta Education ([http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/writing\\_samples.html](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/eslapb/writing_samples.html)). The written samples can be found as appendixes to the study.

Following focus groups discussion dynamics, the work groups were provided with open-ended leading discussion questions (please refer to appendix C) and granted enough time to discuss freely, exchange ideas, write down ideas and arrive to a common plan with which each group would deal with the same, or similar tasks, taking into account ELs' proficiency level in English as L2, as well as, the linguistic and academic demands of the written task. According to Krueger, R. A. (1988), focus groups interviews are valuable because they provide information about human tendencies. Thanks to the interaction with others, individuals can develop and express their attitudes and perceptions about different tasks, products, programs or services. Consequently, focus groups discussions grant researchers the opportunity to discover: a)- how

individuals are influenced to form their opinions in relationship to the opinions of others, b)- how shifts in opinions or perceptions occur and c)- the nature of factors that influence the change.

These focus/work groups did not follow the normal focus groups format that works with an interviewer asking questions. However, groups were arranged following these criteria: a)-it was a class activity that offered participants a non-threatening environment to analyze and discuss about the written examples, b)- it was an activity carried out with colleagues from the same teacher education program, consequently, the groups' members shared similar experiences, c)- groups included participants who did not necessarily work together or would not work together in the future, d)- groups did not have any participant (or interviewer) in the position of power, e)- group participants expressed themselves freely, and f)- were ensured freedom from judgement or any other kind of external control (Krueger,1988).

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

Before starting the study, approval from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) was obtained. As it has been explained before, the IRB required the approval of the following documents before starting to conduct the study: a)- IRB protocol, b)- an informed consent document. c)- instruments specially created and validated to collect data for this study (a demographics document, a literacy questionnaire, an interview protocol containing semi-structured interview questions and focus group leading questions). For more details, please refer to appendixes A, B, C, D.

Before starting data collection procedures, I took the following steps: a)- contacted instructors in different sections of the ESOL methods, a) a course on theories and practice of

teaching ESOL students in schools, and b)- a course on issues in second language acquisition, to be granted permission to invite TCs to participate in the study, b)- requested information about number of TCs enrolled, timetables and modality of different sections, c)- analyzed the information provided and my own availability for data collection (as regards compatibility or incompatibility with other duties as graduate teaching assistant and graduate student), and d)- contacted the instructors of those mixed-mode sections, that met in face-to-face face classes at times that did not conflict with other pre-established duties. Once instructors granted access to introduce the research study to teacher candidates (TCs) enrolled in those sections, I was entitled to introduce the study to TCs.

The study was presented to TCs in order to: a)- explain the importance of research in teacher education programs and the importance of TCs' participation in research studies conducive to inform the process of improvement necessary in teacher education programs, b)- explain the significance of this study among other research studies being conducted in teacher education programs; c)- obtain TCs' informed consent, d)- ensure that participation is voluntary, e)- explain that great part of data will be collected as part of coursework, f)- stress researcher's confidentiality, g)- clarify that TCs will choose their own pseudonyms to be used throughout data analysis and report, h)- ensure participants that only the researcher will have access to data, and i)- secure participants' validation and active information processing as part of the whole research process. Respondents have the right to read the researcher's analysis, comment on it and further correct or corroborate the information (Goodson & Sikes, 2001, p. 27).

I selected four sections to which I assisted, following the criteria of accessibility, permission granted by instructors and lack of timetable discrepancies with my duties as student and graduate teaching assistant. The sections chosen were distributed as follows: a)- three

sections of the course on theories and practices of teaching ELs in schools, and b)- one section of the course on issues in second language acquisition. I took the steps necessary to explain TCs about the importance of research in teacher education programs, and in particular of this research study, and invited a total of 144 TCs to read and sign the informed consent to guarantee their understanding and willingness to participate. A total of 94 TCs agreed to participate by signing the informed consent and completing the demographic document and the literacy questionnaire. On the second stage, I individualized and invited 18 (eighteen) English Language Arts (ELA) teacher candidates (TC) attending 3 (three) sections of the methods course on theories and practice of teaching ELs in schools that I visited, to participate in oral interviews, stressing the importance of this population's participation in the study. Of the total number invited, the number of responses was acceptable, and I could interview 10 (ten) ELA teacher candidates attending different sections of the course between November and December 2015. On the third stage, I invited 5 (five) ELA teacher candidates (TC) attending the methods course on issues in second language acquisition to take part in focus/work groups discussions and all of them accepted to do so.

Table 1. Participants Demographics

Participants' Pseudonyms	Teacher Education Program	Year Level	Year/Place of Birth	Age	Ethnicity	Participation in Study
1. Angelica	ENGLED	Senior	1993/Plantation, FL	22	White	Questionnaire/Interview
2. Eva	ENGLED	Senior	1995/Melbourne, FL	20	White	Questionnaire/Interview
3. Charlotte	ENGLED	Senior	1993/Miami, FL	22	White	Questionnaire/Interview
4. Cindy	ENGLED	Junior	1995/New York	20	Multiethnic	Questionnaire/Interview
5. Katy	ENGLED	Junior	1995/Indiana	20	White	Questionnaire/Interview
6. Jane	ENGLED	Junior	1993/Miami, FL	22	Hispanic	Questionnaire/Interview
7. Hazel	ENGLED	Junior	1989/Guangzhou, China	25	Asian	Questionnaire/Interview
8. Linda	ENGLED	Junior	1996/Virginia	19	Hispanic	Questionnaire/Interview
9. Miranda	ENGLED	Senior	1992/Leesburg, FL	23	White	Questionnaire/Interview
10. Gia	ENGLED	Junior	1964/New Jersey	51	White	Questionnaire/Interview
11. Alice	ENGLED	Junior	1995/Peoria, IL	20	Hispanic	Questionnaire/Focus Group
12. Biba	ENGLED	Senior	1994/Savona, Italy	21	White	Questionnaire/Focus Group
13. Pia	ENGLED	Senior	1994/San Juan, PR	22	Hispanic	Questionnaire/Focus Group
14. Christy	ENGLED	Junior				Questionnaire/Focus Group
15. Chelsea	ENGLED	Junior	1992/Buffalo, NY	23	White	Questionnaire/Focus Group

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

In order to analyze data, the researcher followed Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis procedures (Colaizzi, 1978, Polkinghorne, 1989; Sanders, 2003; Shosha, 2012). This study was designed to describe, analyze and interpret the phenomenon of English Language Arts TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses. The researcher took into account TCs' experiences with writing instruction in their area of expertise, which have surely been influenced by TCs' varied experiences obtained through attendance to methods courses, including ESOL methods courses.

Once data from different sources was gathered, the researcher transcribed and transferred data from recorded interviews, questionnaires, recorded work/focus groups into transcription documents (Colaizzi, 1978). These transcriptions were organized according to each participant and included numbered lines data in order to favor data analysis (Colaizzi, 1978; Sanders, 2003). The stages for data analysis proposed by Colaizzi (1978) are as follows:

- A- The first stage in data analysis involved reading participants' descriptions from the transcription documents. This reading could offer the researcher a preliminary meaning of the collected data (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989; Sanders, 2003).
- B- The second stage implied going back to the transcription documents and extracting phrases or sentences directly related to the experience. Colaizzi (1978) called this stage "extracting significant statements" (p. 59). The extracted phrases and sentences were annotated in a new document called protocol with which the researcher started working. Data protocols needed to be repeatedly read to discover the repetition of similar statements, which needed to be noted and categorized together. In this way,



the researcher could start a process of data transformation. This transformation included re-writing phrases and sentences extracted from the transcription documents using the researcher's words in order to create a data protocol with meaningful and significant statements that reflected the essential meanings of the experiences with the phenomenon shared by the participants (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989; Sanders, 2003).

C- The third step is called "formulating meanings" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59; Sanders, 2003). The researcher needed to extract the meanings contained in each significant statement, thus she was involved in a creative process in which there was a transition from participants' actual words, to what they meant by using those words. At this stage, the meanings extracted by the researcher were close to the original statements in the protocols. Colaizzi (1978) explained that the researcher needs to discover the hidden meanings of the phenomenon, which are present in the original protocols, by "going beyond what is given in the original data and at the same time, staying with it" (p.59). The researcher needs to be careful not to bring her own theories to the data; on the contrary, the researcher needs to be receptive to understand the meanings implied in the data (Colaizzi, 1978, p.59; Sanders, 2003).

D- The fourth step involved re-reading the data protocols with the objective of clustering independent themes in order to continue reducing data, into general themes (theme clusters) that were common in the protocols produced by the participants. During this process, the researcher needed to move back and forth from the original protocols containing data to the themes list in order to secure that the final result shows the thematic findings of the study, i.e. the essential structural description of the

- phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in their teacher education programs. The researcher needed to be able to accept discrepancies and contradictions that appeared among themes (Colaizzi, 1978, Polkinghorne, 1989; Sanders, 2003).
- E- The fifth step involved an “exhaustive description” of the phenomenon, on the basis of the thematical analysis that had been carried out (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61; Sanders, 2003).
- F- The sixth step in data analysis was directed to the “formulation of the exhaustive description of the phenomenon under investigation”, or the interpretation of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, in which the researcher intended to identify and describe the fundamental structure of the investigated phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61; Sanders, 2003).
- G- In the final step, the researcher contacted the research participants to consult with them how did the descriptive results compare with participants' experiences and if there are any aspects of the experience that had been left out of the description. The researcher revised that all aspects were included in the final interpretation of the phenomenon by means of conducting follow up interviews (Polkinghorne, 1989; Colaizzi, 1978; Sanders, 2003).

### ***Trustworthiness***

Creswell (2013) acknowledges that qualitative researchers need to secure validation for their studies. He refers to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) analysis and use of naturalistic axioms to establish the “trustworthiness” of a study. The terms “credibility”, “authenticity”, “transferability”, “dependability” and “confirmability” would be better used in the present study.

Credibility was obtained after working in the field for a long period of time and securing triangulation of data collection and analysis methods, as well as with the contact with other researchers and their work. Transferability between the researcher and those being studied was secured via thick description, whereas dependability and confirmability was established through a thorough analysis of the research process (Creswell, 2013, p. 246). For the purposes of the study and based on the previous explanation by Lincoln and Guba (1985), the researcher supported a prolonged engagement with the research participants to secure rapport and respondent validation (Sanders, 2003). External auditors also provided reviews of the research process by means of strict questions and analysis that requested the researcher to maintain a truthful stance in regards to the study's findings (Creswell, 2013; Miller, 1997; Sanders, 2003).

Triangulation, defined as the process used by researchers to authenticate evidence and themes or perspectives within a research study, is another validation strategy that needs to be taken into consideration (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). Maxwell (2005) goes further to explain that triangulation reduces the risk that the researchers' conclusions will only reflect the limitations of their specific approach (p. 75). Triangulation in the study was secured by conducting the procedures described in the data collection section; namely by: a)- including the researcher's own reflections, presuppositions and judgement on the phenomenon of writing instruction while learning to teach ELs (Creswell, 2013; Goodson & Sikes, 200; Sanders, 2003), b)- implementing a written questionnaire, in which TCs' reflected and wrote about their own literacy background, c)- conducting semi-structured interviews with TCs, and d)- inviting TCs to participate in work/focus groups in which they discussed writing tasks and written assignments produced by ELs at different levels of proficiency in English. Consideration needs to be taken into account regarding generalizability of this study's findings. The researcher couldn't make findings

generalizable based on population characteristics or number of participants, but offered a thorough description and interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon being studied (Polkinghorne, 1989).

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze data, as the researcher, I decided to follow Colaizzi's (1978) data analysis procedures as cited by Polkinghorne (1989) and explained in the methodology section (pp. 58-9). After data from the following sources, a)- written open-ended questionnaires, b)- oral interviews and c)- focus groups oral discussions had been gathered and transcribed into official transcription documents, I started a personal and individual process of analysis.

The first stage of data analysis included in depth reading of data transcripts, which included open-ended questionnaires, oral interviews and focus groups oral discussions transcripts, to extract phrases or sentences related to the following thematic areas: a)- teacher candidates' (TC) general literacy experiences with writing instruction in the content areas, b)- the phenomenon of TCs' experiences in ESOL methods courses and with English learners (EL) in general. *358 significant statements* were extracted from these transcripts and relocated in three new documents: a)- questionnaire data protocol, b)- interview data protocol, and c)- focus group data protocol, which served as basis to further analyze data departing from the *significant statements*.

On the second stage of data analysis, I continued reading the *358 significant statements* in order to recognize repeated meanings from the phrases selected in order to proceed with data transformation process. This transformation included re-writing the *significant statements* extracted from the transcripts using the researchers' own words and creating a list with *formulated meanings* that reflected the essential experiences the participants shared about the phenomena (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989, Sanders, 2003).

I decided to go back to data collection tools including open-ended questionnaire (Appendix A), oral interview questions (Appendix B) and focus group leading questions

(Appendix C), and reflect upon the questions that TCs responded in relation to their own experiences in ESOL methods courses and with ELs in general. These actions backed up the analysis and process of description of the study's central phenomenon, namely TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses. I conducted a thematic analysis of the questions included in those data collection tools, and results indicated that participants reflected and answered about the following thematic areas: a)- experiences with ELs, b)- experiences and activities developed in ESOL methods courses important in writing instruction, c)- writing instruction knowledge to be applied to future general education classrooms (including ELs).

Consequently, the third stage of data analysis implied continuous reading of data protocols to discover the repetition of statements that were categorized together in order to reduce data. *190 significant statements and formulated meanings* that referred to the phenomenon explained above, i.e. TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses were transferred to a new protocol and counted again so as to favor further data analysis and thematic color-coding. After continuous reading of the *190 formulated meanings*, I could move forward to the fourth step in data analysis, which involved clustering the 190 formulated meanings into *20 independent themes*, which were later collapsed into *5 theme clusters* about the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses. For further reference, please refer to Appendix H, which includes the *5 theme clusters*, containing the *20 independent themes*, at the end of the document.

With the objective of securing that final results showed themes clusters that were common to the descriptions of the experience with writing instruction as lived by the participants while attending ESOL methods courses (Sanders, 2003), I continuously moved back and forth

from data transcripts and protocols to the formulated meanings, independent themes and theme clusters' lists during the data analysis process. The following table shows the thorough thematic analysis that emerged from data examination, paying close attention to the meanings implied by participants:

Table 2. Theme Clusters

<b>Theme Cluster: 1-Instruction/Knowledge developed in teacher education programs</b>	
Independent themes	a- Instruction to teach ELs
	b- Instruction/Knowledge/Strategies to teach ELs
	c- Resources used in class to learn/to teach
	d- Teacher candidates' knowledge about ELs
<b>Theme Cluster: 2-Best and bad practices including planning accommodations in general education classrooms</b>	
Independent themes	a- Best Practices to work with ELs in classrooms
	b- Planning to accommodate lesson plans to teach general education classrooms (including ELs)
	c- Bad practices
<b>Theme Cluster: 3-Experiences with ELs in authentic settings</b>	
Independent themes	a- Field experiences with ELs
	b- Opportunities to practice knowledge/strategies' application in authentic interactions
	c- Learning from field experiences and practice
<b>Theme Cluster: 4- Awareness of ELs in schools</b>	
Independent themes	a- English learners' needs
	b- Awareness of ELs' presence in schools
	c- Relationships with ELs
<b>Theme Cluster: 5- Writing instruction for ELs</b>	
Independent themes	a- Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)
	b- Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)
	c- Fostering motivation to write
	d- Fostering relatable writing
	e- Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar
	f- Teaching writing by proving structure
	g- Writing to make connections

The fifth step in data analysis process involved the production of a *thorough description of the phenomenon* being studied by means of integrating all the independent themes and theme clusters considered in the study's findings (Colaizzi, 1978, Sanders, 2003) as exposed above. It was my main objective as the researcher, to offer an exhaustive narrative description of the lived experiences of English Language Arts teacher candidates (TC) with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods courses in the English Language Arts Education program at the institution where I was working at the moment.

The *thorough description of the phenomenon*, which composes the core section of the chapter, included the participants' representations and accounts of their experiences and was written taking into account the formulated meanings developed in data analysis step 3 and independent themes and themes clusters developed during stage 4 in data analysis process. The intention was to explain the overall structure of the phenomenon being studied including all of the elements that composed the experience (Colaizzi, 1978, Polkinghorne, 1989, Sanders, 2003).

### **Thorough Description of the Phenomenon**

The following thorough description of the phenomenon intended to answer the main research question in the study, namely, *What are teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods' courses?* In extension the description of the phenomenon also intended to address the other two subset-questions, a)- *What learning experiences inform in the preparation of TCs' writing instruction to teach ELs in K-12 general education classrooms?* and b)- *What tasks and/or activities inform the preparation of TCs' writing instruction to teach ELs in K-12 general education classrooms?*



Five theme clusters clearly emerged from the twenty independent themes' descriptions, which had been the result of a thorough analysis of formulated meanings and significant statements extracted from participants' data. They showed the interrelation of thematic areas around which TCs' reflected that shaped their learning experiences while attending ESOL methods courses required in the English Language Arts Education program at our institution. TCs' process of becoming teachers was molded by a great variety of experiences they have had while attending classes, and they included learning content and reflecting upon their experiences and participating in field practicum of varied characteristics, thanks to which they also underwent learning and reflective formative processes. But most importantly, TCs experiences of becoming teachers was profoundly shaped when offered the opportunity to reflect about writing instruction experiences while attending ESOL methods courses, and by extension, their writing experiences along their schooling and teacher education program. Inquiry-driven activities included in different data collection instruments (specifically an open-ended literacy written questionnaire, an open-ended oral interview, and focus groups oral leading questions), guided participants in describing and elaborating on their literacy experiences, decision-making process to become teachers, decision to become teachers in the English Language Arts content area, as well as, their writing instruction experiences along their schooling and teacher education career. However, all of these areas of reflection would be analyzed in subsequent publications, since this dissertation concentrates in understanding, describing and interpreting the phenomenon of experiences with writing instruction as lived by English Language Arts TCs while attending ESOL methods courses.

### ***Theme Cluster 1: Instruction/Knowledge Developed in Teacher Education Programs***

The experience lived by TCs while attending ESOL methods courses as explained in TCs' descriptions data, is based on the theoretical and practical instruction they receive to teach ELs, the strategies they are taught to use in classrooms including ELs, the resources TCs use, both for learning and teaching and the knowledge about ELs' knowledge and circumstances that TCs develop. Receiving instruction in ESOL methods courses helps TCs focus on the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom and the need to make academic content, instruction and assessment accessible for ELs, who attend different grade levels and who have different levels of proficiency in English. English language proficiency levels have been explained as any of the stages through which individuals progress in their process from very basic knowledge and understanding about a language to becoming fully proficient in that language. Resources consulted by participants present a basic categorization of three levels of proficiency to which TCs refer in their descriptions, i.e. beginning, intermediate, and advanced. This categorization is accompanied by clear explanations about what each EL can understand and do in English, at the same time that teachers are suggested what they can do to support successful communication between ELs and their teachers, as well as among ELs and other learners (Nutta et al., 2014). Consequently, TCs need preparation to analyze the gap existing between ELs' proficiency level in English and the level of communication in the English language required by different grade levels at schools.

More specifically, *gap analysis* refers to the practice according to which teachers work with content, instruction and assessment adaptations or accommodations according to ELs' needs. Scholars and researchers have agreed that ELs are challenged by their proficiency level in English, i.e. whether they are at a beginner, intermediate or advanced level of proficiency in

English as a second language (L2), which in turn also influences their access to literacy development and content learning in English (Nutta et al., 2014). TCs' descriptions include methods and strategies to teach and interact with ELs in general education classes across content areas and the consideration of each section of the lesson plan including the necessary accommodations to address the ELs' needs mentioned above. Cindy's reflections (Interview protocol 5) about her experiences in ESOL methods courses and in field practicum, refer to the adaptations she has learned to make according to ELs' needs:

210- (In ESOL methods course) "I learned a lot about how you adapt to English learners, English learners' needs. I learned how to use visuals, check it, appoint a cross (...)" 211- I was in a class today for observations where they take pictures of the reading and they translate it into their language and it was really cool. Just a lot of adaptations to make the reading easier for them and have them comprehend a little more (...)" 212- Probably, (thinking of writing instruction in ESOL class) learning how to put it in like their native language more, like adapting to their, what level they are like beginner, intermediate, advanced". (Cindy, Interview data protocol 5).

Hazel (Interview data protocol 7), reflects about her experiences learning about lesson planning and the accommodations necessary to teach ELs: 253- "I was taught to carefully consider every section of the lesson plan and put in appropriate contents in order to make the lesson more rich and understandable and, I also added many ESOL strategies to the students in my lesson plans." (Hazel, Interview data protocol 7).

TCs are instructed to pay attention to different sections in their lesson plans and decide whether tasks included rely primarily on written and spoken language (verbal forms of communication) or on more hands-on experiences, participation in activities, use of

manipulatives or pictures (nonverbal forms of communication). TCs are guided to reflect upon lessons that heavily depend on language because they are mostly difficult for ELs to understand and follow (Nutta et al., 2014). To provide support for TCs and practicing teachers and help them develop the practice of analyzing verbal and non-verbal communication in academic tasks, Nutta et al. (2014) developed two memorable acronyms: *SLIDE* and *TREAD*. These acronyms help TCs analyze verbs, which are commonly used in lesson planning, taking into account common actions normally performed by teachers and students in classrooms, as well as, verbal or non-verbal communication. TCs refer to *SLIDE* verbs as “show” verbs, while in the literature these verbs are identified as “less language-intensive”. Some examples of *SLIDE* verbs that are necessary in lesson plans include: *show, watch, model, display, look and other nonverbal senses, investigate, categorize, connect, demonstrate, design, act out, experience, create, etc.* (Nutta et al., 2014). TCs become conscious of the importance of “showing” ELs examples of how to accomplish a task rather than just “telling” students to do those tasks, expecting ELs to proceed on their own. On the contrary, TCs refer to *TREAD* verbs as “tell” verbs, while in the literature they are referred to as “more language-intensive” verbs. Examples of *TREAD* verbs that commonly appear in lesson plans include: *tell, present information, narrate, recount, report, read, review, explain, listen, ask, answer, write, respond, discuss, describe, define, brainstorm, etc.* (Nutta et al., 2014). TCs recognize the need to become aware of how these verbs are used in their lesson plans because a balance is necessary to provide ELs with additional support in their learning process.

When TCs refer to the strategies learned in the course, they refer largely to those procedures that are relevant when teaching general education classrooms (including ELs) in the content areas. Teacher candidates read about these procedures in instructional resources, discuss

about them in class with their instructors, share them with colleagues and later plan to use and actually use these procedures in field experiences to make learning accessible to all students in the general education classroom, including ELs. Participants' descriptions of their learning process while attending ESOL methods courses include reference to a variety of basic tools that scaffold instruction in different areas and support students' different learning styles. In general terms, these strategies have been designed to favor students' a)- cooperative learning and social interaction in the classroom, b)- language connections in the second language (L2) by means of text support, simplifications and adaptations, c)- vocabulary development in English as L2, d)- hands-on involvement and kinesthetic learning, e)- visual, oral and aural learning.

#### ***Cooperative Learning and Social Interaction in the Classroom (A)***

Cooperative learning and social interaction in the classroom appear in TC's descriptions of the learning experiences they have had and discussed in ESOL methods courses, they have experimented in their practicum and/or they are planning to apply with their future students. Researchers refer to cooperative learning as a learner-centered and teacher-facilitated approach to favor instruction according to which students: a)- are divided in small groups and interact with each other, b)- practice theoretical and practical content related to a subject matter, c)- solve a problem, complete tasks and work towards achieving mutual goals, d)- become responsible for their own and other group members' learning processes, thus establishing positive interdependence, e)- maximize their own and each other's learning by working cooperatively together and receive joint rewards, f)- set up group team work, work with shared resources and respect assigned roles g)- build positive relationships with classmates, and h)- develop healthy

social, psychological and cognitive experiences (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1989; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1993; Johnson, 1994; Li & Lam, 2013, Slavin, 1996).

These strategies include group work, peer partnerships and feedback and in class discussions especially among English learners and English proficient speakers, so that ELs can improve their intake of the English language by interacting with peers, not only with teachers. Nutta et al. (2014) and Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2007) emphasize the benefits of the interaction between English-proficient students, as language models, with English learners (EL) in order to increase curriculum related conversation and sustain mutual help in the revision of assignments, especially written ones. Moreover, participants refer to the roles that advanced students can play within mixed groups of students; they specially refer to the role of leaders, who can be in charge of guiding group participants' discussions and securing every student has the opportunity to participate in those discussions.

***Language Connections in the Second Language (L2) by Means of Text Support, Simplifications and Adaptations (B)***

When working with texts, TCs refer to the need of combining reading and writing using textual support, cloze notes and graphic organizers to support ELs read and write more easily and make language connections. TCs also mention working with simplified texts, questions and instructions, as well as elaborating summaries from longer texts, using word substitutions and breaking down texts to ease ELs' access to heavy loaded texts. Moreover, applying leveled questions gets a higher significance to cater for ELs' different proficiency levels in English and to gear students, and ELs in particular, to writing and learning the second language.

As it is evident in the descriptions above, TCs make reference to their experiences with content transmitted in ESOL methods courses, that favor *moderation of language demands*, i.e.

the reduction of the complexity and amount of academic language present in content area lessons to a level that is slightly above ELs' level of proficiency. Thus, the examples of verbal support enumerated above make it easier for teachers to provide accessible input, output and interaction through language that is a step above ELs' proficiency level in English, which will increase language ability over time (Nutta et al., 2014).

TCs enlarge their descriptions and examples of verbal support by proposing possible writing tasks their ELs students can engage in, including writing sentences to describe their day, their feelings, or even assigning goals that students can achieve and thus, promoting language learning. Going beyond accommodations to guide students in the process of writing in the second language, TCs mention the design of appropriate worksheets to foster writing, writing exit slips and reflections on responses and activities without disregarding ELs' levels of proficiency in English.

### ***Vocabulary Development in English as L2 (C)***

Connected to reading, writing and language development, vocabulary expansion and strengthening is fundamental. Scholars and researchers agree that the development of a strong vocabulary benefits ELs' building background knowledge, understanding texts and subjects' specific content and acquiring L2 by means of language development (Nutta et al., 2014). TCs describe how the creation of vocabulary and phrase lists, as well as word walls including explanations and visuals accompanying words are preponderant to aid ELs to increase their vocabulary according to their individual level of proficiency in English. Other classroom practices that enhance ELs' language and vocabulary development include the use of analogies and examples.

Different activities that TCs have experienced in their personal literacy development history, and they plan to put into practice to assist students, especially ELs, in their vocabulary learning process, include writing vocabulary journals containing new words being learned, or that will be learned in the future, native language translations, and pictures for reference. Likewise, vocabulary learning doesn't need to be stressful for ELs, who encounter unknown words quite often and that is why teachers need to reinforce this cognitive process. More activities described by participants in their vocabulary learning experiences and that they would like to apply in their future classrooms include labeling classroom objects, organizing board games, playing music, learning songs' lyrics to promote writing and learning and writing essays once a week using new vocabulary.

Translations into ELs' native languages or the use of resources in native languages other than English, can be used to bridge the gap existing between grade-level language demands and ELs' level of proficiency in English (Nutta et al., 2014). Translations of key words into native languages is also described as a teaching and learning strategy to help ELs develop vocabulary knowledge, even when that translation can be done using a google translation application to help translate texts. Promotion of students' expressing themselves using their native language first and then continuing with translations of words and expressions into English, also appears to be relevant in the data analyzed.

### ***Hands-On Involvement and Kinesthetic Learning (D)***

Hands-on involvement in learning activities and kinesthetic learning, is represented in participants' data when TCs plan to model instruction for their students and plan to include bell-



work or fun activities, including games, puzzles, role playing games in different settings to aid ELs to learn language and content.

### ***Visual, Oral and Aural Learning (E)***

Visual, oral and aural learning support is granted by offering pictures, disregarding of group age, because they benefit group discussion and grant students the opportunity of supporting each other in learning vocabulary that can later benefit writing assignments. Pictures appear in data descriptions because they foster the retention of new vocabulary, as well as support students in their oral and written descriptions. Moreover, watching movies can also be considered useful to reinforce reading. Other significant support strategies offered by TCs in the descriptions of their learning experiences that they project to using when working with ELs involve using hand gestures and pointing to objects, talking slowly and clearly, simplifying explanations, adapting language and thinking everything that is said while taking smaller steps to guide students accomplish varied tasks.

These last two sections are mainly devoted to describe *nonverbal support* that can be used to make communication in the classroom accessible for all students, especially ELs at the beginning and intermediate proficiency levels in English, since it reduces the language load by presenting information in innovative ways which have been described in sections D)- and E). On the other hand, *verbal support* used to foster communication in the classroom, includes verbal-specific support that have been described in sections B)- and C)- above (Nutta et al., 2014).

TCs participating in the focus/work group discussion reflected on possible activities or strategies that would cater for different learning styles that were learned in ESOL methods

courses, as well as in other methods courses, that they found most useful when planning writing instruction for English learners (Focus group data protocol 1)

339- (...) to engage the ELL after having the studying of the grammar and how to write properly, engaging them by having fun when you do it and like they've mention before visuals for sure so if you're actually working with the class, create labels for different things in the classroom, they get to see how it is spelled or it can even be a sentence to describe a day or how they're feeling that day as a class. Also for each student to have individual daily goals, I feel like daily goals are much more effective because if you have a list of a few things if you get one done, it's much more productive that having a list of weekly goals and doing one. So these can be geared to writing or they can also be to actually learning the language as well (...) 340- And then of course like another way of having fun would be games. Puzzles are great way when you're showing direction and you're running like left and right and maybe one in center that's great vocabulary, this is for probably for a lower level English language learner. And then also board games because that helps you with vocabulary especially something as engaging as monopoly because you're using numbers, you're using vocabulary, you're using colors (...) So that's a great way to learn, and then music and having the lyrics in front of them for them to follow along, and they get to see where the comments are on that and pointing that out would also be an effective way for them to learn the writing (Focus group discussion data protocol 1).

Another preponderant section of TCs' learning experience is composed of the resources used to learn about ESOL content and to teach general education classrooms. Referring lightly to the book used in ESOL methods courses as a great resource in which TCs encounter not only

theoretical explanations, but also ideas, strategies and ways to deal with ELs, TCs concentrate their descriptions on themselves as future teachers planning the use of a variety of resources with their future students. TCs' experiences in ESOL methods courses inform their decisions on materials to be used with their future students in general education classrooms especially ELs. TCs' lesson plans would include leveled reader books or textbooks, even those containing translations into ELs' native languages, apart from texts in English. Related to the description offered about the strategies learned to work with ELs, TCs also device lessons in which visual aids consisting of posters and pictures, videos dictionaries and prompts to enhance lessons, have a great preponderance in their teaching. The general objective that guides the use of these resources would be to help students and stimulate them to learn according to their levels of proficiency in English and by extension, according to their personal learning styles. According to Weinstein (2015) educators believe that students differ in their ways of learning and demonstrating preferences according to their personal process of classroom experiences. Consequently, pedagogical practices need to attend to these differences among students and their ways of leaning.

To complete the description of content knowledge received by TCs in instructional settings, data has revealed the knowledge TCs develop about ELs' proficiency levels in English (see explanation about *beginner, intermediary and advanced* proficiency levels in English offered above, p. 66). Consequently, teaching this population highly depends on the recognition and accurate analysis of that proficiency level in individual ELs and/or in groups of them. Nutta et al. (2014) have largely discussed that the process of L2 learning progresses until ELs become fully proficient in the L2. Thus, TCs receive clear guidance as regards ELs' abilities at different levels of proficiency in English.

On the basis of Carey's (2006) and Halliday's (1999) discussions about the relevance of language in communication and the importance of both in education, Nutta et al. (2014) extend the discussion by stating their perspective on the role of content area teachers as facilitators of the communication within the classroom as the main educational setting. Thus, teachers are in charge of communicating or teaching content *for* students, they also plan communication *between* students about the content being learned and finally they enable communication *of* students so that they express what they have learned of the content transmitted. Gass and Mackey (2006) refer to this approach as the *interactionist approach* according to which, ELs develop proficiency in second language by means of receiving comprehensible *input*, by having opportunities to produce significant *output*, and by negotiating meaning in *interaction* with peers and teachers (Nutta et al., 2012).

In their own words, TCs refer to basic cognitive processes ELs undergo when learning English as a second language (L2), by explaining that this acquisition process takes time, consists of a complex process in which learners are exposed to L2 input, in some cases undergo a process of translation into the L1 and then a new process to re-translate to respond back in L2. According to this description, ELs develop grammatical knowledge in L2 useful to transmit messages and secure communication, both in oral and in written communication along a period of time. Most noticeable in data analysis is teacher candidates' reference to ELs and the fact that they traverse a *silent period* (Krashen, 1982; Nutta et al., 2014). Research has made apparent that children acquiring L2 in a natural linguistic environment may produce few utterances for some time after their first exposure to the second language; reduced output may consist of some memorized language or whole phrases or sentences learned as if they were only one word (Krashen, 1982). Thanks to instruction, TCs become aware of this fact, recognizing that ELs

have the capability to communicate, but specifically those in the beginner level, undergo a timeframe in which they only receive L2 input mainly by hearing and do not feel comfortable enough to produce language by speaking or writing to convey messages.

***Theme Cluster 2: Best and Bad Practices Including Planning Accommodations in General Education Classrooms***

Learning in an institutional setting is shaped by theoretical and practical knowledge transmitted and developed in face-to-face, online and mixed-mode (face-to-face and online) courses and field experiences. Courses attended by TCs participants in this study, include content area courses and a variety of methods courses and it is those methods courses that offer TCs specific instruction as regards teaching content and organizing their classrooms. In the specific case of ESOL methods courses, TCs are exposed to content specific instruction, the enactment of strategies and practices and the use of resources that will make teaching and learning effective and efficient for every learner in the classroom, specially ELs. As it has been explained before, TCs receive instruction about the need to analyze the gap (see p. 66) between the level of communication existent at different grade-levels and the different levels of proficiency in English that individual ELs possess. This analysis is vital for teachers to be able to adapt curriculum, instruction and assessment in order to fulfill the objective stated above, i.e. apply strategies and adaptations to make teaching and learning accessible and effective for ELs (Nutta et al, 2014).

Data analysis has shown how TCs draw from their learning experiences in instructional settings and field experiences and become increasingly more reflective of their past experiences and reflexive as regards future application of what has been learned in those experiences. TCs' descriptions data include their reflections on the content, strategies and knowledge learned, as

well as their reflexive stance as regards the practices they will implement when they work in their own classrooms. TCs' describe their reflective and reflexive stances referring to best and bad practices to work with general education classrooms, which include English learners (EL), as well as, their future plans to accommodate instruction to make it accessible for all students in general education classrooms, paying special attention to the inclusion of ELs (discussed above, p. 69-75). When reflecting and becoming reflexive about how to teach writing in general education classrooms, Gia (Questionnaire data protocol 10) expresses the following about teaching writing in general education classrooms including ELs: 74- "My current experience: I review with and work with my students on their essays, compositions and vocabulary exercises (...) 75-I offer them better grammatical choices and encourage them to self-correct." (Gia, Questionnaire data protocol 10). Another reflection by Jane (Interview data protocol 6), shows her reflexive stance as regards adaptations for her future ELs students:

245- "If I knew who was in what class I would modify – I would do that anyways, but I would modify that lesson plan for them so I would just be providing pictures or maybe it's a video or something to kind of help them follow along with what I'm teaching. Even provide like maybe other books so if one day we're doing Romeo and Juliet, you know, maybe I can find a translated version of Romeo and Juliet, so now they have the English part on one side and their language on the other side. So, then they can follow along in the English side then if they don't know really what's going on then they can read it and like, "Oh!, that's it". You know, providing different – different materials for them to utilize." (Jane, Interview data protocol 6).

Teacher candidates become reflective when describing their theoretical and practical learning experiences while attending the various activities required in ESOL methods courses and reflexive of the best practices they would master and apply once they become teachers in general education classrooms. Best practices encompass application of tips or strategies to guide all learners, including ELs with different levels of proficiency in English and proficient speakers of English to understand and complete assignments successfully. TCs describe their concern for making teaching and learning more efficient for their students with the application of the mnemonic acronyms *SLIDE* and *TREAD* and the use of technology during classes. TCs are highly recommended to analyze the inclusion of a balanced variety of teaching and learning actions, i.e. the inclusion of more language intensive verbs (*TREAD*) and less language intensive verbs (*SLIDE*) when planning their lessons (discussed above, see p. 68). Gia (Interview protocol 10) reflects about her experiences in ESOL methods courses, the content she is learning, especially the mnemonic acronyms *SLIDE* and *TREAD* because they are important for her at this moment since she is teaching writing instruction to ELs:

317- “Right now, they are teaching us gap-analysis and they are teaching us when we do lesson plans, to add additional support for our ESL students. Also *SLIDE* - *TREAD*, to be able to recognize in the lesson plan (...) 318- *SLIDE* is “Show” and *TREAD* is “Tell”. And if you have an ESL student, you might have to modify that (use of verbs in lesson plans) because they won’t be able to follow, given their language proficiency (...) 319- They (ELs) won’t be able to follow the content if everything is just *TREAD*, if everything is “tell”. So you have to take this into consideration (...) 320- So the lesson plan modification and learning *SLIDE* and *TREAD*, gap analysis and modification is helpful and it’s helpful right now because I am recognizing what I might say to a native

speaker, which I think is very common place, might not be so common place for an ESL student” (Gia, Interview data protocol 10).

Moreover, the inclusion of teaching and learning experiences through technology offers benefits to students and cooperate in making teaching and learning in classrooms more effective. TCs refer to the ample opportunities offered by technology to design multiple modality lessons at different levels of proficiency in order to meet the various needs of students, specifically those of ELs. Being engaged in tasks involving the use of technology, increases ELs’ motivation, supports them to become active learners and develops critical thinking (Nutta et al., 2014). Furthermore, according to TCs’ experiences descriptions, teaching and learning increase in efficiency, when teachers take the necessary time to learn about the classroom and what students are or are not capable of doing, when they balance good classroom practices and accommodations and develop relatable content for all students, i.e. make content relevant to students’ experiences.

This objective can also be enhanced by offering a risk-free environment, in which all students can participate in class discussions, ask questions and be involved in classroom exchange (Brewer & Daane, 2002). Moreover, best practices strengthen students’ educative experiences, especially if they secure collaborative learning practices (discussed above, pp. 69-70) by encouraging ample participation in groups’ and peers’ discussions by grouping and/or pairing ELs and English proficient speakers to work together.

On the contrary, bad practices, according to TCs’ descriptions imply pairing and grouping ELs and English proficient students separately and fostering discussions in separate language groups that would not benefit collaborative learning among ELs and English proficient students working together. Failure to group ELs and English proficient students to work together,



as well as failure to analyze ELs' proficiency levels in English and evaluate the materials necessary to teach them can be considered detrimental to ELs' learning experiences, including learning academic content and English as a second language (L2).

To complete this general description of best practices for general education classrooms, TCs refer to their plans to accommodate instruction by means of applying strategies and activities to teach inclusive classrooms when writing their lesson plans. TCs refer back to the mnemonic acronyms *SLIDE* and *TREAD* (see p. 68) as good strategies to which they could go back in order to secure the analysis of the kinds of verbs included in the lesson plan. Such is the case of Angelica (Interview protocol 1) who reflects about this recursive strategy of applying the mnemonic acronyms *SLIDE* and *TREAD* when writing lesson plans: 125- "SLIDE/TREAD were pretty good strategies. I really hated when I had to write a lesson plan, we had to find SLIDE and TREAD and everything but I realized as much as I hated doing it I had to keep going back to it because it had all the methods." (Angelica, Interview data protocol 1)

The general objective to be accomplished with these practices is to accommodate instruction to bridge the gap for ELs and increase accessibility to teaching and learning experiences for all students in the classroom, including ELs with different levels of proficiency in English as a second language (L2), as it has been discussed above (Nutta et al., 2014).

### ***Theme Cluster 3: Experiences with ELs in Authentic Settings***

Attendance to the ESOL methods course on theories and practice of teaching ESOL students in schools integrates a field experience known as service learning (SL) which is mandatory for every TC. Scholars have characterized service learning (SL) in teacher education programs stating that: a)- SL establishes a relationship of mutual benefit that merges field

experiences and authentic community service or school based experiences, b)- SL offers learning opportunities, joining academics to the service in order to benefit college students (TCs) and the community partners, c)- SL fosters TCs' achievement, civic engagement and personal growth (Baldwin, Buchanan and Rudisill, 2007; Hildebrand and Schultz, 2015; Roldan, Strage and David, 2004; Ryan and Callahan, 2002).

According to the ESOL methods course's internal SL requirements, TCs should prove that they have attended a classroom in which there are ELs integrated to the general education system. Apart from observing teachers and students working on a daily basis, TCs are required to work on a one to one basis with ELs accomplishing different tasks as required by the teachers' lesson plans. Likewise, TCs candidates participate in many other different field experiences, which are required by courses in the English Language Arts teacher education program, including Junior Achievement teaching experience, various volunteering and internship experiences as well as, tutoring carried out in settings that serve varied populations on the university campus.

In depth reading of data protocols has revealed that TCs describe a variety of experiences in field practicum, including SL, in which they have been in direct contact with ELs. Their descriptions also include some past experiences with ELs, from the times in which they were students themselves and were in situations in which they could interact or help ELs directly. TCs reflect on authentic opportunities to apply their knowledge about ELs, their learning peculiarities and levels of proficiency in English, as well as, describe their plans to apply the strategies and practices they have learned to work with linguistically and culturally diverse populations in an efficient manner. Moreover, TCs have had the opportunity to reflect about the enhancement of their learning processes while participating in field experiences, which constitutes a

reinforcement to their instructional learning experiences. Hazel (Interview data protocol 7) reflects about the service learning experience she had in the ESOL methods course she was attending: 264- (This service learning experience is different) (...) “And so, I can interact with students. I can teach them, help them to do the homework and work sheets. I’ll read with them, so it is an experience which I can act as a intern or teacher assistant so its much more different.” (Hazel, Interview protocol 7). Pia (Questionnaire data protocol 13) also reflected on her service learning experience: 90- “For one of my TEFL classes I had to shadow a college teacher who taught ELs. The teacher would sometimes give us the opportunity to teach and work with the students ourselves while she supervised.” (Pia, Questionnaire data protocol 13).

When TCs describe their participation in field experiences with ELs, they bring about a great variety of different emprises, which include tutoring, shadowing observing and teaching under the supervision of mentor teachers or practicing as interns under supervising college professors. While undergoing these field experiences, TCs become aware that ELs need extra language support, as it has been discussed above (pp. 67-68), and dedication in various learning experiences like support in writing, reading comprehension, differences in discourse understanding, pronunciation, spelling and word agreement improvement. ELs also need understanding of their capabilities and abilities according to their levels of proficiency in English and the learning process they are undergoing. Ellis (2008) considers that second language (L2) acquisition is the process by which learners acquire the form and structure of a language, among other important language aspects and their functions (Nutta et al., 2014). Researchers have agreed on the need to pay attention to the L2 learning process and the influence of several factors that shape that process, including the social, cultural and affective contexts that surround the

learner, the kind of motivation, whether integrative or instrumental, and age of onset (Dornyei, 1994; Gardner & Lambert, 1973; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Nutta et al., 2014; Zhao, 2015).

Most remarkably, TCs got involved and performed different activities together with ELs including dialogues and learning together, as well as offering ELs a balanced amount of strategies, simplified instruction and accommodations (as discussed above, pp. 68-73). Thanks to these provisions, students and ELs in general education classes received the support needed to advance in their tasks. Such is the experience lived by Charlotte (Interview data protocol 3), when she tells her experience with an EL while fulfilling her service learning hours:

176- “When I was working at the international center I was doing some tutoring with an EL student specifically throughout my time there, and he was in I believe class 2B, and he felt that he was not getting the time to write or to develop his writing. He felt a little bit more advanced (...)177- And so, I worked with him and wrote down an essay starting just from sentence to paragraph, and just telling him what kinds of paragraphs. And he wanted to learn so much about one subject along with paragraphs. It was a basic American culture subject that it motivated him to essentially write his own essay, which was really amazing.” (Charlotte, Interview data protocol 3).

Observations carried out by TCs during their field experiences with ELs include positive and negative reflections. TCs describe how teachers helped ELs individually and in groups using varied strategies and practices to make teaching and learning accessible for ELs. On the contrary, some negative appreciations include experiences in which practicing teachers who were observed lacked motivation to teach ELs due to scarcity of appropriate strategies to teach ELs in general education classrooms. Practicing teachers also evidenced occasions of lack of

appropriate strategies to recognize ELs' proficiency levels in English and design appropriate practices to teach them in general education classroom.

TCs describe their experiences with ELs extensively so much so, that they also reflect about their feelings while working with ELs. On the one hand, descriptions of lived-experiences, which are evaluated as hard, reflect TCs' nervousness and feelings of unpreparedness and not being understood in classes completely populated by ELs whose native languages are unknown to the TCs. On the other hand, there is reference to more positive feelings of empathy with the ELs, who are undergoing the L2 learning experience, and open wishes to be able to do more and implement learned approaches. However, TCs realize the classrooms had their own teachers and they didn't have enough time to apply the vast instructed knowledge, strategies (see pp. 69-73), and practices (see pp. 77-80) they had learned in the courses attended as required by their teacher education program.

TCs' reflections upon their experiences with ELs in authentic settings encompass experiences from the past when they were students themselves (in elementary/middle school) and were in the position of helping ELs classmates. Back then, TCs observed their teachers struggle to teach ELs because they either lacked the necessary skills to accommodate instruction or needed to start from the foundations to teach ELs, which made instruction harder for those teachers. When reflecting about their present opportunities to work and help ELs in authentic settings (outside of SL classes), TCs describe experiences in which they have received job offers after completing service learning and helped professionals and family members, who are not fluent in English, while still completing their teaching careers.

With reference to TCs' reflexive stance towards the future, they reflect on their own experiences to search for teaching opportunities to help ELs in particular, as well as, the

generation of real opportunities for ELs to practice English in authentic interactions. Researchers and scholars have defined authenticity in education from diverse points of view including authenticity of texts, of participants taking part in communication, of social or cultural situations and of purposes of the communicative act or a combination of all of these. There is recognition that authenticity appears in the literature with a variety of inter-related meanings, out of which the ones that relate closely to the *authentic interactions* implied by TCs in their descriptions include the following concepts of authenticity: a)- the language real speakers/writers produce for real audiences, conveying a real message (Nunan, 1988, 1989), b)- the types of tasks chosen (Lewkowicz 2000; Guariento & Morley, 2001), c)- the social situation in the classroom (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Rost, 2002), d)- the culture and the ability to function as a member of the target language culture to be validated by its members (Kramsch, 1993; Gilmore, 2007). Thus, these are important factors to be taken into account when analyzing TCs' experiences with ELs and how they plan to apply what they have learned in their future classrooms.

Looking for opportunities to teach ELs, some TCs express their intentions to teach writing in the United States (US) schools in order to be able to help ELs who are always present in general education classrooms, and on the contrary, others express their intentions to start by teaching English abroad. Those that would like to start teaching in the US, reflect about the importance of taking the first year as novice teachers to test what strategies work best and which don't in order to have a back-up of strategies, resources and practices (discussed above, p. 69-73) that are useful to teach general education classrooms, including ELs. Linda (Interview data protocol 8), reflects about the future application of strategies and practices learned in authentic general education classrooms: 270- "I think it would be a lot of like testing. I would probably have a lot of guinea pigs that I would have to try out different just the different strategies and

different methods and see what works best and what doesn't work well. I know, I would use every single resource available to me to help my students.” (Linda, Interview data protocol 8).

TCs also find it valuable to include and apply further some approaches and methods that have been learned in specific areas of knowledge that can help make instruction successful for ELs in general education classrooms. TCs also describe their learning experiences during their participation in practicum both observing and teaching in general education multicultural and multilingual classrooms. It is accurate to say that TCs consider the importance of the different settings in which learning takes place including service learning and face to face classes, because there is a great amount of tools that need to be learned.

Experiences dealing with ELs in authentic settings, help TCs understand that ELs have limited grammar knowledge, but this fact doesn't necessarily hinder communication, i.e. despite problems, grammar knowledge is still apparent and developing. Second language acquisition scholars and researchers explain that L2 learners progress through sequences of language acquisition, which are constrained by various factors considered developmental. Developmental patterns are common to L2 learners disregarding of their native languages (L1), consequently most L2 learners should be expected to develop language passing through different levels of acquisition (Ellis, 2008; Nutta et al., 2014).

In regards to writing instruction, TCs refer to the experiences that have helped them develop knowledge and practice of teaching writing. In their own words, writing is more challenging than speaking, since it is easier to reproduce oral sounds than writing words and constructing sentences with punctuation. As it has been discussed above, Ellis (2008) and Nutta et al. (2014) agree that L2 acquisition process, and therefore, the acquisition of particular structures progresses through stages. However, this process can be further delayed in writing

specifically, if ELs do not receive appropriate feedback and instruction that can help them overcome their difficulties and improve their writing skills with time (Nutta et al., 2014). As a final remark, relevant aspects of TCs' experiences are composed by their statements about the need to provide ELs with authentic opportunities to practice writing and speaking (discussed above, p. 85-6), to secure transparency in instruction and to make learning relatable, interesting and easier for students (discussed in p. 80).

#### ***Theme Cluster 4: Awareness of ELs in Schools***

Since the beginning of this phenomenon description, it has been apparent how TCs have been increasingly exposed to the presence of ELs in general education classrooms, to their needs as learners in these classrooms and the relationships that TCs can establish with ELs from their positions as helpers or facilitators of the teaching-learning process. All in all the process of awareness development is visible as far as data analysis goes deeper into the descriptions of the learning phenomenon that occurs as a result of the interactions established by TCs and ELs in the various settings attended while they progress in their teaching career.

Teacher candidates (TC) recognize that students in general and ELs in particular have learning needs (discussed above, p. 66) that TCs should attend and not cast low expectations on ELs. On the contrary, TCs are required to develop awareness and patience when working with ELs, they need to put themselves in the position of ELs and become conscious of their different learning styles (discussed above, p. 69). These virtues are necessary when working with ELs, since TCs are being prepared to offer help and teach content, as well as, to learn what ELs need to learn and mold what students need to know so that ELs can start learning from the foundations.



Teacher candidates (TC) specified ELs' needs as follows: a)- appropriate analysis and recognition of ELs' different proficiency levels in English, b)- support in L2 acquisition development, c)- well educated teachers in ESOL content and d)- authentic opportunities to practice the language. All of these areas have already been discussed in the chapter.

Most specifically, ELs need language support, which involves help with foundational language elements, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, as well as access to simplified texts to understand complex ones, access to leveled questions to overcome complex questions meanings and support with language intense verbs. The analysis of the verbs that are included in lesson plans has been explained extensively in the chapter and imply verb analysis according to the mnemonic strategies *SLIDE* and *TREAD* discussed above (p. 68).

TCs' awareness of ELs' presence in schools has also become evident as data analysis progressed. Because of institutional requirements to collect demographic data at schools where service learning is carried out, TCs investigated the percentages of ELs in schools, which helped them realize the real amounts of ELs that attend schools. Moreover, once TCs start with service learning experiences, they become aware that ELs attend general education classrooms and that they need to work with them and include them in lesson planning. Cindy (Interview data protocol 4) reflects about her encounter with ELs in schools:

202- "(...) but this is the first one (Service Learning experience) where I have definitely turned my scope to EL learners. I definitely thought because there is one teacher that I always do my service learning with. We have a great connection and it's just I have never turned my scope to them. I didn't really think when I was starting service learning I was ever going to find ELs to deal with (...) "because they don't exist, they are not in our class, because there is nothing there" (...) 203- It was a lie, nearly I found out that school

has over 50% population for this type of students as well as 13% population for French students and then there is only one ESOL teacher and she is just a graduate and it's not even like a full time position. They really do need that support especially in that school and it was very interesting for me not only to help in any way that I could but just to see everything that was going on (...) 204- I discovered this new whole world that needs a lot of help" (Cindy, Interview protocol data 4).

TCs' reflections about their experiences also involve their stance towards developing patience, empathy and understanding towards linguistically and culturally diverse populations and their experiences while learning an L2. They also find it necessary to create a safe space in the classroom (discussed above, p. 80), where all students can take risks, participate openly and make mistakes, oral and written, since teachers' objectives focus on supporting ELs becoming proficient in L2 without putting them down due to their mistakes.

In some cases, even when TCs had been reading and discussing about ELs in institutional settings, facing them in the classrooms oblige TCs to change their attitudes and stop undermining the presence of ELs in general education classrooms. TCs become aware of what they do when teaching, the amount of work they need to do and the need to simplify and scaffold instruction for ELs (discussed above, p.69). Despite the fact that ELs' products are under grade level in comparison to other students' productions, TCs do not have to lower expectations and continue working hard to support ELs' progress to the desired level, since ELs need understanding and support while undergoing the process of L2 acquisition as it has been explained above (p. 87). Finally, TCs refer to their surprise about ELs' motivation to learn (discussed in p. 101), to work with teachers and to get good grades, even when they had been told by instructors that ELs

usually lose motivation in case of lack of understanding in the second language (L2) being learned.

When referring to their relationships with ELs, TCs recognize they need to have connections with students in order to develop lesson plans in which ELs and their learning needs (discussed above, p. 89) are included and create a connection teacher-student that helps ELs feel comfortable with learning in varied areas, in a risk-free learning environment as explained above. Miranda (Interview data protocol 9) reflects about her learning experiences while attending ESOL methods courses:

299- I think like the biggest preparation thing I've gotten out of all the courses is definitely patience and understanding and just trying to make students realize that the classroom is a safe space where they can take risks and it's okay to mess up saying something or to mess writing something, the point is we want you to start becoming proficient into the language and we'll not going to put you down for every wrong thing you do". (Miranda, Interview data protocol 9).

There are positive and negative views of this relationship with ELs. On the one hand, some TCs recognize that the experience is hard, especially in classes completely populated by ELs, in which they do not always feel understood. On the other hand, TCs also describe their positive feelings about working with ELs and building relationships with them.

### ***Theme Cluster 5: Writing instruction for ELs***

TCs participants in this study were asked to reflect about their past experiences with writing instruction, including their first experiences with learning to read and write, and about their experiences with writing instruction along their schooling. In regards to writing instruction

in English Language Arts, TCs were requested to reflect about experiences with writing, methods they had been taught to write and to teach writing, important aspects in students' writing, kinds of writing instructed to do and amounts of writing done in academic settings. In regards to experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses, TCs were asked to reflect about activities and experiences that inform TCs' preparation to accommodate writing instruction for ELs at different levels of proficiency in English as L2. TCs have also reflected about how they would apply their knowledge of writing instruction in future classrooms including ELs.

Data obtained from TCs' responses to the areas mentioned above have been categorized in the following independent themes: accommodations, activities and strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (including ELs), teaching writing by means of teaching grammar and by providing structure, fostering motivation to write, making writing relatable and writing to make connections. TCs' descriptions of their plans to teach writing in general education classrooms to reach every student, including ELs, are very much influenced by TCs' knowledge acquired in ESOL methods courses, their own content area courses and field experiences in authentic settings, as it has been described in the chapter. Among the accommodations reported to teach writing to multicultural, multilingual populations, TCs mention the need for *differentiation* in instruction and learning for all students, especially taking into account that classes are inhabited by ELs, at different levels of proficiency in English (discussed before, p.66) and English proficient-speaking students. Therefore, the need for different writing prompts becomes evident. Literature consulted by TCs specifies that "differentiation strategies" allow teachers to go through a process of analysis of ELs' different levels of understanding and use of English and the demands of the English-speaking classroom

as regards speaking, listening, reading and writing, as has been discussed before in the chapter. The successful analysis of the classroom communication gap (discussed in p. 66) will allow teachers to make decisions as regards multiple ways to present and test content and make it accessible for ELs. The ultimate goal will be to take provisions for EL to learn the academic content and develop more proficiency in English (Nutta et al., 2014, p.38-9).

TCs also refer to *breaking down* accommodations, specifically when they clarify that *breaking down* content is necessary to make it easier for ELs. Also referring to dissecting information, TCs suggest, as example, to begin teaching writing with one-word adjectives to describe what students see and how they feel and then expand to write sentences to tell a story. Another proposal includes to start writing from the foundations, or starting from one sentence, progressing to a paragraph in order to write an essay. I have already discussed about the moderation of language demands in this chapter (p. 67), a practice that aids teachers to reduce the complexity and amount of language demanded by different content areas, to a level slightly above of ELs' level of proficiency in English. Using the terms mentioned by TCs, "breaking down" or "dissecting" information also refers to text simplification, which facilitates text comprehension and favors language development when text language structures are at the level, or slightly above, ELs' current level of proficiency in English (Nutta et al., 2014).

Finally, TCs refer to *scaffolding* strategies in order to teach writing. Resources consulted by TCs during their ESOL methods' courses provide them with guidelines to analyze the applicability of language arts and literacy scaffolding strategies paying attention to the qualities of: a)- *pitch*, which refers to the use of language in the classroom analyzing its complexity and/or familiarity for ELs according to their proficiency level in English, b)- *pace*, which refers to the amount and frequency of language instruction and practice in a class, c)- *portion*, referring to the

amount of spoken and written content language in a class, d)- *perspective/point*, referring to focus or points of instruction that are different for ELs and native speakers of English (Nutta et al., 2014). TCs' descriptions of scaffolding strategies to endorse content and language instruction, include mapping, modelling, molding and offering pictures for students to describe what they see and feel in one word so that later they can continue writing a story. Further *scaffolding* strategies allow ELs to write and provide instructions in the ELs' native language, particularly to beginner level ELs, so that they can express personal thoughts and later report orally in English what they wrote in their native languages. Furthermore, *scaffolding* to teach writing, according to TCs' descriptions, include presenting content in a slower fashion, using dictionaries to get support with word meaning, and color coding different sections of essays, i.e. introduction, body, examples, evidence and conclusion. TCs are instructed to apply the qualities mentioned above, in order to use the scaffolding strategies successfully, always analyzing the form and reason of implementation (Nutta et al., 2014).

TCs' descriptions of differentiation and modification in instruction recognize the importance of supporting writing instruction for ELs, since they need verbal guidance (discussed above, pp 69-73) and clarification about text discourses, which are different for both: English learners and English proficient students. Studies about cultural differences on how different languages organize text structure, have become fundamental to understand the way in which ELs, who come from varying first language backgrounds, write in English and express themselves in general communication (Kaplan, 1966; Nutta, 2014; Reid, 2009; Schachter, 1974).

Likewise, *scaffolding* in writing instruction also comprises the use of outlines and lists with definitions of potentially problematic words, to help ELs understand their own writing. Finally, TCs include revisions and corrections as being important to help ELs improve their

writing skills. There is agreement that scaffolding helps ELs remember and finally put those corrections into practice. There are several accounts from TCs who plan their work in future classrooms including ELs departing from their learning experiences in varied academic learning settings, like the following reflection from Jane (Questionnaire data protocol 6): 38- “To teach writing including ELs I will begin with one word adjectives. There will be a picture and the student in one word will describe what they see or feel. I will later have them use these words in a sentence to tell a story” (Jane, Questionnaire data protocol 6).

When TCs reflect about the way in which they can apply knowledge of the writing process acquired in the content area, in ESOL methods courses and in previous literacy experiences to teach ELs, they either refer to activities and/or strategies directly related to reinforce written assignments, or other activities that would generate and complement the writing activity. TCs mention the importance of evaluating ELs’ levels of proficiency in English, as discussed above, when planning to work and review a variety of essay questions, vocabulary exercises, writing assignments and creative writing topics. TCs describe further their experiences with writing instruction when analyzing their plans to integrate assignments, help students’ support their ideas with textual evidence and grant students freedom of expression when writing to be applied in their future classrooms. Brainstorming and organizing ideas is fundamental in writing instruction in order to guide students in the production of good pieces of writing in which respecting the ELs’ learning experiences, levels of proficiency in English and in writing production is fundamental.

As regards, reflections about activities and strategies that support writing instruction in general education classrooms by developing new vocabulary knowledge according to ELs’ proficiency level in English, teacher candidates (TCs) describe past literacy experiences

including: a)- journaling, b)-learning and practicing new vocabulary, supported by visual aids, c)- using new vocabulary in weekly written essays, d)- organizing groups discussions to cover for some students' lack of knowledge in vocabulary, e)- working together with students to check who are making similar mistakes and explaining mistakes' origin. TCs' clearly express their plan to apply these practices in their future classrooms in order to support ELs' English language development and grant them opportunities o write about their experiences, stories and anecdotes.

Katy (Interview data protocol 5) reflects about a future general education classroom including English learners (EL), for which she elaborates on possible strategies and knowledge about writing instruction:

213- (...) I'll say by creating assignments that are adapted to every+body and interesting to everybody, because no one wants to write about something that is boring or teaching on the format, definitely, because it's like the basic outline of everything that you need to do (...) 214- And teaching them how to incorporate new vocabulary or add experiences to their writing stories and anecdotes to make it more relatable.” (Katy, Interview data protocol 5).

Data analysis has revealed how TCs drive extensively from their previous or present experiences, which are very valuable to help them decide on practices they would like to implement in their future classrooms. Group work that foster group discussions, as discussed before (pp. 69-70), are very beneficial in the development and improvement of writing skills. Group projects, including written and oral components, classroom discussions and worksheets can be useful to brainstorm ideas and provide students with a sense of and interest in what they will be writing. Furthermore, discussion-based assessments, especially when teachers talk to



students, they correct side by side and corrections made orally and in written form. Moreover, this practice enables students to write about the experience, and learn from corrections (which can include colors for relevance) to boost ELs' writing abilities. TCs in the focus groups discussion (Focus group data protocol 1) reflected on the application of collaborative strategies used in other courses that can be helpful to be applied in general education classrooms, including ELs:

341- I'm currently in course XXX, and I do conversation hours section, and I've noticed that it helps to do discussion based assessments where you're talking to students but then afterwards to write about your experience and then going side by side and correcting as you're doing it. I feel like that helps because not only you're playing out the errors in their writing but during discussion you can assist verbally.” (Focus group discussion data protocol 1).

Error corrections in written assignments are recommended at different levels of ELs' proficiency levels, focusing specifically on errors that can cause comprehension problems. Error correction practices can be done on individual or group settings, as well as, range from explicit and direct feedback, to indirect guided input or selective feedback in order to focus on a variety of error types (Nutta et al., 2014).

TCs' descriptions of experiences with writing instruction in varied courses and settings along their academic career, include variations in the use of group discussions, i.e. use peer feedback and teacher feedback as instructional strategies directly related to writing. These are especially beneficial in the writing workshop approach, in which using the feedback model of writing in groups and then refining writing within the group of peers, who share their

understanding about writing and what needs to be improved, can be more beneficial than working as a whole class workshop. Writing workshops are ways of organizing a writing class by grouping students so that ideas and products could be shared and the writing process could start with peers' exchanges in order to develop ideas. The writing workshop approach would also provide time span and predictable and consistent environments to foster writing for extended periods of time, mainly about topics that are relatable to students and or deal with real-world issues. The Writing workshop puts into practice process writing (discussed in chapter 2) and stresses sharing work with the class, peer conferencing and editing and collecting written work to conform a writing portfolio (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986, 1994; Calkins & Harwayne, 1987; Graves, 1983; Scarbrough & Allen, 2014).

Teacher candidates reflect further about ELs participating in the writing workshop activities and receiving peer feedback according to their level of proficiency in English. To achieve this objective, teachers would need to prepare English proficient students in the classroom to guide ELs according to their level of English language development, namely paying more attention to developing vocabulary, without focusing too much on grammar, so that group work can really be helpful.

Further analysis of TCs' experiential data reveals their stance towards teaching writing, by means of teaching grammar. TCs describe their experiences with writing instruction by making connections to their grammar knowledge, personal experiences with own language and foreign languages' grammar rules, their own present practices and their expectations on how they would teach grammar in future general education classrooms. TCs emphasize the need to strengthen teachers' understanding of the English language because, on the one hand, grammar knowledge is foundational, especially for writing, and on the other hand, grammar rules are easy

to forget. The need for TCs to develop grammar knowledge in English, is based on their needs to teach and explain ELs the rules of English, as well as, about academic content they need to learn in the various disciplinary areas. On their end, ELs need to develop grammar knowledge to learn the second language (L2) and the academic content being taught. Consequently, teachers need to offer ELs better grammatical choices, highlight knowledge of grammar and specific grammar points, focus on parts of speech to progress from there, and encourage self-correction.

Literature consulted by TCs focus instruction on the process of second language acquisition (SLA) that ELs undergo and the stages through which they progress when learning English as a second language (discussed above, p. 66). Moreover, research has shown that the rate of development of precise grammar forms (like the *s* addition to present tense verbs) can be accelerated by explicit instruction of those forms and thus, ELs can improve their levels of attainment of proficiency in English as a second language (L2). Following TCs' descriptions of the process to teach writing, Ellis' (2008) proposal to implement Pienemann's Processability Theory can be successful to support ELs 'development of L2 proficiency. According to Pienemann (2005), grammar instruction should start with single words, then be followed with phrases, then simple sentences and move slowly to more complex ones. This theory clearly pays attention to the most appropriate order in which structures can be learned; such is the case of verb tenses structures, i.e. simple forms (e.g. *I am playing soccer*) need to precede the learning of more complex ones (e.g. *I have been playing soccer for two years*). But most importantly, correction of grammar mistakes is necessary so as to favor the learning of different structures in different stages of language development (Ellis, 2008; Nutta et al., 2014; Pienemann, 2005).

Further data analysis, focuses on TCs' experiences and reflections about teaching writing in their future classes by means of providing structure in two ways. On the one hand, TCs plan to

provide students with outlines or formats to follow when completing written assignments (see discussion on scaffolding above, p. 95), and on the other hand, they plan a class structure according to which students will write following different patterns at different class moments. TCs fundament their first posture when describing that it is easy for students to follow an outline indicating where and how to write an introduction, a thesis statement, the essay body in which they tell what they want, and the conclusion. These basic elements of an essay or composition are key in writing instruction. By describing the second posture, TCs support the organization of classes according to which students will complete different kinds of written assignments, for example a journal time, when ELs would express personal thoughts in their native languages, and a time in which they will be required to write about academic content in English, followed by oral explanations about content being learned.

This pattern or structure described by TCs, namely the pattern that divides the kinds of writing at different times in the class, is apparent in TCs' descriptions of experiences about the motivation to write. In their descriptions, they draw from a variety of experiences in content area courses, ESOL methods courses and field experiences and project them into their future classes. They describe the significance of creating assignments adapted and interesting to everybody in order to oppose writing instruction that relies on boring topics and/or follows a basic format. In ESOL methods courses, TCs learned to incorporate classroom discussions and worksheets to increase students' interest in writing. Field experiences have particularly taught participants that motivated students can complete challenging assignments, like writing essays. Consequently, supporting writing experiences related to what students want to write about, what they know and have passion for, will increase their motivation to write, and by extension, their motivation to learn.

Moreover, TCs draw from their own experiences when describing that writing instruction for ELs could be improved with the addition of vocabulary and experiences for ELs to write their own stories and anecdotes. In this way, writing could be made more relatable to students (refer to discussion on p. 80). This vision is strengthened because TCs refer to their personal experiences to support writing about what is known for them and not about something they do not have passion for or desire to write about. Writing done from students' hearts, about known topics and even in their native languages first, in order to translate later, can certainly make writing more relatable to every student in the general education classrooms. This is especially true with English learners. Final remarks done by TCs in their descriptions refer to writing to make connections, especially paying attention to the use of textual, visual, writing and social support necessary to students to use the language to write, to make connections and learn, not only the language itself, but also content, as it was explained before. Gia (Interview data protocol 10) has a final reflection about promoting writing from students' personal interests in order to support them learn content and language:

325- "I would tell my students and I have told some of my students that you write from the heart, write what you know and first write it in your own language, but write and then you can always translate it (...)

326- Whatever language it is, you write from the heart and what you know you'll have a passion for it and it will be easier (...)

327- It works for me and I've been taught that as well, to write what you know, don't try to find something that you have no passion for, no desire for (...)

328- If they can write that they'll also want to learn to be able to say the same words in English." (Gia, Interview data protocol 1).

## CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Considering that exhaustive descriptions of phenomena can be extensive as shown in chapter 4, Colaizzi (1978) proposed a reduction to an essential structure of the phenomenon (Sanders, 2003). Therefore, the sixth step in data analysis involved the development of the statement of *identification of the fundamental structure* of the phenomenon under investigation, i.e. teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods courses (Colaizzi, 1978; Sanders, 2003) in order to offer an interpretation of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. Such structure needs to include a description of the processes and meanings that have been derived from TCs' descriptions of experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses, together with other content area and methodology courses and field experiences, according to the analysis in chapter 4 (Haase & Myers, 1988; Sanders, 2003).

The seventh and last step in this interpretive analysis, involved the researcher and research participants conferencing about the study's descriptive and interpretative results derived from TCs' educational experiences. Descriptive elements that had been left out were included in order to cover every aspect in the final interpretation of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989; Sanders, 2003).

Chapter 4 is the result of the researcher's analysis and reflection processes dedicated to understanding and describing the phenomenon under study in this dissertation, namely the experiences with writing instruction as lived by English Language Arts (ELA) TCs while attending ESOL methods courses as it appears in TCs' responses to inquiry driven activities, namely written literacy questionnaires, semi-structured oral interviews and focus group discussions. In order to offer a thorough description of the phenomenon, I focused on the

questions that TCs responded in relation to their own experiences in ESOL methods courses and with ELs in general. A thematic analysis of the open-ended literacy questionnaire, open-ended interview questions and focus group leading questions, indicated that participants answered and reflected about the following thematic areas: a)- experiences with ELs along their schooling, b)- experiences and activities developed in ESOL methods courses important in writing instruction, c)- writing instruction knowledge (drawn from different areas of knowledge) to be applied to future classrooms (including ELs).

Rigorous data analysis process explained in chapter 4 guided this detailed analysis from the reading of transcriptions (to get the first ideas about the data) to the in-depth reading where I selected the statements that were significant to explain TCs' a)- general literacy experiences with writing instruction in the content areas and b)- the phenomenon of TCs' experiences in ESOL methods courses and with English learners (EL) in general. At this stage *358 significant statements* were extracted and formulated meanings re-written in order to reflect the essential experiences shared by participants about the phenomena (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989, Sanders, 2003). In order to hone in the formulated meanings that referred to the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses, I decided to focus on *190 formulated meanings*, that resulted from data reduction. These formulated meanings helped me recognize *20 independent themes* to which TCs referred when describing their educational learning experiences while attending ESOL methods courses required in the English Language Arts education program at our educational institution. The following *5 theme clusters* resulted from assembling the independent themes together. They have been thoroughly described and discussed in the previous chapter and I include them here for clarity of explanation: a)- TCs' experiences with instruction received and knowledge developed in teacher education programs,

b)- TCs' recognition of good and bad practices in educational settings, including planning accommodations in general education classrooms, c)- TCs' experiences with ELs in authentic settings, d)- TCs' awareness process of ELs in schools, and e)- TCs' experiences with and about writing instruction for ELs.

The following section and the core of this chapter was dedicated to developing the statement of identification of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, in the search for an interpretation of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon under study (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989, Sanders, 2003).

### **Identification of the Fundamental Structure of the Phenomenon**

The identification of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon lies at the heart of the phenomenon of the experiences with writing instruction as lived by English Language Arts TCs while attending ESOL methods courses, without which the phenomenon couldn't be fully explained. Thus, this chapter intended to go further into accomplishing the objectives of this study, and focused on offering an interpretation to the phenomenon explained above.

### **Teacher Candidates' Learning Experiences**

Continuous in-depth data analysis in this study considered TCs' learning experiences in varied learning settings, including content area classes, general methods courses, field practicum and ESOL methods courses, as it was explained before. Detailed data analysis also required in depth analysis of the areas of reflection included in data collection instruments (considered in chapters 4 and 5), which offered TCs the opportunity to write, speak and share about their literacy experiences along their schooling and teacher education career. Data collection instruments exposed TCs participants in the study to inquiry driven activities (e.g.



written literacy questionnaire, focus group discussions) and to dialogues (e.g. oral face to face interviews) that triggered TCs' interrelated literacy and learning experiences and reflections from all content areas enumerated above. Even when this study sought to analyze, understand, describe and interpret the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses, the rich and comprehensive data obtained from TCs' responses to inquiry driven activities included in data collection instruments, had all been considered as constitutive elements conforming the fundamental structure of the phenomenon. All of these experiences inform TCs' education process while attending a teacher education program to become ELA teachers.

TCs mainly reflected and discussed about their learning experiences while attending teacher education courses and made connections between the different thematic areas, which shaped these learning experiences. TCs' responses to data collection instruments demonstrated how participants described and reflected about literacy experiences in diverse academic settings while attending courses in their content area, general methods courses, and specifically ESOL methods courses, and participating in field practicum of varied characteristics. TCs referred largely to their theoretical and practical instruction experiences received in class settings, that developed into academic and instrumental knowledge, which eventually developed into good practices to make teaching and learning effective and efficient for every learner in the classroom, specially ELs. TCs also reflected about authentic teaching and learning experiences in which they worked with ELs in varied authentic instructional settings. These experiences benefited TCs' instructional experiences and awareness development experiences that opened doors to understand ELs' needs (linguistic, academic and affective). Furthermore, authentic opportunities could reinforce ELs content area learning process and L2 development.

But most remarkably, TCs' experiences of becoming English Language Arts teachers obtained a new meaning when TCs were offered the opportunity to reflect and be reflexive about writing instruction experiences along their schooling and teacher education program, always looking into their future teaching career. When offered a non-threatening space, i.e. when they were invited to participate in the study and asked to react to inquiry driven written and oral activities, TCs reflected about past and present experiences with writing instruction, transmitted in instructional settings, developed in authentic settings and projected to apply what they have learned in their future classrooms. This is when TCs took a reflexive stance as regards future implementation of writing instruction in general education classrooms, which are populated by English proficient speakers and English learners (EL).

In this scenario, TCs made connections among their various experiences to revise what they had learned and experienced, in order to position themselves as future educators in general education classrooms. The theme cluster focused on writing instruction experiences incorporated seven independent themes (discussed in chapter 4 and listed below, p. 108), which depicted TCs' experiences with writing instruction, explained in their descriptions of such experiences. TCs also took a stance in relation to writing instruction, on how to improve it and/or make it available to all students, especially ELs. TCs based their accounts on their personal experiences learning writing and about writing, observing teaching and teaching themselves in authentic settings, and developing knowledge of and best practices on writing from diverse academic areas, including the content area (i.e. English Language Arts), ESOL methods courses and field experiences. In addition, TCs expressed their plans to apply best practices, make accommodations, provide relevant content and a reduced-risk environment, based on their own learning experiences, but

also on their personal beliefs and understanding from instruction received and experiences lived in the field.

Independent themes have been analyzed in the following manner:

- a. Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including els)
- b. Activities and strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including els)
- c. Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar
- d. Teaching writing by providing structure
- e. Fostering motivation to write
- f. Fostering relatable writing
- g. Writing to make connections

The independent themes were thoroughly described in chapter 4 (pp. 91-102) and were analyzed and presented following a progressive developing criteria, according to TCs' reactions to inquiry driven written and oral activities, as described above.

TCs participating in the study were granted a non-threatening reflective space where they felt comfortable and motivated to share with the researcher their experiences with the content instructed and/or experienced and knowledge developed through the application of strategies, procedures and practices in different learning settings, as explained above. Moreover, they were also granted space to become reflexive about the future application of those contents, as they expressed their objective of respecting ELs' writing abilities and proficiency levels in English to promote their development of English as an L2, as well as academic content in the L2. Inquiry driven written and oral activities granted TCs moments to reflect. Thorough data analysis demonstrated that there was a progression in TCs' experiences and their descriptions of their

experiences. These descriptions varied from themes about TCs' actions towards adapting, accommodating, making writing instruction easier for ELs by scaffolding or providing focused or grammar instruction and/or structure, to the application of actions, activities and strategies in an innovative, creative way to enhance, encourage and teach writing.

TCs reflected about teaching writing by means of accommodations, involving differentiation, breaking (text) down and scaffolding of learning activities and writing instruction, as well as, teaching writing by means of grammar instruction and providing outlines. ESOL methods' courses specifically prepared TCs to accommodate instruction according to their analysis of ELs' levels of proficiency in English and the content areas' language demands existing at different grade levels to bridge the classroom communication gap (discussed in chapter 4, p. 66). Following this process, TCs, collaborated in making content accessible or clearer for ELs, focusing teaching on specific skills (e.g. teach writing offering grammatical choices), applying knowledge from other areas and correcting students' work, by means of applying modifications to support ELs' access to academic content in English. In addition, TCs' grammar knowledge was considered to be foundational. Teachers need to be well versed in English grammar to teach ELs corresponding academic knowledge and support ELs with English as second language (ESL) development. Finally, the provision of outlines to make writing easier and guide students step by step in the process of writing, was considered essential to assist ELs' writing instruction.

After reflecting about the need to use supportive strategies to make writing instruction comprehensible for ELs within the framework to teach ESOL that had been discussed in the course and in this data set, TCs referred to their experiential accounts through writing and speaking about personal and academic learning activities, strategies or practices that would

reinforce writing instruction from a creative perspective. These strategies focused on writing instruction issues (e.g. applying the writing process), provided more collaborative and authentic learning and writing opportunities, motivated and helped ELs to develop writing, made writing, both academic and personal, relevant to students' experiences, and offered a risk-free environment, where students developed writing. Most importantly, by means of the application of these strategies in an interrelated manner, ELs would be granted an environment conducive to learning new academic content and improving their levels of proficiency in English as a second language (ESL).

### **Teachers Candidates at the Center of the Educational Phenomenon**

The discussion above shows that teacher candidates (TC) are positioned at the center of the educational phenomenon of becoming English Language Arts (ELA) teachers; they are at the center of their experiences and through their experiential accounts, subjects became reflective and reflexive of the practices developed and their future profession. Continuous in depth analysis of the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, seeking to understand and interpret the inner structure of the phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 61; Sanders, 2003) of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) content methods courses, led the researcher to find that, as well as it was important to pay close attention to TCs and their experiences, it was also essential to focus on the kind and quality of professional teachers that are educated in teacher education programs. This fact also conforms an important area in the fundamental structure of the phenomenon being analyzed.

TCs' descriptions of past and present learning experiences and personal and professional educational growth throughout those experiences, and especially after having observed and

taught ELs in authentic settings, evidenced the process they underwent in their educational career as English Language Arts teachers, but most specifically as “facilitators of the communication” in the classroom, as discussed in chapter 4 (Nutta et al., 2014). Chapter 4 offered an explanation of how Nutta et al. (2014) apply the concept of interactionist approach (Gass & Mackey, 2006) to explain how teachers are in charge of facilitating the communication in the classroom focusing on communication *for* students, when teachers transmit contents to students, communication *of* students, when students respond back to teachers with their understanding of the content transmitted, and communication *between* students, when students negotiate meaning with their peers (pp.67-8) (Nutta et al., 2014).

Data analysis in this study revealed that TCs’ experiences in ESOL methods’ courses, complemented by their literacy learning experiences in other varied settings, as explained before, shaped their education into becoming facilitators of the teaching and learning process in a more comprehensive way, enhancing the description offered above of facilitators of the communication in the classroom. Consequently, further research in the topic helped the researcher enlarge the description of teachers as facilitators including references to their work in setting up a positive learning atmosphere, favoring active practice of contents transmitted and evaluating students’ needs and tasks demands in order to make the teaching and learning process successful.

Scholars describe teachers as facilitators when describing student-centered learning environments and explain their main role in the classroom. Facilitators select the content to be taught and provide the general conditions to promote learning and problem solving. Teachers as facilitators establish tasks, problems and goals that students need to accomplish or solve and help them find solutions to the tasks and problems established. Facilitator teachers assist students to

practice the contents being taught by simplifying or accommodating, especially in case there are barriers to learning, or by establishing challenges according to students' abilities. Most importantly, teachers as facilitators diagnose students' previous knowledge and organize the most appropriate learning activities to develop new knowledge (Dyson, Griffin & Hastie, 2004; Goodyear & Dudley, 2015).

### ***Teacher Candidates' Education in ESOL Methods' Courses***

It is important to consider the contents to which TCs are exposed in methods and content area courses, and most specifically in ESOL methods courses, since they are fundamental to consider instruction and knowledge development about ELs, their process in second language acquisition, needs according to proficiency levels in the second language and potential for learning both, the second language (L2) and academic content in that L2. Furthermore, ESOL methods courses general objectives contemplate the education of TCs to be able to observe, analyze and understand verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom, as well as, the gap existing between ELs' levels of proficiency in English and language requirements demanded by different content areas at different grade levels. Thus, TCs are educated to become communication facilitators since they start attending ESOL methods courses; they are offered the tools and the opportunities to develop knowledge and practices to evaluate ELs' levels of proficiency in English and the content area language demands in different grade levels. TCs also receive instruction as regards strategies, resources and specific knowledge and develop adequate practices that support their decisions to make instruction accessible and organize teaching and learning activities for all students in the classroom, especially taking into account ELs.

Consequently, ESOL methods courses' nature and focus of instruction exceed the common educational contents that TCs from different content areas, and most specifically ELA TCs, receive and develop in teacher education programs. This becomes evident when TCs receive instruction to attend to different areas in which communication in the classroom needs to be bridged, based on the following premises: a)- understanding that, as future teachers, they are in charge of guaranteeing successful communication in the classroom, as discussed in chapter 4 (pp.67-8) (Nutta, et al. , 2014), and b)- understanding that ELs' different levels of attainment in English can hinder or aid their access to language development and academic content in L2 (pp.75-6) (Nutta et al., 2014).

Following the characteristics of teachers as facilitators explained in the enlarged definition above (pp.111-2), in depth data analysis in this study revealed the areas in which TCs prepare themselves to become communication facilitator teachers, specially taking into account TCs' past and present learning experiences and plans to apply what they had learned from them in their future classrooms.

TCs are being educated to observe each classroom in its uniqueness, study the students, what they know and what they need to continue learning, and analyze and understand the communication needs of the class based on EL's proficiency levels and the tasks' language demands. Once this diagnosis stage has been accomplished, TCs need to make decisions as regards adapting and/or creating lesson plans that are conducive to make curriculum, instruction and assessment accessible and successful for all students, especially for ELs, in general education classrooms. When analyzing the tasks for students, TCs are required to analyze verbal and non-verbal communication activities required to complete the tasks and strive to make instruction not only accessible, but also balanced by including strategies and resources to cater



for different learning styles, apart from proficiency levels in English as L2. Teachers as facilitators are also prepared to provide necessary conditions for students to learn, by creating a risk-free environment and a collaborative working atmosphere when pairing or grouping English learners and English proficient students in order to foster language learning, especially English as L2, L2 vocabulary improvement and academic content development in L2. TCs as facilitators are also encouraged to become strategic teachers, prepared to reflect and be reflexive about the use of appropriate strategies and the application of best practices necessary to guarantee ELs' language and academic content learning.

### ***Teacher Candidates' Enhanced Learning from Experiences***

Data analysis revealed the importance of considering TCs' learning experiences departing from theoretical and practical instruction received in methods and content area courses, in order to understand and elaborate on experiences obtained in field practicum, as well. Furthermore, TCs need to become reflexive about the possible application of contents, practices and knowledge learned and developed from experiences, after having reflected on those. This becomes especially vivid when TCs are exposed to varied field practicum experiences, including service learning (SL), which is a mandatory component for successful completion of ESOL methods courses.

This chapter's discussion, based on the thorough description of the phenomenon of TCs' experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses, as included in chapter 4, intended to give value and importance to the enormous array of learning literacy experiences TCs had had during their schooling and the development of their professional careers. If we take into account service learning, other field practicum experiences and learning experiences in

academic and methods courses mentioned above, it is possible to see how TCs' education in general, and education in ESOL content in particular, is enhanced.

This study informs TESOL programs and teacher education programs because it provides a model where the framework of teaching TESOL is combined with inquiry based activities (see the Experience Based Learning Model, p. 122) through which TCs can reflect about learning and literacy experiences and assign meaning to them, especially by means of:

1. Written expression (response to varied written tasks and prompts, questions or questionnaires)
2. Oral interaction (dialogues with instructors and colleagues and group discussions) in which there is the option of interacting with pairs, texts and tasks.

### ***Teachers Candidates' Learning from Authentic Settings and Awareness Development***

As it has been described above, TCs are mandated to attend field practicum as a requirement that complements content instruction and experiences TCs have while attending academic courses, both in the content area and methods courses, in the institutional setting. TCs' reflections when asked about their experiences with ELs in authentic settings, triggered accounts from their past, when they were students in multicultural, multilingual settings themselves, as well as stories from their present experiences in field practicum. Most relevant, by means of writing or dialoguing with the researcher, TCs were able to reflect on the significance of: a)- being offered authentic opportunities to reflect upon personal and academic learning past and present experiences, b)- being offered the opportunity to apply their conceptual knowledge about ELs and their learning processes, c)- being offered the opportunity to apply their practical knowledge, including procedures and practices to work in general education classrooms

populated by English proficient speakers and ELs, d)- being granted the opportunity to recognize and evaluate reinforcement of their instructional learning experiences, e)- being granted the opportunity of becoming aware of ELs in order to be able to support their instruction, and f)- being granted the opportunity to plan the generation of real opportunities for ELs to practice English in authentic interactions.

### ***Teacher Candidates' Intercultural Education***

TCs' accounts of experiences in schools included their awareness process about the presence of ELs and the development of their point of view and understanding of the phenomenon of taking into account ELs as active members of general education classes. Once TCs carried out research into the real amounts of ELs attending schools, and they faced them in the classes they observed and in which they had to teach, they started to become aware of the real presence of ELs and their demands in general education classrooms. Moreover, English learners (EL) bring their own culture, language and cultural background and have needs that should be catered for them to be able to learn English as L2, academic content in the L2 and progress in their schooling successfully. Consequently, TCs recognized the need to take into account the presence of ELs in the classrooms, so as to reflect about their own positionality towards ELs and their inclusion in the planning of curriculum, instruction and assessment. It has been mentioned that TCs receive education to become communication facilitators, and at this moment it would be pertinent to refer to the need to add a further layer to TCs' education into becoming intercultural mediators (see the Experience Based Learning Model, p. 122).

Kohler (2015) explains the focus that has been put into intercultural language teaching and learning as a reaction against communicative language teaching (CLT) that mainly supported

artificial classroom communication tasks, both in second language (L2), as well as in foreign language (FL) teaching and learning, in favor of developing experiences that were more meaningful and relevant to students' L2 or FL experiences within learning processes. Intercultural language teaching and learning also values the meaningful and beneficial connections that can be established among learners, speakers and representatives of their native languages and cultures, who are learning a new language and need to interact with a new culture, as a result. Thus, intercultural communication seeks to offer a conciliatory “discourse of tolerance and flexibility” among speakers of different languages and representatives of different cultures (Alred & Byram, 2002; Dasli, 2011; Gibbons, 2003; Kohler, 2015). Consequently, mediators need to develop knowledge and understanding for “the other”, as well as the ability to understand and compare languages and cultural frameworks in order to mediate and overcome miscommunication, in case of occurrence, in a tolerant and flexible way (Dasli, 2011). TCs' reflections, as evidenced in data analysis, recognized TCs positioning in respect to linguistically and culturally diverse populations, i.e. English learners and their recognition as “the other” according to Dasli's definition (2011) above. TCs recognized the need to develop tolerance towards linguistic mistakes, patience, empathy and understanding towards ELs and their experiences while learning academic content and English as L2. Knowledge of ELs proficiency levels in L2 and needs to develop academic knowledge are necessary to mediate and help overcome misunderstandings or mistakes, between ELs and the new linguistic and academic knowledge they need to learn.

Furthermore, cross-cultural mediation, as applied in education, involves ‘mediators’ who are prepared to communicate or exchange contents between parties that do not share the same meanings and/or languages (Alred & Byram, 2002; Kohler, 2015). Thus, mediation, as

considered in the field of FL and SL teaching and learning, implies a ‘process of learning to ‘read’ a new linguistic and cultural system and transfer these meanings to another linguistic and cultural system’ (Kohler, 2015, p. 4). In this study, TCs reflect about becoming the ‘mediators’ in their future classrooms, where they would teach ELA contents, by means of adapting or re-creating new specific content and language according to ELs’ proficiency levels, both in English as L2 and in academic content. TCs also reflect about the need to becoming aware of their teaching techniques, the amount of work they need to do and the need to make instruction for ELs understandable and efficient. Mediation, also integrates support for ELs’ work and process of progress towards the desired level of L2 and academic content learning.

Finally, Zarate, Gohard-Radenkovic, Lussier & Penz (2004) and Kohler (2015) explain ‘cultural mediation’ as another dimension within intercultural mediation, which is explained by means of affectivity, including the role of attitudes and dispositions to engage in understanding “otherness”. TCs referred to the need of establishing connections with ELs in order to develop lesson plans that cater for their learning needs and reinforce teacher-student connections to make ELs feel comfortable with learning in a risk free environment.

### **Conclusion, Implications and Limitations**

The most important themes, description of the phenomenon and fundamental structure of the phenomenon of teacher candidates’ (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) methods courses have been thoroughly discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The researcher developed data collection tools that incorporated inquiry driven activities that favored the elicitation of reflective and reflexive experiential accounts that enrich TCs’ learning processes while attending teacher education courses.

The Experience Based Learning Model (p. 122), created by the researcher and her supervisor amidst dialogic interactions, depicts the thorough data analysis that had been conducted to describe the phenomenon, namely, the phenomenon of teacher candidates' (TC) experiences with writing instruction while attending ESOL methods courses presented in chapter 4 and to interpret the fundamental structure of that phenomenon, discussed in chapter 5. The model on page 122 departs from the theoretical and practical knowledge TCs acquire while attending ESOL methods courses to teach ELs, framework that has largely been described and interpreted in chapter 4 and in the initial pages of chapter 5. It has been designed to show the process of enhancement and enrichment in the teaching education process as experienced by English Language Arts (ELA) TCs once they accepted to participate in the study and responded to different inquiry driven activities included in the data collection tools. Data collection tools that consisted of a literacy questionnaire, semi-structured interview questions and leading questions for work/focus groups discussions, granted participants an unthreatening space to reflect and become reflexive, opening doors to peer and group interaction, the establishment of dialogic interactions with the researcher and other participants, as well as with different texts and the tasks being accomplished.

The great array of experiences lived by participants in different academic learning settings and field practicum, became vivid again as they were articulated by the participants through the inquiry driven activities enumerated above. Earlier in the chapter, I discussed about the relevance of taking into account TCs' previous and present literacy experiences while becoming English Language Arts teachers and how these experiences could inform ESOL methods courses' curricular content development.

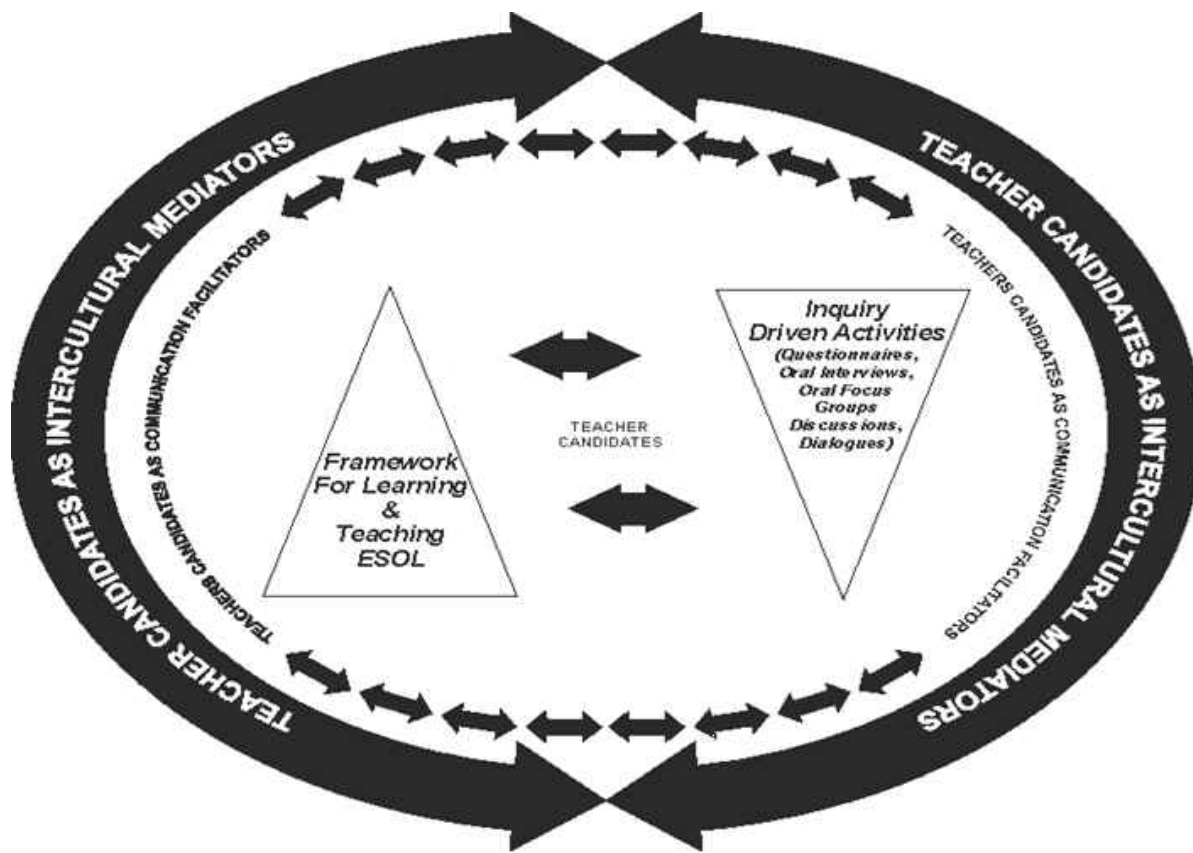
The thorough description of the phenomenon and the fundamental structure of the phenomenon include discussions of TCs' progress towards becoming communication facilitators in the classroom paying attention to the communication flow among classroom's actors. However, the concept of 'communication facilitators' as discussed in the ESOL methods courses' required textbook and in the classroom, needs to be enlarged in the light of this study's data analysis results. Going beyond this first description and analysis, in depth systematic data analysis revealed how TCs refer to, and become reflexive about their future positionality as facilitators of the teaching-learning process in the classroom. Data analysis shows the influence of TCs' past and present literacy, academic and lived experiences when they focus on the teachers as teaching and learning facilitators in the classroom. They mention the preponderance of focusing on the education of TCs who a)- are knowledgeable about ELs' process in L2 acquisition and proficiency levels in ESL, b)- can observe, analyze and understand verbal and non-verbal communication in the classroom, c)- can observe, analyze and understand the gap existing between ELs' levels of proficiency and requirements demanded by different content areas and/or grade levels, d)- become strategic educators providing balanced instruction, e)- cater for different learning styles, f)- provide favorable conditions for learning, g)- foster a risk-free environment and collaborative working atmosphere.

Furthermore, TCs' education to become intercultural mediators needs to be strengthened. Study's results indicate that TCs are in the incipient stages towards becoming intercultural mediators. Data analysis indicates how TCs demonstrate an initial understanding of ELs as the "other" with whom they establish an intercultural, inter-linguistic process of mutual benefit, understanding and meaning building. It is remarkable the relevance acquired by TCs' personal

and academic learning experiences and how they can be used as valid content for classroom discussion and exchange to promote collaborative dialogic learning in a risk-free environment.

Sociocultural learning theory understands mediation as a process that uses material and symbolic artifacts to enable learning (Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) describes learning as occurring inter-psychologically and intra-psychologically, i.e. new contents and experiences are transmitted to learners through social interaction. Finally, learners are responsible for processing this content into their knowledge using their individual cognitive tools. According to this theory, mediation occurs in the ‘zone of proximal development’, in which teachers (experts) present learners (novices) with new content to be learned. Thus, teachers, as mediators, guide the teaching and learning process and use mediating tools for teaching. Among the materials and symbolic artifacts used for mediation, language is the artifact that enables human beings to carry out social interaction, to elaborate private mental functions and build our own conceptual system (Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In FL and SL classrooms, language represents both a medium for learning and establishing social interaction and mental activity and an object of learning that represents forms of knowledge and meaning. Intercultural mediation becomes an integral dimension of language knowledge development that connects learners’ existing and new language and cultural frameworks and transforms teachers into intercultural mediators (Kohler, 2015).





Idea: Olan, E.L. & Belló, P. (2016); Graphic Design: Raldes Paz, D. (2016)

Figure 2: The Experience Based Learning Model

### Implications

This study's results inform the field of TESOL and teacher education giving relevance to critical thinking and self-reflexivity processes in teacher education courses, especially when stress is put on understanding, describing and interpreting the phenomenon occurring with literacy experiences. In this respect, attention should be given to the reflective processes according to which TCs consider the content, strategies and knowledge learned along their

schooling, as well as their reflexive processes in which TCs engage when considering the pedagogical practices they will implement when they work in their own classrooms.

The consideration of past and present literacy learning experiences as they occur in different learning settings, while future teachers are being educated, constitute a significant implication of the study as well as, the inclusion of inquiry driven activities, which favor reflexivity processes as regards those learning experiences. Inquiry based activities that can be useful in the classroom include, written reflections, oral dialogues and groups discussions, among other activities that foster the interaction of students among them and with different tasks.

Among other practical implications, this study's results provided relevant information to influence positively on the process of pedagogical innovation necessary for the improvement of teacher education courses and programs. The interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon of English Language Arts (ELA) teacher candidates' (TC) writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses, could later inform teacher education programs developers and instructors to design curriculum, instruction and assessment to educate TCs to teach students in general education classrooms, including ELs, and guide them in their process to develop content area literacy and proficiency in English as a second language (ESL). Areas for future research will include research on experiences with instruction in other language skills and in writing instruction in English as a second language (ESL).

### **Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

The main delimitations in this study included a)- TCs who participated in the study were enrolled in the English Language Arts (ELA) teacher education program at the largest metropolitan public research university in a southern-eastern state in the USA, during the Fall

semester 2015 and the Spring semester 2016, b)- participant English Language Arts (ELA) teacher candidates (TC) were enrolled in methods courses specialized in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), during the Fall semester 2015 and the Spring semester 2016, c)- the purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to understand, describe and interpret the experiences with writing instruction that English Language Arts' (ELA) teacher candidates' (TC) had while attending methods courses specialized on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) content, d)- phenomenological findings could be generalizable depending on how thoroughly and specific the essential description of the phenomenon is presented (Polkinghorne, 1989), e)- data interpretation might be influenced by the researcher's personal background, personal experiences or personal interest in the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2013; Goodson & Sikes, 2001), f)- the researcher-informant relationship can be complex, contradictory and subjective so detailed descriptions are necessary to secure a thorough unbiased data analysis (Munro, 1998).

The main limitations in the study included a)- researcher's lack of control over the content being developed in the ESOL methods courses at the moment of data collection, b)- researcher's lack of control over ELA TCs' participation in field practicum at the moment of data collection.

## **APPENDIX A: LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE**



A hermeneutic study of English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses

Education Major: ..... Year: .....

Please take your time to read the following questions, reflect about their content and respond to the following questions:

1)- What are the skills necessary to operate in your content area (subject)/ grade level ?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2)- What methods have you been instructed to teach in your content area (subject)/ grade level?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3)- How did you learn to read? Please share any memory (ies) you might have from your childhood.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4)- How did you learn to write? Please share any memory (ies) you might have from your childhood.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5)- What methods have you been taught to write in your content area/ (subject)/ area of expertise? Please provide examples



10)- How have you taught/are you going to teach writing in general education classes to include ELs? Please refer to past-experiences or to your future plans.

.....

.....

.....

.....

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**





A hermeneutic study of English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses

Data	Question	Prompts
<p>-Break the ice and provide some background.</p> <p>-Personal experience: narrations or personal accounts</p> <p>-Connections to personal and family backgrounds and experiences</p> <p>-Personal literacy background experiences</p> <p>-Description of learnt theoretical/practical content</p>	<p>1-What is your major in the Education program? How long have you been studying to become a teacher?</p> <p>2- Would you please share with me why you decided to become a teacher in your content area/ (subject)/ grade level?</p> <p>3-How did you learn to read and write? Would you like to share any experiences that were important to you?</p> <p>4- What are your experiences with writing instruction in your content area/in college assignments?</p> <p>5-How much writing do you do in your content area (subject)/ for college assignments/ to prepare for your classes in case you are teaching?</p> <p>6- What instruction have you</p>	<p>-Could you please describe more aspects on this topic?</p> <p>-Would you like to tell me more about ....?</p> <p>-Please feel free to enlarge ....</p> <p>-Could you tell me any meaningful experience ...</p>

<p>-Description of possible practical application of learnt strategies</p>	<p>received to write in your content area/ (subject)?</p> <p>7- What instruction have you received to teach writing in your content area/ (subject)/ grade level?</p> <p>8- What experiences in ESOL methods courses are important in writing instruction in your content area?</p> <p>9-If you could imagine your future classroom including ELs, how would you apply your knowledge of writing instruction?</p> <p>10- Do you recall any experience that you have had in your field experiences, internship, substituting, teaching in general in multicultural/multilingual classrooms, that you would like to share?</p>	
<p>These provide a check on the interview process.</p>	<p>Paraphrase what I heard about the main data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>And ask for a response.</p>	

## **APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP LEADING QUESTIONS**



A hermeneutic study of English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses

Name:.....Education  
Major:.....Year:.....

Focus group leading questions

Questions about the experience with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses: (Please read the following questions, discuss in your group and write down the main points in the discussion)

1. Please, describe your experiences with writing instruction in ESOL methods courses. Please enlarge your comments.
  
2. What activities developed in ESOL methods courses do you find most useful when planning writing instruction for English learners (EL)?
  
3. How do activities and experiences from the ESOL methods course inform your preparation to accommodate writing instruction for ELs, who are at different levels of proficiency in English? (Please consider the following ELs writing examples to answer the question)
  
4. When analyzing ELs writing examples, please pay attention and provide your insight into the following:
  - a)- the writing task accomplished by the ELs
  - b)- ELs' levels of proficiency
  - c)- accommodations you would provide to improve the writing task/ELs writing performance

## **APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS**



A hermeneutic study of English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses

Demographics

Please complete the following document with information about you and your background: The information obtained will be used for research purposes

Education major:

Complete names and last names:

E-mail address:

Year and place of birth:

Age:

Ethnicity:

Marital Status:

Number of Children:

Elementary School Information:

Middle School Information:

High School Information:

Family Background:

Father's Occupation:

Mother's Occupation:

## **APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT**



A hermeneutic study of English Language Arts teacher candidates' writing instruction experiences in ESOL methods courses

**Informed Consent**

Principal Investigator  
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Doctoral Candidate  
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P. O. Box 161250  
Orlando, FL. 32816-1250  
[elsie.olan@ucf.edu](mailto:elsie.olan@ucf.edu)

1. Introduction:

Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study, which will include 200 pre-service teachers attending Methods courses at the School of Teaching Learning and Leadership at the College of Education and Human Performance, University of central Florida. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are a pre-service or in-service teacher attending Methods courses at the institution named above. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study.

2. What you should know about a research study:

- | | Someone will explain this research study to you.
- | | A research study is something you volunteer for.
- | | Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- | | You should take part in this study only because you want to.
- | | You can choose not to take part in the research study.
- | | You can agree to take part now and later change your mind.
- | | Whatever you decide it will not be held against you.
- | | Feel free to ask all the questions you want before you decide

3. The purpose of this research is to:



- a- Understand, describe and interpret TCs' experiences with writing instruction when preparing to teach English learners (EL) in general education classrooms.
- b- Observe, describe and interpret TCs' learning experiences and activities that inform the preparation of TCs' writing instruction to teach ELs in general education classrooms.
- c- Present and discuss findings in chapters 4 and 5 of my dissertation.

4. Procedures to be followed:

- As part of the methods courses they are attending, TCs will be exposed to different experiences and activities during face-to-face classes. These classes will be observed by the researcher.
- TCs will be invited to participate in the study, complete the demographic document and the literacy, open ended questions questionnaire. These activities will require 30 min. approx. of class time to be completed.
- During classroom activities, participants will be closely observed. TCs will be personally invited to participate in semi-structured interviews, which will take from 30 min. to 45 min. approx. before or after class.
- TCs will be invited to participate in focus groups' activities which will take from 40 min. to 50 min. approx. of class time to be completed.
- TCs participating in the study will be invited to offer their modified lesson plans for analysis.
- Participants in the study will not have to answer to every question, either in questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.
- TCs will not lose any benefits if they skip questions or tasks.

5. Benefits, compensation or payment

There are no expected benefits to you for taking part in this study. There is no compensation or any kind of payment to you for taking part in this study.

6. Confidential research:

The Principal and Co- Researchers will know the information provided by participants. Any other members of the research team who might be granted access to sections of the data set to fulfill the data analysis validation, won't be granted access to personal information provided by participants. Participants attending teacher education programs will be completing the required activities within class time and in their classrooms, so as to secure an unthreatening environment for data collection.

7. Statement of Confidentiality:

Your participation in this research is confidential. Data will be stored and secured in the office ED223 N at the College of Education and Human Performance Building on the University of Central Florida main campus, in a password-protected file. Only Dr. Elsie L. Olan and Paula Belló (Principal and Co- Researchers) will have access to the whole set

of data, which will be destroyed after a period of ten years. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. Only the researchers listed above will have access to any identifying information provided by participants. The only exception to this would be if the participants preferred to be identified by their own names when data results are presented and/or discussed in articles or presentations.

Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

8. Voluntary Participation:

Your decision to participate in this research is voluntary. Your participation and/or refusal to participate will not affect your grades in the course or job positions. In case you accept to participate, you can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Refusal to take part in or withdrawing from this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits you would receive otherwise.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX F: IRB OUTCOME LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
 Office of Research & Commercialization  
 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
 Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
 Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

**From:** UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
 FWA00000351, IRB00001138

**To:** Paula Bello and Co-PI: Elsie L. Olan

**Date:** October 21, 2015

Dear Researcher:

On 10/21/2015, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination
Project Title:	A hermeneutic study of secondary English language arts teacher candidates' (SELATC) writing instruction experiences in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) method's courses
Investigator:	Paula Bello
IRB Number:	SBE-15-11696
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in IRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the [Investigator Manual](#).

On behalf of Sophia Driegielewski, Ph.D., L.C.S.W., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 10/21/2015 09:49:15 AM EDT


IRB Manager

**APPENDIX G: MENTOR TEXTS (FOCUS/WORK GROUP DISCUSSION)**

# Grade 6 Level 1 Writing Sample

[← Back to Writing Samples index](#)

Look at the pictures. Write a story.



*It was  
sad and wet and I  
Fun in watr  
Girl under the  
to mane rain*

**Student writing sample:**

**it** rain  
**sad** girl **wet** two **to** mane  
**Fun in watr**  
**Girl undr** (picture of umbrella) **no** wet  
**to mane rain**

[View full size](#)

Uses a few utility words (**to** [two], **girl**) and descriptive words (**wet**, **sad**) related to familiar topics and familiar experiences.

Writes familiar nouns (**mane** [men], **rain**), verbs in present tense (**no evidence**), plurals (**no evidence**) and prepositions (**in**, **undr** [under]) with usage errors and omissions.

Writes to complete simple patterned sentences (**Fun in watr** [water].).

Copies words and phrases, and spells sight words (**it**, **wet**, **no**).

Writes in words and phrases to express ideas (**to mane rain** [Two men are in the rain]).

Connects words using "and" (**no evidence**).

Forms words with attention to spacing, line and direction.  
Spells sight words accurately (**girl**).

Use the checkboxes below to display the corresponding benchmark text.

**Benchmark Ratings**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Vocabulary	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Grammar	-
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Syntax	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategic	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Socio-Linguistic	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discourse	-
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Editing	1

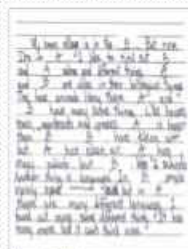
Overall Benchmark Level:
1

## Grade 6 Level 3 Writing Sample

← Back to [Writing Samples index](#)

Compare your home, village or city to the place you live now. Describe things that are the same and different.

Use the checkboxes below to display the corresponding benchmark text.



[View full size](#)

### Student writing sample:

My home village is in the B. But now I'm in A. I like to find out B and A same and different things. A and B are alike in their biological things. They have animals living there, A and B have many same things. Like houses, trees, apartments and grasses. A is bigger than B. B have clean air but A has clean air. A has many schools but B has 2 schools. Another thing is languages. In B people mainly speak \_\_\_\_\_ but in A there are many different languages. I found out many same different thing. It has many more but it can't think now.

Uses more ability words (**home, village, animals, trees, apartments, grasses, air**), descriptive words (**same, different, bigger, clean, many, more**), subject-specific words (**biological, languages**) and academic words (**alike**) related to curricular content.

**Level 2:** Writes nouns (**things**), verbs in present (**have, is, think**), past (**found**) and continuous tenses (**no evidence**), pronouns (**my, I, their, they, it**), prepositions (**in, out**), articles (**the**), adjectives (**clean, many**) and adverbs (**mainly**).

**Level 3:** Uses a range of grammatical structures that demonstrate some control of word order, plurals, tenses and subject-verb agreement.

**Level 2:** Writes simple detailed and compound sentences (**In B people mainly speak \_\_\_\_\_ but in A there are many different languages.**)

**Level 3:** Writes complex sentences (**no evidence**) and simple paragraphs. (**Writes response in a simple paragraph.**)

Spells familiar words and uses sentence frames to write ideas (**A has many schools but B has 2 schools.**).

Uses writing plan template to write a personal response. (**Follows paragraph format with topic sentence, body text and concluding sentence.**)

Connects ideas in related sentences using conjunctions (**and, but**), time markers (**now**) and sequence markers (**another**).

Edits sentences for end punctuation (**.**), commas in a list (**houses, trees, apartments**), simple tense (**are, is, has**) and regular spelling (**things, different**).

### Benchmark Ratings

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Vocabulary	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Grammar	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Linguistic Syntax	2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategic	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Socio-Linguistic	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discourse	3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Editing	3

Overall Benchmark Level:

3





## **APPENDIX H: THEMATIC CLUSTERS**

## Theme Cluster 1: Instruction/Knowledge developed in teacher education programs

Instruction to teach ELs	Instruction/Knowledge/ Strategies to teach ELs	Resources used in class to learn/to teach	Teacher candidates' knowledge about ELs
121- ESOL method important for teaching would focus on showing how to do something rather than explaining and expecting students to know how to proceed (T1)	7-Candidate would like to teach ELs by including the use of textual and visual supports, cloze notes and graphic organizers to help students make language connections (QT2)	49- She would use many leveled readers, books, posters, dictionaries, prompts to enhance lessons (QT7)	9-Candidate understands language acquisition process isn't immediate and the need to offer learners opportunities to practice to develop second language acquisition (QT2)
122- Candidate has learned about the importance of showing ELs how to do something, not only telling them to do something (T1)	40-Students will reflect on their responses, they will do bell work every day and they will turn exit slips (QT6)	85-Candidate would require text (book reading) (QT12)	15- Candidate has had difficulties in understanding ELs' writing but grammatical knowledge is apparent (QT3)
123- Importance of showing ELs how to do something and offering examples of how to do it for them to develop and idea (T1)	76-Candidate would combine reading and writing, starting with vocabulary list and phrases reflective of ELs proficiency level (QT10)	194- Candidate recognizes book used in ESOL methods course is a great resource, it contains great ideas, strategies and ways to deal with ELs (T4)	26-Candidate observed ELs with different levels of proficiency in the language (QT4)
124- SLIDE and TREAD (acronyms) represent the most important aspect of teaching ESOL that candidates can learn because there is need for a balance of SLIDE verbs/ TREAD verbs to support ELs while teaching them (T1)	85- Candidate would require in-class group discussions (QT12)	245- Candidate would provide pictures, videos, to support ELs to follow along with the class, provide adapted books, in ELs native languages and English, among other materials for ELs (T6)	66-Teaching writing in general education classrooms including ELs will depend on ELs' proficiency level and the need to alter rubrics, assignments and create group projects including writing and oral components (QT9)
142- ESOL methods course attended was less about writing and more about interacting with ELs in a classroom and learning how to accommodate ELs needs across subjects, not only writing (T2)	101-Candidate would use hand gestures, talk slowly and clearly and use as many visuals as she can (QT15)	255- She would use different prompts and materials to stimulate students' learning styles (T7)	126- Candidate learned that ELs don't have the capability to communicate but they are able to do so (T1)
145- IDEM 142	128- ELs should write down what they think the unknown words are and just continue going, they don't need to stress too much about unknown words (T1)	270- Candidate would use different resources available to help students (T8)	127- If ELs are given something in their native language they are able to express themselves easier because it is what they know rather than searching for unknown words (T1)
169- In the ESOL class, candidate recalls moments when strategies or methods were mentioned (T3)	164- Candidates are given basic tools, and not even the correct ones in methods courses to teach ELs (T3)		198- Candidate has observed beginner level ELs in the silent period when they don't feel comfortable talking (T4)
195- The course is useful	196- Candidate will include		241- Candidate bases her

Instruction to teach ELs	Instruction/Knowledge/ Strategies to teach ELs	Resources used in class to learn/to teach	Teacher candidates' knowledge about ELs
because candidate has used knowledge learned in ESOL methods courses to help ELs understand instruction in service learning classes (T4)	simplify texts, using graphics, using gestures, trying to be as clear as possible, helping both ELs and English proficient students understand the content when adapting lesson plans (T4)		work with ELs in the knowledge of ELs' proficiency in the second language (beginner, intermediate, advanced) (T6)
209- Candidate has been taught a little bit (how to teach) in ESOL classes, but not a lot (T5)	200- She helped ELs with descriptions in writing, with text simplification and breaking down text to make it easier (T4)		252- Candidate will create appropriate worksheets for ELs according to ELs' knowledge and proficiency level in English (T7)
210- ESOL methods course has taught adaptations for ELs' needs (T5)	201-When strategies used didn't work, candidate used new strategies including pictures, analogies, examples and in this particular case, the teacher observed had linguistic support like key words transcribed into Spanish and French because of the L1 spoken by students (T4)		256- IDEM 252
240- Candidate learned the most in ESOL classes and remembers <i>History of the English Language</i> class, which taught about the sounds of words and how it can help ELs pronounce sounds in English (T6)	205- Candidate has had instructional times with ELs during service learning hours when her teacher asked her to simplify instructions for ELs (T4)		257- Candidate considers it is important to use leveled questions to cater the need of ELs with different proficiency level (T7)

**Theme Cluster 2: Best and bad practices including planning accommodations in general education classrooms**

<b>Best Practices to work with ELs in classrooms</b>	<b>Planning to accommodate lesson plans to teach general education classrooms (Including ELs)</b>	<b>Bad practices</b>
20-When teaching the general curriculum teachers can include tips so that all learners (including ELs) complete assignments successfully (QT3)	17-By molding activities and approach for ELs to learn students will have a higher success (QT3)	146- In TSL class, candidate has become aware of teachers' instinct to pair ELs among them, while teachers can pair ELs with native English speakers to offer them the opportunity to learn from these peers (T2)
48- Candidate would use technology in her lessons because she thinks it is beneficial to both the teacher & the students, for more effective/efficient teaching & learning (QT7)	125- SLIDE and TREAD are good strategies when preparing lesson plans because candidate realized the need to keep going back to it because it referred to all the methods (T1)	215- Candidate observed her teacher grouping students separately, ELs among themselves and English speakers among themselves to talk to all of them at once and get them work together (T5)
67- Candidate would offer a risk-free environment (or reduced-risk environment) in which students can write to make connections (QT9)	131- Candidate is not afraid of making accommodations for ELs, because accommodations can benefit most students, ESE low level students (T1)	246- Students would be separated according to their language groups and the teacher would offer a low level book, even in high school and just tell students to read, without analyzing the proficiency levels (T6)
170- In the future classroom, candidate would have to learn about the classroom, as well as learn what students can or can't do (T3)	132- Candidate feels that accommodations made for ESE students and low level students also help ELs, regardless of their proficiency level in L2 (T1)	
205- Candidate has had instructional times with ELs during service learning hours when her teacher asked her to simplify instructions for ELs, which was a good communicative experience, specially trying to help English proficient students and ELs understand the tasks (T4)	196- Candidate will use the lesson plan she had created to accommodate and bridge the gap for ELs (T4)	
206- Candidate tried to explain to every one in the classroom including ELs and English native speakers, so she circulated between the groups and helped with understanding (T4)	211- Candidate provided adaptations to make readings easier for ELs and help them comprehend a little more (T5)	
217- Candidate has learned to make things easier for ELs, to keep balance between translations and teaching language and provide accommodations (T5)	212- In ESOL methods course she has learned how to translate from English into native language, and adaptations for different proficiency levels (beginner, intermediate, advanced) (T5)	
343- Candidate considers useful to watch a movie after reading a book to reinforce the reading and also trying to find content that can relate to	245- Candidate would modify lesson plans for ELs, provide pictures, videos, to support ELs to follow along with the class, provide adapted books,	

<b>Best Practices to work with ELs in classrooms</b>	<b>Planning to accommodate lesson plans to teach general education classrooms (Including ELs)</b>	<b>Bad practices</b>
students (FGT1)	in ELs native languages and English, among other materials for ELs (T6)	
348- Candidate refers to the “I do, we do, you do” practice in which the teacher demonstrates, then students in groups or individually do the tasks, which can improve beginner level ELs language learning because of instruction and the paring with higher level students, which can be instrumental in improving assignments, including written assignments (FGT1)	295- In ESOL methods courses candidate has participated in discussions, also about teaching students with exceptionalities using universal design to benefit everyone, so teaching can be accessible to various groups (T9)	
349- Candidate remembers when she was an EL and was pulled out form classes, but with more ELs with different language proficiency levels in classrooms it seems helpful that advanced level students act as group leaders to push through discussion to foster students’ participation (FGT1)	317- In ESOL methods course candidate is learning about gap-analysis, to add additional support for ELs when writing lesson plans, and application of SLIDE – TREAD to be able to recognize the use of verbs in the lesson plan (T9)	
350- Candidate thinks that monitoring the groups is important to make sure the groups are working as a community and not only advanced student does the job (FGT1)	318- Candidate explains that SLIDE refers to verbs that indicate “show” (action) and TREAD to verbs that indicate “tell” (verbal) and teachers having ESL students might have to modify lesson plans because of ELs’ language proficiency level (T10)	
352- Using SLIDE and TREAD verb analysis, SLIDE for verbs indicating lower level work and TREAD for verbs indicating higher level questions, and making sure teachers use those verbs effectively for ELs at different levels (FGT1)	346- Candidate considers it is harder to have ELs at different levels of proficiency in English in the same classroom, because writing prompts must be different, consequently it is necessary that teachers tailor instruction to the students’ proficiency levels (FGT1)	

### Theme Cluster 3: Experiences with ELs in authentic settings

Field experiences with ELs	Opportunities to practice knowledge/strategies' application in authentic interactions	Learning from field experiences and practice
5-Experiences with ELs include challenging tutoring in the writing center where ELs need extra language support (QT2)	8-Candidate would like to offer ELs' opportunities to practice their English in authentic interactions (QT2)	15-Candidate has had experiences with ELs who have issues with grammar but it has never hindered conversation and has had difficulties in understanding ELs' writing but grammatical knowledge is apparent (QT3)
37- As a teacher candidate helped a Portuguese student with translation and English language acquisition (QT6)	36- Candidate helped a classmate EL from Colombia while in primary school to learn some words since her teacher didn't modify teaching for him (QT6)	149- The most important lesson learned by the candidate through experience is that students need practice, students also need opportunities to practice writing and speaking and they need transparency in instruction (T2)
46-Candidate's first experiences in internship and service learning (with ELs) made her feel nervous and there were times she didn't know what to do and wished she had prepared and rehearsed more (QT7)	47-Candidate would like to teach writing in the US because there are always ELs in every class and she can assist them whenever they need (QT7)	167- Candidate has taken ESOL classes very seriously because that is what she wants to study and she has observed the writing center college level classes, where she could learn there are so many tools that is difficult to know what they need to learn (T3)
57- Candidate had the hardest experience in a class completely populated by ESOL students, in which she felt useless because no one understood her (QT8)	73-Candidate was offered a permanent part time job teaching ELs after completing service learning hours. She loves working and helping ELs (QT10)	168- Through (these field experiences) candidate developed her knowledge and practice of teaching writing (T3)
81- Candidate assists ELs in conversation sessions, with pronunciation and correct word agreement (QT12)	82-Candidate tutors an Italian engineer to assist with English contracts (QT12)	218- The teachers the candidate has worked with know Spanish and make teaching and learning relatable, interesting and easier for students and candidate has learnt to do that (T5)
90-Experiences with ELs include shadowing college teacher of ELs, who offered opportunities to teach and work with studs while she supervised (QT13)	100- Candidate plans to teach English abroad before teaching regular English in a US classroom (QT15)	221- Candidate has learnt from service learning experience in classroom with ELs, from observing teachers do activities in the classroom, as well as from the classes (T5)
99-Experiences with ELs include observing an ESOL teacher who worked with ELs individually and helped them using a computer program specifically for ELs (QT15)	130-Outside of the classroom she helps her parents who come from Spanish speaking countries (T1)	278- Candidate wasn't long enough in the class to practice what she was learning, it was someone else's classroom, and that's why she couldn't implement learned strategies; however, it was a good experience and she learned a lot from it (T8)
165- Candidate is observing teachers lack of motivation and are scared to teach ELs in classrooms because they only know to give students graphics or key terms (T3)	174- With reference to ESOL, candidate had had a different experience in middle school where all of the students were ELs and teachers struggled teaching because they needed to start from the foundation (T3)	334- According to candidate's experience with writing instruction for ELs, writing is more challenging since it is easier to reproduce oral sounds than to produce words and constructing sentences with punctuation (FGT1)
176- Personal experience tutoring an	270- Candidate plans to do a lot of	

<b>Field experiences with ELs</b>	<b>Opportunities to practice knowledge/strategies' application in authentic interactions</b>	<b>Learning from field experiences and practice</b>
EL student, who needed time and dedication to develop his writing because he felt he was a bit more advanced (T3)	testing, and have guinea pigs to try different strategies and see what works best what doesn't work very well, moreover she would use different resources available to help students (T8)	
178- Candidate and EL student had dialogic interactions, they learned new things and the student researched on his own and wrote an essay departing from just sentences (T3)	275- Candidate would try to implement strategies learned wherever necessary, as for example if students fail or do not understand some content, she would try to implement and test the strategies and prove if they work or not and keep the effective ones (T8)	
205- Candidate has had instructional times with ELs during service learning hours when her teacher asked her to simplify instructions for ELs, which was a good communicative experience, specially trying to help English proficient students and ELs understand the tasks (T4)	276- Candidate is aware that first year teaching is hard, so she would try not to get discouraged if strategies do not work at first; she would keep on trying to find the best strategies to prevent her students' failure caused by her mistakes or omissions (T8)	
211- She observed a class in which students took photos of texts and they could translate to their language, while she also provided adaptations to make readings easier for ELs and help them comprehend a little more (T5)	321- ESOL methods courses have helped her understand that native speakers of English and ELs understand discourse differently and that she needs to pay attention to how she speaks to students and now that candidate has learned that method (discourse differentiation) she will apply it in her classes (T10)	
217- Candidate is working with a class with 90% of ELs and her experience is hard since she doesn't speak ELs' language, however she has learned to make things easier for ELs, to keep balance between translations and teaching language and provide accommodations (T5)		
224- Candidate tells a story when helping an EL with spelling and the misunderstanding that occurs with letter pronunciation, so she needs to be more aware of what she does, she needs to simplify everything for these students (T5)		
246- Candidate has had experience with observations in general education classrooms including ELs in different educational levels, in		

Field experiences with ELs	Opportunities to practice knowledge/strategies' application in authentic interactions	Learning from field experiences and practice
which she hasn't observed much teaching, rather students would be separated according to their language groups and the teacher would offer a low level book, even in high school and just tell students to read, without analyzing the proficiency levels (T6)		
262- When candidate was doing service learning, ELs were writing journals and asked for her help to answer questions, to finish writing tasks and she tried to help them accomplish those (T7)		
264- In service learning, candidate could interact with students, she could teach them, read with them, help them complete homework and she could act as an intern or teacher assistant (T7)		
277- Candidate refers to a service learning experience se didn't enjoy in a class which was fully completed by ELs, who she felt, did not understand her (T8)		
278- Candidate wasn't long enough in the class to practice what she was learning, it was someone else's classroom, and that's why she couldn't implement learned strategies; however, it was a good experience and she learned a lot from it (T8)		
279- Observed class wasn't taught as an ESOL class and it had interesting dynamics because the teacher was from Haiti and could give directions and teach the complete class both in English and Creole, especially because students didn't understand English and when candidate taught the Junior Achievement class, she had difficulties because students didn't understand her (T8)		
304- Candidate remembers working with an advanced EL in speaking, who had been singled out by his teacher as someone who could not read; however, though he asked questions about a survey, he seemed more proficient than the teacher believed because he has understood		



<b>Field experiences with ELs</b>	<b>Opportunities to practice knowledge/strategies' application in authentic interactions</b>	<b>Learning from field experiences and practice</b>
some portions of the reading by himself (T9)		
320- Lesson plan modification, SLIDE and TREAD, gap analysis and modifications are helpful at this moment because as a teacher she recognizes differences in discourse that might seem common place for native speakers, and not so common place for ELs (T10)		
333- Candidate's story about an EL from Vietnam, whom she is helping write about her profession back in her country, helps her reflect about other adults who are ELs in US and have had their professions in their countries and acknowledge ELs' ability to understand learning process and shows empathy for ELs experiences while learning a new language (T10)		

#### Theme Cluster 4: Awareness of ELs in schools

English learners' needs	Awareness of ELs' presence in schools	Relationships with ELs
5-Experiences with ELs include challenging tutoring in the writing center where ELs need extra language support (QT2)	202- Candidate has done service learning for ESOL methods course and has turned her scope to ELs for the first time since she hadn't expected working with ELs from the beginning and moreover she had undermined the presence of ELs in classrooms (T4)	57- Candidate had the hardest experience in a class completely populated by ESOL students, in which she felt useless because no one understood her (QT8)
9-Candidate understands language acquisition process isn't immediate and the need to offer learners opportunities to practice to develop second language acquisition (QT2)	203- Candidate researched her school situation and discovered the percentages of ELs at school, as well as ELs' need for support, including having an ESOL teacher with a stable position at school (T4)	171- Candidate's ideal classroom doesn't know English, so she needs connection with students to develop, learn what they need to learn, mold to what students know and do not know, so they can start writing from the foundations (T3)
19-Candidate would succeed when she offers information to students according to their needs (QT3)	224- Candidate tells a story when helping an EL with spelling and the misunderstanding that occurs with letter pronunciation, so she needs to be more aware of what she does, she needs to simplify everything for these students (T5)	198- Candidate has observed beginner level ELs in the silent period when they don't feel comfortable talking, so she would let them write in their mother tongue and then tell her what they wrote, in this way she will establish a connection teacher-student and help ELs feel comfortable with writing (T4)
65-Candidate has learned by non-example that she needs to be sensitive with ELs and not broadcast a low expectation (QT9)	225- Candidate was surprised about ELs' motivation to work, since she had been told in class about ELs' demotivation in case of lack of understanding, but she observed ELs interest in learning (T5)	263- Candidate thinks teaching ELs was a good experience, ELs are eager to learn, work with teachers and get good grades, so she feels passionate of working with ELs and of building relationships with them and hopes to do more service learning (T7)
129- In service learning, candidate met an advanced EL, who seemed not to need accommodations in instruction, however EL needed help with vocabulary (T1)	263- Candidate thinks teaching ELs was a good experience, ELs are eager to learn, work with teachers and get good grades, so she feels passionate of working with ELs and of building relationships with them and hopes to do more service learning (T7)	
171- Candidate's ideal classroom doesn't know English, so she needs connection with students to develop, learn what they need to learn, mold to what students know and do not know, so they can start writing from the foundations (T3)	298- Candidate doesn't feel there was much she could get in writing instruction for ELs in her content area, except for realizing that ELs' products are under grade level compared to other students' productions, and that she doesn't have to lower expectations and understand that there is much work to be done and that ELs will progress slowly but will reach the desired level (T9)	
173- In the future, everything will	299- Candidate considers that the	

English learners' needs	Awareness of ELs' presence in schools	Relationships with ELs
depend on the students' needs (T3)	biggest preparation to work with ELs in methods courses is definitely to have patience and understanding and trying to make students realize that the classroom is a safe space where they can take risks and it is ok to make mistakes, orally and/or in writing because teachers' objectives focus on ELs becoming proficient in the language without putting students down due to their mistakes (T9)	
174- With reference to ESOL, candidate had had a different experience in middle school where all of the students were ELs and teachers struggled teaching because they needed to start from the foundation (T3)	333- Candidate's story about an EL, whom she is helping write about her profession in Vietnam and her experiences learning English. Candidate further reflects about other adults who are ELs in US and have had their professions in their countries, acknowledges ELs' ability to understand learning process and shows empathy for ELs experiences while learning a new language (T10)	
175- In her ESOL middle school class, there was a lack of learning and students weren't at supposed level for their grade level because they had to start over, which reinforced her learning in particular (T3)		
203- Candidate researched her school situation and discovered the percentages of ELs at school, as well as ELs' need for support, including having an ESOL teacher with a stable position at school (T4)		
204- Candidate discovered a new world that needs help (T4)		
257- Candidate considers it is important to use leveled questions to cater the need of ELs with different proficiency level (T7)		
319- ELs might not be able to follow the content if everything is just TREAD (Tell verbs) so the teacher might have to take this into consideration (T10)		
323- Candidates have learned to tune their eyes for the need for text simplification and they can write simplified texts (T10)		
324- Candidate has learned about the need to develop awareness and patience (T10)		

English learners' needs	Awareness of ELs' presence in schools	Relationships with ELs
329- Candidate's knowledge includes having patience, being able to put herself in the position of ELs, be conscious of different learning styles while she has also learned basic grammar rules in other languages in order to rise awareness of ELs' grammar knowledge, that is different from native English speakers' (T10)		

### Theme Cluster 5: Writing instruction for ELs

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
6-To teach writing in general education classrooms including ELs, candidate plans to use strategies that differentiate instruction for all students (QT2)	39- To apply knowledge of writing in content area to teach ELs, candidate would integrate assignments work and students' support of their ideas with textual evidence (QT6)	75-She offers students better grammatical choices and encourages self-correction (QT10)	199- Candidate hopes to implement ELs' writing in L1 in their journal time, when ELs express personal thoughts, whereas when writing about content, they will be required to write in English and explain to her orally (T4)	177- Candidate worked with ELs in writing starting from one sentence, to paragraph, with explanations of different kinds of paragraphs until he wrote an essay on American culture, a subject that motivated the student to write his own essay (T3)	214- Candidate would teach ELs to incorporate new vocabulary or add experiences for ELs to write stories and anecdotes in order to make writing more relatable to students (T5)	7-Candidate would like to teach ELs by including the use of textual and visual supports, cloze notes and graphic organizers to help students make language connections (QT2)
16-The best way to teach writing in general education classrooms to include ELs is to focus on differentiated learning (QT3)	50-She would assign discussions for students to brainstorm their ideas for writing (QT7)	83-Candidate would teach writing in general education classrooms including ELs beginning by highlighting grammar and specific grammar points focus on parts of speech and then further expand (QT12)	213- Candidate would create assignments adapted and interesting to everybody because no one wants to write about something boring or being taught on the format or following a basic format (T5)	213- Candidate would create assignments adapted and interesting to everybody because no one wants to write about something boring or being taught on the format or following a basic format (T5)	325- Candidate would tell and has told students to write from their hearts, they should write what they know and write first in their native language, then they can translate (T10)	67- Candidate would offer a risk-free environment (or reduced-risk) environment in which students can write to make connections (QT9)
18-It is also very beneficial to help the student learn how to write with mapping and scaffolding strategies (QT3)	66-Teaching writing in general education classrooms including ELs will depend on ELs' proficiency level and the need to alter	259- In a future general education classroom candidate would help ELs to sharpen knowledge of grammar and writing	332- In service learning, candidate taught to write with an outline, people can stick to something very simple if they are	254- Candidate has taken ESOL methods course, where she learned to incorporate classroom discussions, work	326- Writing about something you know and have passion for is easier (T10)	

<b>Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)</b>	<b>Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)</b>	<b>Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar</b>	<b>Teaching writing by means of providing structure</b>	<b>Fostering motivation to write</b>	<b>Fostering relatable writing</b>	<b>Writing to make connections</b>
	rubrics, assignments and create group projects including written and oral components (QT9)	skills because they are foundational (T7)	going to write, introduction, thesis statement, tell what they want, write the body and the conclusion. The basics of an essay or composition are key for any writing instruction (T10)	sheets to provide students with a sense of and interest in what they will be writing (T7)		
27- To teach writing to ELs in the content area, candidate would break down writings to make them easier (QT4)	74-Candidate's experience teaching writing in general education classrooms including ELs involves reviewing and working on students' essays, compositions, vocabulary exercises (QT10)	330- Basic knowledge of other languages' grammar rules can be beneficial in order to understand ELs oral and written productions, always paying attention to the reiteration of English grammar rules (T10)		328- If students can write about what they know and have passion for, they will also want to learn the words in English (T10)	327- She has been taught to write what she knows and not to find something she doesn't have a passion or desire for (T10)	
30- To teach writing in general education classrooms including ELs candidate has to take things slower with them and dissect all information (QT5)	84-Apply knowledge of writing in content area to teach ELs including essay questions, writing assignments and creative writing topics (QT12)	353- Candidate describes the writing task being accomplished by ELs in mentor texts and suggests they could start with clarification of use of past tenses (FGT1)				
38-To teach writing including ELs, candidate will begin	92-Candidate would integrate ELs students' ability to	357- Candidate suggests that it can be helpful that teachers				

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
with one word adjectives and offering pictures for the students to describe what they see and feel in one word. These words will be used in sentences to tell a story (QT6)	express themselves when writing (QT13)	have a really good understanding of the language, because grammar rules are easy to forget, and that knowledge is necessary for ELs to learn the L2 (FGT1)				
59-To apply knowledge of writing in content area to teach ELs, candidate would try to model everything as much as possible, provide instructions in the original ELs' language and color code as much as possible (QT8)	93-She feels that this allows them freedom when writing and teachers can evaluate at what level their students are (QT13)	358- Teachers need to have grammar knowledge fresh in order to teach and explain ELs the rules of the new language (L2) and about other new content they are learning now, if it is not possible to have knowledge of ELs' native language, their own language must be enough (FGT1)				
171- Candidate's ideal classroom doesn't know English, so she needs connection with students to develop, learn what they need to learn, mold to what students know and do	172- If students only want to write sentences, that is all right because at least they have learned something (T3)					

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
not know, so they can start writing from the foundations (T3)						
177- Candidate worked with ELs in writing starting from one sentence, to paragraph, with explanations of different kinds of paragraphs until he wrote an essay on American culture, a subject that motivated the student to write his own essay (T3)	179- The writing process with this EL took two to three months and it provided the EL student with the learning experience he wanted (T3)					
198- Candidate has observed beginner level ELs in the silent period when they don't feel comfortable talking, so she would let them write in their mother tongue and then tell her what they wrote, in this way she will establish a connection teacher-student and help ELs feel comfortable with writing (T4)	197- Candidate wants to use past experiences to teach writing to ELs: journaling and journal time (T4)					
199- Candidate hopes to implement ELs'	214- Candidate would teach ELs to					



Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
writing in L1 in their journal time, when ELs express personal thoughts, whereas when writing about content, they will be required to write in English and explain to her orally (T4)	incorporate new vocabulary or add experiences for ELs to write stories and anecdotes in order to make writing more relatable to students (T5)					
258- Use of dictionary when students need help with meaning of some words to help them to write (T7)	254- Candidate has taken ESOL methods course, where she learned to incorporate classroom discussions, work sheets to provide students with a sense of and interest in what they will be writing (T7)					
271- Candidate would like to try strategies she had learned in ESOL methods courses to work with ELs including color coding in writing, for ex. she would try to teach students to color different sections of an essay: introduction, body, examples, evidence,	260- Candidate would let students have discussions to brainstorm ideas to write about (T7)					

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
conclusion (T8)						
320- Lesson plan modification, SLIDE and TREAD, gap analysis and modifications are helpful at this moment because as a teacher she recognizes differences in discourse that might seem common place for native speakers, and not so common place for ELs (T10)	261- Then candidate would teach them how to organize their ideas and main points for students to produce a good piece of writing because it is important to have enough ideas to have a good length piece of writing (T7)					
331- Candidate believes that anybody can follow a formula like an outline, it is important that everyone is given a formula to follow when writing (T10)	300- Candidate mentions using peer feedback as an instructional strategy that might relate directly to writing (T9)					
335- Writing instruction takes persistence and needs verbal guidance from a teacher when reviewing writing, so that ELs can correct and remember corrections (FGT1)	301- Candidate likes the idea of the writing workshop, which includes peer and teacher feedback, especially in groups using the feedback model of writing and then refining writing					

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
	within the group of peers who understand writing and what needs to be improved, because it can work better in a small group of friends than as a whole class workshop (T9)					
345- Candidate suggests that when reading it is beneficial to have a list of defined words ELs will struggle with to help them along the way to understand their own writing (FGT1)	303- As ELs progress into writing, they can participate in the activity (peer feedback), classmates need to be instructed on the kind of writing they would find in order to guide ELs to produce more words and not focus so much on grammar, in this way the workshop and group work can be helpful (T9)					
346- Candidate considers it is harder to have ELs at different levels of proficiency in English in the same classroom, because writing prompts must be different,	341- Candidate attends conversation hours and she has noticed the benefits to do discussion based assessments when teachers talk to students and then they write about the					

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
consequently it is necessary that teachers tailor instruction to the students' proficiency levels (FGT1)	experience and correct side by side, which can be helpful because their mistakes can be corrected orally and in written form (FGT1)					
347- Candidate considers effective ways to go about the corrections in order to help ELs improve their writing skills, including corrections with colors on ELs' written work and then going to class and having group or one-to-one discussions, and checking who are the students who are making the same/ similar mistakes and explain where do mistakes come from (FGT1)	344- Candidate noticed that group work discussions helped students cover someone else's lack of knowledge and reinforce vocabulary to support writing (FGT1)					
	347- Candidate considers effective ways to go about the corrections in order to help ELs improve their writing skills, including corrections					

Accommodations to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Activities/Strategies to teach writing in general education classrooms (Including ELs)	Teaching writing by means of teaching grammar	Teaching writing by means of providing structure	Fostering motivation to write	Fostering relatable writing	Writing to make connections
	with colors on ELs' written work and then going to class and having group or one-to-one discussions, and checking who are the students who are making the same/ similar mistakes and explain where do mistakes come from (FGT1)					
	355- Candidate remembers learning new vocabulary weekly in elementary school and writing essays on Fridays using those words, and in kindergarten they used to draw pictures and describe what was going on in the pics, in the case of the "compare or contrast" essays, students can expand on it with the vocabulary of the week (FGT1)					

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