A MULTICASE STUDY OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING INSTRUCTION FOR EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL ADOLESCENTS

A dissertation submitted to the Kent State University College of Education, Health, and Human Services in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The purpose of this multicase study was to examine how English as a second language (ESL) teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8. A qualitative multicase study design was used to explore the participants’ teaching by addressing the following questions: (a) How do ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8? (b) How do ESL teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for second language (L2) writing instruction? This study used Lantolf’s Sociocultural Theory of Second Language Acquisition to understand how the teachers used mediating tools toward the goal of teaching second language writing. Participants were two ESL teachers in Ohio. Multiple sources of data were collected: a qualitative survey, classroom observations, fieldnotes, three semi-structured interviews with each participant lasting between 45-75 minutes each, instructional artifacts, and analytic memos.

Findings revealed that these two ESL teachers only spent 11-12.5% of their instructional time in ESL on writing. In addition to receiving nominal time, writing tasks were limited in length and scope; students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length and often only wrote individual sentences. Participants cited several obstacles they cited as impeded their writing instruction.
The implications of this research point to the need to include writing pedagogy in ESL endorsement programs, the need for districts to implement defined goals and writing curricula for English learners, and the need to expand writing instruction beyond basic skills in order to prepare English learners for education, vocation, and everyday life.
DEDICATION

To my parents and grandparents who gave me faith, hope, and love.
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In some ways, writing these acknowledgments is the most rewarding part of my doctoral journey thus far. My words cannot express how grateful I am to those who supported me along the way. I knew from a young age that I wanted to pursue a Ph.D., but the reality of actually accomplishing this goal always seemed like a somewhat distant, somewhat unobtainable vision. Thanks to those who mentored and supported me throughout my time at Kent State (and long before that time), this vision has become a reality.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Situating Second Language Writing Instruction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Significance of Second Language Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Language Writing in American Intermediate and Middle Schools</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Preparation of Teachers for Teaching English as a Second Language</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement and Significance of the Problem</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE</th>
<th>13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Shifts in American Student Populations and the Writing Crisis</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying English Language Learners</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing English Language Learners</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Instruction Models</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing Teachers for Culturally Versus Linguistically Diverse Classrooms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural Theory of Second Language Acquisition</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Current State of Research on L2 Writing Instruction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of L2 Writers’ Texts</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Approaches to L2 Writing Instruction</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral language approach</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The controlled approach</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free composition</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive rhetoric</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing process</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-process orientations</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Research on L2 Writing Instruction for Adolescents</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary ......................................................................................................................... 45

III. METHODS .................................................................................................................. 48
   A Case for Qualitative Inquiry in Second Language Teaching and Learning......48
   The Present Study ...................................................................................................... 50
   Study Design and Rationale .................................................................................. 51
   Context of the Study ................................................................................................. 53
      ESL in Ohio: 2015-2016 .................................................................................. 53
      Participants ........................................................................................................... 55
         Julia .................................................................................................................. 56
         Chloe .............................................................................................................. 56
      District administrator participants ................................................................. 56
   Data Collection and Rationale ............................................................................... 57
      Instructional documents and artifacts ............................................................ 60
      Observations and fieldnotes ........................................................................... 65
      Semi-structured interviews .............................................................................. 67
      Procedures ........................................................................................................... 72
   Data Analysis .......................................................................................................... 74
   Methodological Challenges and Indicators of Rigor and Quality ...................... 84
      Establishing Trustworthiness ........................................................................... 85
      Credibility and dependability ........................................................................... 85
      Transferability .................................................................................................... 87
   Ethical Considerations ............................................................................................ 88
   Limitations ................................................................................................................ 90
   Summary of Methods ............................................................................................. 91

IV. FINDINGS .................................................................................................................. 93
   Julia’s Case ................................................................................................................ 93
      Julia’s Preparation for Teaching L2 Writing ................................................... 96
      Julia’s Beliefs About Writing Instruction ......................................................... 98
      Julia’s Teaching Practices ............................................................................... 100
      Testing ................................................................................................................. 102
         Benchmark tests ......................................................................................... 103
         Placement tests ............................................................................................. 106
         OELPA practice test ..................................................................................... 107
      Copying ................................................................................................................. 108
      Grammar instruction ......................................................................................... 109
      Conventions ....................................................................................................... 114
      Editing .................................................................................................................. 115
      Group/Class compositions ............................................................................... 117
      Fill-in-the-blank and single word responses .................................................. 118
      Writing tasks absent from Julia’s instruction ............................................... 118
      Julia’s Obstacles ............................................................................................... 119
      Student ability ................................................................................................. 119
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Qualitative survey QR code</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Linear reassembling of codes</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Conceptual web created during the reassembling process</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Phases of the data analysis process</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Julia’s ESL and inclusion classes at Donald Intermediate School (Grades 5-6)</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Julia’s ESL and inclusion classes at Bagley Middle School (Grade 7-8)</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Hours spent on writing versus other language skills in Julia’s ESL class</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Julia: Writing in ESL (grades 5-8)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Copying the word interrogative, its definition, and a model sentence</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Present progressive grammar lesson</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The definition of auxiliary</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Present progressive verbs in narrative texts</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>COPS editing strategies</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Writing process pocket chart</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Writing process checklist</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Chloe’s ESL and inclusion classes at each school</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Punctuation poster</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Parts of speech poster</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Hours spent on writing versus other language skills in Chloe’s ESL classes</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Chloe: Writing instruction in ESL (grades 5-8)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. Online library database ........................................................................................................ 142

22. Issues contributing to a lack of writing instruction in the participants’ teaching .... 169

23. Aspects of knowledge necessary for participating in literacy practices ............... 179
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research Questions and Data Collected</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Artifacts Collected From Julia</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Artifacts Collected from Chloe</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An Example of Observation Field Notes for One Class Session (Julia 1/12/2016)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Timeline of Data Collection Procedures</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Level 3 Codes (Themes): A List of Tertiary Level Codes</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Practices for Establishing Trustworthiness</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Summary of Study Phases</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Summary of Time and Class Sessions Devoted to Testing Writing</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Writing Time Across Cases</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Time Devoted to Each Writing Category</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Obstacles Impeding Writing Instruction Across Cases</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Julia’s testing: Benchmark Tests (BT), OELPA Practice Test (OPT), Placement Test (PT)</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Chloe’s Testing: OELPA Practice Test (OPT)</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Situating Second Language Writing Instruction

Second language (L2) writing instruction is a field of study which examines the teaching of writing to learners of a new language. A second language can be any language learned in addition to an individual’s mother tongue. The instruction of students whose first language (L1) is not English began in the United States in the early 1940s with the establishment of the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan (Fries, 1945; Kroll, 2003). At the time, teaching English as a second language (ESL) focused primarily on international adult learners in American colleges and universities. Instructors noticed international students had difficulty “keeping up” with their American peers and were “seriously handicapped” when it came to their English language skills (Gibian, 1951, p. 157).

During this time, the teaching of writing did not receive much instructional attention even though instructors realized international students had difficulties with writing (Gibian, 1951). ESL instructors prioritized speaking in their teaching and writing was viewed as an ancillary skill (Bloomfield, 1942; Fries, 1945); one author considered it the “handmaid” of the other skills (Rivers, 1968, p. 59). English instructors believed students’ writing skills would develop after they had achieved proficiency in listening and speaking (Fries, 1945) and that writing would emerge as students mastered syntax and phonics (Bloomfield, 1942; Erazmus, 1960; Pincas, 1962). Writing was not more
than the simple manipulation of grammatically correct sentences (Erazmus, 1960). Grammatically correct writing was considered quality writing (Pincas, 1962).

The first empirical study on the teaching of writing to English language learners (ELLs), or those students are learning English as a second language, did not appear until 1966 (Briere, 1966). Since then, the field has “gone through the woods in search of new approaches” for the teaching of second language writing (Raimes, 1991, p. 407). These approaches include the audio-lingual and controlled methods of the 1960s, the process-driven approach in the 1970s and 1980s, and the communicative approach in the 1990s (Raimes, 1991). During this time, second language writing has been studied primarily within university composition classes. More recently, researchers have started to examine the teaching of second language writing within the context of K-12 education. In this “emerging field” of research (Harklau, 2011, p. 227), researchers aim to understand how teachers teach writing to English language learners in early, elementary, middle, and secondary grades.

**The Significance of Second Language Writing**

Writing instruction is often overlooked in English literacy education (The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools and Colleges, 2003), so it is no surprise that few studies have attempted to understand the current state of writing instruction for ELLs in U.S. schools. Instructional practices used to teach second language writing are not well documented. This lack of research contrasts with the abundance of studies that have used discourse analysis to study second language speaking and reading (c.f., Chaudron, 1988; August & Shanahan, 2006, 2008). Like speaking,
writing is a productive language skill. As such, teachers must employ instruction that promotes active compositional practice. By definition, learning to write cannot be a passive activity; similarly, the teaching of writing cannot be either and must receive its due attention in research.

Historically, second language writing has been examined from a compositional perspective, not from an instructional standpoint (Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). Essentially, writers’ texts have been examined but the teaching of writing to ELLs has been overlooked. Furthermore, much of the research in the field second language writing continues to be conducted with international students in settings of higher education (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Tang, 2012).

In the only existing review of research on writing instruction for adolescent English language learners in the United States, Panofsky and colleagues (2005) found a mere 25 empirical research studies from 1995 to 2005 published in peer-reviewed journals or book chapters. Twelve years after this review was published, there continues to be a lack of empirical studies in this field. In their meta-analysis of research on writing instruction, Graham and Perin (2007a) noted a “serious gap” in the literature with regards to adolescents with low English proficiency; other scholars report no empirical studies of writing instruction for English learners in grades 6-12 from 1988-2003 (Fitzgerald & Amendum, 2007). Scholars are still concerned with the apparent lack of studies attending to this topic (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Leki et al., 2008; Olson, Scarcella & Matuchniak, 2015).
Particular attention needs to be given to the writing instruction of ELLs in intermediate and middle schools because students’ writing abilities may influence their access post-secondary institutions and their potential for future professional employment (The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools and Colleges, 2003). Writing is not only important for school and the workplace, but it is an essential tool for communicating in everyday life; it is a medium used to “gather, preserve, and transmit information” (Graham & Harris, 2013, p. 5). If we ignore the teaching of writing to adolescent ELLs and only pay attention to writing at the post-secondary level, we are not helping emergent writers develop the skills they need to be successful in college, the workplace, and in everyday life. Writing instruction needs to begin long before students enter institutions of higher education.

Therefore, an investigation of the instructional practices of ESL teachers is necessary because little is known about how teachers are teaching writing to English language learners, particularly in grades 5-8. This is a problem given the fact that ELLs are the most rapidly growing group of school-aged children in U.S. schools but have the poorest performance of any other student group on national writing assessments (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012, 2013). Little is known about how ESL teachers are addressing this problem in the classroom.

**Second Language Writing in American Intermediate and Middle Schools**

Several books and articles have been written in the past decade on second language writing in general (see Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014) and scholars have discussed the development of this field in depth (Kroll, 1990, 2003; Leki et al., 2008; Matsuda,
2003; Matsuda & Silva, 2005), but there remains a lack of research about practices used to teach writing to adolescent ELLs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Harklau, 2011; Leki et al., 2008; Olson et al., 2015). The research “in this area [is] sparse” (Harklau, 2011, p. 227). Existing research has prioritized students’ written products and socialization experiences over the instructional practices used to teach them (Leki et al., 2008). Furthermore, much of the literature on L2 writing instruction is positional or written in response to other scholars’ opinions about the “best” method for teaching writing; they not based on research (Kroll, 2003; Leki et al., 2008; Raimes, 1991; Zamel, 1976).

Second language writing instruction at the middle school level has not been examined in depth. In fact, in Leki, Cumming, and Silva’s (2008) synthesis of research on second language writing in English, they devote a full chapter to research on high school writers (grades 9-12), but a combined chapter on “young writers,” which includes research on ELLs in preK through eighth grade. Many of the citations in this chapter point to early emergent elementary L2 writers, with a select few referring to research on middle school writers (Bunch & Willet, 2013; De la Paz, 2005; Harman, 2013; McCarthey, Lopez-Valasquez, Garcia, Lin, & Guo, 2004; Reynolds, 2002; Souryasack & Lee, 2007; Uruza, 1987; Ware & Benschoter, 2009). Furthermore, the current literature on middle school adolescents focuses primarily on the structural and rhetorical choices demonstrated in students’ written texts (Bunch & Willet, 2013; De la Paz, 2005; Harman, 2013; Reynolds, 2002, 2005) and not the instructional decisions of their teachers.

In a special issue of the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, scholars voiced concern over the continued lack of study of second language writing instruction for
adolescents. In this issue, three empirical studies (Enright & Gilliland, 2011; Fránquiz & Salinas, 2011; Kibler, 2011) on adolescent writing, teaching, and learning contributed to our knowledge of how a standards-driven curriculum socializes ELLs into particular norms of academic writing, how ELLs develop cross-disciplinary writing skills, and how ELLs use digitized primary documents to support their writing practices in a history class.

Ortmeier-Hooper and Enright (2011) and Harklau (2011) wrote the introductory and concluding articles of the issue respectively. In these pieces, they called the research on adolescent second language writers and writing instruction “new territory” (Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011, p. 167) in an “emerging field” (Harklau, 2011, p. 227). They urged researchers to investigate the writing practices of second language adolescents, but also highlighted that little is known about teachers’ current instructional practices for teaching writing. The authors of this special issue argue the teaching of second language writing in grade-school differs greatly from instruction in the university. They point out that current empirical research on ELL writers prioritizes contexts of higher education and the emergent literacy of elementary-aged ELLs, but neglects to examine the writing processes of the pre-adolescent and adolescent population, particularly those of refugee and immigrant students (Harklau, 2011; Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011). They, and others (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Hinkel, 2011; Leki et al., 2008), have noted that few studies examine the instructional practices of teachers and that limited critical attention has been given to the preparation of ESL teachers.
The Preparation of Teachers for Teaching English as a Second Language

In addition to the lack of research on L2 writing instruction, there is also limited research on how ESL teachers are prepared to teach writing. Consequently, the preparation of ESL teachers in the United States varies greatly from one state to another (Fenner, 2013). This means the preparation of teachers for L2 writing instruction is inconsistent across the country. There are only four states (Arizona, California, New York, Florida) that require preservice undergraduate teachers to take courses in ESL teaching methods (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008). The most recently published national survey of ESL teacher education programs reveals fewer than 1/6th of teacher education programs in the U.S. require any preparation for teaching ELLs in undergraduate coursework (Menken & Antunez, 2001).

Though No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) has required that all ELLs have access to ESL services, it leaves the standards for preparing ESL teachers up to the state departments of education. Thus, the current state of ESL teacher preparation in the U.S. “represents a patchwork of programs, requirements, and credentials” (Fenner, 2013, p. 6). This is due, in part, to the fact that credentialing requirements for ESL teachers can be very different from one state to another; they can consist of an endorsement, a certificate, certification, or a license (Fenner, 2013). In addition to these problems, there are very few teacher education programs that offer courses in second language writing (Leki, 2006; Santos, Atkinson, Erickson, Matsuda, & Silva, 2000). This “wide variation in teacher preparation and credentialing programs creates ambiguity in roles for ESL teachers in preK-12 classrooms across the country”
(Fenner, 2013, p. 6). Even less is known about their preparation for the teaching of second language writing.

**Statement and Significance of the Problem**

Even though research in the field of second language writing is growing, there is still a lack of research attending to K-12 instruction and the preparation of teachers in particular. Most of the current “research” on second language writing instruction includes positional statements and discussions about approaches to writing instruction, but not research studies (Carr, 1967; Cumming, 1986; Erazmus, 1960; Gibian; 1951; Kroll, 2003; Hinkel, 2011; Horowitz, 1986a, 1986b; Leki et al., 2008; Liebman-Kliene, 1986; Pincas, 1962; Piper, 1989; Raimes, 1983, 1991; Ross, 1968; Silva, 1993; Spack & Sadow, 1983; Zamel, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1983). Though these statements promote insightful scholarly discussion, they provide limited research-based methods for teaching writing to English language learners. Scholars have been voicing concern over the lack of research in second language writing instruction for several decades, yet few studies heed this call.

What is known from a limited number of naturalistic studies is the value of regular routines for writing practice, explicit instruction on text forms and writing processes, and the kinds of feedback teachers should provide students (Cumming, 1992; Riazi, Lessard-Clouson & Cumming, 1996; Shi, 1998; Weissberg, 1994; Yeh, 1998). However, none of these studies were conducted at the intermediate or middle school levels, none were conducted within the past 20 years, so “future research needs to
continue to investigate the pedagogical practices of teaching L2 writing and the
development of teachers’ knowledge in this domain” (Leki et al., 2008, p. 81).

Scholars have discussed second language writing instruction within the context of
higher education but have not examined writing instruction for adolescent ELLs. Public
school teachers and college composition instructors have differing writing curricula and
goals for their students (Harklau, 2002). These settings represent vastly different
contexts for second language writing instruction (Harklau, 2002, 2011) and research on
teaching writing to ELLs in the middle grades has been largely disregarded (Leki, 2003).

The existing literature on second language writing instruction is largely non-
empirical and gives little attention to the instruction of adolescent ELLs. While scholars
have attempted to discern the “best” method for teaching second language writing, their
perspectives inform contexts of higher education and have limited transferability to K-12
settings. Because of this, more research is needed to understand how teachers are
approaching the teaching of writing for adolescent ELLs in American schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

Hinkel (2011) posited that

[a]t present . . . it is not known what L2 writers are to be taught to enable them to
meet their academic, occupational, professional, and vocational goals. New
research, the development of principled classroom practice, and well rounded
teacher education are urgently needed. (p. 535)

This is a serious problem given the increasing populations of ELLs in our schools and
their poor performance on national writing assessments (NCES, 2016, 2012). Other
researchers echo Hinkel’s concern and reiterate that the teaching of writing to adolescent ELLs have been largely unexplored: “There have been surprisingly few research-based descriptions of L2 writing classroom instruction . . . research has produced few substantive guidelines for designing and implementing L2 literacy instruction” (Leki et al., 2008, p. 80).

Clearly, research on second language writing instruction is needed to inform classroom teaching practice as well as programs of teacher education. With these fervent calls in mind, this study aims to understand teachers’ pedagogical decisions and practices for teaching writing to ELLs in grades 5-8.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this investigation. Of interest was how ESL teachers teach writing to ELLs in grades 5-8 in Ohio and the sources that inform their instructional decisions.

1. How do ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8?
2. How do ESL teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for second language writing instruction?

Conclusion

In the following chapter, I discuss emerging demographic trends in the American student population and issues related to describing and identifying English language learners. I then explain the theoretical framework used for this study and examine the existing body of literature on second language writing instruction.
**Definition of Terms**

*Emergent Bilinguals/Multilinguals:* Students who have learned their first/second language(s) at home and are also learning English at school (Grosjean, 1998).

*Emergent Biliteracy:* The process of developing literacy simultaneously in a first and second language (Edelsky, 1986; Moll, Saez, & Dworin, 2001; Reyes, 2006). In the U.S., first language literacy is typically informally developed in the home and second language (English) literacy is formally developed at the school. In this dissertation, the term ‘emergent biliteracy’ refers to the active and ongoing process of learning to listen, speak, read, and write in two languages. Particular emphasis and attention is given to instruction aimed at developing English writing as one of these emergent bilingual competencies.

*English Language Learners:* Students in K-12 schools who speak a first language other than English.

*First Language:* The first learned language of a non-native English speaker.

*Second Language Writing Instruction:* The teaching of (English) writing to English language learners.

*Second Language Writing:* An interdisciplinary field of inquiry that examines contexts of second language writing, educational practices for teaching writing, and the composing processes and written texts of second language writers (Leki et al., 2008).

*Second Language:* The second learned language of a non-native English speaker. In this dissertation, “second language” refers exclusively to English as a second language unless otherwise stated.
(Teaching) English as a Second Language: The instruction of English in an English-speaking country to students whose first language is not English (Nunan, 2015).

**Abbreviations**

ESL: English as a Second Language.

L1: First language (The native language of the speaker, i.e., Spanish, Arabic).

L2: Second language (In this study, English as a second language).

L2: Writing Instruction: Second language writing instruction.

ELLs: English language learners

ELA: English language arts
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this review of the literature, I describe demographic shifts in the U.S. student population over the past 16 years and the slow response to these changes in programs of teacher education. I attend to some of the difficulties in accurately identifying and describing English language learners. I discuss issues regarding terminology used in the field of second language education. I then explain James P. Lantolf’s sociocultural theory of second language acquisition, which serves as the theoretical framework for this study. Following this, I examine, from a historical perspective, the existing literature on second language writing instruction. Finally, current research on teaching writing to adolescent ELLs is summarized.

Demographic Shifts in American Student Populations and the Writing Crisis

English language learners (ELLs) are the most rapidly growing student group in America’s K-12 public school system (NCES, 2016). The most recently published national data on ELLs reports that in the 2013-2014 school year, ELLs comprised approximately 9.3% of the total K-12 population in the United States (NCES, 2016). Demographers project that by 2020, 25% of all students in U.S. schools will be Latinos who speak a first language other than English (Maxwell, 2012). There are currently 4.5 million students participating in programs for English language learners in U.S. schools. Almost one third (31.3%) of all ELLs in the U.S. are in grades 5-8 (NCES, 2016b). Adolescents ELLs are the fastest growing segment of the K-12 student population (Batalova & McHugh, 2010).
Within the state of Ohio, the ELL population is growing rapidly. Ohio has over 40,000 ELLs in its K-12 public schools, which represents a 199% increase in this student population over statistics reported 10 years prior (NCES, 2016; Ohio Department of Education [ODE], 2016). About one quarter of Ohio’s ELLs are recent immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for less than three years (ODE, 2016). This rapid increase in the ELL student population should bring renewed attention to the instruction of ELLs in Ohio. Many of these students are entering the American public school system for the first time with limited or no English skills at all, while others have lived here for many years but are still developing their second language.

While ELL enrollment continues to rise, teachers, researchers, and policymakers are beginning to observe concerning trends in the academic performance of these students. In particular, their limited literacy skills are preventing them from participating fully in school. The most recently published results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveal significant gaps between the writing proficiencies of ELLs and non-ELLs in both 8th and 12th grade. In fact, the average writing score of ELLs in 12th grade was lower than ELLs in 8th grade and less than 1% of ELLs in both grades demonstrated proficient writing skills as defined by the assessment (NCES, 2012). This means 99% of adolescent ELLs in the U.S. did not demonstrate proficient writing skills. These statistics are not only concerning, but represent an emerging crisis in K-12 education.
Identifying English Language Learners

These statistics should bring renewed attention to the instruction of second language writing. One of the challenges in studying second language teaching, however, is identifying and describing English language learners as a distinct student group because this population consists of at least two different groups of students: resident immigrants and generation 1.5 students.

Resident immigrants are those students who have either voluntarily or involuntarily immigrated to the United States. They possess a different legal status than, for example, international students who receive a temporary visa to study at a university. Immigrant students and their families have typically been granted some form of long-term residency status, which can eventually lead to citizenship. Some resident immigrants immigrate voluntarily in search of educational or professional opportunities, while others are refugees displaced by war or political unrest in their home countries.

Involuntary immigrants, or refugees, possess varied language learning experiences in both their first and second languages and also have diverse prior educational experiences. Children fleeing their home countries may have had interrupted schooling due to displacement and/or the conditions of the educational system. In fact, learning to read and write in English may be the first time a refugee student learns these skills in any language. Generally, their motivation for learning English is for survival or integrative purposes but their ability to read and write upon arrival in the U.S. is typically very limited. Moreover, these students typically identify with the culture of their home country and have limited knowledge of the cultural customs of the U.S. (Ferris &
Hedgcock, 2014). These students are sometimes referred to as SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) in the research literature (DeCapua & Marshall, 2011; DeCapua, Smathers & Tang, 2007); they are what Valdés (1992) calls circumstantial bilinguals, or individuals who are becoming bilingual out of necessity and not by choice.

Voluntary immigrants, though less likely to have suffered the same kinds of traumatizing experiences, may or may not have had language instruction in their home country and may or may not have interrupted schooling experiences. Generally, the schooling experiences of these students depends largely on the extent to which their home nation has a developed educational system. They also identify strongly with their home country’s culture (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Since their prior educational experiences vary greatly, they also have varying first language literacy, meaning that students may or may not be able to read and write in their first language.

Another group of ELLs, generation 1.5, includes students who have been educated in the American school system and have first generation (immigrant) parents (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988). Ferris and Hedgcock (2014) propose that generation 1.5 students are those who have parents who are immigrants, speak a language other than English at home, have attended school in English (American) schools for most of (or all) their school-age years, and have received some form of educational support due to their limited English proficiency. Scholars disagree on whether or not generation 1.5 students need to be born in the U.S. or not, whether or not they only speak a language other than English in the home, and how old a child can be before he/she is simply considered an immigrant. In comparison to recently immigrated students, generation 1.5 students are
generally already assimilated to U.S. culture and are familiar with the school system because they have had (mostly) continued educational experiences in the United States. Generally, they identify culturally with U.S. culture and can speak English fluently, but have varying reading and writing abilities in English (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

In some cases, however, generation 1.5 learners and their families are transnationals who travel frequently between the U.S. and their home country. In this U.S., these students are typically children of Mexican seasonal workers who live temporarily in Arizona, California, and Texas. Children of transnational parents often have English-learning experiences that are frequently interrupted due to travel and long periods of time spent outside of an English-speaking community or school system (Roberge, 2002, 2009).

Because U.S. generation 1.5 children have lived in the United States for some, most, or all of their lives, and learn to speak English at a young age but typically speak a language other than English at home, it is unclear whether or not English is technically a “second” language for these students. These children grow up in an English-speaking society but typically have limited early literacy experiences to support their reading and writing in English. It may be more accurate to describe these students as simultaneous bilinguals or multilinguals depending on how old they were when they started learning English.

In short, ELLs in the U.S. possess varying levels first and second language literacy, formal education, and diverse personal histories. In sum, the heterogeneity of this group of students in and of itself is not problematic, but the inconsistent language
used to describe them is, at times, confusing and does not always accurately capture the variability of educational experiences of these students.

**Describing English Language Learners**

So what do we call students whose first language is not English? This question seems quite straightforward, but it is actually quite difficult to answer because our educational system currently lacks a consistent definition and method for classifying ELLs (Olson, Scarcella, & Matuchniak, 2015). Teachers, policymakers, and scholars have not adopted consistent language to describe these students.

In the 1950s, ELLs were referred to as “foreign students” (Gibian, 1951, p. 157). Today, many terms such as English language learners (ELLs), Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, international students, English as Second Language (ESL) students, speakers of other languages, second language learners, language or linguistic minority students, or culturally and linguistically diverse learners are used. The language used to describe English language learners is complicated by the fact that the terms “foreign,” “limited,” and speakers of “other” languages assign a diminutive status, which has become controversial within the field of second language education (Nunan, 2015). In settings of higher education such as universities and colleges, it is customary to use the term ESL students or international students to describe students who are learning English as a second language. In K-12 settings, the terms English language learners, limited English proficient students, and second language learners are more commonly used. Within the field of teaching English as a second language, these terms are often used interchangeably without much critical attention to the language used and its meaning.
The exchanging of these terms promotes the notion that English language learners consist primarily of a homogenous group of students; however, this is simply not the case. English language learners represent a culturally and linguistically diverse population of students learning English in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes.

Though the terms English language learners (ELLs) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) are currently used by the U.S. Department of Education, these terms imply a subtractive view of language learners as “lacking” English and imply a devaluing of the student’s first language. Also problematic with the term ELL, one could argue, is the fact that monolingual English-speaking children and adults continue to learn their language throughout the lifespan and by a broader definition may also be considered “English language learners.” Other terminology such as English as a Second Language (ESL) students may also pose issues for describing those who are learning English as a third or even fourth language, which makes the term “second” inaccurate though easily understood.

Some scholars have advocated that the term “bilingual” more accurately describes this group of students, but there is disagreement on who can or cannot be considered bilingual in terms of their level of language proficiency (Grosjean, 1998). From this viewpoint, there are different types of bilingual learners, including early, late, sequential, simultaneous, circumstantial, and emergent bilinguals (Grosjean, 1998; Reyes, 2006; Valdés, 1992). However, the term bilingual carries the same issue as the term “second” language learner, implying that the student’s learning is limited to two languages. In
many cases, the term bilingual is sufficient, but when multiple languages are learned, the term multilingual should be used.

Perhaps another contributing factor to the inconsistent use of language is that the fields of second language education and second language literacy lack clear and consistently used terminology for describing these students. Multiple titles are often used interchangeably. For example, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English as an Additional Language (EAL), and Second Language Education (SLE) are all used to speak broadly about the field of teaching English to learners who speak a first language other than English. Clearly, the field itself is difficult to define. Perhaps the inconsistent language is a reflection of second language education as a relatively new academic discipline.

In taking these points into consideration, I will use the term English language learners (ELLs) to describe students who are learning English as a second or additional language. In line with Grosjean’s (1998) recommendation to pay specific attention to the terms used to describe this group of students, I also adopt the term emergent bilinguals/multilinguals. These include students who are developing bilingual competencies in at least two languages (for example, English and Spanish), meaning that they are learning to listen, speak, read, and write in multiple languages at the same time (Reyes, 2006).

When it comes to describing writing instruction for emergent bilinguals, I borrow the commonly used term “second language writing” and its abbreviated form “L2
writing.” I acknowledge the limitations of this term as it excludes learners who can write in more than two languages, but this is the terminology commonly used in the research literature. In this study, L1 refers to the first learned language of a non-native English learner (Chinese, Arabic, German, Spanish, etc.) and L2 refers to English when it is learned as a second language. The following section describes the various instructional settings in which multilingual students learn English.

**ESL Instructional Models**

Instructional programs designed to help ELLs with English language development vary. These programs vary from state to state, from district to district, and even from school to school. There are five primary instructional models used for ESL instruction in the United States. The first model, sheltered instruction, provides focused language instruction for students with many different L1s coupled with content-area instruction in which language is adapted to the needs of the learners. The second model involves intensive remedial language classes in which instruction focuses primarily on improving students’ speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills in English. Thirdly, “pull-out” ESL programs are those in which ELLs leave mainstream general education classes and participate in a 45-60 minute lesson in a separate ESL classroom (Duff, 2005). During this time, the ESL classroom may include students from different grades and varying levels of English proficiency. This is the model examined in this study. Fourthly, the “push-in” or inclusion model occurs when ESL teachers visit ELLs in their mainstream content-area classes to provide additional language support during the teacher’s lesson. In some cases, the ESL teacher may teach part of the lesson if there are many ELLs in the
Those who teach pull-out and push-in models typically travel to different schools within the district to provide support (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Finally, less common models in the U.S. are bilingual education and language immersion programs in which content is primarily taught in the student’s L1 (Spanish, Chinese, etc.). In some districts, ESL instruction is a combination of two or more of these models. In the next section, I will discuss some of the ongoing issues regarding how teachers are being prepared to teach ESL.

**Preparing Teachers for Culturally Versus Linguistically Diverse Classrooms**

The professional preparation of ESL teachers is essential to the success of any one of these approaches to teaching ELLs. The poor performances of ELLs on national writing assessments should bring attention to how teachers are being prepared for teaching English as a second language, and more specifically, how they are being prepared to teach writing. There are two primary issues in preparing teachers for teaching L2 writing. Firstly, the teaching of ESL is often subsumed in programs of teacher education within courses of multicultural education. In other words, the preparation of teachers for cultural diversity and linguistic diversity are not often differentiated (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). Secondly, the credentialing requirements for ESL teachers vary from state to state (Fenner, 2013). Thus, there is little consistency in how ESL teachers are prepared to teach.

The lack of attention ESL has received in programs of teacher education is due, in part, to the tendency to subsume ESL instruction under the umbrella of multicultural education. It is necessary to make a distinction between the preparation of teachers for
the cultural versus linguistic diversity of the classroom. Though language and culture are inextricably linked, there are important paradigmatic distinctions that need to be made between these two aspects of language teaching.

The preparation of culturally-responsive teachers requires that educators pay attention to the cultural differences within the classroom setting (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Culturally-responsive, or relevant, teaching is a pedagogical framework in which educators value the cultural knowledge students bring to the classroom (Gay, 2002, 2010, 2013). Culturally-responsive teaching assumes that students who are identified as “culturally different” are routinely marginalized in educational contexts (Delpit, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2003). Though initially conceived to address the needs of marginalized African American children (Ladson-Billings 1992, 2009), this framework also informs teaching of other minority student groups such as English language learners.

The focus on culturally-responsive teaching in programs of teacher education has overshadowed issues related to the linguistic diversity of the classroom. Consequently, pedagogy for teaching linguistically diverse students has remained largely undifferentiated from teaching pedagogies for culturally diverse populations (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). This is problematic given the fact that “culturally diverse” students may or may not be “linguistically diverse.” This distinction is critical for programs of teacher education that aim to prepare ESL teachers because the assumption that culture and language are one and the same has resulted in programs of teacher education that largely ignore the preparation of preservice teachers to meet the language needs of ELLs. As Lucas and Grinberg (2008) write, “[i]t is time that we stop subsuming the preparation of
classroom teachers to teach English language learners within more general considerations of the preparation of teachers for diverse populations” (p. 606).

What are also needed are clearly defined standards for preparing ESL teachers. Even though ESL instruction was mandated across the country by No Child Left Behind (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), the credentialing and licensing of ESL teachers is decided by state departments of education (Fenner, 2013). In Ohio, for example, licensed teachers with a bachelor’s degree may pursue an ESL endorsement that may or may not be granted as part of a Master’s degree. In order to receive the endorsement, licensed teachers must take at least 21 credit hours of graduate level coursework and pass the Praxis II/Ohio Assessment for Educators (OAE) ESOL examination (ODE, 2014). In other states, teachers may obtain an ESL certificate or they may need a special license to teach ESL. The number of credit hours needed to obtain an endorsement, certificate, or license and the number of practicum hours spent in an ESL classroom vary greatly from one state to the next (Fenner, 2013).

Not only do credentialing requirements vary from state to state, but ESL teacher education programs also vary within each state because individual universities decide the coursework requirements for the endorsement. Individual schools of education or English departments at the university level determine program requirements for prospective ESL teachers. It is not known how these entities decide which courses prospective ESL teachers will complete and whether or not their program of study includes a course in L2 writing instruction. Thus, there is little consistency in how ESL teachers are prepared for classroom instruction.
Sociocultural Theory of Second Language Acquisition

It is not only the language inconsistencies and “patchwork” credentialing that pose problems for researchers in second language education. No particular theory currently guides research in L2 writing curriculum and instruction (Leki et al., 2008). L2 scholars generally agree, however, that second language teaching is a socially and culturally complex task (Leki et al., 2008). For this study, James P. Lantolf’s sociocultural theory of second language acquisition (SCT-L2) is used to understand the L2 writing instruction of ESL teachers in intermediate and middle schools (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This framework is appropriate because the teaching of writing is a socially and culturally-bound activity. In other words, teaching occurs in social contexts that are mediated by instructional and personal interactions between educators and students.

SCT-L2 poses that human consciousness is mediated through semiotic processes, the most significant of which is communicative activity (Vygotsky, 1986). Grounded in Vygotskian notions of consciousness and learning, this perspective “places mediation, either by other or self, at the core of development and use” of second language learning (Lantolf, 2011, p. 24). Mediation involves the development and use of tools toward a particular goal; everyday tools are objects used to facilitate a task. In social and psychological terms, tools are signs and symbols employed for the purposes of communication (Lantolf, 2011; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). Through mediation, teachers and students are able to engage in meaningful academic activities which guide learning. In this vein, Vygotsky (1987) considered education to be a form of cultural activity with
unique developmental consequences; he argues that meaningful instruction must precede conceptual development and that social interaction is vital to the learning process.

Of primary importance in SCT-L2 are the settings in which conceptual development and learning take place. The social contexts, or milieus, in which language learning occurs are viewed as not only influencing development, but also as the source of activities for learning (Leontiev, 1981). Settings of language learning are viewed as being comprised of social relationships between educators and students as well as the symbolic artifacts constructed within classroom contexts. From this perspective, learning to write in a second language is viewed as a process originating in social activity that is eventually internalized within a particular setting for learning (Lantolf, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, Vygotsky (1997) emphasizes that teachers play a central role in the process of teaching and learning, the role of the “director of the social environment” (p. 339). This perspective maintains that teachers influence learning by changing the instructional environment. Teachers choose appropriately challenging activities within the social environment. Social interaction between adults (teachers) and children (students) within the social environment are the strongest motivating forces underlying cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1987).

To summarize, SCT-L2 is predicated on three primary assumptions about language acquisition. Firstly, human cognition and learning are “mediated by psychological tools such as language, signs, and symbols” (Karpov & Hayward, 1998, p. 27). The power of these tools lies primarily in their potential for action, and in the case of teaching, their potential for learning. Secondly, language serves as a socially
constructed symbol for teaching and learning. Students acquire language from teachers throughout childhood and adolescence through goal-directed activities. Finally, language is a culturally-meaningful tool used for communication and thinking. Therefore, appropriation of tools for writing in a second language is a significant cultural act in the process of learning to write. The purpose of learning a second language in school is to develop the “[child’s] capacity to consciously shape [language] to meet their communicative needs” (Lantolf, 2011, p. 25).

The SCT-L2 perspective is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study because it attends to two major concerns in the field of second language writing. Of concern is the nature of the instruction being used to teach ELLs how to write and the tools used in this activity. It is not known what instructional strategies teachers are using to teach writing to ELLs (Hinkel, 2011). Furthermore, “research has produced few substantive guidelines for designing and implementing L2 literacy instruction” (Leki et al., 2008, p. 81). SCT-L2 also attends to the cultural significance of learning to “make meaning” in a second language. Cultural understandings of what writing looks like vary across cultures (Kaplan, 1966, 1967). Learning a “second language is looking into the windows cut out by the first language” (Ushakova, 1994, p. 154). It is unclear from the current literature whether or not teachers attend to this issue in their writing instruction of ELLs.

In this study, SCT-L2 provides the theoretical frame used examine the teaching of L2 writing as a socially-mediated and contextualized event. It allows one to identify and describe the conceptual and material tools which mediate the teaching of writing within
the setting of the ESL classroom. In examining these tools, one can begin to understand how they potentially expand or limit opportunities for learning to write in a second language.

**The Current State of Research on L2 Writing Instruction**

Research on the teaching of second language writing in English is notoriously limited (Hinkel, 2011; Jun, 2008; Leki et al., 2008). Though research in the areas of L2 writers’ characteristics, academic texts and their linguistic features are well documented (see Hyland 2003; Tang, 2012), there have been few studies of L2 writing classroom instruction (Leki et al., 2008). Little research has aimed to understand what we know about teaching writing to ELLs, how they are being taught to write in K-12 classrooms, and how teachers are being prepared to meet the unique literacy needs of these students. What is known is that L2 writers’ texts are different than L1 writers’ texts (Hyland, 2003); however, it is not known if teachers are being prepared to pay attention to these differences. Writing constructs such as structure, topic appropriateness, arrangement of evidence, and style are “influenced by the rhetorical and text construction norms that can differ substantially across languages and cultures” (Hinkel, 2011, p. 526).

No particular definitive model of L2 writing has emerged because L2 writing research is a relatively new area of inquiry. L2 researchers have mostly relied on the models of L1 English writing instruction and composition (Raimes, 1983; Zamel, 1976, 1980). Some L2 writing scholars argue that the field has relied too heavily on “L1 composition theories, theories which are, incidentally, largely monolingual, monocultural, ethnocentric, and fixated on the writing of [native English speaking]
undergraduates in North American colleges and universities” (Silva, 1993, pp. 668-669). Though L1 research can inform L2 instruction, reliance on these studies can be problematic because one cannot assume that L1 and L2 writing are the same (Silva, 1993). As such, it is necessary to acknowledge some differences between L1 and L2 texts.

**Characteristics of L2 Writers’ Texts**

Comparative analysis of L1 and L2 texts in similar written genres reveal L2 writers employ inconsistent use of macro discourse structures and rhetorical features due to negative transfer of conventions from L1 (Hinkel, 2011). Specifically, they have difficulty supporting and constructing thesis statements with reasoned arguments, take approaches to argumentation and persuasion that differ linguistically and conceptually from what is expected in academic English, and support claims with anecdotal evidence or personal opinions or leave arguments unsupported altogether (Hinkel, 1997, 2001a, 2001b, 2002). L2 writers have a tendency to sequence ideas differently than monolingual English writers, have difficulty constructing coherent prose, produce shorter and less detailed texts, and have a difficult time understanding how to write for a particular audience (Hyland, 2003; Leki, 2007; Leki et al., 2008). They also use repetition more frequently and develop prose that is allusive and employs vague statements in lieu of direct statements (Silva, 1993; Spack, 1997).

Similarly, micro features of L2 prose also differ significantly from L1 writing. For example, L2 writers use few idiomatic expressions and collocational phrases, compose shorter sentences and fragmented clauses, and often have high rates of
incomplete sentences that lack a subject-verb agreement (Cutting, 2000; Ferris, 1995a, 1995b). ELLs often repeat content words frequently due to limited vocabulary, employ fewer modifying prepositional phrases and frequently misuse prepositions, employ inconsistent verb tense, use fewer nominalizations, and have a tendency to use conversational intensifiers in the effort to over exaggerate (always, totally; Ferris, 2002; Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Finally, L2 writers often omit articles, confuse singular and plural nouns and pronouns, use modal verbs incorrectly, and have frequent spelling errors (Hinkel, 2005, 2009; McCretton & Rider, 1993).

Research on the compositional practices of ELLs has determined that L2 writers make certain errors that L1 writers typically do not. What is not known is how teachers can address these issues effectively in their teaching. Put simply, it is unclear what teachers know about instructional practices for teaching L2 writing.

**Historical Approaches to L2 Writing Instruction**

In reviewing the literature on second language writing instruction, it is clear that much has been discussed but there is a lack of data to support best practices for teaching L2 writing. In fact, for more than fifty years, L2 writing scholars have fervently expressed the need for research in second language writing instruction because it is practically non-existent (see Briere, 1966; Cumming, 1992; Hinkel, 2011; Leki et al., 2008; Piper, 1989; Spack & Sadow, 1983; Zamel 1976). Even in the 1940s and 1950s when L2 writing occupied a marginal status as a field, little research was being conducted on how writing should be taught to English language learners; most publications were
based on anecdotal teaching experiences and discussions of what should be taught (Zamel, 1976).

Though L2 writing instruction began in 1941 at the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan, the first study about L2 writing instruction did not appear until 1966 (Briere, 1966). With the exception of studies on error correction and feedback to student writing, research on instructional practices for teaching writing in L2 contexts “have produced few substantive guidelines for designing and implementing L2 literacy instruction” (Leki et al., 2008, p. 81).

There have been six evolutions in the teaching of second language writing since the 1940s: oral language, controlled, free composition, contrastive rhetoric, process, and post-process. Each historical approach is characterized by an emphasis on an aspect of writing deemed important at the time. In studying these transitions, one can identify how the teaching of writing has evolved from its infancy to the current day.

**Oral language approach.** In its earliest stages, the teaching of L2 writing was only an afterthought in language education because the teaching of speaking took precedence over writing and other language skills (Bloomfield, 1942; Fries, 1945). For Fries (1945), writing was not an important skill to be learned; he stated that “even written exercises might be part of the work” of English language learners (p. 8). Instructors believed students would acquire writing skills after they had mastered the other productive skill of speaking.

In the following decade, instructors such as Gibian (1951) noticed that “a large majority of [foreign] students . . . [had] difficulties with taking notes, taking part in the
regular class of English composition . . . and writing papers and examinations” (p. 157). Gibian’s separate ESL section of English composition at Harvard aimed to meet the “peculiar needs” of international students (1951, p. 157). A close reading of this paper, however, reveals that his course actually focused primarily on reading, oral repetition, spelling bees, and translation of text from the students’ native languages to English. Gibian attended to the correction of grammatical errors, not the teaching of compositional writing. Nevertheless, he was among the first scholars to recognize that international students needed explicit instruction in writing.

**The controlled approach.** What followed the oral approach was the perception of writing as a habit-forming, controlled skill (Pincas, 1962, 1964; Rojas, 1968; Ross, 1968). Thus, the purpose of writing instruction at the time was to help students substitute and manipulate language structures. Common examples of controlled writing included “copying, completion, dictation, answering questions based on reading material, writing a paragraph by answering questions, filling blanks, and rewriting by making substitutions” (Rojas, 1968, p. 127). The conscious manipulation and imitation of sentence patterns was central to learning how to write (Ross, 1968). The primary purpose of instruction was to prevent students from making errors in their writing (Ross, 1968). Proponents of this approach believed students needed to master the lexical and syntactic structures of English before they could attempt to write a composition. The teacher assumed the role of editor, concerned primarily with grammatical correctness and not the communication of ideas. The controlled composition approach aimed to “elicit correct sentences, to give practice in the writing of correct sentences” (Pincas, 1962, p. 190). Grammatically
correct writing was viewed as quality writing. Students needed to learn to substitute and manipulate language patterns in their writing. “Quality” texts were ones that included a variety of (grammatically correct) sentence patterns and vocabulary.

**Free composition.** Some rejected the controlled approach and advocated instead for “free composition” (Briere, 1966; Erazmus, 1960). They conceived writing instruction as being more complex than simple manipulation of patterns. In their view, writing instruction for ELLs was complicated by four factors: (a) students’ limited proficiency with the target language; (b) the interference of L1 linguistic structures; (c) the interference of L1 stylistics and cultural thought patterns; (d) limited exposure to ‘free composition’ in the L1 (Erazmus, 1960). These issues were believed to have caused students’ writing to be very basic and full of errors. Opposition to controlled writing was primarily motivated by concern for fluency and writing quantity. Briere and Erazmus argued that the concern over the correctness and “quality” of writing should not precede concern for quantity and length.

In what is considered the first study on second language writing instruction, Briere (1966) noted a “tremendous lack of any empirical evidence derived from controlled observations in the [second language writing] classroom” (p. 141). He continued to say that “the most honest statement we can probably make about the teaching of writing . . . in any second language . . . is that we know very little about it” (Briere, 1966, p. 141). This pilot study of 15 students in an advanced ESL composition course at the University of California Los Angeles provided (limited) evidence of the importance of quantity, but his views were opposed by most scholars who supported the
principles and practices of controlled composition (Danielson, 1965; Dykstra, 1964; Dykstra & Paulston, 1967; Moody, 1965; Paulston, 1967, 1972; Pincas, 1964; Praninskas, 1965; Spencer, 1965), who also viewed writing as “the handmaid of the other skills” and believed that it “[could] not take precedence as a major skill to be developed” (Rivers, 1968, p. 241).

**Contrastive rhetoric.** Also absent from the literature until the mid-1960s was an awareness of how students’ cultures would affect their rhetorical choices in written English. Kaplan’s (1966, 1967) theory of contrastive rhetoric in the teaching of composition posited that language and culture are mutually reinforcing and that thought patterns evident in written English came from Anglo-European cultures. Central to this perspective was the notion that teachers could no longer assume teaching speaking and grammar would result in mastery of writing skills for ELLs. Kaplan (1967) argued instructors could no assume that students would be able to write simply “because [they had] learned to control the phonology and syntax of a second language” (p. 16). He defined rhetoric as “the methods of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns” (Kaplan, 1967, p. 15) and recognized that ELLs “employ a rhetoric and a sequence of thought which violate the expectations of the native reader” (Kaplan, 1966, p. 4). Similar to Gibian (1951), Kaplan maintained that teaching composition to culturally diverse students is fundamentally different than teaching American students. He called attention away from writing at the sentence level and called for “more pattern drill . . . at the rhetorical level” (Kaplan, 1967, p. 15). Thus, the paragraph and essay form, the arrangement of sentences, use of examples and illustrations, providing support and
outlining, and imitating paragraph structures were of primary concern (Arapoff, 1967, 1968, 1969).

This approach criticized the notion that syntactic accuracy should be the primary concern of ESL instructors (Carr, 1967). Carr explained:

> [i]n sentence building exercises, the emphasis is on correctly written sentence patterns. The students’ concerns are with words, word order, and grammar. But in composition exercises the emphasis must be on the logical arrangement of ideas into paragraphs and full-length compositions. It therefore doesn’t follow that because a student can write sentences, he can compose. These two skills must be differentiated. (1967, p. 30)

In other words, Carr argued that the teaching of writing required attention to the organization of ideas and not only the manipulation of sentences. Proponents of this traditional rhetorical approach used model texts to teach students the structures of paragraphs and essays. For example, having students find the topic sentence, main ideas, and the concluding sentence of a paragraph in a model text were common practices. This approach aimed to bring writing to the forefront of English instruction and served as the starting point for the process movement. In essence, supporters of this instructional approach believed that writing could no longer be regarded as the “handmaid” of the other skills.

**Writing process.** Mounting dissatisfaction with the controlled approach to writing brought about debate over the importance of the writing process versus the written product. Clearly the controlled approach favored product with little regard for the
writer’s process and expressive ability in the creation of the piece. Zamel (1976, 1980) argued teaching the writing process to L2 learners was not different than teaching writing to L1 students, which conflicted with scholars’ earlier proposals (Kaplan, 1966, 1967; Pincas, 1962). Supporters of Zamel’s perspective believed that though English language learners had lower proficiency and limited language skills compared to their native peers, they still needed to practice the cognitive skills necessary to complete the writing process (Taylor, 1976, 1981). A particular point of contention was the confusion of the teaching of grammar with the teaching of composition:

For [advocates of the controlled approach,] writing seems to be synonymous with skill usage and structure, and the assumption is that these exercises will improve the students’ ability to compose. Influenced by the audio-lingual methodology, writing is seen as a habit forming skill, error is to be avoided and correction and revision are to be provided continuously. (Zamel, 1976, p. 69)

The teaching of grammar is only one dimension of teaching writing (Zamel, 1980) and the controlled approach produced fear of making mistakes, which promoted reluctance to write for some (Spack & Sadow, 1983). Underlying this critique is the fundamental question of what it means to write. For Zamel, the act of composing a piece of writing involves much more than simply combining grammatically-correct sentences. Instead, she argued that “organization, style and rhetoric become the crucial aspects of skill in writing” and that instructors could no longer conceive of writing as orthographic speech (Zamel, 1976, p. 69). The call to abandon the controlled approach to L2 writing instruction prioritized the writer’s purpose, the need to communicate a message through
writing, and the writing process (Raimes, 1983; Spack & Sadow, 1983; Zamel, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1983). Of concern was the neglect of the complexity of the writing process and the unquestioned assumption that improving syntax would also improve students’ rhetorical skills (Zamel, 1980). Zamel and others argued that L2 researchers needed to look to research in the related field of L1 composition for guidance on how to teach L2 writers (Raimes, 1983; Spack & Sadow, 1983; Zamel, 1976, 1980).

The process approach called for instructors to use pre-writing strategies and give “ample time to write and rewrite, to learn that several drafts may be needed before intention and expression become one” (Zamel, 1982, p. 205). Proponents of this approach encouraged writing instructors to engage in writing conferences with students between drafts, and to engage in student-teacher journals in which students write about their experiences and teachers respond (Cumming, 1986). They also believed in teaching students how to plan and make notes, giving consistent meaningful feedback on writing, fostering positive attitudes toward writing and providing a supportive classroom environment (Spack 1984; Spack & Sadow, 1983). Finally, they aimed to provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively with peers, to have students set explicit goals for their writing, to provide scaffolded instruction for the realization of these goals, and to recognize that students could no longer be taught that the writing product could be perfectly executed in one sitting (Zamel, 1982, 1983). The teacher’s role was to guide students’ ideas and organization throughout the writing process and to engage in conferences with students and provide opportunities for them to work collaboratively (Zamel, 1983). The process approach focused on issues between what the writer intends
to communicate and what is actually on the page (Zamel, 1983). Central to this approach was the notion that learning to write only occurs through practice with the writing process: “We . . . learn . . . about the writing process by writing” (Spack & Sadow, 1983, p. 589). The writer and his/her purpose for writing and ability to express meaning are prioritized while the final written product is viewed as a derivative of this process. In essence, proponents of the process approach maintained that instructors of L2 writing needed to recognize that “meaning is created through language, even when the language is written down” (Zamel, 1983, p. 184).

Underlying the shift toward the process approach was concern with the positivist tradition that dominated the field of composition for many years (Raimes, 1983). Instructional practices in both L1 and L2 composition were rooted in psychology and linguistics, particularly Skinner’s behaviorist stimulus-response theory, which emphasized positive reinforcement of correct responses to form habit (Raimes, 1983). As a result, instructors in second language teaching “had paid little attention to real communication and to language as meaning making” (Raimes, 1983, p. 539). Raimes observed that the field was undergoing a shift away from language as form toward language as communicative meaning-making, but maintained that they were still “rooted firmly in the positivist tradition” (Raimes, 1983, p. 538). This perspective of writing instruction characterized writing as a student-centered, interpersonal act largely influenced by the learning process, the learner, and the learning environment. The field experienced transition, but this shift lagged behind research in L1 composition. Accordingly, the field was “in the middle of a paradigm shift” (Raimes, 1983, p. 549).
Debate over process/product continued into the mid-1980s, when exchanges in the “Forum” section of *TESOL Quarterly* gave way to heated discussion. Horowitz (1986a) argued the process “dogma” was not applicable for all kinds of academic writing and imposed Western cultural ideas about writing on international students. Additionally, he proposed the process approach gave students false impressions of how university assignments would be evaluated (Horowitz, 1986a). In response, Liebman-Kleine (1986) clarified that the process approach did not intend to prepare students for every kind of writing they would encounter at the university and that content area instructors needed to teach writing as well. She boldly stated that writing instruction is not the sole responsibility of writing teachers. We cannot inoculate for good writing. A 15-week course will never prepare students-native speakers of English or not-to perform all university writing tasks asked of them. For one thing, to improve, writing must be continually reinforced and practiced . . . there is simply no way to prepare students for every sort they will face. We can only give them strategies and then help them, over and over, to figure out how to find a process that will enable them to handle the current writing task and situation. And by we I do not mean only English teachers. (p. 787)

In response, Horowitz (1986b) maintained that the teaching of writing needed to focus on the kinds of products that professors assigned and that the process approach did not sufficiently provide for this need. In essence, he argued the process orientation overemphasized the individual’s psychological functioning at the expense of the social context (the American university) and what this context required in terms of writing
tasks. Alternatively, L2 writing instruction needed to provide opportunities for students to practice writing that would be acceptable for the academic institution. In this way, students could be successful academically and meet the writing requirements set by professors. Horowitz (1986a, 1986b) advocated for an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) approach to instruction that prioritized the kinds of products students would need to write in their academic disciplines.

Conversely, the process-oriented approach to L2 writing instruction was inspired by theory and research in L1 composition. Many researchers presumed that the similarities between the L1 and L2 writing processes meant that instructional strategies for teaching writing should also be similar (Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 2003). Operating under the assumption that strong L1 writers are also strong L2 writers, research in L2 writing started to show that ELLs with proficient writing skills in their first language were able to employ writing strategies that resembled those of monolingual English writers (Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Ma & Wen, 1999). Many L2 researchers proposed that ELLs who had already developed writing skills in their first language would be able to transfer these competencies to L2 writing (Cumming, 1989; Cummins, 1981, 1994; Zamel, 1976, 1982, 1983). These publications led many researchers and instructors toward the belief that the needs of L2 writers basically mirror the needs of novice L1 writers.

Though this assumption is tempting to adopt, the presupposition that L1 literacy skills naturally and effortlessly transfer to L2 contexts oversimplifies the language learning process (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2007) because L2 writers must continually practice reducing transfer of writing patterns from L1 (Lincoln & Idris, 2015). Current research
does not consistently support the assumption of a strong, positive relationship between L1 and L2 writing proficiency. In a couple studies, researchers found that as L2 writers become highly proficient, their L1 writing skills actually diminish (Atliakbari, 2002; Carson & Kuehn, 1992). Additionally, ELLs who demonstrate high L2 writing ability are those who have achieved a high overall proficiency in English, including their oral and aural skills (Blanton, 2005; Ma & Wen, 1999; Weissberg, 2006). Research on the influence of L1 on L2 development in writing is mixed, but ultimately, knowledge of another language does not appear to prevent learners from acquiring writing skills in a second language (Hedgcock, 2005, 2012). However, research suggests that L2 writers who have limited experience writing in their first language do need explicit instruction on the purposes of writing, audience awareness, executing writing structures appropriately, editing and revising their work, and the overall writing process (Cumming, 1989; Leki et al., 2008; Raimes, 1985).

**Post-process orientations.** More recently, some L2 scholars are challenging the process model for its pedagogical and theoretical positionalities. One notable critique raised of the process approach is can conceive of text composition as an individual, asocial, and decontextualized process (Atkinson, 2003; Dobrin, Rice, Vastola, 2011; Polio & Williams, 2011). The term-post process first appeared in Trimbur’s (1994) paper in which he argued that literacy instruction, particularly the teaching of writing, in “post-process . . . theory and pedagogy [should] represent literacy as an ideological arena and composition as a cultural activity by which writers position and reposition themselves in relation to their own and others’ subjectivities, discourses, practices, and institutions” (p.
Post-process scholars critique process-oriented teaching practices that promote a conceptualization of the writing as an abstract, internally conducted process and argue that process-oriented instruction is only vaguely conceptualized as being related to the social learning environment (Atkinson, 2003). Studies which examine the academic contexts in which writers’ compose (Leki, 1995; Leki & Carson, 1997) and discussion on notions such as genre, discourse communities, and social constructivism (Johns, 1990; Swales 1990) are leading researchers toward conceptualizations of L2 writing as a socially situated and enacted activity.

Trimbur’s (1994) conceptualization of writing as a social activity challenges the process-research originating from Flower and Hayes’ (1981) cognitive framework. Post-process, post-cognitivist scholars critique the cognitive perspective for neglecting the complex, socially constructed environments in which writing occurs (Atkinson, 2003). Coming from a post-modern perspective, post-process orientations toward L2 writing position “literacy as an ideological arena” (Trimbur, 1994, p. 109), meaning that it is conceived not as a decontextualized, individually created, impersonal activity, but rather an activity that is influenced by culture society, power struggles, and social interaction between people (Atkinson, 2003). Investigations that frame L2 writing pedagogy as a social activity are emerging and limited, but demonstrate that L2 literacy is beginning to oriented itself towards a post-cognitivist, socially-contextualized understandings of teaching and learning as socially-constructed activities (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014).

Over the past 75 years, the teaching of L2 writing has undergone an evolution in which each subsequent approach has also progressed from its predecessor. It is necessary
to explicate this evolution for two reasons. First, a comprehensive understanding of these transitions sets the foundation for knowing the current state of L2 writing instruction as a field of study. Second, understanding the pedagogical path L2 writing instruction has taken in the past aids in distinguishing how writing is being taught in second language classrooms today. With this knowledge, one can identify the approaches teachers are currently adopting.

What is known from this history is that most research on teaching second language writing since the 1940s has studied instructors and international students in colleges and universities. It has not been until recently that researchers have started to examine these approaches within the context of K-12 schools. In the section that follows, I discuss the existing research on L2 writing instruction for adolescent English language learners.

**Current Research on L2 Writing Instructional Approaches for Adolescents**

The current body of literature on the instruction of emergent multilingual adolescent writers is limited (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Leki et al., 2008; Panofsky et al., 2005). Current studies focus primarily on the features of student’s compositions, but limited studies have examined the teaching practices and instructional decisions of ESL teachers in the middle grades.

Current research focuses primarily on the linguistic, structural, and rhetorical choices demonstrated in students’ written texts (Bunch & Willet, 2013; Danzak, 2011; De la Paz, 2005; Harman, 2013; Reynolds, 2002, 2005) and not the instructional decisions of their teachers. Some studies have examined temporary instructional interventions and
workshops for L2 writing (Bunch & Willet, 2013; De la Paz, 2005; Lehman & DeLiddo, 2010; Souryasack & Lee, 2007; Uruza 1987), but limited studies have aimed to understand the current, everyday instructional practices aimed at helping adolescent ELLs develop their English writing skills.

One of the existing underlying assumptions in the literature on L2 writing instruction for emergent multilingual adolescents is the notion that teachers’ instructional practices should be informed by the characteristics of L2 students’ written products, but this focus on writing products ignores the importance of teachers’ pedagogical knowledge about writing instruction and the writing process. In my view, the focus on L2 writer’s products provides teachers with little guidance for teaching writing beyond targeting grammatical and structural errors.

Another issue with the current literature on L2 writing instruction for adolescents is that most studies have been conducted in states with large ELL student populations (California, Florida, and Texas) (NCES, 2013; Panofsky et al., 2005). States with mid-size but rapidly growing populations of ELLs such as Ohio have generally been neglected in the research literature. Such states should be of interest because they represent contexts that may be “catching up” in terms of preparing their teachers for the reality of the linguistic diversity of the classroom.

In the aforementioned special issue of the Journal of Second Language Writing, which identified second language adolescent writing as “new territory” (Harklau, 2011, p. 227) in an “emerging field” (Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011, p. 167), the authors call scholars to venture across “disciplinary borders” in the effort to understand how L2
writing instruction is enacted in public schools (Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011, p. 179). In particular, they suggest that scholars in the field of composition studies, literacy studies scholars in schools of education, and K-12 educators work toward understanding these contexts of L2 writing. They echo Leki (2003) and Harklau (2002) in arguing that intermediate, middle, and high school contexts have been neglected in research on L2 writing, just as the study of L2 writing has been neglected within the larger field of compositional studies. They warn that the narrow focus of second language writing research on post-secondary international students is limiting the scope of the field and that research on second language writers, writing, and writing instruction in K-12 contexts are greatly needed because they represent a “different research landscape than that in higher education” (Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011, p. 178).

Overall, the research in L2 writing attends primarily to the writing of young, elementary age learners (K-4) or international students in universities, but rarely focuses on adolescent ELLs in grades 5-12 (Panofsky et al., 2005). Few studies have aimed to understand what we know about teaching writing to ELLs, how adolescent language learners are being taught to write, and how teachers are prepared to meet the unique literacy needs of these students. Essentially, we know very little about the teaching of L2 writing to adolescent ELLs.

**Summary**

Hinkel (2011) posits that teachers and researchers do not currently know how to teach L2 writing. This should be a primary concern for teachers and teacher educators because ELLs comprise at least 9.3% of the school-aged population in the U.S. (NCES,
2016). What is currently known from research on the teaching of second language writing is not only limited, but the significant lack of research on instruction, is a problem for current and future literacy educators. The historical positional debate over pedagogical approaches for teaching L2 composition at the post-secondary level has provided us with some insight but little evidence for teaching. The back-and-forth conversations about L2 writing in journals is a necessary discussion, however, it provides little data to support practice. Given the lack of research in the area of second language writing instruction, one can only conclude that this field has undergone anecdotal debate about the “best” approach for teaching L2 writing, but has produced little evidence in support of these opinions. As Raimes (1991) has said, L2 writing scholars have “gone through the woods in search of new approaches” and have yet to agree the single most effective approach (p. 407).

Many critical questions about L2 writing instruction remain answered: How do teacher educators prepare preservice teachers for teaching L2 writing? How are teachers currently teaching L2 writing? What informs their pedagogical decisions about the teaching of L2 writing? Little is known about how ELLs are taught to write and how their teachers are being prepared to meet their literacy needs. Clearly, research is needed to answer these questions.

Current practices for teaching L2 writing are based on conjectures of how L2 writing should be taught. Moreover, ideas about how L2 writing should be taught are largely based on what is known from teaching composition in contexts of higher education. It is also unclear how ESL teachers are being prepared to teach writing.
Research that informs pedagogical practices is needed to fill this gap in the literature. Unfortunately, “[t]here have been surprisingly few research-based descriptions of L2 writing classroom instruction” (Leki et al., 2008, pp. 80-81) despite the continued growing presence of linguistic diversity in U.S. schools. Research is needed in order to understand how teachers are addressing the needs of L2 writers in their classrooms and what can be done to improve the current state of writing instruction for these students.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

A Case for Qualitative Inquiry in Second Language Teaching and Learning

Qualitative research methods in second language education have not always been viewed as useful for understanding how languages are acquired (Richards, 2003). The positivist tradition present in the field of second language acquisition has prioritized quantitative methods over qualitative ones (Duff, 2008). Consequently, previous research on language acquisition has been largely oriented toward the reporting of “objective” occurrences of language acquisition (Richards, 2003). The “social turn” in second language acquisition (Block, 2003) has brought to light ontological issues with regard to what the field can and cannot study within positivist frameworks. The social turn is useful for examining how language skills are acquired but also how they are taught and learned. With regards to writing as a learnable language skill, positivist-oriented studies have been useful for examining certain aspects of writing, particularly the examination of writers’ texts.

This research demonstrates that comparing multiple groups of writers and measuring a text feature against other variables (typically some measure of proficiency or text quality) informs the developmental stages of learning to write (e.g., Sasaki, 2000), student errors (e.g., Chan, 2010) and the effects of the writer’s first language on his/her ability to write in another language (e.g., Reynolds, 1995). In other cases, experimental quantitative studies about teacher feedback and error correction (Ferris, 2002; Truscott, 2007) provide support for writing interventions. Though these are important topics
worthy of investigation, these studies provide limited in-depth evidence of the social influences on teaching, teachers’ beliefs and perspectives about writing instruction, and their pedagogical orientations towards teaching L2 writing.

Fortunately, scholars in the field of second language acquisition and second language education have recognized that strictly positivist orientations towards L2 learning are limiting the kinds of questions they can consider in their research (Atkinson, 2011; Block, 2003). Qualitative research is necessary in this field because it informs the qualities of second language teachers and their practices. Second language researchers are now advocating for more qualitative research to fill this gap in the research (Duff, 2008, 2012; Friedman, 2012; Richards, 2003). Qualitative inquiry provides the opportunity for asking questions about how and why teaching and learning processes unfold and provides insight into the complexities of the social milieus in which languages are learned. Language teaching and learning are inherently “person-centered enterprise[s],” meaning that the social aspects of teaching and learning cannot be disregarded (Richards, 2003, p. 9). From this perspective, research on patterns of human behavior in the classroom needs to account for the unpredictable subjectivities of human experience within contexts of learning. This study aimed to examine the social subjectivities of teaching writing within the context of second language education. In short, qualitative inquiry is necessary for understanding how ESL is taught and learned (Richards, 2003).
The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how teachers teach writing to English language learners in Ohio. This is a worthwhile study because there are few researchers who have examined L2 writing instruction, especially in grades 5-8 (Leki et al., 2008; Panofsky et al., 2005). Most studies on the teaching of second language writing focus on the teaching of writing to international students in colleges and universities, but the study of L2 writing instruction in K-12 settings is a new area of inquiry. Studies conducted in contexts of higher education have shown that writing practice and explicit instruction on text forms and the composition process help develop ELLs’ writing ability and capacity (Cumming, 1992; Riazi, Lessard-Clouston, & Cumming, 1996; Shi, 1998; Weissberg, 1994). However, the findings of these studies have limited transferability to K-12 classrooms.

Researchers have identified second language writing instruction for adolescents to be an “emerging field” of research in which studies of teacher instruction are urgently needed (Harklau, 2011, p. 277; also see de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Hinkel, 2011; Ortmeier-Hooper & Enright, 2011). Existing research on adolescent L2 writers attends primarily to the characteristics of writers’ texts (Bunch & Willet, 2013; De la Paz, 2005; Harman, 2013; Reynolds, 2002) and not to the instructional approaches used for teaching writing (Leki et al., 2008). Some researchers have examined the implementation of temporary instructional interventions with adolescent ELLs such as genre-focused interventions (De la Paz, 2005; Harman, 2013), an afterschool writing group (Sourysack & Lee, 2007), and a writing workshop (Uruza, 1987). These studies show that explicit
writing instruction helps adolescent ELLs develop their academic writing skills, but they do not inform our understanding of how ESL teachers are teaching writing to L2 learners in grades 5-8.

This research sheds light on how writing is taught in ESL classrooms. Beyond this, this study not only brings attention to how writing is being taught but reveals some of the existing obstacles ESL teachers encounter as they attempt to teach writing and make pedagogical decisions about teaching writing in grades 5-8.

**Study Design and Rationale**

This study was conceived and designed as a qualitative multiple case study, or “multicase” study (Merriam, 1998, p. 40). Case study research is exploratory in nature; it examines processes rather than outcomes (Merriam, 1998). “Multicase” means that the researcher explores multiple cases within a bounded system (Merriam, 2009; Smith 1978). With this definition in mind, this study aims to achieve “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of two cases of teachers who teach writing to emergent multilingual students. Since case studies require the identification of a case that is defined by particular parameters, it is necessary to explain why this particular research warrants a case study design.

Since this research aimed to investigate L2 writing instruction in ESL classrooms, ESL teachers comprised the individual cases for this study. Two teachers, Julia and Chloe (all names are pseudonyms), were purposefully selected to participate. Both participants taught ESL pull-out classes for ELLs in grades 5-8. These classes aimed to provide language support and intervention for ELLs outside of general education
classrooms. As an individual case, each teacher was bound to her instructional context at local and state levels. At the local level, these teachers taught within the parameters of their district expectations and policies for ESL instruction. At the state level, these teachers were bound to new conditions, such as new curricular standards for ELLs and a new language proficiency assessment. Given these characteristics, a multiple case study design seemed appropriate for making comparisons within and across cases (Merriam, 1998). These cases were examined within the context of English as a second language education in the state of Ohio.

Since a case study approach can also include quantitative data as a secondary data source (Merriam, 2009), I present, where appropriate, the duration of time devoted to writing instruction in ESL classes and the time given to different kinds of writing tasks. This data is used to supplement interview and observational data in order to provide a detailed, specific, and accurate account of how the participants taught writing. The purpose of recording instructional time given to writing was to capture a snapshot of how frequently, regularly, and consistently writing was taught in ESL.

With these objectives in mind, I observed two ESL teachers, Julia and Chloe (all names are pseudonyms), during a total of 108 ESL classes. I conducted multiple classroom observations while taking detailed field notes. I also interviewed each participant three times and collected teaching artifacts such as lesson plans and handouts. A qualitative survey also provided information about the teachers’ preparation for teaching writing. All observed class sessions and interviews were digitally recorded and
later transcribed. In the following sections, I describe the context of this study and present the participants.

**Context of the Study**

**ESL in Ohio: 2015-2016.** The 2015-2016 school year was a transitional year for ESL teachers in Ohio. In August 2015, the Ohio Department of Education implemented new English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards for ELLs (Appendix A). Not only had new standards been established that year, but the state English language proficiency test also changed. The state adopted the Ohio English Language Proficiency Assessment (OELPA) to replace the Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition (OTELA). The state’s language assessment evaluates English proficiency in the four language domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing. A student’s score on this test determines whether or not he/she can exit an ESL program. OELPA changed in both content and formatting. For the first time, all ELLs in K-12 in the state of Ohio took this test in a digital, online format. The testing window for OELPA opened on February 29, 2016 and closed on April 22, 2016.

An investigation of ESL teachers in Ohio is warranted because much of the research on the instruction of ELLs reflects the teaching conditions in states with larger ELL populations. These states include California, Texas, Florida, and New York (NCES, 2013). A study within the state of Ohio provides insight into ESL teaching in states with growing ELL populations. Ohio’s public schools serve approximately 40,000 students with developing English skills (ODE, 2016). Although Ohio does not have as large of an ELL population as California, Texas, Florida, or New York, it belongs to a group of mid-
western states with moderate but growing populations of ELLs (NCES, 2013). The most recently published federal data on ELLs in the U.S. shows that during the 2012-2013 school year, California had the largest ELL population with almost 1,392,000 ELLs (NCES, 2013). In the same year, Texas had over 739,600 ELLs; Florida had 242,133 ELLs and New York had 197,594. States with the lowest populations of ELLs include Vermont (1,447), West Virginia (2,084), Wyoming (2,733), and North Dakota (2,667) (NCES, 2013). What is common across most states, however, is that the population of ELLs has increased steadily since the 2002-2003 school year (NCES, 2013). The Ohio Department of Education has reported a 199% increase in its ELL population since 2002 (ODE, 2016).

Ohio’s ELL population represents a diverse linguistic mosaic with 110 different first languages. The most commonly spoken first languages of ELLs in Ohio are Spanish, Somali, Arabic, Pennsylvania Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, French, Russian, and Twi (ODE, 2016). In the past 15 years, tens of thousands of refugees have settled in Ohio from countries such as Somalia, Burma, Vietnam, Russia, Uzbekistan, Cuba, Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Iran, and Sudan (ODE, 2016). Children arriving to Ohio from these countries are required to attend school with sometimes little to no knowledge of English. This poses a unique set of circumstances in which students are arriving to the classroom without the linguistic tools and literacy skills needed to be successful in the American school system. In many cases, refugees have interrupted and/or limited formal schooling experiences and may be illiterate in their first languages (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Given these complex circumstances, it remains unclear
exactly how teachers are addressing the literacy needs of these students, particularly when it comes to the teaching of writing. Research on the instruction of ELLs is typically conducted with teachers in states with larger ELL student populations, so a case study that examines ESL teachers in Ohio adds diversification to the existing body of literature and contributes valuable information within the context of this state. In response to this need, I collected data from two participants.

**Participants.** The vocabulary used to describe the people who are examined in a study varies according to the researcher’s beliefs and epistemological stance on how research should be conducted. Underlying these beliefs are assumptions about the nature of knowing, the ability to describe and understand truth, and cultural notions about the world. Seidman (2013) argues that the terms respondent, informant, and subject “[imply] that the [research] relationship is hierarchical and that the person being [studied] can be subjugated” (p. 13). For this reason, I employ the term ‘participant’ to reflect the active roles that the participants played in the social construction of knowledge in this study.

Since case studies aim to present information within a particular context, purposive sampling was used as the method for selecting participants (Creswell, 2013). As its name suggests, purposive sampling aims to select information rich cases that can inform the investigation’s purpose and research questions.

I recruited participants via email. I obtained email addresses via school and district websites. I used Ohio’s School Report Cards to target schools and districts with high ELL populations, however, I found few teachers willing to participate. I sent the recruitment email once per week for three weeks (Appendix B). In total, 31 ESL teachers
received the recruitment email. Two teachers replied and agreed to participate in the study.

**Julia.** Julia taught at Donald Intermediate (grades 5-6) and Bagley Middle School (grades 7-8; all names are pseudonyms), which were located directly beside each other. Donald Intermediate School had 562 students – 6.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.8% African American, 5.2% Hispanic, 4.4% Multiracial, and 82.3% Caucasian. Additionally, 20.2% of students were economically disadvantaged and 11.4% were identified as English language learners. Bagley Middle School had 614 students – 5.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.6% African American, 5.7% Hispanic, 4.5% Multiracial, and 82.5% Caucasian. At the middle school, 18% of students were economically disadvantaged and 4.7% were English language learners.

**Chloe.** At the time of this study, Chloe was an ESL teacher at Longfellow Elementary (grades 5-6) and Norton Middle School (grades 7-8). These schools were located approximately two miles apart. Longfellow Elementary School had 525 students – 3.6% Asian or Pacific Islander, 11% African American, 2.2% Hispanic, 3.6% Multiracial, and 79.3% Caucasian. Additionally, 15% were economically disadvantaged and 2.7% were considered ELLs. Norton Middle School had 573 students -5.2% Asian or Pacific Islander, 11.4% African American, 2.5% Hispanic, 4.5% Multiracial, and 76% Caucasian. Additionally, 18.4% were economically disadvantaged and 2.6% were ELLs.

**District administrator participants.** I also recruited Chloe and Julia’s district supervisors to participate in this study. Chloe’s supervisor was the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Julia’s supervisor was the Director of Pupil Services. I
wanted to interview these individuals in order to investigate the district’s goals and resources for teaching writing to ELLs. Chloe’s supervisor, Tim, agreed to participate; I interviewed him in April 2016. Julia’s supervisor initially agreed to participate in February 2016 but did not reply when I contacted her a second time to set up a time and date for our interview. I contacted her via email and phone again in May 2016 but did not receive a reply. One potential reason for her seemingly sudden unwillingness to participate could have been the tense climate between teachers and district administration. In the following section, I describe my methods of data collection.

**Data Collection and Rationale**

In this case study, multiple sources of data comprised the data set. I chose six methods that would inform my research questions: a twenty-item qualitative survey, 56 class observations with Julia and 52 with Chloe (and recordings of these sessions), fieldnotes for each class session, three semi-structured interviews per teacher and one interview with a district supervisor, instructional artifacts such as lesson plans and assignments, and daily analytic memos. I recorded class sessions and interviews with a digital voice recorder and clip microphone. The Kent State Research Bureau transcribed interview recordings and I transcribed classroom recordings.

When conducting a qualitative study, enough relevant data needs to be collected in order to answer the research questions (Merriam, 2009). With this in mind, I will discuss how my data attend to my research questions and the rationale for selecting these particular types of data. Table 1 lists the research questions and the data sources used to
answer each question. What follows is the rationale for collecting each data source and the methodological challenges.

Table 1

*Research Questions and Data Collected*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collected to Answer Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8?</td>
<td>Instructional artifacts, daily observations, daily field notes, analytic memos, semi-structured interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do ESL teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for L2 writing instruction?</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews, daily observation, analytic memos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the interest of collecting enough relevant data to document teaching and communicative activity in the classroom (Lantolf, 2011; Vygotsky, 1986), I observed teachers’ instruction in ESL classes and wrote continuous fieldnotes during these observations. I also collected instructional artifacts such as lesson plans and handouts to build a record of learning tasks teachers assigned. In order to understand teachers’ reasons for making pedagogical decisions regarding their instruction of L2 writing, I asked questions about their teaching in semi-structured interviews. In using these methods, I was able to ask specific questions about their instruction, citing examples from their own teaching practices. Finally, following class sessions and at the end of each school day, I wrote analytic memos which helped record my emerging thoughts about the teachers’ writing instruction. These memos also documented potential questions I wanted to ask participants during future interviews.
At the onset of the study, each teacher received a qualitative survey link via email during the first week of observation. This Qualtrics survey collected biographic, historical, and educational information relevant to the research questions. Additionally, the survey collected data about the teachers’ current teaching positions and courses taught, prior teaching experience, teacher education, and credentials. In order to learn how to use Qualtrics, I participated in an webinar which taught me how to build various types of survey questions and design the layout of the survey. The survey can be accessed via the QR code below (Figure 1). The survey password is teacher.

![QR code](image)

*Figure 1. Qualitative survey QR code.*

The survey was used to collect relevant contextual and biographic information about teachers’ instructional context such as grades and classes taught, years of teaching experience, degrees and endorsements, and their courses taken during teacher preparation. The purpose of this survey was practical in nature rather than analytic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). It provided a method for collecting relevant characteristics of the participants and their previous experiences information without having to ask several short-response questions in an interview. Participants completed the survey online and responses were downloaded and printed via Qualtrics.
**Instructional documents and artifacts.** When I obtained consent from teachers to participate in the study on the first day of observation, I also gave them a list of documents (lesson plans, handouts, etc.) that I wanted to collect for my research (Appendix C). These artifacts provided a record of their teaching practices and learning activities beyond my observations. I collected 70 artifacts from Julia (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Written Expression Curriculum-Based Measurement (WE-CBM)</td>
<td>2.0, 2.4, 2.5, 4.5</td>
<td>Writing benchmark teacher directions and writing prompt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Reading Benchmark Test</td>
<td>2.0, 2.4, 2.5, 4.5</td>
<td>Reading benchmark test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary A-Z Words in Context Days 1-5</td>
<td>2.2, 3.2, 4.2</td>
<td>Pull-out/Homework Help/One-on-one activity with male student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>WTDPF-5G Martin Luther King Jr.</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Word puzzle (supplemental)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Reading A-Z Nonfiction Retelling Scoring Form</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Teacher scoring form for story retell (reading comprehension).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Elevator to Space!</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Story for reading retell test (paired with row above).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-11-2016</td>
<td>Alphaboxes (blank)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Students used this sheet to write the names of movie. Example: <em>The Lion King</em> goes in the ‘L’ box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued)

*Artifacts Collected From Julia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Alphaboxes (completed)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Students crossed off movie titles that they had in common and circled titles that only they wrote down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Movie Riddles (completed)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Teacher read the riddles and students has to guess which movie she was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Movie Riddles (blank)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Teacher read the riddles and students has to guess which movie she was describing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Genres Vocabulary Powerpoint</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Students copied the definitions of science fiction, fantasy, and biography from the Powerpoint.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>WRS Group Lesson Plan</td>
<td>3.3a, 3.3b</td>
<td>Students recited the vowel drills (speaking).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Montessori parts of speech shapes</td>
<td>3.5; 4.2</td>
<td>Julia used these shapes to identify the parts of speech in a sentence on the board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>DGP Week #2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Used to help students write a sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Preposition list (blue)</td>
<td>3.5, 4.0</td>
<td>Students try to memorize the prepositions to the tune of “Yankee Doodle.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-12-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary (Dictionary sheet)</td>
<td>3.5, 4.0</td>
<td>Students use the vocabulary sheet to create a dictionary in their notebooks. They write the word, a definition, write a sentence using the word, and draw a picture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13-2016</td>
<td>Monthly Lesson Plan; January 2016</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Monthly Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13-2016</td>
<td>Week of Mon Jan 11th</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Weekly Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13-016</td>
<td>Unit Scope and Sequence</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Unit plan items. Gathered from textbook at a workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13-2016</td>
<td>Spelling Log</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Students help each other verify their spelling words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued)

*Artifacts Collected From Julia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-13-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Entry in student notebook dictionary: tactless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-13-2016</td>
<td>WRS Student Dictation Page/Handwriting Grids</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14-2016</td>
<td>School Supplies</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Identifying count and noncount nouns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14-2016</td>
<td>Definite and indefinite article chart</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Reference chart for choosing definite or indefinite articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14-2016</td>
<td>WRS Student Dictation Page/Handwriting Grids</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Copying two sentences from the document camera. “Pete frequently completes the job late.” “Is the sentry from the shop tireless?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary “N”</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Wrote the word “neglectful”, its definition, an example sentence, and drew an illustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-14-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary “R”, “F”, “H”</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Students copy the types of genres, the meaning of each genre, an example sentence and draw an illustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>Article or no article?</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Student writes the appropriate article in the blank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>Root word study</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>Did not get to this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>AIMSweb Intermediate</td>
<td>Interview 1.0</td>
<td>Winter benchmark writing test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>AIMSweb Newcomer</td>
<td>Interview 1.0</td>
<td>Winter benchmark writing test results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>AIMSweb Dual</td>
<td>Interview 1.0</td>
<td>Winter benchmark writing test results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued)

*Artifacts Collected From Julia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td><em>An Eventful Day</em></td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Silent reading activity for Wilson reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-15-2016</td>
<td>Reading A-Z Fiction Retelling Scoring Form</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Story retell assessment for <em>An Eventful Day</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>7.0-7.5</td>
<td>Daily Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>President’s Day Scramble</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Word Puzzle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>Student practice sheet</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>Using subordinating conjunctions to connect clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>Past-present-future NOW!</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Present perfect student note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>One, two, three</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Paper for listing verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>Old Mr. Do</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Helping verbs reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-8-2016</td>
<td>Homework Guide</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Julia’s study strategies and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-11-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>8.0-8.4</td>
<td>Daily Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-17-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>9.0-9.5</td>
<td>Daily Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-17-2016</td>
<td>Anagram Riddles</td>
<td>9.0, 9.4</td>
<td>Weekly Word Puzzle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-17-2016</td>
<td>LAS Links Placement Test</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Short version of student placement test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>Language Survey Revised</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Comprehensive placement test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>10.0-10.5</td>
<td>Daily Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>Reading In the Park</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>5th grade reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
### Table 2 (continued)

**Artifacts Collected From Julia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey -Revised, Normative Update</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Second attempt at placement assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>WRS student Dictation page</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Student dictation page/handwriting grids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-18-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary “leisure”</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Vocabulary page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-19-2016</td>
<td>Maze cloze assessment</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>WRS writing assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>12.0-12.5</td>
<td>Daily Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Maze Cover Sheet</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>Reading benchmark test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary “Complement”</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>Vocabulary “Complement”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Unit 13</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Similes, metaphors, and personification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary “tint”</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>Vocabulary “tint”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Version 1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Tornado paragraph version 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Version 2</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Tornado paragraph version 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Key</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Tornado paragraph key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Editing Checklist for self and peer editing</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>NCTE IRA editing checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9-2016</td>
<td>Writing workshop</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Writing Process checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>13.0-13.4</td>
<td>Daily lesson plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11-2016</td>
<td>planbook.com</td>
<td>14.0-14.5</td>
<td>Daily lesson plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11-2016</td>
<td>Linking verbs list/metaphor chart</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Identifying parts of a sentence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 2 (continued)

*Artifacts Collected From Julia*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-11-2016</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>Vocabulary entry for mold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11-2016</td>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>33 word dictation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-11-2016</td>
<td>WRS Student Dictation</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>Real word and spelling option words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I collected 14 artifacts from Chloe (Table 3). Chloe did not have formal lesson plans for her ESL classes and rarely used handouts and worksheets with her students.

I collected classroom artifacts in order to compile a record of the lessons and activities which occurred during my observations. Closer examination of these artifacts after class also helped to inform some of my interview questions. Additionally, these materials helped me understand the teacher’s learning objectives and goals.

**Observations and fieldnotes.** Classroom observations informed how teachers taught writing to ELLs on a daily basis. I observed 56 ESL class periods with Julia and 52 with Chloe. Of interest were their instructional practices, routines, and methods for teaching writing. I used a digital audio recorder to record all class sessions. Teachers wore a small clip microphone during instruction.
## Table 3

*Artifacts Collected from Chloe*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Collected</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
<th>Session(s)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-19-2016</td>
<td>Preposition Worksheet</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7th grade fill-in-the-blank preposition worksheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-19-2016</td>
<td>OELPA Practice Test</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>URL to OELPA practice test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-22-2016</td>
<td>Prepositions Review (Quiz)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Quiz on prepositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-25-2016</td>
<td>Prepositions second assessment</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Remedial preposition quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-26-2016</td>
<td>Language Assessment System (LAS) Grades 6-8</td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>ESL placement test grades 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-26-2016</td>
<td>Language Assessment System (LAS) Grades 4-5</td>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>ESL placement test grades 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-2016</td>
<td>Quotation marks</td>
<td>7.0, 7.3</td>
<td>Guided practice for punctuating dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-25-2016</td>
<td>Using quotation marks and apostrophes</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>Handout on punctuating dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-22-2016</td>
<td>“Rule 2” Ever complete sentence has a subject and a</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Chloe’s lesson on subject and predicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>predicate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12-2016</td>
<td>2016 ESL Family Movie Night</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Movie night permission form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12-2016</td>
<td>Summer Reading Log</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Summer reading log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12-2016</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Example of summer reading and writing activities for ELLs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-12-2016</td>
<td>Aquarium Powerpoint</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Powerpoint about field trip to the aquarium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to recording all observed class sessions, I also documented instruction and activities in fieldnotes. This documentation supports the accuracy and reliability of the observational data collected in the classroom. My fieldnotes documented the teacher’s instructional practices and supported my understanding of the transcripts. The purpose of taking fieldnotes was to document the “social and interactional processes that make up” the everyday activities aimed at teaching students how to write (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 15). I documented information about the observed scenes, interactions, sensory details, and participants’ responses to others and the environment (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Furthermore, I took notes on my interaction with teachers in between classes at times when we were not using the digital recorder. Fieldnotes were written in a table format as seen below (Table 4).

**Semi-structured interviews.** Semi-structured interviews include a variety of predetermined and flexible research questions. What distinguishes this type of interviewing from structured interviews is that there is no predetermined order to the questions and the interview takes on the qualities of a conversation rather than a survey (Merriam, 2009). The researcher asks the main questions, follow-up questions, and probes the participant for detailed responses. In this way, both partners are responsible for guiding the conversation in a direction that is comfortable and meaningful for both parties.
### Table 4

*An Example of Observation Field Notes for One Class Session (Julia 1/12/2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instruction and Activities</th>
<th>Notes/Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:34</td>
<td>We arrive in the library classroom at Donald Intermediate School.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:36</td>
<td>Students and teacher discuss the difference between homonyms and homophones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:37</td>
<td>ABC quartiles activity – organizing alphabet tiles in order. Teacher introduces the mnemonic “All grandmas make tea” to help students put alphabet tiles in order. “In English we read from left to right.”</td>
<td>Where did you learn about this activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:44</td>
<td>Julia explains that this activity helps students remember the ABCs but also helps with their orthographic memory.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>Julia draws the 6 lines used to draw letters on the board. -Diagonal, horizontal, vertical, curved.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:47</td>
<td>Teacher has the students stand up to do “sky writing” for each type of line.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:48</td>
<td>Julia writes a mystery letter on the back of a post-it note. Students ask questions to guess the letter: “Does your letter have a horizontal line?” “Does your letter have a curved line?” “Is your letter a consonant?” “Is your letter a vowel?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:52</td>
<td>Winter Reading Benchmark- Julia gives instructions for reading benchmark test. Teacher works on the practice question with students. “The dog ____ after the cat” (ran) - student is given the choice of three words to finish the sentence. Students will choose the word that fits in the sentence. Teacher does a practice example with the students and then gives them minutes.</td>
<td>How often does Julia do benchmark testing?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4 (continued)

An Example of Observation Field Notes for One Class Session (Julia 1/12/2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instruction and Activities</th>
<th>Notes/Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:58</td>
<td><strong>Writing Benchmark Test</strong></td>
<td>Writing prompt: “One day a burglar climbed through my living room window and . . .”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher hands out blank paper for the writing benchmark test. Students write the date, name,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and “winter benchmark.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher reads the instructions and then gives students the writing prompt. Students need to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complete the prompt with their own story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher gives three minutes for students to write what happens next in the story.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students are given the chance to finish their sentence after the timer goes off.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:07</td>
<td><strong>Julia brings attention to the content objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Content Objective:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. We will activate prior knowledge about economics vocabulary words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. We will identify subject and predicate in an interrogative sentence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Language Objective</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. We will speak to list prepositions with mnemonic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:09</td>
<td><strong>Teacher sings the prepositions song that will help students remember prepositions.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A prepositions is pretty much anything a plane can do to a cloud.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:11</td>
<td><strong>Daily Grammar Practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrogative questions - Teacher is asking students how they can make an interrogative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sentence into a declarative sentence. Does this yellow pencil break often? - This yellow pencil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>breaks often.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:16</td>
<td><strong>Teacher has student review the objectives.</strong></td>
<td>First content objective not completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Semi-structured interviewing was an appropriate method of data collection because it is aligned with the socio-constructivist model that frames this study. As an interpretive researcher, I “accept that there is a reality but argue that it cannot be measured directly, only perceived by people . . . what we know, then, is not objective; it is always filtered through people, always subjective” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 15). This method allowed for the flexibility to explore various topics and perspectives throughout the interview.

As such, Patton’s (2002) six types of interview questions informed the questions I asked during my interviews. They included experience and behavior questions, opinion and value questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002). I avoided asking questions that elicit yes/no answers and leading questions (Merriam, 2009). When I observed an instructional routine or incidence related to writing instruction, I took note and asked questions about that practice during the interview. Thus, interviews were used to gain new information, but also to check the accuracy of my observations and understandings. My goal in conducting these interviews was to address “specific events and actions, rather than posing questions that elicit only generalizations or abstract opinions” (Maxwell, 2013, p. 103).

I conducted three face-to-face semi-structured interviews with each participant on the last or second to last day of each round of observation (day 4 or 5). My fieldnotes and observations from each round informed interview questions. The questions aimed to provide insight into teachers’ pedagogical decisions, beliefs, and dispositions towards
writing instruction. I also probed teachers’ answers and asked exploratory questions when appropriate. I conducted interviews individually with each participant at her school. Each interview lasted between 45 to 75 minutes. See Appendix D for the interview questions.

I also interviewed Chloe’s district supervisor, Tim, in April 2016 to learn about district-wide initiatives for writing. My interview with Tim occurred in a conference room at the middle school and lasted 51 minutes (Appendix D).

As previously mentioned, I attempted to set up an interview with Julia’s district supervisor; she responded to my initial request to participate but did not answer my follow-up emails nor my phone calls. Julia suggested that her supervisor may have changed her mind due to tensions between teachers and administrators in her district.

Interview recordings and transcripts were saved to a protected external drive. Transcripts of interviews were password-protected for the purpose of maintaining the participants’ privacy. Because data were analyzed in between each round of observation, this recursive analysis also informed the questions asked. I presented my interpretation of their writing instruction to the participants and they either confirmed or explained further during a member-check interview (Patton, 2002).

The third interview served as a member-check to confirm or disprove emerging findings. The questions in the final member-checking interview were based on my analysis of the data. Before creating the final interview questions, I met with my dissertation chair to discuss my coding scheme and categorization of the data. This discussion elicited ideas that helped form the questions for the member-check interview.
These interviews conducted on the last day of observation in both districts. This served as an opportunity to verify my emerging understanding of the data. See appendix D for member-checking interview questions. In the following section, I explain my procedures for obtaining these data sources.

**Procedures.** In September 2015, I met with each teacher individually at her school to address questions about participating in the study. During this visit, I also learned about their daily teaching schedule and experimented with microphone placement in the classroom. I obtained IRB approval for this study in December 2015.

I designed my data collection in three rounds. The first two rounds consisted of five full school days of observation with each teacher. The third round consisted of three full school days with each teacher. Thus, I observed each teacher for a total of thirteen full school days. The rounds of observation occurred in January, February, and May 2016.

Full days of observation were necessary because Chloe and Julia taught ESL classes at different times and locations during the school day. Julia’s schedule, for example, varied on a daily basis; she traveled frequently between her ESL classrooms and subject-area classrooms. Following teachers for full school days, one week at a time, also gave me a sense of their everyday experiences as ESL teachers and allowed me to follow consecutive lessons in their instruction. This observation protocol helped me gain a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the challenges they face in their daily instruction as well an accurate calculation of the amount of time each teacher spent on writing.
In the first round of observation, teachers completed my qualitative survey and I observed for five full consecutive school days for seven hours per day. I observed Julia first. The following week, I observed Chloe following the same protocol. Each teacher was interviewed about her teaching practices at the end of her first week of observation.

In the second round, each teacher was observed for an additional five days following the same protocol as round one. Due to teacher schedules, meetings and holidays, observation days were not always consecutive; some observations were carried over on the following Monday and Tuesday. For example, Chloe did not work on Wednesdays, so I observed her on the following Mondays. At the end of the second round of observation, each teacher was interviewed about her instruction.

Initially, my study design included two rounds of observation, however, my data showed that Julia and Chloe were devoting a lot of time to testing and preparation for state tests. Thus, I decided to return for three more school days in May to observe any changes in their instruction post-testing.

I also collected data from ESL pull-out classes and inclusion (general education) classes where Julia and Chloe provided language support for ELLs. I observed each teacher for 91 hours of instructional time. However, for this study, I focus exclusively on data I collected from ESL classes because Julia and Chloe made few decisions about writing instruction in inclusion classes such as English language arts, Science, and Social Studies. As auxiliary teachers in these settings, they did not make any major decisions about instruction or about how writing was taught. Given that the ESL teacher is not the lead classroom teacher in inclusion, I focus primarily on how ESL teachers taught writing
and not how they supported other teachers’ instruction. Thus, the ESL classroom observations included in this study consist of 52 hours from Chloe’s ESL pull-out classes (52 class periods) and 77 hours (56 class periods) from Julia’s ESL classes. Julia taught more pull-out sections than Chloe and her classes were longer; thus, the final data set used included more ESL class observations from Julia than from Chloe.

Keeping with Merriam and Tisdell’s (2016) recommendation to begin data analysis during data collection, I transcribed and analyzed data from round one before proceeding to data collection for round two; I analyzed data from round two before proceeding to round three. This recursive process allowed me to critically observe during subsequent rounds of collection and ask meaningful questions during our weekly interviews. The cycling approach facilitated verifying and confirming observations from the previous round. Using a cycling model for observations also helped in obtaining a diversified data set and ensuring the trustworthiness of the data. Table 5 shows a timeline of the data collection procedures of this study.

Data Analysis

In the following section, I explain my methods of data analysis. Maxwell (2013) says that for novice researchers, “data analysis may be the most mysterious aspect of qualitative research” (p. 105) but it is necessary in order to make sense of the data (Schwandt, 2007). Data analysis provides a means by which the artifacts, conversations, and observations inform the research questions and study purposes.

In a multicase study such as this one, there are two levels of analysis—the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). The within-case
Table 5

*Timeline of Data Collection Procedures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 15, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-data Collection</td>
<td>Initial face-to-face meeting to discuss study protocol with Julia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-data Collection</td>
<td>Initial face-to-face meeting to discuss study protocol with Chloe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-data Collection</td>
<td>One day of observation with Chloe to practice microphone placement, taking fieldnotes in class and writing memos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 19, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-data Collection</td>
<td>One day of observation with Julia to practice microphone placement, taking fieldnotes in class and writing memos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 17, 2015</td>
<td>Pre-data Collection</td>
<td>Obtained IRB approval from Kent State Institutional Review Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 11-15, 2015</td>
<td>Round 1: Julia</td>
<td>Qualtrics Survey, 5 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 1 (01/15/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 19, 21-22, 25-26, 2016</td>
<td>Round 1: Chloe</td>
<td>Qualtrics Survey, 5 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 1 (01/26/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8, 11, 17-19, 2016</td>
<td>Round 2: Julia</td>
<td>5 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 2 (2/19/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 22-23, 25-26, 29, 2016</td>
<td>Round 2: Chloe</td>
<td>5 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 2 (02/25/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5, 2016</td>
<td>Interview with Tim</td>
<td>Interview with Chloe’s district supervisor (Director of Curriculum &amp; Instruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9-11, 2016</td>
<td>Round 3: Julia</td>
<td>3 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 3 (05/11/2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 12, 17, 19, 2016</td>
<td>Round 3: Chloe</td>
<td>3 observation days, field notes, instructional artifacts, Interview 3 (05/17/2016)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
analysis treats each case (in this study, each teacher) as its own entity. That is, the data for each case is analyzed on its own without reference to other cases in the study. Once all the cases have been examined individually, the researcher engages in cross-case comparisons, which involves comparing and contrasting the data sets for each case.

The first phase of data analysis was compiling the data. This phase included transcription and organizing the data in a database. Data analysis began with the transcription of the classroom recordings and the interviews. I submitted interview audio files to the Research Bureau via a secure online submission system and received the transcripts via my Kent State email address. I used Dragon for Mac to aid in the transcription of my classroom recordings. I used Dragon’s transcription mode to speak the audio back to the computer, thus providing the input for the program to transcribe in Word. After the transcripts were completed, I read through the entire data set in order to familiarize myself with the data.

I compiled my instructional and interview transcripts, fieldnotes and memos and imported them into NVivo for Mac, a “Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (or CAQDAS, pronounced cactus) software” (Yin, 2016, p. 188). NVivo served as a database for compiling and organizing the data. It is a program that “enables you to collect, organize, and analyze data” in a database (QSR International, 2014). Over the course of my doctoral program, I have become familiar with NVivo though webinars and have used it to analyze data for other studies prior to my dissertation.

In the second phase of data analysis, I disassembled my data (Merriam, 1998). The primary method I used to accomplish this was systematic coding. Systematic coding
“is a process that disaggregates the data, breaks the down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 32). This process involves continuous comparing and contrasting of the successive segments of data. Merriam (2009) provides a simple illustration of what it means to organize codes into categories and the purpose of this analytic process:

[C]onsider the task of sorting two hundred food items found in a grocery store. These two hundred items in a research study would be bits of information or units of data upon which to base an analysis. By comparing one item with another, the two hundred items could be classified into any number of categories. Starting with a box of cereal, for example, you could ask whether the next item, an orange, is like the first. Obviously not. There are now two piles [i.e., categories] into which the next item may or may not be placed . . . [Most] likely, you would divide the items into common grocery store categories: meats, dairy, produce, canned goods, and so on. These categories would be fairly comprehensive classes, each of which could be further subdivided. (p. 177)

Thus, I used the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to analyze my data. Methodologists such as Yin (2016) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that the constant comparative method, though originally designed for grounded theory research, is now widely accepted for conducting data analysis in other qualitative approaches such as case studies (Merriam, 2009). Initially, I created open codes which constituted my first level of codes. In some cases, coding labels came from the exact words of the participants. For example, in an interview Julia described her approach to
writing instruction as a “discrete approach to writing,” which then became a code that represented her explanations of how she taught writing. My initial open coding scheme yielded 154 codes.

The second level of codes, category or axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2014), involved connecting first level codes that identified types of instruction or teacher actions to broader conceptual issues. I created axial codes by grouping open codes. I parsed my original list of open codes by writing them on separate pieces of paper; each paper representing a new category or axial code. After combining the open codes, I labeled each piece of paper with a category name based on the comparative features of each grouping. I systematically grouped the open codes into 36 axial codes (Appendix E). I input the axial codes into NVivo after writing them by hand on the separate pieces of paper.

At this point in my data analysis, I met with my dissertation chair to discuss the data. I shared my open and axial coding procedures with her. Our meeting was digitally recorded and lasted one hour. At this meeting, we discussed my emerging understandings of the data. From this, we discussed potential implications to keep in mind while reassembling the data such as implications for students, implications for teacher education, how to quantify time spent on writing instruction and how to qualify writing instruction. She gave suggestions of how I might combine some categories into conceptual themes.
The third level of coding involved interpreting axial and open codes to create conceptual and topical themes. Thematic codes point to the potential findings and implications of the research. My tertiary coding level consisted of 11 themes (Table 6).

Table 6

*Level 3 Codes (Themes): A List of Tertiary Level Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertiary Codes (Themes)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quotations/Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of Writing</td>
<td>Categories of writing instruction; types of writing tasks practiced in the ESL classroom.</td>
<td>Copying, Spelling, Short sentences, Grammar instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs about teaching writing</td>
<td>Teacher beliefs about writing instruction/how to teach writing</td>
<td>“I think [writing] needs to be a daily practice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I think these skills are the foundation for all communication, verbal and written.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles for writing instruction</td>
<td>Contextual obstacles teachers cited as impeding their writing instruction.</td>
<td>“. . . after I taught them [subject and predicate], it didn’t sink in; they couldn’t apply it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“[Writing is] something that needs to get taught explicitly, but we don’t have materials, strategies, or time to do it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of writing pedagogical knowledge</td>
<td>Teacher explanations of how she learned to teach writing; explanations of teacher preparation to teach writing.</td>
<td>“. . . most of what I learned about teaching reading and writing, I learned by teaching and observing other teachers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I don’t think my teacher preparation in college or graduate school taught me how to teach either reading or writing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching practices</td>
<td>Teacher explanations of their practices for teaching writing.</td>
<td>Teaching “discrete writing skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching “fundamental writing skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of ESL</td>
<td>Teacher descriptions the status of their ESL programs within the district.</td>
<td>“ESL is marginalized in the district.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 6 (continued)

*Level 3 Codes (Themes): A List of Tertiary Level Codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tertiary Codes (Themes)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quotations/Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of testing/evaluation</td>
<td>Participant concerns with the testing culture of their schools, district, and state; influence of testing on time to teach writing.</td>
<td>“we make pretty pragmatic decisions—we’re going to teach the things that we know are going to come up on the test.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher conceptualizations of writing instruction</td>
<td>How teachers characterize writing instruction.</td>
<td>“. . . the lengthy writing process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and strategies</td>
<td>Methods and strategies used to teach writing in ESL.</td>
<td>“. . . teaching writing is time consuming.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching goals and objectives.</td>
<td>Stated goals and objectives for writing in ESL.</td>
<td>“I add the writing component because it communicates to me what they read . . . it helped me understand if they understood what they read.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricula and materials for teaching reading and writing</td>
<td>Curricula and materials available to teachers for teaching reading and writing.</td>
<td>“We don’t have a set writing program . . . We kind of pull from different places.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next phase of data analysis, reassembling data, involved “search[ing] for patterns” in the data set (Yin, 2016, p. 202). Part of this phase includes organizing codes, categories and themes created during the disassembling phase into a hierarchical array with more concrete data items at the lowest level and more abstract concepts at the highest levels. Reassembling the data means combining related data by “point[ing] to different groupings (i.e., potential “classes” or “typologies” of things) [and also] suggest[s] associations across groupings” (Yin, 2016, p. 204). In NVivo, I reassembled my codes into a linear hierarchy based on the coding levels. I also reassembled my
categories and themes by associating each label with one of more of my research questions. I organized my hand-written codes and categories in columns under each research question (Figure 2).

![Image of handwritten notes and codes]

*Figure 2. Linear reassembling of codes.*

I did this to ensure that my codes and were “responsive to the purpose of the research” (Merriam, 2009, p. 185, italics in original). This was a concrete way of ensuring that my coding scheme was aligning with my research questions. In the interest of reassembling in both linear and nonlinear ways, I also sketched a conceptual web that illustrated and organized the emerging analysis of the data (Figure 3). The web brought to light some of the mediating factors that influenced the teaching of writing. I also kept a data analysis notebook in which I kept handwritten notes and memos from my debriefing meetings, analysis sketches, lists of files to be transcribed, and notes on emerging themes.
After reassembling my data, I met with a ‘disinterested’ peer, another doctoral candidate at my institution, to discuss my data collection and analysis processes as well as my themes and emerging findings. This meeting was digitally recorded and lasted one hour. I chose this individual to be a peer debriefer for two reasons. Firstly, we were both analyzing data for our dissertations at about the same time. Secondly, though we shared the broad subject area of Curriculum and Instruction, his study was not related to ESL or literacy, so his questions about my data were authentic and brought a new perspective to my understanding and wording of the data codes.

Since a qualitative “multicase study seeks to build abstractions across cases” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 234), I conducted a cross-case analysis following the analysis of each individual case. My cross-case analysis involved dividing my codes by
typologies, classifying them in three meta-categories of teacher education, instructional practices, and explanations of pedagogical decisions. Within these categories, I searched for patterns in the data from one case that were corroborated in the other. Patterns included, for example, similar terminology or concepts expressed by the participants, or practices mirrored in their teaching of writing. I also identified codes existing within a single case and identified these data as differences across cases.

Data assembling and reassembling phases are recursive and iterative processes of analytic induction which reveal themes and recurring patterns of meaning in the data set (Figure 4). These patterns led to justifiable, empirically-based conclusions about the L2 writing instruction. In the following section, I describe methodological challenges as well as indicators of rigor and quality used to maintain trustworthiness.

*Figure 4. Phases of the data analysis process.*
Methodological Challenges and Indicators of Rigor and Quality

The case study approach to qualitative research can provide a detailed and holistic account of a phenomenon. Case studies are especially useful in applied fields such as education, health, and social work (Merriam, 2009). Erikson (1986) asserts that the general always lies in the particular and that which is revealed in the particular can be transferred to comparable situations. The findings of this study are not meant to be generalized beyond the teachers studied; however, their experiences potentially inform our understanding of the challenges ESL teachers may encounter in teaching. Given the lack of research regarding L2 writing instruction in ESL classrooms, this multiple case study aids teachers and teacher educators in understanding current practices and makes recommendations to increase the quality, complexity, and diversity of writing tasks in the ESL classroom.

Two of the challenges of conducting an in-depth qualitative case study are identifying participants and gaining access to research sites. I made initial contact with teachers via email. I searched district and school website to identify potential participants. Using the Ohio School Report Cards, I identified a list of schools in Northeast Ohio with populations of English language learners. To begin, I selectively targeted districts and teachers with high ELL populations. However, few teachers responded to my invitation to participate in my research. Thus, I began sending emails to ESL teachers in districts with fewer ELLs. Of the 31 ESL teachers I contacted, two were interested in participating. In September 2015, I met with each teacher individually to explain the purpose of the study and the data collection procedures. Following this initial
Establishing Trustworthiness

In order to obtain trustworthy findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I designed this study to meet standards of credibility, dependability, and transferability (Table 4). While other researchers (Creswell, 2003; Maxwell, 2013; Merriam, 2002) prefer terms like ‘verification,’ ‘validity,’ and ‘reliability,’ Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ‘trustworthiness’ is the term that most accurately describes the assessment of quality in naturalistic interpretive research. I implemented several strategies to achieve these indicators of rigor and quality.

Credibility and dependability. The credibility of the findings is supported firstly by triangulation of data sources. Triangulation of sources involves comparing different methods of data collection to see if the various sources support the same conclusion(s) (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). Comparing the data collected from each data source reduces the risk that the findings will only reflect the bias of a particular type of data collection. As previously described, data collected for this study included a qualitative survey, 129 hours of observed ESL classroom instruction supported by timed fieldnotes, 6 extensive semi-structured interviews with teachers, one interview with a district administrator, and 98 classroom artifacts. Additionally, I employed an observation cycle in order to collect a diversified data set and collect data at different points in time. This strategy decreases the potential for bias toward findings that are based on a single observational period. Finally, the inclusion of two teacher-participants
in different districts serves as a method of triangulation by providing multiple perspectives and potentially contrasting findings. The use of multiple data sources and methods helps to strengthen the believability of the data and subsequent findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, the triangulation of multiple methods of data collection and the use of different sources of information inform the credibility of the materials that were analyzed.

Another method used to support the credibility of the findings was member-checking. I developed a member-check interview based on my analysis of the data and peer debriefing. During this interview, I presented my emerging findings and interpretations of the data to the teachers. I asked them to confirm my interpretations with regard to their writing instruction or invited them to provide further explanations. In this way, the participants played an active role in ensuring the trustworthiness of the data.

This study also gains credibility through peer debriefing embedded within the data analysis process described above. Lincoln and Guba (1985) call this a “process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer” (p. 308). I debriefed with both my dissertation chair and another doctoral candidate at my institution. These debriefers brought attention to areas of data collection, analysis, and reporting that lacked clarity or transparency; they also acted to help affirm that my data supported my findings. In return, I also acted as a “disinterested peer” and critical eye for my colleague’s research. Together, we examined the codes established from the data sources and discussed the emerging findings of our dissertations. Peer-debriefers are necessary in order to help the researcher become aware of her own biases toward certain interpretations of the data.
Careful documentation, data analysis, and protection of the data sources aided in achieving dependability for this study. I stored password-protected data sources on my computer. Strategies for ensuring the dependability of the findings also included informal data collection procedures such as ongoing review of the data and documenting initial impressions and thoughts in research memos (Maxwell, 2013). Analytic memos were written immediately following an interview or observation, or shortly thereafter (the same day). This strategy ensured consistent written documentation of the data and served to help me document my initial impressions of the data. These memos aided in recording my thinking about the data and were a crucial part of identifying themes and eventually reaching conclusions about the data. Writing analytic memos provided reflexivity to the research process and organized my thinking explicitly in writing. In addition to writing memos, I kept a daily log of all the data sources collected. My log documented the date, the class session number, the number of students in the class, the instruction activities and assignments, the date the recording was transcribed and by whom, and when the piece of data was imported to NVivo. This log maintained transparency during the data collection process but also organized my data systematically, which made it easy to refer back to a certain class period or a particular piece of data.

**Transferability.** When it comes to transferability of data, case studies can be useful sources of information especially if cases share similar contexts and circumstances. Although the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the experiences of all L2 writing teachers, “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the participants’ beliefs, attitudes, and experiences with L2 writing instruction enable the
possibility of transferability of results to similar contexts. In this study, numerous transcripts of classroom instruction, fieldnotes, and in-depth interviews provided data that allowed for thick description to be possible. These descriptions provide insight that potentially informs classroom practice with regard to L2 writing instruction. It is not the researcher’s position to decide whether or not the findings of this study are transferable to other contexts, but rather, the responsibility of the person in the similar contextual situation to decide whether or not the findings of this particular study are applicable to his/her situation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In using thick description, the reader can decide to transfer the findings to similar settings or contexts (Merriam, 2009). Table 7 summaries the methods used to establish trustworthiness. The next section of this chapter examines ethical considerations of this study.

**Ethical Considerations**

Researchers need to maintain a standard of ethical conduct when invited to observe and collect data in schools. At my initial meeting with the participants in September 2015, I provided an informed consent form (see Appendix F) and answered any questions about their rights as participants. I made the goals of the study explicit and shared my research questions with them. Study participants and school administrators were fully informed of the researcher’s intentions and purposes for conducting the study. Since I collected data in public schools in the presence of children under the age of 18, I obtained the appropriate level of IRB approval and provided the schools with a police and FBI background check, IRB approval forms, and consent forms. The participants signed an informed consent to participate in research. This consent form outlined the potential
Table 7

Practices for Establishing Trustworthiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishing Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Research Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Triangulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Inclusion of multiple data sources (survey, observations, field notes, interviews, documents).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Inclusion of multiple participants/cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Cycling of observations and collection of data at different points in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member-checking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Interviewing participants after data analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Affirmation or rejection of the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative-cases analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Identification of data within and across cases that contradicts other data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer-debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Review of data sources and codes by a dissertation chair and other doctoral candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Password protection of digital data sources and NVivo data analysis files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analytic memos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Written after each observation and interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Data Collection Log</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Time, date, location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Ensures transparency of data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Thick description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ “Painting a picture” of each case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Description of context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Connections to similar settings/situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

benefits, limited anticipated harm, and goals of the study (Creswell, 2013). All participants agreed to allow this research to be published in academic journals both online and in print. Additionally, they gave permission for this study to be presented at professional meetings and conferences. All participants received a copy of the signed consent form and reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any time without
penalty. As with any study conducted under the supervision of a research institution, all study procedures were approved by the Kent State Institutional Review Board prior to the collection of data. Participants were not compensated for participating in this study. No risks were anticipated for the participants beyond those encountered in everyday life. All names of individuals and schools in this study are pseudonyms. To conclude this chapter, I explain the limitations of this study and summarize the methods used to investigate my research questions.

**Limitations**

A limitation should be acknowledged with regards to findings about teachers’ reporting of their preparation for teaching writing. Since I conducted this study with inservice teachers, they examined their teacher education and endorsement programs retrospectively. This information represents the participants’ own perceptions of those lived experiences. Though not the primary focus of the study, the teachers’ preparation for L2 writing instruction is important given the presence of ELLs in their classrooms. Since the participants are inservice teachers, it is not possible to observe their prior teacher preparation experiences such as student teaching and teacher education coursework; however, teachers provided a list of coursework taken directly from their university transcripts.

Finally, this study is limited in that it does not examine or assess which methods are effective (or not) for teaching writing to ELLs. It is a descriptive investigation of how two ESL teachers taught writing to ELLs in grades 5-8, but does not provide insight into whether or not these practices were effective or not in the long-term or short-term.
Future research should attend to these questions. Given these limitations, this study adds to an emerging body of research, which examines the teaching of L2 writing in grades 5-8 ESL classes in the United States.

**Summary of Methods**

The present study is a qualitative multicase or multiple case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data sources include a Qualtrics survey, classroom observations and recordings, field notes, semi-structured interviews, and instructional documents such as lesson plans and handouts. Data analysis was conducted digitally with NVivo qualitative analysis software. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to segment, code, and divide the data into categories and themes. Trustworthiness was established through the implementation of procedures for maintaining credibility and dependability of the data. The study is limited by its small sample size, but transferability of findings will be achieved through thick description of the cases in question. Table 8 summarizes the study procedures at each phase of the study.
Table 8

**Summary of Study Phases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of Study</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Proposal</td>
<td>• Discussion of current literature and need for the study.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conceptualization of the study design and methods.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Proposal Defense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution Review</td>
<td>• Completion of IRB forms and documents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Submit to Kent State IRB for review via email.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Obtain approval to conduct research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant Recruitment</td>
<td>• Contact principals and teachers via email.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Meet with teachers to obtain informed consent and determine observation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>times and days.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Request lesson plans and handouts to be used during observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>• Administer Qualtrics survey via email. Provide teachers with the survey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>password.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• First weeks of observations and repetition of three round of observation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Audio record instruction.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Interview the teacher at the end of each week of observation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Conduct a member-check interview.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transcribe audio recordings.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintaining dependability through careful handling of the data sources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>detailed memoing, and logging sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>• Import data into NVivo qualitative data analysis software.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Read and code data using the constant comparative method (Glaser &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create codebook that defines each code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collapse codes into categories and themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintaining credibility through triangulation of sources, peer</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>debriefing, and negative case analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member-checking</td>
<td>• Conduct member-checking interview with teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transcribe interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Code interview and incorporate into data set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintaining credibility through member-checking and peer debriefing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV  
FINDINGS

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore how ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8. This study examined the teaching of two ESL teachers, Julia and Chloe, in two separate districts in Ohio. By way of “thick description” (Geertz, 1973), this chapter presents key findings for the following research questions:

1. How do ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8?
2. How do ESL teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for L2 writing instruction?

As described in Chapter 3, I conducted both within-case and cross-case analyses. First, I present each case individually. I describe the participant’s teaching context and how she was prepared to teach writing. Then, I examine the teacher’s beliefs about teaching writing, followed by a descriptive exploration of how she taught writing in ESL classes. Following this, I describe a number of obstacles that impeded writing instruction and influenced teaching decisions. Finally, I provide a cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998) which examines the cases collectively, focusing on similarities and differences across cases.

Julia’s Case

Julia was one of three ESL teachers in her district, but the only ESL teacher at Donald Intermediate (grades 5-6) and Bagley Middle School (grades 7-8). These two
schools were located directly beside each other. Julia had a classroom at each school and walked between them two to five times per day.

At Bagley Middle School, Julia’s classroom was centrally located near the main office. It had fifteen desks, arranged in groups of three or four, as well as a side table and a teacher’s desk. Julia had a document camera and digital projector she used often during her instruction. Her classroom at Donald Intermediate School, however, was a small, narrow room in the library with one long table and a teacher’s desk. The table had seats for six students. Each classroom had a white board, two student computers and a computer on the teacher’s desk.

Julia taught eleven different sections of ESL-pull out for students in grades 5 and 6 (Figure 5), and four sessions of 7th and 8th grade ESL (Figure 6). Julia’s schedule varied from day to day and on alternating weeks (Appendix G). Since she had multiple sections of ESL in each grade level, she did not see each student every day. In fact, she saw some ELLs daily while only seeing others once a week. Generally, she saw her beginner-level ELLs more often than her intermediate students.

![Diagram of Julia’s ESL and inclusion classes at Donald Intermediate School (Grades 5-6)](image-url)

*Figure 5.* Julia’s ESL and inclusion classes at Donald Intermediate School (Grades 5-6)
Figure 6. Julia’s ESL and inclusion classes at Bagley Middle School (Grade 7-8)

Julia also taught one period of 8th grade ESL reading intervention every day after lunch (Appendix G). She used the Wilson Reading System curriculum to teach this class (Wilson Language Training Corporation, 2017), but also used materials from Wilson in her other ESL classes. Julia taught reading because many parents in her district refused ESL services, but allowed their children to receive reading intervention; Julia called this the “backdoor ESL class.”

Finally, Julia also provided academic and language support for ELLs in inclusion (ELA and Social Studies) classrooms. In this context, however, she was not the primary teacher in the classroom. She provided support but did not plan the learning activities, assignments, and assessments given in these classes. Therefore, she made few decisions about how to teach writing in these classes. Since I studied the ESL teacher’s instruction, I focus on data collected from the 56 ESL class sessions I observed were Julia was the primary teacher in the classroom.
During this study, Julia had a total of 55 beginner, low intermediate, and intermediate ELLs in grades 5-8. Most of her students were born in the United States but spoke other languages at home. These languages included Arabic (48), Japanese (1), Mandarin (2), Ukrainian (1), Russian (1), and Spanish (2). Julia also taught one 8th grade student who was not an ELL, but who had been placed in her reading intervention class due to scheduling.

**Julia’s Preparation for Teaching L2 Writing**

The 2015-2016 school year was Julia’s 16th year of teaching. She received her Bachelor’s degree in English literature from a large public university in the southeastern United States. After obtaining her Bachelor’s degree, she taught 7th and 8th grade EFL in the American Peace Corps for two years in the U.S. territory of the Federated States of Micronesia. When she returned, she taught freshman composition and literature at a community college for five years.

After teaching at the community college, Julia wanted to pursue her teaching license and TESOL endorsement to make herself “more marketable as a teacher.” She received these credentials through a Master of Arts in Teaching with a concentration in TESOL from a mid-sized university in Ohio. For her endorsement, Julia took face-to-face courses in multicultural foundations of education, theory and methodology for teaching ESL, grammar and structures of modern English, teaching reading and language arts to bilingual students, and completed a field practicum.

After graduating, Julia was hired to teach 4th and 5th grade ESL in a district in Ohio. In 2009, she began teaching K-4 and 7-12 ESL in her current district. From
2010-2013, she taught grades 5-12 ESL in the same district. Since 2013, she has been teaching grades 5-8 ESL.

Julia expressed concern about her knowledge of writing pedagogy, specifically the lack of attention given to writing in her M.A.T. and endorsement programs. When asked what she had learned about teaching writing in her graduate coursework, she paused and hesitantly admitted, “I don’t think that any of my – I don’t think that a lot – most of my teacher preparation in college and graduate school taught me how to teach either reading or writing.” Julia did not recall learning about writing instruction in the teaching reading and language arts to bilingual students course. She learned what she called “general strategies” such as “Total Physical Response (TPR), jigsaw, think-pair-share,” “how to group students,” how to promote interaction between students, and how to “operate physically in the classroom,” but she maintained that “most of what [she] learned about teaching reading and writing, [she] learned by teaching and observing other teachers.” To put it simply, Julia said, “I didn’t learn very much about writing.”

In addition to not being prepared to teach writing in her teacher education program, Julia did not receive any professional development in writing instruction while working in her current district. When asked if there were currently any initiatives for writing, Julia said:

that’s a million dollar question right now in our district. We don’t have a set writing program. Supposedly, that’s the next on the list as far as what we’re going to be tackling. We kind of pull from different places.
Julia had limited preparation for teaching writing. She knew about some aspects of writing instruction, such as conferencing and mini-lessons, but she admitted to not really being prepared to teach writing comprehensively in her teacher preparation program or through professional development.

Julia’s Beliefs About Writing Instruction

Despite her district’s lack of vision for writing instruction, Julia held her own beliefs about how writing should be taught based on her own teaching experiences and observations of other teachers. She shared, “my colleagues in ESL and I all agree and understand that [writing] is something that needs to get taught explicitly.” Julia wanted to teach “discrete writing skills that don’t get transferred from other languages” such as “subject-verb agreement and using articles.” To this she added, “... but in the big picture, I don’t think best practices for teaching writing to ESL students are any different than the best practices for teaching writing in general.”

When asked to identify best practices for teaching writing, Julia stated: “I think [writing] needs to be a daily practice.” Having students write daily in every class session was something Julia wanted to do, but she found it “very difficult to do in [her] setting” because she did not see each student every day. “I think that [writing] needs to be delivered with the vitamin metaphor; we take a little bit every day instead of doing one large unit and then not writing for several weeks” she said. She shared ELLs need “weekly or daily writing opportunities, depending on how often you get to see them...they need this in order to lower their fear of writing . . . they just need more opportunities to write.” To this end, she identified responsive journaling, an exercise
where teachers and students write to each other, as one activity that potentially helps lower students’ fear of writing in a second language. She also thought “responding to reading” was another way to help ELLs develop their writing skills and lower their “fear of putting words on the page.” Julia wanted her students to learn to write uninhibited, but she knew this was difficult for them because of their unfamiliarly with English writing conventions. She explained:

[ELLs] feel inhibited and they’re not going to write anything down because they’re not sure they’re going to be able to write it correctly . . . I want students to get used to the idea of writing as much as they can to kind of break that down –that fear of sitting in front of a blank piece of paper and not knowing what to write.

Julia thought that one way of responding to this fear of making mistakes was to teach grammar and conventions “explicitly.” She shared that teaching these “discrete writing skills” would help ELLs learn to write without fear.

In contrast to this, however, Julia also shared ELLs need “more time spent on process writing” and said “I think it’s important to learn the writing process” but she expressed reservations about “how effective process approaches can be for ELLs” given their lack of mastery of basic writing conventions. However, she also said “learning the writing process is important for [ELLs] because a lot of them don’t understand that it is a process.” Julia mentioned using writing workshop to teach the writing process to her former high school ELLs during our second interview. She had learned about it “in her first or second year of teaching in the district” while observing a special education
teacher who introduced it to her. More recently, Julia saw ELA teachers “practicing parts of it like conferencing and mini-lessons sometimes” when she provided support in inclusion classes. When asked if she currently used writing workshop in ESL, she said she “used parts of it too,” namely conferencing and mini-lessons, but she “was not a big fan of writing workshop because it is very very hard to implement” and she was “divided about how effective it is for [ELLs].” She continued, “some students aren’t self-starters . . . they can’t progress though a project on their own . . . and [writing workshop] leaves you with a lot of time where you have to be writing on your own because the teacher is conferencing with someone else.” Julia had varied dispositions toward this method: “I think [ELLs] do need writing workshop . . . and they need good models even if they are just copying from those models.” However, she also cited her reservations with regard to this method’s effectiveness for ELLs. This belief also seemed to contradict her general belief that best practices for teaching writing in ESL are no different than teaching writing to students in the mainstream classroom. In all, Julia had varied, sometimes contradictory, beliefs about how to teach L2 writing. In the following sections, I examine how Julia taught writing in ESL.

**Julia’s Teaching Practices**

I observed Julia’s instruction in 56 class periods for a total of 77 hours. A typical class session lasted one hour and ten minutes; six sessions lasted two hours. Of these 56 observations, only 8 hours and 54 minutes hours (11.6% of her teaching time) was devoted to writing instruction or practice (Figure 7).
Figure 7. Hours spent on writing versus other language skills in Julia’s ESL class.

On average, students wrote for 9 minutes and 18 seconds per class period, meaning that the average writing time per period was less than 10 minutes. During ten of the fifty-six class periods, students did not write at all. These findings reveal that limited time was devoted to writing instruction in Julia’s ESL classes.

With only 11.6% of her overall instruction aimed at teaching writing and an average of less than 10 minutes of writing per period, this data shows that Julia’s students did not write extensively in her ESL classes. I examined not only the time she taught writing, but also the types of writing tasks she assigned. Figure 8 shows these tasks as well as the instructional time she gave to each type of writing task. The figure demonstrates that when Julia did teach writing, she focused on testing, copying, grammar, and conventions, not composition.
What is noteworthy is not only how Julia taught writing, but also how she did not teach writing. For example, her students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length and there were only two class periods where students wrote for more than 30 minutes.

In the section that follows, I will demonstrate how Julia attended to each of the writing categories in figure 8, beginning with testing and ending with a description of the writing skills she did not teach.

**Testing.** Julia administered writing tests during my observations. Specifically, she administered the OELPA practice test, AIMSweb benchmark writing tests, and placement tests. Overall, Julia tested students’ writing abilities during 20 of the 56 classes I observed. The total time given to the category of testing writing was 146.5
minutes (2 hours and 26 minutes and 30 seconds), which comprised 28% of her writing instruction. Table 9 summarizes the data regarding each test Julia administered.

Table 9

*Summary of Time and Class Sessions Devoted to Testing Writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Type</th>
<th>Observed in Grade(s)</th>
<th>Number of class sessions</th>
<th>Total Observed Minutes</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Use for data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIMSweb Benchmark Writing Test</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Assess writing fluency (number of words) and accuracy (number of correct word sequences).</td>
<td>Develop writing lessons based on student errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Placement Test (Writing section)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>Assess student’s current level of language proficiency.</td>
<td>Assess whether ELL qualifies for ESL services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OELPA Practice Test (Writing section)</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Prepare students for state language proficiency test.</td>
<td>Scores not collected for the practice test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>146.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Benchmark tests.* Julia administered writing benchmark tests three times per year—one at the beginning of the year, once in the winter quarter, and in the spring. The benchmark test consisted of a writing prompt, or “story starter.” These prompts came from AIMSweb (Achievement Improvement Monitoring System) training workbook, which was the progress monitoring system used to assess reading and writing in Julia’s
district. I observed Julia administering the benchmark test during my second (winter) and third (spring) rounds of data collection.

Julia used the same prompts in grades 5 and 6. The writing prompts for the winter and spring benchmarks were, “One day a burglar climbed through our living room window and . . . ” and “If I could trade places with my teacher, I would . . .” respectively. The protocol for this test was for Julia to read the directions, then she read the prompt and gave students a minute to think about what they wanted to write. Then, students wrote continuously for three minutes.

Julia students often asked if the benchmark test would affect their grades in other classes in any way. Students did not receive grades in ESL, but Julia wanted them to take the test seriously, so she explained the purpose of the test:

Let me explain. When I am checking these to find out how much your writing has improved, I am going to check for two things. One way I am going to check is I am going to count the total number of words that you wrote. I’m going to see if you wrote more this time than you did last time. The second way that I am checking is to see how much you are writing correctly. I’m going to be checking for total correct word sequences -and that means I’m going to check to see how many times you wrote two words in a row where you had no spelling or punctuation or comma or capitalization or word uses wrong. Write as much as you can but also do your best writing.

For Julia, the purpose of this test was to track progress in writing fluency and accuracy. She wanted students to “write more than last time” but also wanted their writing to be
grammatically and syntactically correct. The test did not assess communication of ideas or meaning.

One of the problems Julia encountered with the benchmark test was that it was time consuming. By the time Julia had completed a warm-up activity, introduced each section of the benchmark test, gave directions, explained how it was graded, completed the practice questions, and gave students time to complete the test, there was often little time left in the period. Julia was aware that this test occupied a lot of time, but she prioritized the test over other learning activities. In the spring semester, for example, she encountered this problem in a 5th grade ESL class. After she administered the test, there was simply not enough time left in a class period to complete her planned lesson:

We have about 13 minutes left so we are going to start a lesson . . . That’s as far as we are going to get today. I’m going to be our objective checker today. Today did we define ‘complement?’ Yes. Did we analyze metaphors? No, we did not get to this. Did we read any examples of metaphors today? No. Did we speak to explain how the subject shares a trait with the complement yet? No – this is all coming on Wednesday.

In another section of 5th grade ESL the next day, Julia said at the end of the period, “we’re not going to have time to start the lesson today.” Due to the time constraints of administering the benchmark test three times per year, Julia struggled to finish her planned lessons with her 5th and 6th graders.

Julia used the results of the benchmark test to guide how she taught writing because she thought it was the “best indicator of their writing abilities.” For example,
Julia noticed that her 5th graders had difficulty conjugating present progressive verbs on the winter benchmark test, so she taught three lessons on this topic. This test helped her determine which writing skills her students needed to practice. Julia even said “[the benchmark test] doesn’t shape my teaching enough”; she shared that the data she gathered from this test should shape her decisions about how she taught writing. She added, “I think there is huge potential for [the benchmark test] to help improve their writing . . . if I’m able to get my kids back 5 days a week, next year I would really like to use it to do a lot more item analysis for understanding the kinds of errors students are making.” Julia shared that testing students’ writing fluency and accuracy was the best way to attend directly to the specific mistakes her students were making in their writing. “[I want to] start doing mini lessons on the mistakes they make and I’d like to start doing more than just the Fall, Winter, and Spring benchmarks because that’s the best way to find out if those errors are being addressed,” she explained.

Placement tests. In addition to progress monitoring, Julia also administered placement tests, which helped her determine if new students qualified for ESL services. I only observed two class sessions where Julia administered placement tests. She evaluated a new 6th grade ELL with two different placement tests. The first test she used was LAS (Language Assessment System) Links, published by McGraw-Hill. The results on the first placement test were inconclusive, so the next day Julia evaluated the student with another test, the Woodcock-Muñoz Revised Language Survey, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. It took a total of 19.5 minutes for Julia to administer the writing sections of these tests. When asked why she used these particular placement
tests, she said that these were the tests she had at her disposal and “her district bought them because they were used in surrounding districts as well.” Essentially, these were the assessments that were available to her, so these were the ones she used.

**OELPA practice test.** The 2015-2016 school year was the first year that the Ohio Department of Education implemented a digital version of the state English language proficiency assessment. Because of this, Julia wanted to provide opportunities for students to practice the test online. During six two-hour periods, Julia’s students in grades 5-8 completed the online OELPA practice test; 51 minutes of this time was practice of the writing section.

Julia’s wanted her students to “practice with the technology and to be aware of the features that they are going to have” and “understand the tools [they] could use in each section [of the test],” particularly in the writing section. In one of her 5th grade practice test sessions, for example, Julia showed her students how to use the spell-check in the writing section:

In the questions where you use the keyboard to type something, you have the ability to use the spell check. I could write, for example, ‘Do you liaktiv being famous?’ Does anybody see anything that I spelled wrong here? Yeah, ‘like’ is wrong . . . Then if I click on ‘liek’, it’s going to show me a list of words and I can choose the one that I want. Did we get this kind of feature or help with last year’s writing section? No—this is a big improvement. It’s a nice change to this year’s writing test.
Julia showed this feature to all her students across grade levels during the practice test sessions because she thought it was an essential tool for her students in the writing section.

**Copying.** In addition to testing, Julia gave considerable instructional time to copying tasks where students copied what she wrote on the board or under the document camera. Her students copied sentences, notes, and vocabulary words during 15 ESL classes for 127 minutes (2 hour and 7 minutes); this comprised almost one quarter (24%) of all her writing instruction. In many of her lessons, particularly those which focused on learning new vocabulary words, students copied a word, its definition, and a model sentence from the board. In one 5th grade ESL class, Julia taught the meaning of the word ‘interrogative’ and had students copy this word and its definition into their notes. While projecting her own writing from the ELMO to the Smartboard, Julia said:

So can everyone please open up to your vocabulary section of your binder? Open up to the letter ‘I.’ We are going to define the word interrogative. On your dictionary papers on your ‘I’ page, please write the word interrogative. I-N-T-E-R-R-O-G-A-T-I-V-E . . . An interrogative sentence is a question-asking sentence . . . interrogative is an adjective because it is used to describe a sentence that asks a question. Please copy down ‘a question asking sentence’ where it says ‘meaning’ in your dictionaries.

Students copied from the board onto a “dictionary” handout, which Julia borrowed from the Wilson curriculum she used for her reading intervention class (Figure 9).
Julia also asked students to copy words such as “auxiliary” and “present-progressive tense” into their dictionaries. The dictionary entry, consisting of a word or term, a definition, and a model sentence typically served as the starting point of a grammar lesson. She wanted her students to be familiar with these terms so that they had shared vocabulary for discussing grammar concepts. When I asked Julia why she had ELLs copy words and sentences, she said it was “important for students to have good model [sentences in their notes], even if they are just copying from them.” She wanted students to copy grammatically correct models they could use for future reference.

**Grammar instruction.** Julia taught grammar explicitly. I observed her teaching lessons about syntax, parts of speech, verb tense agreement, use of prepositions, and indefinite/definite articles. She taught grammar during 7 observed ESL classes. In total, she taught grammar for 98.5 minutes, which constituted 18% of her overall teaching of
writing. When asked why she focused on grammar, Julia said, “kids don’t get the building blocks . . . so if we can get some of the discrete skills to start happening with automaticity . . . then kids can . . . lower their anxiety about putting something down on paper.”

To this end, Julia taught a series of three lessons on the present progressive tense to her beginner 5th grade ELLs. In the first lesson, Julia introduced the learning objectives for the class: “So today our content objectives . . . we are going to draw a diagram to show the present progressive tense . . . [and] [w]e are going to define helping verbs and list some helping verbs in the ‘be’ family.” Julia drew the following diagram (Figure 10) on a piece of paper under the document camera and students copied it into the grammar section of their notes.

**Figure 10.** Present progressive grammar lesson.
While she drew this diagram under the document camera Julia said:

We’re going to write a sentence. So my sentence for today is ‘The students are writing in their notebooks.’ . . . Whenever we talk about tense in all languages . . . we can talk about three different times. We can talk about past, present and future . . . One reason that we use present progressive tense is to talk about something that is happening right now . . . there are two things that we need to look for: one is going to be our main verb and our main verb is going to have the -ing suffix. Do you remember we talked about suffixes? . . . Our suffixes are letters that come at the end of words to change the meaning of the word. So here we have write-writing . . . Main verb plus –ing.

In the next lesson, Julia defined the term “auxiliary,” as in auxiliary verbs, and her students copied the definition, a model sentence, and drew an image to represent the word. Julia wrote under the document camera and students copied what she wrote (Figure 11).

*Figure 11.* The definition of auxiliary.
Julia explained that this word was a “fancy adjective that means helping . . . [or] extra.” She asked students to identify the “main principal” and the “auxiliary principal” at Donald Intermediate School.

In third lesson, Julia had students identify present progressive verbs in short narrative texts with the intention of having students compose a short narrative as a whole class. She wrote the following content and language objectives on the board at the start of the class:

Content Objectives:

1. We will identify present progressive verb phrases in a text.
2. We will use –ing suffixes in a story about leisure activities.

Language Objectives:

1. We will read a narrative about a family who is relaxing.
2. We will write a narrative paragraph about a family having leisure time.

First, Julia had students identify the present progressive verbs in two short texts (Figure 12).
After Julia and her students discussed the verbs they found in the two texts, Julia said, “now it’s our turn to write a leisure story. Let’s brainstorm . . . We have about four minutes left . . . We are going to start writing a story guys. We might not finish it today. What we don’t finish, we will do again next time. Yes, we are going to do it here [on chart paper].” Since there were only a couple minutes left in the period, Julia did not have a chance to finish the writing task and said that they would finish it next time. While checking the objectives at the end of the class, specifically the language objective about writing a story, Julia said “We didn’t finish. We started but we didn’t finish.”

I observed 10 classes where Julia intended to have students write on their own, but did not have time to complete the last task of the lesson. During these classes, she stated writing objectives at the beginning of class but rarely completed the writing tasks because writing was typically the final task in her grammar lessons. When asked why...
she ran out of time to write, she simply said, “it’s so time intensive and we have so many other things we have to accomplish.”

Conventions. Julia also emphasized spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in her writing instruction. She taught conventions in 12 observed class periods for a total of 70 minutes (1 hour, 10 minutes). Thus, the teaching of conventions was 13% of the time she spent teaching writing. Of these three writing conventions, Julia focused on spelling the most. She only taught conventions with one 7th grade student and her 8th grade students because it was part of the Wilson reading curriculum she used with these students. Julia’s 8th grade ESL reading intervention class completed spelling drills daily. On some days, Julia led a whole class dictation; on other days, students worked in pairs and dictated three spelling words to a partner. When a new student was added to her reading class, Julia explained how they practiced spelling:

So this is how this works since you haven’t done this before. Everyone only works on three words at a time. So each word has a number next to it. So [partner] read him the words that he has . . . his words are tomorrow, February, and Europe. Go ahead and write those words . . . Okay, so you spelled all the letters in Europe correctly but you did not put a capital ‘E’ at the beginning and that makes it wrong. Europe is a word that must always have a capital ‘E’ at the beginning. So [your partner] is going to check your words and you will check her words.

Julia practiced spelling words with her students because she thought if students mastered spelling and other basic conventions, it would help in “increasing writing fluency . . .
[and] encourage more risk taking in writing.” She thought it was necessary to teach these skills because these were, in her view, “the most important skills ELLs need in order to develop as writers.”

**Editing.** A skill that received nominal attention in her classes was editing. Only about one hour (64 minutes) of observed ESL class time was spent on editing a text during two class periods.

In between my second and third rounds of observation, Julia’s 5th grade students wrote a paragraph comparing study strategies. Students choose two study strategies such as ‘make a concept web’ and ‘make a chart’ from a list of ten and wrote a paragraph that compared these strategies. When asked why her students were writing about study skills, Julia explained:

one of the [5th grade] general education teachers had asked me to talk to them about study skills and what they can do to prepare for testing . . . and [writing a paragraph] was something I hadn’t taught yet this year and I didn’t have a really good writing sample from any of my students yet.

All of the time spent on editing occurred during two 5th grade ESL classes; ELLs in grades 6-8 did not edit writing at all during my observations.

On my second to last day of observation, Julia was conferencing with individual students about editing their paragraphs. Students made changes on paper first (individually, with a partner, and with the teacher) and then made corrections on Google docs. Students printed the final version of the study skills paragraph and also shared it online via Google classroom with Julia.
While teaching students how to edit, she instructed students to “read your paper out loud to yourself first” and then she had students exchange paragraphs. Then, Julia conferenced with each student individually to discuss his/her changes. During one of these meetings, Julia said:

Let’s read this sentence together. Does this make sense? Using flashcards is a visual learner. The learner is a person right? That doesn’t make sense. But it is a visual what? Can we change that word form learner to strategy please? I would like you to read the next sentence out loud please...Let’s stop right there. I heard a place where a sentence ended - did you? . . . Yes, we need a period. Keep going . . . Nice. I’m going to get you a Chromebook so you can make those changes.

Julia’s ELLs struggled with writing even at the sentence level. For example, one ELL had written a “paragraph” which consisted of a series of bulleted points. “We are not going to put bullet points in a paragraph,” Julia explained to him. Then she asked, “How can you change those bullet points so you can put them in your paragraph?” For another student, Julia had to set up sentence frames to help him write a topic sentence. She wrote on his paper, “Drawing a picture and __________ are two __________ for _________ character traits.” The student used this frame to write the sentence “Drawing a picture and making a chart are two study strategies for practicing character traits.”

Although this particular writing task required students to write more than a sentence, some struggled to edit a paragraph while other struggled to structure sentences and order them in meaningful ways. Even after students had edited individually and with
a partner, Julia had to provide instruction on grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

**Group/Class compositions.** I observed only 21 minutes (less than 1% of my overall observational time) where students wrote with a partner or a group of peers. There were only two class periods out of the 56 I observed where students wrote with peers. The first instance was when Julia and her 5th grade students began writing a paragraph about leisure activities using the present-progressive tense. The paragraph was the culminating task of her series of lessons about identifying and using the present progressive tense. They began the paragraph with the sentence “The [Smith] family is sitting in the living room.” However, they did not finish writing this paragraph because the period ended.

In another 5th grade class, Julia assigned partners a “three-line readers’ theatre” in which students had to write three lines that would help them remember the definitions of terms that would appear on an upcoming social studies test. She explained:

Everybody has a social studies test coming up pretty soon that has to do with economics. I want to show you a study strategy kind of like strategy number eight but instead of writing a poem or a song we are going to write a little play. You are going to be in partners . . . So my readers’ theatre is going to have two people: An A person and a B person. . . . In our conversation, we need to provide enough context clues about the word ‘natural’ so that anybody that hears your play would definitely know what the word natural means.
These group compositions only occurred in Julia’s 5th grade beginner and intermediate ESL classes. Her students in grades 6-8 did not compose with peers.

**Fill-in-the-blank and single word responses.** Julia rarely had students complete fill-in-the-blank worksheets in her ESL classes. Only 7 minutes of her observed writing instruction consisted of fill-in-the-blank or single word response activities. She did have an optional “weekly word puzzle” that students could submit for small prizes, but she did not regularly have students write single word responses unless these words were copied from the ELMO.

There was only one class session when Julia had students fill-in-the-blank. In her beginner grade 5 ESL class, she had students write the names of movies in “alphaboxes.” Students wrote the names of movies that began with each letter of the alphabet. For example, for the letter A, students wrote *Aladdin.*

**Writing tasks absent from Julia’s instruction.** Of the 77 hours that I observed Julia’s instruction in her ESL classes, there was no time given to individual composition of anything greater than a paragraph in length and no observed time given to prewriting activities. The students did not choose the topics they wrote about; Julia assigned the topics and focused on correct grammar and conventions rather than content or composition. Ten of the fifty-six ESL classes I observed did not have any writing instruction or practice. Her 6th and 7th graders typically only wrote as part of a test; her 8th graders practiced spelling as part of the Wilson curriculum, her 5th and 6th graders mostly copied notes and learned about grammar.
Most writing activities involved either copying, taking a test, grammar instruction, or practicing “discrete” writing skills such as spelling and punctuation. Julia shared that having these discrete skills would help her students become more fluent writers. “They need to know the basic mechanical components of writing—capital letter at the beginning, end punctuation—in order to become more fluent writers,” she said. “I think many ELLs who are in ESL long-term have somehow missed those foundational skills and that really holds them back,” she concluded.

**Julia’s Obstacles**

The errors in her students’ writing guided Julia’s decisions about teaching L2 writing. Thus, she tried to address these mistakes explicitly in her instruction. However, she also acknowledged several obstacles she cited as impeding her writing instruction, obstacles she regarded to be mostly outside of her control. In this section, I examine these perceived obstacles and how they influenced her pedagogical decisions.

**Student ability.** Although Julia valued writing instruction and shared it “needs to get taught,” knowing how to teach writing to adolescents with varied and emergent writing abilities, as well as different levels of English proficiency, was challenging for her. She identified writing as “the last of the domains to be mastered by [her] students.” She explained this was one reason why her students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length: “I do take a pretty discrete approach to writing-- because never mind writing a whole five-paragraph essay, writing solutions to problems, or comparing and contrasting --my students frequently can’t write a sentence.” Julia wanted to assuage their
fears about writing, but she expressed concern that her students’ writing capabilities were too limited to practice writing extensively. She said:

I’d say more than half of my [writing] instruction is devoted to [teaching] discrete writing skills—capitals, punctuation, learning your parts of speech . . . because I think that’s part of increasing fluency, lowering fear and encouraging more risk-taking. When they feel they’ve got more words in their command, they’re more likely to put them down on paper.

Julia’s goal was to increase writing fluency, but she reported that deficiencies in grammar, punctuation, and spelling limited the scope of the writing activities she could practice with her students. She thought the primary way to overcome her students’ limited writing abilities was to teach grammar and conventions explicitly. Consequently, the need to provide instruction aimed at fixing these mistakes seemed to overshadow the need to provide opportunities for extended daily practice.

**Time and scheduling.** Julia further explained that her students did not write anything longer than a paragraph because writing instruction was “time consuming.” Given the constraints of meeting other curricular standards and the number of students she had, Julia reported she did not have sufficient time to teach writing beyond grammar and basic conventions. When asked why more time was not devoted to writing practice, she responded, “because it’s so time intensive [laughs] and we have so many other things we have to accomplish.” Finding time was “the most challenging part of teaching writing” for Julia. She explained, “I want to take the time to go through the whole
writing process . . . because taking a piece to publication is what makes it meaningful . . . but the challenge is finding time to do that.”

Additionally, Julia noted that her teaching schedule did not facilitate writing instruction. Julia did not teach each student every day; she saw some students once a week and others every day. She shared: “[teaching writing] is really hard to do especially if you don’t see your kids every day because you start something then you have to go back to it three days later . . . I used to use to teach [writing workshop] at the high school when I had kids five days a week [and I] had a 50 minute ESL class every day.” This was, in her view, a schedule that supported regular writing practice, but her current schedule and the number of students she taught made it almost impossible, in her opinion, to teach the writing process.

**Testing.** Julia explained that her instructional time was often occupied with “data gathering,” which she reported left little time for writing practice. These tests included progress monitoring (benchmark tests) three times per year and placement assessments for incoming students, but Julia was highly concerned with the standardized tests such as OELPA and AIR. In her view, these tests “focused more on reading than writing.” She explained how these tests influenced her decisions about writing instruction: “My colleagues and I are trying to address writing across the curriculum...students should be writing in all their classes . . . there just isn’t an emphasis on [writing] in testing, so then there is not emphasis on it in instruction . . .” To this she added, perhaps her most prevalent concern with regards to testing, “. . . a teacher’s personal evaluation is tied to how their kids do on testing. So we make pretty pragmatic decisions—we’re going to
teach the things that we know are going to come up on the test.” Julia’s decisions about how to teach writing were closely tied to her concerns about how her students’ scores reflected on her as a teacher, and the potential consequences of negative test results.

**Lack of a writing curriculum and district objectives for writing.** Another reason why Julia did not focus on writing in ESL was because she reported the district administration lacked a vision for writing and did not prioritize it. She shared: “we don’t have an umbrella model or policy or curriculum materials for writing.” “[Writing is] something that needs to get taught explicitly, but we don’t have materials, strategies, or time to do it” she explained. I found evidence to support Julia’s claims of a lack of support for writing in the district’s ESL objectives and “ESL philosophy statement,” which Julia shared with me. This document declared the broad goal of “help[ing] [ELLs] overcome linguistic, cultural and language difficulties.” It stated this goal would be accomplished through the “use of a structured English immersion approach for educating all ELL students.” The district’s ESL policy documents did not explain specifically how writing would be taught. In short, the district lacked clear objectives for writing instruction. Julia cited the lack of a clear plan for L2 writing, no writing curriculum, and a lack of emphasis on writing in her district as impeding her attempts to teach writing in her ESL classroom.

Julia wanted to adopt Lucy Calkins’ unit of study approach: “I would really like it if [the district] adopted Lucy Calkins—that’s a good model.” She had heard about Lucy Calkins from an ELA teacher and had started to read about it on her own. However, when asked why she had not requested it for ESL, Julia explained she doubted the district
would purchase it specifically for ESL because she was told her instruction was supposed to mirror and support instruction in subject-area classes. Julia said her district supervisor wanted ELLs on a “parallel curriculum.” In addition, Julia suspected the district would not provide professional development, and that some teachers might not take it seriously because the district “always had too many initiatives” that were not followed through on. Therefore, Julia thought the only way she would get access to this program was if ELA teachers decided to adopt it. She explained:

I could probably name between 8 to 10 different initiatives happening in our district, none of which are writing . . . And everything is done an inch deep and a mile wide. So there’s tension. There’s a district that administration doesn’t follow through and prioritize. And whatever you’re going to be asked to do and learn about is probably going to be gone in 36 months. [laughs] So why bother? Essentially, there was no cohesive writing program or even goals for writing instruction in the district.

**Materials for teaching writing.** The district’s lack of provisions also meant Julia lacked materials for teaching writing. Julia said she had “no current materials specifically for writing.” She explained her district supervisor had been “extremely resistant to buying any kind of curriculum or materials for ESL” because Julia was expected to support the existing curricula of subject-area teachers.

Julia had been provided the Wilson Reading System (Wilson Language Training Corporation, 2017) curriculum and materials to teach her ESL reading intervention class. Julia had the entire Wilson program—student workbooks, magnet journals, magnetic tiles,
pocket charts, fluency assessments, flashcards, spelling lists, and teacher guides. Julia explained she only had these materials “because it’s a reading intervention class, not ESL.”

I asked Julia why she was teaching Wilson and not other reading intervention programs; she said the district chose Wilson because it was “regionally more popular” than other programs at the time when the district decided to implement it. She added that she thought that it was “very applicable to ESL students.”

These materials were purchased for reading intervention, but Julia ‘borrowed’ materials from the Wilson program for her ‘regular’ ESL classes. When asked if she had any other materials for teaching writing beyond those from Wilson, she simply said, “no.”

The writing component of Wilson, from what I observed in Julia’s classroom, consisted primarily of spelling dictations, defining grammatical terms, and copying short sentences that used the spelling words. She also used an editing strategy from Wilson in her ESL classes. She used the acronym COPS (Capitalization, Overall, Punctuation, Spelling) to help her students remember what to look for while editing. This was a strategy that “came directly out of Wilson” according to Julia. She had this strategy posted in her classroom (Figure 13).
Figure 13. COPS editing strategies.

Julia taught writing with the materials she had at her disposal. Other materials she borrowed from the Wilson program for her ESL classes included lined vocabulary handouts her students used to copy new vocabulary words and dictation pages (Appendix H). Additionally, when her 5th graders wrote a paragraph about study skills, she used a pocket chart she had acquired from Wilson, which she repurposed for writing (Figure 14). She added labels with the steps of the writing process (pink cards) and students moved their name cards down the pocket chart as they progressed through the steps of the writing process.

Other than the pocket chart and a writing process checklist students used to keep track of the steps of writing the study skills paragraph, which she only used twice during my observations (Figure 15), Julia had no additional materials, books, or resources for teaching writing.
Figure 14. Writing process pocket chart.
Writing Workshop

Date:

Topic:

✓ Prewriting: Choose a pre-writing strategy to help you generate ideas. You could choose a concept map, a list, an outline, free-writing, a Venn diagram, or another prewriting strategy that you like.

✓ Rough Draft: Use your prewriting to help you write a draft essay for homework.

✓ Revision/Conferencing: Read your draft out loud to your teacher, making quick revisions where needed. Think about places where you need more detail or places where you have included details that do not. After discussing your writing with me and with your classmates, please revise your essay.

✓ Editing: With your teacher or a classmate, read your writing BACKWARDS. Identify any spelling, capitalization, punctuation or formatting errors.

☐ Final Draft: Type a clean, final copy of your essay. Paper clip all of the steps of your writing process together and turn them in to the teacher.
Findings From Julia’s Case

ELLs arguably need more writing practice than their native-speaking peers, but Julia found this to be difficult due to time, scheduling, and student ability. Julia perceived that her teaching schedule precluded her from teaching writing daily because she did not see each student every day. In her view, these issues influenced how frequently and extensively she could teach writing in ESL. To add to this, Julia had no materials to teach and the district did not have a set writing curriculum. Julia reported these obstacles impeded her writing instruction in the ESL classroom. Although Julia expressed concern about the lack of “materials, strategies, and time,” she reported these constraints were mostly outside of her control and there was little motivation to address these issues given the focus on reading and testing in her district, which “pushed writing aside” into a subsidiary role.

Findings from this case demonstrate that writing can be limited in instructional time and in the length of the tasks in ESL classes. Her students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length and spent little time writing in ESL. Julia only spent 11.6% of her instruction in ESL on writing. Most of the writing activities in her ESL class focused on testing, copying, and teaching grammar and conventions. Because she thought teaching “discrete skills” would lower her students’ fear of writing, increase fluency, and encourage them to put more words on the page, she concentrated on these writing skills in her ESL classes.
Chloe’s Case

Chloe was one of three ESL teachers in her district, but the only ESL teacher at Norton Middle School (grades 7-8) and Longfellow Elementary (grades 5-6). On a regular school day, Chloe taught at the middle school from 7:30am until 10:50am, then drove to the elementary school and taught there until 3:30pm. She did not teach on Wednesdays because she worked part-time.

Chloe shared classrooms with other teachers at both schools. At the middle school, she shared with the gifted education teacher. This classroom had four long tables with six chairs each, a teacher’s desk, a digital projector, and Smartboard. The room was decorated with posters, had four book shelves with novels, and four large fish tanks at the back of the room. At the elementary school, Chloe shared with the speech teacher. This room also had a Smartboard, four laptops, two teacher’s desks and five tables with four to six chairs each.

Chloe taught four ESL pull-out classes per day: a combined class for 7th and 8th grade ELLs, one for 6th grade, and two sections for 5th grade (Appendix I). Chloe also provided support in ELA, Social Studies, and Science classrooms (Figure 16). Chloe saw each student at least once per day.
Chloe had an unusually low number of ELLs in the 2015-2016 school year. She only had eleven students, compared to as many as forty in previous years. She had seven students at Norton Middle School and four students at Longfellow Elementary. Eight of her students were from India and spoke either Punjabi (2) or Gujarati (6) as a first language; others spoke Spanish (2) and Tagalog (1). Many of her students had either “tested-out of ESL” or moved away. Because of this, she often had pull-out sessions where she taught students in pairs or one-on-one.

Chloe’s district had procured a technology grant the year prior to the study; all students at Longfellow and Norton schools had 11.6” Chromebooks. They kept them as they progressed through the grades and when they moved on to the high school. Chloe’s students used their Chromebooks in ESL on a daily basis.

**Chloe’s Preparation for Teaching L2 Writing**

The 2015-2016 school year was Chloe’s 20th year of teaching and her 14th year of teaching ESL. Prior to becoming an ESL teacher, she taught fifth and sixth grade
English, Social Studies, and Health. Chloe taught in the same district for her entire teaching career and even attended the schools in this district as a student herself.

Chloe received her Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and Mathematics from a large university in Ohio. She also received a Master’s degree in school counseling from the same institution. When asked why she pursued a Master’s in counseling, she said she “wasn’t sure if [she] wanted to be a classroom teacher forever, so [she] wanted to have the option to do something else in education.” Chloe had never been employed as a counselor, but she said it was always something she had wanted to do.

Chloe decided to pursue an ESL endorsement after teaching for six years. She completed an online program from a large university in Ohio. Chloe took courses in sociolinguistics, grammar and phonetics, theories of second language acquisition, methods of teaching ESL, assessment and evaluation of ESL, teaching reading and writing in ESL, and a practicum. She said the course in teaching reading and writing concentrated on “phonetics, word order, and grammar instruction.” Other than this one course, Chloe did not recall any other preparation for teaching writing.

Chloe also did not receive any professional development for writing instruction. In the school year prior to this study (2014-2015), Chloe’s district began piloting the 6+1 Traits Writing Program (Education Northwest, 2017) at the middle school. This writing program aims to develop student’s writing ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, language conventions, and presentation of writing (Education Northwest, 2017). The district provided professional development exclusively for middle school language arts teachers. Chloe did not participate because she was “not a language arts teacher” and
this professional development had been designated specifically for them. Since she had not received training, she “learned about [the writing program] along with the students.” Consequently, she did not use the program in ESL because she “questioned how effective it was for ESL” and “had not learned about it.”

Chloe had limited preparation for teaching writing. She was not enthusiastic about the writing curriculum being used at the middle school because she had not been included in the training. Additionally, she had learned little about teaching writing in her teacher education and endorsement programs, which she shared made her writing instruction “somewhat inconsistent from day to day.”

Chloe’s Beliefs About Writing Instruction

Chloe identified writing as the language skill that “holds ELLs back more then any other skill” because “for most [ELLs] writing is the last skill they have to up their score on before they are able to exit the [ESL] program.” She added, “writing is difficult because there’s so many things involved with it—vocabulary, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, grammar.” When asked which aspects of writing were most important for ELLs to learn, Chloe said she thought teaching “fundamental skills” was of prime importance because she had seen her students “struggle with this the most.” By “fundamental skills” she meant teaching grammar and conventions. “I think these skills are the foundation for all of communication, verbal and written” she said. Chloe even displayed these ideas in her classroom at the middle school, where she had posters about punctuation and parts of speech (Figures 17 & 18).
Figure 17. Punctuation poster.

Figure 18. Parts of speech poster.
Chloe ascribed strongly to the belief that she needed to teach grammar because, she said, most ELA teachers “[did] not teach grammar anymore” and she suspected her students’ writing lacked clarity because they “typically had problems with verb tenses.” “A good foundation in understanding grammar is key to being a strong writer,” she added. She viewed grammar as a major problem for ELLs: “if there’s one problem that almost all ELLs have in writing, it’s verb tense. And that’s hard to learn to write unless you know the difference between nouns and verbs.” For these reasons, Chloe concentrated on teaching parts of speech, auxiliary verbs, and parts of sentences (subjects, predicates). She wanted her students to understand “how all the parts work together” in writing.

Chloe shared that grammar and conventions “needed to be taught more in school.” She expressed concern that grammar was not being taught explicitly enough in ELA classrooms: “I teach grammar in ESL because most ELA teachers don’t teach grammar and my students need that basic knowledge but don’t get it in English.” She explained further:

I know my students should know when to capitalize and punctuate by the time they’re in 7th grade . . . but they still forget to put a period at the end of a sentence . . . I’m not sure how that happens, so grammar and writing conventions are not being made to be the priority they need to be in my opinion.

In sum, Chloe wanted her writing instruction to focus on teaching grammar and writing conventions because these were the skills, she reported, ELLs needed in order to develop as writers. She wanted more emphasis to be given to these skills across the curriculum.
These strong beliefs about how to teach writing guided Chloe’s writing instruction. In the next sections, I examine how Chloe taught writing in ESL.

**Chloe’s Teaching Practices**

I observed Chloe for 52 class periods for a total of 52 hours. A typical class period lasted one hour. Of these 52 hours, only 6 hours and 31.5 minutes (12.5% of her teaching time) was devoted to writing instruction and practice (Figure 19).

![Figure 19. Hours spent on writing versus other language skills in Chloe’s ESL classes.](image)

On average, students wrote for 7 minutes and 30 seconds per class period. During 25 of the 52 observations, students did not write at all. These findings show that limited time was devoted to writing in Chloe’s ESL classes.

With only 12.5% of her overall instruction focusing on teaching writing and an average of 7.5 minutes of writing per period, this data demonstrates that ELLs did not write extensively and little time was devoted to writing instruction. In addition to limited
time spent on writing, the scope and variety of writing assignments in Chloe’s ESL classes was narrow (Figure 20). Chloe’s writing instruction focused exclusively on testing, grammar, writing short sentences, and conventions such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

![Chloe: Writing Instruction in ESL (Grades 5-8)](image)

**Figure 20.** Chloe: Writing instruction in ESL (grades 5-8).

Additionally, Chloe’s students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length, and arguably, did not write a full paragraph. Students wrote short sentences about their A.R. (Accelerated Reader) novels in Google docs, but not fully composed paragraphs. Thus, extended writing practice was not part of Chloe’s writing instruction.

In the section that follows, I demonstrate how Chloe attended to each of the writing categories in figure 20, beginning with testing and ending with a description of the skills she did not teach. These findings reveal that although her students wrote
sentences, Chloe’s writing instruction was limited not only in length and time but also in the scope of the tasks she assigned.

**Testing.** Due to changes in OELPA that year, Chloe administered the writing section of the OELPA practice test during five class sessions for a total of 121.5 minutes (2 hours and 1.5 minutes). This comprised 31% of her observed writing instruction.

When asked why she spent over two hours administering the writing section of the practice test, she explained it was “for both [her] benefit and the students’ benefit” because it “is a brand new test and we’ve never taken it before.” She “wanted them to become familiar with the format” and she “wanted [students] to practice some questions in every section of the test.” She added: “I wanted to see how it was going to work—especially the tools they would have access to during the test.” For example, one feature Chloe demonstrated was the note-taking tool in the writing section. “Have you practiced using any of the writing tools?” she asked a student. “You might want to try it. You can used this tool to write notes and brainstorm ideas you want to write about,” she continued. She also explained how to answer questions in the writing section: “You may notice it asks you to write three sentences here, but make sure you read all the directions because it says ‘write you first sentence here.’ So you need to click ‘next’ and see it says ‘write you second sentence here.’ It’s important that you write one sentence in each box.”

Chloe wanted her students to understand how to answer questions on the test, since students had never completed the state language assessment online before. Chloe was confident her students would not have difficulty manipulating the test tools and typing answers because “they use Chromebooks daily in almost all their classes” but she
still wanted her students to be familiar with the format and how to answer questions in
the writing section appropriately.

Learning to access writing tools and learning how to answer questions in the
writing section of the test was, Chloe thought, essential to her students’ potential success
on this test. “I want them to learn how to maximize the writing tools available to them,
that’s why it’s important for us to spend time on this,” she explained.

It should be noted that Chloe did not test her students’ writing abilities on a
regular basis. She said “ELA teachers are already looking at their writing a lot so I focus
mostly on reading in ESL. I try to support the existing A.R. program.” She explained that
the only other test she used to assess writing was the LAS Links language proficiency
assessment, which she used a placement test for new ELLs. When asked why she used
this particular test, she said it was “used regionally” so the district purchased it as the
placement test for ELLs.

**Grammar instruction.** Chloe also focused on grammar instruction in ESL. In
fact, almost one quarter, 24%, of her observed writing instruction in ESL was teaching of
grammar. She spent 93 minutes (1 hour and 33 minutes) on grammar instruction in
sixteen classes. During my observations, Chloe taught lessons about subjects and
predicates, conjugating auxiliary verbs, using prepositional phrases, and parts of speech.
Interestingly, Chloe taught grammar but had few resources to teach it. In fact, she used
grammar lessons and activities from an old English textbook which was previously used
in the language arts program “about ten years ago” but “no one used it anymore.” This
textbook, *English*, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1988. When asked why she
taught grammar, she explained she “noticed . . . that many of the students struggle[d]
with grammar and [made] many grammar mistakes” such as “writing fragments or run-on
sentences” so she taught grammar lessons to address these problems in their writing.

In one grammar lesson with her 5th grade students, Chloe taught about subjects
and predicates because she had seen her students writing incomplete sentences. She
began by saying, “One thing I noticed in your writing was that sometimes you are
confused about what makes a complete sentence . . . so we are going to talk about the
subject and the predicate.” She then explained these concepts:

   every sentence has a subject and a predicate . . . It applies to every sentence but
   not always in the same way . . . The complete subject is all these words and the
   simple subject is this word . . . Do you see that? . . . So the complete subject is all
   the words and the simple subject is just one word . . . Go ahead and read about
   predicate. What is the complete predicate? . . . What about the simple predicate?
   . . . in English verbs are not always actions sometimes they are helping verbs and
   auxiliary verbs. By the word verb, write ‘action.’

Following her instruction, Chloe and her students practiced identifying the subject and
predicates:

   We’re going to practice this on the next page . . . Let’s do number one. My
   hungry friends want to eat. So we have three words for the complete subject and
   the predicate is the rest of the sentence. What’s the complete subject? Yes—my
   hungry friends. Let’s write CS above that. What’s the simple subject-- one word
that tells you the subject is about? Friends. Very good. The friends are the who.

Circle the word friends and write SS above it.

In this lesson, Chloe wanted her students to be able to identify the parts of a complete sentence because she wanted them to understand how to write a complete sentence and how the different parts of a sentence work together. During these lessons, students labeled the parts of a sentence but did not practice writing sentences.

Chloe was highly motivated to teach grammar and taught it regularly because she observed frequent grammar errors in her students’ writing. When asked why she taught grammar so explicitly, she explained:

I feel that for my students, they need more grammar . . . I don’t think there is enough of that anymore going on in the regular Language Arts classroom . . . and that’s parts of speech and that’s understanding nouns and verb tenses, the parts of a sentence-- these are some of the main problems for my students in their writing. I constantly see verb tenses being mixed up, they don’t know how to use auxiliary verbs and they often write fragments . . . I think they need that foundational knowledge, which they don’t get in other classes, so I teach it in ESL.

Chloe’s reasons for teaching grammar were twofold: a) she had observed ELLs making these mistakes in their writing, so she taught grammar as a way to correct these errors and b) grammar was not taught enough in ELA. She explained: “ELLs need to learn these fundamental skills in order to develop as writers because they don’t have that knowledge already in their second language; they really need to learn the building blocks of writing that aren’t really taught explicitly anymore in ELA classes.” Thus, Chloe’s
writing instruction focused on teaching grammar concepts. She reported that teaching these “fundamental skills” was essential to the teaching of L2 writing.

**Short sentences.** As previously mentioned, Chloe aimed to support the existing A.R. reading program in her ESL classes. She aligned her ESL classes closely with the school’s reading program. At the middle school, ESL was scheduled during the school’s sanctioned reading time, so Chloe’s 7th and 8th grade students typically read silently during ESL. On most days, students read silently, selected books, or completed an A.R. test. During ESL classes, Chloe often helped students select their A.R. books from the classroom library or from the district’s online library database (Figure 21) and provided time for students to read these novels:

So what are you getting started on here? Your A.R. test? What book did you read? *Baseball Fever*? Do you have your next book ready to go? Okay so tomorrow when I’m not here, you go to library if you can . . . Did you find any books that look interesting to you? Did you find one that you might like to read? When you find one, read and then write some sentences in Google docs.
In addition to reading, ELLs wrote summary sentences about what they had read. There was no particular number of pages or chapters students read before writing a summary sentence, but Chloe encouraged them to “write at least one sentence about your reading” per class. During twelve of the fifty-six observations her students wrote ‘reading summary’ sentences. This comprised 23% (89 minutes) of her teaching of writing. In my fieldnotes, I documented that Chloe’s middle school ELLs wrote “2-4 sentences after reading a chapter or series of pages.” Her students at the elementary school (grades 5 and 6) “wrote 1-2 sentences after reading one to five pages.” These sentences essentially summarized what students had read and was a way for Chloe to “check that they understood what they had read.” Even though students sometimes wrote multiple sentences, they did not compose paragraphs, as the sentences were mostly
independent of each other and simply summarized individual events or character traits from A.R. novels.

When asked about the purpose of this practice, Chloe explained that many of her students had high reading fluency but very limited comprehension. She thought that writing about their reading would help with comprehension, and also help them remember what they read for the A.R. test. When Chloe met individually with students to read and write, she typically asked the student read out loud and then write about what he/she had read. The following is an example of this instruction with a 6th grade ELL who was reading *The Spaghetti Detectives* by Andreas Steinhofel (see Appendix J for an extended transcript).

So now you are on page 92? Is that correct? . . . Do you remember what happened when they ran into each other in the hallway? He was a little upset about something . . . let’s back up to that. Can you read that again? . . . Read this sentence . . . So this is what you wrote . . . ‘Mrs. Darling knows nothing.’ Is this in the context of the story? Does it mean she doesn’t know anything in the whole world? When you write ‘Rico says Mrs. Darling knows nothing’ you are taking it out of context. Do you know what they were talking about when she said that? This is supposed to remind you about what is happening in the book. But if you just copy a sentence here and there, it’s not going help you understand. Let’s look at this again. Start reading.

During these lessons, which frequently occurred one-on-one at the elementary school, students alternated between reading and writing, but rarely wrote more than five
sentences during one period. In the extended transcript of the above example, the student writes three sentences in one class period. These sentences did not comprise a cohesive paragraph but simply summarized individual ideas and events from the narrative. Chloe wanted to help her students understand “what [was] happening in the book.” However, she found that her students often copied random sentences when she asked them to write.

It was common for students to copy whole sentences or phrases directly from a book, especially when Chloe was not working one-on-one with students. During a class session at the middle school, it appeared that a 7th grader had written several paragraphs about *The Little Prince*. However, when the student met with Chloe to discuss her chapter summaries, Chloe recognized almost instantly that most of what the student had written was copied directly from the book. “It’s unfortunate that it looks like you copied this. So you have to rewrite it in your own words,” she said to the student. When asked why she thought the student copied, Chloe said, “she does that because she has no idea what she just read . . . she will just copy different phrases down and they don’t always go together . . . but I’ve noticed that if we talk about what happened then she writes a really good sentence.”

Writing short sentences was one way Chloe provided an opportunity for her students to practice writing in ESL. When asked about this practice, however, Chloe returned to the idea of supporting the district’s reading program. She hoped that writing these sentences would help with “reading comprehension and help them remember what they read when they take the A.R. test . . . many of my students can decode words fluently, but then when I ask them what they read, they don’t know, so I hope that writing
these sentences can help with that.” In essence, Chloe’s purpose for writing these sentences was to help support ELLs understanding of narrative texts.

**Conventions.** When Chloe met with students individually to review their summary sentences, she focused on correcting spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors in their writing. During ten classes, for a total of 67 minutes, she taught these conventions to her students. Of her writing instruction in ESL, 22.5% (88 minutes) was teaching conventions or correction of these errors in students’ reading summaries.

Since Chloe had fewer students that year, she often worked individually with them to correct errors related to writing conventions. In one meeting with a 6th grade ELL Chloe said:

When you are writing a sentence, remember what a sentence has to have at the beginning . . . Don’t forget to start with a capital letter at the beginning. And what do we need at the end? Yes, we need some punctuation.

In another observation, Chloe worked with a 7th grader to correct similar errors in his summary sentences about *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*:

Let’s take a look at this before the bell rings . . . So you wrote ‘charlie is the son of Mr. and Mrs. bucket charlie lived in a small house made of wood’ What do you need there? A period. Right-- you have two sentences here. You can go back and change it. . . . Now what do you need when you have a proper noun? No, not plural. You don’t want to make it plural. You don’t want to make it ‘Charlies.’ It’s a proper noun. Do you remember what we talked about with proper nouns? Right! They have to be capitalized. So you have to capitalize Charlie here and
here . . . every time you write his name, which is a proper noun, we have to capitalize it. And what did you forget here? Another period. Right! So now we have ‘Charlie is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bucket. Charlie lives in a small house made of wood.’

Chloe found that her students struggled even with basic writing conventions. “In many cases, my students don’t capitalize the first word in a sentence and they forget to punctuate at the end of the sentence,” she explained. Chloe found this very frustrating because she did not see her students applying these rules regularly: “We’ve gone over this rule so many times, but I don’t see them making those changes” she lamented.

Because her students made mistakes frequently and regularly, Chloe’s writing instruction focused narrowly on teaching basic writing conventions; she taught within a right/wrong dichotomy that concentrated on error correction but not on communication of meaning.

**Writing tasks absent from Chloe’s writing instruction.** Of the 52 hours I observed Chloe’s instruction in ESL classes, her students did not write anything greater than a paragraph in length. In fact, I argue, that her students did not write complete paragraphs because the reading summary sentences were individual sentences and not cohesive meaningful paragraphs. Most of the writing activities in Chloe’s classes involved testing, grammar instruction, writing short sentences and correcting convention errors in these sentences. Essentially, Chloe’s writing instruction focused closely on accuracy in grammar and conventions. She thought teaching these “fundamental skills” would help ELLs develop as writers.
Although her ELLs did not write anything greater than a couple sentences in length, and did not write for extended periods of time, the scope of the writing activities was also limited, with students writing almost exclusively about what they read in the A.R. books. Students never composed with the goal of communicating their own opinions or thoughts about the books; they simply summarized the events of narrative texts. This seems particularly finite when one considers the scope of writing activities prescribed by the national curriculum for writing (argumentation, informative/explanatory, narrative texts) found in the Common Core (NGA & CCSS, 2010a).

Chloe’s instruction focused on state tests for writing, teaching grammar, and correcting convention errors in their short reading sentences, rather than on communication of ideas or composition of more extended pieces of writing involving multiple paragraphs. Furthermore, since Chloe’s ELLs did not write any multiple-paragraph compositions, there were simply no opportunities to learn other writing skills such as revision and organization. Twenty-five of the 52 classes I observed did not have any writing instruction or practice because Chloe’s students in all grades typically read their A.R. books during ESL. Across grade levels, her classes focused on reading, not writing. This is not to say that teaching reading is unnecessary or unimportant, however, the emphasis on reading in ESL overshadowed writing in ways that limited the time devoted to writing, as well as the scope and the length of writing composed in ESL.
When I asked Chloe why she focused on teaching grammar and conventions and did not teach the writing process, she stated, “the writing process gets taught in ELA” and she did not teach it because “it’s so time-intensive to teach.” Following this, I asked Chloe if she thought she had a responsibility to teach writing:

[Natasha:] Do you think ESL teachers have a responsibility to teach writing?
[Chloe:] I see it as my responsibility to make sure that their writing is improving . . . They all have different needs. But in general, I see a lot of [problems with] verb tenses, prepositions . . . [and] prepositional phrases.

[Natasha:] So you teach more of the technical aspects of writing? Grammar?
[Chloe:] Yeah, I do more technical things and grammar . . . They definitely get more writing instruction from their Language Arts teachers and I just look for patterns [in their writing] and try to correct a pattern until it’s corrected and then I look for another pattern [they] can improve upon.

[Natasha:] Mhmm. Do you see improvements in their writing?
[Chloe:] Slowly . . . when they write, they’re not necessarily applying it.

[Natasha:] Right. So you don’t see many improvements on formative assessments?

[Chloe:] . . . they don’t necessarily apply it right off the bat the first time they write something.

Chloe’s writing instruction focused on the “patterns” she observed in her students’ writing. However, she saw little improvement in their writing as her students struggled to
put these rules into practice. Because Chloe observed recurring mistakes, she reported that it was important to teach these aspects of writing explicitly.

Chloe’s decisions about how to teach writing were guided by two primary influences: the A.R. reading program in her district and the errors she observed in their writing. Although students were not required to write these reading summaries for the reading program, Chloe thought it would help them understand and remember what they were reading. Although her students wrote these sentences, they never wrote a paragraph in which they composed or incorporated their own ideas. In some cases, students copied sentences directly out of the book. When Chloe found errors in these sentences, she taught grammar lessons with the goal of correcting these mistakes. Chloe shared that teaching “fundamental writing skills” was the way to help improve students’ writing.

**Chloe’s Obstacles**

When asked why she limited her writing instruction in these ways, Chloe cited several obstacles, which impeded the extent to which she could teach writing in ESL. This section presents these obstacles and explains how they influenced her pedagogical decisions with regards to writing instruction.

**Student ability.** Chloe’s belief in the importance of teaching grammar and conventions was motivated by the mistakes she observed in her students’ writing. She expressed concern about her students continually making grammar errors, which she found “a little bit maddening.” Chloe was frustrated with the fact that despite her efforts to teach grammar explicitly, her students continued to make the same errors in their writing. Yet, the mistakes she observed compelled her to teach grammar. When she
observed a “pattern of mistakes,” she taught a lesson aimed at correcting these specific grammatical errors. “I just pretty much observe what they do in their writing and go from that . . . I think a good foundation in understanding grammar is key” she explained. One example of this was when Chloe taught a lesson about subjects and predicates: “when I was looking at their [reading summary sentences] . . . I noticed that they were writing fragments, or run-ons, and when we corrected the run-ons then they went back to fragments, so I thought we’re going to start again with subject and predicate.” However, she also found that this approach was not always effective: “ . . . but after I taught them [subject and predicate] it didn’t sink in, and they couldn’t apply it.” This was concerning for Chloe, but she reported that given her students’ limited ability to write grammatically-correct sentences, she could not really teach much writing beyond this basic level of writing.

**Time and testing.** In addition to the constraint of her students’ writing ability, Chloe lamented that much of her instructional time was spent preparing students for standardized tests. She deemed the testing culture of her school, her district, and her state to be restrictive, limiting how and what she could teach in ESL. In her view, preparing students for standardized tests compromised valuable instructional time. Chloe explained it was not only state tests, but also placement and progress assessments occupying this time:

At the beginning of the year, we have to do initial assessments for any student who is new to the district and marked that there is another language spoken in the home on the Home Language Survey . . . so at the beginning of the year, I test
every new student [at the middle school and the intermediate school] who has anything other than English marked . . . so that’s at the beginning of the year [and] . . . that could take up to a month since I usually only work 3 or 4 days a week depending on the year . . . their score on [the placement test] determines if they receive ESL services . . . So after that we have to do Pre-SLO tests so we can see how much they learned from the very beginning of the school year to the very end of that school year . . . that takes us into October . . . and then there are other state tests that they have to take as well – AIR or Terra Nova or whatever it is - it changes every year. Well, maybe not every year, but it changes a lot . . . this year, OTELA, I mean OELPA, is later in the year than usual . . . so normally I have from about the middle of October until Christmas break to teach them and work with them. Then as soon as we get back from that, we might have a week in January and then we start testing after Martin Luther King Day . . . usually that runs into April. Not just OELPA, but all the other tests that are also in the Spring . . . and then we have our post-SLO test; it’s usually in mid-April . . . so there is very little teaching from January to April . . . maybe a maximum of 3 weeks and I don’t see my students every day.

Chloe wished she had more instructional time, but the realities she described limited her ability to teach comprehensive successive lessons in ESL classes. As such, the constraints of mandated testing limited the extent to which she could teach writing in ESL.
Parent perceptions. In addition to the obstacle of testing, Chloe felt pressure to purposefully limit her writing instruction because she feared some of her students’ parents would complain about the workload in ESL:

I don’t [teach the writing process] because it is such an intense process that I feel like I’m just adding so much stress to their lives if I do that. And a lot of times parents will say to you, ‘you’re giving my child homework’ and then want to pull their child out of ESL altogether . . . I’ve received complaints about giving too much writing for homework, so now I have them write sentences . . . instead of going through the lengthy process . . . and then we go on to the next thing.

Following these comments, I asked Chloe why she thought parents would want to pull their students out of ESL, given that it is offered to help support their learning. She explained: “well, it’s because there is sometimes a perception that [ESL] is taking away from the other classes and that students miss content because they come to ESL.” For most of Chloe’s students, however, ESL was scheduled during the school’s reading time or during an intervention period, but Chloe did not want to aggravate these concerns.

One factor that fueled the perception of ESL as “unimportant” and “adding to the workload” was the absence of grades in ESL. Chloe found that some students and parents thought ESL was unnecessary; she obviously disagreed but did not want to further promote this perception by giving ELLs “lengthy” writing assignments. Having students write short sentences about what they read masked writing in a way that made it seem as if it was part of the existing reading program. “The writing process is something that gets taught in Language Arts and the perception is that ESL shouldn’t give too much
homework since they don’t get grades, so I support the existing writing instruction in ELA by teaching verb tenses, parts of speech, and other fundamental skills like punctuation and capitalization,” she explained. Chloe’s perception of the writing process as “intense” and “lengthy” coupled with pressure she bore from parents deterred her from teaching writing beyond grammar and other “fundamental skills.”

**Lack of curricular objectives for ESL.** In addition to these concerns, Chloe’s district did not have any specific ESL program objectives. Since the A.R. reading program was fervently emphasized in her district, and there were entire class periods dedicated to reading, Chloe’s instruction in ESL aimed to support this program. At the middle school, ESL was scheduled at the beginning of the school day, at the same time as the school’s sanctioned reading time, so Chloe viewed this time as dedicated primarily to reading.

When asked why she added a writing component to A.R. reading, she said,

[Chloe:] I put those two skills together because it supports the existing language arts program and it also helps me do reading and writing. And it doesn’t give them any more work.

[Natasha:] So they’re required to write those sentences in English language arts as well?

[Chloe:] Not the writing part . . . They’re required to read a book and take a test every quarter.

[Natasha:] Okay.
[Chloe:] So I put the writing component in there because it communicates to me what they read . . . it helps me understand if they understood what they read.

[Natasha:] So you use writing to verify their reading comprehension but their reading comprehension is low so they don’t know exactly what to write on the doc -

[Chloe:] That’s correct.

Chloe did not have any specific writing goals or objectives for her students other than “helping improve their writing” and “supporting their reading comprehension.” She explained that part of the reason why she did not have a set curriculum beyond the A.R. reading program was because the ESL program in her district was “unstructured” and there were no clear goals or objectives for ESL: “I change what I want to do with my students often...which is part of the unstructuredness of the [ESL] program, which I don’t really like...I like the autonomy that I can change my teaching, but then I am never really in a good groove where I feel like this is exactly the way it should be done.” She appreciated the flexibility, but also thought at times it was “too unstructured” and she “wasn’t quite sure how to get it right.” Chloe had been “craving some structure” in the ESL program for “so many years.”

Chloe’s district supervisor, Tim, confirmed this lack of direction for the ESL program. When asked about curricular goals for the ESL program he said, “I don’t know if we have any primary goals. Um, I would say if I had to come up with a primary goal, it would be to pass OELPA.”
**Materials.** Since there was no set curriculum for Chloe to follow, other than the reading program, Chloe had few materials to teach writing. Other than the single copy of a grammar textbook published in 1988 that “no one used anymore,” Chloe had no resources to teach writing. She continued using this textbook because she thought it was important for ELLs to “learn the basic building blocks of writing.” When asked if she had any other resources for teaching writing, she said, “No-- I feel like there’s definitely something missing in what I have for my students, but I haven’t figured out what it is- I haven’t found a resource that works for them other than that old grammar book.” Chloe knew Tim, “[was] very open to getting [her] what [she] needed” but she did not know of any writing programs specifically for ELLs. “There must be something out there – but I haven’t seen it,” she said. When I asked Tim about materials he had purchased for L2 writing instruction, he said he had “not purchased any program specifically for ESL.”

**Findings From Chloe’s Case**

A number of influences limited Chloe’s writing instruction in ESL. These included Chloe’s own beliefs about how to teach writing and several contextual obstacles. Chloe’s perception of grammar as the “foundation” of writing and the observed grammatical errors in her students’ writing motivated her to focus on the “technical aspects” of writing. She focused her instruction on these “fundamental skills” because she perceived a lack of instructional time to teach the “lengthy” writing process because of testing and other mandated assessments. There was pressure to purposefully limit her writing instruction because of parents who had the opinion that ESL was not necessary, and was insignificant to school as a whole. Furthermore, since the A.R.
reading program was prioritized in her district, and Chloe did not want to add to her students’ workload, she decided to support the existing program by having her students write reading summary sentences. This was, in her view, a way to incorporate writing without it interfering with the existing school curriculum. Finally, Chloe had no established curriculum for ESL in general, and no materials other than her old grammar textbook to teach writing. In short, there were few resources and limited vision for writing instruction in ESL.

Cross-Case Analysis

The individual cases of this study were analyzed to identify how ESL teachers teach writing to adolescent English language learners. The participants, Julia and Chloe, were experienced ESL teachers who taught grades 5-8 in two separate districts in Ohio. The similarities and differences across these two cases are discussed here. I compare the two participants based on the following categories which emerged during my analysis: teacher education, instructional practices, and explanations of pedagogical decisions.

Teacher Education

The two participants attended different universities for their teacher education programs. Julia, who initially studied English literature, did not pursue her ESL endorsement until later in her career. Similarly, Chloe pursued her endorsement several years into her career, even after she was already teaching ESL in her district. Unlike Chloe, however, Julia pursued her teaching licensure and endorsement together in an M.A.T. program in hopes of obtaining a full-time teaching position, while Chloe added it to her license because her district asked her to start teaching ESL. Unlike Julia, Chloe
completed her ESL endorsement entirely online from a large university in another part of the state. Julia completed a face-to-face program at a mid-sized university.

Both participants had limited preparation to teach L2 writing in their teacher preparation and endorsement programs. Neither teacher recalled learning anything about teaching ELLs in their general teacher education coursework, and reported learning very little about teaching writing in their endorsement coursework. Julia said she learned “general teaching strategies” but not specifically how to teach L2 writing. Chloe said the extent of her preparation for teaching writing in her endorsement program was learning about teaching grammar and syntax.

In terms of professional development and other initiatives aimed at developing writing instruction, both participants reported no workshops or other sessions specifically for teaching writing. In Chloe’s district, the 6+1 Traits program (Education Northwest, 2017) was being piloted at the middle school, but Chloe had been excluded from receiving professional development in it because she was not an ELA teacher. In Julia’s district, writing seemed to be an afterthought. Julia noted there was little motivation for teachers to adopt “another initiative” because there had been so many in the past that were not fully implemented or followed through on.

Since both participants reported limited preparation to teach L2 writing, I asked them about other sources that informed their instructional decisions for teaching writing. Both pointed to learning about teaching writing from observing other teachers. Julia said, she first learned about “writing workshop when [she] saw the special education teacher teaching writing” and she had also seen “some ELA teachers using it” as well.
Chloe said she observed the 7th grade ELA teacher while she was in inclusion, who she thought “did a great job of teaching grammar . . .” and she tried to mirror this instruction in her own teaching.

**Instructional Practices**

*Writing time.* In both cases, nominal time was devoted to writing instruction and practice. In Julia’s case, students wrote in more than half her classes. By contrast, Chloe’s students only wrote in less than half her observed class sessions. Comparisons across cases show that on average ELLs are writing for less than ten minutes per class period. The percentage of instructional time devoted to writing was quite similar in both cases, varying only by less than one percent (Table 10). Next, I examine how writing time was used in various types of writing tasks across cases.

Table 10

**Writing Time Across Cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Number of classes without any writing</th>
<th>Total observed writing time</th>
<th>Average observed writing minutes per period</th>
<th>Percentage of observed instructional time devoted to writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>10/56</td>
<td>8h 54m</td>
<td>9m 18s</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>25/52</td>
<td>6h 31m 30s</td>
<td>7m 30s</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows the minutes devoted to the different writing tasks and instruction observed in Julia and Chloe’s classes. Of note is that both teachers devoted the most time to testing writing, not teaching writing. Testing and practicing for writing tests was
especially important for both participants because of Ohio’s new English language proficiency test.

Table 11

*Time Devoted to Each Writing Category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Categories</th>
<th>Testing</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Copying</th>
<th>Conventions</th>
<th>Short sentences</th>
<th>Editing</th>
<th>Group writing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia (Minutes)</td>
<td>146.5</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloe (Minutes)</td>
<td>121.5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>391.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The time devoted to writing seems particularly limited when one excludes the testing category as writing instruction. Although students practiced writing during this time, it did not constitute time *teaching* writing and the same can be argued for copying. Copying, which is writing without composing (Applebee, 1981), does not exactly constitute teaching writing. These writing activities focused on skills necessary for success on the assessment and on note-taking, rather than on the development of writing strategies ELLs need to write more complex compositions. When one subtracts time devoted to testing writing and copying from the total time devoted to writing in each case and focuses on activities where participants taught students about writing and how to write—grammar, conventions, editing, group writing, and short sentences—there are only 253.5 minutes (4.2 hours) devoted to writing instruction in Julia’s case and 270
minutes (4.5 hours) in Chloe’s case over thirteen days of observation. Thus, it can be concluded that nominal time was given to the teaching of writing in both cases.

Both teachers also focused much of their writing instruction on teaching grammar and conventions—aspects of writing they reported to be essential to learning to write in a second language. The writing categories which contrasted across cases included copying—with Julia devoting 127 minutes and Chloe giving none, editing—Julia devoted 64 minutes and Chloe none, group writing—Julia devoted 21 minutes and Chloe none, and writing short sentences—Chloe devoted 89 minutes and Julia none. These figures demonstrate that Julia provided more diverse writing tasks while the scope of Chloe’s tasks was more limited.

These findings reveal writing instruction was also limited in scope in ESL classes. Essentially, ELLs did not encounter a variety of writing tasks designed for different purposes and audiences. The actual writing that occurred in ESL classrooms focused on testing, tasks where the teacher writes and students copy, teaching of grammar and conventions, and writing short sentences to summarize reading. Writing used to express opinions or ideas, be creative, or develop arguments was missing from instruction.

**Teaching grammar and conventions.** While they used different vocabulary to describe how they taught writing, similar concepts emerged in both cases. Both participants described the importance of teaching “discrete,” “rudimentary,” (Julia) “fundamental,” and “technical” (Chloe) writing skills. They observed ELLs struggling with these aspects of writing, so they attempted to address these problems in their instruction. They shared the belief that ELLs not only benefit from this instruction, but
they prioritized the teaching of grammar and conventions in their daily teaching. Both devoted time to teaching and practicing these skills. Julia explained her motivation to teach writing in this way:

I remain, I guess, kind of old school. I think it’s really important to teach parts of speech and sentence construction. I think if we can’t talk about conjunctions and verbs and pronouns and we can’t talk about phrases and independent clauses and dependent clauses then we don’t have a shared mode of communication to improve your writing.

Chloe held similar beliefs: “I really think that the foundation for being a good writer is understanding the parts of the sentence and the parts of speech and how to put them together.”

They viewed “understanding the building blocks” as “critical to developing [students’] writing.” The participants prioritized ‘fundamental’ and ‘discrete’ writing skills because they shared these skills were foundation of learning to write. They observed ELLs lacking in these skills, and therefore, aimed their instruction at these particular writing skills.

Copying. Both participants valued teaching fundamental writing skills, but there was one marked difference in their writing instruction. Julia’s students frequently copied notes, vocabulary words, and whole sentences from the board, but Chloe’s students did not copy from the board at all during my observations. Almost one quarter (24%) of writing time in Julia’s ESL class was copying. Instead of copying, Chloe’s students wrote short sentences based on what they had read in their A.R. books. Interestingly,
however, without Chloe’s assistance, students often copied these sentences directly from the book. Her students had difficulty understanding how to extract information from the text without copying it directly, suggesting that, in both cases ELLs either lacked this knowledge and lacked opportunities to practice writing that challenged them to put their own ideas, thoughts, and opinions on paper.

**Testing.** Both participants wanted to prepare their students for the upcoming OELPA test. Julia worried that her students’ scores would be affected by their (in)ability to manipulate the digital testing tools. Chloe, on the other hand, was not so concerned with the testing tools, but rather, that her students answered the questions appropriately and fully.

Both teachers used placement tests to evaluate incoming students. They both used the LAS Links test produced by McGraw Hill. Although I did not directly observe Chloe administering a placement test, she explained that she typically assessed new students at the beginning of the year because this was when they usually arrived in her district. In Julia’s district, however, she had to evaluate students as they arrived throughout the year.

Unlike Julia, Chloe did not regularly administer progress tests in writing. Julia’s benchmark tests, which she gave three times per year, tracked how much students could write and how accurately they used the conventions she taught them. This was how she tracked writing fluency and accuracy. Since students did not receive grades in ESL, Chloe did not monitor her students’ writing progress throughout the year.
Explanations of Pedagogical Decisions for Teaching L2 Writing

In this section, I examine how teachers’ stated beliefs about writing and concerns about several obstacles mediated their pedagogical decisions for teaching L2 writing. Both similarities and differences emerged across cases. First, I explain how the participants’ beliefs about writing instruction mediated their teaching practices. Following this discussion, I present a cross-case examination of the obstacles they faced. The consequences of these obstacles are discussed.

Teacher beliefs as mediating concepts of pedagogical decisions for writing instruction. An underlying issue that emerged while examining Julia’s case was the apparent disconnect between how she thought writing should be taught and the actual instructional practices in her classroom. For example, Julia expressed her belief that best practices for teaching writing to ELLs are not different from those used in the mainstream classroom. At the same time, however, her teaching did not consistently reflect these practices as she focused on teaching “discrete” writing skills and copying.

Julia also shared that students need opportunities for daily writing practice; however, these opportunities were not typically provided during her instruction beyond the sentence level and copying text from the board. One potential explanation for this phenomenon was Julia’s observation that student ability limited the kinds of writing tasks she could assign. Julia wanted to provide opportunities for students to “write uninhibited” but this proved to be difficult given that many of her students “struggled to write a sentence.”
Julia also had somewhat contradictory views of teaching the writing process, as she questioned the effectiveness of process-oriented models for ELLs. She expressed concerned over having inadequate time to teach the writing process and found writing workshop, for example, difficult to implement with her students. Due to the varied writing abilities and levels of language proficiency of her students, Julia wanted to teach writing was to emphasize grammar and writing conventions in her instruction. Consequently, in Julia’s case, there seemed to be a disconnect between her beliefs about writing instruction and her actual practice of teaching writing in the ESL classroom. Her stated beliefs did not always align with her practices.

By contrast, in Chloe’s case, her practices aligned quite closely with her belief that teaching grammar and writing conventions helped ELLs develop as writers. Chloe repeatedly expressed the need to teach grammar and conventions explicitly because these aspects of writing were not taught regularly in the language arts classroom “anymore” and ELLs lacked these basic writing skills. Consequently, Chloe did not teach the writing process in her ESL classroom because she thought it was “too intense” and “too lengthy” to teach in ESL; she also shared that the writing process was “something that gets taught in language arts.” In fact, one could argue Chloe did not emphasize writing in general in her instruction. She used ESL classes to support the existing A.R. reading program at both schools where she taught. Students wrote short sentences, which summarized what they had read, and Chloe helped her students correct basic errors in these sentences, but ultimately most of her instruction focused on reading and not writing.
Although the origins of teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction are beyond the scope of this study, these beliefs mediated how they decided to teach writing in ESL. In Julia’s case, there seemed to be a disconnect between her stated beliefs and her practices; in Chloe’s case, her practices mirrored her beliefs quite closely.

**Mediating obstacles limiting L2 writing instruction.** Both participants cited obstacles that impeded their instruction and were mostly out of their control. These obstacles were similar across both cases, but with some subtle differences (Table 12).

**Table 12**

*Obstacles Impeding Writing Instruction Across Cases*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Julia’s Obstacles</th>
<th>Chloe’s Obstacles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student ability</td>
<td>Student ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and scheduling</td>
<td>Time and testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Parent perceptions/complaints about ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of professional development in writing</td>
<td>Exclusion from professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of materials for teaching writing</td>
<td>Lack of materials and knowledge of materials appropriate for teaching L2 writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of writing curriculum and objectives for writing (expectation to keep ELLs on a “parallel curriculum”)</td>
<td>Unclear curricular objectives for ESL in general (expectation to support the existing A.R. program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student ability limiting length of writing tasks.** In both cases, students did not write anything greater than a paragraph in length. When asked why this was the case, both participants cited their students’ writing ability as limiting the length of the writing tasks they could assign. Julia explained: “sometimes my students struggle to write a
sentence, never mind a paragraph.” Chloe agreed: “we need to start with getting the parts of the sentence in the right place.” Even writing at the sentence level was a challenge; both participants aimed to help students understand how to write a complete sentence, but there were few opportunities for students to compose beyond the sentence level.

One of the consequences of this perception was the tendency for both participants to assign writing tasks such as copying or ‘writing about what you read’ rather than teaching students how to write. They both taught grammar and conventions with the intent to improve writing fluency, but focusing on these skills also limited opportunities for teaching the writing process and limited opportunities for learning to write in different genres.

**Testing and scheduling limiting available instructional time.** In addition to student ability, both teachers cited tests as limiting the instructional time they could devote to writing. With the new state English proficiency assessment (OELPA) being implemented that year, both teachers had students complete the online practice test because it was “a brand new test” and students had “never taken it before.” They showed students how to manipulate digital tools on the test. One of the primary objectives in practicing for OELPA was “to practice with the technology” and “to be aware of the features” of the test. Julia worried that students’ ability to “manipulate the test tools” could negatively affect their scores, especially on the writing section of the test. Chloe’s concerns were not with using the technology, since her students used their Chromebooks daily, but with ensuring students answered each question fully.
Chloe did not administer benchmark tests like Julia did three times per year. However, they both used placement tests to assess potentially qualifying students for ESL services. They viewed testing as necessary, but as something that interfered with their daily instruction. Chloe went as far to say “very little teaching” occurred “from January to April” because of preparation and administration of state tests. Julia reported making “pragmatic decisions” about how much writing she taught because she perceived reading to be the primary focus of standardized language tests.

**Lack of a cohesive writing curriculum or ESL curriculum in general.** Neither teacher had a set writing curriculum that she followed in ESL. Although Chloe’s district had adopted the 6+1 Traits Writing curriculum at the middle school, she was not using it in her ESL classes because she had not been formally trained to teach it. Julia reported the writing curriculum was “the next on the list of things [to be] tackled” in her district. Consequently, there was, in both cases, no defined curriculum for writing in ESL. In fact, in Chloe’s case, there was no particular curriculum followed in ESL other than A.R. reading.

**Lack of materials limiting instructional potential.** With no clear writing curriculum in either case, it seems to follow that both participants reported not having any materials specifically for teaching writing and no professional development aimed at writing instruction. Consequently, they based their decisions about how to teach writing on observing ELA teachers and on the mistakes they observed in student writing. Both participants agreed that grammar was not being taught extensively in ELA and worried that ELLs would not learn to write effectively without explicit grammar instruction.
They shared that these errors were evidence of student need – and wanted to address these writing needs in their instruction. As a result, they focused on teaching the “building blocks” of writing.

Julia reported that ELLs needed to learn more than these basic skills, but at the same time, she wanted to teach the writing process more. However, she reported there simply was not enough time to teach it given that she also needed to prepare students for the new OELPA test while also teach reading, listening and speaking. Chloe also concentrated on teaching these “fundamental skills” because she reported writing beyond the sentence level was “taught in ELA” and she did not want to receive complaints that she was adding to students’ workload.

These choices about how to teach writing were what Julia called “pragmatic decisions” about writing instruction. Given the expectation in Julia’s district, to keep ELLs on a “parallel curriculum” and the lack of structure to the ESL program in Chloe’s district, both participants taught writing in ways that served the existing reading programs at their schools. Julia used materials from the Wilson program her district had purchased; Chloe supported the existing A.R. reading program in her district. The writing tasks in Julia’s ESL classroom (copying vocabulary words, copying sentences, grammar practice, and spelling) were products of the materials and curriculum she used to teach reading. With no clear objectives for writing, or even for the ESL program in general, Chloe decided to ask her students write sentences about their books. Essentially, in both cases, writing instruction existed within the constraints of the existing adopted programs but writing was given a subsidiary role in the curriculum. The participants’ decisions about
how to teach writing were influenced by a number of compounding issues, which ultimately limited the length of writing tasks, the time spent on writing instruction, and the scope of writing activities in ESL classes (Figure 22).

*Figure 22.* Issues contributing to a lack of writing instruction in the participants’ teaching.

**Summary**

This chapter presented findings of a multicase study of two ESL teachers: Julia and Chloe. The findings indicated that both participants taught basic writing skills to ELLs but did not provide opportunities for writing anything longer than a paragraph in length. Additionally, writing instruction comprised only a small portion of the overall instructional time in ESL. Both teachers lacked materials, professional development, and
a cohesive program to support L2 writing instruction in ESL. With the constraints of placement testing, progress monitoring, and state tests—as well as the parental pressure in Chloe’s case—the participants reported there was little time to teach writing extensively and to teach the writing process. Consequently, writing was not prioritized in ESL and writing instruction that did occur focused on the teaching of basic writing skills.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to understand how ESL teachers taught writing to English language learners in ESL pull-out classes in grades 5-8 and their explanations of these practices. These questions are significant because research in the field of second language writing has historically focused on the compositions of adult college-age international students and has neglected to address how younger ELLs learn to write. Furthermore, a study on second language writing instruction is warranted because there are few studies that explore the teaching of second language writing within the contexts of American intermediate and middle schools (de Oliveira & Silva, 2013; Leki et al., 2008; Olson et al., 2015).

Overview of the Study

This study was designed as a qualitative multicase study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) because I sought to answer “how and why questions” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 28). Two questions guided this investigation:

1. How do ESL teachers teach writing to English language learners in grades 5-8?
2. How do ESL teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for L2 writing instruction?

Two cases were purposefully selected for this study. The participants, Julia and Chloe, taught grades 5-8 ESL pull-out classes in two separate districts in Ohio. Julia taught full-time; Chloe worked part-time. Each individual case, each teacher, was bound to the system of her instructional context. Locally, each teacher was bound to the
district’s expectations and policies for teaching ESL. At the state level, these cases acted
within the system of Ohio’s ESL standards, testing procedures, and overall goals for
English learners. I chose to examine teachers in different districts in order to obtain a
diversified data set as a means to compare and contrast instruction in different settings.
As such, this study gains credibility because more than one case was examined (Merriam,
2009).

Data analysis procedures for this study aligned with the methods of data
collection. The audio recordings of instruction and interviews were transcribed and
imported into Nvivo qualitative data analysis software. Data were segmented through a
systematic coding process of constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Glaser &
Strauss, 1967) into three levels of codes and later reassembled into a linear hierarchy,
which grouped codes into “typologies” which “suggest associations across groupings”
(Yin, 2016, p. 204). The patterns in the data were refined through peer debriefing and
manipulation of the data. This allowed for the interpretation of emerging patterns, the
presentation of the findings, and finally, the discussion of implications and conclusions of
this study.

In this chapter, I discuss these implications and conclusions. This discussion
should prompt ESL teachers to critically consider how they teach writing. Additionally, I
aim to add to the field’s understanding of how writing is taught in ESL classrooms. I
discuss the limitations of this study and its implications for theory, practice, and policy.
Finally, I make suggestions for future research.
Theoretical Considerations for Teaching L2 Writing

In this study, sociocultural theory of second language acquisition (Lantolf, 2000) provided the framework for understanding teaching activities, which occurred within particular social settings for learning (Leontiev, 1981; Vygotsky, 1978). The assumption of teacher as the director of this environment (Vygotsky, 1997) allowed for the examination of teachers’ pedagogical decisions within the ESL classroom. The participants choose teaching and learning activities and used particular tools which mediated their teaching within these settings (Lantolf, 2011; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014). These actions were achieved through social interaction between teachers and students (Vygotsky, 1987). Thus, this framework provided a sociocultural lens through which the teaching of second language writing can be interpreted.

As an understudied area of research, the teaching of second language writing is also in its infancy theoretically. With the field of second language acquisition, a subfield of applied linguistics, providing largely positivist-oriented perspectives of language acquisition, scholars have debated whether or not these theories can be applied to classroom instruction or whether they serve primarily to define the conditions necessary for language acquisition to occur (Belcher, 2007; Chapelle, 2007; Ellis, 2005; Han, 2007; Lightbown, 1985; Lightbown, 2000; Magnan, 2007). As the field of second language education attempts to bridge this theory/practice gap, it is also developing as a field in its own right. As part of the emerging field of second language education, second language literacy, and more specifically, the teaching of second language writing to adolescent
English learners, is in its early developmental stages theoretically but some theoretical implications can be suggested from the findings of this study.

The first theoretical implication attends to the role of grammar instruction in the teaching of second language writing. There is an argument for including grammar instruction in the teaching of ELLs. Within the sociocultural theoretical framework, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) explain how grammar instruction mediates the acquisition of a second language. They point to some fundamental features of the role of grammar instruction in the cognitive development of second language writing skills. Most notably, they make the case that learning to write in another language requires conscious awareness of each of the relevant segments and features, including the letters that represent individual sounds, the strings of letters that represent words, and the strings of words that represent phrases and full sentences - and, above all, the meanings that are encoded through these various strings. (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 292)

Moreover, what makes learning to write in a second language challenging is that “all of this is produced voluntarily and consciously” (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, p. 292). Supported by Vygotsky’s notion of grammar instruction to be of “tremendous significance for the general development of child’s thought” (1987, p. 205), they argue that part of schooling is learning to manipulate one’s linguistic system in increasingly complex and meaningful ways.

Therefore, in teaching L2 writing, grammatical and linguistic structures are often taught explicitly because they are not implicitly available in the learner’s consciousness
Both participants adopted this notion about second language learning and it motivated them to teach grammar in their ESL classes. In contrast to this, one’s native language is learned implicitly and spontaneously (Vygotsky, 1987), thus explicit grammar instruction in one’s first language may not be necessary to the same extent because first languages are acquired primarily unconsciously through interaction with other interlocutors. Native speakers have previously learned language frameworks that have been acquired through interaction and practice. First language instruction attempts to make this implicit knowledge explicit, while second language instruction aims to teach explicitly learned frameworks with the goal of making them implicitly available within the learner’s consciousness.

The teachers in this study aimed to teach these structures, and provided opportunities for grammar practice, because they wanted these structures to become implicitly available for use in students’ writing. They wanted students to adhere to the language’s underlying linguistic framework in order to be fully understood by potential readers. They taught grammar explicitly to ELLs because students made frequent grammatical errors in their writing, which they viewed as evidence of the absence of grammar knowledge. They aimed to correct these mistakes by teaching students about tense, parts of speech, and syntax. This was demonstrated in their instruction because almost one quarter (24%) of Chloe’s writing instruction and 18% of Julia’s was teaching grammar. They considered this to be an essential aspect of learning to write for ELLs.

Although there is an argument for teaching grammar to ELLs, the teaching of L2 writing should not be limited to grammar instruction and conventions as these are only
two aspects of knowledge necessary in order to learn to write. Although these are skills that are needed in order to compose comprehensible writing, instruction of L2 writing can move beyond these basic skills, even for emergent and developing L2 writers.

When considering the kinds of knowledge L2 learners need in order to develop as writers, one must also consider the social contexts in which they are taught to write and the motivating ideologies within these contexts. The participants of this study encountered several contextual obstacles they perceived as impeding their writing instruction. Julia, for example, made “pragmatic decisions” about how she taught writing because she wanted students to pass OELPA. Chloe deliberately limited her writing instruction because she received complaints from parents who did not think ESL classes were necessary; she feared they would remove their children from ESL altogether. They approached writing instruction in ways that satisfied multiple stakeholders within their school communities, including content area teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

These stakeholders provided both material and conceptual artifacts (Cole, 1996) that mediated how they taught writing. In Julia’s case, her district provided little direction for her instruction beyond telling her that her ESL curriculum should support the existing ELA curriculum. This was problematic for writing instruction in particular because the district had also not provided any professional development or materials for teachers to teach writing. Chloe, who also had few materials for teaching writing and no set curriculum, avoided assigning writing tasks longer than a couple sentences in length because she did not want parents to perceive ESL as adding to students’ workload.
The findings of this study suggest that although mediating conceptual and material artifacts do influence how ESL teachers approach writing instruction, the cultures of school communities and social relationships ESL teachers encounter within these communities also shape how writing is taught in schools. This suggests a slight shift from Lantolf’s views of mediation towards L2 writing as a social practice embedded within socio-cultural layers which influence how L2 writing instruction occurs.

Literacy as a socially-situated practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 1985) maintains that literacy practices such as learning to read and write occur within socially and culturally situated contexts. Proponents of this perspective distinguish between observable literacy events and inferred literacy practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Heath, 1983). Literacy practices such as reading and writing are much more than a set of autonomous discrete skills, they are carried out within the influence of social relationships, cultural goals, and institutions that define these practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). The ideologies embedded within schools inherently shape how writing is taught and what is assigned (Berlin, 1987; Miller, 1997). Hillocks (2002), for example, has documented that test-drive ideologies shape instruction and ways that may limit writing opportunities for students, which was also demonstrated in this study. Although this perspective does not necessarily provide insight into how L2 writing is acquired as a language skill, it does provide insight into the types of knowledge ELLs may need in order to participate in literacy events such as assigned writing tasks in school as well as literacy practices such as using texts for social, cultural, and institutional purposes.
Perry’s (2009) research of Sudanese refugees in Michigan identified three types of knowledge language learners need in order to participate in literacy practices, which, I argue, also inform the knowledge adolescent ELLs need in order to learn to write. First, she maintains that learners need lexico-syntactic and graphophonic knowledge which encompasses the vocabulary, syntax, spelling and grammatical structures of a language. This knowledge was clearly addressed in the instruction of the participants of this study. With this knowledge, learners gain an understanding of how the language is encoded (writing) and decoded (reading) to produce meaning. Second, language learners also need cultural knowledge, which ELLs may lack, within which are embedded the values and expectations for language use. Finally, in order to engage in literacy practices, learners also need written genre knowledge of the text features, purposes, and organization of texts (Perry, 2009).

This study found that ESL teachers are teaching the lexico-syntactic and graphophonic aspects of literacy knowledge, but not attending to cultural or genre knowledge of writing practices. These two aspects of knowledge were not addressed in significant ways in the ESL classrooms studied (Figure 23).
This suggests that adolescent ELLs who participate in ESL classes are not encountering opportunities to develop their cultural and genre understandings of writing as a social practice. Although it may be necessary for ESL teachers to teach some grammar to students who have no prior experience with the structures of the English language, it is also essential for ELLs to learn about genre and appropriate cultural uses of English writing. There were few occasions in which teachers supported cultural knowledge (purposes for writing, audience) and the genre knowledge (structures, features, type) of ELLs. Ideally, all three of areas of knowledge should be addressed in L2 writing instruction.

**Discussion of the Findings**

In addition to these theoretical considerations, there are several findings, which can be discussed about the cases individually and collectively. These findings can help inform the education of ESL teachers, how teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction
potentially shape their writing instruction in the ESL classroom, how the presence or absence of curricula and materials mediate L2 writing instruction, and how teachers’ time is used for teaching in ESL.

**Julia**

The first significant finding from Julia’s case is that she had limited preparation to teach writing in her teacher education program, her ESL endorsement program, and had few opportunities for professional development aimed at writing instruction. In fact, she said her teacher preparation program and her ESL endorsement failed to teach her how to teach reading or writing.” She received no professional development about teaching writing. What she knew about teaching writing came mostly through observing other teachers and through her own teaching experiences. Even though Julia was an experienced teacher, she had little knowledge of how to teach writing.

The second major finding from Julia’s case is that her own conceptualizations of writing instruction shaped how she approached the teaching of writing in ESL. She narrowly focused on the teaching of syntax, parts of speech, verb agreement, articles, and punctuation. She maintained that “capitalization, punctuation, parts of speech [and] vocabulary” were the most important writing skills ELLs needed to learn in order to develop as writers. She characterized these elements of writing as “discrete writing skills.” This conceptualization of writing as a set of discrete elements influenced how Julia approached writing instruction in her own classroom. She taught grammar very explicitly and purposefully and avoided assigning lengthy writing tasks. These ideas
about what writing “is” and which writing skills are important for ELLs to learn mediated how she approached the teaching of writing in ESL.

Another concept that mediated Julia’s teaching was her perception that writing instruction is “time consuming.” Even though Julia knew that taking a piece of writing through the writing process is “what makes it meaningful” she resisted teaching the writing process because she did not see each student every day and reported she did not have enough time to teach it. Consequently, her writing instruction consisted primarily of the teaching of grammar and writing conventions.

Julia suggested that one of the reasons why writing was often “pushed to the side” in ESL was because she did not have “materials or strategies” to teach writing. This was evident in Julia’s instruction as she often used handouts from the Wilson Reading System to teach grammar, vocabulary, and spelling in her ESL classes. Although Julia thought it would be beneficial to adopt Lucy Calkins’ units of study approach, she doubted that the district would purchase these materials for her unless the entire school adopted it as well. Even then, she perceived there would be little “buy-in” from her colleagues because the district had “already had so many initiatives that were not followed through on.” Thus, a lack of materials (and vision for writing) such as an explicitly stated writing curriculum and resources for teaching writing restricted how writing was taught in ESL.

The district provided her with few clear objectives for the ESL program. It is noteworthy that there were no explicitly stated objectives for writing instruction in the district’s ESL policy documents. The only clear expectations for the ESL program that Julia could identify were a) she was supposed to teach an 8th grade ‘ESL’ reading
intervention class, and b) her instruction in ESL should support the ongoing instruction of
the general education classrooms. However, this instruction rarely focused on the
teaching of writing.

The vague instructional objectives of the district and the lack of curricular
materials for teaching writing influenced the narrowing of the writing curriculum in
Julia’s ESL classes. Julia’s writing curriculum was “narrow” in the sense that it focused
primarily on testing, grammar instruction, and conventions. That is not to say that Julia
thought that the teaching of writing was unimportant, but she lacked both objectives,
knowledge, and materials for teaching writing. In other words, she advocated for the
general goal of teaching writing—or at least the goal of teaching students how to
manipulate language fluently and accurately—but lacked both the conceptual and
material artifacts necessary to move beyond teaching these basic writing skills.

Another notable characteristic of Julia’s teaching was frequent testing and
evaluation of ELLs. Julia tested students who could potentially qualify for ESL services,
assessed student progress in writing through benchmark testing three times per year, and
helped prepare ELLs for the state ESL test. There was a strong emphasis on teaching the
kinds of writing tasks that appeared on progress assessments and state language tests such
as OELPA in her teaching. For example, she had all her students complete the OELPA
practice test so that they could “become familiar with the test tools.” Spending extensive
time on testing and practicing for testing potentially limits the frequency and complexity
of the writing that can be taught in ESL.
Julia’s case brings to light some of the reasons why “writing gets pushed to the side” in ESL classes. Julia’s conceptualization of writing as a “discrete” set of skills speaks to how teachers’ conceptualizations of language skills may influence how they teach those skills in the classroom. For Julia, her emphasis on grammar instruction seemed to be motivated by her own understanding of what constitutes “good” writing as well as her own struggle to define what she wanted her students to be able to achieve as writers. These mediating conceptual artifacts limited both the frequency and the complexity of the writing tasks her ELLs experienced within the ESL classroom. Julia’s case suggests that ESL teachers who perceive writing to be difficult to teach or time consuming may limit their writing instruction to the teaching of grammar and basic writing skills.

Finally, writing constituted only 11.6% of Julia’s observed instructional time in ESL classes. The average time spent on tasks requiring writing per class period was less than 10 minutes. Overall, the majority of the time Julia did spend teaching writing was dedicated to testing, copying, and teaching of grammar and conventions. Additionally, students did not write anything longer than a paragraph in length and rarely wrote more than a few sentences unless it was for a timed 3-minute on-demand writing prompt on a test. These findings suggest that writing is not being made the priority it should be in intermediate and middle school ESL classes and emergent L2 writers are not encountering opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, to write in different genres, or to write anything of length.
Chloe

In Chloe’s classes, only 12.5% of her observed instructional time included writing instruction and writing tasks; however, writing in Chloe’s classes were far more limited in the variety of tasks she assigned. Writing focused only on testing, grammar instruction, writing short sentences to support reading comprehension, and teaching conventions such as capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. The average time spent on writing in Chloe’s classes was 7.5 minutes—also less than 10 minutes per period. Her students, even those in 7th and 8th grade, rarely wrote anything longer than a few sentences in length in ESL classes. These findings suggest that writing instruction is not only limited in time, but the writing tasks asked of ELLs in grade 5-8 are limited in length and scope, meaning that students are simply not writing enough in intermediate and middle schools in order to be prepared to for the tasks that will be required of them in high school, university, or the workplace.

A potential explanation for the limited scope of writing instruction in Chloe’s classes is that her beliefs about how writing should be taught were mirrored in the instructional choices she made. When she did teach writing, she focused on grammar and conventions because she wanted ELLs to learn these “fundamental skills” in order to develop as writers. This finding sheds light on why teachers’ conceptualizations of what constitutes “good” writing matters for their teaching practice. Because Chloe viewed teaching grammar and conventions as critical, she avoided teaching the writing process and teaching students how to communicate ideas in their writing. She maintained that
“the writing process gets taught in Language Arts” and that ESL was not the appropriate venue for teaching the writing process.

Thus, another important finding from Chloe’s case is that ESL teachers may only view ESL as a support for the teaching of writing that occurs in ELA classes, not as a class where ELLs can learn to write extensively. For example, Chloe not only thought that it was the responsibility of the ELA teacher to teach the writing process, but she also said she thought it was too “intense” and “lengthy” to teach in ESL. This raises the question of the purpose of ESL pull-out classes. I argue that the writing process can, and should, be taught in ESL in order to, at the very least, help students understand that writing is a process, not a set of finite fragments. Furthermore, ESL classes are, by definition, language classes—so it seems inappropriate to neglect writing in this way. Though the origins of these beliefs about the teaching of writing as ‘not part of ESL’ are beyond the scope of this study, it may be that these conceptualizations of the teaching of writing are consequences of a lack of preparation for writing instruction in both teacher education and professional development settings, which brings this discussion to the next finding.

Although Chloe’s district was piloting a writing curriculum at the middle school, Chloe was excluded from the professional development for this program because she was not an ELA teacher. This shows that ESL teachers may not be receiving professional development in writing simply because they are not ELA teachers. Though a seemingly trivial excuse, there are potentially many reasons why this occurs: a lack of clear objectives for the ESL program and a lack of allocated resources (Gandara,
Maxwell-Jolly, Driscoll, 2005) and the marginalization of ESL teachers in middle schools (George, 2009). Both participants reported their programs held a lower status than other interventions such as reading and math because they received less financial support or low scheduling priority. For example, Chloe did not use the 6+1 Traits writing program in her ESL classes, in part, because she had not been prepared to teach it. Furthermore, the district had not purchased any “materials specifically for ESL”—so the purchase of a writing curriculum for ELLs would be quite unprecedented. As a result, Chloe had limited opportunities to develop her pedagogical knowledge about writing instruction and also lacked the material artifacts necessary to carry out the teaching of writing.

I argue, therefore, that the provision of a writing curriculum and professional development in writing for ESL teachers is not only advisable, but should be required in ESL intervention programs such as the ones studied here. Without these essential pedagogical tools (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999), ESL teachers are unable to provide extensive and meaningful writing instruction beyond teaching grammar and basic writing skills. Surely the expectations and objectives for learning to write in a second language need to include more than this in order to prepare students for the writing tasks they will encounter in high school, and eventually, in college and career.

Findings Across Cases

A common thread across both cases beyond the fact that they taught a narrow writing curriculum and spent little time teaching writing, was the lack of comprehensive teacher preparation and professional development for teaching L2 writing. Since both
teachers had limited preparation for writing instruction, they depended on methods and resources other teachers used to teach writing both presently and in the past. Chloe, for example, used an old grammar textbook she had seen ELA teachers use “about ten years ago.” She continued using it because she thought it was useful as it provided grammar exercises on punctuating dialogue, which was one of the problems she observed in her students’ writing. In essence, she used the activities in the grammar textbook because they directly addressed the errors she observed in her students’ writing. Julia, on the other hand, said she learned to teach writing by “observing other teachers” and not from her teacher preparation or endorsement program. This was, for example, how she knew about writing workshop but had not formally learned about it. Perhaps this was one reason why Julia had conflicting feelings about using writing workshop in ESL. She wanted ELLs to practice writing multiple drafts, have time for writing, use model texts, and to “publish [their] writing because that’s what makes it meaningful” but at the same time she questioned how effective this method is for ELLs because she reported many of her students were not “self-starters.” Accordingly, there was a subtle yet actual apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) in both cases, which guided the participants’ writing instruction.

Though Lortie’s concept of apprenticeship of observation was initially conceived to describe student-teacher relationships, there are parallels between what Lortie describes and how the ESL teachers in this study approached writing instruction. Lortie explains:
There are important limits on the extent to which being a student is like serving an apprenticeship for teaching. First, the student sees the teacher from a specific vantage point; second, the student’s participation is usually imaginary rather than real . . . Students rarely participate in selecting goals, making preparations, or postmortem analyses. Thus they are not pressed to place the teacher’s actions in a pedagogically oriented framework. They are witnesses from their own student-oriented perspectives. (1975, 62)

Like the “students” Lortie describes, both ESL teachers in this study conceived writing instruction from a “specific vantage point” which was the emphasis given to grammar and conventions. These ideas are perhaps not surprising given the fact that neither participant had extensive preparation in or instruction on writing pedagogy. In the absence of this preparation, they observed how others taught writing and attempted to adopted some of these methods and resources in their own teaching.

It may be that the apprenticeship of observation is compounded for ESL teachers because unlike most general education teachers, ESL teachers observe other teachers’ instruction daily in inclusion, which may or may not be informed by research-based practices, and they may subsequently attempt to replicate these practices in ESL classes. This compounding may result in a miscellany of approaches for teaching writing in ESL.

**Addressing Research Questions**

This study revealed that ESL teachers do not teach writing in ways that provide ELLs with opportunities for extended writing practice. It was also found that they teach writing in ways that are either (a) consequences of their own mediating concepts of what
writing is and what ELLs need to know in order to develop as writers; (b) consequences of the (lack) of material artifacts provided; and (c) ways that support or mimic how they “witness” other teachers teaching writing. There are pedagogical risks involved in approaching writing instruction in these ways. Firstly, ESL teachers who perceive writing instruction as “time consuming” and “lengthy” jeopardize opportunities for ELLs to practice writing tasks beyond the word or sentence level. With limited opportunities to practice extended writing in ESL, it remains unclear how isolated teaching of grammar and conventions can improve second language writing abilities. Secondly, the lack of clearly stated objectives, teaching materials, and a writing curriculum limited the scope of writing instruction that occurred in ESL. In Chloe’s case, it was discovered that even in districts that are attempting to establish a writing curriculum, ESL teachers may be excluded from receiving the professional development necessary to carry out the teaching of writing. Finally, simply observing other teachers’ writing instruction and following their instructional approaches is problematic given that these practices may be outdated or the fact that even ELA teachers are not typically provided a writing methods course in programs of teacher education (Myers et al., 2016).

**Implications**

There are several implications that can be extended from these findings. The implications of this study inform the preparation of ESL teachers in endorsement programs, teaching practices used to teach L2 writing in grades 5-8, policy for L2 writing curricula, and the field of second language writing instruction.
Implications for the Preparation of ESL Teachers for L2 Writing Instruction

There is a current and immediate need to educate ESL teachers and future ESL teachers on best practices in writing instruction. Neither of the participants recalled learning about the teaching of writing in their teacher preparation programs or their ESL endorsement programs. This study brings attention to a potential lack of preparation of ESL teachers for teaching writing in grades 5-8. The development of teachers’ pedagogical knowledge in writing is of prime importance for second language education but seems to be lacking from programs of teacher education. Teacher educators should consider including the teaching of L2 writing in programs that aim to certify or endorse ESL teachers.

Since credentialing requirements for ESL teachers vary from state to state and individual universities make decisions about coursework (Fenner, 2013), there is little consistency in how ESL teachers are being prepared to teach ELLs. Thus, the extent to which ESL teachers are prepared to teach writing is currently unknown. This study suggests that like prospective ELA teachers who rarely take a course in writing pedagogy (Myers et al., 2016), ESL teachers are also not encountering this type of coursework.

At Kent State, for example, my doctoral coursework in ESL methods, theories of second language acquisition, and linguistics coincided with the coursework of teachers seeking the Ohio ESL endorsement. At our institution, a course in second language reading is required in the endorsement program, but a course in second language writing is optional (Kent State University Department of English, 2015). This means ESL teachers potentially graduate without ever taking a course about teaching writing. This is
consistent with Julia and Chloe’s experiences—they also did not take a writing methods course. This issue is not limited to Kent State. Other universities in Ohio such as The Ohio State University and Ohio University offer general courses in second language literacy instruction (Ohio University Department of Linguistics, 2015; The Ohio State University School of Teaching and Learning, 2015), but no focused course on teaching L2 writing. Such courses are necessary if ESL teachers are expected to develop ELLs’ ability to write in a second language.

This call for courses in L2 writing in ESL endorsement programs raises the question of what topics should be covered in such coursework. Since the research on teaching adolescent L2 writers is limited, this could be a difficult question to answer. In keeping with Perry’s (2009) theory developed from her study of Sudanese refugees, however, it stands to reason that prospective ESL teachers would benefit from a course that attends to the three domains of knowledge necessary for participating in literacy practices: genre knowledge, cultural knowledge, and lexio-syntactic and graphophonic knowledge. A course in L2 writing pedagogy could focus on these three aspects of knowledge necessary to participate in writing.

In addition to changes in teacher preparation, there is also a need to examine the professional development ESL teachers are not provided. Julia and Chloe both reported receiving no professional development aimed at improving their writing instruction. One obstacle that prevented Chloe from learning about writing instruction was the fact that she was excluded from the 6+1 Traits (Education Northwest, 2016) professional development because she was an ESL teacher and not an ELA teacher.
There is, therefore, a need for curriculum directors to provide ESL teachers with clear objectives for writing and professional development for writing instruction, instead of promoting their marginalization (George, 2009), because teachers are not likely to have learned extensively about teaching L2 writing in programs of teacher education.

Without preparation in ESL endorsement and certification programs and ongoing professional development for writing instruction, ESL teachers will not be likely to provide frequent and complex writing opportunities for ELLs, which limits the development of their writing abilities. One could argue that ELLs need this practice more than any other student group, given that they are learning to develop their language skills in a second language.

**Implications for Teaching Contexts and Practices**

**L2 writing in grades 5-8 ESL classes.** This study finds that writing instruction in intermediate and middle school ESL classrooms is limited in time, in the length of the assigned tasks, and in scope. For Julia, only 11.6% of her instruction in ESL classes focused on writing. In Chloe’s case, 12.5% of her observed instruction was devoted to writing, but these activities were narrowly focused on teaching what she considered “fundamental” writing skills. ELLs also did not write anything longer than than a paragraph in length and often struggled to write a meaningful, grammatically correct sentence. In Julia’s case, students wrote to complete an on-demand prompt as part of a test, copied notes, and learned about grammar. Similarly, Chloe also taught grammar and conventions, but her students practiced writing sentences in order to help them remember what they had read. In both cases, students did not choose the topics they wrote about
and rarely wrote to express their own ideas; they simply *used* writing as a means to accomplish other tasks such as copying and tests.

These findings bring to light some important questions about how ELLs are being taught to write in intermediate and middle school ESL classes. Research shows that ELLs benefit from opportunities for extended writing as well as complex writing tasks that require them to analyze and synthesize information (Janzen, 2008; Schleppegrell, Achugar, & Oteiza, 2004), however, I did not find that these opportunities were provided frequently or even regularly in ESL pull-out classes. Additionally, I did not observe ESL teachers practicing what are considered best practices for writing instruction such as providing opportunities for discussion about writing (Nystrand, 1997), regular opportunities for collaboration to compose complex texts with peers (Langer, 2001), using mentor texts as exemplars of quality writing (Ray, 2006), and ensuring that students engage in different writing tasks for a wide variety of audiences and purposes (Dawson, 2013). ELLs did not regularly engage in these practices, and thus, may be not be receiving the kinds of instruction necessary to help them develop their writing skills beyond the sentence-level.

A major influence on how writing was taught in ESL was placement testing, progress assessments, and state testing. Both Julia and Chloe reported they did not have enough time to teach writing extensively in ESL because they had to prepare students for high-stakes tests. In addition to time, however, Julia even went as far to say she made “very pragmatic decisions” about the variety of writing tasks she taught because she viewed the writing tasks on state-tests as consisting primarily of on-demand prompts
requiring little reflection or revision. According to Hillocks (2002), these limitations lead to narrowing conceptualizations of what constitutes quality writing and, like Julia said, “pragmatic” approaches to the teaching of writing which focus on the kinds of writing students encounter on tests. So although both teachers reported writing instruction was “important,” they prioritized the kinds of skills and tasks that would help students be successful on tests. This narrows the scope of writing experiences ELLs encounter in ESL classes.

Since both teachers devoted significant time to testing and test preparation, it is worthwhile to examine this instructional time in depth. One of the benefits of having three observation cycles as part of this study’s methodological design was that it provided the opportunity to observe instruction before and after the administration of OELPA. Observations occurred before the test in January and February and post-testing in May. In 2016, the OELPA testing window began February 29 and ended April 22. For Julia, testing practice occurred mostly during the second round of observation in February, shortly before the testing window opened. Table 13 shows how frequently Julia’s students wrote for testing purposes. As previously described, her students wrote benchmark tests (BT), the OELPA practice test (OPT), and she administered an ESL placement test (PT) during my observations. Grade levels are shown in parentheses.
The recurrent testing shown here confirms Julia’s concern about not having sufficient time to devote to writing instruction. She administered a test almost every day I observed her instruction. This speaks to the pressure some teachers may feel to ‘teach to the test’ and teach the kinds of skills students need in order to be successful on these assessments. This was especially true for Julia, who admittedly made “pragmatic decisions” about what she did or did not teach because her professional evaluation was directly tied to her students’ performance on state tests. Since she perceived that these tests focused “more on reading than writing” and that “teaching writing [is] time consuming,” writing did not receive much instructional time in her teaching.

Chloe also scheduled multiple class sessions for students to practice for OELPA. She did not, however, regularly administer writing benchmark tests throughout the year like Julia (Table 13). Despite this, however, Chloe also reported that high-stakes tests such as OELPA infringed on her teaching time for most of the school year. Chloe shared
teaching writing was a “lengthy” and “time consuming” endeavor and she did not want to add to her students’ exiting workload because she feared parents would remove their children from ESL; thus, she devoted little time exclusively to teaching writing and limited the length of the writing tasks her students encountered in ESL (Table 14).

Table 14

*Chloe’s Testing: OELPA Practice Test (OPT)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Round 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;(January)</td>
<td>OPT (5)</td>
<td>OPT (7)</td>
<td>OPT (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Round 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;(February)</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPT (7)</td>
<td>OPT (7)</td>
<td>OPT (5)</td>
<td>OPT (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Round 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;(May)</td>
<td></td>
<td>OPT (8)</td>
<td>OPT (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tables provide a snapshot of how an ESL spends her instructional time before and after state tests. Both participants reported their instructional time was limited because of state tests. Preparing students for this test (and the time it takes to administer the test) potentially limits time ESL teachers can devote to teaching writing. Furthermore, OELPA constitutes only one state tests ELLs must take in Ohio; Chloe even said that there is “very little teaching from January through April” because “testing [starts] after Martin Luther King Day . . . not just OELPA but all the other tests . . . AIR or TERRA NOVA . . . it’s not just OELPA.” These findings suggest that high-stakes tests
had a direct influence on classroom instruction and on time devoted to writing instruction in ESL classes.

L2 writing instruction should not simply be motivated by the kinds of tasks that appear on high-stakes tests. This approach limits the scope of genres and writing skills ELLs learn. However, the culture of testing that exists makes it difficult for teachers to find time to teach different genres of writing. In particular, process and genre approaches to teaching writing do not correspond with the kinds of writing students are being asked to produce on high-stakes tests. Testing potentially limits the kinds of writing students are being taught and narrows the writing instruction and curriculum in ESL.

**Policy.** When it comes to implementing policies to address these issues, the path forward is somewhat unchartered because writing “more than any other school subject, lacks a widely accepted framework for discussing what students should know and be able to do” (Applebee & Langer, 2013, p. 8). Within the context of second language education, the groundwork for these discussions is only beginning to be laid. I believe that policies about teaching L2 writing can be supported and developed in three ways.

Firstly, there is a need for district curriculum directors and superintendents to critically examine district policies and instructional objectives for writing and L2 writing. The districts presented in this study did not have clearly stated goals for L2 writing. These changes should be made in collaboration with teachers who receive professional development in writing instruction. Since the kinds of writing tasks students are being asked to do are limited, administrators and teachers should examine ways to expand the scope and frequency of writing within intermediate and middle school classrooms.
Secondly, ESL teachers need opportunities to participate in a) professional development initiatives aimed at improving writing instruction and b) shared planning meetings with English and other language teachers. Chloe, for example, was excluded from participating in professional development in her district because she was not an ELA teacher. Even though her curriculum director wanted to implement a writing program in the district, this was not really occurring because only ELA teachers at the middle school had completed the training. Neither participant planned writing instruction or co-taught with any of their colleagues, but there were also no time provisions for this planning to take place.

Thirdly, local and state curricular policies in ESL should define exactly what ELLs should be able to write at the end of each year and provide a specific percentage of instructional time that should be focused on writing, such as those found in the Common Core (NGA & CCSS, 2010a). One of Julia’s suggestions for improving writing instruction in her district was to have a second ELA period dedicated solely to writing. In her view, there simply was not enough time to teach writing effectively. She also pointed out that scheduling was a problem in their district because she did not see her students every day, which ultimately did not support extended and regular writing practice.

**Implications for the Field of Study**

This study adds to the research literature about second language writing in grades 5-8 (Bunch & Willet, 2013; Danzak, 2011; Reynolds, 2002; Souryasack & Lee, 2007; Uruza, 1987). Unlike these studies, which focus on temporary interventions and writers’
textual features in language arts and social studies classes, however, this study adds to the literature in that it reveals writing is receiving nominal attention in ESL pull-out classes and ESL teachers are quite underprepared for teaching L2 writing. Additionally, this study demonstrates that although public efforts and calls for improved writing instruction have been made for the mainstream American English-learner (The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools and Colleges, 2003), and researchers such as Graham and Perin (2007b) have responded in attempting to establish evidence-based practices for writing, these practices have not, at least in the cases studied here, carried over into the teaching of second language writers. When the participants did teach writing, they focused on grammar and conventions at the sentence level; students never wrote more than a paragraph in length. Thus, an important finding of this study is that research-based practices for teaching writing such as those described by Graham and Perin (2007a, 2007b) and Hillocks (1986) may not be part of the instruction of L2 writing in ESL classes in grades 5-8.

Thus, this study brings to light important questions about how L2 English writing is taught in U.S. intermediate and middle schools. It finds that ESL teachers focus on the basic features of writing such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in ESL rather than engaging them in more complex disciplinary writing tasks (Enright & Gilliland, 2011; Wilcox, 2011; Wilcox & Angelis, 2009, 2011) and that that ESL teachers may have limited pedagogical knowledge of writing instruction. Thus, this study contributes to our understanding of how L2 writing instruction is taught in ESL and how it can potentially be improved in order to provide more frequent and complex writing
opportunities for ELLs. To this end, I provide the following recommendations for the teaching of L2 English writing to emergent bilingual students.

Firstly, at the district and school levels, teachers and administrators must share the responsibility of providing ELLs with clearly defined objectives and programs aimed at developing L2 writers. Such initiatives should provide writing instruction that is adapted and scaffolded to meet ELLs’ level of English proficiency. Secondly, at the classroom level, ELLs need opportunities to study disciplinary genres through close examination of models. Without such examples, ELLs are unlikely to learn the structures of a variety of writing types. Thirdly, in practice, ELLs will likely need extra time to compose extensively and move beyond short writing tasks such as fill-in-the-blank and single-sentence responses in order to work towards more complex and extended writing.

Even though the Common Core (NGA & CCSS, 2010a) has given renewed attention to writing, this renewal remains to be seen in the teaching of writing to ELLs. As previously discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, the Common Core provides little to no guidance for how the writing Standards apply to English language learners (NGA & CCSS, 2010b). This is problematic given that there are over 4.5 million ELLs in American schools (NCES, 2016b). A consequences of this is that ESL teachers, such as the ones studied here, are not consistently providing opportunities for ELLs to write for a variety of purposes and audiences (the scope of the assigned writing tasks is limited) and the time devoted to teaching writing in ESL classes constitutes only 11.6-12.5% of the instructional time.
One might question why it is so important for ELLs to learn how to write extensively in English. After all, they are not only learning to write, but they are learning to do so in a language they have not acquired implicitly (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1987). Writing is not only an essential skill for academic and vocational success but learning to write is part of learning how to think. This is why, as educators of language learners, we cannot accept reductionist views of writing instruction as the simple acquisition of basic spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. As Hillocks (2002) said,

[i]n the minds of some people, writing is one thing, but thinking is quite another. If they define writing as spelling, the production of sentences with random meanings, and punctuation, then they might have a case. But who would accept such a definition? Writing is the production of meaning. Writing *is* thinking. (p. 198)

Writing is thinking. When the teaching of writing narrowly focuses on basic writing skills, students’ capacity for inquiry is being limited. Put simply, reductionist approaches to the teaching of writing limit students’ thinking.

Though research on the teaching of L2 writing is limited, the current body of research points to the underlying value of establishing regular classroom routines that model and scaffold writing activities in which ELLs practice multiple drafts of writing (Cumming, 2012; Haneda & Wells, 2012; Nassaji & Cumming, 2000). Olson and Land (2007) have shown the explicit modeling and continued practice of composing strategies is beneficial for developing L2 writers. In this study, however, it was found that
adolescent ELLs are not receiving these opportunities in ESL classes due to time constraints, competing educational objectives such as the prioritization of reading instruction and test preparation, the absence of pedagogical knowledge in writing, as well as a lack of materials for teaching writing. This is problematic given that, ironically, ELLs arguably need the more writing practice than any other student population.

**Limitations**

There are a few limitations to this study. The study is limited in socioeconomic scope as both districts described were public, suburban, middle to upper-middle class districts. Research conducted in lower or upper socioeconomic districts or private schools may reveal different findings.

Another limitation in terms of understanding teachers’ preparation for teaching writing is that they examined their teacher education programs in retrospect. However, both teachers did provide a list of the courses they took in their ESL endorsement programs taken directly from their transcripts.

One aspect of L2 learning that was not explored in this study was students’ level of first language literacy and how that influenced the extent to which ESL teachers could teach writing. Given that Chloe and Julia’s students had variable levels of writing ability ranging from beginner to advanced in their first languages, this could potentially restrict the complexity of the writing tasks they were able to accomplish.

**Areas of Further Study**

This study revealed that ESL teachers approach the teaching of writing in ways that treat writing as a set of “discrete” or “fundamental” skills. It also demonstrated that
the writing complexity and length of compositions written in ESL classes is very limited, and in some cases, non-existent. Additionally, the time ESL teachers devoted to writing instruction in ESL was nominal. These findings raise some of the following questions that may be explored in future research.

Julia and Chloe had very limited preparation for the teaching of L2 writing. Neither their teacher education programs nor their ESL endorsement programs prepared them to teach writing. Further research needs to examine ways in which writing can be integrated into ESL endorsement programs as well as the current state of what teachers learn about writing instruction in these programs. Current research tells us that the requirements for completing these programs vary from state to state and from university to university (Fenner, 2013) but little is known about how this coursework prepares (or does not prepare) teachers for L2 writing instruction.

More studies that examine the writing instruction of ESL teachers are needed. In this developing field of research, little is known about effective methods for teaching writing to ELLs. Future studies should examine not only how ESL teachers teach writing but also how effective or ineffective particular methods are for developing second language writers.

Conclusions

In 1958, Rivers described writing as the “handmaid” of the other language skills (p. 59). At the time, many instructors believed that writing skills developed as students’ mastered the structures and phonics of the language (Bloomfield, 1942; Erazmus, 1960; Pincas, 1962). ‘Quality’ writing was believed to be writing that was grammatically
accurate. Given the findings of this study, it seems that the controlled writing methods of the 1960s are still being used in ESL classrooms today. Although Julia and Chloe did not teach writing as much as the other language skills, when they did teach writing they focused primarily on grammar, conventions, and testing. Their methods mirror controlled methods, but also attended to the data-driven culture of today’s schools.

Julia and Chloe’s writing instruction exemplify why the field of second language writing in K-12 settings, particularly the examination of curriculum and instruction in this context, continues to be an “emerging field” of research (Harklau, 2011, p. 227). Given that there is little research that evaluates the effectiveness of particular approaches to teaching L2 writing, it follows that ESL teachers are using controlled approaches to writing instruction in 21st century classrooms. Historically, L2 writing has been explored from a compositional perspective, and one that primarily examined the compositions of adult and early childhood L2 writers. The teaching of writing to adolescents ELLs, however, has been overlooked. This study attempts to bring attention to the fact that ELLs are not experiencing extended writing practice on a regular basis. This is problematic given that writing is how we “gather, preserve, and transmit information” (Graham & Harris, 2013, p. 5). Writing is an essential skill for communication, vocation, and education.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

OHIO ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS
Appendix A

Ohio English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards

The new Ohio ELP Standards can be accessed at the link below:

http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Limited-English-Proficiency/ELL-Guidelines/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-ELP-Standards
Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Hello,

I am a doctoral student in Curriculum & Instruction at Kent State University. This Fall I will be collected data for my dissertation research. I am investigating how teachers are teaching writing to English language learners at the high school level. With your permission, I would like to observe your instruction for four weeks in 2-week blocks of time. I would also like to interview you about your teaching and preparation for teaching English language learners following each week of observation. Interviews will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Your participation in the study is voluntary. Pseudonyms will be used in the reporting of the data and you will not be identified by name. Your participation will help me understand how reading and writing are being taught to the English language learners at your school.

This study has been approved by Kent State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, you may contact Dr. Denise N. Morgan at dmorgan2@kent.edu or 330-672-0663, or Natasha H. Chenowith at 814-450-0250 or nschenbe@kent.edu. If you have any questions about Kent State’s rules for research or your rights as a respondent, you may call the IRB at 330-672-2704.

Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating in this study or would like to know more about this study and your role as a participant.

Thank you,

Natasha H. Chenowith
nschenbe@kent.edu
APPENDIX C

DOCUMENT REQUEST
Appendix C

Document Request

The purpose of this study is to understand how you teach writing to English language learners.

The research questions are:

1) How do ESL teachers teach writing to ELLs in grades 5-8?

2) How do teachers explain their pedagogical decisions for L2 writing instruction?

I would like to request the following documents to help me answer these questions.

a) Lesson plans for class sessions that I will observe.

b) Copies of handouts and assignments given to students during each class.

c) Copies of Powerpoint slides or other documents used during writing instruction (if applicable).

d) Your course syllabus and plan (if applicable).

e) Any documents or materials you have received during inservice professional development aimed at helping you teach writing to ELLs.
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Appendix D

Interview Questions

Interview 1

1) Did your teacher preparation program provide a course about teaching ESL? If yes, please describe the content of the course. Did you take a course about the teaching of writing?

2) Did you teach English language learners during a teaching practicum?

3) What did you learn about teaching writing to ELLs in your teacher education program?

4) What kind of inservice professional development have you received at your current school/district for the teaching of writing?

5) Tell me about how you approach writing instruction in ESL.

6) How much of your instructional time would you say is devoted to the teaching of writing? Why?

7) What accommodations and modifications do you make for your ELLs?

8) What kinds of writing tasks are your ELLs able to do now? What would you like to see them be able to do in the future?

9) What would you say is the most important skill ELLs need to learn in order to write?

10) Tell me about why you introduce each lesson with the content and language objectives.

11) Do you think your students so a lot of composing?
12) Tell me about the reading comprehension and writing benchmark tests. Where does this test come from? What is its purpose?

13) Could you tell me why you don’t assign homework regularly?

14) In your view, what are the pros and cons of teaching in so many different spaces/classroom?

15) Can you tell me about the Wilson Reading Program you use? Why did you choose this curriculum?

16) In my first week of observation, I’ve seen you teach math, social studies, Spanish, reading, writing, grammar, and computers. You teach a lot of different subjects and skills. How would you defined your role as an ESL teacher?

17) Tell me about why this year has been a “transitional year” for ESL teachers in Ohio.

18) Can you describe the professional development sessions you are leading in your district?

19) Tell me why you teach about parts of speech.

20) This week, we attended an IEP meeting, done a webinar, an ESL teachers’ meeting; is it typical for you to have so many meetings?

21) How do you organize and plan your lessons?

22) Tell me about how you are preparing your students for OELPA and why you think it is beneficial for them to practice.

23) Would you say your students do more reading or writing or spend equal time in both?
24) Do you think that sharing a classroom affects your teaching? If so, how?

25) Your students read their AR books during their ESL time. You have them read aloud or silently and then write a short summary about what they read on a google doc. Tell me about why you do this. What do you do with the chapter summaries afterwards?

26) Do you have many students who are dually identified? How does that affect your teaching?

27) Can you describe your relationship with the content-area teachers?

Interview 2

1) Tell me why you introduce your lessons with content and language objectives and review them at the end?

2) Some of the materials you use come from Learning A-Z. How did you learn about this program and what do you use from it?

3) Tell me about your Multiple Meaning words. Where did you learn about this? Why do you do it?

4) What did you do on your day of training for OELPA? What was said about writing section?

5) Tell me about why you moved your 6th graders to your classroom in the middle school on Mondays and Wednesdays. How did you negotiate this change with classroom teachers?

6) What do you like/dislike about the practice OELPA test? What are the benefits/drawbacks of the new format?
7) Tell me why you devoted a whole day to OELPA practice and additional time for goal setting.

8) Tell me your thoughts on the practice writing questions on practice OELPA.

9) Tell me about doing the practice test with the 5th graders. It took a lot longer to get started with them than your other classes. Why?

10) You didn’t want students to use the masking and color background tools. Why?

11) You often do vocabulary lessons with your students; why do you think this is necessary? They write the word, use it in a sentence, identify the part of speech and draw a color image.

12) Tell me about the COPS strategy.

13) What would you say is the most challenging about teaching writing to ELLs?

14) What do you think are the most effective practices for teaching writing to ELLs?

15) What experiences do you think prospective teachers need in order to be prepared to teach writing to ELLs?

16) What curriculum do you use to teach writing?

17) What materials do you have to teach writing?

18) Tell me about planbook.com and where you learned about it.

19) Tell me about the ABC game that you use as a warm-up activity.

20) Tell me about LearnZillion, MobyMax, and Study Island.

21) Tell me about the English grammar textbook. Do you use that often? Why? Where does it come from?

22) Tell me about your subject-predicate lesson today.
23) How does your typical day look different now when you only have 10 students than when you had 25 students? Where did the students go?

24) How do you decide what you will teach your students?

25) Have you ever had parents who have refused ESL services?

26) Do you consider yourself an interventionist? Why/Why not?

27) How do you define your role in inclusion settings?

28) How much autonomy do you feel you have in choosing what you will teach in ESL pull out?

29) What do you choose to do more individualization instead of group lessons?

Interview with district administrator

1) Tell me about your educational and professional background.

2) How many ELLs do you currently have in your district?

3) Do all your ESL teachers work at two buildings?

4) How do you decide what curriculum to buy for ESL?

5) What do you see as the purpose of providing ESL services?

6) Could you tell me about the technology grant the district received?

7) What kinds of professional development do the ESL teachers receive?

8) What materials and tools are available for ESL?

9) What did the primary learning goal for ELLs in this district?

10) Have you done anything to help prepare your ESL teachers to teach to the new ELP standards?
11) Does the district currently follow a specific writing curriculum or have any writing initiatives?

12) What writing skills are currently being taught in the district? In ESL?

Interview 3

1) Describe the average length and complexity of writing tasks students do in ESL pull out classes.

2) What kinds of writing activities do you think are important for ELLs? What improves their writing skills?

3) How many extended writing tasks (paragraph or more) would you say your students do in one quarter?

4) To what extent do high stakes tests and test preparation guide your instruction of writing? How does OELPA shape your writing instruction? Why is it important to you to spend time preparing student for OELPA, doing benchmarking and placement testing?

5) To what extent do you feel responsible for teaching writing?

6) To what extent do you feel your writing instruction has been supported by school-wide initiatives related to the teaching of writing?

7) How does teaching writing to ELLs look different or similar than teaching writing to mainstream students?

8) What do you think are effective approaches to teaching writing to ELLs?
9) In our previous interview you described your approach to writing instruction as a “discrete” approach that emphasizes grammar. Could you tell me why you use this approach?

10) What other sources have informed how you teach writing?

11) Please complete this sentence for me: “Writing instruction is . . . [blank] . . .”

   (How do you define writing instruction?)

12) Tell me about any challenges your had with OELPA? Anything specific to the writing section?

13) Describe your relationship with other (core) teachers. What would you like to improve?

14) Describe your relationship with your administration/district? What would you like to improve?

15) What makes you think you are a strong writer? How do you know that?

16) Writing is often used to do activities for reading comprehension (short sentences), fill-in-the-blank or copying notes. Would you agree that writing is somewhat of an auxiliary activity in your schools? What are some reasons why there isn’t much process writing?

17) How would you describe the status of ESL in your school/district? Why is ESL stigmatized?

18) What is one of the greatest successes you’ve seen with students through Wilson Reading Program?
APPENDIX E

AXIAL CODES (36)
Appendix E

Axial Codes (36)

Axial (Level II codes)

- Low-order writing skills
- Preparation for writing assessments and evaluations
- Tutor support
- Writing as an auxiliary activity
- Writing as grammar instruction
- Writing process techniques
- Writing to support reading comprehension
- Writing versus composition
- Patchwork of tools
- Time for writing instruction
- Development of L2 writing pedagogy and knowledge
- Teacher education information
- Teacher involvement at state level
- Teacher preparation and development
- District writing initiatives
- Acting as interventionist
- Struggle for clearly defined role
- Explanations of instructional decisions
- Length and frequency of writing tasks
- Multiple paragraph writing
- Content and language objectives
- Writing standards
- Balancing ESL instructional models
- Accessing OELPA
- Preparation for OELPA testing
- Test familiarity
- Testing practice
- District tension
- ESL teacher isolation
- Importance of teaching writing
- Discrete approach to writing
- Responsibility to teach writing
- Technology integration
- Perceived testing concerns
- Placement evaluations
- Progress assessments
APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT
Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: A Multicase Study of Second Language Writing Instruction for Emergent Multilingual Adolescents

Principal Investigator: Dr. Denise N. Morgan
Co-investigator: Natasha H. Chenowith

We are inviting you to volunteer to participate in a research study on writing instruction. This consent form provides an overview of the research project, your possible role and any associated benefits or risks of participating in this research. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions in order to make an informed decision. You will receive a copy of this form.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand how teachers teaching writing to English language learners. Specifically, we want to understand the decisions you make as a teacher and your reasons behind those decisions.

Procedures: You will be asked to complete a survey about your educational background and current teaching context. Natasha will observe you for ten school days and interview you three times about your teaching. She would also like to examine your classroom materials, assignments, and lesson plans. If you are a district administrator, you only be asked to be interviewed once.

Audio Recording: The interviews and instructional observations will be recorded using a digital audio recorder.

Benefits and Risks: Potential benefits may include professional reflection upon your teaching practices. There are no anticipated risks beyond those encountered in everyday life. You will not receive compensation for your participation in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Any information gathered from this study will be kept confidential within the limits of the law. We will keep identifying information in a secure location. You will not be identified in any publications or presentations. Pseudonyms will be used.

Voluntary Participation: Taking part in this research study is entirely up to you. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time. You will be informed of any new, relevant information that may affect willingness to continue your study participation.
Contact Information
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact Dr. Denise N. Morgan at dmorgan2@kent.edu or 330-672-0663, or Natasha H. Chenowith at 814-450-0250 or nschonbe@kent.edu. This project has been approved by the Kent State University Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or complaints about the research, you may call the IRB at 330-672-2704.

Consent Statement and Signature
I agree to the project investigators to observe my teaching, use my comments, and classroom documents in their study. I agree to audio taping during interviews. The information gathered from my classroom, interviews, and observations may be presented at professional conferences, educational meetings, or published in professional journals, print or online. I understand that my name will not be used.

I have read this consent form and have had my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study. By signing below, I give my consent.

________________________________  _________________
Participant Signature    Date
APPENDIX G

JULIA’S DAILY SCHEDULE
# Appendix G

## Julia’s Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 ESL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 ELA inclusion</td>
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<td>Period 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Time</td>
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<td>Period 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7/8 ESL</td>
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<td>Period 5</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 ESL (Wilson Reading)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 7</td>
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<td>5/7 Beginner ESL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 8</td>
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<td>5 Social Studies/ELA inclusion</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td>Period 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 ESL Special Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
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<td>Planning Time</td>
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<td>Period 4</td>
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<td>7 ESL Academic Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 5</td>
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<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>Period 6</td>
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<td>Period 7</td>
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<table>
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<td>Period 2</td>
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<td>Period 3</td>
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<td>Period 6</td>
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<td>8 ESL (Wilson Reading)</td>
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<td>Period 7</td>
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<td>Period 8</td>
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<td>6 Social Studies inclusion/ 6 ESL</td>
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<td>Period 2</td>
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### WRS Vocabulary Handout

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- [ ] synonym
- [ ] antonym
- [ ] cause + effect
- [ ] example
## WRS Student Dictation Page

### SOUNDS

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### REAL WORDS

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### NONSENSE WORDS

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### HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS

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### SENTENCES

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2. 

3. 

(C, O, P, S)

(C, O, P, S)
APPENDIX I

CHLOE’S DAILY SCHEDULE
### Chloe’s Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chloe’s daily schedule</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
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<th>Period 6</th>
<th>Period 7</th>
<th>Period 8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/8 ESL</td>
<td>7 ELA inclusion</td>
<td>8 ELA inclusion</td>
<td>6 ESL</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>5 ESL (section A)</td>
<td>5 Science/Social Studies inclusion (alternating days)</td>
<td>5 ESL (section B)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX J

EXTENDED TRANSCRIPT
So now you are on page 92? Is that correct? What page are you on? 87? Okay. The last time you wrote about it . . . did you read over the weekend then? Do you remember what happened when they ran into each other in the hallway? He was a little upset about something . . . let’s back up to that. Yeah, he didn’t think that Rico should be left at home alone. Is that the custodian of the apartment building? Is that the same character? Let’s see. Yes. He’s a little bit grouchy.

Read this sentence . . . So this is what you wrote . . . ‘Mrs. Darling knows nothing.’ Is this in the context of the story? Does it mean she doesn’t know anything in the whole world? When you write ‘Rico says Mrs. Darling knows nothing’ you are taking it out of context. Do you know what they were talking about when she said that? This is supposed to remind you about what is happening in the book. But if you just copy a sentence here and there, it’s not going help you understand. Let’s look at this again. Start reading.

[Student reads out loud.] . . . So something happened and we don’t know exactly what it was. Something that is making him feel what? He’s kind of scared. It’s after midnight and he sees dark shadows outside and he sitting by himself in his apartment. He must call his mom but then he thought she would be worried . . . Instead of writing this, tell me what we talked about, maybe what kind of day it is and what he’s feeling and why. Can you put those three ideas into one sentence? What time of day? It’s after midnight and he is home alone in his apartment. That would be a good sentence to start . . .
‘Rico was all alone and he was scared at night he was going to call mom but he didn’t do it because she’ll be worried.’ Good ideas. You put a lot of ideas in one sentence so we’ll learn how to break that up again at the end. Your ideas are great. Rico is his name, so what do you need there? Yes, it needs to be capitalized.

Let’s keep reading. He was going to go somewhere else before that. He heard something on the stairway. So he was going to Mrs. Darling and he heard a noise and then he was going to Mrs. Darling but she wasn’t home, remember? Yes. That would be a good sentence. Write some of those ideas down.

‘Mrs. Darling wasn’t home so Rico went to Mr. Haven’s house.’ Do you remember we learned about apostrophes? Then why didn’t you use one there? Right, we don’t want it to look like a plural. We want it to be a possessive which shows that the house belongs to Mr. Haven . . . Go ahead and read again. What’s the first word he says? Rico! He says his name. He’s telling him his name but obviously you already know it. That’s what he wants the person to hear. So that’s why he interrupts him. Read me the next paragraph now.

‘He saw Mr. Haven and asked him if he could come in his house.’ Good sentence. Let’s keep reading.
[Student reads.] . . . Does that make sense to you? So he’s just wishing he hadn’t said that. See the question mark there? That’s a question. That’s how you read it . . . You can try reading and writing again tonight. So your next sentence is going to be what happens when he went inside.
REFERENCES
REFERENCES


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