PRESERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING AND THEIR PLANS TO TEACH WRITING: THE APPRENTICESHIP OF OBSERVATION

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Preservice teachers (PSTs) bring a plethora of knowledge and experiences to their educator preparation courses. The PSTs have also formed ideas about how to teach based on their observations during the thousands of hours they spent as students in the classroom from kindergarten through high school graduation. This phenomenon, coined by Lortie, is called the apprenticeship of observation. Past research has focused on the apprenticeship of observation in general while neglecting to specifically explore how this phenomenon influences PSTs in regards to writing. Guiding this study were three research questions: (1) what are the PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction and themselves as writers, (2) how have PSTs' experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers, and (3) how do PSTs' experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing? After conducting a thematic analysis, there are four findings that stemmed from the data. First, PSTs come to their educator preparation programs with beliefs about themselves as writers. Particularly, the PSTs believe they are either writers or non-writers, Next, PSTs believe that writing instruction should be high-quality and foster student interest. Additionally, data suggested that PSTs' past experiences as students in a writing classroom influenced the PSTs' beliefs. Particularly, the PSTs' experiences around feedback and the control they had over writing were the most discussed. Lastly, past experiences stemming from the PSTs' apprenticeship of observation formed the basis for the plans the PSTs had about teaching writing. These findings have implications for both teacher educators and the

PSTs they teach. It is imperative that teacher educators take steps to uncover the beliefs and past experiences of the PSTs as these serve as a lens through which the PSTs look through during their writing methods courses. Teacher educators must also use this information as a springboard for instruction. Finally, teacher educators must challenge the apprenticeship of observation to ensure that the plans PSTs have for teaching writing are not simply a conservative recreation of past experiences devoid of a theoretical basis.

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

By the time preservice teachers (PSTs) enter a teacher preparation program, they have spent, on average, 13 years as students in a classroom. During their time as students, they spent thousands upon thousands of hours watching how to teach. The result of all of their time spent observing the craft of teaching as students is that the PSTs believe that for the most part, they know what teaching is all about. They bring these ideas and beliefs with them to their teacher preparation program. Lortie (1975) coined the term apprenticeship of observation to describe this phenomenon. Since 1975, there have been some studies (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Westrick & Morris, 2015) exploring the apprenticeship of observation and how this experience influences PSTs in general. Additionally, a small handful of discipline-specific studies have been conducted (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Cross; 2009; Slekar, 1998).

During my time spent over the past two academic years as one of the reading and writing methods course instructors for elementary PSTs in their first internship semester, I have noticed a few patterns exhibited by my students. First, PSTs have strong conceptions about themselves as writers. They can define themselves with certainty either as writers or non-writers. Also, many PSTs possess vivid memories regarding how they learned to write and their experiences as writers. Last, when PSTs have the opportunity to teach writing in a classroom, they tend to either revert to the ways in which they remember being taught or they model the ways in which their mentor teacher or methods instructor teaches writing. There is a great worry among the

PSTs about the state standardized test that all students, starting in grade three, are expected to pass. From my observations, there is tension between the personal interpretation of their experiences that the PSTs had as students, the theory based instruction they receive in their educator preparation program, and the realities they face when they assume the role of teacher.

The goal of a teacher preparation program is to prepare PSTs to be confident and competent instructors of their disciplines. To do this, teacher educators must help PSTs grapple with discord between the personal beliefs they bring with them and theories of learning taught as part of a teacher preparation program. The first step is to explore the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences they had that contributed to the construction of their beliefs. From a constructivist learning perspective, this must be accomplished so that teacher educators can help students use their prior experiences to grow as teachers throughout their initial teaching experiences. This qualitative interpretive study explored the beliefs that preservice teachers have about writing, themselves as writers, and the influence that the apprenticeship of observation has on their beliefs. Additionally, this study also sought to uncover PSTs' plans to teach writing in their classrooms.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Through the work of past researchers who used Lortie's apprenticeship of observation as their theoretical framework, findings have shown that the beliefs PSTs bring with them into their teacher preparation programs are deeply ingrained and relatively stable (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010). Moreover, Kagan (1992) and Pajares (1992) noted that preservice teachers are

typically not able to fully express their beliefs regarding best practices as most of the time they mimic what they saw during their time as students without stopping to think about the pedagogical reasons behind the activities they encountered. Darling-Hammond (2006) pointed out that one of the goals of the teacher preparation program is to develop educational professionals who are aware of their background experiences and how those experiences influence their current ways of thinking. Existing research focuses on PSTs overall with little research that is discipline specific. In literacy, the research that exists exploring the influence that the apprenticeship of observation has on preservice teacher beliefs focuses almost exclusively on reading (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Hall, 2005; Johnson, 1994). Accordingly, there is a need to examine how this phenomenon influences writing (Norman & Spencer, 2005). Findings from a study of the apprenticeship of observation as it relates to writing will add to the limited research on this phenomena overall as well as address a writing specific gap that exists.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

To adequately prepare PSTs to teach writing, teacher educators must understand and acknowledge the beliefs that their PSTs bring with them to use those beliefs as a springboard for experiences in their pedagogy focused methods classes.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive inquiry was to explore the beliefs that elementary PSTs had about writing and the influence that their apprenticeship of observation had on their beliefs. Further, this study explored how the PSTs plan to

teach writing in their classrooms in the future. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers?
2. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about writing instruction?
3. How have preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers?
4. How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This qualitative interpretive inquiry is unique to the field of education as this is the first known study to explore the apprenticeship of observation as it relates to writing. While there has been past research that addresses this theory as it relates to reading (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Hall, 2005; Johnson, 1994) there is a void in the literature that links this theory to writing. Additionally, due to past research on the belief-action paradigm (Pajares, 1992), this study includes PSTs' beliefs coupled with the PSTs' interpretation of their past experiences while looking at the apprenticeship of observation. This is a unique way of looking at the apprenticeship of observation as past work on this topic only considers past experiences. The decision to include PSTs' beliefs as part of the exploration is based on research (Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992), which determined that beliefs are one of the primary predictors of behavior.

Findings from this study will inform teacher educators of the nature of beliefs about writing that PSTs bring with them when they enter teacher preparation. Pajaras (1992) indicates that research on teachers' beliefs is an area that needs attention based on the assumption that there is a link between beliefs and an individual's decisions. Additionally, this study informs teacher educators of the PSTs' plans to teach writing

and how those plans are influenced by their past interpretations of their experiences as students. This allows teacher educators to better understand the beliefs that their students bring with them while also giving them the opportunity to craft their instruction that takes into account these beliefs.

In the past, research on the apprenticeship of observation is scarce but has recently gained more attention in the past decade because of studies conducted by Smagorinsky & Barnes (2014), Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson (2013), Knapp (2012); however, there is still a lack of discipline specific studies linking the apprenticeship of observation to various content areas. This study will add to the body of research on the apprenticeship of observation as a whole while also providing specific research linking this phenomenon to writing, a connection that is currently non-existent.

Findings from this study will have the potential to inform practitioner scholars. Since this study explores teacher beliefs and the influence that PSTs' past interpretation of their experiences have on their plans to teach writing, those who work in teacher professional development will get an understanding of the types of beliefs PSTs have about writing as well as how their plans are tied to their apprenticeship of observation.

Lastly, this study is significant to me as an educator since my plan is to work with preservice and inservice teachers in some capacity. The findings add to my understanding of how PSTs' past interpretations of their experiences their personal beliefs as well as the plans they have for teaching writing. I will be able to take the findings into account while coaching both preservice and inservice teachers with the intent of having a greater influence on their teaching abilities.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study used Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation as the theoretical framework. He uses this term to define the time that students spend from kindergarten through high school graduation allowing them an in-depth look at teaching and the role of teachers. Due to the apprenticeship of observation, PSTs enter their teacher education program with preconceived notions of teaching and what it means to be a teacher (Borg, 2004). These preconceived notions tend to be mechanical in nature (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). The apprenticeship of observation has been seen as troublesome for teacher educators whose job is to provide a theoretical knowledge base to PSTs as this knowledge base often contradicts the simplistic views of teaching held by the PSTs (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Other researchers such as Narváez, Ramírez, and Vasco (2003) do not consider the apprenticeship of observation as wholly negative since autobiography has been used as a tool to explore the origin of beliefs for the purposes of understanding, confrontation, and affirmation. The exploration of PSTs' apprenticeship of observation through the use of autobiography is a shift from a past where teacher educators treated the PSTs as blank slates while employing an additive curriculum (Ironside, 2004).

1.6 Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in this research report as part of the study.

- Apprenticeship of observation: The apprenticeship of observation is a phenomenon defined by Lortie (1975) as "the time that students spend in classrooms, 16 years on average, during which they are apprenticed into the ways of teaching" (p. 61). He goes on to explain that "those who decide to enter teaching have had

exceptional opportunity to observe members of the occupation at work unlike most occupations" (p. 65). PSTs have a myriad of experiences as students in the classroom. These experiences are viewed from a limited perspective that is lacking pedagogical knowledge and the full scope of education in which each experience is situated. These experiences turn into ideas of how to teach. Once these PSTs enter a teacher preparation program they bring with them a multitude of experiences and ideas of how to teach. Those that have researched the apprenticeship of observation explain that these ideas and experiences are powerful and often "unconsciously influence their teaching and contribute to the perpetuation of conservative school practices" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchannan, 1983, p. 11). As an example, a PST remembers taking a spelling test every Friday from Kindergarten through fifth grade. In the PST's eyes, giving a weekly spelling test is part of teaching. The PST remembers that a spelling list is distributed every Monday and a spelling test is given every Friday; however, while she was a student, the PST wasn't privy to the research surrounding spelling and spelling tests. Once the PST enters the educator preparation program she might be confronted with conflicting pedagogical information that explains why the traditional spelling test isn't considered best practice anymore; although, due to her apprenticeship of observation, she still plans to give a weekly spelling test, just as she remembers, because that is how she knows how to teach. If the PST goes into the classroom and recreates her experiences with spelling tests she will be contributing to the perpetuation of conservative school practice.

- Beliefs: There are varying definitions of beliefs used in research; however, for the purpose of this study, Harvey's (1986) definition of beliefs is used. He describes

them as “an individual’s representation of reality that has enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide thought and behavior” (p. 660).

- Confidence: Confidence is a person’s trust in his or her abilities (Luhmann, 2000).

- Feedback: Feedback is any information delivered to the learner about their work or abilities in reference to what should be the case (Hattie & Yates, 2014). For this study, feedback can be delivered in many forms to include grades, verbal comments, and writing conferences.

CHAPTER 2

RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a literature review that provides context for the exploration of the beliefs and apprenticeship of observation of preservice teachers (PSTs). This chapter is divided into the following sections: (1) history of writing instruction from 1900 to present, (2) PSTs' beliefs about writing (a) PTSs' beliefs about themselves as writers (b) PSTs' beliefs about how to teach writing, (3) apprenticeship of observation, (4) autobiography as a research tool, and (5) summary. To date no research has been conducted examining how PSTs' past interpretation of their experiences as students influence their beliefs about themselves as writers and teachers of writing. To provide a starting place for the current study, I explored literature in the abovementioned areas.

2.1 History of Writing Instruction from 1900 to Present

This section provides a historical look at the history of writing education from 1900 to present. This section is significant because the study explored the experiences of PSTs who came from various backgrounds. To better understand their interpretation of their experiences, it was helpful to have an understanding of the history of writing instruction to have some insight into where their experiences might have been situated. Hawkins and Razal's (2012) three P's of writing instruction summed up writing over the past century breaking this period down into penmanship, product, and process. For this study, it was especially important to pay attention to the shift from product to process, as most of the PSTs had experiences that stemmed from one of these two schools of

thought. What follows is a historical look at writing instruction from the 1900s to the present.

2.1.1 Writing Instruction as Penmanship and Empty Vessels

Very little has been published about writing instruction from 1900 to the late 1940s (Dutro & Collins, 2011). Most information found addresses the writing curriculum in secondary school (e.g., Applebee, Auten & Lehr, 1981; Dornan, Rosen & Wilson, 2003). As explained by Hawkins and Razal (2012) what we do know about this period can be summed up by the word penmanship, which was the primary focus of instruction; however, there was also inclusion of spelling and grammar into writing instruction. To get an understanding of what elementary writing instruction looked like in the early 1900s, we must turn to teacher manuals of that period. At this time writing was thought of as the physical act of putting ink to paper as well as the transcription of spoken thought onto the page; therefore, the teacher did not stress the importance of the thought process involved when writing (Hawkins & Razal, 2012). One particular sentence pulled from a teacher's manual from the 1912 said, “Writing needs little technical knowledge outside of the ability to spell and form letters,” (Wright, 1912). One of the main theoretical assumptions during this time was that children were empty vessels waiting to receive knowledge from the teacher (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). For this, instruction was focused heavily on repetition and memorization (Keeler, 1918). In writing instruction, this meant students spent most of their time copying words, sentences, and passages that the teacher modeled.

When looking at the use of writing socially and in business from the 1900s through the 1930s, it is important to remember that business and correspondence

operated entirely using paper and pen. Writing was a direct reflection of one's station in life, meaning that if a person was wealthy he or she was expected to have impeccable penmanship to fit in among society (Thornton, 1996). It was not enough to have legible handwriting. Penmanship at this time was more of an art compared to the manuscript of today. Hawkins and Razal (2012) explained that during the great depression financial strains resulted in penmanship teachers losing their jobs. In the early 1940s, after World War II, a new form of writing called manuscript, also known today as print, was developed as an easier way to write. Penmanship courses transformed into handwriting instruction, which became a smaller integrated part of the writing curriculum. Teachers provided handwriting instruction to the whole group so they could gain a general understanding of this new form of writing. Any issues students had after this initial instruction was handled during small group or one-on-one settings. Legibility was the goal; however, Atwell (2015) still addresses handwriting today, which will be discussed later.

2.1.2 Writing Instruction as a Product and Behaviorism

In the early 1900s behaviorism, led by Watson, Thorndike, and Skinner, was the dominant theoretical basis for explaining how students learned and what constituted effective teaching; however, it was not until the 1950s that these beliefs started to take hold in writing education (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). A historical look at writing education shows that behaviorism was prevalent from the 1950s to the 1970s. Followers of behaviorism believed that a person could control and modify the external stimuli to produce desired behaviors (Boghossian, 2006). Additionally, by giving rewards for proper behavior, the likelihood of the behavior happening again was high. As stated

earlier, after World War II the emphasis on penmanship was lessened. Scrutiny of the final written product was the new focus during this time (Hairston, 1982). Judgment was made on a writer's final product while the teacher ignored the means by which the student arrived at the final product. After the launch of Sputnik in 1957 education overall was systematized and pushed in a scientific direction. Writing was broken down into smaller steps that students could master and teachers could observe the outcomes (Hawkins & Razal, 2012). Once a student mastered all steps in the systematized writing process teachers believed that the student was able to write a correct composition.

Applebee's (1983) analysis of instructional practice from the 1950s through the 1970s reported traditional teaching methods when it came to writing. He explains that students were often asked to write compositions based off of personal experience. Teachers also focused their instruction on handwriting, spelling, and grammar. The instruction manuals of that time had teachers working on writing skills at the word and sentence level (Applebee, 1983). This resulted in a lack of higher-order thinking skills employed by the students.

2.1.3 Writing Instruction as a Process, Whole Language, and Constructivism

In the early 1980s the whole language movement, led by Goodman, Calkins, Graves, and Atwell, emerged and the teaching of writing skills in inauthentic contexts through rigid steps was seen to be less effective (Murray, 1997). With whole language, the belief was that students learn to read and write best when they are taught using authentic contexts and authentic texts. For this, students often picked their topics to write about based on their individual interests. Further, basal readers were discarded for quality pieces of children's literature, which served as mentor texts for writing. The

emphasis on handwriting lessened when emergent writing became valued allowing students to play with letters and letter formation.

During this time, research by Emig, Calkins, Atwell, Graves, and Elbow influenced curriculum development immensely. Writing began to be thought of as a meaning-making process that was social and interactive. At the beginning of the shift from writing as a product to writing as a process, Emig (1971) conducted a study in which she used think aloud protocols to observe the composing process of middle class 12th graders in a Chicago public school. Up until this point, the large majority of research about writing involved the examination of completed writing by "expert" writers; however, Emig (1971) focused on what she deemed as average or above average 12th graders (Schultz, 2006). Upon the completion of her study, Emig (1971) conceptualized writing as a cognitive composing process that started as a stimulus, often a school assignment, to which the writer responded. Her work broke down writing into process that is complex and recursive. This seminal study was one of the first to open up critical discussions about the writing process.

Peter Elbow (1973) added to the writing process movement by proposing an alternative way of composing. He critiqued the notion of starting an essay with an outline. Elbow asserted that this way of writing was backwards. Instead, he proposed an interactive strategy called freewriting in which the writer starts writing whole sentences from the beginning as opposed to starting with an outline. During freewriting, Elbow (1973) explained that writers should write without stopping to edit. He claimed that this style of constructing would reduce writer's block and also help the writer discover better ideas. He based this new approach to writing on Murray (1978) and Galbraith's (1999)

ideas that writing was both a discovery process and a knowledge-constituting process. His argued outlines served as a hindrance to the thought process involved in writing. Kellogg (1990) conducted initial studies that challenged Elbow's freewriting. His findings contradicted Elbow's claims and showed that writers who utilized the outline method ended up with drafts that were longer and overall higher in quality as compared to writers who did not begin with an outline. However, in the early 1990s Galbraith (1992) conducted a series of studies that offered opposite findings. Galbraith (1992) argued his findings were more accurate because the design of his study followed Elbow's idea of freewriting more closely.

Graves can also be credited, in part, for spearheading the writing process movement of this time. His work developed from observing young writers as they learned to write. He made four recommendations to educators in order to achieve a successful program based on writing process (Graves, 1985). First, he felt it was crucial that students were given adequate time to write. This often meant spending an extended amount of time on a single piece of writing, which was a change from his past observations where he noted teachers were quick to jump from one writing assignment to the another. Second, he expressed that it was important for students to choose their own topic. By giving students choice, they take ownership of their writing. Next, writers need to be given responses based on their work. He felt this was an important component that allows the writer the opportunity to get feedback. Last, Graves felt it was important to transform the classroom to become a community of learners. This mindset allows all members of the community, teacher and student, the opportunity to act as experts with various skills and topics. Based on his four recommendations, the

role of the teacher changed considerably from what it was when writing was seen as a final product. Grave's explanation of what writing instruction should look like took the teacher out of the role of writing dictator. Instead, the teacher was to serve as a model for students as well as a facilitator while students grappled with improving their writing craft. This was a significant shift from writing instruction prior to this time.

Lucy Calkins (1983) focused much of her work on Writer's Workshop as a way to teach writing. This instructional model embraces writing as a process as well as authenticity in writing. The Writer's Workshop model starts with a short mini-lesson. During the mini-lesson teachers provide instruction on a variety of skills writers need such as ideas, voice, sentence structure, and grammar. Next, students are given substantial time to write. During this time, students are allowed the opportunity to try out the skill from the mini-lesson in their pieces of writing. While students write, teachers conference with individuals. At the close of the Workshop writers are able to share their work. Calkins (1983) reported her findings from a study, which she conducted in an elementary school classroom in New Hampshire in which the classroom teacher utilized the Writer's Workshop model. Calkins (1983) showed, in detail, the writing growth of one student in particular. Her report built a solid case for the switch to Writer's Workshop as a way of teaching writing.

Atwell, a practitioner scholar, outlined her transformation from teacher-centered writing instruction to student-centered writing instruction in her 1987 book. She outlined the steps she took to change her ways of teaching to embrace writing as a process in her middle school classroom. Her work that centered on the writing process served as a model for how to teach using the Writer's Workshop model. The goal of this way of

teaching is show students how to be writers while teaching spelling, grammar, and mechanics in the context of authentic texts. She utilized the four recommendations by Graves (1985) during Writer's Workshop. First, she ensured that her students wrote for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes per day. Per Graves (1985), her students were allowed to choose their topic and genre for their writing pieces. Additionally, her classroom acted as a community of writers. Students were involved in regular conferencing both with the teacher and with peers. Students also took their writing through to publication and shared their finished products with their classroom community. By embracing this new process of teaching, Atwell (1987) described newfound motivation among her writers. Her success with Writer's Workshop served as inspiration for others to change their ways of teaching to focus on writing as a process.

Ironically, during this time *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was published showing the grim facts that the US education system was slipping. Authors of *A Nation at Risk* pushed for a back-to-basics approach when teaching all subjects while shying away from new and progressive ways of teaching. Some districts and campuses adopted a writing program by Education Northwest called 6+1 traits. The 6+1 Traits program (Bellamy, 2001) used the writing process while providing numerous rubrics and ways of assessing student writing to ensure progress was made. Later, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 called for even greater standardization and more assessments. For writing in Texas, this meant the creation of a standardized writing test given in grades four and seven. There was tension among those who fully embraced whole language/writing workshop that now faced the reality that they must prepare students for the new assessments.

From 2002 until 2015 teachers and administrators navigated the new assessments. Curricula became more scripted while constructivist researchers continued to show that authenticity when teaching writing was best. Even after 100 years, there are still traces of Hawkins and Razal's Three P's. Going back to penmanship, Atwell (2015) talked about the importance of handwriting among writers. She explained that a writer's handwriting ultimately affects the reader, as this is the reader's first impression of the writer. Poor handwriting may signal that the writer does not care. Additionally, the writer may feel that he or she has poor ideas because of his or her frustration over poor handwriting. Further, today's standardized assessments in writing only assess the final product of a writer. The process the writer goes through when composing is not considered for scoring. A report compiled by Troia (2014) broke down evidenced-based practices for writing instruction into ten different components. Included in these components are instruction focused on product elements and instruction focused on product elements. Troia (2014) explains that these two types of instruction can work together to help students become competent writers. The goal of instruction focused on process is for writers to gain an understanding of the iterative process of composing, as this is how expert writers work (Calkins & Mermelstein, 2003; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). Product instruction exists to show students how to understand and use various elements of the text to produce finished products that achieve the writer’s goals for the piece (Graham et al., 2012; Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). Even after all of these changes the question still holds: How should writing be taught?

For the purpose of this study, it was important to keep the history of writing instruction at the forefront when analyzing the interviews and artifacts of the PST participants. This will place the PSTs' interpretation of their past experiences in a historical context and possibly give voice to why certain experiences occurred. This is especially true when we consider that the PSTs did not have the pedagogical knowledge to understand and explain their experiences while they occurred in their pasts.

2.2 Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Writing

When looking at education research about beliefs, Pajares (1992) described the construct as messy because of researchers' varying definitions on this subject (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Cross, 2009; Dewey, 1933; Fenstermacher, 1994; Harvey, 1986; Harvey, Frank, Gore & Batres 1998; Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010; Rokeach, 1968; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1986). Furthermore, the caveat of belief research is that beliefs must be inferred. However, Pajares (1992) asserted that despite the uncertainty, teacher beliefs demand to be researched as findings have the power to inform educational practice in a way that has not been done before. This is due to the assumption that beliefs are the foremost indicator of decisions therefore an understanding of a teacher's beliefs could possibly serve as a predictor for future actions (Rokeach, 1968). For this study that looked at how the PSTs' interpretation of their past experiences influenced actions, Harvey's (1986) definition was most appropriate in which he defined beliefs as "an individual's representation of reality that has enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide thought and behavior" (p. 660).

PSTs come to their teacher education programs with existing beliefs about writing in general, themselves as writers, and how to teach writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995). These beliefs emerge as a result of their personal experiences. Nisbett & Ross (1980) explained that the experiences that form the basis of beliefs begin at a very early age. Several studies (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010) indicated that these beliefs are relatively stable and difficult to change; however, as PSTs with limited teaching experience, they may not be fully aware of their beliefs nor may they have the language to clearly explain them (Kagan, 1992). Further, even when an individual is presented with conflicting information and experiences that render their beliefs untrue research shows that it is rare, not impossible, that the individual makes a change to her belief to fit the new information (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). For these reasons, it is important to consider PSTs' beliefs if teacher educators intend to help their students become confident and competent teachers of writing.

2.2.1 Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Themselves as Writers

Several researchers (Gallavan, Bowles, & Young, 2007; Morgan, 2010; Norman & Spencer, 2005) have uncovered PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers. Most often, researchers (Hall 2016; Norman & Spencer, 2005) find that the PSTs have either strong positive perceptions about their writing abilities or strong negative views of themselves as writers. It is less common for them to fall in the middle of the spectrum. When asked about their writing pasts, PSTs can point to specific experiences both positive and negative that they believe directly influenced their self-perceptions of themselves as writers (Morgan, 2010). The most commonly noted experiences were ones that involved grades and specific interactions with teachers during writing time.

Additionally, Graves (2002) found some PSTs that reported they did not receive any instruction in writing. Consequently, the same PSTs that felt they didn't receive writing instruction also had lowered confidence in their writing abilities. As a result of these experiences, Frank, Carpenter, and Smith (2003) explained that, in general, these PSTs do not label themselves as writers and when they think about teaching writing they tend to focus on low-level mechanical corrections such as spelling and grammar. Further, Norman and Spencer (2005) and Frank et al. (2003) found that a large number of PSTs believe that writing abilities are fixed. That is, good writers were born with writing talent while poor writers lacked this trait and regardless of instruction or practice this would not change.

Many PSTs that have a negative feeling about writing and themselves as writers exhibit what Daly (1985) called writing apprehension. Writing apprehension refers to the degree to which a person will undertake or avoid writing tasks. As with beliefs, Daly believed that apprehension towards writing tends to remain stable over time. Therefore, regardless of practice or experience PSTs do not lose their fear of writing. Moreover, Lenski and Pardiek (1999) pointed out that apprehension stems from a person's past and links to instances in which that person's writing was criticized. As a result, Lenski and Pardiek asserted that those that experience writing apprehension tend to avoid writing altogether if they sense that their writing is subject to evaluation. Consequently, it is important to note that Daly's research indicated writing apprehension ties to a writer's self-talk and is not necessarily an indication of the writer's ability to write well.

In regards to this study, the aforementioned information is important if teacher educators want to provide experiences as an attempt to influence PSTs' beliefs about

writing as they prepare for teacher certification. As stated above, beliefs are different from one person to the next; yet, past research has helped to identify some of the common beliefs of this population. Before these beliefs can be changed or amended, both the PSTs and the teacher educators must expose the beliefs the PSTs bring with them. After uncovering beliefs, it then becomes possible to work towards ensuring those beliefs are consistent with the research-based best practices taught in university courses. Since PSTs' beliefs serve as a lens that they look through while teaching and learning, failure to take their beliefs into account will result in a barrier between what teacher educators intend to teach and how PSTs receive the information in their writing methods courses (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011).

2.2.2 Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about How to Teach Writing

While it is important to understand the beliefs that PSTs hold about themselves as writers, it is equally important to find out their beliefs about how to teach writing being that they are preparing to become writing instructors (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). These beliefs serve as a veil from which they look through when planning ways in which to teach future students. Explained below are past studies that have attempted to understand the beliefs that PSTs have about how to teach writing.

One trend seen in research indicates past experiences significantly influence the plans PSTs have regarding practices they feel will be most effective to use when teaching their future students. Norman and Spencer (2005) explained that the many years PSTs spent learning how to write while in the classroom often served as the basis for the pedagogical decisions they make during writing instruction with their students. As an example, a study by Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) indicated that PSTs believed

that to foster students' positivity towards writing, the teacher should display finished pieces of writing. The participants in the study expressed the proud feelings and increased they had when they saw their writing work valued by their teachers. For this, they intended to show the same care towards the writing of their future students. Additionally, the participants expressed that teachers should create meaningful teaching opportunities that allow for creativity in the writing process. For the PSTs, this meant that in their future classroom they intended on tailoring writing experiences to meet the individual interests of their students. Last, the PSTs felt that an abundance of negative feedback resulted in lower self-confidence in writers and a diminished positive attitude towards writing. In particular, the PSTs recalled receiving papers back from their teachers covered in red ink. They described the detrimental influence this had on their writing confidence and vowed to be more empathetic towards their future students. Supporting and adding to Norman and Spencer's (2005) work, Holt-Reynolds (1992) found that PSTs believed that because a strategy had worked for them in the past, they felt it would apply to others when they stepped into the role of teacher.

It is important to explore the experiences PSTs had as student writers to understand ideas they have about how to teach writing. Further findings from Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) showed that PSTs categorized various aspects of writing as easy or hard. Participants in the study agreed that they were confident in using writing strategies in their writing; therefore, they felt that teaching writing strategies would be easy. On the other hand, the areas in which they felt they would have the most difficulty were with the teaching of mechanics and giving student feedback as these were all areas in which they struggled as writers. These results are valuable as it gives teacher

educators a look into the possible areas of confidence and apprehension among their students. To add to this, Colby and Stapleton (2006) found that a large number of PSTs felt their knowledge of how to teach the writing process was nonexistent. In the same vein, these participants also had very little recollection about how they were taught the writing process as students.

While PSTs bring many ideas about teaching based on their apprenticeship of observation with them to their teacher preparation program, findings from Grisham and Wolsey's (2011) study of PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction show that their beliefs lacked depth. The PSTs' beliefs are superficial in nature and when probed to provide further explanation, the PSTs struggled. As an example, Grisham and Wolsey's (2011) pre-course survey data showed that the PSTs valued "good writing". When pressed for further details to explain what "good writing" was for the PSTs, they gave underdeveloped responses that included creative writing, and writing that involved choice. In their responses, the PSTs often cited past experiences they observed while they were students. Their findings demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding on the part of the PSTs while simultaneously showing that PSTs' beliefs are connected to their observations during the time spent as students in the writing classroom.

This section supports the idea that it is not enough to uncover PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers. Research must go a step further to determine the influence that these beliefs have on the PSTs' beliefs about how to teach writing. From the above research, we can see how closely PSTs tied past experiences to their plans for teaching writing (Colby & Stapleton, 2006; Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Norman & Spencer, 2005). If the end goal is to help mold PSTs beliefs

to align with best practices taught in their university courses, we must understand where their ideas about how to teach writing stem from.

2.3 Lortie's Apprenticeship of Observation

PSTs do not come into teacher preparation programs as blank slates; rather, they bring with them nearly two decades of experience watching and interacting with teachers. In Lortie's 1975 book titled *Schoolteacher*, he coins the term apprenticeship of observation to define the time that PSTs spend in classrooms as students from kindergarten through graduation. While *Schoolteacher* was Lortie's only publication about the apprenticeship of observation, since then other researchers (Borg, 2004; Boyd, Gorham, Justice & Anderson, 2014; Smagorinsky & Barnes 2014) further studied and refined this phenomenon. While they were students, the PSTs were apprenticed into the ways of teaching. Because of their time spent in classrooms, they come into teacher preparation programs with conservative preconceptions about teaching (Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014). This phenomenon is unique to the field of education, as other professions do not have this type of experience and background knowledge when they enter formal training. It is important to be aware that teachers are already familiar with the ways of teaching because they bring with them an intuitive understanding of teaching; however, their understandings can serve as a disadvantage because PSTs are not aware of their shortcomings (Westrick & Morris, 2016). During their time spent as students in a classroom, the PSTs only saw a small aspect of teaching. PSTs were not privy to everything teachers dealt with outside of the classroom such as lesson plans, state and national standards, assessments, and campus politics. In their study,

Westrick and Morris (2016) explored PSTs' apprenticeship of observation as it related to their knowledge of assessment. They collected responses to course blog posts that were written by the course instructor. These responses were then analyzed to determine how, if at all, the assessment unit that was part of their methods course influenced the students' beliefs. Initially, all 74 participants reported a shift in perspective about assessments; however, upon further analysis, the researchers believed that only four of the PSTs adopted new ideas about assessments based on the unit. While students in the elementary school classroom, the PSTs took many tests and watched their teachers give assessments; yet, they were not present while the teachers developed the tests. Because of this, the PSTs had underdeveloped understandings of assessments overall. As an example, one of the participants in Westrick and Morris's (2016) study explained that she thought multiple choice responses consisted of one correct answer with the rest of the answer choices being random wrong answers. This was different than the information taught by the course instructor, which suggested that the incorrect answer choices be "better wrong answers" in order to get the students thinking. Even though the PSTs were presented with a more thorough explanation of assessments and rationale for assessment decisions, the comments they made after the unit was over suggested to the researchers that the majority of the PSTs continued to rely on what they knew from their apprenticeship of observation. In their discussion, Westrick and Morris (2016) explained that the limited scope of the apprenticeship of observation becomes an issue when the PSTs are faced with these new situations for which they do not have prior experience.

As a result of their apprenticeship of observation, PSTs bring overly simplified beliefs about teaching with them to teacher preparation programs. Over simplification of teaching can be problematic as they prepare for teacher certification. Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) described PSTs' ways of knowing and understanding how to teach as mechanical. These authors have often found that, due to the apprenticeship of observation PSTs at the beginning of teacher preparation programs see learning as a passive transfer of knowledge. Research (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Street 2003) has shown that ideas stemming from the apprenticeship of observation can serve as a barrier that PST educators must consider when working with their students. Carlderhead and Robson (1991) followed 12 PSTs through their first year of a teacher preparation program to explore their ideas about the task of teaching. They conducted a series of interviews with their participants during four different points during the year. Additionally, they elicited evaluative comments from the PSTs after showing them three different videotaped teaching demonstrations. Their findings asserted that the majority of the "images" the PSTs had when describing teaching, both in general and how they imagined they will teach, stemmed from their apprenticeship of observation. During their discussion, the researchers concluded that, due to the limited time of the study, they could not determine whether their college coursework influenced the PSTs' images; however, the majority of the images described by the participants lacked the theoretical knowledge that was part of the educator preparation program. As part of their recommendations, Calderhead and Robinson (1991) urged teacher educators to scrutinize and challenge the images PSTs bring with them. Darling-Hammond (2006) described the apprenticeship of observation as troublesome for PST

educators who seek to expand PSTs' beliefs to include a theoretical knowledge base to call upon while teaching. Under these circumstances, the apprenticeship of observation can be a hindrance for PSTs as opposed to an asset.

The apprenticeship of observation allows PSTs to form a wide range of ideas about teaching. When there is disconnect between prior conceptions and new ideas, PSTs have a hard time abandoning their prior conceptions. Researchers such as Pajares (1992) have conducted studies that indicate beliefs tied directly to the apprenticeship of observation are resistant to change. As PSTs enter into educator preparation programs, they may find that there is disconnect between the ideas formed during their apprenticeship of observation and the new ideas taught to them by their teacher educators. In her study, she conducted in depth interviews with nine PSTs about the content area reading course they were required to take as part of their teacher preparation program. Holt-Reynolds's (1992) study explored the relationship between the personal history-based beliefs, also known as the apprenticeship of observation, and the principles of reading that were taught as part of the course. She found that PSTs believed that because a strategy worked for them in the past, they felt it would apply to others when they stepped into the role of teacher. For instance, both writing-to-learn activities and peer-led discussions were practices advocated by the course instructor as an alternative to traditional teaching formats. Yet, most of the participants told Holt-Reynolds (1992) that they saw themselves using a more traditional teacher-as-teller lecture format. The researcher noted their disequilibrium when PSTs encountered learning theories and teaching strategies in the teacher preparation program that were not consistent with their experiences. The PSTs had resisted

changing their original ideas to match the new information they received during formal training. Additionally, this is seen when the PSTs enter into the classroom. Findings from a study by Tang Yee Fan (1998) provided a different point of view about the influence that a teacher preparation program had on the PSTs' beliefs and ideas about teaching formed as a result of their life histories. This study explored how student teachers learned how to teach in the context of their teacher preparation program while utilizing the life history perspective. Tang Yee Fan (1998) found that even though many of the beliefs PSTs had about teaching came from their observations as students, PSTs were able to revisit their prior beliefs and assess the effectiveness of past teaching strategies using the pedagogically- oriented framework provided by the course instructor. As an example, one of the participants in the study, William, discussed his change in thinking surrounding teacher effectiveness. Prior to his methods course, William described one of his prior teachers that he liked as a student. William explained that the teacher often delivered a smooth lesson that was well organized. After William's involvement in the methods course, he attributed his past teacher's organization to lesson plans. Tang Yee Fan (1998) recognized that the concept of lesson plans was covered during the methods course and she believed that, as a result of the pedagogically based instruction, William amended his prior beliefs to take this new information into account. This finding is important because it gives hope that the information taught in the PSTs' methods courses can be influential to the PSTs' beliefs and ways of thinking.

Research (Borg, 2004; Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Tomlinson, 1999) indicated that there is a trend for PSTs to fall back on what they

remember from their past as students when they become the teacher. Borg (2004) explained that PSTs' “folkways of teaching” often provide a readymade course of action that is safe and familiar (p. 274). This was seen in a study by Ogan-Bekiroglu and Akkoc (2009) in which they explored the relationship between the beliefs that preservice physics teachers formed as a result of their apprenticeship of observation and their practices. The researchers interviewed and observed six preservice teachers for their study. After data were coded, Ogan-Bekiroglu and Akkoc (2009) found that the beliefs and practices of four of their participants were incongruent. Based on interviews conducted after the PSTs’ teaching experiences, the PSTs explained that there were instances in which they were faced with challenges while they were teaching and these challenges caused them to “fall back” onto teaching styles they observed as students. In particular, during her lesson, one of the PSTs realized she did not have a thorough understanding of the science concept that was the focus of her lesson. Prior to teaching, Selma, told researchers that she believed instruction should be constructivist in nature and that lessons should be wholly student centered; however, when she found that she was not confident in the material she was teaching, Selma proceeded with a tightly teacher controlled lesson in which she did not allow the students to ask questions or contribute to discussions. When the researchers questioned the discrepancy between her beliefs and actions, Selma explained that the science lessons she participated in as a student were teacher centered and she felt more confident teaching that way since she was apprehensive. Tomlinson (1999) supported Ogan-Bekiroglu and Akkoc’s findings when he explained that PSTs often choose to mimic the ways in which they were taught when faced with a difficult or uncertain situation. A study conducted by

Goodlad (1984) came to a similar conclusion that PSTs have a difficult time imagining alternatives to the ways in which they experienced because their past observations are deeply engrained (Goodlad, 1984). As a result, the PSTs resort back to what they know from their past. Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann (1983) found that PSTs often face "familiarity pitfalls" in which they tend to refer to personal experiences that were most memorable when designing lessons and interacting with students.

After reading the breadth of the literature about the apprenticeship of observation from its inception starting with Lortie (1975) to present day, I have developed my own understanding about of this theory. First, to me, the apprenticeship of observation explains that PSTs come to their educator preparation programs with readymade understandings and ideas about how to teach. These ideas come from the time they spent observing how to teach starting at a young age through present day. The ideas the PSTs bring with them are unique to their individual observations. Additionally, the apprenticeship of observation supplies the PSTs with underdeveloped, one-sided ideas of what teaching is like. For example, PSTs may come into their educator preparation programs with the idea that spelling tests are given weekly in the elementary school classroom. This idea is based off of observation alone and is devoid of theory. It is also stripped of any national, state, or local requirements that might have been in place during the time they spent observing. Further, it is my understanding that the ideas the PSTs have about teaching that stem from the apprenticeship of observation are deeply rooted and resistant to change. This can cause problems in a few instances. First, because the PSTs think they know how to teach, they may not be aware of all that they do not know. Next, teacher educators can be met with barriers during their pedagogy

focused methods courses when the PSTs ideas do not match the content presented. Despite the negative aspects of the apprenticeship of observation, this phenomenon is unique to the field of education and in order to influence PSTs it must be acknowledged as opposed to overlooked.

2.4 Autobiography as a Research Tool

The act of writing an autobiography allows the author to tell her life story from her point of view in her own words. During his research, Bruner (1986) asserted that humans are storytellers by nature. The act of storytelling is the closest we can come to reliving an experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). It is through storytelling that we make sense of our experiences and the world around us. Goldstein (1997) supported and extended this notion by saying, "the act of storying seems inextricably linked with the act of making meaning, an inevitable part of life in a postmodern world and only becomes problematic when its influence on thinking and perception goes unnoticed or is ignored," (p. 147). For this, the use of autobiography as a research tool allows researchers a means to look at a person's beliefs and the experiences that led to the construction and influence of those beliefs.

2.4.1 The Historical Role of Autobiography in Education Research

When looking at the history of autobiography in education research, one of its earliest uses was Pinar's *currere* (1975), which employed autobiography to explore curriculum reform. It wasn't until the late 1980s that teacher educators started to emphasize autobiography as a tool to aid in PST education (Ayers, 1989). Before this time teacher educators once took for granted the experiences of their students. As a result, teacher education coursework before to the late 1980s was additive in nature.

That is, PST education courses placed little value on prior experiences of the teacher candidates and instead treated them as blank slates when teaching pedagogy and methods. Now there is a trend towards engaging students in autobiographical work as part of their educator preparation programs as research has shown the past influence experiences have on present and future learning (Boyd, Gorham, Justice & Anderson, 2013). A brief glance at education research that uses autobiography over the last three and a half decades reveals this reflective practice was used in a wide variety of ways and various disciplines.

2.4.2 The Purpose of Using Autobiography

The act of constructing an educational autobiography can be insightful for both the PST and the PST educator. Autobiographies of PSTs can help frame their understandings about teaching (Narváez, Ramírez & Vasco, 2013). Narváez, Ramírez, and Vasco (2013) stated, “Autobiographies can be used as a lens to explore and facilitate understanding of teaching practices and to delve into the what, the how, and the why of pedagogical actions,” (p.36). This reflective practice helps the PST uncover the influences past education experiences have had on both their personal and professional lives. Additionally, PST educators gain insight on the experiences their students have had, which can help to explain where their beliefs, understanding, and misconceptions stem from (Ellsworth & Buss 2000). The process of creating an autobiography allows opportunities to reflect and articulate that can lead to professional development and growth (Convery, 1999). Autobiographies have the capability to provide rich information for both PSTs and the instructors of their educator preparation courses.

2.4.3 Autobiography as an Indicator of Beliefs

Beliefs and dispositions that PSTs bring to their preparation programs have a strong influence on how they view their teacher education preparation and what they do in classrooms (O'Brien & Schillaci, 2002). Because narratives have a powerful influence on a person's future, it is important to engage PSTs in autobiographical writing and to examine the autobiographies to understand the potential influence they can have on future beliefs and actions (Le Fevre, 2011). Muñoz, Palacios, and Escobar (2011) believed that when looking at the life experiences of teachers, they were able to access the beliefs, values, and understandings that guided teaching practices. This can be seen in a 2013 study where Narváez, Ramírez, and Vasco used PST autobiographies as a research tool to uncover beliefs and knowledge. One of the key findings from this study confirmed prior speculation that constructing and exploring individual autobiographies can uncover PSTs' beliefs about particular learning strategies.

2.4.4 The Use of Autobiography in Literacy Studies

The use of autobiography as a research tool in education spans many disciplines including math education, science education, multicultural education, literacy education, and general curricula (Barton & Darkside, 2010; Goldblatt, 2012; Guillory, 2012; McCulloch, Marshall, Decuir-Gunby & Caldwell, 2013; Pinar, 1975). Of specific interest for this study is the use of autobiography in literacy studies. Steinman (2007) defined literacy autobiography as "a reflective, first-person account of one's development as a writing being" (p. 563). Her definition emphasized the personal writing journey of the author as part of the construction of the literacy autobiography. Sharkey's (2004) definition of literacy autobiography emphasized the link between personal experiences

and pedagogical beliefs that can be made clearer as the author engages in autobiographical writing of his or her literacy history. By combining these two definitions, we can see that literacy autobiographies help PSTs make meaning on both a personal and professional level. In his 2012 book, Goldblatt shared that the purpose of writing a literacy autobiography allows one to become more aware of how the literacy past affects the written present. Additionally, Frank et al. (2003) explained that autobiographies can enhance teachers' understanding of literacy instruction as they encounter formal explanations of pedagogy and methods during the teacher preparation program.

While autobiography has been seen consistently in education research since the end of the 1980s, studies specific to literacy autobiographies constructed by PSTs are scarce. In 1999, Brown used PSTs' literacy autobiographies at the beginning of her course to help her gain insights into her class members' experiences towards both literacy teaching and literacy learning. Brown found that allowing PSTs to create literacy autobiographies provided a space to actively engage in the meaning-making process that results from reflection involved in creating this type of text. Edwards (2009) conducted another study using literacy autobiographies in which she explored how these texts influenced faculty at her university. Through her investigation, Edwards found that both the process of creating the autobiographies and the analysis of the final products provided great insight to the course instructors about where their students came from and the experiences that were memorable for them. This allowed the course instructors to scaffold the experiences of the PSTs and aid in their transition from student to teacher. While the studies using literacy autobiographies are limited, the

quality of these research studies provides a solid foundation for educational researchers to successfully use this tool in future work.

2.5 Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the history of writing education, which was important to keep in mind during the analysis process. While the PSTs were students in the classroom, they weren't equipped with the pedagogical knowledge to understand why certain experiences occurred. Yet, the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences served as the basis for their ideas about teaching (Lortie, 1975). By knowing the history of writing, it was possible to place students' interpretation of their experiences into a historical context and give voice to why certain experiences occurred. Due to the thousands of hours they spend as students observing teachers and how they teach, the PSTs come to their teacher preparation program with many ideas about teaching and how to teach. Lortie (1975) calls this unique experience the apprenticeship of observation. PSTs become apprenticed into the ways of teaching long before they receive formal training. Additionally, because of their experiences as students, PSTs bring with them many beliefs about themselves as writers and how to teach writing (Chambless & Bass, 1995). Studies show that the beliefs are relatively stable and difficult to change (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010). Research on beliefs is extensive; however, research on the apprenticeship of observation is less widely available (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Joram & Gabriele, 1998; Westrick & Morris, 2015). There have only been a handful of discipline-specific studies (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Cross; 2009; Slekar, 1998). Upon a thorough search of the literature, there are no

studies that specifically look at the apprenticeship of observation of PSTs as it relates to writing instruction. For this, the study will not only add to the body of research on the apprenticeship of education, but more specifically since this study looks at writing the findings will begin a conversation of how the apprenticeship of observation influences this content area.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This was a qualitative interpretive study of preservice teachers' (PSTs) beliefs about themselves as writers and their plans to teach writing (Cresswell & Poth, 2017; Holstein & Gubrium, 2011). The following sections begin with the rationale for using qualitative methods for the study. Next, is an outline the setting of the study and the process employed to recruit and select participants. Additionally, I discuss my role in this study. Then, I explain the data sources and analysis methods. This section concludes with a discussion of trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Research

This study was conducted using qualitative interpretive methods. There were several reasons why qualitative interpretive methodology was chosen over all other options. First, one of the main caveats of qualitative research is that it is designed as a way to understand and explain social phenomena with the least disruption to the participants' environment as possible (Merriam, 1998). This is in contrast to quantitative research that reduces data to numbers and includes the testing of theory through the use of variables (Creswell, 2012). This study was specifically situated within an interpretivist paradigm, which acknowledges that a person's reality is socially constructed and that one way to understand their reality is through an exploration of their perceptions (Glesne, 2011, Merriam, 1998). For this study, two of the data sources called on the PSTs' interpretations of their past experiences. Seeing as the apprenticeship of observation is a social phenomena, I felt qualitative interpretive research was the most appropriate option for this study as my goal was to understand

how people make sense of their experiences (Grbich, 2013). Next, qualitative methods allow the researcher to get a more personalized look at the participants as compared to quantitative methods (Creswell, 2012). For this study, the use of essay and interview data allowed me to retain the words of each of the participants, which captured their individuality. This enabled participants to maintain their voice throughout the data analysis and reporting process. Last, by nature, qualitative research is flexible (Merriam, 1998). Because the apprenticeship of observation as it relates to writing is an area that has not been studied before, qualitative methods allowed me to be responsive to the data. This is in opposition of quantitative research, which follows a rigorous structure that is laid out before the study begins. For these reasons, qualitative research was the best fit for this study.

3.2 Setting and Participants

To understand the selection of participants for this study, it is important to first provide an insight into the structure of the education program at the university. University students typically apply for admission to the teacher education program during their junior year. To gain admission, the student must have a 2.75 overall GPA and must complete an interview with the admissions department in the College of Education. Once students gain full admission into the teacher education program, they spend their final two semesters of their senior year participating in the university's Professional Development School (PDS). This program operates much like an internship. During PDS I, elementary PSTs enroll in a block of four methods courses that focus on science, social studies, math, and English language arts. Additionally, during this semester, the PSTs spend two days a week in an elementary public school

classroom observing their mentor teacher. They also teach lessons with the support of the mentor. Over the course of the semester, the PSTs split their time between two different classrooms in two different grade levels.

During PDS II, elementary PSTs are invited back to their PDS I classrooms for 14 weeks. During this final semester before graduation, the PSTs spend a large portion of their time in total control over their mentor teachers' classrooms. The hope is that the PSTs are allowed the opportunity to assess students, plan lessons, and implement the lessons they plan. After the successful completion of both PDS I and PDS II, PSTs earn their Bachelor's degree. Once they have their Bachelor's degree and pass their state certification exams, they are qualified to teach in Texas public schools.

The recruitment portion of the study took place on the university campus. To begin the process, I first visited one of the language arts methods courses to explain my study. The students in this course were in PDS I. I also visited the capstone course that the PDS II students had to take during their final semester. One of the data sources used in the study was an essay called the Autobiographical Writing Life Map, which the PSTs wrote during their PDS I semester. Only participants who still had a copy of their initial autobiographical writing life map essay were considered to participate in the study, as this piece of writing served as one of the major data sources. The PSTs that no longer had a copy of their essay were thanked for their time and dismissed. It should be noted that for the Autobiographical Writing Life Map assignment participants were asked to write both and essay and construct a visual; however, for the participants in PDS 1, the visuals were not available. Because of this, I made the decision to move forward with the study and only use the essays as a data source.

Next, I gave an adapted version of the Teacher Writer Questionnaire (TWQ) to all of the PSTs who still have a copy of their autobiographical writing life map essay and were also willing to participate in the study (Lenski & Pardieck, 1999) (see Appendix A for questionnaire). In total, 36 potential participants took the questionnaire. This questionnaire was a Likert scale survey that inquired about personal beliefs about writing as well as beliefs about teaching writing. The Likert scale had numbers ranging one through five with the following corresponding statements: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree. Of the 39 survey questions, 26 pertained to personal beliefs about writing while 13 pertained to beliefs about teaching writing (see Appendix B for division of questions). The answers for each survey were tallied to get a broad overview of the beliefs of each participant. Table 3.1 serves as an example of how I tallied the answers of one participant's TQW to get an overview of her beliefs.

Table 3.1

Table Used to Tally Beliefs

	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Beliefs about writing	IIIII III	IIIII IIIII	III	III	II
Beliefs about teaching writing	IIII	IIIII I	II	I	

After the potential participants took the TWQ, I created labels as a way to categorize the participants according to their survey answers. It was my goal to recruit participants with a wide range of beliefs so that I would have a dynamic sample;

therefore, it was important for me to come up with a way to get an initial overview of the beliefs of the participants. This allowed me to choose participants whose beliefs about writing and writing instruction were different as a whole. Results from the survey were examined, and potential participants were given the following labels that corresponded to their answers on the TWQ: (a) mostly agreed with belief statements about writing (b) mostly disagreed with belief statements about writing, (c) beliefs about statements about writing were mostly uncertain (d) mostly agreed with belief statements about teaching writing, (e) mostly disagreed with belief statements about teaching writing, and (f) beliefs about statements about teaching writing were mostly uncertain. For example, when looking at the PSTs' answers to the questions about their beliefs about teaching writing, if they had more answers of "strongly agree" and "agree" than answers of "strongly disagree" and "disagree", or "uncertain" then the PST was given the label of "mostly agreed with belief statements about writing". The participants I chose had a variety of labels to provide greater opportunity for differing beliefs within the study (Chambless & Bass, 1995; Palinkas et al., 2013) (See table 3.2). This was true for participants labeled "mostly positive" and "mostly negative"; however, there were only three cases in which the PSTs' answers were "mostly uncertain".

For this study, 14 female participants were recruited. My initial intent was to recruit 16 participants for this study with eight being PSTs in PDS 1 and eight in PDS 2; however, after the TWQs were analyzed, only six of the PDS 2 students were still willing to participate. Therefore, only 14 participants were recruited in total. I chose this number based on Morrow's (2005) belief that a sample size of 12 is sufficient when collecting qualitative data. He calls this the "magic number" of participants (Morrow, 2005, p. 255).

He goes on to explain that sample size can be a researcher's personal choice and that it is important to look for redundancy in the data. I wanted to have extra data available in case there were instances where I wanted further data for confirmation of a finding. Table 3.2 shows the labels given to each participant based on the TWQ. All participants were given pseudonyms to help maintain anonymity.

Table 3.2

Labels Given to PSTs Based on the TWQ

Name	PDS I or PDS II	Beliefs about their writing abilities based on TWQ questionnaire	Beliefs about teaching writing based on TWQ questionnaire
Adrianna	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Abigail	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Emily	PDS I	Mostly disagreed	Mostly uncertain
Jessica	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly uncertain
McKenzie	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Gwendolyn	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Riley	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Stephanie	PDS I	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Anna	PDS II	Mostly disagreed	Mostly disagreed
Andrea	PDS II	Mostly disagreed	Mostly uncertain
Bailey	PDS II	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Julia	PDS II	Mostly agreed	Mostly disagreed
Jamie	PDS II	Mostly agreed	Mostly agreed
Joy	PDS II	Mostly agreed	Mostly disagreed

Once participants were selected, I sent an email to each participant in order to arrange a one-on-one interview. Participants were allowed to choose the time and place for their one-on-one interview. I met with eight of the participants in the university's student union building, two of the participants at a local coffee shop, and one of the participants at a restaurant near her home. Lastly, three of the interviews were conducted using Skype.

3.3 Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the research tool during all phases of the study including data collection and analysis (Xu & Storr, 2012). Complete objectivity is not possible when conducting qualitative research, but I constantly worked to maintain neutrality throughout the process by being self-aware and reflective (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012). I kept a research journal throughout data collection and analysis in order to bracket out my experiences and to keep research memos. As stated in the introduction, I was one of the course instructors for the English language arts methods course that students are required to take during PDS I. I did not teach at the university while the study was conducted; however, I was a course instructor during the semester prior to this study. During that semester I taught each of the participants in PDS II. The relationship between the participants and myself was a professional instructor/student relationship. To limit my biases as a researcher, I actively bracketed out my preconceived notions and beliefs that I brought to the research in order to pay attention exclusively to the participants' views and interpretation of their experiences (Finlay, 2002). I was cognizant of my beliefs throughout both the data collection and analysis process. The remainder of this section includes a brief overview

of my writing history as well as my beliefs about both writing instruction and myself as a writer.

For as long as I can remember, writing came naturally to me. My first explicit memory of writing instruction was from 4th grade standardized test preparation. I responded well to praise and I knew that this was another opportunity to show off my abilities. I received a high score and as a result got extra recognition during a school awards ceremony. I often wrote stories outside of school both on my own and with my best friend. Writing allowed me to express my feelings and was an escape from my seemingly boring life. I started to enjoy writing less once I got to high school when writing assignments became more challenging for me. That was the first time in my life that I struggled in any subject and academic writing became my nemesis. I did the bare minimum to appease my teachers and was not open to improving my abilities. In college, writing became a chore and every ounce of enjoyment was gone; however, I was somehow able to keep my grades up. Once I became a writing teacher, my excitement slowly grew. I drew excitement from my students as I saw their faces light up with pride when they published their pieces. I wrote along side them and they loved hearing my stories just as much as they loved sharing theirs. The smiles and applause I got from my students after reading my writing aloud encouraged me to look at writing in a different light. Now, I go back and forth between love and hate when I think about writing. Journaling continues to be an emotional outlet while academic writing is still a source of frustration.

As a writer, I believe I am capable of doing what is asked of me. I believe I am better at creative writing as compared to academic writing. Even after 19 years of formal

instruction, I still think I have a lot more to learn and I believe with any discipline learning is never done. When it comes to writing instruction, I believe that there is not a single best way to teach rather a mixture of experiences and teaching styles provides greater opportunity for all students to get what they need. I also believe that praise and setting students up for success is important when it comes to teaching writing. When students feel capable and successful, I think they are more open to feedback that can help them refine their craft.

3.4 Data Sources

This qualitative interpretive study drew information from several data sources. The purpose of using multiple data sources to collect information for a qualitative study is to allow for triangulation (Yin, 2009). In the case of this study, the data were triangulated (Tracy, 2010). Table 3.3 shows how the data were triangulated for each research question. During the data analysis stage of this study, I looked for similarities across data sources in order to build a coherent justification for the findings (Cresswell, 2012). What follows is an explanation of the data sources that were used in this study.

3.4.1 Autobiographical Writing Life Map Essay

As mentioned earlier, while PSTs were in their PDS I semester they were also enrolled in four teaching methods courses. One of the initial assignments in the English language arts methods course was to have the PSTs think back to how they learned to read and write. This assignment was called the Autobiographical Writing Life Map (see Appendix D). The methods instructor leads the students through brainstorming exercises to help them recall their past with learning to read and write. The PSTs were then asked to create an autobiographical narrative of their literacy journey as well as a

visual representation. For participants in PDS 1, the visual representations were not available so I made the decision to use only the essays for all participants The use of this narrative as a data source provided a look into influential past experiences that the participants had when learning to write.

3.4.2 Teacher Writer Questionnaire

As explained in a previous section, the TWQ was used to select participants; however, the survey was also used as a data source for the study. This questionnaire, adapted from Lenski and Pardieck (1999), showed the participants' beliefs towards writing and writing instruction. By examining each participant's completed TWQ, I was able to get an understanding of her beliefs. I was also able to see if her answers were consistent with data from both the autobiographical writing life map essay and the one-on-one interview

3.4.3 Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview

The final source of data came from qualitative semi-structured interviews with each of the participants (see Appendix C for interview protocol). This interview probed participants to explain their beliefs and their interpretation of their experiences more in depth as compared to the other two data sources. A semi-structured interview format was chosen to ensure that all participants were asked the same questions while still leaving room to ask follow-up questions based on participants' answers (Seidman, 2013). The qualitative interview included time for clarifying questions based on the autobiographical writing life map essay and the TWQ. For example, when talking about her beliefs of herself as a writer, one participant wrote about a time she thought she failed a test even though she actually passed. The details included in her

autobiographical writing life map essay about this experience were confusing. Prior to her interview, I added a note to her individual interview protocol to ask her to explain this instance in more detail so that I could get a more complete understanding of what happened from her point of view. Each participant took part in one interview that lasted between 45 minutes and one hour.

Table 3.3

Triangulation of Data Sources

Research Question	Autobiographical Writing Life Map Essay	Teacher Writer Questionnaire	Qualitative Semi-structured Interview
What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers?	X	X	X
What are preservice teachers' beliefs about writing instruction?	X	X	X
How have preservice teachers' interpretations of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers?	X	X	X
How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing?	X	X	X

3.5 Theoretical Framework

Lortie's (1975) apprenticeship of observation was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Lortie used this term to define the time that students spend in classrooms from kindergarten through high school graduation allowing them an in depth look at teaching and the role of teachers. The result of the apprenticeship of observation

is that PSTs come to their teacher preparation program feeling as if they know how to teach when in fact the PSTs only saw a small portion of the teacher's role as part of their observations. While past studies have looked at the apprenticeship of observation in general, this study used the apprenticeship of observation specifically in the context of writing by exploring how this phenomenon influenced the PSTs beliefs about writing and their plans to teach writing. It is important to note that this phenomenon is unique to education as other professions, such as doctors and lawyers, do not get as much observation time prior to their formal coursework.

One major downfall of this phenomenon is that PSTs only get to see a small amount of what the teacher does in comparison to the entire scope of the profession. While the PSTs bring with them a sense of knowing how to teach once they enter their teacher preparation programs, they have only been exposed to a relatively small portion of what the job entails. According to Lortie (1975), the PSTs are imitative in their actions when given the chance to step into the role of the teacher. This becomes problematic in two different instances. First, when PSTs imitate what was taught to them, they fail to consider the information from their pedagogy focused methods courses. This results in education practices remaining stagnant. Secondly, the PSTs do not know how to handle other aspects of the job that they didn't observe as students. For instance, the PSTs tend to struggle with the outside pressures of content standards and standardized assessments, as they haven't had to consider this before during their time spent as observers. For these reasons, it is imperative that the apprenticeship of observation is not ignored. Failure to acknowledge the apprenticeship of observation will likely result in

a continuation of teaching practices that are merely replications of past experiences devoid of current theory.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) conception of thematic analysis. I chose this form of analysis because of its flexible yet structured nature that helped in identifying themes and patterns within the data. Even though all PSTs are different, and all teacher preparation programs are different the goal of this study was to identify broad themes regarding teacher beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing as it related to their apprenticeship of observation. I achieved this by using thematic analysis as the method for analyzing the data.

Data collected for this study were analyzed in two phases. The first phase of analysis took place after the TWQ and Autobiographical Writing Life Maps were collected. During this first phase of analysis I looked for recurrent ideas within and between the participants. Based on findings from the first phase of analysis, clarifying questions, explained above, were added to each participant's semi-structured interview protocol. It was important to complete one phase of analysis prior to the interviews so that I was allowed the opportunity to create additional probing or clarifying questions for each participant when needed. The second phase of analysis took place after the semi-structured interviews were completed once all data were collected. Before the second phase of analysis, I transcribed all interviews to help familiarize myself with the data.

During the second phase of analysis I used the six phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a framework. First, I became familiar with the data through reading and re-reading. The process of transcription also helped in data

familiarization. During this process, I noted initial patterns. Second, I generated initial codes. These codes were a more formal conception of the initial patterns that I noted. Table 3.4 shows the qualitative codebook that was used to code all data. Third, I searched for themes. Themes were a collection of similar codes grouped together to form a larger idea. Figure 3.1 shows how codes were grouped to become themes (see Appendix E). Fourth, I reviewed and refined the themes ensuring that there was enough data to support each theme. Further, I checked to make sure that each theme warranted standing alone, or if themes could be combined. At this step in the process I generated a thematic map (see appendix F). This served as a form of data display to show how the raw data connected to the themes that I generated. Fifth, I defined and named themes. In this step, I used excerpts from the data to form comprehensive definitions of each theme. The last step of this thematic analysis was to produce the report. Although this explanation of the data analysis process is sequential, when dealing with data the process was recursive allowing me to move forwards and backward as needed.

Table 3.4

Qualitative Codebook

Code	Description	Example
Choice/freedom during writing	PST talks about having choices or freedom when writing. This could include choice of topic, genre, or format of finished product.	“In college they definitely are better with the choices. I don't think I ever got told to write about one thing in particular. I remember having a class where we learned about children with disabilities and we had to do this big disability notebook and they let us pick the disability.”
Structure of finished product	PST talks about the parameters imposed upon finished written products. For instance, writing in response to reading must be written in an essay format.	“And then my like biggest writing memory of my entire educational career was in my freshman year of high school. I had a teacher that was a stickler on everything. Grammar and the way we wrote our essays. We had to write in blue or black ink on notebook paper. Every single essay had to be written on the front page only and if we made more than three mistakes on the paper we had to start over on that page.”
Timed writing	PST talks about time limits put on writing pieces.	“I loved my GT and AP English classes and looked forward to timed writings. Although these timed writings were less personal and always based on a specific academic prompt related to a text we had read. I still found these times to be a great creative outlet for me in school compared to other subjects such as math.”
Length of writing	PST talks about page requirements or word requirements put on writing pieces.	“As the years went on I began to dislike writing more and more because I never really enjoyed the prompts and everything had a length requirement. My small handwriting made me feel like I had to do twice as much as my peers because girls typically had that pretty bubble writing that took up so much space and guys’ were so illegible that it just looked like scribbles anyways.”
Positive feedback in regards to writing by teacher	PST talks about positive feedback about her writing given to them from a teacher starting in elementary school through present day. This feedback does not include grades.	“I've actually had a lot of teachers kind of go out of their way to tell me I'm a good writer, um--I think that personal feedback from teachers definitely made more of a difference than just like getting an A.”
Negative feedback in regards to writing by teacher	PST talks about negative feedback about her writing given to them from a teacher when they were students starting in elementary	“I just remember that I wanted to do my own kind of thing in writing. My teachers were like, "No, that doesn't sound good. Let's fix it. Do this to it and this to it." And I was like, "But I wanted to write it that way, but,

Code	Description	Example
	school through present day. This does not include grades.	okay." I felt like what I did was wrong since they made me change it without giving me any options."
Positive feedback in regards to writing by friends/family	PST talks about positive feedback about her writing given to them from friends or family members.	"My parents have always encouraged me in my writing. I would read them something from school and they would tell me it was good and tell me some things I needed to fix. Even if I did a terrible job and I would bring a paper home that I thought was good and I did really bad on they would just say you know some of your ideas were not very thought out and that is why you got that grade but at the same time I know you can do better. I think having a family system that supported me in all of my schoolwork really built up my confidence."
Negative feedback in regards to writing by friends/family	PST talks about negative feedback about her writing given to them from friends or family members.	"I remember conferencing with my peers as a child. I wasn't a big fan of that because I wasn't so good in my writing. To hear critiques from other people saying, "this is not good" didn't feel great. It seemed like first the teacher doesn't like it and you don't like it so I don't like it either."
Writing grades	PST mentions grades attached to writing in the form of letter grades, number grades, or pass/fail situations.	"I didn't really enjoy writing but I am kind of good at it. I've always kind of been good at it. I've gotten As and stuff on all of my writings."
I want to teach like ___ because this worked for me as a writer	When talking about plans to teach writing the PST references experiences from her past in the classroom that helped improve her writing abilities.	"I'll probably insert another poetry unit. I feel like poetry is where I learned about alliteration, oxymorons, and all of the other literary elements. So I would probably teach about that in a fun way. I know kids will love learning about that because I did."
I want to teach like ___ because this didn't work for me as a writer	When talking about plans to teach writing the PST references experiences from her past that didn't help her writing abilities.	"There were points in my academic life where I was told, "You can't do this. You're stupid. Don't do it." I want to make sure that no students ever feel that their writing abilities are not good enough. I want to show my student's that a disability does not hold you back from succeeding. I want to be their proof that you can do anything you put your mind to. I will be the teacher that says, "Keep going. You got this," you know, "You can do this."
I want to teach like ___ because I liked this as a student	When talking about plans to teach writing the PST references experiences from her past that she enjoyed.	"I remember we had a journal that we would keep where we could write about anything and the teacher would write back to us every week. That was very positive for me because I liked getting that feedback from the teacher. It made me feel connected to her and like she really cared about me as a person. It was a really fun activity. I'd love to have the cheaper

Code	Description	Example
		journal that my teacher had with me because I feel like that was an enjoyable way to build relationships with your students on your own time while allowing them freedom to write to you about whatever they wanted. It's not the only way I would teach writing. I would use it as a supplement but you can get to know your students better."
I want to teach like ___ because I didn't like this as a student	When talking about her plans to teach writing the PST references experiences from her past that she didn't enjoy	"Our teacher asked us to share our writing and I never did but she put a bunch of pressure on us wanting us to share what we wrote. I didn't like that. I was not confident in my writing and I also think some of the things she wanted us to share was personal. With my kids I won't pressure them to share because I don't want to make them uncomfortable like I was."
Poetry	PST mentions writing poetry, teaching poetry, or learning about poetry.	"Eighth grade I remember writing a huge poetry unit. That was the first time I did poetry and I started to think more positively about poetry, because we got to make our own stuff and we got to talk about that class and make a book. You took ownership of it, so that was really nice."
Creative writing	PST describes a piece of writing or a writing assignment as being "creative" or mentions using creativity while writing.	"I really loved writing in school. English was on of my favorite subjects because I was fairly good at it and I really enjoyed writing. I didn't enjoy it as much when it started to become essays and incorporating read a book and then prove why you like something. I like the more creative writing and being able to make up a story and do whatever."
Writing for pleasure	PST mentions writing during free time. This writing is not assigned. This could take many formats such as blogging, journaling, notes, letters, emails, and list making.	"I have a group of friends that are very good writers. We have kind of have created a world of our own and we have written our own characters and we write our own stories interacting with each other. Technically it could be called role-playing but it is really a lot more. There is a lot more that goes into it than what the stigma of that subject is. I go there for my creative freedom. I think it is so great to have my own character that I can control."
Content area writing	PST mentions writing in other subject areas such as math, science, social studies, and reading.	"The hardest class I had for writing was my Philosophy class because I didn't understand what I was reading for the first time. I was just like, "What is this language? Don't even know. Is it even English? But it was. So I was like, "What is this?" And so learning how to write that and what he wanted and learning how to write for a Philosophy class was very difficult for me, because it was a new style of writing. But I feel able to do it, but that was pretty hard for me."

Code	Description	Example
Writing in response to reading	PST mentions writing that was done in response to reading. The reading could be chosen by the PST or assigned by a teacher.	“When I reached high school, I finally started to have English teachers that understood the struggle that comes with writing about uninteresting topics. I, of course, still had to do book reports, but my teachers began to give me a choice in which books I wanted to read. Instead of assigning one long and grueling book to the entire class, they gave us choices and allowed us to decide which book we wanted to read and eventually write about. These types of assignments made writing a lot more enjoyable for me because I was interested in what I was writing about and in the end I felt a lot more confident about the papers I wrote upon finishing the book.”
Standardized testing	PST mentions any standardized writing test to include state tests, AP exams, and entrance exams.	“In grade school I don't really remember writing until fourth grade because that was my first writing test. So, that teacher stands out a lot because she was big on writing to prepare for our test.”
Grammar	PST talks about learning about grammar, teaching grammar, her own grammar, or the grammar of others.	“I think that flexible classrooms where the kids have the freedom to embrace their imagination is where kids thrive the most. I’d like to have a classroom where there are not any constraints to what they are supposed to write. How it comes across is another story. Grammar is important. How it reads is important but what they write should be up to them.”
Handwriting	PST talks about handwriting, learning how to write, her own handwriting, or the handwriting of others.	“It was crucial to me that my writing looked perfect. I would erase as many times as necessary, sometimes erasing holes in the paper, until my handwriting was just how I needed it to look. I struggled with this type of obsessive behavior for over a year and a half. When I reached 4th grade, my teacher took note of this bad habit when I started turning writing assignments in late because I needed more time to make them look “perfect.” One day, she finally had a serious and very helpful discussion with me about it that aided me in letting go of the idea that my assignments had to always be perfectly written. From then on out, the physical act of writing was never an issue.”
Confidence	PST talks about confidence or times when she trusted her writing abilities.	“Once I got back in the classroom I started to see C’s go to A’s by the end of my middle school career. I had increased confidence. My writing had improved and my confidence in my ability to write was high.”

Code	Description	Example
High-quality writing instruction	PST talks about high-quality writing instruction or mentions one of the following components of high-quality writing instruction: (a) engaging, (b) differentiated, (c) standards based, (d) data driven, and (e) research based	“Since I struggled with dyslexia I have a huge advantage because like I said, I’m going be an accommodative teacher. My experiences changed my whole viewpoint of just seeing a class as a class. I don’t do that. I see students for their individual strengths and needs. I can push certain kids harder to work above grade level while still working on and below grade level with other kids. For me it is very important to do this so that all of my kids are learning at all times. I won’t just teach to the middle kids. I will accommodate all kids.”
Functional writing	PST talks about functional writing. Ex: emails, text messages, Facebook, resume writing, cover letter writing, writing lists, keeping a planner	“I don’t write a lot outside of school. The writing I do is stuff I have to do like send emails to principals as part of my job hunt.”
“Good”/”bad” writer	PST mentioned being a good writer or a bad writer.	“I am a bad writer. I have never been good at writing. No matter how many writing classes I take, I am still bad at writing."

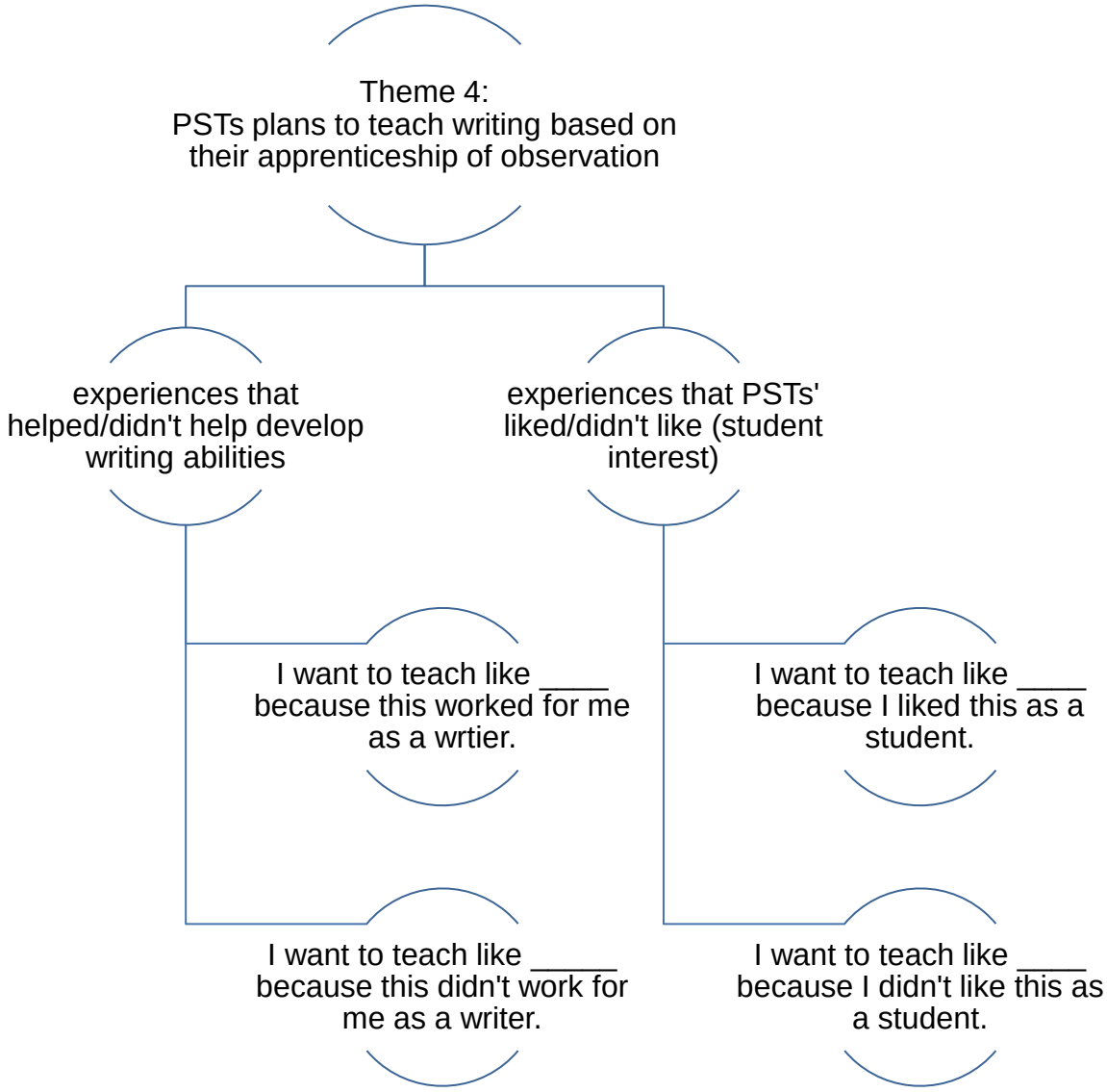


Figure 3.1. Thematic maps that include codes.

This thematic analysis utilized inductive coding, which meant there were no specific words, phrases, or ideas I looked for when analyzing the data; rather, I looked for patterns and recurrent ideas that then became themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). However, since the theoretical framework for this study was Lortie's apprenticeship of observation some codes, especially in regards to the participants' interpretation of their experiences and their plans to teach writing, centered on this theory. As a whole codes stemmed from both theory and data; however, the majority of the codes were

constructed from the data. To generate codes, I made research notes throughout the entire analysis process as these notes helped to capture ideas and possible coding schemes. To be as hands on with the data as possible, I manually coded all data as opposed to using a qualitative data analysis software program.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research is highly subjective because the researcher acts as the primary research tool. I established trustworthiness for this study in several ways. First, this study used multiple data sources for the purpose of triangulation (Yin, 2009). When triangulation of data sources occurs and evidence of each theme was seen in multiple data sources, it was more likely that the theme was not an isolated occurrence. Additionally, I conducted member checks with three of the participants after analysis (Tracy, 2010). I extended the opportunity to participate in the member checking process to all of the PSTs in the study; however, only three decided to participate. During member checks, I sought the input of the participants and elicited feedback regarding the preliminary themes that I constructed. This ensured that my interpretation of the data collected aligned with their intentions (see Appendix G for member check data). I also kept a research journal for bracketing out my beliefs about myself as a writer, writing instruction, and my past experiences as a student in a writing classroom. I also bracketed out my preconceived notions about the participants that I taught during PDS 1 as I had already formed ideas about their beliefs based on our interactions in class. Last, this research report uses “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1994; Stake, 2005) to help build understanding. These descriptions contain extensive excerpts from the data

sources. Thick descriptions allow for the reader to judge the trustworthiness of the findings presented in the final report.

3.8 Limitations

With every study there are limitations. In the case of this study posthoc interviews were a limitation. Posthoc interviews provided the participants' best recollection of their past. Inevitably participants may have had gaps in their memory and flawed recall of past events given the large period from which participants were asked to recall information. These interviews were still valuable to this study as they were the best available means of recapturing old interpretation of the experiences of the participants.

3.9 Summary

To answer the research questions posed by this study, I employed qualitative methods. Specifically, l collected data using a survey, interviews, and student work samples. Once data were collected, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was used to look for and construct broad themes from the data. Care was taken to ensure the analysis was rigorous in nature. I achieved trustworthiness by using triangulation of data sources (Yin, 2009) and member checks (Tracy, 2010). Throughout the research process, I was aware of my personal beliefs about writing and writing instruction, and I actively bracketed out my experiences through the use of research notes (Finlay, 2002).

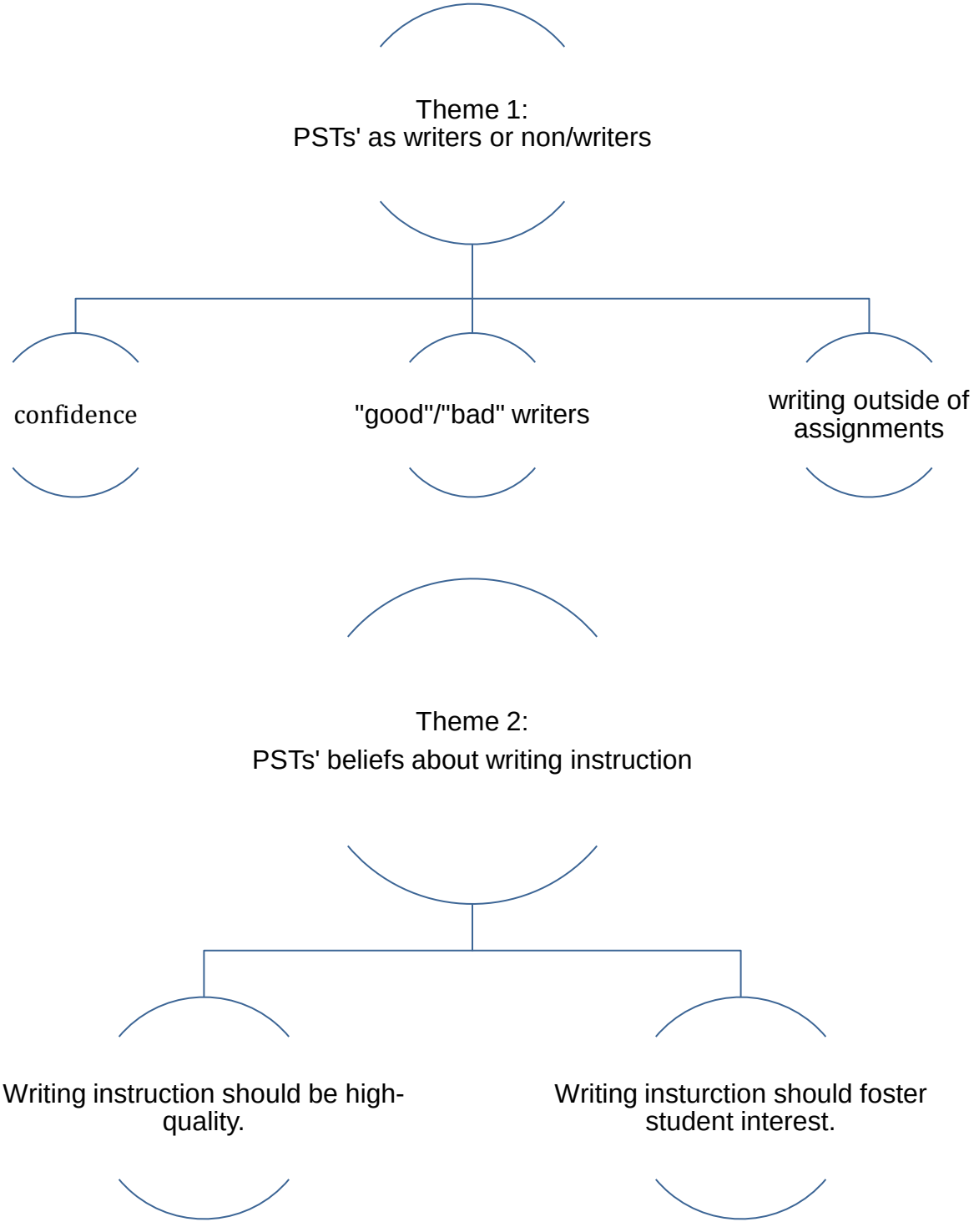
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive inquiry was to explore the beliefs that elementary preservice teachers (PSTs) have about writing and the influence that their apprenticeship of observation has on their beliefs. Further, this study explored how the PSTs plan to teach writing in their classrooms in the future. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers?
2. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about writing instruction?
3. How have preservice teachers' interpretations of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers?
4. How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing?

Chapter 4 presents the findings of this study. The themes that were constructed from the data analysis serve as answers to the four research questions (see Figure 4.1 for a thematic map). For this study, four themes were identified: (a) PSTs as writers and non-writers (b) PSTs believe writing instruction should be high-quality and consider student interest (c) the role feedback played in students' beliefs about themselves as writers, and (d) PSTs plans to teach writing based on their interpretation of their experiences that influenced writing ability and related to student interest. These themes served to answer the research questions that guided this study. The remainder of this chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) research question one, (b) research question two, (c) research question three, (d) research question four, (e) summary of findings, and (f) summary of the chapter.


Theme 1:
PSTs' as writers or non/writers
confidence
"good"/"bad" writers
writing outside of assignments
Theme 2:
PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction
Writing instruction should be high-quality.
Writing insturction should foster student interest.

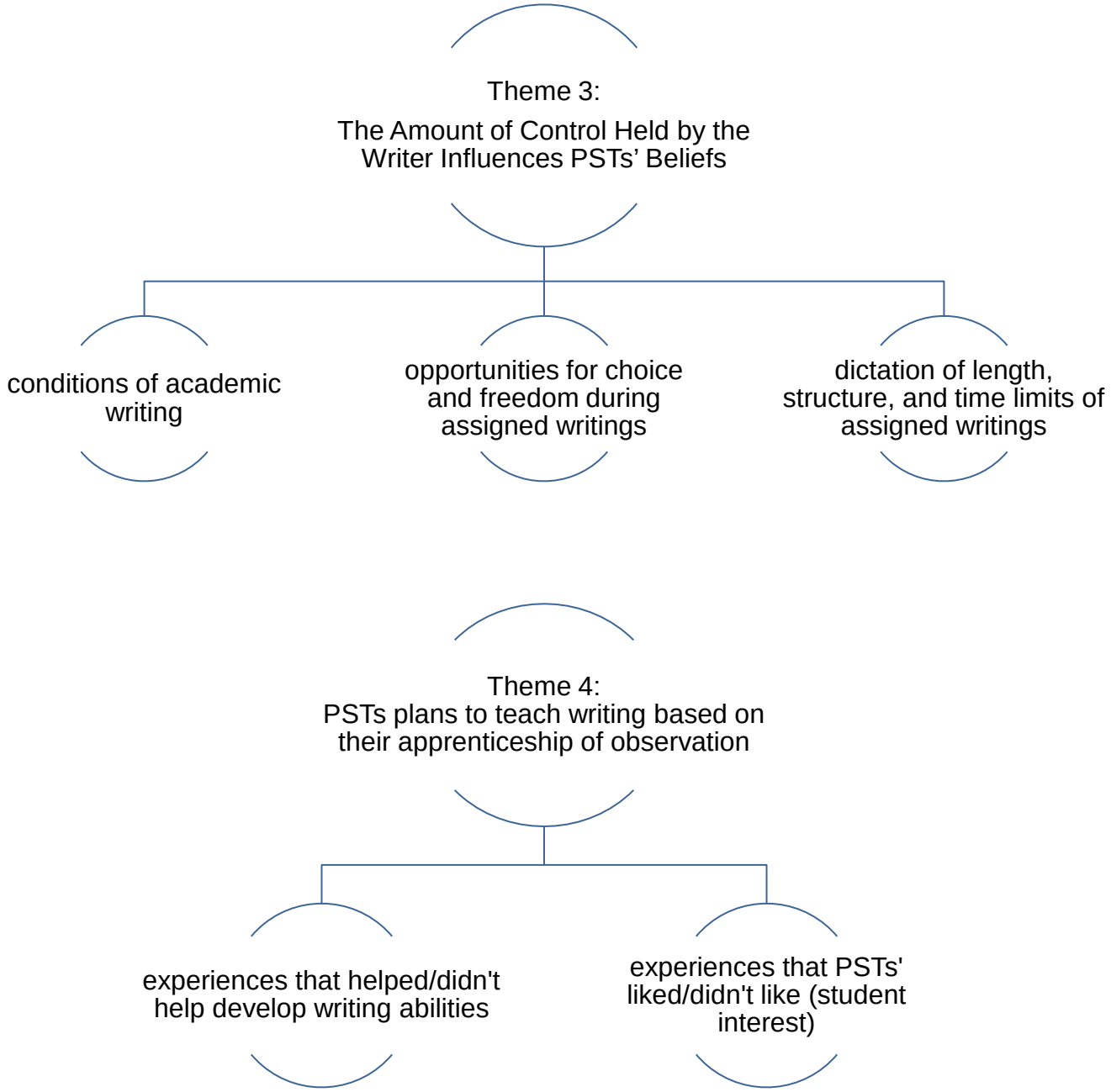


Figure 4.1. Thematic map.

4.1 Research Question 1: PSTs' Beliefs about Themselves as Writers

The intent of the first research question was to understand the beliefs PSTs held about themselves as writers. Findings from this study, which are supported by theme one, suggested that PSTs believed that they were either writers or non-writers. This was true for 13 of the participants. There was only one instance in which a participant, Anna, considered herself neutral and did not fall on either end of the spectrum. These findings mirrored findings from earlier studies conducted by Morgan (2010) and Frank et al. (2003) that sought to uncover PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers. PSTs that mentioned they were good writers, confident in writing, or wrote for pleasure were labeled writers. PSTs that were labeled non-writers said they were bad at writing, lacked confidence in writing, or avoided writing when possible.

Table 4.1

Participants' Beliefs about Themselves as Writers

	Name	Autobiographical Writing Life Map Essay	Interview	Survey*
Writers	Adrianna	X	X	X
	Abigail		X	X
	Stephanie	X	X	X
	Riley	X	X	X
	Jessica		X	X
	Joy	X	X	X
	McKenzie		X	X
	Gwendolyn	X	X	X
	Jamie		X	X
Non-writers	Emily	X	X	X
	Andrea		X	X
	Julia	X	X	
	Bailey	X	X	
Neutral	Anna	X	X	

*The following survey questions addressed the concept of a writer: 3, 11, 12, 15, 21, 23, and 31. The following survey questions addressed the concept of a non-writer: 1, 29, 34, and 37.

Table 4.1 shows the breakdown of how the PSTs viewed themselves as writers. This table also shows the data sources made mention of the factors that contributed to their beliefs. What follows is an explanation of the three factors that influenced the PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers.

4.1.1 Confidence

One commonality between the nine PSTs that considered themselves as writers was that they showed confidence in their writing abilities. For this study, confidence was defined as the PSTs' trust in their writing abilities (Luhmann, 2000). For example, when Adrianna was asked to describe herself as a writer she said:

> I am a confident writer. I am a good writer. I know that I feel proud a lot when I'm done writing. I like that feeling. I'm the type of person that doesn't even need other people to feel proud of me. I love feeling proud of myself. That's enough for me and because of this I know that I am a pretty good writer.

Stephanie described herself as an avid writer while she was in middle school and high school. In her essay, she wrote about the role her writing confidence played in her extra curricular activities:

> In middle school I believed I wanted to be a writer when I grew up. I loved books, and I had novel ideas that I wanted to invent by putting pen to paper. I would attempt to be creative by solving riddles of rhyming lyrics as if they were puzzles, adding imagery wherever possible, and using symbolism to give my writing greater depth. I was a confident writer who wasn't afraid to take risks with my writing. Because I felt secure in my abilities, I even joined a writing club in seventh grade that met after school. It was a real source of writing inspiration.

For the nine participants that were labeled as writers, their confidence helped to reaffirm the beliefs that they were strong writers. This was also seen in Abigail's response to the same interview question in which she replied:

> I'm fairly confident in my writing skills. I enjoy writing. That's practically my most confident area. In fact, I have friends who will ask me to look over something that they have written. They want to make sure that the tone is right and they're not

> overly argumentative or anything. I get asked that a lot or I get asked to help with their writing in general which makes me feel like I am a good writer.

Riley mentioned confidence in her writing abilities as part of her autobiographical writing life map essay. She shared an experience that further strengthened her confidence.

> I vividly remember one of my high school English classes where we wrote research papers, opinion papers, and did grammar exercise after grammar exercise. My teacher's strict boundaries truly helped me to learn about what writing academically meant. After completing her class, I felt extremely confident in my ability to write various types of essays. The work I did in that class made me feel as if I could tackle any type of writing thrown my way.

Confidence was individualized for each participant. Some of them were confident in all areas of writing while others only trusted their abilities when engaging with specific genres.

The four PSTs that considered themselves non-writers had opposite responses. They shared a lack of confidence in their abilities as writers. These participants didn't trust their writing abilities. When Emily reflected on her time spent in her writing methods class during college, she recognized that she made improvement. Unfortunately, this interpretation of her experience did not make her feel confident so this impeded her overall view of herself as a writer. She said:

> That has been my favorite class because I've learned specific ways to help kids and I feel more prepared. I feel like I am more educated in writing skills than I was at the beginning of the semester, but I still don't feel like a writer. I am still not confident when I write no matter what it is.

In two instances, PSTs lacked confidence even when they scored well on writing assignments. In Anna's essay she wrote about a time when she passed her Advanced Placement (AP) exams in high school then found out she wouldn't receive college credit at the university she planned to attend.

> I got a three on all of my AP English exams in high school, which is passing, but my school doesn't except threes so I didn't get any credit. That was a bummer. I passed but I wasn't good enough for them so I didn't feel like a good writer after I learned that I did all of that hard work only for it to not count.

Additionally, Julia felt that the high grades she received on her assignments weren't a true reflection of her abilities. Despite her grades, she still believed she was a bad writer and because of this she lacked confidence.

> I typically did pretty good on all of my writing assignments. I don't know how. I still feel like I am a bad writer. I am definitely not confident when it comes to writing. I struggle with academic writing and most of the times my creative writing pieces aren't that creative.

Unlike the nine PSTs that were considered writers, the four PSTs that considered themselves non-writers felt this label applied regardless of the genre.

4.1.2 Grades and PSTs' Beliefs about Themselves as Writers

Another area that PSTs attributed to their classifications as either writers or non-writers were the grades received on written assignments. It is important to note that the notion of what constituted a low grade versus a high grade was individual for each participant. Some of the participants considered low grades to be scores below passing while others felt that anything below a 90 was low. Six of the nine PSTs that were considered writers spoke about the high grades they received on writing tasks and how they perceived them to be an indication that they had strong writing abilities. For instance, Stephanie talked about how her grades led to her beliefs that she was good at academic writing. She went on to explain that because she hadn't been graded on creative pieces she was hesitant to say she was a good creative writer.

> I've been told and shown through my grades that I'm a good academic writer. I'm not sure if I am good at creative writing. I feel like I'm pretty good but I haven't shared it with anyone to know what they think.

This statement can also be tied back to the idea that confidence is a contributor as to whether or not the PSTs believe they are writers. The grades Stephanie received reaffirmed her belief that she was a writer when it came to academic writing; however, since she hadn't received grades or feedback on her creative writing she was unsure as to whether or not she considered herself a writer when it came to creative pieces even though she personally felt like she was pretty good at it. Another instance that shows the influence of grades was Adrianna's response when she was asked what led her to believe she was a good writer.

> It's grades. I've actually had a lot of teachers go out of their way to tell me I'm a good writer.

Even though she did not enjoy writing, she still believed she was a writer due to the grades and feedback from her teachers and peers.

In contrast, all four of the PSTs who considered themselves non-writers attributed low grades to be one of the factors in establishing this belief. There was an instance that Jessica mentioned in which she turned in a paper that she felt she did well on only to get it back with a much lower score than expected. She explained that this single grade made her feel like she was a bad writer. For PSTs such as Jessica, a grade had the power to undo her writing confidence. Anna shared a unique situation regarding a grade she received on a standardized writing test from fourth grade. She said:

> For a long time I thought I failed the fourth grade writing test. I thought this until ninth grade. And I was like, "Mom, I didn't fail?" She said, "No." I said, "I swore that I failed this whole entire time."

I asked how her view of herself as a writer changed after hearing this news. Her response was:

> It didn't. I still think I am a bad writer because I thought for so long that I failed that test.

This was interesting because even though she had wrong information that single score influenced her belief about herself as a writer even after learning that she passed.

4.1.3 Writing Outside of Required Assignments

The final similarity among PSTs that were classified as writers was that they often wrote outside of their required assignments for school. Four of the PSTs that believed they were writers expressed that they would write more often if they had additional free time. As part of the interview protocol each participant was asked about her writing life outside of school. Jessica, one of the PSTs that considered herself a writer, shared that she had written a book which was published on a website made for teen writers to showcase their writing. She started a second book but hadn't had time to work on it since starting PDS 1 although she was anxious to continue adding to it. Another example was Riley who was a paid writer for a blog. Despite her busy schedule this was a fun outlet for her, which also served as a space to hone her writing abilities. For the PSTs who believed they were non-writers the types of writing they engaged in outside of school was for functional purposes. As an example, Julia wrote lists and used her planner to organize her daily life while Anna was in the process of writing emails and cover letters as part of her job search.

When looking at the influence that the apprenticeship of observation had on the PSTs, it was important to first understand the beliefs that PSTs had about themselves as writers. Each of the 14 PSTs in this study with the exception of one could be described as either a writer or a non-writer based on their beliefs about themselves as writers. Their beliefs were broken up into three categories: (a) confidence, (b) grades,

and (c) writing outside of required assignments. Each category contributed to their classification as writer or non-writer.

4.2 Research Question 2: PSTs' Beliefs About Writing Instruction

The PSTs in this study had varied beliefs about writing instruction; however, there were two beliefs that most all PSTs agreed on: (a) the importance of high-quality writing instruction, and (b) student interest. These beliefs, supported by theme two, are discussed below. One interesting observation to note was the difficulty the PSTs had being specific when articulating their beliefs regarding writing instruction. They talked about them in vague terms, but when pressed for details they referenced concepts taught to them by their professors or mentor teachers using phrases such as our writing teacher said, and my mentor teacher told me. They acknowledged that their time in the classroom would help to further flesh out their thoughts.

4.2.1 High-Quality Writing Instruction

The agreement that high-quality writing instruction is important for students was universal among all 14 participants. For this study, high-quality writing instruction included the following components: (a) engaging, (b) differentiated, (c) standards based, (d) data driven, and (e) research based. The PSTs believed that when teachers delivered high-quality writing instruction they would influence student abilities. McKenzie felt strongly that engagement was an important component of high-quality instruction especially with reluctant writers. She explained that engagement was a key factor in improving their writing abilities.

> Students really need to be engaged when you are teaching them. I think it is especially important when they have to write on a topic that they aren't interested in. I believe they have a hard time learning when they aren't engaged. I could use a mentor text or try to get them to see writing they do in class not as an

> assignment but as a way that they could express their voice. As a teacher it is important to do anything necessary to get them engaged or else they won't really learn.

Another participant highlighted the importance of standards based instruction as a means to ensure that instruction was intentional and appropriate for each grade level. She asserted that standards could act as a road map to ensure students are uniformly exposed to the same skills by grade level.

> When teaching writing, or any subject, each lesson must be tied to the standards so that the teachers can make sure they are covering the same skills and concepts from classroom to classroom even if they teach in different ways. It is also important that instruction is standards based so teachers know to what extent certain skills should be taught. For example, the same concept could be taught in multiple grade levels but the standards tell the teacher how the concept changes over time and how the students should deepen their understanding of certain skills as they get older. (Julia)

The words differentiation, accommodation, and individualization were used interchangeably among the participants in both their autobiographical writing life map essay and their interview. Five of the participants mentioned that they thought it was important for writing instruction to be differentiated for each student. Three of the participants mentioned that they plan to use differentiation when asked how they will teach writing in the future. Because of Bailey's interpretation of her experiences as a student with dyslexia she understood the influence of differentiation firsthand. As she recalled her past, she mentioned that the teachers who saw her as an individual with unique abilities made the most difference in her academic abilities as opposed to the teachers who viewed their classes as a whole without regard to the individual students. She felt strongly that she would use differentiation in every subject to help her students succeed to the best of their abilities.

> Since I struggled with dyslexia, I have a huge advantage because like I said, I'm going be an accommodative teacher. My experiences changed my whole viewpoint of just seeing a class as a class. I don't do that. I see students for their individual strengths and needs. I can push certain kids harder to work above grade level while still working on and below grade level with other kids. For me it is very important to do this so that all of my kids are learning at all times. I won't just teach to the middle kids. I will accommodate all kids.

Each of the participants mentioned different components of high-quality writing instruction when talking about their beliefs. Six of the participants went so far as to explicitly state that they plan to implement these components once they become classroom teachers.

4.2.2 Student Interest

Even though every participant believed in high-quality writing instruction, they believed that this was not the only important factor to consider. Seven out of 14 PSTs also believed that student interest was important to consider. Writing instruction that was thought to be more enjoyable in the students' eyes ranked superior to instances where enjoyment was less. Jamie, one of the PSTs who considered herself a writer, had many positive interpretations of her experiences in elementary school and hoped to replicate those experiences for her future students in hopes of fostering the same love of writing that she has. During her student teaching semester in a fifth grade classroom, she recalled a time that was exciting for her as she watched her students write. She said:

> Student teaching has opened up my eyes to the fact that kids light up when they get to do creative writing stuff like that. They really enjoy it and get into it. In the fifth grade class that I was in they were doing a lot of preparation for testing and writing wasn't one of the tests that they took. They hardly did any writing much less any creative writing. Then, during the last two weeks I was there, they started this project where they had pictures of bridges to pick from and they created a story about where it came from, how it got there, and stuff like that. They loved that! They could have done it all day long. I felt so sad that they

> couldn't do that more. Since they were interested in what they were learning they were completely tuned into learning which was so different to see in comparison to watching the teacher trying to get them prepared for the test they didn't care about taking.

The idea of student interest in writing was shared among three of the PSTs that considered themselves non-writers as well. For example, Emily stated:

> Making writing fun and interesting as well as showing students the good that comes out of it is important in creating hard working students that love to write. It is teachers like Mrs. Vaughn and how she motivated me that I will remember when I am trying to ignite that fire within my future students.

Emily referenced her own interpretation of her experiences and the influence they had on her as a writer. She used her interpretation of her experiences as a student as a springboard for how she wanted to teach her future students. Riley shared the same sentiment when she talked about her current writing life:

> Writing continues to be a large part of my life, and I would love to be a fourth grade writing teacher to have the opportunity to build a foundation for students. Giving back to students in the way that my teachers gave to me would be a wonderful experience. I will forever appreciate my teachers that made writing interesting for me.

While all of the PSTs deemed high-quality writing instruction as important, student interest was also valued and believed to be a necessary component of writing instruction for seven of the participants.

PSTs beliefs about writing instruction were vague. When pressed for details, they referred to concepts taught by their professors; however two beliefs were commonly brought up: (1) The belief that high-quality writing instruction is important for students was universal among all participants where the following components made up high-quality writing instruction: (a) engaging, (b) differentiated, (c) standards based, (d) data driven, and (e) research based. Even though every participant believed in high-quality

writing instruction they believed that this was not the only important factor to consider, (2) The second theme in regards to writing instruction that PSTs thought to be important was the level of student interest. Seven of the PSTs believed that student interest coupled with high-quality writing instruction was the key to student success.

4.3 Research Question 3: PSTs' apprenticeship of observation and the Effects

The previous section talked about PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers and their beliefs about writing instruction. This section dives deeper into the experiences that the PSTs had as students. The experiences below are supported by theme three and focus on the interpretation of experiences that the PSTs think contributed to the construction of their beliefs. What follows is an explanation of the two types of experiences, feedback and control, that were most commonly mentioned among participants.

4.3.1 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences with Feedback

Out of all experiences that the PSTs discussed during their time as students in writing classrooms from kindergarten through their college years, feedback was most commonly brought up. All 14 participants either wrote about an interpretation of their experience involving feedback or talked about an interpretation of their experience where feedback was given during their interview. While analyzing the data, feedback was divided into three different types: (a) grades, (b) assessments, and (c) conferences and other verbal feedback. With each mention of feedback by the participants, their memories were either positive or negative. Table 4.2 shows the types of feedback mentioned by each participant. What follows is an explanation of each type of feedback and experiences recalled by the PSTs that they think contributed to their beliefs.

Table 4.2

Types of Feedback Mentioned by Each Participant

Name	Grades	Assessments	Conferences and Other Verbal Feedback	Data Source
Adrianna	X			A, I, Q*
Abigail	X			I, Q*
Emily	X		X	A, I, Q*
Jessica	X		X	I, Q*
McKenzie	X		X	I, Q*
Gwendolyn	X	X	X	A, I, Q*
Riley	X	X		A, I, Q*
Stephanie	X		X	A, I, Q*
Anna	X	X	X	I, Q*
Andrea	X	X		A, I, Q*
Bailey	X		X	A, I, Q*
Julia	X		X	I, Q*
Jamie	X	X	X	I, Q*
Joy	X	X		A, I, Q*

Note. A= Evidence was found in the autobiographical writing life map essay, I = Evidence was found in the interview, Q= Evidence was found in the Teacher Writer Questionnaire. *The following survey questions addressed the concept of feedback: 2, 5, 11, 13, 16, 19, 28, and 35.

4.3.1.1 Grades

All 14 participants in this study made some mention of grades they received in the past even though they were not prompted to talk directly about them. Since many of the PSTs' memories about grades were from over a decade prior to this study, we can assume that the PSTs felt grades were an important part of learning how to write as they had a lasting influence. The determination of what constituted a good grade vs. a bad grade was individualized among the participants. For some, good grades were only 90s-100 while others stated any grade that was passing was good. The same was true for bad grades. One participant saw a grade that was below a 90 as bad while another only thought of failing grades in this way. Nevertheless, the grades received by the PSTs played a role in what the PSTs believed about themselves as writers.

For instance, Adrianna explained how she was reassured that she was a good writer through her grades.

> As I got older, most of the writing that I did was in school. I always fancied myself as a pretty good writer because I received A's on nearly all of my writing assignments.

Another participant, Bailey, talked at length about her struggles with dyslexia and the effects this disability had on her writing abilities. After she started to receive the support she needed, her writing life started to change. She explained:

> Once I got back in the classroom, I started to see C's go to A's by the end of my middle school career. I had increased confidence. My writing had improved and my confidence in my ability to write was high.

For two of the participants, Joy and Andrea, grades had the power to change the PSTs' beliefs of herself as a writer as seen in the following example by Joy when she was asked why she believed she was a good writer.

> I made good grades. Even if I thought my writing was bad, I always got good grades in writing. It came easy for me and when I made good grades it made me think I was a good writer.

While grades were not the sole factor that influenced PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers, it was one type of experience mentioned by every participant in the study.

4.3.1.2 Assessments

The subject of standardized assessments was brought up by six of the participants. While there were grades attached to these assessments, they warrant their own category as the participants made mention of the lengthy amount of practice and pressure surrounding these events. For one PST, Riley, the AP exams she took in high school filled her with a mix of frustration and excitement since she was a self-proclaimed perfectionist. During her early high school years she expressed her

frustration when she didn’t receive the highest score possible on standardized writing assessment:

> It really bugged me that I didn't get a four on my test, because that was like a gold mine. I just didn't understand why. I was like, "Why it is that?" That really bugged me. I wanted to get it. I wanted to figure out how I could get to that level.

She didn’t feel like the best writer she could be until she received the perfect score. After a year spent as a student with a teacher she described as hard and strict, she talked about the breakthrough that sealed her beliefs about herself as a strong writer:

> I’ll never forget in her class we did a short answer and she gave me the highest score and I thought “Oh my gosh, it’s possible!” Before that even my mom said, "It's totally fine, like you did good, like that's great. That's awesome. You passed and you did really well," but, to me it wasn't good enough, because I wanted to know how to be the best and I finally did it.

Some students thought the stress of the assessments was not helpful to them as writers. Gwendolyn expressed her love of writing throughout her interview and autobiographical writing life map essay. She talked about how she took the situation into her own hands after having an unsatisfactory experience in her AP class. In her interview she explained:

> I got a 2 on my junior AP test and I was like “Ok this is pointless. I am going to go to regular English and pass it with flying colors and be done with it. This is ridiculous. I don’t need this amount of stress.” I just didn’t need it.

She further expounded upon the course change in her autobiographical writing life map.

> I switched to regular English, where my teacher didn’t even read my work because she knew I was likely the smartest student in the class. I sat there brooding like a kindergartener forced to read the word “kangaroo” for the twelfth year in a row, and made a 100 in my senior English class by barely trying. I still wish to this day that there were a class tailored to students like me: higher achieving, but not entirely cut out for AP.

It was apparent that Gwendolyn was confident in her abilities since she mentioned she was high achieving despite her assessment scores. While each PST that mentioned

standardized assessments had a different interpretation of their experience in one way or another, they all tied their experiences back to their beliefs about themselves as writers.

4.3.1.3 Conferences and Other Verbal Feedback

The rest of the feedback mentioned by PSTs came in the form of writing conferences with teachers and peers as well as other verbal feedback directed at the writers. Today writing conferences are common in writer's workshop classrooms; however, given the average age of participants in this study, it can be assumed that the writing workshop model that we know today was just making an appearance in classrooms during their elementary school years. With that being said, four participants talked about the feedback they received during conferences with their teachers and peers and how the feedback influenced their beliefs. For instance, Emily was a reluctant writer beginning in elementary school. She talked about how peer conferences negatively influenced her views of herself as a writer.

> I remember conferencing with my peers as a child. I wasn't a big fan of that because I wasn't so good in my writing. To hear critiques from other people saying, "this is not good" didn't feel great. It seemed like first the teacher doesn't like it and you don't like it so I don't like it either.

Anna also viewed conferences in a negative light. She expressed how it was stifling to her as a writer especially since she was already reluctant in her abilities. When asked about her memories surrounding conferences, she explained:

> I just remember that I wanted to do my own kind of thing in writing. My teachers were like, "No, that doesn't sound good. Let's fix it. Do this to it and this to it." And I was like, "But I wanted to write it that way, but, okay." I felt like what I did was wrong since they made me change it without giving me any options.

Other PSTs saw conferences as a positive opportunity to help them grow as writers. Jamie shared her interpretation of her experiences with a teacher that she felt took the time to work with her to help her grow. With a smile she recalled:

> My favorite teachers were the ones that were just really genuine and really cared about you and not as much about the rubric. They actually wanted to help you and we weren't wasting a day in the computer lab doing nothing. It was more like this is really a time for you to have a conference with me and for me to help you with what you need help with. I felt like those times helped me to become a better writer.

Other verbal feedback brought up by the participants that they thought influenced their beliefs came in the form of comments from family members, teachers, and peers. These instances shared by the PSTs were not formal forms of feedback such as grades and assessments rather they were short or informal interactions. With Bailey's dyslexia struggles she admitted she had low confidence in academics as a whole but she remembered one instance in particular where a teacher's comments made her feel especially inferior as a writer.

> Whenever I got to middle school that was probably the most miserable point in my entire writing life because they just shut me down. There was one teacher that made me feel like I was stupid. She did not want to let me pursue what I-- She didn't even want me to go to the best of my ability. She was just like, "Oh, you have word a written. [claps sarcastically] Good for you." I was so upset.

Jamie felt very supported by her parents when it came to her development as a writer. She shared that her family valued education and family discussions surrounding academics were common.

> My parents have always encouraged me in my writing. I would read them something from school and they would tell me it was good and tell me some things I needed to fix. Even if I did a terrible job and I would bring a paper home that I thought was good and I did really bad on, they would just say you know some of your ideas were not very thought out and that is why you got that grade but at the same time I know you can do better. I think having a family system that supported me in all of my schoolwork really built up my confidence.

Her parents used constructive criticism, which Jamie was able to receive in a positive manner and through those interactions she mentioned her confidence in her abilities increased.

4.3.2 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences with Control Over Writing

The concept of control was brought up by all 14 participants when discussing their writing past and the effects these experiences had on their beliefs. It was understood that certain instructional requirements dictated many of the classroom experiences.

> I understand that the teachers had to meet the standards and we had to have certain prompts like narrative writing form, and persuasive writing. (Adrianna)

However, the PSTs frequently discussed the various forms of control teachers had over their writing and the negative influence it had.

Table 4.3

Types of Control Mentioned by Each Participant

Name	Choice or Freedom	Dictation of Length, Time, or Structure of Assignments	Data Source*
Adrianna	X	X	A, I
Abigail	X	X	A, I
Emily	X	X	A, I
Jessica	X	X	A, I
McKenzie		X	A, I
Gwendolyn	X	X	I
Riley	X	X	A, I
Stephanie	X	X	I
Anna			
Andrea			
Bailey	X	X	A, I
Julia	X	X	A, I
Jamie	X	X	A, I
Joy	X	X	I

Note. A= Evidence was found in the autobiographical writing life map essay, I = Evidence was found in the interview. *None of the questions on the Teacher Writer Questionnaire dealt with the concept of control.

The following section is broken into the two types of control most commonly discussed: (a) dictation of length, structure, and time limits of assigned writings, and (b) opportunities for choice and freedom during assigned writings. Table 4.3 shows the types of control mentioned by each participant. The following sections are about these types of control with examples of how this influenced the students. This section wraps up with examples of the few times where the PSTs preferred controlled writing.

4.3.2.1 Opportunities for Choice and Freedom during Assigned Writings

Choice and freedom were two words brought up numerous times in the PSTs' interviews and autobiographical writing life map essays. They were mainly used in the context of wanting as much choice as possible while writing both academically and for pleasure. Either choice or freedom was mentioned by 11 of the 14 participants. These PSTs explained that they often felt more confident in their work when they were given choices and freedom when writing. For example, Jessica explained that she felt her quality of work improved when she was able to choose the topic and genre to write about.

> I think it started in 11th grade. I started writing my own stories and just being able to have control over what I wrote about I was able to do better on them. I liked being able to pick what I wrote about. When I wasn't given that choice, I didn't feel like my best work was showing. I like to think outside the box. I've got that creative mindset to be able to write in different formats. I like to add all those adjectives and sensory details to my writing.

When the PSTs recalled assignments in middle school and high school, writing in response to reading was mentioned many times. This type of writing wasn't highly regarded by the PSTs since they were often assigned the book they were supposed to write about. Adrianna talked about a shift that happened among some of her high

school English teachers who started to allow choices when writing about literature. This shift not only increased her confidence but she has increased interest in writing as well.

> When I reached high school, I finally started to have English teachers that understood the struggle that comes with writing about uninteresting topics. I, of course, still had to do book reports, but my teachers began to give me a choice in which books I wanted to read. Instead of assigning one long and grueling book to the entire class, they gave us choices and allowed us to decide which book we wanted to read and eventually write about. These types of assignments made writing a lot more enjoyable for me because I was interested in what I was writing about and in the end I felt a lot more confident about the papers I wrote upon finishing the book.

Writings where students got little freedom and choice often resulted in the participants' lack of confidence in their work. A secondary consequence of these types of writings was the lack of student interest.

4.3.2.2 Dictation of Length, Structure, and Time Limits of Assigned Writings

Of the 14 participants, 12 mentioned that when they were given structure to follow with their writing, this tended to result in complaints, as they felt constricted and limited by the structure imposed upon them. In some cases this lead to frustration and boredom. Jamie wrote about her feelings towards structured writings versus writings in which she was given choice.

> Writing in school depended on how much free reign I got. I dreaded the writings about a selected topic by the teacher where you had to prove your answer with evidence from a text blah blah blah. It was boring and formulaic! When a teacher gave me the ability to pick a topic and genre of writing, you better believe I loved every second of it.

McKenzie told the story of how her love of writing increased and decreased over the course of her school career. The times when she disliked writing was when she was told what to write and how to write it; however, she explained that by her senior year of high school she enrolled in an honors English class that helped her to enjoy writing again.

> The freedom to write what I wanted returned and I was able to explore the writing process all over again. This shift in my perspective allowed me to recognize that the option to write had never gone away, but rather my own personal qualms about the unwanted structure tied to assignments removed the joy in writing out of my life. I started to write for leisure instead of requirement and my outlook on writing and the importance in the classroom was renewed.

While structure was accepted as a necessary part of the writing curriculum, 12 of the 14 participants felt that they were not able to show their creativity. This led to unpleasant interpretation of their experiences and ultimately affected their beliefs about their abilities to write academic texts.

The participants did not see all aspects of control as negative. Two participants mentioned that they were comfortable with writing during tightly controlled situations when they were writing for standardized tests and on some college essays. Anna explained that the controlled conditions allowed her to know exactly what was expected of her when writing. She said:

> Once I got to high school we did timed writings for getting ready for our AP exams, which I was pretty okay at. Big picture, academic writing is more my thing. I like knowing to pull my writing from quotes to develop a piece. I am more confident in this type of writing style. It is more straightforward than narrative pieces and I know how to write these pieces.

Andrea shared the same sentiment about her AP exams even though she didn't like writing because of the prompts. Structure made writing safer during high stakes writing assignments. She explained this when she wrote:

> I was in an AP English class and my teacher gave a specific formula to write each of three types of essays that would be on the exam. To me this made writing a breeze because I knew exactly what the teacher was looking for to make a good grade, and since grades was my aim in school I didn't mind writing in her class.

These two participants seemed to find comfort in controlled writing situations if the stakes were high. Due to the subjective nature of writing in general this helped the writer to know exactly what the expectations were in order to achieve a desired score.

4.4 Research Question 4: Influence of PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences on Their Plans to Teach Writing

Table 4.4

Types of Plans PSTs Had based on Their Apprenticeship of Observation

Name	Plans Related to Writing Ability		Plans Related to Student Interest		Data Source
	Interpretation of Their Experiences that Improved Writing Ability	Interpretation of Their Experiences that Didn't Improve Writing Ability	Interpretation of Their Experiences PSTs Liked	Interpretation of Their Experiences PSTs Didn't Like	
Adriana	X			X	A, I, Q*
Abigail	X		X		I, Q*
Emily		X		X	I, Q*
Jessica	X				A, I, Q*
McKenzie		X	X		A, I, Q*
Gwendolyn			X		I, Q*
Riley	X		X		A, I, Q*
Stephanie			X		A, I, Q*
Anna		X			I, Q*
Andrea	X	X	X		A, I, Q*
Bailey		X			I, Q*
Julia			X	X	A, I, Q*
Jamie	X		X	X	A, I, Q*
Joy	X				I, Q*

Note. A= Evidence was found in the autobiographical writing life map essay, I = Evidence was found in the interview, Q= Evidence was found in the Teacher Writer Questionnaire. *The following survey questions addressed the PSTs' plans to teach writing: 6, 14, and 27

The participants spent a minimum of 15 years as students in the classroom before becoming a part of this study. Throughout this time they saw many different classrooms, teachers, and teaching styles. During their internship semesters in the

educator preparation program they began to formulate and fine-tune their ideas about how they planned to teach once they were in the instructor's seat. During their interview, each participant was asked about her plans to teach writing when she stepped into the role of the teacher. Additionally, eight of the 14 participants mentioned their plans as part of their autobiographical writing life map essay. Table 4.4 shows the types of plans that PSTs had based on their apprenticeship of observation. What follows is an explanation of how the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences influenced their plans to teach writing. These plans, which are supported by theme four, were broken down into two sections: (a) PSTs' plans to teach writing that are related to writing ability, and (b) PSTs' plans to teach writing that are related to student interest.

4.4.1 PSTs Plans to Teach Writing, Based on Their Interpretation of Their Experiences as Students, which Related to Writing Ability

During data analysis it was clear that the PSTs' plans to teach writing could be separated into two different types – experiences related to writing ability and experiences related to student interest. Within each type, experiences could further be classified into positive experiences and negative experiences whereas the positive experiences warranted replicating and the negative experiences could be used as a non-example for future instruction. What follows is an explanation of the interpretation of their experiences related to the PSTs writing abilities when they were students and their plans to teach writing based on these two types of experiences.

4.4.1.1 Interpretation of Their Experiences that Improved Writing Ability

Experiences that PSTs had as students in the classroom that were considered positive were those that helped to develop their writing craft. The common theme among seven of the 14 participants was that if a certain experience helped their

development as a writer when they were students, then it would be helpful for their future students. Therefore, they planned to recreate these experiences once they became writing teachers in hopes of the same outcome. Throughout her interview and autobiographical writing life map essay Jessica brought up the importance choice played in her writing journey and her development as a writer. As explained earlier this was a common theme among many of the PSTs. In Jessica's essay she included how choice was helpful to her writing and how she planned to use choice with her students as well. She wrote:

> Overall, my writing skills and background will influence the way I teach my future students writing, because I will more than likely give them a choice of what they would like to write about in their future papers. I will probably be that one teacher that will give them a list of topics, but encourage them to come up with their own ideas. I want to be able to see my students' creativity in their writing, just like I showed throughout my years, too.

Jessica's history was full of positive interpretations of her experiences when she was given choices during her writing along with experiences where she felt she couldn't do her best because she wasn't allowed free choice. Because she felt that she did better when given choices during writing she planned to incorporate this when teaching her future students. Abigail was another supporter of allowing choice with writing since she enjoyed writing more when she was allowed flexibility and freedom. During her interview this carried over into her plans to teach writing with her future students. When asked if she had any concluding thoughts about writing, she responded by saying:

> I think it all boils down to if I get to write about what I want to write about I enjoy it more. Even if I do have to do the book report with my students, I'm going to allow them to incorporate as much of their own creativity and own decision making as possible because I feel like you do your best work when you can be creative.

Another example of writers' positive interpretation of their experiences that influenced

PSTs' plans to teach writing came from Adrianna. She was fond of the poetry units included by her teachers when she was a student. She felt that she was able to get a firm grasp of literary elements through learning about poetry, which she ultimately felt improved her writing as a whole. For this, she planned to include poetry instruction in her classroom in hopes that her students would benefit in the same way.

> I'll probably insert another poetry unit. I feel like poetry is where I learned about alliteration, oxymorons, and all of the other literary elements. So I would probably teach about that in a fun way. I know kids will love learning about that because I did.

Overall, seven of the participants mentioned their plans to replicate writing experiences they had in the classroom because they felt these experiences helped them to grow as writers.

4.4.1.2 Interpretation of Their Experiences that Didn't Improve Writing Abilities

When the PSTs had experiences that they viewed in a more negative light, they didn't always write them off completely; rather, five of the 14 participants used these interpretations of their experiences as non-examples when discussing their plans for how they will teach writing in the future. For some PSTs, such as Andrea, they envisioned including these experiences but with the modifications they wish had been provided to them, which they believed would help writers. When Andrea recalled her writing past, she talked at length about how restricted she felt when given a length requirement on her essays due to the fact that she had small handwriting. She explained that she would often get her point across in shorter number of pages than the teacher assigned leaving her to add text just to take up space. In the same vein, she realized that writers should be able to write longer texts filled with relevant information

that gives the piece substance. During her interview she talked about how she would modify her past experiences for her future students.

> I don’t think length proves that you have a good paper. Content proves you have a good paper. But, in order to be a good paper the writer has to give a good amount of information to get his point across so there needs to be some kind of length to it. When I teach my students I will give them a structure to use when writing. For example, if you have and introduction paragraph and paragraphs with topic sentences and details to support it- you know two or three great paragraphs in the middle and a conclusion, then I think you’ve done it. I will focus on teaching them how to flesh out each of these parts, which will result in a full paper as opposed to just telling them “Write five pages about this topic.”

The notion of confidence was discussed earlier in relation to the PSTs who saw themselves as writers. Bailey struggled with dyslexia and lacked confidence in her academic abilities. Further, she had teachers who were not supportive of her efforts further adding to her lack of confidence. These negative interpretations of her experiences ended up shutting her down as a writer. She was very adamant about how these negative interpretations of her experiences will influence her plans to teach writing.

> There were points in my academic life where I was told, "You can’t do this. You’re stupid. Don’t do it." I want to make sure that no students ever feel that their writing abilities are not good enough. I want to show my student’s that a disability does not hold you back from succeeding. I want to be their proof that you can do anything you put your mind to. I will be the teacher that says, "Keep going. You got this," you know, "You can do this."

On the same topic of confidence, Emily shared her interpretation of her experiences with peer conferences in elementary school and how this activity decreased her confidence in her writing abilities. At the same time she expressed her belief that writing conferences had the power to help if conferences were conducted with the teacher or a trusted friend. Looking forward to writing instruction in her future classroom she talked about how she would handle conferences with her students.

> I think to conference with students is really important too. I would do them one-on-one. I remember having to conference with my peers as a child. I wasn't a big fan of that because I didn't feel like I was good at writing and to hear critiques from other people saying "this is not good" didn't help. I don't see myself doing that in the classroom. I see myself conferencing one-on-one with them because I don't want kids to be embarrassed and take a hit to their confidence and self-esteem like I did.

While the PSTs remembered negative experiences they felt didn't help their development as writers, five of them took these experiences and made changes to them when planning for instruction in their future classrooms.

4.4.2 PSTs' Plans to Teach Writing, Based on Their Interpretation of Their Experiences as Students, That Related to Student Interest

When PSTs talked about their plans to teach writing their ideas also stemmed from the interpretation of their experiences they had in a writing classroom related to student interest. These experiences were divided into two categories, positive and negative, where the positive interpretation of their experiences warranted replicating and the negative interpretation of their experiences would be changed. The following section contains the PSTs' interpretations of their experiences and the plans they attach to them.

4.4.2.1 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences They Liked

PSTs were asked to envision their future classroom and describe how they plan to teach writing. Eight of the fourteen participants tied their plans to experiences that they liked when they were students and hoped to replicate them once they stepped into the role of teacher. Earlier sections included details about the influence of feedback as well as choice during writing. Riley talked about an interpretation of an experience she had with an interactive notebook that combined these two things, which she wanted to replicate in her classroom.

> I remember we had a journal that we would keep where we could write about anything and the teacher would write back to us every week. That was very positive for me because I liked getting that feedback from the teacher. It made me feel connected to her and like she really cared about me as a person. It was a really fun activity. I'd love to have the cheaper journal that my teacher had with me because I feel like that was an enjoyable way to build relationships with your students on your own time while allowing them freedom to write to you about whatever they wanted. It's not the only way I would teach writing. I would use it as a supplement but you can get to know your students better.

During her writing course in the teacher preparation program Stephanie talked about the quick writes that the professor introduced in class. As a student, she liked this low-pressure type of writing. Since this was an enjoyable experience for her, she planned to include the same activity when teaching writing to her future students.

> Just recently being in this writing class has made me realize how much I do like writing because we do little quick writes every class. She'll let us write about whatever we want and I've really enjoyed that. This type of writing just lets my mind go and I write about whatever I want to write. Sometimes it'll be poetic and eloquent, and the other times it'll be like, "This is a crappy week, and I just needed to like get this off my chest." When I get my own students, I want to do quick writes with them because I think they will find it enjoyable, as well.

Andrea explained that although she felt she was good at writing she didn't enjoy it. She had a teacher that wrote every time she asked her students to write. She appreciated seeing her teacher putting in the same amount of work and she felt it was important to do this with her class once she became the teacher.

> I really think that it's important that they see me write, as well. I do remember my fourth-grade teacher. Every time we're writing she was writing too. I felt like, "Okay, if she does this stuff I know I can too." I feel like for the kids that were like me thinking "Uh, I don't want to do this," I feel like if they see me writing with them it'll encourage them or motivate them to go ahead and do it. So, every time I ask my students to write I will write along with them.

The participants who talked about their positive interpretation of their experiences when explaining their plans to teach writing were excited to replicate these activities in their own classrooms. Overall, these experiences made them feel good and made their

writing time more enjoyable; therefore, they imagined the same would be true for their future students.

4.4.2.2 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences They Didn't Like

There were fewer negative interpretations of their experiences shared in the context of the PSTs' plans to teach writing in the future; however, four of the fourteen participants used their negative interpretation of their experiences as non-examples when describing their plans. Jamie felt she was happiest when she was allowed to write creatively. Yet, she recalled much of the writing she was asked to do during grade school had to fit predetermined parameters. For this, she didn't enjoy assigned writing. In her interview, Jamie explained the changes she will make for her future students.

> As a student I always wanted more creative writing in school. I wished that we could do more informal writing for fun to be creative or express ourselves. I loved making poems. That was one of my favorite things that I haven't mentioned but I loved doing poems. Seeing firsthand at school during student teaching there is such a lack of that type of writing. I just feel bad for those kids. I think that there needs to be more of those opportunities for them. I want to intentionally plan creative and expressive writing opportunities for my students. I think they will enjoy it just like I did.

Adrianna recalled being frustrated with the lack of stated expectations from her teachers when writing was assigned. Being a student that was motivated by grades she was disappointed when the grade she was given didn't match the grade she expected to earn. She was confident in her abilities and attributed the discrepancies to not being aware of the teachers' expectations. Adrianna talked about this while explaining her future plans.

> I hated when teachers didn't express their expectations very well. I had times where I got a B on a paper when I should have gotten an A. I would write well and my paper would be organized but my teachers were looking for certain details that I didn't include. I would think, "Well he didn't say that. If I knew that's what he wanted I could have just added it" I knew I was a good writer and I hated

> getting bad grades because I left something out that the teacher wanted me to do even though he didn't tell me. When I get my classroom I will be clear on my expectations about what I want my students to do so they aren't frustrated and disappointed like I was at those times.

Emily was adamant that she wasn't a good writer. On several occasions she expressed that she suffered from a lack of confidence in her writing abilities. She was disheartened when she was pressured to read her writing aloud in front of her classmates. Emily realized that she might have students in her future classrooms that share the same feelings and she didn't want to put them in an uncomfortable position. For this, she planned to be conscious of her students' apprehensions by not forcing them to share if they were uncomfortable.

> Our teacher asked us to share our writing and I never did but she put a bunch of pressure on us wanting us to share what we wrote. I didn't like that. I was not confident in my writing and I also think some of the things she wanted us to share was personal. With my kids I won't pressure them to share because I don't want to make them uncomfortable like I was.

Overall, the plans that were linked to the PSTs past experiences can be summed up by Julia's broad statement that she wrote in her autobiographical writing life map essay:

> When I become a teacher, I hope to leave a positive influence of reading and writing for my students based on my reflections of what I enjoyed at that age and making the things I hated doing more bearable!

Each of the participants referenced at least one of their past experiences when they were asked about how they will teach writing in the future. Only three of the PSTs talked about what they learned during their educator preparation courses in regards to how they will teach writing. Thus, demonstrates that their apprenticeship of observation had a more powerful influence on their plans for how they will teach writing than their university experience.

4.5 Summary of Findings

As explained in the previous section, four themes were identified from the data. These themes served to answer the research questions posed at the inception of this study. When looking at PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers, findings supported Frank et al. (2003) and Morgan's (2010) research where the PSTs saw themselves as either writers or non-writers. Instances where they saw themselves in the middle of this dichotomy were limited to one participant in this study. Their interpretation of their experiences as students played a significant role in the development of these beliefs. Two types of experiences that the PSTs felt were most influential in developing their beliefs were the influence of feedback and the amount of control held by the writer.

Further, when looking at PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction two areas stood out. High-quality instruction was deemed as important by all 14 participants in the study; however, in the eyes of half of the PSTs student enjoyment during writing instruction was also held in high regard. Lessons that were highly enjoyable for students were ranked superior to lessons where students showed less enjoyment. These findings were strongly tied to Lortie's (1975) conception of the apprenticeship of observation as the PSTs linked their past experiences as students to their future plans to teach writing (Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Norman & Spencer, 2005). The findings tied to each research question are explained in the following sections and are supported using quotations from the participants' interview responses and excerpts from their autobiographical writing life maps.

4.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter began with an overview of the themes that were identified through Braun and Clarke's conception of thematic analysis. For this study, four themes were identified: (a) PSTs as writers and non-writers (b) PSTs believe writing instruction should be high-quality and consider student interest (c) the role feedback played in students' beliefs about themselves as writers, and (d) PSTs plans to teach writing based on their interpretation of their experiences that influenced writing ability and related to student interest. These themes served to answer the research questions that guided this study.

Next, were sections that described the findings of the study in relation to the research questions posed. The first research question was: What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers? PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers they fell into one of two categories: (a) writers and (b) non-writers. These beliefs were based on the PSTs' confidence in their abilities coupled with the grades they received on writing assignments. The second research question was: What are PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction, Findings showed that PSTs believed that writing instruction should be both high-quality in nature as well as interesting to students.

The third research question that guided this study was: How have preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers? Due to the apprenticeship of observation there were experiences that influenced the abovementioned beliefs. When looking at the PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers both feedback and control over their writing was the most influential. Feedback included grades received as well as conferences and other

verbal feedback given to them while they were students. Control over their writing consisted of the freedom and choice they were given for their writing assignments along with dictation of the length, structure of the finished product, and time limits placed upon writing.

The final research question that framed the study was: How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing? When looking at plans the PSTs' had about teaching writing upon graduation their plans were based on interpretations of their experiences, both positive and negative, they had as students in the classroom during writing instruction. The PSTs believed that their positive interpretation of their experiences warranted replication with their students as they believed that since the activities were enjoyable and helped develop their writing abilities the same would be true for their future students. The PSTs believed that the negative interpretation of their experiences they brought up when talking about future plans could be manipulated into activities and experiences that would be helpful to students' writing experiences while also being enjoyable to their future students.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative interpretive inquiry was to explore the beliefs that elementary PSTs had about writing and the influence that their apprenticeship of observation had on their beliefs. Further, this study explored how the PSTs plan to teach writing in their classrooms in the future. The theoretical framework that guided this study was Lortie's apprenticeship of observation (1975). For this study, 14 PSTs were chosen to participate. Each participant completed the TWQ and a one-one-one interview as part of the data collection process. Additionally, each participant's Autobiographical Writing Life Map essay was used as a data source for this study. Data analysis was guided by four research questions:

1. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers?
2. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about writing instruction?
3. How have preservice teachers' interpretations of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers?
4. How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing?

Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis in order to identify themes and patterns within the data.

Upon completion of data analysis, four themes were identified, which answered the research questions: (a) the role feedback played in PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers, (b) the amount of control held by the writer and the influence it had on the PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers, (c) PSTs' plans to teach writing, based on their interpretation of their experiences as students, that related to writing ability, and (d) PSTs' plans to teach writing, based on their interpretation of their experiences as students, that

related to student interest. These themes were explained in detail in chapter three. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings with an explanation of how the literature and previous findings relate to the findings from this study. After, is a section about the implications for practice followed by recommendations for future research.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

The previous chapter provided an illustration of the themes constructed after data analysis. These themes were then used to answer the research questions. There were four main findings that came from data analysis:

1. Findings from this study suggest that the majority of PSTs can be labeled as either writers or non-writers.
2. Findings from this study also suggest that the majority of PSTs believe that both high-quality writing instruction and student interest are important.
3. Upon completion of the study, it appears that the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences with feedback and control over writing during their time as students influenced their beliefs of themselves as writers.
4. Findings show PSTs' interpretation of their experiences form the basis for some of the plans they have for teaching writing.

What follows is discussion of the aforementioned findings to include how they link to previous research.

5.1.1 PSTs Can Be Labeled as Writers or Non-Writers

Findings from the current study showed that the participants in this study could be placed on either end of the writer-non-writer dichotomy based on their beliefs. Particularly, data from this study revealed that confidence and grades were seen as

contributors to beliefs that the PSTs had about themselves as writers. Further, PSTs in this study that were labeled as writers often wrote outside of what was required of them while non-writers mainly used writing in a functional manner outside of school. The aforementioned findings are consistent with findings from prior studies. In particular, Morgan (2010) and Frank et al. (2003) asserted that the majority of PSTs see themselves as either writers or non-writers. Findings from their studies show that the PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers stemmed from their experiences they had throughout their time spent as students in a writing classroom. Specifically, Morgan (2010) asserted that the positive or negative interactions, writing grades, and writing experiences influenced the PSTs' beliefs. Similarly, participants in the current study also cited past interactions with teachers and grades they received on their writing when discussing what they thought contributed to their beliefs. For Frank et al. (2003), confidence, stemming from past experiences with writing, was a major contributor to the PSTs' vision of themselves as a writer or non-writer. They found that PSTs who were labeled as non-writers shied away from writing when not required. Like the study conducted by Frank et al., over half of the PSTs in the current study talked about their confidence in their abilities when asked to describe themselves as writers.

Daisey (2009) conducted a study with secondary PSTs to explore their prior experiences with writing along with their beliefs about themselves as writers. Findings from this study also divided the PSTs into the categories of writer or non-writer. Further, Daisey asserted that the PSTs' past experiences with writing were the number one contributor to their beliefs about themselves as writers. One difference between the findings of Daisey's study and findings of the present study centered on the participants'

past writing teachers. Daisey explained that PSTs who considered themselves writers recalled having writing teachers that loved writing. Contrastingly, the PSTs in her study who considered themselves non-writers often shared that they didn't think their past teachers enjoyed writing. Like Daisey (2009), Raspberry (2001) recruited all secondary teacher candidates for his study. He, too, found that that majority of his participants could be viewed from either a writer or non-writer lens; however, he was surprised that these labels could not be predicted based on their content area specialties. These two studies show that the writer/non-writer designation, which is based on the PSTs' beliefs, is not limited to elementary PSTs. Researchers who have studied secondary PSTs have reported similar findings.

Out of the 14 participants in this study, 13 were given the label of either writer or non-writer based on their confidence, grades, and writing done outside of school. While the finding that PSTs' can be labeled as writers or non-writers isn't new, this study supports previous findings that were similar. This shows that there are few PSTs whose beliefs put them in the middle between being a writer and non-writer. Rather, the PSTs have strong conceptions about themselves when it comes to writing that are either positive or negative.

5.1.2 PSTs Beliefs about High-Quality Instruction and Student Interest

It is imperative to understand the PSTs' beliefs regarding writing instruction as these beliefs serve as a veil from which they look through when planning and teaching writing (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). Findings from the present study suggest that the majority of PSTs believe that high-quality writing instruction and student interest during instruction are important. This is similar to findings from Hall (2016) in which she

showed that PSTs believed that high-quality writing instruction was important for students. Further, Hall found that the PSTs believed that student interest during writing instruction lead to sustained attention that, in turn, would positively influence writing abilities. Just like Hall's study, nearly all of the participants in this study believed that writing instruction should be high-quality and foster student interest in order to influence their students' writing abilities.

Findings from a study by Norman and Spencer (2005) are contradictory. The PSTs in their study believed that writing instruction does not have a positive influence on writing development. They attributed this finding to the fact that a large number of participants in their study viewed writing abilities as fixed regardless of the quality of instruction. The PSTs believed that writers were born with their abilities, which wouldn't be significantly changed with formal instruction. While 13 of the participants in the present study believed that writing instruction can be influential to students' writing abilities, there was one participant who believed that her own writing abilities were fixed regardless of the amount and quality of writing instruction she received. Interestingly, she only believed this about herself. She did not believe the writing abilities of others were fixed.

When looking at PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction, Seban (2008) offered a different way of viewing their beliefs. He found that PSTs' beliefs could be classified as being wholly oriented in either the process approach or the product approach of writing. The beliefs of the PSTs who he saw as being process approach oriented fell closely in line with the beliefs of the PSTs in the present study who were seen as writers; whereas PSTs who he saw as being product approach oriented had beliefs similar to the

participants who were seen as non-writers. Since PSTs typically have trouble fully expressing their beliefs (Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992), this way of classifying the PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction resulted in a more rounded explanation of their beliefs as compared to the present study.

5.1.3 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences with Feedback and Control Influence Writing Beliefs

Upon completion of this study, just like in past studies (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011; Lenski & Pardiek, 1999), it appears that the PSTs' past interpretation of their experiences with feedback and the control they had over writing during their time as students influenced their beliefs of themselves as writers. When talking about feedback, participants in the current study focused on experiences that fell into the following categories: (a) grades, (b) assessments, and (c) conferences and other feedback. A study by Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) found that PSTs who received an abundance of negative feedback with writing that was not balanced out by positive feedback, suffered from lowered self-confidence overall and their beliefs about their writing abilities were negative. Further, participants in their study reported that these experiences had a detrimental influence on their writing confidence. In a study by Lenski and Pardiek (1999), they asserted that when a student's work had been heavily criticized in the past, the student might avoid writing altogether when presented with writing tasks where they sense their work will be subject to evaluation in the future. Findings from both of these studies support the beliefs expressed by the participants in the current study. The majority of participants who recalled mostly negative feedback had lower self-confidence and avoided writing unless it was required. Consequently, these were the same participants who were labeled as non-writers. On the other hand,

Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) talked about their participants who had experiences with teachers that valued the students' writing by taking the time to deliver praise and positive feedback. These participants had a more positive view of themselves as writers as compared to the participants whose experiences revolved around mostly negative feedback. The same was true for participants in the present study. PSTs who recalled teachers that delivered mostly positive feedback tended to have positive beliefs about themselves as writers. Overall, these were the same participants that were labeled as writers.

Another common theme in this study that influenced PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers was their interpretation of their experiences with the control they had over writing. Specifically, they mentioned control in the following three ways: (a) dictation of length, structure, and time limits of assigned writings, (b) conditions of academic writing, and (c) opportunities for choice and freedom during assigned writings. These findings support findings from the aforementioned study by Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011). Based on their past experiences, the PSTs in their study believed that teachers should create teaching opportunities that allow for creativity in the writing process. This stemmed from the PSTs' past experiences in which they were allowed to write creatively and choose their writing topics. In the current study, participants recalled writing experiences that were both tightly controlled by teachers and experiences where they were given freedom. In general, the PSTs gravitated towards writings in which they were given control resulting in a more positive interpretation of their experience and an increase in their positive beliefs about themselves as writers. The majority of the participants reported negative interpretation of their experiences when engaging in

writing that was mostly teacher controlled. They reported lowered confidence in their abilities when they weren't allowed freedom or choice while writing.

5.1.4 PSTs' Interpretation of Their Experiences Form the Basis for Some Plans for Teaching

As stated at the inception of this study, one of the goals of this study was to provide specific findings on the apprenticeship of observation as it relates to writing since this is currently an area of research that is non-existent. Upon completion of the study, there is evidence that PSTs' interpretation of their experiences as students in a writing classroom form the basis for some of the plans they have for teaching writing. This is consistent with existing research on the apprenticeship of observation that is not content specific (Borg, 2004; Boyd, Gorham, Justice & Anderson, 2014; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Research by Smagorinsky and Barnes (2014) that looks at the apprenticeship of observation in general, showed that PSTs bring preconceived notions about teaching with them when they enter an educator preparation program. Their findings showed that these conservative preconceptions, based on the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences, often form the basis for their plans they have for their future students. Additionally, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) assert that the PSTs' ways of knowing how to teach are simplistic and mechanical. Findings from this content specific study of writing and the apprenticeship of observation support the findings from general studies as the PSTs' plans for how they will teach writing were mostly based on a collection of experiences that they liked or that helped their writing abilities. As with the participants in the Smagorinsky and Barnes (2014) study and the Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998)

study, the PSTs' plans for how they will teach writing were conservative, simplistic, and mechanical.

Another commonality between the PSTs in this study was that their plans were based on interpretation of their experiences that worked well for them in the past while they were students. The PSTs believed that because a strategy or activity helped them in the past the same would be true for their future students. Holt-Reynolds (1992) and Borg (2004) presented the same finding when explaining that the PSTs often fell back on what they remembered from their pasts as students when teaching or making plans to teach. The present study shows that this tendency, resulting from the apprenticeship of observation, extends beyond general research and into to writing instruction.

5.1.5 Writing and the Apprenticeship of Observation

This was the first known study to look at the apprenticeship of observation as it relates to writing. The majority of the prior studies that explored this phenomenon (Boyd, Gorham, Justice & Anderson, 2014; Hall, 2005; Smagorinsky & Barnes 2014) have contributed findings about the apprenticeship of observation that are not content specific. Upon completion of this study, I found that the PSTs' apprenticeship of observation and plans they have for teaching writing are strongly tied to their past interpretation of their experiences as students in the classroom. All participants in this study cited plans for future teaching interactions that were based on activities and experiences they observed while they were students in the classroom. This is similar to the non-content specific findings on the same phenomenon. For example, Smagorinsky and Barnes (2014) found that the PSTs in their study were able to verbalize plans for teaching reading in their future classrooms. Like the current study, their findings showed

that the majority of these plans were based on observations from their apprenticeship of observation.

Based on their apprenticeship of observation, the PSTs' plans were either recreations of activities and experiences they observed in the past or they planned to amended what was previously observed. Borg et al. (2014) also found that the participants in their study used their past observations during their apprenticeship of observation as both examples and non-examples when discussing their plans for future instruction. Yet, Borg et al. found that many participants that discussed non-examples did so in the context of how their past interpretation of their experiences did not fit with what they learned in their current coursework. This is different from findings in the current study. The plans of some of the participants in the current study were amended experiences they observed as part of their apprenticeship of observation. These participants planned to make changes to future teaching interactions for two reasons. First, when past writing experiences did not help their writing development, they planned to make changes moving forward. Also, when the PSTs did not like one of their past experiences they planned on reworking the experience in the future. Only one of the participants in the current study mentioned current coursework as a cause for her future plans to teach writing.

5.2 Implications for Practice

Findings from this study showed that PSTs have strong beliefs about themselves as writers as well as beliefs about writing instruction. These beliefs are formed, in part, by the interpretation of the experiences the PSTs had while students in the classroom starting in kindergarten through the time they entered their teacher preparation program.

Further, findings show that as a result of the apprenticeship of observation, the majority of plans the PSTs have for teaching writing come from the time they spent as students being apprenticed into the ways of teaching. Knowing this, there are several implications for teacher educators, PSTs, professional development, school administration, mentors, and teachers.

5.2.1 Uncovering Beliefs as a Springboard for Instruction

Findings from the current study show that PSTs come to their educator preparation program with deep-seated beliefs about themselves as writers as well as beliefs about writing instruction. These beliefs were formed as a result of their time spent as students in the classroom coupled with their apprenticeship of observation (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992). Based on past belief research (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010), it can be assumed that these beliefs are difficult to change even if the PSTs are confronted with conflicting information in their methods courses. For this, it is imperative for teacher educators to use the beliefs of their PSTs as a springboard for experiences in their pedagogy focused methods courses since beliefs have the potential to interfere if current pedagogy included in a methods course contradicts the beliefs held by the learners. As part of a two-step process, teacher educators should begin by taking time at the beginning of their courses to uncover and explore their PSTs' beliefs. Then, the teacher educators must tailor their instruction to take these beliefs into account. When looking at the PSTs' beliefs about themselves as writers, findings from this study show that the PSTs believe they are either writers or non-writers. Once the teacher educator knows where their PSTs place themselves on the writer/non-writer dichotomy, the teacher

educator should show the PSTs how their beliefs might play a role when teaching their future students. For example, PSTs that believe they are non-writers tend to provide fewer writing opportunities for their students as compared to PSTs that believe they are writers (Norman & Spencer, 2005). For this, teacher educators are charged with showing their non-writer PSTs how to teach writing despite the fact that these PSTs might typically shy away from writing themselves (Norman & Spencer, 2005). By taking the PSTs' beliefs into account while teaching, the teacher educators will individualize their instruction to meet the needs of their students.

Additionally, findings from the current study show that the majority of PSTs believe that high-quality writing instruction and student interest during instruction are important. These findings are supported by past research (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011); however, Norman and Spencer (2005) presented contradictory findings when they asserted that PSTs believe that writing abilities of students are fixed. The conflicting findings regarding the beliefs that PSTs have about writing instruction show that PSTs come to their educator preparation programs with varying beliefs. For this, teacher educators cannot make assumptions that all PSTs think instruction has the potential to influence students' abilities. As shown by Norman and Spencer (2005) and as voiced by one of the participants in this study, there are some PSTs that think writing instruction cannot cause an improvement in abilities. Just like with PSTs beliefs about themselves as writers, teacher educators should facilitate discussions to learn about the beliefs their students hold regarding writing instruction as these beliefs form the basis for many of the decisions PSTs make. Once teacher educators get a sense of the beliefs the PSTs have about writing instruction, they should keep this knowledge at the

forefront when customizing the learning experiences to fit the unique beliefs of the PSTs. If teacher educators have PSTs that believe that writing abilities cannot be changed, they must first confront this misconception before moving forward with showing them how to teach writing.

5.2.2 Helping PSTs Name and Understand Their Beliefs

As explained in chapter 4, the beliefs of the PSTs in the current study were heavily tied the their past interpretation of their experiences. Findings suggested that past interpretation of their experiences surrounding the PSTs' control over writing and feedback they received about their writing influenced their views of themselves as writers. Darling-Hammond (2006) pointed out that one of the goals of the teacher preparation program is to develop educational professionals who are aware of their background experiences and how those interpretations of their experiences influence their current ways of thinking. For this, it is imperative for teacher educators to engage teacher candidates in autobiographical work in order to bring these influential experiences to light.

One way that teacher educators can include autobiographical experiences is by having the PSTs construct an essay similar to the writing life map essay that was used as one of the data sources for this study. This assignment asks the PSTs to write about their personal writing history, including memorable experiences and teachers, and their beliefs about writing. Once teacher educators are made aware of the PSTs' interpretations of their experiences and beliefs, they should then help the teacher candidates to understand their beliefs more fully by showing them the role that their past interpretation of their experiences played in the formation of these beliefs. Teacher

educators should then take it a step further and situate the PSTs' beliefs in current research, if applicable. This is important as Kagan (1992) explained that one difficulty encountered by teacher educators and the PSTs they teach is that they may not be fully aware of their beliefs nor may they have the language to clearly explain them. While the teacher educators will benefit from this knowledge about their students, the PSTs will also benefit, as they will better understand the origin of their beliefs. When teacher educators fail to acknowledge the beliefs and experiences the PSTs bring with them, they will be met with barriers, as their beliefs will continue to serve as a veil from which the PSTs look through while in their methods courses. As Ayers (1989) pointed out, PSTs are not blank slates; therefore, teacher educators should not treat them as such.

5.2.3 Challenging the Apprenticeship of Observation

Upon completion of the present study, findings show that PSTs' interpretation of their experiences as students in a writing classroom form the basis for some of the plans they have for how they will teach writing. These findings are similar to non-content specific findings on the apprenticeship of observation. For this, the plans that PSTs have about teaching writing may be mechanical (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998) or conservative (Feiman-Nemser & Buchannan, 1983) in nature. Knowing this, teacher educators should take steps to learn about the plans the PSTs have about teaching writing that are based on past interpretation of their experiences. They should then use this knowledge about the apprenticeship of observation to push the PSTs beyond a simple recreation of the past experiences they had as students. As an example, teacher educators can facilitate discussions in which the PSTs provide justification for their plans by linking their ideas to writing theory. This will challenge the PSTs' thinking by

allowing them to consider if the experiences or activities that they plan to include are appropriate in regards to the best practices and theory they learned in their methods courses. When teacher educators take these steps, they will play a role in disrupting problematic areas of the apprenticeship of observation, which have been shown to further the perpetuation of conservative practices in education. Failure to challenge the apprenticeship of observation will continue the cycle of PSTs recreating experiences with their students without consideration of what was taught in their methods courses.

5.2.4 Implications for Teacher Education and Teacher Educators

Findings from the current study show that PSTs come to their educator preparation program with deep-seated beliefs about themselves as writers as well as beliefs about writing instruction. These beliefs were formed as a result of their time spent as students in the classroom coupled with their apprenticeship of observation (Nisbett & Ross, 1980; Pajares, 1992). Based on past belief research (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010), it can be assumed that these beliefs are difficult to change even if the PSTs are confronted with conflicting information in their methods courses. Further, this study showed that, while discussing plans for teaching writing, PSTs were more likely to reference past experiences over theoretically based examples from their methods courses. In order for methods courses to have an influence on the PSTs' beliefs and plans for teaching, teacher educators to be intentional in their actions in order to disrupt the PSTs' thinking that stems from their apprenticeship of observation. It is not enough to "cover content" in the writing methods courses (Ironside, 2004); rather, teacher educators must be responsive to the pasts that PSTs bring with them including ideas formed as a result of their apprenticeship of

observation. One way to begin the process of the disruption of PSTs' thinking is for teacher educators to be more explicit with their instruction during their writing methods courses. Instruction needs to move beyond explanations and demonstrations of procedures for PSTs to replicate. To add to this instruction, PSTs need opportunities to see the theory behind the practices teacher educators hope PSTs use in their future writing classrooms. The PSTs need to be shown why these new ways of teaching are considered best practices. Teacher educators cannot assume that PSTs will soak in the new information in the writing methods class and abandon their prior beliefs. Past research (Calderhead & Robbins, 1991) shows that even when PSTs are provided with new information, the PSTs rely on the images they have created based on the learning experiences they observed as part of their apprenticeship of observation. Since PSTs are not privy to everything teachers deal with outside of the classroom such as lesson plans, state and national standards, assessments, and campus politics, teacher educators need to help complete the scenario for the PSTs. Teacher educators need to bring up the outside factors that serve to influence writing instruction. This will help to give the PSTs context in which to situate the new pedagogically based practices that teacher educators explicitly teach.

Before beliefs can be abandoned or amended, they must first be defined. In order for teacher educators to disrupt the PSTs' thinking, both the PSTs and teacher educators must know and understand the beliefs that PSTs hold. It is important for PSTs to be able to state their beliefs about themselves as writers as well as their beliefs about writing instruction. Additionally, it is helpful to identify the experiences that the PSTs' perceive as influential for these beliefs. "Why" is a critical question to use when

questioning PSTs beliefs. As teacher educators present new information about writing instruction and writing theory, they need to lead PSTs through thinking process to determine whether the new information aligns with or contradicts prior beliefs. If there is a contradiction, teacher educators can provide a space for PSTs to work out their thoughts surrounding their past interpretation of their experiences as compared to the new information. Then, teacher educators can work with PSTs to determine if they will retain their prior beliefs, amend prior beliefs, or abandon prior beliefs based on the explicit instruction they receive in their writing methods course. This type of deliberate thinking and reflection should be modeled. As stated earlier, PSTs' beliefs are deeply engrained (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010); therefore, teacher educators cannot assume that the PSTs will abandon their prior beliefs and construct new ones based on what they are told is best practices. Instead, teacher educators can provide experiences where they make disrupted thinking visible for the PSTs. Through the help of the teacher educators, PSTs can negotiate what they will believe moving forward based on their interpretation of their experiences in their writing methods courses. In order to disrupt the PSTs' thinking surrounding their apprenticeship of observation, teacher educators must go a step further and shows PSTs how their beliefs can be amended based on their new information through the process of modeling and engaging them in this critical thinking process.

As PSTs progress through their educator preparation program, they will have the opportunity to observe various teaching situations. These teaching experiences may or may not be based on best practices. Teacher educators can work with PSTs to have them mentally question the actions of the teachers they observe. It is important for

PSTs to create the habit of thinking through “why” as a way to justify reasons for the inclusion of various experiences in order for them to take an active role in the refinement of their beliefs. PSTs can ask themselves why their mentor teachers are teaching a certain way, why certain lessons are included in the curriculum, and why certain activities are being presented. The PSTs can then ask themselves how the observed experience relate to their beliefs. Like with new information included in the writing methods course, teacher educators cannot expect PSTs to adopt this type of reflective thinking without explicitly modeling and providing guidance and support while PSTs try this practice out on their own. Failure to engage PSTs in reflective teaching as they observe various forms of teaching might result in PSTs that continue to replicate teaching practices that are conservative in nature or that aren’t best practice based on current writing theory.

Findings from the current study show that many of the plans PSTs have for teaching writing are based on their apprenticeship of observation. Based on this knowledge, it is imperative for teacher educators to engage the PSTs in reflexive teaching in order to evaluate the applicability of their plans for teaching writing based on what they know and believe from their methods course. Woolgar (1991) defined reflexive thinking as reflecting on ones own thoughts in order to provide an impartial analysis. It was shown during the PSTs’ interviews and autobiographical writing life map essay that PSTs have thoughts surrounding the experiences that were memorable to them. Teacher educators can engage PSTs in dialogue about why the experiences were memorable to provide PSTs space to reflect on their interpretation of their experiences. Then, teacher educators can help the PSTs situate their experiences with

the PSTs' current beliefs about best practices in writing instruction. From there, the PSTs can make the decision about whether or not their plans warrant carrying out. Based on responses from PTSs' interview questions, it can be assumed that this type of thinking does not come naturally to the PSTs. For this, teacher educators need to lead the PSTs' through cycles of reflexive thinking by modeling and providing opportunities for practice.

The final way teacher educators can work towards disrupting the PSTs' thinking surrounding their apprenticeship of observation is by providing space for PSTs to practice teaching using their amended beliefs. PSTs come to their educator preparation courses with images of how to teach based on their prior observations during their apprenticeship of observation (Calderhead & Robinson, 1991). Past research (Borg, 2004) shows that these images serve as readymade plans of action for PSTs to access when they step into the role of teacher. Comparable images do not exist to accompany the PSTs' new beliefs. For this, teacher educators need to create space for PSTs to test out teaching experiences based on their new or amended beliefs. By having a chance to practice, observe, and interact during teaching experiences based on their new and amended beliefs, PSTs can revisit their old images and negotiate new images. The assumption moving forward is that the PSTs would then have updated images to rely on during future teaching experiences, which are based more closely on their current beliefs.

5.2.5 Implications for Professional Development

Knowing that prior studies (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010) have shown that beliefs are resistant to change, those that

are in charge of professional development must also acknowledge the apprenticeship of observation. This is not a job that teacher education and teacher educators can do alone. Goodlad (1984) explained that PSTs have a difficult time imagining alternatives to their beliefs; however, he found that after repeated exposure, teachers were able to amend or abandon their beliefs when presented with conflicting information. For this, professional development should take actions that are similar to teacher educators in order to provide continuity and increase the likelihood of repeated exposure. As with teacher educators, professional development facilitators need to be explicit. Based on constructivist beliefs about how people learn, traditional presentation formats used for professional development will not result in a transfer of knowledge (Holt-Reynolds, 2000). Instead, the professional development curriculum must be explicit and include opportunities for discourse.

Another change that needs to be made to professional development based on findings from this study is the inclusion for reflective and reflexive thinking. Like PSTs, teachers also carry a set of beliefs that serve as a veil through which they view new information. If the aim of professional development is to influence a change in practice, then professional development facilitators must actively work to disrupt the thinking of the teachers. The inclusion of reflective thinking practices in professional development sessions will enable teachers to recall their current practices. In order for a change in thinking to occur, teachers need to have a reason for why their old ways of thinking should be amended. Additionally, reflexive thinking practices will give the teachers space to analyze their thoughts to determine whether or not they still agree with their previous thought patterns given the new information drawn from professional

development. The combination of reflective and reflexive thinking practices will allow the teachers to combine their old thoughts with new information to determine what their beliefs will be moving forward. Since this type of thinking does not occur naturally, it is imperative that professional development facilitators model this thought practice and provide teachers with time and support as they negotiate the old and the new.

5.2.6 Implications for Administrators and Mentors

One common practice of classroom teachers is to turn in their lesson plans to administrators and mentors to be reviewed (Marshall, 2005). Administrators and mentors can use this practice as an opportunity to challenge their teachers' apprenticeship of observation by evaluating the contents of the lesson plans, as lesson plans often contain an overview of the activities that teachers plan to use with their students. Findings from this study showed that PSTs often based their plans for teaching writing on past experiences they had, both positive and negative, during their time as students in the classroom. That is, their motivation for their plans for teaching writing were not based on writing theory or other pedagogically sound ideas. As part of the lesson planning process, administrators and mentors should require teachers to provide a short justification for each of the activities they plan. This could be as simple as listing the standard that the activity corresponds to. Creating this system of checks will help to prevent teachers from including activities based on their apprenticeship of observation that do not match the learning goals of their students. During conferences, administrators and mentors can use the knowledge they gained from reviewing the teachers' lesson plans as the basis for conversations surrounding the teachers'

apprenticeship of observation as a way to inquire about how their past interpretation of their experiences play into current teaching practices.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Based on findings from this study, I recommend that this study be modified to become a long-term qualitative inquiry that will follow the same group of teachers from the beginning of their education coursework at the university through their first year of teaching and possibly beyond. By obtaining long-term data, teacher educators can be informed about the possible changes in beliefs about writing instruction and themselves as writers that participants experience over time. This is important, as findings would add to the discipline specific conversation about writing beliefs and whether or not they are resistant to change. Previous studies about beliefs in general, (Brusseau, Brook & Byers, 1988; Cross, 2009; Ng, Nichols & Williams, 2010) affirm that beliefs are resistant to change; however, studies that look at changes in beliefs about writing are scarce.

Another benefit of turning this study into a long-term inquiry would be that researchers could explore whether or not PSTs follow through with their plans regarding writing instruction. Since findings from this study show that the plans made by the PSTs are formed, in part, by their apprenticeship of observation, a long-term inquiry would provide additional information about the apprenticeship of observation as it pertains to writing. Whether or not PSTs follow through on their plans could help demonstrate the lasting power that this phenomena has on PSTs.

5.4 Conclusion

This study sought to explore the beliefs that elementary PSTs have about writing and the influence that their apprenticeship of observation has on their beliefs. Further,

this study explored how the PSTs plan to teach writing in their classrooms in the future. Guiding this study were four research questions:

1. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about themselves as writers?
2. What are preservice teachers' beliefs about writing instruction?
3. How have preservice teachers' interpretations of their experiences as students affected their beliefs about themselves as writers?
4. How do preservice teachers' interpretation of their experiences as students influence their plans to teach writing?

After using thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2006) to analyze the data, I arrived at four findings. First, PSTs come to their educator preparation with beliefs about themselves as writers. Particularly, the PSTs believed they are either writers or non-writers. These findings are supported by past research on the beliefs of PSTs (Daisey; 2009; Morgan, 2010; Rapsberry 2001; Frank et al. 2003) The PSTs also believed that writing instruction should be high-quality and foster student interest. Both Hall and Grisham-Brown (2011) and Hall (2016) offered similar findings from their studies; however, Norman and Spencer (2006) arrived at contradictory findings.

When looking at PSTs' beliefs more deeply, data suggested that their past interpretation of their experiences as students in a writing classroom greatly influenced the PSTs' beliefs. Particularly, the PSTs' interpretation of their experiences around feedback and the control they had over their writing were the most talked about. Additionally, past experiences stemming from the PSTs' apprenticeship of observation formed the basis for the plans the PSTs had about teaching writing. This finding is unique as it is the first content specific study connecting the apprenticeship of observation to writing. General studies (Borg, 2004; Boyd, Gorham, Justice & Anderson, 2014; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2014; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998) on the

apprenticeship of observation supported this by showing that the plans of PSTs are often based on experiences from their time as students.

Findings from this study have implications for teacher education, teacher educators, PSTs, professional development facilitators, administrators, and mentors. Teacher educators can help the PSTs to become aware of their beliefs and use them as a springboard for experiences in their pedagogy focused methods courses. One way in which the teacher educators can help the PSTs uncover their beliefs is by engaging them in autobiographical work (Barton & Darkside, 2010; Goldblatt, 2012; Guillory, 2012; McCulloch, Marshall, Decuir-Gunby & Caldwell, 2013; Pinar, 1975). This will call beliefs stemming from the apprenticeship of observation to the forefront so that the PSTs and teacher educators can determine if their beliefs match current best practices. Similar practices can be put into place by professional development facilitators, administrators, and mentors.

Moving forward, the field of education will benefit from a long-term study exploring the beliefs of PSTs as they relate to writing. This extended inquiry should also look into the plans PSTs have for teaching writing that stem from their apprenticeship of observation. By obtaining long-term data, teacher educators can be informed about the possible changes in beliefs about writing instruction and themselves as writers that participants have over time. Additionally, data from a long-term inquiry could show whether or not PSTs follow through with their plans regarding writing instruction.

APPENDIX A

TEACHER WRITER QUESTIONAIRE

Adapted from Lenski and Pardieck's (1999) Writing Apprehension Survey

Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are uncertain, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree with the statement.

1. I avoid writing.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers in my field do not have to be writers.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers should write along with their students.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Writing assignments are difficult to grade.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I like to write down my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I feel confident in critiquing another person's writing.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Writing should be incorporated in all classes.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I like to have my friends read what I have written.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am nervous about teaching writing.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Writing is more important in some classes than others.	1	2	3	4	5

19. People seem to enjoy what I write.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I do not need instruction in writing.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I enjoy writing.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I never seem to be able to clearly white down my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Writing is a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
24. All teachers should be writers.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I plan to use writing regularly in my classes when I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Discussing my writing with others is enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas when writing.	1	2	3	4	5
30. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Mathematics does not lend itself well to writing.	1	2	3	4	5
32. It's easy for me to write good compositions.	1	2	3	4	5
33. When teaching, I will try to correct all of the students' writing mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I don't think I write as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Whether or not I write has no bearing on my students' writing.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I am no good at writing.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I want to teach writing.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

DIVISION OF QUESTIONS

The following questions from the Teacher Writer Questionnaire are related to PSTs beliefs about writing.

1. I avoid writing.

2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.

3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.

5. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.

7. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.

8. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition.

9. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.

11. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.

12. I like to write down my ideas.

15. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.

16. I like to have my friends read what I have written.

19. People seem to enjoy what I write.

20. I do not need instruction in writing.

21. I enjoy writing.

22. I never seem to be able to clearly white down my ideas.

23. Writing is a lot of fun.

25. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.

26. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.

28. Discussing my writing with others is enjoyable.

29. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas when writing.

30. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.

32. It’s easy for me to write good compositions.

34. I don’t think I write as well as most other people.

35. I don’t like my compositions to be evaluated.

37. I am no good at writing.

39. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.

The following questions from the Teacher Writer Questionnaire are related to the PSTs’ beliefs about writing instruction.

4. Teachers in my field do not have to be writers.

6. Teachers should write along with their students.

10. Writing assignments are difficult to grade.

13. I feel confident in critiquing another person’s writing.

14. Writing should be incorporated in all classes.

17. I am nervous about teaching writing.

18. Writing is more important in some classes than others.

24. All teachers should be writers.

27. I plan to use writing regularly in my classes when I teach.

31. Mathematics does not lend itself well to writing.

33. When teaching, I will try to correct all of the students’ writing mistakes.

36. Whether or not I write has no bearing on my students’ writing.

38. I want to teach writing.

APPENDIX C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about your writing life as a student in grade school. What teachers stand out for you? Why? Who were the best and worst teachers you had? Why do you feel this way about them?

2. Tell me about your writing life in a college.

3. Tell me about your current writing life outside of school.

4. Tell me about your reading life.

4. How do you think your personal history about writing affects your beliefs about writing?

5. How do you envision teaching writing in your classroom?

6. How do you think your personal history about writing affects your plans to teach writing in the classroom?

APPENDIX D

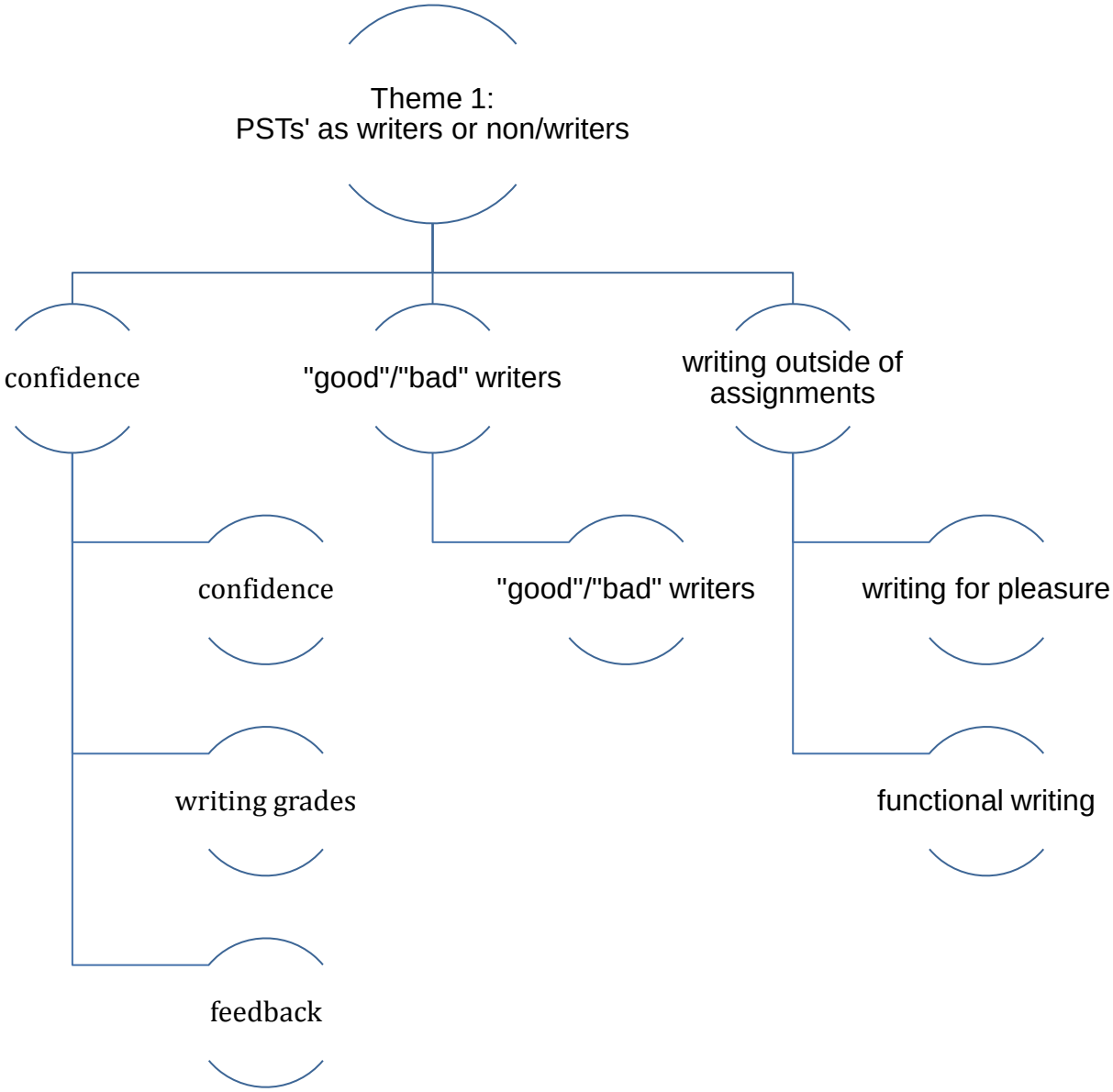
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING LIFE MAP ASSIGNMENT

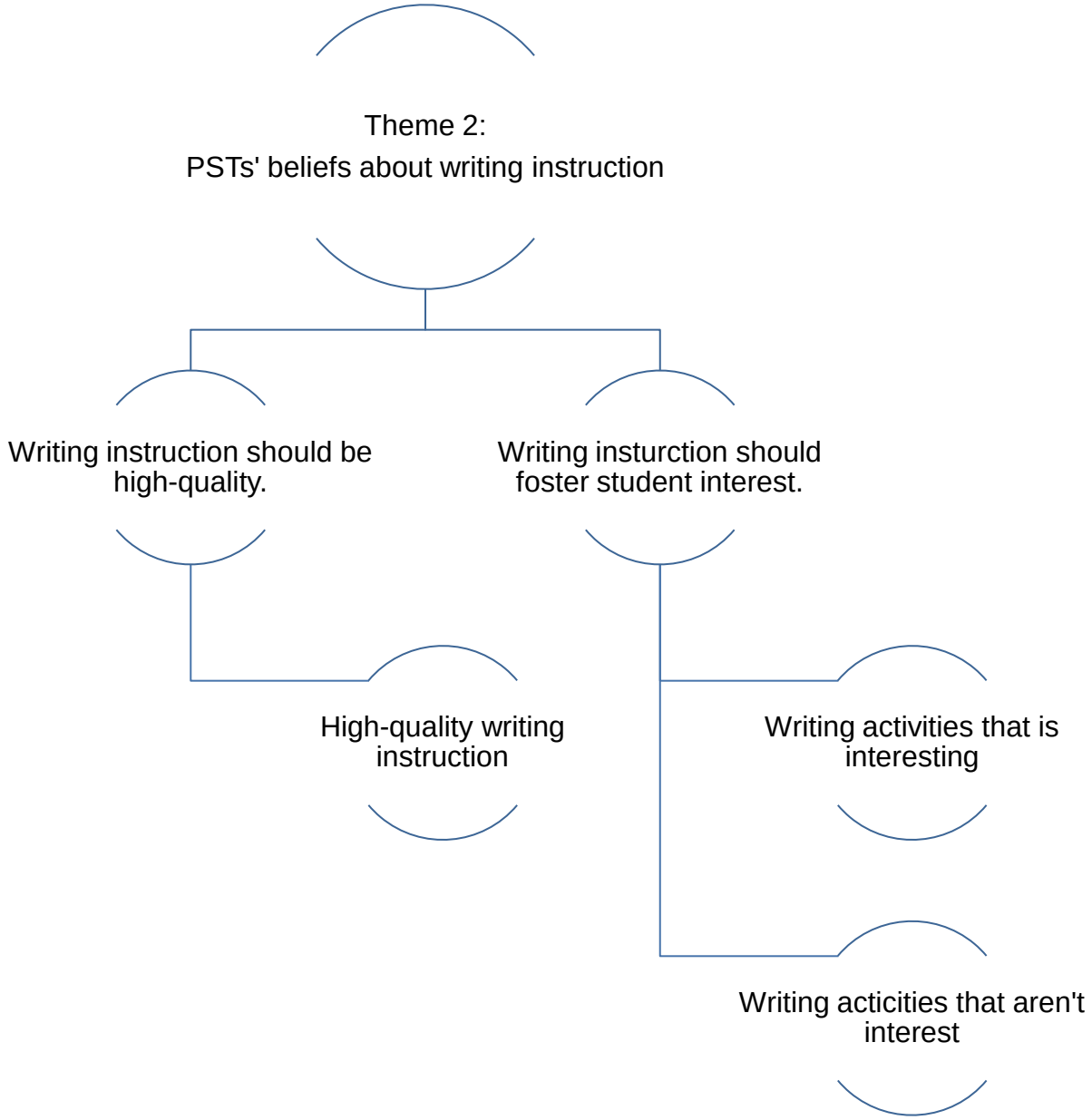
The following is an excerpt from the syllabus of the writing methods course that the PDS I students take. The excerpt shows the explanation of the autobiographical writing life map assignment that was used as a data source for this study.

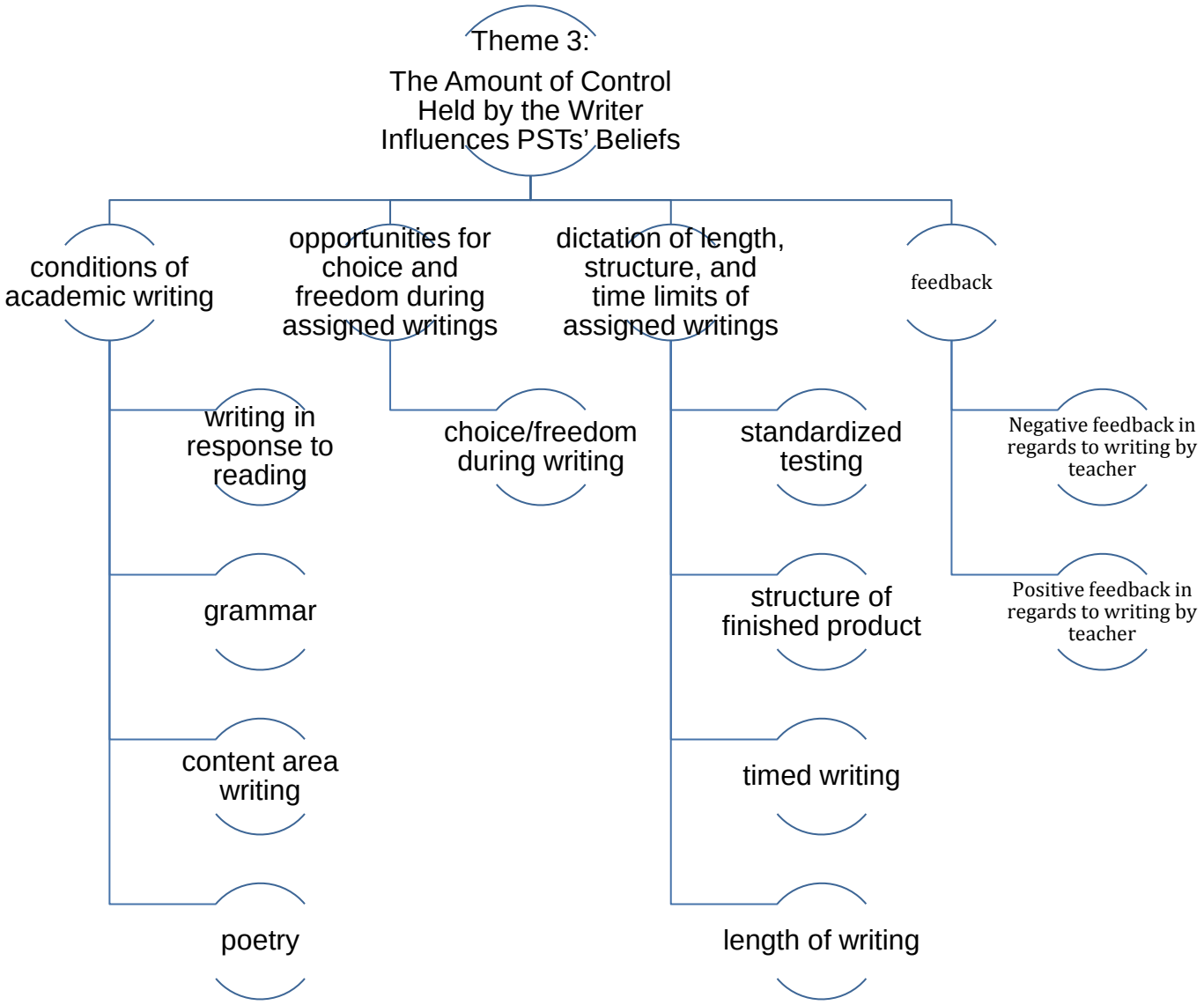
Writing Life Map/ Writing Biography: It is important for teachers to understand their own writing development and attitude in order to effectively teach others about writing. The map should represent in and out of school experiences related to writing --- specific teachers/friends/family members who influenced your writing; episodes related to handwriting, grammar, spelling, papers you wrote, school newspaper/yearbook experiences, letter writing, thank you notes, emailing, blogging, etc.; experiences from childhood all the way to the present. Consider your functional writing life as well as your compositional writing life. Be prepared to share your writing life map with your peers. You might even think about how writing impacts your daily life. Further, think about how your personal experiences with writing impact your attitude about teaching writing. (We will begin this in class to help you get started).

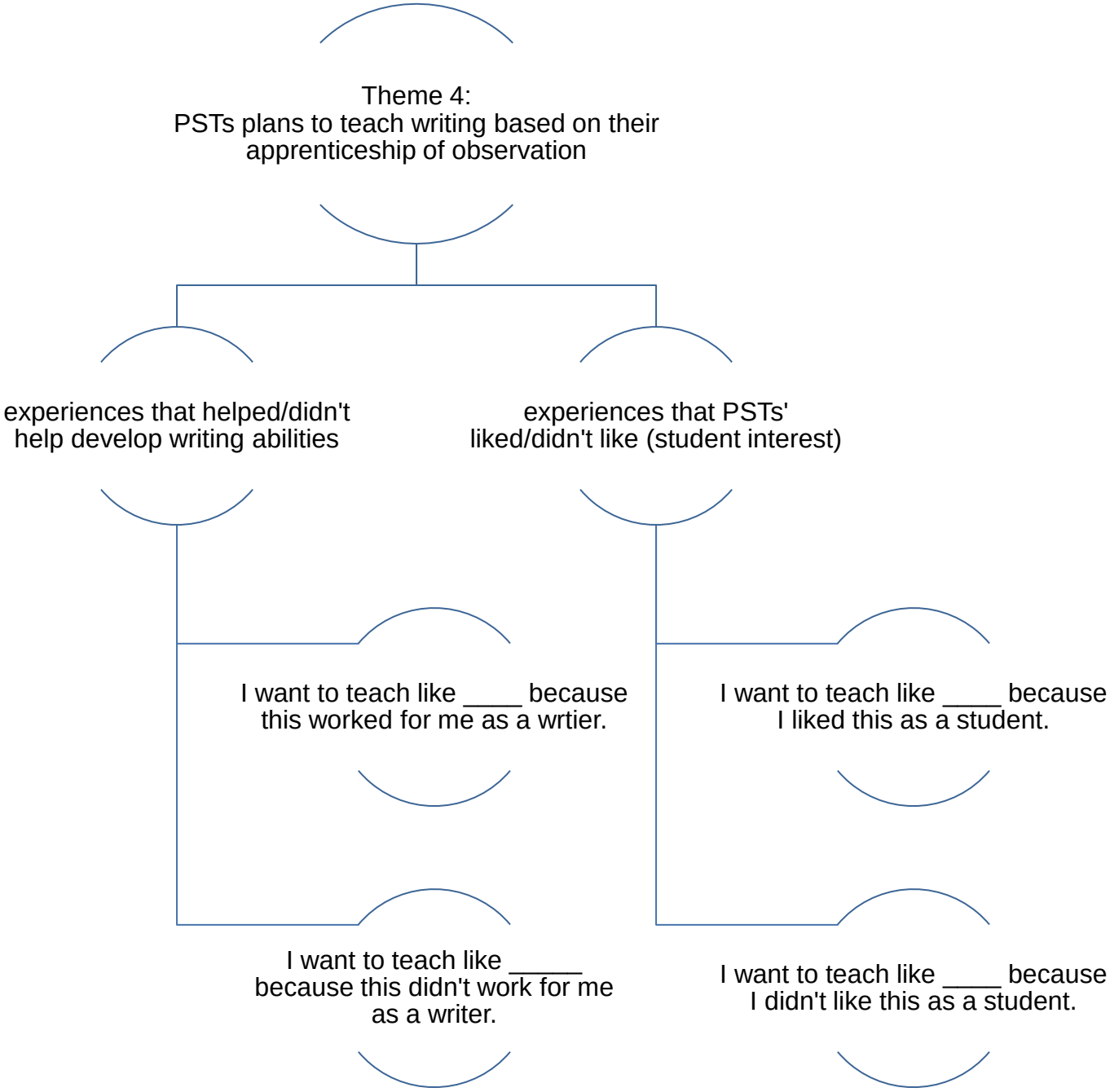
APPENDIX E

THEMATIC MAPS THAT INCLUDE CODES


Theme 1:
PSTs' as writers or non/writers
confidence
"good"/"bad" writers
writing outside of assignments
confidence
"good"/"bad" writers
writing for pleasure
writing grades
functional writing
feedback

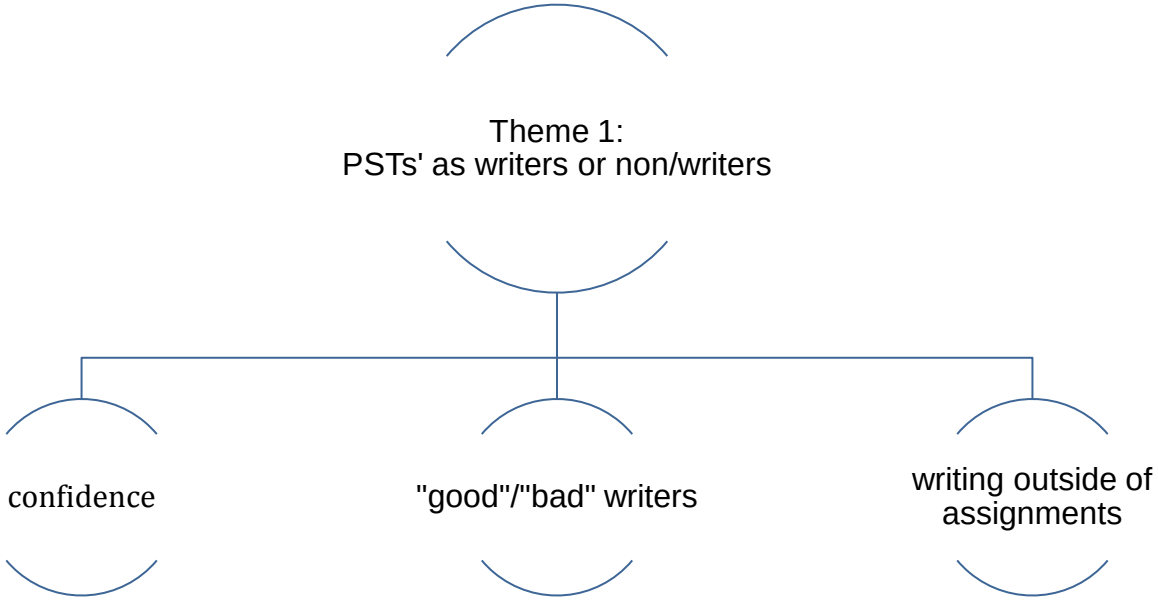

Theme 2:
PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction
Writing instruction should be high-quality.
Writing insturction should foster student interest.
High-quality writing instruction
Writing activities that is interesting
Writing acticities that aren't interest

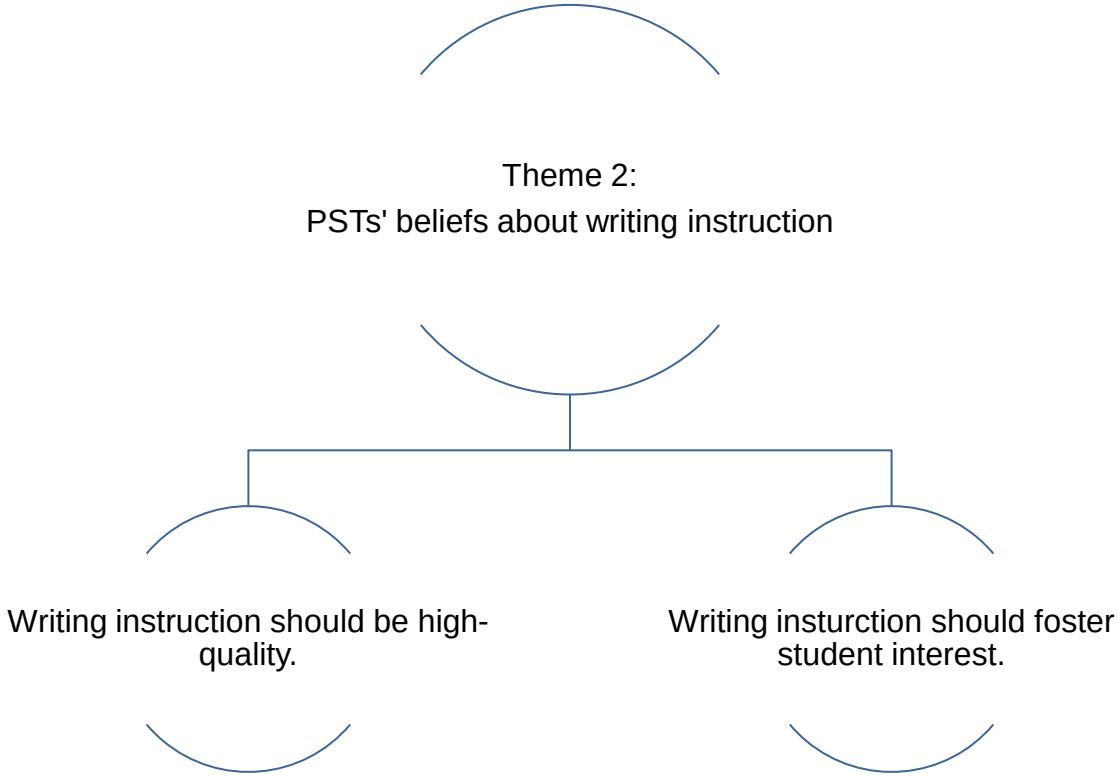

Theme 3:
The Amount of Control Held by the Writer Influences PSTs' Beliefs
conditions of academic writing
opportunities for choice and freedom during assigned writings
dictation of length, structure, and time limits of assigned writings
feedback
writing in response to reading
grammar
content area writing
poetry
choice/freedom during writing
standardized testing
structure of finished product
timed writing
length of writing
Negative feedback in regards to writing by teacher
Positive feedback in regards to writing by teacher

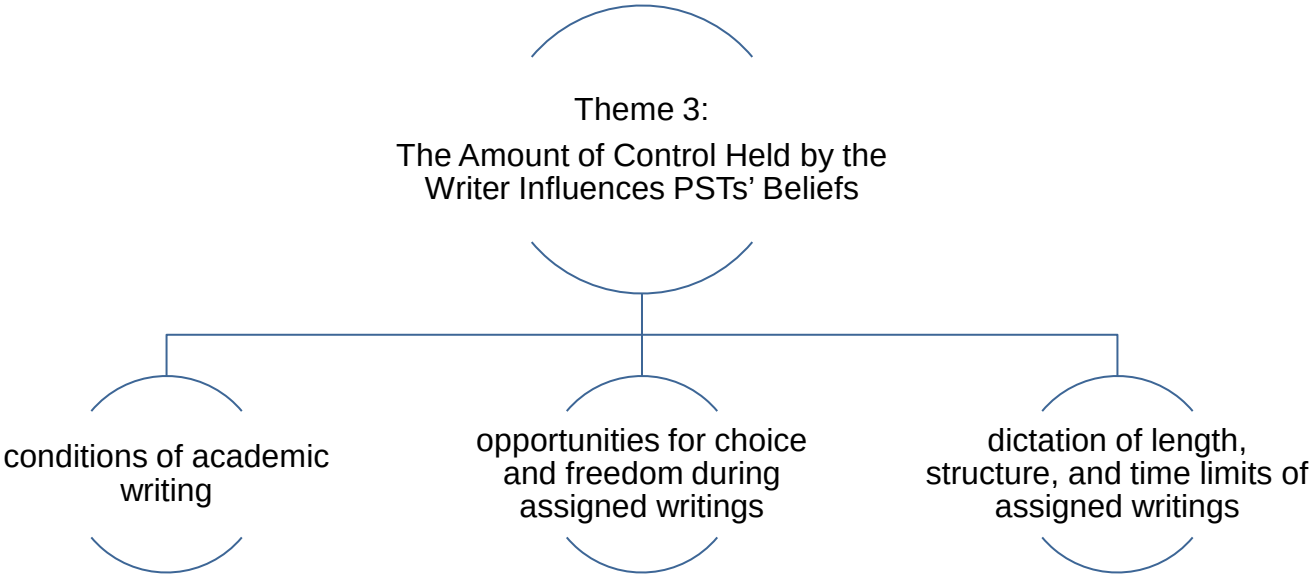

Theme 4:
PSTs plans to teach writing based on their apprenticeship of observation
experiences that helped/didn't help develop writing abilities
experiences that PSTs' liked/didn't like (student interest)
I want to teach like ____ because this worked for me as a wrtier.
I want to teach like _____ because this didn't work for me as a writer.
I want to teach like ____ because I liked this as a student.
I want to teach like ____ because I didn't like this as a student.

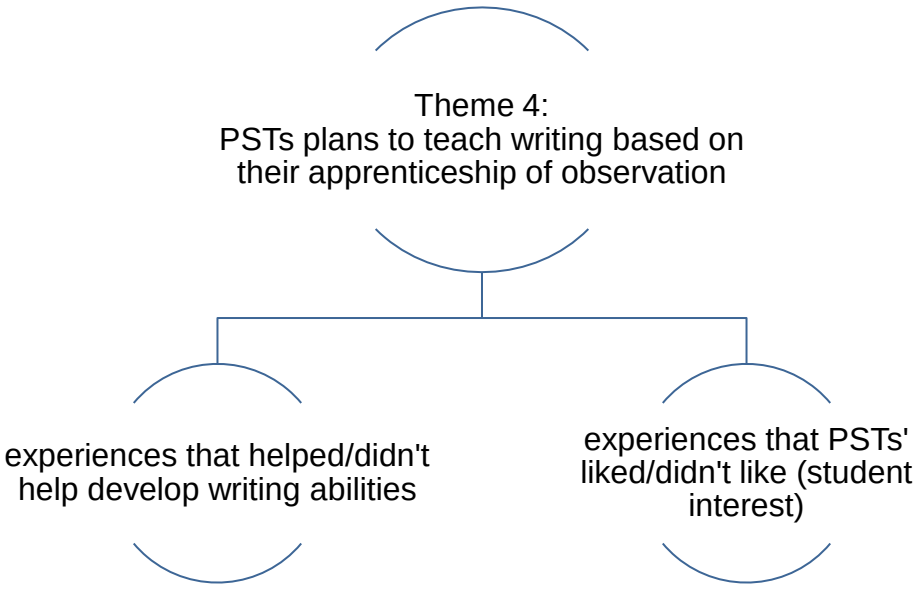
APPENDIX F

THEMATIC MAPS


Theme 1:
PSTs' as writers or non/writers
confidence
"good"/"bad" writers
writing outside of assignments


Theme 2:
PSTs' beliefs about writing instruction
Writing instruction should be high-quality.
Writing insturction should foster student interest.


Theme 3:
The Amount of Control Held by the Writer Influences PSTs' Beliefs
conditions of academic writing
opportunities for choice and freedom during assigned writings
dictation of length, structure, and time limits of assigned writings


Theme 4:
PSTs plans to teach writing based on their apprenticeship of observation
experiences that helped/didn't help develop writing abilities
experiences that PSTs' liked/didn't like (student interest)

APPENDIX G

MEMBER CHECK DATA

Preliminary Themes	Jessica	Jamie	Julia	Comments
I believe I am either a writer or a non-writer.	agree	agree	agree	
I believe that high-quality writing instruction that influences student abilities is important but not the only important aspect of writing instruction.	agree	agree	agree	“I think that choice in writing styles and topics is very important as well to engage student interests and teach students that writing is not just in one form.”
I believe that student interest is an important component of writing instruction.	agree	agree	agree	
When I was a student, my past experiences with grades and assessments affected my beliefs about myself as a writer.	agree	agree	agree	“I made good grades so I always thought I was a strong writer when in reality I should have looked at the categories I scored lower on and worked to improve those traits of writing.”
When I was a student, my past experiences with general feedback regarding my writing or conferences I had with my teachers affected my beliefs about myself as a writer.	agree	agree	agree	
When I was a student, the amount of control I had over the writing assignment affected my beliefs about myself as a writer. Ex: When I was given a prompt that I had to follow I felt a certain way about myself as a writer as opposed to when I was allowed to write about whatever I wanted.	agree	agree	agree	
When thinking about what writing instruction will look like in my future classroom, I will take into consideration experiences I had as a student that HELPED ME AS A WRITER.Ex: XXXX helped me as a writer so I will probably use it in my classroom.	agree	agree	agree	“When I was in college and had a course over Language arts and reading instruction. I was shown the writers workshop model and plan to use that in my classroom because I think it Is a more organized method.”

Preliminary Themes	Jessica	Jamie	Julia	Comments
When thinking about what writing instruction will look like in my future classroom, I will take into consideration experiences I had as a student that DIDN'T HELP ME AS A WRITER. Ex: XXXX activity didn't help me as a writer so I probably won't use it in my classroom or I might change that activity.	agree	agree	agree	
When thinking about what writing will look like in my future classroom, I will take into consideration experiences I had in the classroom that I LIKED AS A STUDENT.Ex: When I was a student I liked XXXX activity so I will probably include it in my classroom.	agree	agree	agree	
When thinking about what writing will look like in my future classroom, I will take into consideration experiences that I had in the classroom that I DIDN'T LIKE AS A STUDENT.Ex: When I was a student I didn't like XXXX activity so I probably won't include it in my classroom or I might change that activity.	agree	agree	agree	

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