PRESEVICE TEACHER BELIEFS ABOUT TEACHING

LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY

by

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ABSTRACT

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Language and Literacy describes the findings of a qualitative study conducted with a Junior/Intermediate language arts methods course in a Faculty of Education at a University in Northern Ontario. The study was conducted in two phases. The participants in the first phase consisted of one cohort of 39 preservice teachers; the second phase consisted of eight participants drawn from phase one. Data sources included personal history accounts, term reports, reflection papers, lesson plans, learning journals and transcribed focus group interviews. The data were emergent and a constant comparative method was used for analysis. Phase One findings are presented holistically while Phase Two findings are presented as three case studies. The findings indicated that preservice teachers have multiple assumptions and beliefs about literacy teaching and learning when entering the teacher education program and that these are informed by a variety of influences, prior to their admission to and during their studies in the Bachelor of Education program. Findings also indicate that preservice teachers can identify their entering beliefs when given opportunities to do so and that those beliefs are amenable to change in linear as well as cyclical ways as a result of in-course and across course learnings and experiences and field components of the program as well as through opportunities for reflection.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Teacher beliefs are fundamental building blocks that begin forming as early as a person's experience with schooling begins. Over time, preservice teachers build a set of beliefs about teaching based on those experiences. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) note that the thousands of hours prospective teachers spend as pupils in classrooms shape their beliefs. Richardson (2003) defines teacher beliefs as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (p. 3).

Jarvis-Selinger (2007) and Smith (2005) note that preservice teachers have strong beliefs about many things including the role of education and why some students do better than or not as well others in school. Kennedy (1999) asserts that beliefs are used to evaluate new ideas about teaching that preservice teachers encounter in their preservice education classes. Smith notes that preservice teacher beliefs will guide decisions that they make about the process of teaching and learning.

According to Lortie (1975) and Jarvis-Selinger (2007), the beliefs that preservice teachers bring to the teacher education program are influenced by their history as learners. Lortie states that "preservice teachers do not enter their professional preparation empty-handed. Thanks to the apprenticeship of observation, these individuals bring with them images and understanding of teaching that will shape their nascent practices" (p. 69). Calderhead (1996) argues that neither experience as a student nor observation of teachers teaching provides preservice teachers with all they need to know about teaching and learning. What sometimes occurs in preservice education programs is the reduction of education and the act of teaching to the identification of teacher practices and behaviours that preservice teachers like or do not like. Even then, Calderhead

argues, preservice teachers often perpetuate those behaviours and practices that they themselves did not like, in part because they have no other experiences to draw upon. It is imperative that preservice teachers have opportunities to examine those beliefs and challenge their assumptions (Barr et al., 2000; Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2003).

The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs that preservice teachers entering a teacher education program have about literacy teaching and learning; to describe how their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over time in the literacy course; and to identify the influences on preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning.

Rationale

Traditionally, literacy has been referred to as the act of communication through reading and writing (Eisner, 1997; Kist, 2005; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). Eisner (1997), however, points out that communication (sending and receiving) can take on many different forms:

> In order to be read, a poem, an equation, a painting, a dance, a novel, or a contract each requires a distinctive form of literacy, when literacy means, as I intend it to mean, a way of conveying meaning through and recovering meaning from the form of representation in which it appears. (p. 353)

The term literacy has changed significantly in the last decade. In keeping with the ever-expanding definition of literacy, the education system in Ontario has been experiencing significant changes in literacy curriculum and instructional approaches to teaching literacy. The experiences that preservice teachers have had as literacy learners influence the beliefs that they hold about teaching literacy (Calderhead, 1996; Jarvis-Selinger, 2007; Lortie, 1975). As a result, the need for research that investigates preservice teacher beliefs about literacy education becomes critical because these entering beliefs act as filters for all subsequent learning and experiences (Campbell, 2005). Since entering beliefs act as filters, they therefore have the potential to influence critically preservice teachers' incorporation of knowledge and new beliefs

during the teacher education program. Preservice teachers and teacher educators, therefore, need opportunities to know and understand their entering beliefs in ways that will allow them to recognize how their beliefs might influence their teaching. This is in keeping with Cochran-Smith's (2004) belief that preservice teachers need opportunities to examine "much of what is usually unexamined in the tightly braided relationships of language, culture, and power in schools and schooling" (p. 49). As future educators, preservice teachers need to have the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to be aware of their belief systems, to understand the influences on their beliefs and what variables continue to influence their beliefs about teaching and learning literacy. Similarly, literacy teacher educators must be informed about teacher beliefs and implement strategies to promote their students' awareness and reflection.

Personal Ground

For five years, I taught Language Arts and Literacy in the Junior (Grades 4-6) and Intermediate (Grades 7-10) Division of a teacher education program. My experiences as an instructor of this course led me to identify concerns about the course and the students I taught. Accordingly, the beliefs and attitudes described in this personal ground are connected to my experiences as a preservice teacher educator. In the following section I used critical reflection to examine my own beliefs about literacy and teacher education and how those beliefs influenced the preservice teachers I taught. This reflection addresses self-identified issues of importance to me, including the following: attention to theory and practice; mode of delivery; the sociocultural perspective; role of dialogue and reflection; and role of teacher bias in education.

Theory and Practice

As a Contract Sessional instructor of language arts and literacy courses in the junior/intermediate division at a Faculty of Education in Ontario, I often found myself struggling

to establish a balance between theory and practice. In the space of eight short months, students in the preservice program had a lot of theoretical and practical experience to gain. The course I taught constituted four hours of instruction per week for a total of seventy-two instructional hours per academic year.

I believe that my struggle between theory and practice came from not knowing how much theory to deliver and how much practical experience to offer. The preservice program itself was structured in an attempt to strike a balance between the two by requiring several weeks in a university class setting punctuated by several weeks in an elementary classroom setting. But the concerns I had about theory and practice went much deeper than my concerns with this division between the field and the postsecondary classroom. For example, the teacher education program did not have any built-in links to connect what preservice teachers experienced in the field with classroom instruction. There were no classes specifically designed to encourage deconstruction of placement experiences or to encourage dialogue about issues, concerns, or differences between what preservice teachers were experiencing in elementary schools and what preservice teachers were learning in the university classroom. Further, there was no guarantee that preservice teachers would have opportunities to apply any of the content learned in my class in their placements. In fact, in some cases, preservice teachers progressed through the program without ever teaching a language arts lesson. For these reasons, I continued to look for ways to bridge the theory/practice dimensions of teaching in my classroom. For example, I had preservice teachers teach language arts and literacy lessons in elementary classrooms through practical field-based teaching opportunities that were built into the structure of the course I taught. I believed that these teaching opportunities were important to bridging the gap between theory and practice in my classroom.

Mode of Delivery

Inherent in this struggle was the style of teaching I employed in the preservice classroom. Was there a 'best' way to teach preservice teachers about literacy? Should teaching and learning in a preservice program parallel the traditional lecture-based university model, or should my approach parallel a more student-centered approach similar to the style I would use with young adolescent learners? This was a serious question I pondered frequently, and one that I continued to grapple during my entire time as a preservice teacher educator.

Lectures are the traditional mode of delivery in the university culture, but this educational model does not align with current research on human cognition (Halpern & Hakel, 2002). In fact, the transmission methodology has also been called into question as an effective means of teaching preservice teachers (Halpern & Hakel, 2002). Mallette, Kile, Smith, McKinney, and Readence (2000) also argue that students have difficulty learning in lecture-based courses which represent decontextualized settings. A faculty of education is unique in that instructors are called upon to present models of effective teaching. Students learn by doing (Duckworth, 1987; Resnick et al., 1997), and students only master the activities they actually practice, regardless of how well concepts and ideas are presented to students (Anderson & Roth, 1989). I believed that it was important for preservice teachers to have opportunities to construct their own understanding of concepts and strategies.

Choosing an appropriate mode of delivery went beyond merely making a choice or aligning oneself with what was familiar and comfortable–there were potential barriers that needed to be considered. For example, the overall duration of the course I taught was a limiting factor as were the two-hour increments of time that each class was given. As well, the number of students in a class and the physical environment of the classroom itself often constrained how I

taught particular lessons.

The Social Constructivist Perspective

Vygotsky (1978) found that the process of knowing involves other people and is mediated by community and culture. He asserted that children learn through socially meaningful interactions, and that language is both social and an important facilitator of learning. I believed that a social constructivist (Vygotsky, 1978) lens was the appropriate theoretical framework to use for teaching in a junior/intermediate classroom. It was my contention that students should have opportunities to construct their own understandings of new material through purposeful, meaningful, and authentic experiences. In order to make this evident to preservice teachers, I used the same constructivist approaches in my own teaching, attempting to consider and use every opportunity to act as a model.

The Role of Dialogue and Reflection

Reflection and dialogue were key teaching and learning strategies that I believed must be incorporated into the preservice teacher education program. I used these strategies to encourage preservice teachers to think metacognitively (Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995), that is, to think about their thinking. The use of these tools was consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism whereby students learn from one another and through thoughtful analysis of experiences. I believed that preservice teachers should be required to think and talk beyond retelling of experiences and that making connections to either self, other texts or the world, fostered internalization of new learning. I believed that it was important for preservice teachers to listen to and consider the life-experiences and perspectives of others.

The Role of Teacher Bias in Education

Bigelow (1990) claimed that "all teaching is partisan. Whether we want to be, all teachers

are political agents because we help to shape our students' understandings of the larger society"
(p. 445). In keeping with this statement, I attempted to address the ways in which my bias
influenced the students I taught. I tried to be cognizant of the power of the teacher to have a
positive or negative impact on students. However, what really troubled me was that I was not
always aware of what that impact was. I tried to use critical self reflection consistently as a tool
for keeping me aware of the way my words, mannerisms, and demeanor influenced the students I
taught.

My voice was a constant source of bias in the classroom. And so I examined my own
voice as a teacher educator in terms of how my voice was biased, silenced some, empowered,
and marginalized others. I had concerns, also, about the image I projected and the perception
students had about me. As a result, I tried to ensure that I frequently pointed out that what
material I chose to present and how I presented it were based on my own lived experiences,
research I had conducted, and my professional reading, but my choices and how I presented the
material were, nevertheless, biased. For instance, I wondered about the role of bias in curriculum
and pedagogy: the what and how I taught. As a teacher educator, I had the autonomy to develop
a course outline that fit my theoretical and philosophical assumptions and beliefs about the
subject matter I taught. I was bound only by technical rules such as number of hours per class,
but not necessarily in terms of content. Although autonomy can be liberating, it can also be
stifling. I like to refer to this as 'freedom within boundaries.' This was one of the guiding
principles that I tried to teach by. Being aware of my own bias permitted me to let go of the need
to prove that I was right or that someone else was wrong. I strived to embrace what others
thought, felt, knew and understood. It is through the experience of another's perspective that I
continued and continue to grow and know.

In summary, I came to realize, through listening to and evaluating my own stories of lived experience as a preservice educator, that these stories shaped who I was as an educator and that my experiences were different from those of others. I was also informed by teacher candidates' understandings and responses to opportunities for learning as well as assignments. By attending to these understandings and continuously acknowledging and examining my beliefs about literacy teaching specifically and life in general, I continuously reformulated (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) my beliefs. I knew that each time I made a new consideration or came to a new understanding, things in my course or philosophy might have to change. However, as each year passed, I gained new insights and understandings based on my interactions with students of that academic year. I knew that what I understood to be worthwhile one year may need to be reconsidered and reshaped. In this view, my inquiry was continuous. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) maintain, "life does not stand still, it is always getting in the way, always making what may appear static and not changing into shifting, moving, interacting complexity" (p. 125).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is rooted in the theory of social constructivism. This theory posits that learners actively construct their own knowledge by filtering new information through prior knowledge (Strommen & Lincoln, 1992). Learning is an active process (Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992) in which learners interact with the knowledge, the learning environment, and with other learners (Dershem, 1996). As a result, what is learned in a social constructivist classroom is based not only on an individual's past experiences, but also on the collective experiences of the learning community.

In a social constructivist classroom, the role of the teacher shifts from expert to an informed mentor and member of the learning community. The teacher facilitates authentic

learning opportunities from which students work individually and collectively to construct meaning. Lebow (1993) describes "authentic activity" as experiences of personal relevance "that permit learners to practice skills in environments similar to those in which the skills will be used" (p. 9). The constructivist teacher uses scaffolding to provide the appropriate amount of support for students who are working within their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). For example, a teacher scaffolds new learning by providing full support to students at their level of understanding when introducing new concepts, skills, and strategies, by working as a whole class together to construct meaning. As students gain experience with new concepts, the teacher releases some support and encourages students to work in smaller groups. As the teacher releases control of the learning experience to students, learners also have to "take personal responsibility, exercise initiative, and be in control in the instructional setting through a variety of learning experiences" (Snyder, Bolin & Zumwalt, 1992, p. 415). As such, the constructivist classroom is student-centred as opposed to teacher-centred.

The learner in a constructivist classroom is actively engaged in learning (Snyder, Bolin & Zumwalt, 1992). In this way, the constructivist approach empowers the learner to construct and interpret his/her understanding of knowledge and reality (Dershem, 1996).

The concept of constructivism is important to this study because preservice teachers possess powerful sets of beliefs about teaching (Kennedy, 1999) that are based on a wide range of experiences. These beliefs are often implicit, unnamed, and subconsciously held beliefs (Cochran-Smith, 2004) that provide a foundation for the theories that teachers develop about how students learn and should be taught including the kinds of instructional strategies used in the classroom (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). Because preservice teachers have had varying degrees of experience with different

models of teaching and learning, it becomes increasingly important that they have regular opportunities to be actively involved in constructivist learning in a language arts and literacy course.

The related research questions are identified below.

Research Questions

The research questions that were addressed in this study are as follows:

1) What beliefs about teaching literacy do preservice teachers bring to a literacy course in a preservice teacher education program?

2) How do preservice teacher beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over the course?

3) What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the influences on their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning?

Design

This study was qualitative and emergent. It was an ethnographic study as Gay & Airasian (2003) "describes and analyzes all or part of a culture of a community by identifying and describing the participants' practices and beliefs" (p. 166). As such, contexts for the study included the university classroom and elementary classrooms. The sample was drawn from preservice teachers enrolled in a one-year Bachelor of Education program at an Ontario university and who were enrolled in one section of a Language Arts and Literacy course, Junior (Grades 4-6) and Intermediate (Grades 7-10) divisions. I was the instructor and researcher. Chapter Two reviews the literature that has informed the conceptual framework of this study.

The study was conducted in two phases Phase One included one section of preservice teachers enrolled in the literacy course of which all 39 students enrolled in the course

volunteered to participate in the study. Methods for Phase One included the completion of personal history accounts, participation in Partners in Education (a field experience separate from practicum placements that is described in Chapter Three), participant and non-participant observations, term reports, a final reflection paper, and fieldnotes based on Partners in Education and the literacy course. Phase Two included a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of eight preservice teachers selected from the original sample. Methods for Phase Two included the Phase One methods as well as learning journals and three focus group interviews. Data were analyzed using a constant-comparative analysis (Patton, 2002).

Limitations

The intent of the study was to identify the beliefs that preservice teachers entering the teacher education program had about literacy teaching and literacy, to describe how their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning changed over time in the literacy course, and to identify their perceptions of the influences on their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. The findings of the study are therefore limited to the experiences of the participants. However, even though individual findings are not generalizeable to the population at large, the overall findings may be transferable to similar settings (Patton, 2002). For example, patterns that emerged in the data may be used to inform future planning of preservice teacher education courses in literacy.

A second limitation of this study was time. The intent was to begin the study in September as preservice teachers entered the teacher education program. In fact, the study did not begin until December. Permission was granted to collect data from relevant assignments completed prior to this date, but access to those documents in real time might have enhanced the study. For example, the opportunity to conduct focus groups during the time or immediately following the completion of reflective tasks (assignments) might have contributed to richer

discussions. Timing of the study also affected implementation of the Partners in Education program (as described in Chapter Three). Given the way in which the teacher education program was structured, scheduling of Partners in Education visits was challenging. Students needed time between Partners in Education visits, practicum field placements, as well as in-class instruction. As it turned out, I was able to schedule only two Partners in Education visits instead of three. In addition, the time between visits was sometimes lengthy due to practicum field placements and, therefore, the opportunity to deconstruct Partners in Education visits in a timely manner was challenging as we had to wait to return to class before the Partners in Education visits were discussed.

Further, there are two limitations to the quality of data. Much of the data were in the form of assignments. As a result, there may have been times when preservice teachers responded in ways that did not wholly reflect their beliefs. As well, one of the data methods consisted of focus group interviews. Although participants were informed that the contents of the focus group interviews as well as the identity of its participants were to remain confidential, there may have been instances where preservice teachers refrained from raising issues or contributing to the dialogue due to internal or external pressures.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study provide preservice teacher educators insights into preservice teacher beliefs about language arts and literacy education. The process of participating in the study provided preservice teachers with insights into their own beliefs about literacy education and literacy teaching and how those perspectives influenced their pedagogy. The data collection strategies encouraged participants to make known the implicit theories, values, and beliefs that underpinned their thinking about being a teacher. Personal reflection (term reports, personal

history accounts, Partners in Education reflections) as well as dialogue with peers (focus groups) helped preservice teachers become critically aware of their beliefs and how they influenced their teaching.

The findings of the study will add to the body of knowledge about teacher beliefs and strategies that may be used in preservice literacy courses to encourage preservice teachers to identify and reflect on their beliefs.

Summary

This chapter provided the purpose and rationale for the research as well as the conceptual framework and personal ground that guided the design of the study. This chapter also described the limitations and significance of the study. Chapter Two reviews the related literature important to the study: (i) literacy education; (ii) preservice teacher education; (iii) preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching; (iv) changes to preservice teachers' beliefs; (v) influences; and (vi) concerns. Chapter Three outlines the background pertinent to the study, the research design and methodology, and ethical considerations. Findings of the study as well as interpretations are reported in Chapter Four. Chapter Five presents an in-depth investigation of three case studies and interpretations. Discussion of the findings as well as conclusions, implications and recommendations are found in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of the literature describes research on literacy education and preservice teacher beliefs. It is organized into five sections to address these topics. The first section describes current research on literacy education. The research on literacy education is important to this study because preservice teachers need to learn the theories related to a social constructivist perspective on teaching and learning. The second section of the review describes the research on preservice teacher education. The third section describes the research on preservice teacher beliefs about teaching in general and specifically about literacy teaching. Fourth, the literature on changes to preservice teachers' beliefs is reviewed. The next section reviews the literature relating to influences on preservice teacher beliefs. Finally, concerns that preservice teachers have about teaching language arts and literacy are presented.

Literacy Education

The section below focuses on describing literacy from a postmodern perspective including the role of new literacies, multiliteracies, and multimodalities. Theories important to literacy education are addressed: reader response theory, critical literacy, and the Four Resources Model (Freebody & Luke, 1990). Finally, the role of Canadian children's literature in literacy development is explored.

A Postmodern Perspective of Literacy

Traditionally, literacy has been equated with competence or proficiency in comprehending and composing print texts. Traditional texts were typically print-based and linear and literacy was viewed as an in-school practice. Literacy teaching in schools was regarded as teaching a set of skills (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). In the last two decades, theorists in the field of

literacy have advocated for a revision of this traditional view of literacy (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; The New London Group, 1996).

Courtland and Gambell (2010) argue that "postmodern perspectives have opened up new ways of conceptualizing literacy and the nature of literacy curricula…" (p. 25). A postmodern approach to literacy teaching and learning requires educators to call into question commonly held assumptions. Postmodernism challenges the 'common' or the routinely-held beliefs about teaching and instructional practices, simply because they are the norm. A postmodern approach questions the perpetuation of past practice and its usefulness to current practice. Courtland and Gambell note that a postmodern approach to literacy teaching and learning means that "educators must critically question the grand narratives that traditionally have undergirded the way we have defined literacy, the development of English language arts programs, resources and textbooks for teaching literacy, literacy teaching, and assessment" (p.26). In other words, although traditional visions of literacy are still worthy, they need to be considered and reconsidered in light of current research in literacy.

New Literacies

Literacy in contemporary terms is described by researchers as a social practice (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005) and thus, socially constructed (Courtland & Gambell, 2010; Gee, 1996; Kress, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). One's social, cultural, historical, political, and economic histories shape literacy practices. In schools, reading and writing are done in a certain place and for a certain purpose (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). When children engage with text (composing or decoding), they draw upon their past experiences. In doing so, they draw upon their personal and cultural identities to make meaning.

Multiliteracies

Literacy is used in different contexts and for different purposes (Eisner, 1997; Street, 2003; The New London Group, 1996). The New London Group (1996) advocate for a pedagogy of multiliteracies that differ according to culture and context. Multiliteracies is described by the New London Group "as a way to focus on the realities of increasing local diversity and global connectedness" (p. 5). More specifically, multiliteracies can be defined as the creation and expression of meaning in all sign systems (Courtland & Gambell, 2010, p. 30). The New London Group argue that, in some cultural contexts, alternate forms of representation may be more meaningful than traditional literacy. For example, Canadian Aboriginal peoples using oral storytelling and visual forms of representation to convey and preserve their culture.

According to The New London Group (1996), the changes in workplace, civics, and private life necessitate a pedagogy that "opens possibilities for greater access" (p. 13). The knowledge of how culture, language, and diversity relate to classroom interactions is integral to providing "access without people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities" (p. 13). Educators need to build on students' lived experiences, which stem naturally from their backgrounds. As such, the New London Group argues that literacy pedagogy must account for increasingly diverse cultural and linguistic communities. The New London Group also argues that literacy pedagogy must attend to the growing variety of text forms associated with communicating. These various text forms represent multiliteracies such as technological and digital literacy, media literacy, visual literacy, and in-school and out-of-school literacies are described below.

Technological and digital literacy. Technology is a medium through which many students are heavily influenced. Students' use of technology in education is expected to improve

educational outcomes, increase skills in the use of technology, and decrease inequities between groups (Industry Canada, 1997; Pelgrum & Anderson, 1999). It is considered an important indicator of student preparedness to succeed and excel in the future.

Technology literacy refers to the use of and competence with computers, software and the Internet (Corbett, 2002). Canada began developing a national strategy to incorporate information and communication technology in education as early as 1997 (Industry Canada, 1997). Over the last decade Canada has made and continues to make huge investments, both human and financial, to ensure that all students have access to acquiring the skills and knowledge they will need to be technologically literate.

The proliferation of computers in classrooms has been followed by increasing access to and use of the Internet. Internet usage requires a certain kind of literacy that is different from traditional literacy. For example, Henry (2005) investigated the nature of literacy skills that students needed to conduct searches using the Internet. Participants were six middle school teachers. Interviews were the primary source of data. The study found that a variety of literacy skills were considered important when conducting a search on the Internet. Reading was the most fundamental literacy skill identified by the participants, but several different literacy-based skills were also identified: the ability to scan, skim and sift through material quickly; in-depth reading of information and texts; critical reading ability; higher-order thinking skills, including a sense of good judgment and common sense; and the ability to use language well.

Leu, Jr. (2000) notes that students need a variety of skills for searching for online information efficiently. Strategies for online research go beyond understanding the traditional inquiry process (Eagleton & Guinee, 2002) because the skills required for navigating and negotiating the Internet differ significantly from skills used with traditional texts. In fact, many

interactions using the Internet are simply not possible to experience with print materials. For example, Leu, Jr. notes that digital media require students to understand a number of dimensions: the strategic use of color; hyperlinked texts and graphics; icons and animations; as well as pictures, maps, charts, and graphs that can change in response to questions posed by an interactive reader during reading.

Eagleton and Guinee (2002) conducted a microethnographic study that investigated hypermedia text composition of an e-zine in a Grade 7 language arts classroom. The study shifted the notion of technological literacy toward an examination of the transmediated nature of working with and creating hypermedia texts. Eagleton and Guinee found that, while creating an online magazine, students gained familiarity with webzine and hypertext fiction genres and extended their understanding of the roles that text, graphics, photography, and icons play in the hypermedia environment. These findings support the notion that technological literacy requires the ability to navigate and transmediate among oral, print, visual, computer, and hypertext literacies.

This current era of substantial technological proliferation also brings about new approaches to the art of writing including new dimensions that are in keeping with multiliteracy and transmediation. For example, Burnett and Myers (2006) found that digital writing is emerging as a form of writing that speaks not only to the use of technology, but also to the multiple possibilities for expression, and multiple learning styles of students. Burnett and Myers' study describe how children approached the process of composing on screen and how children responded to the possibilities offered to them in drafting and editing their work on screen. Participants included two classes of students aged 8 to 10 years who were partnered with each other and used email to plan a joint creation of PowerPoint presentations exploring their shared

hopes, fears and interests. Using hardcopies of emails and PowerPoint presentations as a starting point, researchers interviewed the students. Observations were also used as a data source. A number of findings important to educators emerged from this study. First, if students are expected to make full use of computers for writing, they should be doing so from the beginning of the process, that is, the planning stage, as opposed to using the computer for publishing final copies only. Second, students who used digital writing recognized the value of its multimodal nature. These multimodal elements were not merely additions used to make a text aesthetically appealing, but rather they were central to the meanings the children wanted to convey. The authors argue that, if multimodality is to be used fully in the classroom, the creation of images, moving images and sound files should be part of the writing process. The authors caution however, that there is also a need to ensure that students are able to critically evaluate the digital options available.

Media literacy. According to Kelly (2010), "media" refers to the means of communication: radio, music, internet, television, print, film, video and photography, as well as outputs such as news reports, advertisements, television and radio shows, films, video games, websites, and e-zines. Media literacy, according to Bainbridge and Malicky (2004) aims to "provide students with skills and strategies for dealing critically with the media and the role they play in their lives" (p. 400). They explain that media literacy includes the following: interpreting the way media presents reality; understanding media texts; examination of cultural practices, values, and ideas found in media texts; production of multimedia texts; as well as critical thinking about media texts for personal growth and participation in a democratic society.

A significant contribution to the literature on what is known about media usage among young Canadian adolescents has been reported in an ongoing study called *Young Canadians in a*

Wired World. The Media Network embarked on this research project with the purpose of exploring how Canadian youngsters use the Internet. Young Canadians in a Wired World (YCWW), which began in 2000, is funded by the Canadian government. The first phase of the project began in 2001, and used focus groups with children as well as surveys of parents and children, to explore what young people do online, how they perceive the Internet, and what they know about it. The second phase of the project began in 2003, and was completed in 2005. This second phase furthered our understanding of how the online activities, behaviours and attitudes of young Canadians have evolved since 2001. Key findings of the study indicate that young Canadians are using the Internet more now than ever before, with 94% reporting that they go online at home; many have their own Internet connections; and 22% have a cell phone with Internet capability, text messaging, and a camera. In addition, the study found that adolescents use technology in an active manner, with 86% reporting that they use email; 89% play games online, and 28% use instant messaging on an average day.

The *Young Canadians in a Wired World* (2005) study indicates that the influence of media in today's society is extensive. In fact, most of our youth are immersed in a multimedia world that includes print media, electronic media, and popular culture. Inherent in the vastness of the media is the need for educators to provide children with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes for interacting with and analyzing the impact this media has on their daily lives. Luke (1997) argues that failure to do so can be considered "pedagogically and politically irresponsible." Kelly (2010) describes two approaches to media education: a protectionist approach and a preparation approach. The former emphasizes the risks associated with interaction and media while the latter emphasizes ways of preparing students for engaging in the media in a responsible way. Kelly argues that both approaches are important, and can occur simultaneously.

Visual literacy. Visual literacy is a medium for encouraging critical thinking that allows students to understand new material beyond facts to include how they perceive the world and how their ideas fit into that world. Kist (2005), a proponent of visual literacy, emphasizes that educators should incorporate the use of non-print and nonverbal media such as moving pictures, still photography, dance, theatre, music, and visual arts into their literacy programs.

Approximately 80% of the signals which our brains interpret are visual (Moline, 1995). Visual literacy supports comprehension of texts of all types, including picture books and information texts. In addition, it accommodates the learning styles of many students. It also promotes media literacy and supports students in their reading and writing (Moline, 1995).

Students must know how to integrate verbal and visual information to make meaning. Consequently, visual literacy is a life skill. We read and interpret pictures, posters, paintings, photographs, maps, signs, videos, graphs and tables on a daily basis (Moline, 1995). It becomes apparent then that students need visual literacy skills to make meaning from the many visual messages to which they are exposed.

Visual literacy also refers to the means of expressing what one knows or has learned. In other words, visual literacy is important to meaning-making, but it is equally important to expressing what has been learned. For example, Kist (2005) asserts that a person can 'speak' just as directly and individually using visual literacy as s/he can through the medium of print. Bustle (2004) advocates for the use of different techniques of visual literacy from finger painting to drama to represent thoughts and ideas and to communicate with others.

In-school and out-of-school literacies. The literature provides evidence to support the need for education to address home-school connections (Kist, 2005; Heath, 1996; Street, 2003). For Kist (2005) and Pahl and Rowsell (2005) this means that teachers must bring students' out-

of-school literacies into their classrooms. Heath (1996) suggests that schools do not always draw on children's popular culture as a resource in teaching children. Jenkins (2006) concurs and notes that although students have grown up regularly using the Internet, computers, cell phones and MP3 players, they are not being given opportunities to use these technologies during the school day. Further, Leu Jr., Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack (2004) contend that many students come to school with more knowledge about some of the new literacies than most adults possess. Courtland and Paddington (2008) conducted participant and nonparticipant observations, informal interviews, and analysis of documents such as a blog, journal entries, and *Canteen*, the teen e-zine created by the students. The study took place over a 14-day period in which students worked in a computer lab for 75 minutes a day. An implication that emerged from the study is that it is critical for educators to integrate students' in-school and out-of-school literacies into their literacy programs.

Pahl and Rowsell (2005) argue that literacy is tied to students' cultural backgrounds and, by association, is linked to students' belief systems, language, values, and goals. If school literacies devalue home-based literacies, schools run the risk of marginalizing or devaluing the student and his/her cultural foundations. Street (1984) and Gee (1996) indicate that although literacy is practiced in different domains, there are a number of literacy practices that are used within each of those domains, for example, reading a novel for aesthetic purposes and reading a gamer's manual for a popular video game. Literacy practices can cross from one domain to another, for example, homework assigned in the school domain can be completed in the home domain. These points illustrate, first, the need to connect home and school literacies, and, second, the concrete possibility of doing so.

Shirley Heath (1996) studied children in three distinct but geographically related

communities—one Black working class; one White working class; and one Black and White middle class. Through observations of interactions within each of these communities, she showed that, because of different lifestyle and child-rearing practices, children went to school with different literacy experiences and understandings as well as differing expectations about school. Heath's study lends a different perspective to the need for connection between out-of-school literacies and in-school literacies. In Heath's case, by studying how different communities used literacy, she identified mismatches between home and school cultures. She found that children's literacy practices at home do not always mesh with literacy practices expected at school. In so much as school cultures often reflect only one home culture, the school environment and expectations there are likely unfamiliar to those raised in other environments. Further, mismatched behaviours were often viewed by teachers in a negative way and led to characterizing children as "behaviour problems" or "slow." Heath found that neither teachers nor students were equipped to bridge the gap between these differing expectations.

Tompkins, Bright, Pollard, and Winsor (2005) also note the disconnection between home and school literacies. The authors argue that children from differing cultural groups bring their unique backgrounds to the process of learning, and they sometimes have difficulty understanding concepts outside their backgrounds of experience. They point out that children of diverse ethnic groups meet with varying degrees of success in school. The degree of success depends largely on previous cultural experiences, as well as student, parent and teacher expectations. They also contend that children often experience a discrepancy between the ways in which their cultural group behaves and the way in which classrooms operate.

Faulkner (2005) suggests that out-of-school literacies play an integral role in the literacy development of adolescent learners and that making connections to the ways of knowing and

reading the world that adolescents choose to use should be integrated in the classroom. Faulkner conducted an ethnographic study in Australia, and spent six months immersed in the culture of middle schooling. He found that in-school literacies are essential, but that teachers need to expand their understandings of what literacy entails. Faulkner argues that out-of-school literacies could be used to address this problem if they were "teased out and embedded within middle school reform focused on adolescent literacies" (p. 117).

Multimodalities

"Multimodalities" refer to "the sign systems that humans use to create meaning" (Courtland, 2010, p. 334). Within sign systems such as poetry, arts, digital literacies, and media, there exist particular signs that are used to make meaning (Courtland, 2010). Pahl and Rowsell (2005) argue that multimodality has changed the way in which people engage with literacy. Students can move around, through, and between various sign systems simultaneously such as print-based Web pages that include aural cues (music, beeps and common sounds to convey meaning) and visual cues (colour, graphics, symbols) that students use to make meaning.

Theorists such as Smagorinsky and Whiting (1995), as well as Leland and Harste (1994), argue that actively engaging the reader through new interpretive strategies allows for the transformation of interpretation through transmediation whereby meaning can be constructed and conveyed through multiple modes and sign systems. This process of reconstructing or reinterpreting understandings from one system and moving them into another system (Siegel, 2006) encourages students to use various multiliteracies at the same time or in conjunction with one another in order to make meaning.

Reader Response Theory

Theories of reader response vary depending on the degree of influence that the reader, the

author and/or the subject bring to the transaction of making meaning while engaging with text. Reader response theory, articulated by Rosenblatt as early as 1937, continues to make a significant contribution to how we view literacy and literacy events. Rosenblatt (1978) believes that readers make meaning from texts by drawing on their personal experiences and beliefs. She views reading as a transaction between reader and text:

> The special meaning, and more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text. (pp. 30-31)

Rosenblatt proposes two possible stances the reader might take when engaging with text: the efferent stance and the aesthetic stance. In the efferent stance, readers engage with text in order to take some information away from the reading. In an aesthetic stance, pleasure and enjoyment are considered the primary purposes for engaging with the text. Rosenblatt (1986, 2004) argues that, even though the stances are very different, readers might switch back and forth between the two while engaging with any one text. However, she also argues that, "despite the mix of private and public aspects of meaning in each stance, the two dominant stances are clearly distinguishable: someone else can read a text efferently for us, and acceptably paraphrase, but no one else can read aesthetically–that is, experience the evocation of–a literary work of art for us" (p. 125).

Based on these principles–the relationship between the reader and text, and individual response to text, Rosenblatt (2004) developed the transactional reader response theory. In this theory, engagement with text is an experience shaped by the reader as s/he engages in the act of reading a text and creates a transaction between the reader and the text. The way a person responds to a text determines the way one interprets and understands the text.

Since Rosenblatt, other researchers such as Sumara (1995), Straw and Bogdan (1993), as well as Gonzalez and Courtland (2000), have contributed to reader response theory and explored ways in which people construct meaning from texts they engage with. Sumara encourages readers to visit and revisit text using a "focal practice" that requires the reader to engage in some form of rereading. One strategy for focal practice, according to Sumara, is to use a journal to keep track of responses to text when reading. Gonzalez and Courtland (2000) found that using Sumara's vision of 'focal practice'

> …is a powerful generative strategy that enabled us to experience our engagement with and response to a literary text in a way that led to a deeper understanding of the text, our personal relationships with the text, and the power of shared response in interpreting and re-interpreting the text and our own lived experiences. (p. 339)

Straw and Bogdan (1993) argue that reader response theory is important because it views the reader as using past experience, prior knowledge, cultural, and historical contexts to make meaning from text, rather than taking only from text what the author intended to give. In this way, the reader is seen as being actively involved in making meaning while engaging with text.

Reader response theory is important in defining literacy in contemporary terms because it encourages movement beyond viewing literacy as a set of skills and literacy works as objects. Instead, text is cooperatively produced by the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1969). The theory has significantly contributed to a redefinition of what literacy is and how is comes to be: an engagement and relationship between the reader and text in which the reader brings personal and cultural identities and uses responses to text in order to interpret and make meaning.

Critical Literacy

Comber and Simpson (2001) define critical literacy as the use of language in powerful ways to get things done in the world, to enhance everyday life in schools and communities, and to question practices of privilege and injustice. Cervetti, Pardales, and Damico (2001) describe

critical literacy as a "process of construction; where one imbues a text with meaning rather than extracting meaning from it" (p. 5). In addition, "textual meaning is understood in the context of social, historic, and power relations, not solely as the product or intention of an author" (p. 5). Rosenblatt (2004) argues that students must to learn to identify those personal factors that influence meaning-making of texts and to critically examine their responses for social and cultural influences. Cervetti et al. concur, urging educators to teach application of critical literacy skills to texts in all forms so that students are empowered to make decisions about the validity and reliability of the messages they invoke.

Critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes change and action (Freire, 1993). Critically literate students are able to identify what power sources are represented in texts and how they marginalize or oppress individuals or groups. Whenever readers engage with text, they are subject to an author's choice of topic and the way in which the author has framed the topic. In turn, readers have the power to question the author's perspective and consider, through reflection, whose voice the message represents, and whose voice is silenced or marginalized (McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004). Furthermore, Coffey (2008) notes that the development of critical literacy skills encourages students to question issues of power–explicitly disparities within social contexts like socio-economic status, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc." (p. 2). Proponents of critical literacy would argue, though, that identification and questioning of these issues is not enough (Freire, 1993; Noddings, 2005). Rather, critically literate students should be able to identify and implement plans of action that address the injustices and inequities in texts. Similarly, as Vasquez (2010) points out, critical literacy needs to be continually defined within the context of the community–it needs to be lived.

Four Resources Model

Freebody and Luke (1990) propose four roles of the reader that shift the focus away from trying to find the right method of engaging with text forms to developing a repertoire of practices needed to be a literate learner. The four roles include the following: code-breaker (decodes text to make meaning); meaning-maker (understands and composes texts); text-user (uses texts functionally by knowing about and acting on the different cultural and social functions that various texts perform inside and outside school); and text critic (critically analyzes texts). These four roles provide the foundation for literacy teaching and learning in Ontario schools (see Ontario Ministry of Education, *Guides to Effective Instruction*).

The Role of Canadian Children's/Young Adult Literature in Education

Literacy as a social practice requires students who engage with literature to call upon their personal and cultural identities to construct meaning (Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Rosenblatt, 1978). Canadian children's literature should, therefore, be a prominent feature in Canadian classrooms.

Diakiw (1997) argues that Canadian literature can play a significant role in affirming Canadian cultural identity. Bainbridge and Malicky (2004) argue that Canadian children who have opportunities to read Canadian texts learn about Canada and being Canadian, but they also learn that Canadian people can be authors and illustrators. As a result, authors become real people, and writing and illustrating become real, possible professions.

The perceived "Canadianness" of a text is affected by the relationship developed with a text by an individual as the book is read (Pantaleo, 2001, p. 1). Pantaleo (2001) examined the role of Canadian literature in classrooms, considering the perspectives of Canadian students. In her study, one class of twenty-eight Grade 5 students met three times a week over a four-week

period. At these meetings, they read Canadian picture books and considered "What's Canadian about Canadian children's literature?" Pantaleo (2001) acknowledges that the transferability of the findings was limited by the geographical site of the project and the life and school experiences of the participants. Findings indicated that most of the children believed it was important for Canadian students to read books written by Canadian authors. Almost all of the children agreed that people can learn about Canada by reading Canadian literature. These findings suggest that teachers' knowledge about children's literature is important and that teachers need to learn about their national children's literature because "literature, regardless of country of origin, plays a fundamental role in developing an understanding of and appreciation for one's own culture and the cultures of others" (p. 8).

But what is Canadian literature? And what makes a text Canadian? Courtland et al. (2009) conducted a study of preservice teachers to investigate their understandings of Canadian identity in Canadian multicultural picture books. Data were collected from six sites where participants took part in a four-hour workshop and responded to an open-ended survey. Findings suggest that Canadian identity is closely linked to geography, including landscape and relationship to urban, rural, and regional spaces. However, findings from the study also generated concerns about preservice teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the use of Canadian multicultural literature in classrooms. First, although some preservice teachers recognized the importance of using multicultural literature for promoting understanding of diversity, others would teach only to the diversity in their own classrooms (p. 144). Second, some preservice teachers believed that access to multicultural representations in texts was not needed in spaces that were either 'already multicultural' or 'not very multicultural'. In other words, teaching about multiculturalism (using literature or any other strategy) was considered unnecessary if a certain

population wasn't represented in a classroom: "…but, if you're in Montreal, or the East Coast, where there are not as many Natives…we have to be careful in how much multicultural we are teaching in the classroom…" (p. 145). Finally, some preservice teachers would not include texts that did not align with the values of the community. The implications for teacher education are important. Decisions about what to include as representations of Canadian multiculturalism are critical to extending students' understanding of identity across space. To assume that a multicultural community does not need to explore multicultural identities (and, conversely, that non-multicultural communities do not have the need to explore multicultural identity), severely limits the potential for students to extend their understanding of the diversity that makes Canada 'Canadian'.

Research suggests that adolescents need to self-select texts from a variety of genres and forms (Bang-Jensen, 2010; Hughes-Hassel & Rodge, 2007; Pitcher, et al., 2007). Hughes-Hassel and Rodge (2007) administered a 20-item questionnaire that focused on factors related to reading by choice to 584 adolescent students in a large urban middle school in the United States. They found that seventy-two % of adolescent students read for leisure for three main reasons: fun and relaxation; to learn new things; and to escape boredom. Magazines were the top choice for reading material for both boys and girls. Comic books and Internet also rated highly, while books accounted for only thirty percent of leisure reading materials. These findings suggest that adolescents need to have choice in the texts that they engage with and that those texts have to be of particular interest to them. The findings of the study also suggest that texts should draw from a wide scope of genres, including magazines, comic books, and the Internet–sources that are not typically found in classrooms, but are representative of authentic texts for adolescents.

Bang-Jensen (2010) conducted a qualitative study that examined the influence of social relationships on students' book choices, and how choice influences students' awareness of themselves as readers. The study consisted of 30-minute interviews with twelve fourth and fifth grade students at the end of a school year. Findings from the study highlight the importance of student choice in book selection and the subsequent impact on the language that readers use to describe their reading and themselves as readers: "When readers make their own book selections, they exercise agency in the development of their own reader identities…" (p. 175). The implication for educators, Kiefer (2010) notes, is to "understand children's interests, their growth patterns over time, and the changing patterns of their responses to literature" (p. 1).

Preservice Teacher Education

This section of the review examines the current literature in preservice teacher education. In teacher education programs, preservice teachers are required to develop a general body of knowledge about teaching and learning that is both practical and theoretical (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Feimen-Nemser, 2001). Beyond this requirement, they must also develop a specialized knowledge-base about the subject matter they intend to teach (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Feimen-Nemser, 2001). The following section describes the general knowledge preservice teachers need for teaching and learning, as well as the knowledge needed for literacy education.

Developing Knowledge for Teaching and Learning

This section of the review is rooted in the extensive work of Kosnik and Beck (2009) on preservice teachers and teacher education programs. To facilitate the process of describing the role of the teacher educator and teacher education programs, I have used the framework developed by Kosnik and Beck, specifically their seven key priorities in teacher preparation: program planning, pupil assessment, classroom organization and community, inclusive

education, subject content and pedagogy, professional identity, and a vision for teaching.

Because Kosnik and Beck's study is referred to frequently in this section of the review, I will explain the methodology in detail here. Kosnick and Beck began their large-scale qualitative study in 2003. It continues today and, according to the researchers, has no predetermined endpoint. The seven priorities emerged largely out of research conducted between 2004 and 2007. The study involved 22 graduates from OISE's teacher education program into their third year of teaching. The participants started teaching in elementary classrooms in a large urban area (Toronto) as well as in surrounding areas, immediately following their teacher education programs. In this study, teachers were observed and interviewed twice in both the first and second years of teaching. Of the 22 teachers, seven were selected for case studies in the third year. These teachers were observed and interviewed twice. The remaining 15 teachers were observed and interviewed once toward the end of the school year. Interviews were open-ended and data were emergent. A central focus of the interviews was literacy teaching, but other subjects as well as teaching and teacher education were addressed.

Kosnik and Beck propose a "together we figure it out" (p. 4) model of teacher education whereby teacher educators and preservice teachers co-construct understandings of teaching that are in keeping with current theories of constructivist learning. They advocate for the university classroom as a place where teacher educators can make their own beliefs explicit while, at the same time, they create environments where preservice teachers can engage in respectful dialogue where hard questions are discussed. It is in this kind of environment that both teacher educators and preservice teachers can examine their own beliefs in light of the beliefs of others. Cochran-Smith (2003) also suggests that teacher educators adopt an inquiry stance that models the approach to teaching and learning that their students should adopt.

Kosnik and Beck (2009) propose a framework for teacher education that includes seven 'priorities':

1. Program planning

2. Pupil assessment

3. Classroom organization and community

4. Inclusive education

5. Subject content and pedagogy

6. Professional identity

7. A vision for teaching

Program planning. Kosnik and Beck (2009) maintain that preservice teachers need to have opportunities for planning for instruction for the entire academic year. Planning must be done in a way that engages students and promotes learning. Kosnik's and Beck's study found that, although preservice teachers learned about unit planning and subject specific planning, they had little knowledge of or "understanding of the extent of the planning task or how to go about it" (p. 13). The authors concede that program planning is best understand through the lens of a classroom teacher–preservice teachers are in an intermediary position–not just as a student and yet not a classroom teacher–with opportunity and means to make long-term program decisions for a class. Notwithstanding, these limitations the authors argue that there is still much that teacher education programs could do to prepare preservice teachers to be more effective program planners. For example, key principles and strategies especially selection and prioritization of concepts/expectations, need to be well-understood. Consequently, teacher educators need to have a solid understanding of how to effect selection and prioritization in a way that is both authentic and realistic.

Pupil assessment. Preservice teachers need to learn about day-to-day assessment to inform future instruction. They also need to learn how to evaluate for report cards and reporting to parents and how to prepare students for and conduct a host of provincial standardized tests. Based on the findings of their study, Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that teacher education programs must link assessment to teaching so that it is considered a part of an ongoing process day to day planning. Preservice teachers ought to be taught how to use diagnostic tests and baseline assessments as the start point of the planning process, followed by regular observations to monitor progress which in turn informs daily planning decisions.

Kosnik and Beck (2009) note that preservice teachers should be taught about the various ways assessment can be implemented and about the assessment tools that are available (including standardized tests). All assessment practices should be realistic and meaningful. Kosnik and Beck suggest that teacher educators should give more attention to assessment in their programs with more emphasis on everyday, on-going assessment and less emphasis on standardized assessments.

Classroom organization and community. Kosnik and Beck (2009) describe classroom organization and community as "the structures, routines, social patterns, and atmosphere of the classroom" (p. 64). In such a setting, student learning is supported in safe and secure relationships with peers and the teacher. They argue that teachers need to build a *learning community*–a place where students *learn*, and a *community* of learners where students feel safe and able to take risks. Currently however, although critically important for effective teaching, learning communities are largely ignored in teacher education programs. As a result, Kosnik and Beck propose that teacher educators should model their own classrooms on the same basic principles of classroom organization, management, and community that elementary teachers

would use.

Contrary to much of what is written in the literature about constructivist teaching and learning, Kosnik and Beck (2009) found an over-use of group work in preservice programs. As a result, they advocate for a balance of approaches coupled with teaching about when and why teachers employ each of the approaches best suited to certain conditions for learning.

Inclusive education. Students need to feel safe and secure in the learning environment in order to be active participants. They also need to develop inclusive attitudes for the school setting and life in general. Kosnik and Beck (2009) include concepts such as equity, social justice, respect for difference, gender equity, multiculturalism, anti-racism, and academic mainstreaming as part of inclusive education. The researchers state that, in preservice programs, inclusive education needs to be woven throughout all courses. Teaching inclusive education as a stand-alone subject tends to present the view that it is an 'add-on' to daily curriculum rather than an integral part of daily living both in and out of the classroom. Kosnik and Beck further argue that modeling and constructivist approaches, through the development of a community of learners (akin to the elementary classroom) and solid professor-student relationships (akin to elementary classrooms) would encourage preservice teachers and teacher educators to engage in deep dialogic conversations where all voices are heard, allowing for consideration of multiple perspectives. In the end, it is these kinds of conversations that serve to enhance student perceptions of inclusive education. Addressing and exploring examples and non-examples of inclusion, that is exclusion and inclusion, is important.

Subject content and pedagogy. Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that more attention should be given to subject-specific knowledge. Further, they argue that subject-specific knowledge should be a criterion for admission to teacher education programs. Similarly, when considering

candidates for teacher education positions, university hiring committees should take into account one's subject content and pedagogical knowledge and ability to teach adult learners. In turn, faculty must continue to develop their own knowledge-base with respect to content and pedagogy of the specific subject they teach. The strategies that faculty use to accomplish these objectives should be integrated into their course as examples for preservice teachers of how to continue to develop their own knowledge over time.

The recent trends in teacher education involve a focus on the development of broad issues and general instructional approaches to teaching. Based on their findings, Kosnik and Beck (2009) recommend these broad issues and concepts should be taught within specific subject and foundation courses. One way to accomplish this more focused instruction would be to organize teacher education programs around grade level divisions such as primary/junior (Kindergarten through Grades 6), junior/intermediate (Grades 6 through 8), and so on.

Professional identity. Kosnik and Beck (2009) describe professional identity as "how teachers perceive themselves professionally including goals, responsibilities, styles, effectiveness, level of satisfaction, and career trajectory" (p. 130). For preservice teachers this means that experiences in "curriculum decision-making, classroom organization, community building and developing good teacher-student relationships" (p. 143) are in order to foster personal conceptions of teaching. Connecting these experiences to instruction in the university setting is necessary. Opportunities to debate and dialogue about practicum experiences (as well as societal, educational, and personal issues) must be embodied in the teacher education program.

Teacher educators must ensure that the climate of the university classroom is one that encourages openness, collaboration, dialogue, and risk-taking. Personal visions and beliefs must

be incorporated into classroom experiences as teacher educators model their own current and developing identities as teachers.

Brown, Morehead, and Smith (2008) conducted a mixed-method study of 123 elementary education students in an American teacher education program. Pre-course and post-course questionnaires and pre-and post-course pictorial representation of a 'good teacher' were used as data. Participants met in small groups to discuss their pictures and report back to their respective classes. Researcher field notes were also used as data. Public versus personal conceptions of identity emerged in this study. On the one hand, effective teachers were perceived as highly-qualified, while on the other, effective teachers were seen as caring and friendly. Brown et al. argue that the challenge for teacher educators is to help preservice teachers develop an identity that includes both the public and personal conceptualizations of effective teachers.

Korthagen, Loughren, and Russell (2006) note that grappling with beliefs stemming from experiences as students will help preservice teachers shape their identities as teachers. Further, many researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Korthagen, Loughren, & Russell, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) argue that teacher educators are powerful influences and have the capacity to shift teacher practice. The stances that teacher educators take act as models for preservice teachers, directly feeding into their own perceptions of teacher identity. Cochran-Smith (2003) and Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler (2002) call for teacher educators to use an inquiry stance to model appropriate approaches to teaching and learning. Berk and Hiebert (2009), in their eight-year study of an elementary mathematics program at an American university, found that critical self-study can change an entire program and provide preservice teachers with the tools needed to develop contemporary and effective images of identity.

A vision for teaching. Kosnik and Beck's (2009) study found that one of the things

preservice teachers appreciated most about their teacher education programs was the assistance and guidance they received in developing a vision for and philosophy of teaching. The researchers argue that, in much that same way that teacher educators are given the autonomy to develop unique and personalized belief systems, preservice teachers need not fit a preconceptualized mold of teacher philosophy. Rather, "they should be encouraged to develop a vision that is tailored to their distinctive needs, talents, circumstances, outlook, while also meeting the needs of their students" (p. 166).

Although Kosnik and Beck's (2009) framework has served as a useful tool for the purposes of this section of the literature review, there are gaps representing important themes in contemporary teacher education: practicum field placements, critical social theory, and cultural studies.

Curiously, one of the most prominent topics in the research literature on teacher education–practicum field placements, is not considered a stand-alone priority by Kosnik and Beck. This is not to say that they fail to address field placements in any measure; in fact, they do, but they choose to incorporate field placements into their existing seven priorities. I, however, would be remiss if I failed to address the importance of practicum field placements as a separate component of the program.

Every faculty of education that I researched or read about (there were literally hundreds) included at least two broad components: in-class instruction and field placements. There was considerable variation in how much time was allotted for each, and in the criteria for what constituted a field placement (from traditional elementary classrooms to alternative placements such as dance studios and theatre production companies). The one consistency, though, was that field placements garnered at least as much importance, if not more, than in-class instruction

(Tsang, 2004).

Many researchers have widely differing views on how practicum field placements should be incorporated into the teacher education program. Traditional faculties of education offer a certain length of time in the university classroom, punctuated by a certain length of time in an elementary or secondary classroom over the course of an academic year. Other researchers (Zeichner & McDonald, 2011) argue that there are more effective approaches, including the embedding of subject specific methods courses into classrooms.

Similarly, researchers (Kosnik & Beck, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2005) have widely differing views about the purpose of practicum field placements. Based on the findings of their longitudinal study, Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that practicum placements should provide preservice teachers with experiences that include observation of effective teaching of subjects in grades that they intend to teach and that the content and pedagogy they observe should closely match their university classroom experiences. Darling-Hammond et al. (2005) identify four purposes for field placements: a) to make connections between theory and practice; b) to construct a curriculum that is meaningful and developmentally appropriate; c) to model best practices; and d) to assess student learning in effective ways.

The second gap relates to critical social theory: the consumption of ideas that leads to an accumulation of knowledge (Segall, 2008) as well as a way of knowing–"a form of critically theorizing" (p. 16). Segall, having examined the ways in which critical social theory has been implemented in teacher education programs, argues that merely teaching critical social theory does not mean that preservice teachers will engage in critical thinking about their own worlds or the world of teaching and learning. For Segall, 'crisis' needs to be present and that without it, the teaching of critical social theory prevents students from actually *doing* what the tenets of the

theory expected of them, that is: "to implicate theory and theorize practice in its broader social, political, and economic spheres" (p. 17). Segall argues that in order to bring preservice teachers into the theory—in order to make them active participants—three issues must be addressed. First, when preservice teachers are required to learn theories generated by others, university courses are viewed as places where theories are consumed, not generated. As a result, preservice teachers do not see themselves as theorists, but rather as practitioners of someone else's theory. Second, Segall argues that preservice teachers "…either actively avoid issues and/or avoid implicating themselves and their teaching contexts in issues that are discussed, especially when the latter are issues raised by critical social theory that require students to implicate education, and themselves as educators…" (p. 18). Finally, Segall describes reflection in teacher education programs as a private act rather than a public one. Segall argues that collective reflection might open possibilities for considering social conditions in broad, political, and economic ways.

The third gap relates to cultural studies in teacher education. Helfenbein's (2008) study involved forty preservice teachers from a Midwestern American university. The study was qualitative and emergent, and used student assignments as data sources. Helfenbein notes that cultural studies as an approach allows teacher educators to introduce preservice teachers to the "realities of school and schooling in contemporary society, but also to instill some degree of empowerment…" (p. 4). He describes the necessity for teacher education to do the following: a) contribute to disrupting commonly and previously held views about education; and b) create cognitive dissonance with respect to issues of teaching, learning, and school. In his study, Helfenbein found that, through a cultural studies approach, preservice teachers were able "complicate their own sense of self as teacher and school as component of a larger more complicated world" (p. 13). In this study, preservice teachers began by engaging with texts while

considering the culture of their students and, in the process, ended up with a deeper understanding of themselves as teachers and their visions of teaching.

Both critical social theory and cultural studies as approaches in teacher education programs connect to Kosnik and Beck's (2009) priorities of professional identity and vision of teaching. Helfenbein (2008) notes that the kinds of internal, private, and public negotiations in which preservice teachers engage through a cultural studies approach to teaching and learning, contribute to development of their "teacher self" (p. 12). Similarly, the writing of one's own theories or the collective reflection that Segall (2008) discusses are also means of imagining one's professional identity and one's vision of education.

Developing Knowledge about Literacy Education

Beck et al. (2005) and Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that literacy education is crucial in teacher education. Since the field of literacy has changed and continues to change dramatically, it has become increasingly important that preservice teachers have the requisite skills and knowledge to ensure that their students become literate learners (Beck et al., 2005). Rowsell, Kosnik, and Beck (2006) maintain that preservice teachers need to understand literacy in contemporary terms, including the meanings and implications of multiliteracies and critical literacy.

The literature describes the general characteristics of effective literacy teaching. One study, conducted by Parris and Block (2007), used a randomized sample of secondary literacy supervisors from 50 states. Participants completed a survey either in writing, through personal interviews, or by telephone conversations. The survey included one open-ended question asking them to describe two traits that best characterized the expertise that made a specific educator highly effective at a particular grade level. This list of qualities of literacy teachers' expertise

was processed through grounded research procedures using an open coding format. The data were then collapsed into categories and domains of expertise were identified. The study found that exemplary literacy teachers used a variety of teaching strategies that allowed students to think critically, ask questions, make decisions and work independently. Exemplary literacy teachers are able to address a range of differences in levels of student need. They care about all students, establish and maintain a good rapport with students, and experience few discipline problems. They have a comprehensive knowledge of the content of their subject(s) and the developmental stages of adolescents. Exemplary literacy teachers use multiple forms of input systems and encourage multiple forms of expression. They keep abreast of current literature in literacy education and use self-reflection as a means of improving pedagogy. The findings of the study are important to preservice teacher educators because the identified characteristics span all subjects in the curriculum. What this means for preservice teacher educators is that being an effective literacy teacher requires more than knowing the content of a subject. Classroom management skills, teaching diverse learners, and building appropriate connections and relationships with all students are concepts that need to be woven into literacy courses.

Other studies illustrate the more specific needs that preservice teachers have with respect to teaching certain strands in a literacy program. For example, beginning teachers of writing need to know about content, pedagogy, and context (Pardo, 2006). Pardo conducted a study that followed three beginning elementary teachers to determine how each learned to teach writing. Data sources included field notes, observations, videotaped teaching sessions, interviews, and other artifacts. Findings indicate that beginning teachers learned to teach writing by drawing on prior knowledge, teacher education, trial and error, professional development, and reflection. Beginning teachers' writing instruction was heavily influenced by the context they were in, for

example, policies, students, community, colleagues, and available support. The researcher also found that, due to the sometimes conflicting nature of these contexts, learning to teach writing depended on how each teacher managed the conflicting aspects of the teaching context.

Implications for teacher education using findings from Pardo's (2006) study suggest that literacy programs need to examine various approaches to teaching writing, and to investigate how teachers make decisions about teaching writing and how they go about improving their practices. In addition, the study demonstrated that beginning teachers experience tension while trying to teach diverse learners, suggesting that more is needed to prepare beginning teachers to enact culturally responsive pedagogies.

Further studies indicate that self-concept and confidence in personal writing ability impacts upon one's perception of teaching ability. Mathers, Benson, and Newton (2006) conducted a study of 192 preservice teachers in an effort to gain insight into their perceived successes and failures as writers. The study used personal literacy stories and a writing questionnaire. The researchers distinguish between 'internal' factors such as effort and ability, and 'external' factors such as the influence of others. The findings of the study indicated that, although preservice teachers perceived internal factors to play a role in their ability to write well, the influence of others (parents, teachers, and peers) is also significant. The authors concluded that, although literacy teachers must teach the mechanics of writer's craft, the attitude of teachers toward the art of writing, the value they place on writing, and the time they devote to writing in the classroom all influence students' attitudes and perceived ability to write well. They also concluded that preservice teachers need opportunities within their teacher training programs to develop confidence as writers and teachers of writing.

Preservice Teacher Beliefs

This section of the literature review describes research on preservice teacher beliefs and includes preservice teacher beliefs about teaching in general, and preservice teacher beliefs about teaching literacy.

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching

Preservice teachers bring many different beliefs to the education program. Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) acknowledge that some of these beliefs are indeed valuable and worthy; but, unfortunately, some are not. Early studies (Richards & Killen, 1993; Veenman, 1984; Weinstein, 1988) on preservice teachers' expectations about their first year of teaching indicate that preservice teachers believe that they will perform better as teachers than their peers. Weinstein (1988) developed the "Expectations about the First Year of Teaching" questionnaire– a 33-item questionnaire based on Veenman's (1984) list of the most frequently perceived problems of first-year teachers. A total of 118 preservice teachers at an American university rated the degree of difficulty they thought the average first-year teacher would have with each item, and the degree of difficulty they would have with each item. Weinstein found that most participants predicted that their future teaching performance would be above average compared to that of their peers. Richards and Killen (1993) used a modified version of Weinstein's questionnaire with 76 preservice teachers, and found that there was a clear tendency for preservice teachers to rate their future performance as a first year teacher above that of their peers.

When identifying perceived characteristics of a good teacher, preservice teachers place more emphasis on affective variables than on academic variables – this has remained consistent over time. For example, Lasley (1980) noted that preservice teachers believed that "liking

children" was a sufficient indicator of effective teaching. Later, Walls, Nardi, Von Minden, and Hoffman (2002) noted that preservice teachers identified "loves children," an affective variable, as a marker of an effective teacher. More currently, Fajet, Bello, Ahwee Leftwich, Mesler, and Shaver (2005) investigated perceptions of preservice teachers relating to the qualities and characteristics of good and poor teachers. The 62 participants were drawn from an introductory education course. Methods included a survey, questionnaire, and interviews. The participants identified five themes relating to teaching: affective, personal characteristics; pedagogy/classroom management; attitudes and behaviors toward students; attitudes toward job/teaching in general; and knowledge of subject matter. Interestingly, the same five themes described what preservice teachers thought were characteristic of poor teachers. Upon consideration of the five themes, the researchers found that they could be categorized into two groups: the affective domain or the cognitive domain. For instance, themes that described amiability traits, personable behaviors and/or attitudinal qualities were classified as being affective characteristics. Characteristics that demonstrated professional competence or acquired knowledge and skills were categorized as belonging to the cognitive domain. In this study, students cited characteristics in the affective domain twice as many times as cognitive characteristics when describing traits that they thought made a teacher either "good" or "bad." The researchers argue that preservice teachers "conceive of teaching primarily as a task involving affective, interpersonal relationships rather than a profession requiring a skilled and knowledgeable practitioner" (p. 720).

Some preservice teachers believe that there is one right way to teach (Holt-Reynolds, 1995). In 1995, the National Centre for Research on Teaching and Learning conducted a five-year longitudinal study of how undergraduate literacy majors planning to take a teacher

education program developed subject matter knowledge. Holt-Reynolds (1995) drew from this pool of students and reported on the cases of 12 students. Methods included a baseline interview, end of semester interview, and an exit interview. Although there were several findings reported, the most relevant here is that students who were in subject specific programs for reasons of developing a knowledge-base in preparation for teacher education programs believed that there is one right way to teach. The researchers found that, when students subscribed to the notion that there is only one right way to teach English, their ability to view English as a discipline was seriously hindered. The authors argue, "English as a discipline includes a variety of legitimate critical perspectives each of which define expertise differently" (p. 21). Therefore, searching for one right way limits one's ability to perceive the richness inherent in the discipline.

Another belief among preservice teachers is that teaching is easy (Hollingsworth, 1989). Wienstein's (1988) study (described above) found that participants consistently underestimated the difficulties that first-year teachers face, and that they consistently perceived themselves as having less difficulty than the average first year teacher.

For some preservice teachers, beliefs are well established by the time they enter the teacher education program (Ashton & Gregoire-Gill, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001). For others, entering beliefs are not as firmly entrenched (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997). Beliefs are developed as students observe their teachers teach and interact during the many hours spent in a classroom. Lortie (1975) describes this period as the 'apprenticeship of observation' during which students develop conceptions about teaching. Calderhead (1996), however, contends that neither student experiences nor observations of teachers teaching are adequate reference for becoming a teacher. Even Lortie (1975) acknowledges limitations to the apprenticeship of observation, including the fact that it does not afford preservice teachers with insights into the decision-making processes of

a teacher.

The beliefs that preservice teachers have about teaching play a central role in determining how they make sense of classroom and placement experience (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Tabachnick & Ziechner, 1984; Ziechner & Tabachnick, 1981). Preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching act as filters (Campbell, 2005; Feimen-Nemser, 2001; Smith, 2005) for new learning and play a significant role in what preservice teachers learn during the teacher education program (Chong & Low, 2009). Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Mansfield (2010) argue that beliefs can facilitate or impede new learning since preservice teachers consider learning about teaching "through the lens of their prior knowledge, including their preconceptions and beliefs" (Eilam & Poyas, 2009, p. 88). These filters, then, have significant influence and contribute to preservice teacher learning in the teacher education program in critical ways.

Edwards, Higley, Zeruth, and Murphy (2007) conducted a study that examined how preservice teachers judged their ability to carry out various forms of effective teaching practices. The participants were 656 preservice teachers attending a large university in the northeastern United States who were enrolled in teacher preparation courses. The data source was a 46-item questionnaire using Likert-scale statements. The instrument was based on two previously validated tools: TSES (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and TAPI (Sinatra & Kardash, 2004). The questionnaire was designed to measure three facets of general pedagogical practices, including efficacy for instructional strategies (8 items), efficacy for classroom management (8 items), and efficacy for student engagement (8 items).

The researchers used a comparison framework consisting of general versus persuasive teaching practices. General teaching practices are those with which preservice teachers are familiar based on their experiences as students and include the following: adjusting lessons to

meet different levels of student ability, providing appropriate challenges, and using a variety of assessment strategies. Edwards et al. (2007) used Scheffler's (1965) conceptualization of teaching as persuasion whereby both teachers and students are seen as negotiators of knowledge, with experiences, reasons, and perceptions.

Findings suggest that 88% of the participants believed they were very capable of performing general teaching practices. Edwards et al. (2007) maintain that such results may be due in part, to the fact that participants had not yet had field experiences and, as a result, may possess inflated beliefs about their abilities (Richards & Killen, 1993; Weinstein, 1989). Edwards et al. also found that preservice teachers were less confident with persuasive teaching practices designed to bring about change in students' beliefs. In essence, Edwards et al. found that preservice teachers strongly believed that they were highly able to function in the classroom using general methods of teaching. Conversely, preservice teachers believed that they would be less able to challenge students' perspectives and understandings.

Edwards' et al. (2007) study has implications for preservice teacher education programs that view the teacher as an agent of change. As the researchers contend, "If teachers are simply attempting to modify students' knowledge, but not their beliefs, the intentionality necessary for conceptual change may not occur, thus leaving students with incongruent knowledge and beliefs" (p. 462).

In summary, the review of the literature on preservice teacher beliefs about teaching indicates that preservice teachers enter their teacher education programs with a set of beliefs about teaching and education. These beliefs help preservice teachers make sense of practical and theoretical experience in the preservice program.

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

This section of the review describes the impact of scholarship on the beliefs that preservice teachers have about teaching literacy. The literature describing preservice teacher beliefs about teaching literacy is limited. The literature does refer to some studies geared toward specific strands of language arts (Knudson, 1988; Norman & Spencer, 2005; Theurer & Onofrey, 2006), but there is little with respect to literacy overall (Allred, 1988).

Norman and Spencer (2005) conducted a study of 59 preservice teachers in which they analyzed preservice teachers' autobiographies to examine their beliefs and experiences about writing and writing instruction. The study found that 91% of preservice teachers' views about writing ability could be classified as either fixed (a gift or talent that one has or doesn't have) or malleable (a craft that can be improved with instruction and corrective feedback). The researchers note that many preservice teachers view writing ability as fixed, and that they believe that good writing is a talent that only a few possess. The preservice teachers also indicated that they felt that instruction did not have a positive influence on writing development. As a result, their view of effective teaching of writing centered around providing students with opportunities to write and encouraging writers and their writing, rather than providing direct instruction in the art of writing.

Norman and Spencer (2005) argue that the use of autobiographies offer both the instructor and the students a window for identifying their knowledge, skills, and dispositions about writing and writing development. The authors argue that teacher educators should encourage preservice teachers to be aware of how their personal histories influence their teaching and to provide opportunities for ongoing reflection as they move through the program. The results highlight the essential role that teacher education programs can play in helping preservice

teachers develop a theoretical framework for thinking about writing development and instruction.

Knudson (1998) studied the relationship between preservice teacher beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for English as a Second Language learners. The study was based on a population of 106 preservice teachers, and examined the extent to which theoretical beliefs were consistent with theory as well as whether beliefs and practices changed over the course of the academic year. The findings indicated that preservice teacher practices were very consistent with beliefs, but that beliefs did not change over the year. These findings are important in that they highlight the need for identifying what beliefs preservice teachers hold about teaching literacy as they enter the program so that instructors can provide them with the tools they need to move beyond their own borders. A major limitation is that this study did not critique the kinds of theory or kinds of practices that preservice teachers employed; therefore, the conclusion that practices were consistent with beliefs is not informative. In other words, the practices and/or beliefs, although consistent with each other, might not be consistent with what current research tells us is important to literacy education.

Theurer and Onofrey (2006) examined 40 preservice teachers' beliefs about reading comprehension instruction. The researchers asked preservice teachers to evaluate the role of meaning-making or comprehension versus such skills as word usage and spelling. The researchers found that preservice teachers felt that, although meaning-making while reading and writing should be the primary goal, attention to skills such as word usage, spelling, conventions, and punctuation was also important.

Allred (1998) conducted a study to determine what literacy and literacy instruction meant to preservice teachers, how they experience literacy instruction in the classroom context, and how they construct their perceptions of literacy instruction. Methods included classroom

observations, interviews, and document examination collected from three preservice teachers over a five-month period. The findings suggest that, for preservice teachers, literacy meant reading and writing in ways that communicate meaning for enjoyment, for learning, and to accomplish one's goals in life. Literacy instruction meant the teaching of reading and writing as integrated processes, in both student-directed and teacher-directed-ways. In addition, it was found that preservice teachers developed their perceptions of literacy in literate environments, with literate role models, and expectations for literate behavior. Finally, preservice teachers developed their understanding of literacy instruction through school biographies, teacher education course work, field experiences, and professional development activities.

The principles of critical literacy are important in teacher education programs in much the same way as they are in elementary literacy classes. Johnson (2007) conducted a study of three preservice teachers to identify how they construct knowledge about critical literacy in a methods course. The participants used some of the critical literacy approaches that were presented as instructional strategies in the methods course including problem solving and dialogue. Findings suggested that participants recognized the importance of problem-posing and dialogue in their own learning about critical literacy, but had difficulty using these methods in their own teaching.

On the other hand, Lesley (2004) conducted a study of one class of preservice teachers taking a content area literacy course to investigate what might happen when they experienced their content area literacy methods course in conjunction with critical literacy praxis. Data sources for the study included field notes, a reflective journal, archives of student writing, transcriptions of classroom discussions, and analysis of student questions. Lesley found that sharing critical questions, encouraging student exploration of diverse perspectives, and

facilitating deep discussions helped students recognize that being literate (and, therefore, teaching literacy) facilitates self-advocacy. She found that critical literacy emerged through an understanding of literacy instruction in content areas as advocacy. This sense of advocacy helped students to examine and then redefine their imagined roles for teaching and their beliefs about literacy.

Doeke (2004) found that preservice teachers are capable of attaining understanding of critical literacy in ways that allow them to infuse critical literacy into their own classrooms. He used self-study to examine his own practice as a preservice teacher educator as well as focus groups with preservice teachers to improve the quality of practicum experiences. The focus groups ultimately became opportunities for preservice teachers to construct their own knowledge about teaching while in conversation with others. It was through these focus groups that Doeke observed that preservice teachers could be facilitators of change–people who possess the power needed to take action against injustices and inequalities in education. Doeke says, "I see them [preservice teachers], in other words, as potentially capable of resisting the managerialist version of professionalism that currently dominates school administration in some settings" (p. 11).

Changes to Preservice Teacher Beliefs

Research examining changes to preservice teachers' has been ongoing for several decades. However, as is the case with other topics in this review, there is little research delving into changes to preservice teacher beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy specifically. There have been many studies on changes to beliefs in general (Dunkin, 1996; Grossman, 1989; Kagan, 1990; Kennedy, 1999; Nettle, 1998; Pajares, 1992; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, 1998; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). In addition, several subject-specific studies on preservice teacher beliefs and changes have been conducted in the areas of mathematics

(Beswick, 2006; Charalambous, Panaoura, & Philippou, 2009; Grootenboer, 2008; Leonard, Newton, & Evans, 2009; Wilkins & Brand, 2004), physical education (Karp & Woods, 2008; Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2010), science (Palmer, 2006), social studies (Doppen, 2007); technology (Anderson & Maninger, 2007), reading (Linek et al., 2006; Boggs & Golden, 2009); and music (Thompson, 2007). Further, there have been some studies concerning concept or strategy-specific studies on preservice teacher beliefs and changes in assessment (Karp & Woods, 2008); and multiculturalism (Dedeoglu & Lamme, 2009; Mills & Ballantyne, 2010).

The review of the literature on changes and beliefs begins with an historical perspective and is followed by an examination of change as part of a process, and finally, the use of various approaches in teacher education programs for the specific purpose of influencing change.

Historical Perspective

About twenty years ago, Kagan (1992) examined forty studies on the influence of teacher education programs on preservice teachers' knowledge, as well as on the probability or likelihood of change in preservice teachers' beliefs during their teacher education programs. Kagan found that preservice teachers' beliefs were unlikely to change. Kagan's conclusions were frequently cited as "truth" in subsequent articles, despite Grossman's (1992) later article that called Kagan's observations into question. Grossman took issue with the Kagan's selection of the studies, arguing that she failed to include several important studies that offered contrary evidence. As a result, Grossman did not agree with Kagan's conclusions. Dunkin (1996) concurred with Grossman, arguing that Kagan's conclusion that preservice teachers' beliefs do not change during teacher education programs was erroneous. Dunkin was able to show that, in some of the studies cited by Kagan, change did occur. Around the same time as Kagan's study, Zeichner and Gore (1990) reviewed similar studies, and found that teacher education programs

did not influence preservice teacher beliefs, and that changes in beliefs were more likely a result of school-based contextual factors.

Nettle (1998) examined twenty studies on changes to preservice teachers' beliefs during their teacher education programs. Nettle found that, of the twenty studies, eighteen showed changes in preservice teacher beliefs while two did not. However, of the eighteen that showed changes, fifteen also showed stability in beliefs. Needless to say, the question of whether or not teacher education programs influence preservice teacher beliefs, and whether preservice teachers beliefs change during the teacher education program remains unclear.

Subsequent studies have affirmed that changes in beliefs are quite uncommon (Kennedy, 1999; Pajares, 1992; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Winisky and Kauchak (1997) note that entering beliefs can be either vague and fragmented or firmly entrenched. The authors argue that vague beliefs can be developed while more fully developed belief systems are more resistant to change. Similarly, Mary Kennedy (1991) in the Teacher Education and Learning to Teach (TELT) study surveyed over 700 teachers and teacher candidates in 11 different programs. She found that the structure of the preservice education program had little effect on preservice teachers' beliefs and knowledge by the time that they exited the program. Instead, her study found that differences in beliefs and knowledge about teaching practices, diverse learners, and subject matter were largely due to preservice teachers' entering beliefs and knowledge.

Kennedy (1999) describes the beliefs that preservice teachers bring to the program as 'frames of reference'. Teachers draw on these frames of reference to make sense of events in the classroom and to make decisions about how to respond to different events. She hypothesizes that these frames of reference are likely rooted in preservice teacher experiences when the teacher

candidates were students in elementary and secondary classrooms. Kennedy (1999) notes that preservice education programs are ideally situated to provide opportunities for preservice teachers to alter, amend or change those frames of reference because the preservice program exists at a time between past experiences as students and future experiences as teachers in classrooms. If preservice teachers' frames of reference are not examined during the education program, their experiences within the program will reinforce those frames, creating even more firmly entrenched beliefs about teaching. Reinforcing these beliefs also reduces the likelihood that those beliefs or frames of reference will ever change.

Change as a Process

The current research literature has seemingly moved away from absolute truths: from change is possible or change is not possible to (a) looking at changes as part of a process (Wienstein, 1988); or (b) the use of various approaches in teacher education programs for the specific purpose of influencing change (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Several studies provide evidence of changes occurring as a result of a process—changes that evolve throughout the teacher education program. Magolda (1996) studied preservice teachers and the nature of knowledge among 70 graduate education students. Using surveys and interviews as data sources, Magolda identified four stages of teacher knowledge:

- absolute knowing (knowledge is viewed as certain; the belief that acquiring knowledge is important),

- transitional knowing (some knowledge is seen uncertain, but understanding of the knowledge becomes important),

- independent knowing (knowledge is mostly viewed as uncertain, and one's own thinking is valued)

- contextual knowing (knowledge is determined contextually).

Other researchers (Schommer-Aikins,1990; Schommer-Aikins, Mau, Brookhart & Hutter, 2000) proposed a different categorization of beliefs that might account for how and why preservice teachers' beliefs change:

1) omniscient authority believer (the authoritative source is the sole base of knowledge);

2) certain knowledge believer (the certainty of knowledge is important instead of its tentative nature);

3) simple knowledge believer (knowledge is a collection of pieces of information instead of integrated concepts);

4) quick learning believer (the speed of learning is an important criterion for judging knowledge acquisition); and

5) the innate ability believer (one's ability of gaining knowledge is fixed at birth and cannot be improved).

Schommer-Aikins (1990), as well as Rukavina and Daneman (1996), argue that some preservice teachers might have several beliefs in different categories, and that they might not progress through the categories in a linear fashion. Therefore, beliefs are considered multidimensional and asynchronous in their development.

Kuhn et al. (2000), however, discussed four levels of epistemological understanding, which they viewed as synchronous. They concluded that people begin as realists (preschool children), accepting knowledge as certain, as it comes from external sources. Later on, adolescents become absolutists, still viewing knowledge as certain but not directly accessible. Absolutists then become multiplists, viewing knowledge as generated by human minds and

therefore uncertain. Adults become evaluatists, viewing knowledge as uncertain yet susceptible to evaluation.

The implication of research that attempts to make sense of changes in preservice teachers' beliefs is important to teacher educators and teacher education programs. If preservice teachers progress through conceptual stages in a sequential manner, then it would be important for teacher educators to identify the stages at which preservice teachers entering the teacher education program. With this knowledge, planning for programming that attends to progression through stages can occur. Conversely, if preservice teachers' beliefs develop asynchronously, they may be susceptible to change, depending on their nature. It would then be important for teacher educators to know about preservice teachers' entering beliefs as well as the influences under which those beliefs might be changed.

Approaches for Influencing Change

Some studies attend to changes in preservice teachers' beliefs using various interventions such as case analysis (Sykes & Bird, 1992), autobiographical reflections (Hollins & Guzman, 2005), collaborative reflection on teaching (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002), and field observation (Putnam & Borko, 1997). The expectation is that, if preservice teachers engage in these activities, they will have a chance to analyze and reflect on the meaning of their own beliefs as well as their limitations, so that the alternative ideas can be better understood and internalized (Cochrane-Smith, 2003).

One widely-cited case in which specific approaches to influence changes were used was conducted by Anderson and Holt-Reynolds (1995). In this study, Holt-Reynolds was the also the instructor of a methods course in a preservice teacher education program at an urban public university in the southwestern United States. There were three participants for whom case studies

were developed. Anderson and Holt-Reynolds found that two of the participants transformed some of their fundamental beliefs about learning and teaching, but did so only under the guidance of the course instructor, who made predictions about entering beliefs and adjusted course content accordingly. A third student did not change beliefs during the course, nor had he had been greatly influenced by the course. Holt-Reynolds accounted for these differences in changes to beliefs because she had not accounted for all entering beliefs and missed some important features of the third student's responses.

In the study, Holt-Reynolds (1995) predicted preservice teachers' entering beliefs and planned for instruction accordingly. For example, Holt-Reynolds predicted that some preservice teachers would enter the program with beliefs that were organized around the theme of "interestingness" and that they often attributed teachers' success to personality and enthusiasm. Holt-Reynolds accurately predicted that the only way she could get preservice teachers to accept strategies that did not align with their entering beliefs was when the central notion of "interestingness" was shown to be insufficient as a basis for teaching. When Holt-Reynolds accurately predicted preservice teacher beliefs, she was able to plan effectively for instruction in ways that would address beliefs that were not in line with effective teaching practices. For example, the first two participants, whose beliefs did change, entered the course with beliefs that were accurately predicted, and so they responded to instructional approaches as expected. In Holt-Reynolds' class, the two preservice teachers' beliefs were identified, then altered, amended, or discarded as a result of course experiences.

There are some limitations to this study. First, although it is assumed that teacher educators are knowledgeable about both theory and pedagogy, the fact remains that they would need thorough understanding as well as practical experience in order to attain a deep

understanding of teaching their subject. Second, teacher educators would need considerable experience working with preservice teachers in order to accurately predict entering beliefs and then use those predictions as the basis for planning. In terms of usefulness, Holt-Reynolds (1995) was motivated by the third student whose beliefs did not change and who did not appear to have been influenced by the course. She stated that

> If preservice teachers are bringing beliefs with them to class that interact with course concepts and make it harder for preservice teachers to learn that content but that, as their instructor, I have not yet discovered, I find that rather exciting. It would mean that students of teaching have a larger assortment of significant beliefs with which they work already than I have imagined or located. It would suggest that, as their instructor, I would do well to ask myself how it is that I've failed to notice the range and nuance of preservice teachers' beliefs. Perhaps my elicitation strategies can be expanded–I may need to thrown a wider net! Perhaps my listening skills require sharpening–I may need to slow down. (Anderson & Holt-Reynolds, p. 19)

As researchers develop clearer understandings about the nature of change, studies can be designed to determine whether or not change actually takes place. For example, if preservice teachers' entering beliefs are different, then the nature of change will also be different (Cooney, 2001). It might be reasonable to suggest, then, that some preservice teachers are predisposed to change while others are not. Different preservice teachers have different beliefs about the nature of knowledge, which in turn determines to what extent, in what ways and contexts, preservice teachers will change their specific ideas about teaching (Cooney, 2001). Based on this idea, influencing changes in preservice teachers' beliefs necessitates that teacher educators have a deep understanding of both the nature and strength of preservice teachers' entering beliefs.

Influences

There is some research in the literature regarding influences on teacher beliefs, but little on preservice teachers' beliefs. There is less regarding influences on preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy, or even about teaching in general. Rather, research

studies have been conducted to examine specific influences, for example, the influence of associate teachers (Graves, 2007), prior experiences (Powell, 1992), the teacher education program (Graber, 1996), as well as age, gender and ethnicity (Richardson, 1996). Few of these studies refer specifically to the influences on preservice teacher beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. Because of the limited number of studies pertaining to influences on beliefs of preservice teachers of literacy, this section of the review of literature describes studies which investigated influences on preservice teachers and literacy teaching, for example, reading, as well as teaching in general.

Some research focused on the influences of the teacher education program and its inherent elements such as coursework and fieldwork. Linek, Sampson, Raine, Klakamp, and Smith (2006) conducted a one-year descriptive case study of eight preservice teachers preparing to specialize in reading instruction. The purposes of the study were to (a) better understand the development of literacy beliefs and change processes in preservice teachers with reading specializations engaged in the final year of their field-based teacher education program, and (b) ascertain factors influencing their change processes during the final year of preparation (p. 187). Findings of the study identified three influences on preservice teachers' beliefs:

- Field experience (practicum placement experiences);
- University coursework (information sources such as seminars, college courses, and interactions with university faculty);
- A combination of university coursework and field experience (applying university coursework knowledge to field experiences and bringing knowledge from field experiences to the classroom).

Graves (2007) uncovered similar results in a study designed to describe the relationships

between preservice and associate teachers in an early childhood education (ECE) practicum. A collective case study approach was used, and data included open-ended interviews, field observations, and reflection and dialogue journals. Similar to Linek et al. (2006), Graves found that preservice teachers' beliefs were influenced by associate teachers, the field experience, and/or both.

Boggs and Golden (2009) conducted a study that examined preservice teachers' written literacy histories with the purpose of examining literacy events and experiences. The purpose was to raise preservice teachers' awareness that prior knowledge assisted their understandings of how to teach reading. In this study, Boggs and Golden were participants' reading instructors as well as researchers. They used a content analysis research design to analyze the literacy histories of 308 undergraduate students who were first-semester juniors or second-semester sophomores enrolled in a four-year teacher education program in a rural American university. Participants were taking one of the following programs: early childhood, 4th grade certification, 4-8th grade certification, or secondary certification. The researchers found that, among 205 individual codes, three major themes of influences developed:

- Singular experiences: experiences either in or out-of-school, positive or negative, elementary or secondary, and individual or social events. The researchers describe positive singular events as those when students remembered teachers who helped them learn to read or students who remembered creative activities such as making dioramas after reading and using drama to help with reading.
- Family experiences: fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, sisters, grandmothers, grandfathers, and stepparents were identified by preservice teachers as having played roles in their literacy development.

- School experiences: memories of libraries, teacher relationships, reading aloud,
  reading for prizes, school events, peer relationships, school programs, and individual
  perceptions regarding ability, technological programs, different school-related events,
  handwriting, and spelling.

Richardson (1996) argued, in a vein similar to that of Boggs and Golden (2009), that preservice teachers' beliefs were influenced by life experiences and school experiences. She found also that preservice teachers garnered theoretical and practical knowledge about teaching through field placements and their teacher education programs.

Personal prior experiences also help shape preservice teacher identity. How these past experiences influence the development of pedagogical understanding was the focus of a study conducted by Powell (1992). Participants in the study were 25 nontraditional (mature students returning to university after some time) and 17 traditional (those entering the teacher education program immediately after graduating high school) preservice teachers. Data included autobiographical interviews, stimulated recall interviews of peer lessons, and concept map think-aloud interviews from concept maps of teaching. The findings identified influences on traditional preservice teachers' pedagogical development that were both similar to and different from those of nontraditional preservice teachers. In terms of traditional preservice teachers (the focus of the current study) Powell found that preservice teachers often referred to high school teachers as positive or negative influences; that they often called upon their college experiences to guide their own practicum pedagogy and planning; and that the teacher education program was an influence in classroom decision-making.

One study that sits apart from the others cited in this review was conducted by Graber (1996) at a School of Physical Education in the southern United States. This study is different

from the others because the participants were teacher educators. It is relevant here, however, because the findings relate to perceptions of influences on preservice teachers' pedagogy and beliefs. The purpose of the study was to investigate a teacher education program that was documented as having a strong influence on the teaching beliefs and subsequent actions of program graduates. Graber conducted formal interviews with 10 faculty members and the Director of the school. Informal interviews with faculty and students supplemented the data. The investigator also conducted a series of formal observations of four courses that represented the range of courses that preservice teachers would encounter during their programs. The investigator also observed faculty and students between classes and during informal social exchanges and at a faculty meeting. The investigator used relevant artifacts such as course syllabi, students' handbooks, and other course materials as sources of data. Data analysis was continuous and inductive. Graber found that the teacher education program had a strong influence on preservice teachers' beliefs and subsequent practice. The following elements of influence emerged in the findings:

- Cohort groupings in which preservice teachers work and learn together over several hours per day and throughout the entire teacher education program served to build a collaborative community that extended to classrooms, teaching labs, and self-directed study groups. The opposite might, however, also be true when a cohort develops beliefs that are contradictory to the intentions of the program.

- Using a thematic approach provided consistency and integration across courses and over time. Faculty were closely connected and worked from the basis of a common agenda. Faculty and investigator cite the thematic approach as a significant reason for

preservice teachers to change their beliefs from a traditional perspective of physical education teaching to a contemporary perspective.

- Constant program reinforcement was provided by faculty to try to move forward a common agenda of using non-traditional teaching approaches in physical education. When preservice teachers who were of a traditional stance heard repeated messages and experienced repeated success with only non-traditional approaches, they were more likely to adapt and change their beliefs to integrate new learning.

- Professional conduct expectations included the provision of a handbook consisting of nineteen expectations regarding acceptable student behaviour. These expectations were monitored, and contraventions to the expectations resulted in a serious of interventions designed to gain compliance.

- Preservice teachers were offered professional growth opportunities that were consistent with faculty's beliefs about effective teaching practices.

- Progressive and compatible internships in which preservice teachers were first matched with a purposefully and intentionally selected model of expertise in the classroom and then, later, immersed in public schools.

- Awareness of "studentship." Studentship refers to students who successfully move through the program, but exert little real effort. Rather, these students often take shortcuts, cheat, and project contrived images of themselves. The handbook and close monitoring by faculty through informal meetings and discussions were commonly used strategies for preventing studentship.

- Faculty consensus included a common agenda and co-created student handbook that clearly outlined expectations. Faculty also moved this common agenda forward in

their respective courses and met regularly to monitor their own teaching and students' progress. Having a closely aligned and similarly informed faculty was believed to be an influence in the program.

- Political involvement on the part of the faculty served to provide a voice for both faculty and student concerns and to provide an opportunity to ensure that legislation and policy (institutionally and state-wide) were in keeping with the agenda of the faculty. This broad-based attention to faculty's mission and goals was thought to serve as a further influence in establishing a foundation for ensuring that preservice teacher beliefs if not a first, eventually aligned with the goals of the program.

Lortie's (1975) seminal work brought forth the notion that preservice teachers spend several years watching teachers teach, and, as a result of these experiences, develop perceptions and beliefs about teaching. Lortie referred to this phenomenon as "the apprenticeship of teaching." It has been used in this review to provide partial explanation for the kinds of beliefs with which preservice teachers enter the teacher education program, but is used here as further support for the ways in which preservice teachers' beliefs are influenced–how they are shaped over time, even before formal teacher training begins. Other researchers such as Calderhead (1996) and Hollingsworth (1990) point out that preservice teacher experiences as students cannot and do not provide them with adequate or sufficient knowledge to know or understand what it means to teach. Nevertheless, the years spent as students are powerful influences on preservice teachers' entering beliefs about teaching.

Zulich, Bean, and Herrick (1992) examined how program and personal influences interact to shape preservice teachers' beliefs and practices. Eight preservice teachers participated in the study and all were enrolled in a content area reading and writing course. Data included

weekly dialogue journals and were analyzed using content and constant comparison analysis. The findings of the study showed that past personal experiences influenced current beliefs and decision-making. In some cases, a preservice teacher's personal history influenced his/her decision to become a teacher of a specific discipline. In other cases, personal history influenced the kinds of relationships preservice teachers expected to have with their students.

My study is different from most of the above and perhaps has the potential to contribute further insights because it identifies specific elements of personal history, rather than simply stating that personal history was an influence (Zulich et al., 1992). For teacher educators and more importantly for preservice teachers, this specific attention to details (for example, parents, positive teacher experience, outings to public library, siblings etc.) provides opportunities for preservice teachers to see and hear their voices represented in the literature, but also provides grounds for teacher educators to understand the roots of their students' beliefs.

Concerns

There were no studies in the research literature specifically designed to identify the concerns of preservice teachers of language arts and literacy. There were several studies that examined preservice teacher concerns about teaching in general. This section begins with Fuller and Brown's (1975) three-stage model of preservice teacher concerns and how it served as a framework for subsequent research. Examples of subsequent research follow, not primarily to dispute or confirm Fuller and Brown's (1975) theory, but because the findings regarding preservice teacher concerns were rich and worthy of consideration.

Fuller and Brown (1975) developed a three-stage model of preservice teacher concerns, a reconceptualized model based on Fuller's (1969) earlier work that was grounded in preservice teachers' discussions and biweekly written statements. The researchers envision these stages as

linear in nature:

1. self-survival (addressing questions such as: How adequate am I?);

2. teaching situation (for example, concerns about resources such as time and materials
    as well as instructional approaches);

3. students and the impact of teaching.

Fuller and Brown (1975) argue that the stages progress as clusters of concerns occurring

in sequence, shifting outwards from concerns emphasizing the self to a focus on teaching

situations, and finally to the impact of teaching on students. According to Fuller's and Brown's

model, preservice teachers have more self-survival concerns, while practicing teachers have

more teaching situation and pupil concerns.

Subsequent studies used the Fuller and Brown (1975) model as a framework for further

research into preservice teachers' concerns about teaching, both substantiating (Campbell &

Thompson, 2007; Conway & Clark, 2003) and challenging the merits of the model.

Campbell and Thompson (2007) conducted a study to investigate concerns of preservice

music teachers. The study was designed using Fuller and Brown's (1975) three-stage model (as

described above) to determine if preservice teacher beliefs differ across established points in the

teacher education program. Participants included 1,121 preservice music education students from

16 institutions of higher education in the United States enrolled in music education programs for

preservice teachers. The study employed a revised version of the Teacher Concerns Checklist.

Data were analyzed using SPSS.

Although the results of the study were organized as relationships between point/level in

the teacher education program and type of concern, findings regarding overall concerns were

identified. Campbell and Thompson (2007) reported the following five most frequently occurring

overall concerns of preservice teachers in their study:

- Helping students to value music learning

- Being able to motivate students to learn

- Creating support for music programs

- Whether each student is reaching his or her potential

- Guiding students toward intellectual, emotional, and musical growth

Considering the three-stage level articulated by Fuller and Brown, (1975), further results emerged. Preservice teachers identified the following five concerns in each level:

Level 1: Self-Survival concerns

- Whether the students respect me

- My ability to maintain the appropriate degree of class control

- Losing the respect of my students

- Doing well when I'm observed as I teach

- Appearing competent to parents

Level 2: Teaching Situation or Task concerns

- Creating support for music programs

- Skills for working with disruptive students

- Not being able to cope with troublemakers in my classes

- Too many standards and regulations for teachers

- Not enough time for me to rest and prepare for class

Level 3: Student and Impact Concerns

- Helping students to value music learning

- Being able to motivate students to learn

- Whether each student is reaching his or her potential

- Guiding students toward intellectual, emotional and musical growth

- Increasing students' feelings of musical accomplishment

Although this study revealed substantial concerns of preservice teachers, two cautions emerge: first, since the data tool was a questionnaire consisting of predetermined statements about concerns, how much those specific statements drove the responses is not clear. Would preservice teachers identify any concerns if they did not have a list of them to choose from? In the current study, preservice teachers were asked if they had concerns, and if so, to identify them. In this way, it is assumed that only preservice teachers with concerns discussed them. Second, the nature of Campbell and Thompson's (2007) study related specifically to preservice teachers in music education programs. How well those results generalize to other populations, for example, literacy teachers, is also unclear.

A second study using the Fuller and Brown (1975) model was conducted by Conway and Clark (2003). The purpose of the study was to examine the professional development of six preservice teachers with a focus on evolving concerns. Each participant was interviewed individually three times as well as in one focus group. The data were collected over the course of a 30-week, two-semester internship in teaching. Findings identify eight categories of concerns:

- Children: not being able to meet students' needs

- University expectations: not being able to complete all of the requirements

- Self-as-teacher/class management: not being able to manage the class effectively

- Curriculum and instruction: not being able to keep up with daily lesson planning

- Self-as-teacher: not being adequately prepared to be a teacher

- Collaborating teacher-intern teacher relationship: not developing effective

relationships with collaborating teacher [associate teacher]

- Professionalism: concerns about public perceptions of teachers and the teaching profession.

The study provides evidence of the prominence of preservice teacher concerns as well as the wide-variety of concerns that preservice teachers have. As a further point of interest, the findings of Conway and Clark's (2003) study indicate that preservice teachers concerns progress outward (as indicated by Fuller & Brown, 1975) but also inward. Conway and Clark maintain that this central notion, specifically of self concerns (the first stage) becomes increasingly important over time as opposed to less important as theorized by Fuller and Brown. Conway and Clark (2003) contend that this increasing emphasis on self-related concerns is necessary as well as valuable and might also indicate that preservice teachers are reflecting on their practice as they develop an identity as teachers over time.

Two further studies provide insight. The first, a study conducted by Ng, Nicholas, and Howard (2010) examined preservice teachers' beliefs about perceptions of effective teachers. The purpose of the study was to connect preservice teachers' perceptions of good teaching with their field experiences. Participants included thirty-seven preservice teachers enrolled in a one-year teacher education program. Data consisted of a questionnaire that was administered as preservice teachers returned to university classes immediately after placements in schools. Although the study primarily examined preservice teachers' beliefs, it is cited here for its ancillary findings on preservice teachers' concerns about teaching.

Findings showed that classroom management, managing student learning, and professional expectations (knowing where they would be teaching, knowing about school policies, dress code, and how to interact with teachers and students) represented areas of concern

for participants. More than half of the participants reported self-management (being disorganized, procrastinating, lacking confidence, not being strict enough, not being a good listener, and being too nice) as a main source of concern. Although the goal of this review is to present findings concerning preservice teachers' concerns about teaching, one cannot help but notice that the Ng et al. findings fit, on a surface level at least, the Fuller and Brown model. Self-management, as report by Ng et al., was the main source of concern. Self-management as a self-survival concern is in keeping with the first stage of the model and also aligned with Fuller and Brown's contention that preservice teachers have more self-survival concerns than either of the other levels of concern.

The focus of a second study, conducted by Haritos (2004), was identifying the role of preservice teachers' beliefs as well as their concerns. In addition, Haritos examined the relationship between the concerns and beliefs prior to entry into a teacher education program. There were 47 elementary and 47 secondary school teacher candidates enrolled in their first education course, none of whom had teaching experience. The data source consisted of a reflection written after preservice teachers' first day of class in response to two questions: (1) What do you believe are the challenge(s) of teaching? (2) What do you believe is the role of a teacher? Data were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Bilken, 2006). The findings of the study identified three categories of concerns:

- survival concerns
- teaching situation concerns (sparking and maintaining students' interest, catering to students' individual needs, being a motivator, establishing a respectful teacher-student relationship, teaching students right from wrong, educating students, facilitating learning, and creating an environment that promotes cognitive growth)

- concerns about pupils (low parental support, keeping students interested, addressing individual student needs, keeping kids motivated, student apathy, having a good teacher–student relationship, disrespectful students, and students who are cognitively weak)

Harito (2004) organized the findings using the same stages as Fuller and Brown's model; however, the findings of the study are in direct contrast to precepts of the model, indicating that self-survival concerns were least important while student concerns were most important. In fact, preservice teachers reported more student concerns than teaching situation issues and survival concerns combined.

One of the more current studies on preservice teachers' concerns about teaching was conducted by Dunn and Rakes (2011). The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of preservice teachers' efficacy and concerns regarding the implementation of learner-centered practices on preservice teachers' learner-centered beliefs. The study used a quantitative design and consisted of a questionnaire in three parts: (a) the learner-centered beliefs about learners, learning and teaching subscale from the Teacher Beliefs Survey (McCombs & Lauer, 1997); (b) Stages of Concern Questionnaire (George et al., 2006); and (c) the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Participants consisted of 185 preservice teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at an urban, mid-southern American university. The findings indicate that respondents were not concerned about learner-centered practices. This is a significant finding for this study because all of the teacher education programs whose students participated in this study stated with certainty that their students should have been familiar with what constitutes learner-centered education. This finding, then, indicates that formative assessment, used throughout a teacher education program of studies, may help teacher

educators to better monitor student knowledge (Dunn & Rakes, 2011). It may be significant for all teacher educators, for example, who aim to teach certain fundamental concepts within their specific disciplines only to find that students have not grasped the essentials of the concept. If this is the case, the findings might be useful. The study also found that management was a concern for preservice teachers, but not on a significant scale. The fact that participants had not had any field experiences prior to completing the questionnaire was given as a possible rationale. As with Campbell and Thompson's (2007) study, participants expressed concerns about teaching based on a predetermined set of statements. It is possible that some participants did not have any concerns, but, given a questionnaire with directions to rank-order concerns, they did so. In other words, since the study's participants rank-ordered concerns on a Likert-type scale, the strength of ranked concerns is unknown. For example, participant A might have heightened concerns, whereas participant B might have minimal concerns, but both would have been able to rank-order those concerns from 1-5. In neither case would the investigators be able to identify which participant actually had more or less strenuous concerns.

According to the review, preservice teachers' concerns seem to fall under three categories (whether the researcher(s) intended for them to or not). Fuller (1969) was the pioneer of these linear stages of concerns, including self-survival, the teaching situation, as well as students and the impact of teaching. There is variability in the findings cited in this review with some studies showing self-survival concerns as being most predominant while others found that student concerns were of more concern. What is consistent across the studies is the presence of all three kinds of concerns in some degree.

What counts as literacy in the 21st century has changed dramatically over the last decade. What will count as literacy in future years is expected to continue to change. Multiliteracies,

multimodalities, and new literacies present educators and students with multiple means of learning and multiple means of expressing ideas. All are important to teacher education programs.

Summary

The review of the literature indicates that preservice teachers enter their teacher education programs with a set of beliefs about teaching and education. These beliefs help preservice teachers make sense of practical and theoretical experiences in the preservice program. However, even after one academic year in the teacher education program, preservice teachers often exit with the same beliefs firmly intact (Kennedy, 1999). In fact, the preservice program may serve to reinforce previously held beliefs (Stofflett & Stoddart, 1994), as opposed to helping students to develop new ones or amend old ones.

The number of studies concerning teachers' beliefs about teaching literacy is limited. Although there are several studies that described preservice teacher beliefs about teaching reading or about teaching writing, there are few studies that described preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. Furthermore, research to date has not fully explored how teacher education programs and practica influence preservice teachers' experience in becoming literate learners, and how those influences shape their beliefs about teaching and learning literacy, nor have scholars examined changes in beliefs with specific reference to literacy teaching and learning. My study employed a variety of tools to identify preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching in general, but also about literacy learning and teaching specifically. In addition, this study explored changes to preservice teachers' beliefs over the course of the teacher education year, as well as the factors that influenced the development of and potential changes to beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy.

Chapter Three describes the design and methodology that guided the study.

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Preservice teachers enter the teacher education program with a set of beliefs about teaching and learning (Jarvis-Selenger, 2007; Smith, 2005). These beliefs are typically formulated during years in classrooms as students (Jarvis-Selenger, 2007; Lortie, 1975). As students, they observe teachers teach and begin to develop a set of beliefs about teaching. The process of developing beliefs in this way is problematic for two reasons: first, observing teachers teach does not afford students insights into all that teachers do (Calderhead, 1996). Students do not observe teachers in the multiple tasks teachers carry out prior to implementing lessons. They therefore often have little understanding of the complex nature of planning, preparation, accessing and collecting resources, ongoing professional development, assessment, and differentiated instruction. Second, these entering beliefs act as filters that guide decision-making (Smith, 2005). Depending on the nature of one's beliefs and experiences when entering the teacher education program, these filters can either enhance new learning or impede it. Further, the research suggests that entering beliefs do not readily change during the teacher education programs.

The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs that preservice teachers entering a teacher education program have about literacy teaching and learning. The qualitative research study sought to describe how preservice teacher beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over time in the literacy course. Finally, this research study attempted to identify the influences on preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning.

My study was informed by findings of a pilot study I conducted in 2007. The design, methodology, and findings influenced the approaches used in the current study. Details of the

pilot study are provided in the Background section below. The remainder of the chapter outlines the design, methodology, research process, analysis of the data, and ethical considerations.

Background

This chapter begins with background information essential to developing the design and methodology of the study. The pilot study conducted in 2007 is described in order to provide a rationale for some of the decisions made regarding how the current study would be implemented. In addition, the language arts and literacy course in which this study is rooted is described.

Pilot Study

This study was informed by the findings of a pilot study I conducted: *Negotiating Meaning: Preservice Teacher Beliefs in a Literacy Course.* The pilot, conducted from February through April of 2007, involved preservice teachers enrolled in a language arts and literacy course during the 2007-2008 academic year. The pilot was a qualitative study that investigated the beliefs of four preservice teachers in a preservice education literacy course, the pedagogical choices they made, and how their beliefs influenced curriculum decisions made during Partners in Education and practicum field placements. The context for the study was a literacy course grounded in the constructivist theory of teaching and learning. Methods included focus group interviews and journal entries. Data included transcribed focus group interviews, learning journals, and fieldnotes which were analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Patton, 2002).

Findings suggested that preservice teachers entered the education program with beliefs that contribute to a theoretical perspective toward teaching literacy. Preservice teachers were able to describe characteristics of effective literacy programs, as well as effective approaches and strategies. However, the study showed that, even though participants were aware of these important elements, they rarely used them in field placement settings. The study also found that

preservice teachers identified issues and dilemmas such as time management and lack of resources that may have acted as barriers to teaching literacy.

The findings of the pilot study were used to inform the current study. As a result, changes to the design, methods, research process, limitations, and significance of the current study were made.

Language Arts and Literacy Course

Language Arts and Literacy is a preservice literacy course taught to teacher candidates who will be certified to teach in the junior (Grades 4-6) and intermediate (Grades 7-10) divisions. The course comprised 72 contact hours that spanned September through April. As part of the course requirements for the Language Arts and Literacy course, preservice teachers participated in a program called Partners in Education that I developed because some preservice teachers did not teach any language arts lessons during their practice teaching field placements. The intent of Partners in Education, therefore, was to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to apply language arts and literacy skills, techniques and strategies in field settings with students in a Junior (Grades 4-6) or Intermediate (Grades 7-8) class from a local school. In this program, preservice teachers and elementary students met twice at the elementary school during regularly scheduled class time. Preservice teachers developed lesson plans that were reviewed by the instructor prior to the school visit. At each visit, each preservice teacher was paired with a student to implement the literacy-based lesson. This field experience was separate from practicum requirements.

Research Design

My research study was qualitative and emergent (Patton, 2002). The decision to use a qualitative approach was not made lightly. I did not have much research experience prior to

commencing PhD studies, and, although I would not have been able to name it at the time, my only associations were with quantitative research. My understandings of what constituted research were borne out of mandatory statistics classes which I felt were clinical and perfunctory. Having little comfort with numbers, I found statistics scary–not being fond of formulas and applications did not help. Despite these general negative feelings toward quantitative statistics, I was not unaware of their potential usefulness.

Early in my coursework, I took a qualitative research course that had a significant impact on my thinking and opened a new realm of possibilities when it came to choosing a research paradigm for my own study. I read Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work on narrative inquiry, and encountered the notion of 'reformulation'. I learned that, although not new, qualitative research was still battling to stake its claim as 'real' research. I knew that if I chose a qualitative design, I would have to be sure that it was the best method for my research problem.

Many research texts begin with advice about how to choose the proper research design. The common approach (Patton, 2002; Yin, 1989) is to choose a design based on the questions that the study intends to investigate. Although the primary question in my study, "What beliefs about teaching literacy do preservice teachers bring to a literacy course in the preservice teacher education program?" could have been addressed using either qualitative or quantitative methods, I wanted the voices of the participants to be heard. I did not have or at least tried not to have preconceived notions about how the participants would respond. Categories and codes emerged from the data. I did not pre-establish certain beliefs that I expected preservice teachers to identify. I wanted to use open-ended opportunities for preservice teachers to describe what they believed about literacy teaching. I felt it was important to refrain from imposing my own beliefs on the participants. Leaving the door open to preservice teachers allowed for opportunities for

them to identify beliefs that hadn't occurred to me. For these reasons, using a qualitative approach seemed the best course of action.

There are an overwhelming number of qualitative designs used by researchers. Again, keeping the research questions in mind, I selected the specific research approach of ethnography. According to Gay and Airasian (2003), ethnography is used to "describe and analyze all or part of a culture of a community by identifying and describing the participants' practices and beliefs" (p. 166).

This study employed two phases. The first focused on one section of preservice teachers enrolled in a literacy course. All 39 students enrolled in the literacy course volunteered to participate in the study. Phase Two consisted of a purposeful sample of eight of the 39 participants from the first phase. Methods for Phase One included the completion of a personal history account, term report, and a final reflection paper, participation in the Partners in Education program, participant and non-participant observations, and field notes based on the literacy course and Partners in Education. Methods for Phase Two included the above, as well as learning journals and three focus group interviews.

The purposeful sample of eight preservice teachers drawn from the Phase One participants was intentionally created to allow me to use multiple data sources to represent the stories of preservice teachers. The Phase Two data sources were rich and detailed and were, I believe, representative of the stories of many preservice teachers. The Phase One term report and final reflection paper provided specific data about preservice teachers' beliefs that all respondents contributed to. There were, however, two Phase Two data sources in particular, the learning journals, and transcribed focus group interviews that contained rich data through which the voices of individual respondents could be heard. I came to believe that although the global

data generated by the term reports and final reflection papers were important, there was much to be learned by delving more deeply into the histories and stories of the Phase Two participants. Using a case study approach seemed to be a perfect fit.

Yin (1989) states that a case study is an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence" (p. 18). Patton (2002) notes that case study is not intended as a study of the entire organization. Rather, it is intended to focus on a particular issue, feature, or unit of analysis. It involves organizing the data by specific cases, in this case, preservice teachers, for an in-depth look at individual stories. A key strength of the case study method involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process. The researcher determines what evidence to gather and what analysis techniques to use with the data to answer the research questions. In this case, the analysis was constant comparative (Patton, 2002). Tools used to collect data for the case studies included transcribed focus group interviews, and learning journals as well as the Phase One data: personal history accounts, term reports, final reflection papers, participant and non-participant observations, partners in education lesson plans and reflections, as well as researcher field notes.

Research Questions

The research questions that were addressed in this study are as follows:

1) What beliefs about teaching literacy do preservice teachers bring to a literacy course in the preservice teacher education program?

2) How do preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over the course?

3) What are preservice teachers' perceptions of the influences on their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning?

Participants

Participants were teacher candidates enrolled in a Language Arts and Literacy course during the 2008-2009 academic year. Participants were enrolled in a one-year Bachelor of Education program (subsequent to attaining an undergraduate degree) at a University in Northern Ontario. Participants were enrolled in the Junior (Grades 4-6) and Intermediate (Grades 7-10) divisions, and were required to take the language arts and literacy course as part of their course load.

The study consisted of two phases. The sample for Phase One consisted of one section of 39 preservice teachers enrolled in a literacy course who were invited to participate in the study. The population of the Phase One sample consisted largely of white female students who began their teacher education training immediately after having attained their undergraduate degrees. Of the 39 participants, 32 were female while seven were male. Fully 36 participants were white while three represented visible minorities. Of the participants, 35 had recently completed their undergraduate degrees, while four were mature students. All participants were from Ontario, but represented a diverse population of varying cultural backgrounds.

The second phase consisted of a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of eight preservice teachers drawn from those preservice teachers in Phase One. A purposeful sample is one that is believed to be representative of the given population (Patton, 2002), in this case, of preservice teachers. In purposeful sampling, prior knowledge and experience on the part of the investigator are used to identify criteria for selecting the sample. Of the eight participants, one was male and seven were female. Seven were recent graduates of undergraduate degrees and one was a mature student. All were from Ontario.

The need for an information-rich (Patton, 2002) sample was fundamental to the study. Patton described several types of purposeful samples, but the one best suited for this study was maximum variation sampling. In this case, the individuals were selected from within a single program, namely preservice education teachers enrolled in one section of the Language Arts and Literacy course. The intent was to create a sample of individuals who had different experiences, thereby allowing the investigator "more thoroughly [to] describe the variation in the groups and to understand variations in experiences while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes" (p. 172). In this study, participants in Phase One were briefed on what would be requested of them as participants in Phase Two and then were invited to participate. Of the 39 participants in Phase One of the study, eleven volunteered to participate in Phase Two. When selecting the sample for Phase Two, the researcher considered three factors: gender, age, and cultural background.

Methods

Methods for Phase One of the study included the completion of a personal history account, participation in Partners in Education, participant and non-participant observations, a term report, a final reflection paper, and fieldnotes based on the literacy course and Partners in Education. The selection of these methods was based on what the literature described as being useful tools for uncovering and examining preservice teacher beliefs in an education program (Clark, 1988; Holly, 1989; Knowles & Cole, 1994; Graesser, Person, & Hu, 2002). Methods for Phase Two included learning journals and focus group interviews.

The following section describes the data sources for Phase One and Phase Two of the study.

Data Sources for Phase One

The tools used for data collection in Phase One included the following: personal history account (PHA), lesson plans (LP), reflections (R), participant and non-participant observations, term report (TR), final reflection paper (FRP), and fieldnotes. The data sources are described below.

Personal history account. Participants delved into their own personal histories of becoming literate learners by identifying critical events in their literacy development–both positive and negative. In doing so, preservice teachers may have developed a better sense of the important influences in their development of literacy skills and knowledge and their beliefs about teaching literacy. The personal history account assignment can be found in Appendix F.

Lesson plans and reflections: Partners in education. As part of the course requirements for the language arts and literacy course, preservice teachers participated in Partners in Education (described above). Lesson plans and reflections from two classroom visits were used as data sources since they might illustrate preservice teachers' thought processes in planning a literacy lesson and evaluating its success. The lesson plan template can be found in Appendix G

Participant and non-participant observations. Participant observation is used when researchers immerse themselves in the field they are investigating. Lofland (1971) describes participant observation as "the circumstance of being in or around an on-going social setting for the purpose of making a qualitative analysis of that setting" (p. 93).

There were several opportunities in the proposed study for the researcher to be "fully engaged in experiencing the setting while at the same time observing and talking with other participants about whatever is happening" (Patton, 2002, p. 266). Participant observation was used during dialogue and discussion in the literacy course, observations of preservice teachers in

the Partners in Education component of the study, and as a tool for gathering data about participants during the focus group interviews.

Non-participant observation was used when the researcher did not interact with participants, but, rather, observed activities from a distance. Non-participant observation was used when preservice teachers taught lessons as per the Partners in Education component of the course and study. It was important that preservice teachers felt a sense of autonomy when implementing lesson plans, and, as a result, the researcher observed from a distance, without any interaction with either preservice teachers or their elementary partners.

Term report. All students enrolled in the course were required to complete a term report at the end of the first semester. These reports described what preservice teachers perceived their beliefs about literacy education and literacy teaching were, how they might have changed over the course of the semester, and what they perceived to have influenced the development and/or change in their beliefs. Participants in the study were invited to submit their term reports for use as data in the study. The term report assignment can be found in Appendix H.

Final reflection paper. All students were required to complete a final reflection paper at the end of the academic year. These reflections described what preservice teachers perceived their beliefs about literacy education and literacy teaching were, how they might have changed over the course of the semester, and what they perceived to have influenced the development and/or change in their beliefs. Participants in the study were invited to submit their final reflection papers for use as data in the study. The final reflection paper assignment can be found in Appendix I.

Fieldnotes. A log was used to record fieldnotes based on participant and non-participant observations. Notes were kept regarding observations during the course, as well as during the

Partners in Education visits.

Data Sources for Phase Two

The methods used for data collection in Phase Two included the following: learning

journals (LJ) and transcribed focus group interviews (FGI). The data tools are described below.

Learning journal. The purposeful sample of eight participants was invited to keep a

learning journal from January through April of 2009. The learning journal was used to record

ideas, issues, concerns, and dilemmas about literacy teaching as they emerged during practice

teaching field placements, Partners in Education field experiences, participation in the Language

Arts and Literacy course and completion of other components of the study such as the personal

history accounts, and focus group interviews. Participants were invited to write in their journals

at least once per week; however, I understood that the volume of assignments and other

obligations may have prevented them from doing so.

Focus group interviews. Focus group interviews have been defined by Krueger and

Casey (2000) as "carefully planned discussion[s] designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area

of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment" (p. 18). The format of the focus groups

for the study followed Patton's (2002) recommendations for using the interview guide approach.

In this approach, the investigator has an outline of topics or issues to be covered, but is free to

vary the wording and order of the questions to some extent.

Bringing preservice teachers together to participate in focus group interviews allowed

them opportunities to learn from hearing the perspectives of the collective group. This type of

collective cognition included learning about pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of subject

matter content, and knowledge of self and learners (Holly, 1989).

Three audio-taped focus group interviews were scheduled between January and April of

2009, and were approximately 60 minutes each in length. In this study, the focus groups consisted of two groups of four participants each. It was expected that keeping the number of participants to four per focus group would allow each participant ample opportunity to contribute to the dialogue. Each group met on the same day, but at different times. Participants were informed that the contents of the focus group interviews as well as the identity of its participants were to remain confidential. A list of guiding questions for each of the focus groups can be found in Appendix J.

Research Process

The following section describes the timing of the study, entry, process, analysis of data, the role of the investigator, and rigor.

Timing of the Study

The study began in January and lasted through till April 2009 (second semester of two semesters comprising the one year Bachelor of Education program). Starting the research in January allowed for at least four months in which to conduct the study. This amount of time made it possible to hold three focus groups with enough time between for participants to gain experience in both the course and in the field.

Several of the data tools were also evaluation requirements for the Language Arts and Literacy course. These assignments had to be completed at times in relation to the course schedule. As a result, the personal history account and term reports were completed prior to commencement of the study, but not collected as data until after the study began.

Entry

Phase One of the study included students from one section of preservice teachers. There were 39 students enrolled in this section and all 39 volunteered to participate in the study. For

Phase One, an announcement was made at the end of the first class in January 2009 describing the nature and purpose of the study. Letters of invitation (Appendix B) and consent forms (Appendix C) were distributed to those students from the section who wished to participate. I explained how data would be collected and what their responsibility would be for each of the data collection segments. Students were provided with a written copy of this information to retain for their records. Students were advised of all ethical considerations.

The purposeful sample of eight participants was selected for Phase Two based on consent forms collected from Phase One participants. The eight selected participants were invited to attend a brief meeting after class during which Phase Two of the study was described. Letters of invitation (Appendix D) and consent forms (Appendix E) were distributed. Participants were briefed on how data would be collected and what their responsibility would be for each of the data collection segments. Participants were advised of all ethical considerations.

Process

Phase One and Phase Two of the study began at the onset of the second semester in January of 2009. A schedule outlining focus group interviews and Partners in Education dates as well as dates for practicum placements and classes is as follows:

DATES	ACTIVITIES
September 2-5	Practicum Placement
September 8-26	Classes
September 29-October 7	Practicum Placement
October 20-November 7	Classes
November 10-28	Practicum Placement
December 1-20	Classes

DATES	ACTIVITIES
January 5-Feb. 6	Classes
January 5	Introduction and explanation of study
January 12	Selection of purposeful sample
January 26	Partners in Education visit #1
January 27	Focus group Interview #1
February 9-March 27	Practicum Placement/Study Week
March 30-April 24	Classes
April 2	Partners in Education visit #2
April 2	Focus Group Interview #2
April 23	Focus Group Interview #3

Analysis of Data

Bogdan and Biklen (2006) define qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 145). Since the design of the study was emergent, the data analysis was ongoing; it informed the focus group questions, and interventions in the classroom and in the field.

Data analysis was completed through constant-comparative analysis of the data set. These data were used "to group answers to common questions [and] analyze different perspectives on central issues" (Patton, 2002, p. 376). Using the constant-comparative approach, the raw data were broken down into manageable chunks and examined to determine codes that emerged. At this point, I identified and tentatively named the conceptual codes into which the data would be grouped (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The goal was to create descriptive, multi-faceted codes to act

as a preliminary starting point (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As each new concept was identified, it was compared to existing categories (Gay & Airasian, 2003) to look for consistencies and differences.

Consistencies between codes revealed categories. The emergent categories as a result of the process of grouping responses and events were continuously refined throughout the data collection and analysis phases. A category was considered saturated when no new codes that relate to it were formed. The process of analysis was inductive, meaning that the critical themes emerged out of the data (Patton, 2002), and were recursive as the investigator moved back and forth between the different data sources.

Process of Data Analysis

The sources for data analysis included the following: personal history account; Partners in Education lesson plans and reflections; participant and non-participant observations, term report, final reflection paper, learning journals, and transcribed focus group interviews. Each of these data sources were analyzed individually. The following section describes the process used for analysis for two data sources.

Personal history account. The personal history accounts were read several times to develop an understanding of what literacy events and practices preservice teachers discussed. The requirements of the assignment itself allowed the accounts to be divided into categories, for example, pre-school experiences, in-school experiences (elementary, high school, university), current practices, and influences of experiences on beliefs. These categories became the initial broad groupings that were used to sort preservice teachers' personal history accounts. The personal history accounts were read several more times, through the lens of the broad categories. Consequently, the categories were broken down into further groupings. These groupings were

given codes, and were applied to all of the personal history accounts. As the accounts were coded, new themes emerged and were assigned new codes. In some cases, themes were abandoned and discarded. In other cases, themes were combined as I became more familiar with the accounts.

After all of the accounts were coded, I read through them again, looking for any missed data. I repeated this process several times to ensure that all the data were represented in the findings.

Once the personal history accounts were coded, a table was created in a word document and the data was posted. The data were sorted using the categories as main headings, for example, pre-school, elementary school, high school, current, philosophy, and perceptions of self. I further divided the categories into the subcategories as described above.

As I continued to consider how all of the data from the various sources could be gathered into one meaningful piece, I realized that most of the data from the personal history accounts could be described as roots of preservice teacher beliefs. I began to consider how "Influences" from the term report and final reflection paper offered similar kinds of information. As a result, I removed the "Influences" category from the original data table and added it to any data from the personal history accounts that referred to events, things, or people that preservice teachers perceived to have been influences on their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy and kept the code: Influences for the combined data.

Having done that, I still had copious amounts of what I considered to be rich data from the personal history accounts. I examined that data through the lens of the original data table created for the term reports, and found that the existing categories would work well as places to sort these unused data. As a result, I photocopied the coded personal history accounts and cut

them apart according to the categories and subcategories described in the term report and final reflection paper data analysis process. I then took these data and inserted them into the appropriate sections of the findings.

Term report. The term report was an assignment that preservice teachers were required to complete after the first semester of the Bachelor of Education program. In the term report, preservice teachers were required to discuss three topics: beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy; how beliefs about language arts teaching and learning changed since the beginning of the teacher education program; and what events or experiences influenced these changes.

In addition, preservice teachers were required to respond to two of four further topics, including concerns and or strengths about teaching language arts and literacy; barriers to teaching language arts and literacy; things that surprised them about teaching language arts and literacy; and what they hoped to learn about teaching language arts and literacy in the next term.

The term reports were read through in order to become familiar with the texts. The documents were read a second time and important words, sentences, and phrases that related to the general topics that students were required to write about (i,e., beliefs, changes, concerns etc.) were underlined. One or two words were used to capture the essence of each underlined section; in each case, I wrote these annotations in the margin next to the underlined section. These general categories included the following: beliefs, changes, influences, barriers, and concerns. In the third reading, any missed sections were underlined using the same one or two word codes. In addition, new words or phrases were developed to describe items that were not identified in the first two readings. New categories that emerged included these: new beliefs, perceptions of ability to teach, and perceptions of changes. In addition, it should be noted that, while I was

reading through the term reports, patterns began to emerge that did not necessarily fit the notion of categories; rather, they consisted of repeated attention to some concept within the confines of teaching and/or learning language arts and literacy. These repeated statements were each given a separate page each with a title across the top. Each time something in a report matched one of the headings, the student code and any supporting data from the report were recorded. Some of these headings included comments with respect to the following: grammar and spelling; and a repeated use of the phrase "learned helplessness." These topics emerged as a pattern, but needed more than a category label because the context in which the phrases were being used needed further examination.

All of the general categories that emerged through the first three readings appeared to consist of hundreds of entries and needed further deconstruction. To that end, the documents were photocopied, cut apart, and sorted according to the codes noted in the margins. With the documents cut up and put into piles, it became quite evident that there were indeed hundreds of entries for each category. As a result, one category was selected for further analysis: beliefs. Patterns emerged within that category, and the group was divided further. Repeats, patterns, similarities, opposing beliefs, and so on were examined. Through this process, new categories about the original beliefs category began to emerge and are as follows: characteristics, nature of a program, content, instructional strategies, teacher's role, and student's role.

Still examining the beliefs category I discovered a new dimension. Not only did preservice teachers identify what their beliefs were, but they also identified, in some cases, where they perceived those beliefs stemmed from. As a result, a second photocopy of the Term Reports was made and sorted according to belief sentences with respect to preservice teachers' past experiences that shaped these beliefs. This new category was labeled: "Beliefs: roots." This

category was eventually changed to fit in the "Influences" category after all of the data were analyzed holistically.

I followed a similar process for each of the other main categories (changes, influences, and concerns) using the cut and paste method and reading and rereading as new subcategories, emerged. A coding chart detailing themes, categories, subcategories and examples is located in Appendix L.

Role of the Investigator

As instructor-investigator, I kept a log in which I recorded personal thoughts and reflections on the process of the study. Foci for the log included identification of my own set of beliefs about literacy teacher education, my role as a preservice teacher educator, and how my beliefs influenced the content and structure of the course I taught. I used the log to record fieldnotes based on participant and non-participant observations and as a tool for recording questions and comments while examining the data.

Rigor

To ensure the rigor of qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe three criteria: credibility, dependability, and transferability. It should be noted that there is considerable debate in the field of qualitative research as to how well or even if the criteria apply (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) express concern that the identifiers of reliability and validity in quantitative research do not translate well in the qualitative paradigm. Patton (2002) has also expressed some concerns about attempting to find evidence to evaluate qualitative research by quantitative standards. In any case, there is a pressing need to provide reasonable evidence to ensure that the proposed study is rigorous. I have looked to the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) with respect to the four criteria to guide

such an explanation, with consideration given to the dissenting voices as well.

Credibility. The investigator assumed the presence of multiple realities, and attempted to represent these multiple realities adequately. Credibility might be considered one test of this procedure. Patton (2002) argues that credibility depends less on sample size than on the richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher. Credibility can be enhanced through prolonged and varied field experience, reflexivity, and triangulation of data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

- *Prolonged and varied field experience.* The study, which spanned a four-month period, used Partners in Education field experiences, practicum placement experiences, and university classroom instruction.

- *Reflexivity.* The participants were invited to keep a learning journal to record their thoughts, ideas, and experiences. Participants were invited to reflect on Partners in Education experiences, in response to literacy instruction in the preservice program, and in response to me as a researcher.

- *Triangulation.* Denzin and Lincoln (2008) describe several methods for achieving triangulation of data. This study achieved data triangulation by using different sources of data/information, including personal history accounts, transcribed focus group interviews, learning journals, and reflections from the Partners in Education program. Methodological triangulation involved the use of several methods in the study including focus group interviews and learning journals.

Dependability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that "since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter" (p. 316). Nevertheless, researchers do provide a limited

number of strategies that can be used to enhance the dependability of qualitative research, including dense description of research methods, triangulation, and using the code-recode procedure

- *Dense description of research methods.* The methods employed in the study have been described in the degree such that replication would be achievable.

- *Code-recode procedure.* As new codes emerged from data analysis or when old codes needed to be changed, the code-recode procedure was employed.

Transferability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the existence of local conditions "makes it impossible to generalize" (p. 124). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "the *transferability* of a working hypothesis to other situations depends on the degree of similarity between the original situation and the situation to which it is transferred. The researcher cannot specify the transferability of findings; he or she can only provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation" (p. 125). Nevertheless, dense description as described above was used in this study in an attempt to illuminate the element of transferability.

Ethical Considerations

The study was developed in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Lakehead University. Application to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Nipissing University was also required. Approvals by the REBs are in Appendix A. All participants who agreed to participate in the study were invited to complete and sign a consent form. The consent form (Appendices E–Phase One, and Appendix G–Phase Two) clearly articulated the following:

- Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and without penalty.

- Participants had the right to refuse to participate in any part of the study.

- There were no known risks to participants associated with this study. However, any potential social, emotional, and psychological risks arising from the focus groups were minimized by the investigator's articulation regarding appropriate boundaries for discussion.

- All data were coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. There were some instances during the data collection phases (specifically focus groups) in which participants were clearly identified. As investigator, I felt that facilitation of the focus groups was vital to the study. Participants were assured that the contents of the focus group sessions would be coded and that pseudonyms would be used to protect identity. Participants in the focus groups agreed to protect the confidentiality of participants by refraining from discussing the focus group meetings or identifying other participants.

- Participation in the study and/or any data collected would not have any impact on grades in the course.

- All data would be stored securely at Lakehead University for five years, after which time the documents would be shredded and discarded.

- The data would be accessible to the researcher and supervisor only.

- The findings of the study would be disseminated to the academic community through the publication of a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed journal articles and presentations at conferences. The dissertation would be housed in the Bora Laskin Library at Lakehead University.

- Participants would have access to a summary of the findings by making an email

request to the researcher.

Permission from the school board and from students (and their parents) in the elementary school was not sought because data collected from the Partners in Education program was restricted to preservice teachers' lesson plans and reflections. There was no collection of data that contained student work samples or reference to their identities or the identity of the school.

Summary

Chapter Three described the background to the study, the pilot and the Language Arts and Literacy Course, the design, methods, research process, rigor and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents findings for Phase One and interpretations.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS:

PHASE ONE

Overview

The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs that preservice teachers entering the teacher education program have about literacy teaching and learning; to describe how their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over time in a literacy course; and to identify the influences on preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. The participants were teacher candidates enrolled in a Language Arts and Literacy course during the 2008-2009 academic year. All of the 39 preservice teachers enrolled in the course volunteered to participate in the study. Of the 39 participants, 32 were female while seven were male. Fully 36 participants were white while three represented visible minorities. Of the participants, 35 had recently completed their undergraduate degrees, while four were mature students. All participants were from Ontario, but represented a diverse population of varying cultural backgrounds. The participants were enrolled in a one-year Bachelor of Education program (subsequent to attaining an undergraduate degree) at a university in Northern Ontario. They were enrolled in the Junior (Grades 4-6) and Intermediate (Grades 7-10) divisions. The Language Arts and Literacy course was a required part of their course load.

I was the instructor of the course. I believed that participation in the course would influence preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. As a result, a general overview of my philosophy of teaching and of how it informed planning is provided below. This section is followed by a lesson plan I used in teaching the course; it provides an example of the content and strategies used with preservice teachers and, in turn, the kinds of experiences preservice teachers would have had in the literacy course. I then present an

outline of the topics covered in the literacy course, on a weekly basis. Subsequent sections of the chapter describe the findings and interpretation for Phase One of the study.

The Language Arts and Literacy Course

All lessons in the language arts and literacy course were planned with the social constructivist theory of teaching and learning in mind. All lessons were rooted in the scaffolding process (Vygotsky, 1978). Where possible, modelling of strategies (think aloud strategy, visualizing, illustrating, writing, conducting and analyzing baseline assessments) was used. Students were given opportunities to try new strategies either in small groups, or independently as time permitted. Attention was given to varying the approaches and strategies used in teaching to meet a variety of needs. For example, interactive strategies such as Four Corners or Inside/Outside Circle were used; power points were used for every lesson; video and audio clips were incorporated to engage learners. Varying strategies such as jigsaw, think-pair-share, and elbow partners facilitated group work. Students were often provided with opportunities to construct their own ideas about strategies and approaches by solving problems and puzzles.

Every class opened with a read aloud. A variety of multicultural texts were chosen with an emphasis on Canadian literature. Picture books were almost always used, although segments of novels such as *Flipped* (W. Van Draanen, 2010) were read to demonstrate how perspective and voice can change the meaning of an event.

A lesson plan that I used to teach the instructional approaches in a balanced literacy program is outlined below.

Lesson Plan: Balanced Literacy – Instructional Approaches and Scaffolding

1. Introduction
2. Balanced Literacy

a. Have students work in triads to match the key instructional approaches to their definitions. Students should then place the terms in order from those that require high teacher support to low teacher support.

b. Review the definitions for each of the approaches following the ppt slides.

c. Introduce the concept of scaffolding. Scaffolding is a teaching approach in which the teacher provides full support, and then gradually releases support so that the students can complete tasks independently.

d. Connect to instructional approaches to scaffolding. Review the slide that illustrates Vygotsky's theory.

e. Present the chart and describe.

Scaffolding	Instructional Approaches
Modeling	Read Aloud Modeled Writing
Large Group	Shared Reading Interactive Writing
Small Group	Guided Reading Guided Writing
Independent	Independent Reading Independent Writing

3. Tell students that today we will be focusing on the instructional approaches for reading. The remaining approaches will be discussed in future classes. Divide students into 8 groups (2 for each approach: Read Aloud, Guided Reading, Shared Reading, and Independent Reading). Two groups will be working on Read Aloud, for example, but one group will focus on the teacher's role and the other group will focus on the students' role.

a. The groupings will be as follows:

1: Read Aloud	2: Guided Reading
A: Teacher	A: Teacher
B: Student	B: Student
3: Shared Reading	4: Independent Reading
A: Teacher	A: Teacher
B: Student	B: Student

b. Each group will examine one of the instructional approaches with respect to reading.

c. Revisit the information on pp.162-177 of the text.

d. Use the organizer to record main points.

Role	Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Teacher			
Students			

    e. Allow time to complete the task.

    f. Remind students that they will present their information to their peers.

    g. Presentation of group findings.

4. Reflection

- What did we learn?
- How does the teacher's role differ from the student's role?
- Does the teacher's role presented in the texts today differ from your perceptions of the teacher's role? If so, how?
- Describe the role of the teacher as observed on placement (create a chart).

Course topics included instructional approaches in a balanced literacy program as well as Canadian children's literature, multiliteracies, drama, assessment, and evaluation (see Appendix K: Course Outline for a complete list of the topics that preservice teachers would have learned about in the literacy course).

Findings

The presentation of findings is organized into four sections representing themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. The first section describes the evolution of preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. The second section describes perceptions of changes to beliefs. This discussion is followed by influences on preservice teachers' beliefs, and finally, concerns preservice teachers held about teaching language arts and literacy. A discussion of interpretations follows the presentation of the findings.

Evolution of Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching Language Arts and Literacy

The findings regarding preservice teachers' beliefs have been organized into two categories according to how they evolved during the course of the teacher education program:

entering beliefs, and beliefs held by preservice teachers as they exited the program.

Entering Beliefs

Personal history accounts were composed by preservice teachers within the first week of their teacher education programs. The histories revealed preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy, as well as teaching in general, as they began their teacher education programs. Preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with beliefs about pedagogy; characteristics of language arts and literacy; perceptions of themselves as literacy educators; and the value of the reflective process as part of writing personal history accounts.

Pedagogy. Preservice teachers' entering beliefs about how and what they expected to teach with respect to language arts were rooted in personal experiences as youngsters, as well as their experiences as students in elementary, middle, and high school. Some believed that using a critical lens, that is, reading critically, while engaging in literacy practices was important. Terry explained:

> With regards to literacy learning, I believe it is important to be aware of the source the material is coming from, and thinking critically about the material. Also, I believe it is important to hear multiple opinions so that you can develop your own feelings or position on a topic. (TR, p. 2)

Five participants believed that they would focus on teaching language arts and literacy. For example, Sandra stated: "As I go in to teach the junior and intermediate grades in the near future, my emphasis for them will most definitely be on the Language Arts and Literacy" (TR, p. 2).

Some participants believed that students should have opportunities to see their teacher model skills and strategies. Meg stated: "It is important that students see their teachers model what it is that the students are to learn from the activity" (TR, p. 2). Some perceived that teaching involved learning for both students and themselves as teachers. "The teacher, just as the

students should constantly be learning something and the students need to see this" (TR, p. 3).

Van believed that establishing a healthy learning environment was important: "It is also imperative that the students grow and learn in the same type of environment that the teachers continue to learn in, a supportive and non-judgmental environment" (TR, p. 2).

Some preservice teachers believed that they would use an asset model to guide their teaching, that is, instead of discovering what students were unable to do, they would build on strengths. Hetta said: "One of my goals as a literacy educator is to discover each individual's literacy strengths and build upon those, rather than try to force the entire class into a single, narrow expectation of literacy skills" (TR, p. 4).

Almost all preservice teachers had goals for themselves as teachers that they believed were rooted in the past experiences as literacy learners. For example, Rick noted:

> As I have mentioned previously, my main objectives as a future educator are as follows; doing everything in my power to give children the confidence to at least try, being supportive and encouraging no matter what the skill level of a child, and to ensure all my students are comfortable with their own literacy abilities no matter what they might be. Literacy is like the soil of a flower and the flower is the child reaching their very best potential because of the ground work that has been laid. Literacy never stops, and encouraging literacy at all levels is crucial. As a future educator I will also continue with my own literacy skills while helping others with their own. It is a never ending journey and I am glad I am part of it! (TR, p. 3)

Some preservice teachers believed that phonics and grammar were important elements in language arts, that teaching using a phonics approach led to improved performance in reading and writing. Van said: "I wish that I had learned phonics in elementary school because my older sister had and she was always able to read and write so much better than any of my siblings" (TR, p. 2). Others believed that independent reading would be an integral part of their literacy teaching. For example, Mag said: "First of all I would like to have reading time everyday in my classroom for the pure enjoyment of it. I am always reading a novel and feel it is a great way to

relax, escape, and stimulate ideas" (TR, p. 3). Mag also believed that novel studies would be

important: "I would also have book studies in which my class all reads the same novel and

discuss it" (TR, p. 3).

Characteristics. Preservice teachers described particular characteristics of language arts

and literacy programs. They entered the program believing that in order to be effective, language

programs should be engaging and interesting.

Ten preservice teachers entered the program with the belief that language arts and

literacy should be engaging. Using his own experience as a student, Tom said:

> I will strive to allow my students to be engaged and entertained by the lessons, so they
> not only understand the lesson but enjoy the assignment. Therefore, my students will
> remember my unique assignments and unique approaches to lessons and their only
> memory won't be the final grade. (TR, p. 2)

Eight participants noted that in order for students to be intrinsically motivated to engage

with literacy events and practices, language arts and literacy programs needed to be interesting.

Peter stated: "I believe that students will not only engage in literacy learning if the resources are

personally interesting, but it is very possible that they will excel in their own literacy world

without even realizing it!" (TR, p. 3)

> Others described the importance of language arts and literacy. Carlie noted:

> I believe that literacy is of multi dimensional function and importance; it opens you up to
> a whole world of knowledge that would be otherwise unattainable, allows you to explore
> your imagination and develop fantasies which could be the building block to pretend
> games. Literacy can create confidence and illiteracy can destroy it, literacy also beings
> social contact among many other facet. (TR, p. 3)

In addition, participants believed that language arts was important, and should begin early

in children's lives. Some preservice teachers believed that experiences with literacy needed to

start early, preferably at home, but that educators also had a role to play. Frank said:

> My experiences tell me that children need a solid literacy base and that this should begin

at a very young age, in fact the younger the better. This early exposure will provide solid literacy basics; create a habit of learning literacy; provoke an affinity for literacy; and give the child confidence in their own literacy abilities. In large part this will be up to the child's parents (or other family) to build these habits, but early educators will also be very influential in this regard, especially in cases where the child is not receiving much academic support at home. In short, I believe in starting early, and doing it often. (TR, p. 3)

Perception of self. Preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with particular perceptions of their own abilities in language arts as well as perceptions of their role as teacher of language arts. Some preservice teachers believed that they were strong in language arts while others believed that they were weak. Regardless of whether they perceived themselves to be strong or weak, participants believed that they would be good language arts teachers. For example, Morgan noted that she disliked writing: "I have never really taken an interest in writing, probably due to the fact that I am not a very strong writer" (PHA, p. 2). That experience influenced her teaching in a positive way:

> As I mentioned earlier [referring to a previous section of her personal history account], I am not a big fan of writing; I will make an effort to make writing more fun for students. I will teach new and different techniques, and I will be sensitive to students who struggle with writing. (PHA, p. 4)

Perceptions of self also included the role that preservice teachers believed they could play in the literacy learning of their students. Maggie believed that her past experiences as a student empowered her to shape her students' perceptions of themselves: "By instilling in my students that they can do the work and that they have my support and total faith in them the whole way through, I can help build up their self esteem" (PHA, p. 3).

Almost all of the participants described the experiences that contributed to their becoming literate learners as having shaped their perceptions of themselves as teachers. Twenty-one preservice teachers believed that their early experiences had positive influences on who they hoped to be as teachers of literacy. For example, Savanna said:

My personal experiences as a child, whose family, social and school life revolved around books and magazines, not only strengthened my self awareness but also strengthened my literacy abilities, which in turn will further minister to me in becoming a literacy teacher. I firmly believe that everything, no matter how insignificant it may have seemed at the time, I have experienced in our literate world; from reading Mr. Doodle had a Poodle to reading Lord of the Flies, has influenced my beliefs and standards into teaching literacy. (PHA, p. 4)

Reflection and personal history accounts. Preservice teachers held certain beliefs about the value of writing the personal history accounts. Mag said: "Having an awareness of my strengths and weakness by reflecting on my personal history I can then strategize how I will approach teaching language arts" (PHA, p. 3). For others, writing the personal history account provided an opportunity to think critically about beliefs about teaching and learning language arts. Andrea learned a lot about herself and her beliefs as part of the reflective process of writing the account. She became aware of her 'traditional' views of language arts and identified concerns about how to manage all of the language arts in her teaching:

In writing this essay, I realize that I have primarily focused on reading and writing, and these are only two of the areas that are included in literacy and language arts. They're probably the most obvious and traditional areas, but will not be the easiest or most enjoyable for all students. I need to think a lot more about how to teach speaking and listening. On reflection, those skills are probably even more important and may be more achievable. People talk to each other all the time, and exchange important information. It's the basis of social relationships, which are really important to the Junior/ Intermediate age group. From my own experience, I had thought of speaking only in terms of presenting a speech or presentation to the class, but it is much more than that. Speaking and listening come before reading and writing and are used more often…I'm also very unclear about the whole area of viewing and visually representing. It makes me think of TV, movies, and plays. I do think that those ways of conveying information are important, and will be automatically interesting to my students, but I'm not sure how to integrate them into the classroom or how to separate them from the other four basic skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening). (PHA, p. 5)

Almost all preservice teachers believed that their past experiences, positive and/or negative, of becoming literate learners would influence their teaching. Many concluded their accounts with comments such as the following:

- Without a doubt in my mind, these experiences will certainly come into play when finding my place as a literary teacher. (Zack, PHA, p. 3)

- I firmly believe that my history as an avid literacy learner, which began at a very young age, played an important role in me becoming the person I am today and as a result will directly affect and shape my attitudes as a literacy educator in the future. (Frank, PHA, p. 5)

- Learning to read and write was such a great experience for me as a child and I believe that this is part of the reason why I want to be a teacher. (Nat, PHA, p. 4)

- My personal experiences as a child, whose family, social and school life revolved around book and magazines, not only strengthened by self awareness but also strengthened my literacy abilities, which in turn will further minister to me in becoming a literacy teacher. (Savanna, PHA, p. 4)

Finally, many preservice teachers indicated that they were excited about the prospect of becoming language arts and literacy teachers: "I can't wait to have my classroom and to start encouraging my students as much as my teachers have encouraged me throughout the years" (Tony, PHA, p. 5).

Exiting Beliefs

Several categories of beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy which emerged over the course of the year are described here as exiting beliefs. Preservice teachers indicated that they developed and/or affirmed their beliefs in the following areas: characteristics of an effective language arts and literacy program; the holistic nature of a language arts and literacy program; content and instructional approaches; and, finally, the role of the teacher.

Characteristics of an effective language arts and literacy program. Preservice teachers identified several characteristics that they believed were necessary elements of an effective language arts and literacy program: reality-based lessons or authenticity; engaging programming; enjoyable programming; student choice; variety of approaches and resources; gender appropriate materials; group work; and personal interests of students.

Some preservice teachers used the term 'reality-based lessons' to describe lessons that considered the everyday realities of their students including, for example, technology for writing

and Internet resources for reading. Reality-based lessons or authenticity according to three preservice teachers was an important characteristic for other reasons as well. For example, Rick noted that including things that students love into language arts and literacy "shows students that you care enough to show an interest in them and it can impact how a student learns literacy in the classroom" (TR, p. 2).

More than half of the preservice teachers in the study described the need for language arts and literacy programming to be engaging so that students wanted to participate in class. Jon said, "I believe the one thing I want to achieve for the future learner is to create dynamic and engaging literacy lessons which can be integrated into various subjects" (FRP, p. 3). Similarly, Nancy believed that making literacy learning enjoyable for students was also important: "the influence of my la [sic] curriculum course has opened my eyes to the importance of making literacy fun" (FRP, p. 2).

Four preservice teachers believed that providing students with choice was important. Although choice in learning (especially for adolescents who are striving to find freedom, identity, and a sense of autonomy) is taught in teacher education courses, preservice teachers saw, on their practicum placements, how choice was important for students. Mackenzie stated:

> One of the things I noticed [while on placement] is that while students were reading on their own they were able to read anything that they liked. This gave them some freedom to express themselves. An example of this would be that some students were reading comic strips and others were reading chapter books. The most important things about this is that in the end everyone in the classroom was participating and they were all engaged. (TR, p. 2)

Kerry noted that "providing them [students] with a number of options proved to be very beneficial" (TR, p. 3); and Andrea stated: "I believe that children should be allowed to have more options and choice in what they learn in language arts and literacy. Students should have more options in what books they read and what activities they wish to take part in" (TR, p. 1).

Some preservice teachers noted that the resources they used in lessons made a difference in the success of those lessons. They also indicated that variety was important and that it was closely linked to capturing and maintaining student interest. For example, Mackenna noted that "I think maintaining variety will be the key to my success" (TR, p. 2) while Kerry explained that "there are endless opportunities for learning. The students should be exposed to a large variety. The students should be exposed to fiction texts, non-fiction texts, issues in the community, global issues etc.; an endless variety to increase interest" (TR, p. 1).

Five participants mentioned the need for teachers to consider gender when planning for inclusive instruction. In one case, Bonnie noted that gender was an important marker for determining student interest:

> It is important for the teacher to teach gender appropriate material. It is typically believed that females excel in the language arts, but I believe that if the lessons can also be created in such a way that would be interesting to boys (e.g. writing about video games) then they can have large growths in literacy achievements as well. (TR, p. 1)

One-third of the participants valued the use of group work as a means of enhancing student learning. Terry pointed out: "I believe that students helping each other work is a great opportunity for learning" (TR, p. 1). Kerry saw the use of group work as taking on a variety of formats, all of which she regarded as beneficial to those involved:

> In the classroom where I did my practice teaching I was able to observe the unique contributions that the students were able to make to one another. Scaffolding partners, mixing genders and doing reading buddies with a younger grade all had added value to their learning of language literacy arts. (TR, p. 2)

One-third of the participants believed that learning what students were interested in and using those interests to plan curriculum instruction, could make for a better learning experience. Jack believed that identifying student interests and ensuring that students had access to texts relating to their interests might make a difference in the degree to which students were

intrinsically motivated to read:

> I also believe that students can learn to love to read if they are presented with the right material that captures their specific interests. Often, it may take a lot of work and frustration to figure out what a student's interests are exactly. (TR, p. 1)

The holistic nature of language arts and literacy. Beliefs that preservice teachers held about language arts and literacy were often closely related to their perceptions of language arts and literacy as a 'subject,' specifically the holistic nature of such programs. The dimensions that emerged included language arts and literacy as the foundation and building-block for learning; cross-curricular; technology-bound; rooted in a positive learning environment; and value in building parent-family connections.

Three preservice teachers perceived that language arts and literacy was the foundation for learning. Morgan noted that "students are unable to fully grasp the concepts without having the proper foundation that language arts and literacy provides them" (TR, p. 1). Others such as Kerry, believed that language arts and literacy was and should be a building block for learning in all other subject areas:

> You have to have the essential building blocks...you have to work with the students to ensure that they have strong understandings of the fundamentals of language and the learning strategies to develop those fundamentals so that language learning skills can be translated into other areas of schooling and their lives. (TR, p. 1)

Four participants believed that language arts and literacy teaching and learning provided students with "critical and beneficial tools" (Rick, TR, p. 1) that were "extremely important" (Savanna, TR, p. 1). Mark was able to extend this understanding of the value of language arts and literacy beyond the classroom to the workplace, at home and in everyday life: "Literacy is so important in everything we do, whether it is in a job, in school, at home or in everyday life" (TR, p. 2).

Almost half of the preservice teachers indicated that they believed language arts and

literacy to be cross-curricular. Language arts and literacy was viewed by Kerry as a subject that is "on-going, ever-changing and can be integrated into many other subjects" (TR, p. 1). Further, three believed that language arts and literacy was the subject that bound all others together, while five preservice teachers perceived it to be woven through all learning experiences. For example, Tom believed that both integrating the language process together and integration across the curriculum are critical:

> The most substantial new belief I have developed about language arts and literacy this year is the belief that combining strands is not only doable, but a must. I believe that language arts and literacy can be weaved (sic) into every different part of the curriculum. (FRP, p. 3)

All preservice teachers in this study were required to use laptops as a learning tool daily and in every class. When preservice teachers went on placements, the use of laptops depended on personal choice, but also on availability of the appropriate technology in the classrooms. The participants in this study believed that availability of technology access for students was important to the success of an effective language arts and literacy program. For example, Sandra believed that language arts and literacy programs could be enhanced through the use of technology: "Technology has also made ways to make reading and writing interesting and interactive for students, by use of Smart Board and Dragon. Technology should be used in order to make language arts fun and engaging for all students" (TR, p. 4).

The preservice teachers believed that a positive learning environment was necessary for learning. As Van noted, "It is important that teachers work hard to teach students how to be respectful to one another and foster a positive classroom environment" (TR, p. 1). Kim described a positive learning environment as one in which students felt free to speak their opinions without fear of ridicule or being put-down: "When teaching language arts and literacy I will need to enforce a positive learning environment where all students can share their

imaginative ideas without fear of being put down" (TR, p. 3).

Four preservice teachers identified the important role that parents and family can play in the literacy development of their children. Nancy believed that: "…it is crucial for parents to take an active role in their children's work and encourage and engage them in reading and writing activities at home" (TR, p. 4). Van connected literacies learned and used in everyday living to success with literacies used in school: "Home life plays a large role in the success of a student in language arts, because this subject is tied into so many aspects of everyday life" (TR, p. 1).

Content and instructional approaches in a language arts and literacy program. The preservice teachers identified several beliefs about the content and instructional approaches that should be incorporated into an effective language arts and literacy program. They believed that the program should include reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing; grammar and spelling; media/technology; independent reading; read alouds; scaffolding; differentiated instruction; and metacognitive thinking.

All preservice teachers identified one or more of the traditional elements of language arts such as reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and representing, as being important in language arts and literacy programs. It is important to note that, at no time, did any preservice teacher use the term 'balanced literacy' to describe their beliefs.

The preservice teachers identified viewing as connected to the media and technology. As such, Sherry believed that more attention should be given to viewing in language arts classes: "In today's society we are highly reliant on technology and media. In saying this I would like to see more emphasis put on elements such as like viewing and representing through the curriculum" (FRP, p. 4).

There was an overwhelming preponderance of comments about grammar and spelling

found in the data sources. With respect to the content of an effective language arts and literacy program, grammar and spelling appeared to be of particular importance. Seven preservice teachers indicated that grammar and spelling were necessary elements of the curriculum and, as Frank described, were "essential fundamentals that need to be explicitly taught and learned" (TR, p. 1).

Some preservice teachers indicated an awareness of the importance of media literacy. For example, Tom noted:

> I am very impressed with the inclusion of media literacy into the curriculum. In today's climate, media literacy is very important. The media is in every part of our lives. We now, more than ever, need students to be media literate and understand the difference between truth and opinion. (TR, p. 4)

Other preservice teachers noted that having a set time for students to participate in independent reading was important. For Meghan, independent reading "…ensures that students are reading at least once a day" (TR, p. 2). Others like Kerry noted that reading aloud to students was an important instructional strategy to use in the classroom: "I have begun to realize the endless opportunities for learning and educating that can come from story sharing" (TR, p.3).

Some preservice teachers believed that using a scaffolded approach to teaching and learning, beginning with the modeling of a strategy or skill, was the most effective way to teach language arts and literacy. Nat stated: "I also now believe that it is extremely important for teachers to model language/literacy skills to their students" (TR, p. 1). Further, some identified the need for differentiating instruction based on student need; Tom extended this idea to include the needs of the whole group as well: "We as teachers need to differentiate our methods of conveying information based upon each student's needs and the dynamics of each class" (TR, p. 1).

Five preservice teachers mentioned, but did not elaborate on other instructional

approaches included: the use of centres; the use of contemporary literature; and guided reading.

Beyond the instructional approaches mentioned above, preservice teachers gained some insights

about the role of metacognition in student learning. For example, Diana came to believe that

higher order thinking was necessary for success, not only in the language arts and literacy

program, but for success in everyday life:

> Students need to learn some higher-order concepts and skills in order to achieve a high level of language literacy. For instance, I believe that learning how to organize one's thoughts and ideas, learning to think critically and to develop analysis skills are vital to students' language literacy. (TR, p. 1)

The role of the teacher in a language arts and literacy program. The teacher's role in

teaching language arts and literacy took on many dimensions. According to participants,

preservice teachers should be life-long learners, enthusiastic, role models, and should build

teacher-student relationships.

Many preservice teachers identified their role as teacher as one that is constantly evolving

and changing as a result of ongoing learning. Rick regarded professional life-long learning to be

essential with growth opportunities available in a variety of places:

> I will never know all there is to know and I will never think that I have all the resources there are to have. Learning about literacy is an ongoing process that will continue through my education, my colleagues [sic] expertise, and workshops will keep me up to date on literacy and its implementation into my classroom. (TR, p. 5)

Zach believed that it was his responsibility to keep informed of the kinds of literacy activities

students were engaged in outside of school:

> Educators have an obligation to ensure that they are fully connected to the world of literacy that these same students belong to. Educators should be reading the same novels, keeping up with the various forms of media literacy; whether it is the latest television shows students are watching, or the video games and computer software they are familiar with. (TR, p. 1)

Some preservice teachers recognized that the manner in which they approached teaching

language arts and literacy would have an effect on how students approached their literacy learning. Peter noted that "enthusiasm for learning is a great partner for quality education. Enthusiasm for learning must be present in both teacher and student, or the quality, indeed the learning itself, will stagnate and cease to grow" (TR, p. 1).

Almost all the participants believed they were role models who would, in the future, have the power to influence literacy learning on the part of their students through their own actions. To illustrate, a common practice would be for preservice teachers to show their students their love of reading through example. Van noted that "I believe that when students are learning they need to see role models and so I will show my students my love of reading though example and encourage them to read also" (TR, p. 1). Rick also observed that preservice teachers' success rested largely in their ability to make connections with their students–to get to know them on a personal level including "what they like, what they dislike; what their interests are, their hobbies…"; and teachers need to use this "knowledge as a tool to teach them the skills they need to know" (TR, p. 1).

Perceptions of How Beliefs Changed Throughout the Course of the

Teacher Education Program

Participants experienced many changes in their beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. These included changes to philosophy of teaching and learning; pedagogy; perceptions of students; and perceptions of self. Some preservice teachers also commented on the degree of change they experienced.

Philosophy of Teaching and Learning

Preservice teachers' philosophy of teaching and learning underwent a variety of changes. For some, teaching language arts and literacy changed from easy to hard; boring to engaging;

having a dislike for to liking literacy teaching; unimportant to important; and an understanding that literacy is not an isolated subject but an integrated one. For others, changes in how language arts and literacy should be taught emerged.

Upon completion of their teacher education program and practicum placement experiences, four preservice teachers recognized that teaching language arts and literacy was more difficult than they had expected. In other words, they initially believed that it would be easy to teach language arts and literacy, but discovered that it was in fact, quite difficult. For example, Andrea noted that: "The most important change in my beliefs is that I now realize how difficult it is to teach language arts well" (FRP, p. 1). Similarly, some of Van's beliefs about teaching and learning changed quickly upon entry into the program. He stated: "My belief that good language arts skills could be instilled in students easily was changed after one week in the classroom" (FRP, p.1).

Nine preservice teachers initially believed that language arts and literacy was boring but came to believe that it could be engaging. Anthony described his own personal experiences as a student and noted that he expected language arts and literacy to be boring. However, once he had had some practicum experience and the opportunity to observe language arts and literacy programs in action, he began to change his views:

> I used to believe that language arts and literacy were boring and only consisted of grammar and writing. I was always bored and hated language class, but my views have changed since my first practicum. I now believe that language arts can be fun, unique, and enjoyable. (FRP, p. 2)

Seven preservice teachers identified a shift in thinking about language arts and literacy as something they disliked to something that they came to like. Again, preservice teachers based their beliefs on prior knowledge and experience as students. When preservice teachers had opportunities to examine these beliefs in light of experiences as a teacher, their beliefs

sometimes changed. This was the case with Meg, who experienced a change in her beliefs about language arts and literacy as a subject that needed to be learned as a student and a subject that needed to be taught:

> For most, studying language can be very intimidating. I myself was one of these individuals who hated writing and was not a big fan of reading either. I have found out that through my experiences in the Bachelor of Education program and University that it does not have to be this way. (FRP, p. 2)

Similarly, preservice teachers noted that they developed of a sense of confidence over time. Thirteen preservice teachers identified changes in their levels of confidence with teaching language arts and literacy. For three preservice teachers, a second term in the university classroom and several further weeks in practicum allowed them to become more comfortable with teaching language arts and literacy. For Maddie, this sense of increased confidence came from of a greater understanding of what it meant to teach language arts and literacy:

> At first I was hesitant about having to teach language arts because when I was in high school, or grade school, language arts class consisted of being assigned a specific book to read and answering questions throughout the book or writing reports. I always enjoyed reading; however, it was not something I liked in school. Now I feel that I have the tools and resources necessary to ensure that my students will enjoy language arts and that it won't simply be about writing book reports or answering questions. (FRP, p. 3)

Nine preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with the belief that language arts and literacy was not necessarily important. As they gained experience in the program, some began to recognize how important language arts and literacy really are. For Frank, one indicator of the importance of language arts and literacy was the amount of time the curricular area is given in the classroom. He noted that "There are more classes in language arts each week than there were of any other subject with the exception of math. I don't remember there being such a focus on language arts when I was a student" (FRP, p. 2).

In four cases, preservice teachers' beliefs about language arts and literacy as being easy

to integrate across the curriculum also changed. Initially, some believed that language arts and literacy was a subject to be taught in isolation. As experience in the teacher education program grew, preservice teachers were able to identify the ease with which language arts and literacy topics might be woven throughout the curriculum. Anthony explained his change in thinking when he said: "My beliefs have changed in the sense that it [language arts] can be incorporated into other subjects quite easily, allowing students to learn new literacy techniques while doing math and science experiments" (FRP, p. 2).

Two preservice teachers were surprised that the way students were expected to learn had changed since they were students. For example, Frank noted that "Contrary to the way language arts was taught when I was a student, memorization is not common practice in language arts instruction anymore" (FRP, p. 3).

Pedagogy

Participants in this study experienced changes to their beliefs about the pedagogy of language arts and literacy instruction. Among these changes was a new perception of language arts and literacy. They discarded their former rigid instructional strategies, and adopted contemporary ideas, such as using read alouds across all grades.

Four preservice teachers entered the teacher education program believing that the curriculum was rigid and that there was only one way to teach it. After some time in the program, Sandra discovered that the manner in which teachers taught the curriculum was in fact quite flexible. She was comforted in knowing that she could tailor the curriculum to meet her own teaching style and, at the same time, the needs of her students:

> Another belief that has totally changed is that of the curriculum. I had always thought teachers had to stick directly to the guideline and follow it to a T. However, in taking this course, I have come to find out that I have leeway in choices as to what I can have my students do in regards to activities involving the curriculum in my language arts

classroom. As long as I'm following the outcomes and requirements, I can teach it in a way that is suitable not only for me, but for my students as well. (FRP, p. 3)

In keeping with Sandra's changing beliefs, some preservice teachers were surprised that the language arts curriculum consisted of more than textbooks, grammar, spelling, reading, and writing. Based on his in-class and practicum placement experiences, Frank described the shift in his philosophy regarding spelling and grammar:

> … very little focus on spelling grammar and writing conventions is [used in] school today. Also, learning lists of words (dictations and/or spelling bees), memorizing definitions and learning to expand one's vocabulary are not the focus of learning language that they used to be…this is a huge philosophical change, because when I was a student it seemed like that was a big focus of teaching and learning language arts and literacy. (FRP, p. 3)

Similarly, Rick had to challenge his own notions of what he previously considered to be staples of language arts and literacy curriculum: "I never looked at literacy and language arts as being anything more than spelling, grammar and writing. I was certainly mistaken" (FRP, p. 3).

Jackson was surprised at the "breadth of literacy" and the "amount of time dedicated to teaching strategies" (FRP, p. 1). Maddie acknowledged that her traditional view of language arts and literacy had expanded:

> …I was instantly broken of the belief that literacy only included reading and writing. I now know it also includes being knowledgeable about the conventions and language of other ways of communication, such as computers and websites, tv, billboards, instruction manuals, scientific and math-related concepts.

Similarly, Meg also realized that the contemporary definition of language arts and literacy included more than what she, herself, had experienced as a student:

> I was a little taken aback that the curriculum also has expectations for media literacy. During my time in elementary school the main focus was on spelling, independent reading and writing narratives. Today, these are only a few minor aspects of the language arts and literacy program. (FRP, p. 1)

Four preservice teachers entered the program believing that read alouds, as an

instructional strategy, should be restricted to early primary grades. Meghan indicated that,

through her experiences in the teacher education program, she began to see value in using

literature in literacy teaching:

> I have also seen my opinion change on reading picture books to students past grade 4. I had felt that once students reached the grade 5 level, or especially by grade 8, it was inappropriate to read them picture books. However, I no longer feel that way since beginning curriculum studies at N. Seeing a read aloud modeled by using a picture book in class, and using it in partners in education, as well, I can see how it can be used in an appropriate way for older grade levels. It can be used appropriately through questions that are asked for them to consider or respond to. I now believe that it is a very good idea to use and something I plan to use when I have a class. (FRP, p. 2)

Perceptions of Students

Preservice teachers entered their teacher education programs with certain perceptions

about students that evolved based on university classroom experiences and field experiences.

Preservice teachers noted changes in their beliefs about students' abilities, background, and

learning styles.

Four preservice teachers experienced changes in their beliefs about students' abilities.

Two preservice teachers were, at times, surprised at the varying levels of student achievement

within a class; initially they believed that all students were at the same level academically. These

beliefs changed quickly after their practicum placements. For example, Kara noted that

"assuming that students were all roughly at the same level is far from the truth" (FRP, p. 4).

As preservice teachers learned more about multiple intelligences and learning styles, their

beliefs about the ways in which students become literate learners changed. For example, Maddie

originally thought that students all learned in the same way. She has come to reconsider this

thinking:

> I have somewhat revised my thinking on this subject, after being taught in teachers college that not only do people have multiple intelligences, but they can also use those

intelligences to learn any given subject more easily… (FRP, p. 3)

Degree of Change

In addition to describing the ways in which beliefs changed, preservice teachers also described to what degree they perceived their beliefs had changed over the course of the year. Four preservice teachers believed that their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy had not changed at all or very little. As Mark noted "*My beliefs about language arts teaching and learning have not altered very much*" (FRP, p. 1). In contrast, seventeen preservice teachers perceived that their beliefs had changed over the course of the year. Of these seventeen, seven perceived their beliefs to have changed significantly or drastically. Maggie noted "My beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy have drastically changed because of my recent experiences" (FRP, p. 1).

The findings also demonstrated some inconsistencies between preservice teachers' perceived degree of change and actual changes as represented in comments about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Four examples emerged in the data: Kim, Van, Jack, and Rick perceived their beliefs to have remained consistent, and yet they provided examples of significant changes to their beliefs. For example, Kim stated:

> Another new belief that I have about teaching and learning language arts and literacy is the way that the language arts material is presented to the students. In more traditional methods of teaching, a teacher may stand at the front of the classroom and lecture to the students; this does not involve students in their own learning. I believe that this more traditional method of teaching should be minimized in the teaching of language arts and literacy and that learning language arts should take a more student centered approach. (FRP, p. 2)

Kim's understanding of effective methods of teaching language arts and literacy included the student in constructing meaning (Vygotsky, 1978), an approach that is markedly different from the traditional experiences she had as a learner. Further, Kim's experience represents a

significant change in the quality of her beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.

Van noted that "…much of my thoughts about teaching and learning Language Arts and Literacy have remained the same" (FRP, p. 1). In contrast to this statement, Van went on to describe two significant changes to her beliefs: "I believe that this new information about gendered learning in Language Arts and Literacy will be highly beneficial in my future teaching career" and "another new belief…is the importance of being aware of the different styles of learners in a classroom and catering the Language Arts and Literacy program to suit them" (FRP, p. 2). Understanding of either or both of these concepts represents significant learning and therefore significant changes to Van's belief system.

Jack noted that "my fundamental beliefs about teaching Language Arts and Literacy have remained unchanged" (FRP, p. 1). Later, in the same document, Jack noted that "since beginning the teacher education program this past September, my beliefs about teaching have changed through my experiences both in and out of the classroom" (FRP, p. 4).

Rick explicitly stated that he perceived his beliefs had not changed over the course of the year and then implicitly described events through which one can infer ways in which his beliefs changed. For example, "Since last Christmas my beliefs about teaching and learning language arts have not really changed" (FRP, p. 1). Later he noted: "I have learned that being a student (learning how to be literate) and being a teacher (trying to teach literacy) are two completely different concepts" (FRP, p. 3). Although only one change is described, it does represent a significant change and here, the quality of the change as opposed to the quantity, is significant.

Influences on Preservice Teachers' Beliefs

Preservice teachers described several influences on their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. These influences included family, preschool experiences,

school experiences, the teacher education program, and past personal experiences.

Family

Participants identified grandparents, parents, and siblings as having contributed to their literacy development, which, in turn, influenced their beliefs about teaching and learning. Grandparents played a prominent role in the early literacy development of nine preservice teachers. Tom stated:

> My grandmother, who I called Nanny, also supported my literacy. She was from England and she would give me Rupert books to read with her. They were a bit above my reading level, but that never seemed to bother me. We would sit in the rocking chair and when I knew what a word was I would scream it out. We also sang old English nursery rhymes together. (PHA, p. 3)

In some cases, grandparents shared oral traditions, read bedtime stories, sang songs, baked, played games, and made crafts.

Parents also played a significant role in the literacy development of preservice teachers. In fact, thirty-six respondents identified parents as being significant contributors. Kerry stated:

> Throughout my adventures in literacy, my mother was a very influential role model. My mom is a lifelong student learner and an educator. She has gone to post secondary schooling for eleven years. I can remember books being around all the time when she was studying to be a paramedic, nurse and then completing her Masters to be a professor. My mother always taught me to value books and literature and she provided many opportunities for me to expand my learning. (PHA, p. 3)

For some, parents acted as role models by reading often and ensuring that there was a wide range of reading materials available for all members of the family. In other cases, parents read regularly to their children–almost all respondents had fond memories of this. As Meg remembered: "My parents fostered my love for books and reading with nightly bedtime stories and encouraged me to tell my own stories" (PHA, p. 3). As in Tony's case, immigrant children sometimes helped their own parents to learn to read: "…but the most memorable aspect I remember about reading is being able to sit down with my mother and to help her read" (PHA, p.

1). In other cases, such as Zach's, preservice teachers were parents themselves who modelled the same behaviours that they experienced as youngsters.

Half of the participants observed that siblings played an important role in their literacy development. Meg remembered that

> My older sister also greatly contributed to the literary person I am today by constantly engaging me in activities that strengthened my speaking, listening, viewing and representing skills. Most of our afternoons as children were spent role playing with themes such as "school" (I was always the student) and she would bring home her library books and share them with me, teaching me what she had learned that day in school. I would follow the same practice with my younger sister when I began school. (PHA, p. 1)

In three cases, older brothers and sisters taught what they learned at school to their younger siblings; while in five cases they provided the younger children a desire and motivation to learn what they were learning. Siblings role-played together, often playing school. They put on puppet shows and went to the public library together.

Eight preservice teachers described going to the public library with their mothers and/or siblings on a regular basis. Jon would "tag along with my older sisters, or sometimes my mother, to the local library and pick out as many books as I could carry home" (PHA, p. 2). Kerry described her trips to the library with her mother having influenced her attitude toward reading as a youngster as well as her current attitude toward the importance of reading in the classroom:

> My mother always taught me to value books and literature and she provided many opportunities for me to expand my learning. When she would go to the library I would always go with her and was given plenty of time to take out books that I chose....What my mother taught me through readings and example setting will last with me forever. I feel that it is an essential part of the learning process to involve the students [sic] home life into the literacy teachings. (PHA, p. 1)

Preschool Experiences

The preschool experiences describe preservice teachers' experiences as young children, beginning from the time prior to starting school until they entered elementary school. In some

cases, these beliefs emerged simultaneously while they were of elementary school age, but through connections at home. The preschool experiences that preservice teachers believed to have influenced their current beliefs about teaching and learning include: oral traditions, drama, television, reading, and positive early experiences. It is important to note that not all of these influences were positive and not all experiences contributed to beliefs about teaching in a positive way.

Six preservice teachers believed that the oral traditions passed down to them by family members, usually parents or grandparents, had some influence on who they were as literacy learners. In addition, dramatizing in various ways (playing house, storekeeper or school) was significant to the overall literacy growth of five preservice teachers. Frank remembered that

> We had a dress-up box filled with lots of different costumes and props which both my brother and I loved to utilize. Sometimes my brother and I would dress-up and play make-believe on our own, other times we would include other children who came to our house. Thus, both my brother and I developed a real fondness for using our imaginations (representing) from very early on, and it only grew with time and experience. (PHA, p. 2)

Television was also perceived as playing a significant role in the literacy development of five preservice teachers. Of these five, all but one preservice teacher indicated that with respect to television, they were only allowed to watch educational programming and because of this they felt that television contributed in a positive way to their literacy development.

Access to reading materials and availability of role models (usually parents) were cited as being important to one's literacy development. Almost half of the preservice teachers in this study described themselves as avid readers as youngsters. Maggie noted that: "I would also read a lot of Goosebumps books by myself and with friends" (PHA, p. 2). Conversely, Rick described a dislike for reading as a youngster: "This [reading] has also been the case since I was very young; I would choose participating in any activity over reading a book or writing my thoughts

down" (PHA, p. 4).

Almost half of the preservice teachers described their early forays into literacy learning as being positive. Kim believed that her early positive experiences contributed to her current beliefs about the important of literacy in the classroom:

> My positive literary experiences reaffirm my belief that children need to gain an appreciation for learning at an early age. I would like to share the joys of reading with my future classroom by providing them with the support that I myself received. (PHA, p. 4)

School Experiences

Preservice teachers identified elementary and secondary school experiences as having influenced their beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. These school experiences related to writing, reading, as well as positive and negative influences.

Four preservice teachers described their experiences with writing in school as positive. Kim remembered having a pen pal and how she looked forward to both sending and receiving letters. She also noted how this early experience with literacy and writing helped shape who she hoped to be as an educator:

> As far as writing was concerned, I would always look forward to both receiving and composing letters from one of my pen-pals...as a literary educator I would provide my students with opportunities to enhance their communication skills through writing. For example, I would incorporate a pen-pal program into language arts and literacy. (PHA, p. 3)

Kerry also had positive writing experiences in elementary school. She recalled having a story published in the newspaper:

> It [story] was only two lines long and I spelled the word "found" as "fawd," but they published my story any way. I was so proud of my story being in the paper. I still hold in reserve a copy of it in my scrapbook and it makes me happy that they left our spelling mistakes and published our stories exactly the way we wanted them. (PHA, p. 2)

Almost half of the participants stated that they enjoyed reading throughout their elementary education. Jon believed that these school experiences contributed to his beliefs about

teaching literacy:

> Reading and writing helped me through a time when I was trying to figure myself out, as a child, and even as an adult. It helped me see that not all children were the same and that being different must have been special because all the good books were full of odd characters. If nothing else, that would be the message I would most want to get through to kids; that being different is what makes you book-worthy. As a future literacy educator, I can only cross my fingers and hope that my own love for reading will be picked up by my own students and that it will shine through in my lesson plans as well as teaching strategies. (PHA, p. 5)

Six preservice teachers believed their teachers had a positive effect on their literacy development. Of these preservice teachers, two believed that these positive experiences influenced their current beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy:

- One of the most important things I would want my students to know is the fact that I came into school not knowing the language and through the help of my wonderful teachers and the encouragement and commitment I received throughout my elementary school career. I have come this far in my life and if I can do it, then anyone can as well. (Tom, PHA, p. 4)
- I was very lucky to have such a wonderful teacher that embraced my inability to communicate and helped shape me into the literate individual I am today. (Tony, PHA, p. 3)

In addition to positive experiences with teachers, eleven preservice teachers reflected on their elementary school experiences as being positive overall. Theresa noted that, "In elementary school, I didn't have difficulties with language arts and literacy and I would consider my learning experiences as quite positive" (PHA, p. 2).

There were four preservice teachers who had had a negative experience with a teacher. Kim explained that

> Often in elementary school, my teacher would ask students to read aloud a paragraph or two from a story in front of the entire class. My teacher would then continue around the classroom so that everyone had a turn reading aloud. I would often dread having to read to the whole classroom and classroom reading time became a very negative experience with regards to speaking. This negative experience will influence me as a literary educator. Instead of having each individual read aloud to the entire class I would break up the classroom into smaller groups. It is less intimidating for students to read aloud in groups of five than it is for students to read aloud to a classroom of thirty. (PHA, p. 2)

Despite having had negative experiences, preservice teachers were often able to use them in a positive way. In other words, they used their negative experiences to inform their teaching with respect to practices they would or would not use in their own classrooms. Terry stated:

> My feelings towards literacy learning in intermediate school are mostly negative. I did not enjoy required novels and often would fall behind in readings because the material was not interesting to me. In addition, it was difficult to do well in book reports because I never finished the reading…. My future as a literacy teacher is shaped by my experiences. I believe it is important for students' to pick things they are interested in. This I learned from a young age, picking books for my grandpa or practicing my sister's homework with her. I believe that teachers need to have more creative ways of teaching literacy, because my experience was boring. (PHA, pp. 2-3)

Teacher Education Program

Preservice teachers perceived that their beliefs were influenced by a number of factors stemming from their teacher education programs: the Bachelor of Education program; the Language Arts and Literacy course; practicum placements; peers; associate teachers and other classroom teachers; the Partners in Education program; and reflection.

Four preservice teachers identified the teacher education program as having a direct influence on their beliefs about teaching. In particular, Hetta noted that collaboration with peers was a valuable tool for hearing about others' perspectives, which, in turn, allowed her to make transformations in her own understandings about being a teacher:

> These changes have come about as a direct result of the Nipissing Education program that uses collaborative work in the classroom and for many of the evaluation assignments. I have found I appreciate the ideas that others bring and I have grown as a teacher, student and a person. (FRP, p. 3)

Six preservice teachers indicated that the course contributed to changes in beliefs about what constituted a language arts and literacy program, as well as appropriate approaches and strategies that should be used in junior/intermediate classrooms. For example, Nancy was able to make personal connections while experiencing a read aloud–an instructional strategy useful for

all age levels, but one that is typically viewed by preservice teachers as limited to primary-aged students:

> In one of my first language arts classes in the Bachelor of Education program, my language arts professor read aloud to the class. Not having been read aloud to in many, many, years, I was shocked and confused. As I listened however, I began to relax. I felt intrigued with the book and really enjoyed the experience. After reading, my professor said, "almost all kids like to be read to" and at that point, having liked it the age of twenty-one, I couldn't agree more. (TR, p. 2)

In three other cases, preservice teachers identified class discussions that disrupted the commonplace, allowing them to view situations from multiple perspectives as having been important. Through this kind of critical thinking and dialogue David was able to consider the value and validity of his currently held beliefs:

> The experiences that have influenced changes in my beliefs about language arts teaching and learning have been due to all of the in class discussions. These discussions have helped to broaden my views on the subject and various learning/teaching techniques that follow it. (TR, p. 1)

Two preservice teachers identified their peers in the education program as having influenced their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Terry indicated that observing class presentations and various group work assignments were important.

Five preservice teachers believed that practicum placements provided them with opportunities that contributed to their understanding and knowledge of teaching language arts and literacy. Jon believed that the opportunity to teach strategies and approaches modeled in the preservice teacher Language Arts and Literacy course was beneficial: "During my practicum, I was able to use many of the strategies I learned in class with my own grade 6's and the outcome, I found, was very successful" (TR, p. 2).

In addition to trying approaches in the field that they had learned in the university classroom, preservice teachers also had opportunities to develop beliefs or reaffirm beliefs while

on practicum placements. Preservice teachers looked to their students, the responses that those

students had to the lessons they taught or the resources they used, to help them make sense of

what to keep and what to discard (in terms of developing a teaching repertoire). Preservice

teachers also looked to the practices of their associate teachers and other teachers to help them

understand the value of certain strategies and to make connections between theories taught at the

faculty and practices that students actually engaged in. Terry summed up this influence by

stating:

> The experiences I have had in the classroom placement have influenced my beliefs in
> language and literacy. As mentioned, I have read aloud to students in a variety of
> subjects, which has influenced me to believe that children love to be read to. During
> placement, I taught a literacy lesson on making connections and used the instructional
> approach [read aloud]. (TR, p. 2)

Ten preservice teachers identified the importance of associate teachers in terms of the

knowledge and experience they possessed. Van said: "Thanks to my associate teacher I was able

to get my hands on a great resource, but without his guidance I was lost" (TR, p. 4). Conversely,

two preservice teachers indicated that associate teachers did not provide them with the kinds of

models that they had expected. In both cases, theory taught at the faculty was at odds with the

practices observed in the classroom. Maggie explained:

> I also believe that my associate teacher during this semester's placement has not been the
> greatest literacy model. Her lessons were dry and similar to each other. The students had
> one textbook that was related to spelling, another to grammar and a last one for reading.
> That was the extent of her language resources. (TR, p. 2)

In three cases, other classroom teachers within the placement school provided much

needed support which contributed to an increased self-confidence on the part of the preservice

teacher. Jon noted:

> Once I realized how much support and resources there was in my placement school I
> began to worry less about not being able to give the students a good education. My
> associate teacher and other junior teachers in the school were so helpful and encouraging

of my teaching and my abilities. (TR, p. 3)

One of the aims of the Partners in Education program was to ensure that each preservice teacher had an opportunity to plan and implement language and literacy-based lessons. This goal seemed important since, in some cases, junior/intermediate preservice teachers did not have a practicum placement in which they were required to teach any language arts lessons. Although the university attempts to ensure that all students have both junior and intermediate placements, there were some who had only junior or only intermediate. Similarly, the university also recommends that associate teachers provide preservice teachers with a balanced teaching load, but the program cannot require associates to do so. As a result, preservice teachers were obligated to teach what was asked of them and, sometimes, language arts was not an option. Three preservice teachers indicated that, for these reasons, the Partners in Education program served them well and contributed to changes in beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. Jackson observed: "The Partners in Ed [Education] activities also contributed to my changes about language arts teaching" (TR, p. 2).

Preservice teachers had several opportunities to engage in reflective practice as part of coursework and placement requirements. Van believed that the process of reflecting was an important part of the process of becoming a teacher: "Another influence has been reflecting. As much as I am tired of reflecting, it is one of the best tools to learn" (FRP, p. 3).

Preservice Teachers' Concerns about Teaching Language Arts and Literacy

Preservice teachers identified a number of concerns about teaching language arts and literacy related to planning, assessment, resources, ability to teach language arts and literacy, and students. Although there were data to support this theme, I debated whether or not to include the information in the findings and interpretation because at first, it did not appear to connected to

the research questions. After much consideration, I realized that this theme was extremely valuable to the study. First, it was preservice teacher beliefs that led to the disconnect between what they *thought* should happen in a classroom versus what they were actually experiencing that led to the development of 'concerns'. Second, I realized that the concerns preservice teachers had were likely the most vulnerable of all preservice teachers' beliefs to change. Since preservice teachers identified and named what they were experiencing as being problematic, they were already engaged in the second stage of Woods' (1996) change cycle.

Planning

The participants articulated concerns about planning for an effective language arts and literacy program: the broad nature of the subject; planning engaging lessons; and integration of language arts and literacy into other subjects.

With respect to planning, preservice teachers reported concerns about the broad nature of the subject. For example, Meghan stated:

> I feel that the curriculum is too broad, and therefore becomes left too much up to the teacher to decide what is taught and how; it is all up to interpretation. The curriculum for other subjects, while can also be interpretive at times, it has somewhat more of a set of definition for what is to be taught and learned, than in the language arts curriculum... There are so many aspects of it [language arts and literacy] to teach and so many ways of getting it across. Which is the better way? How will the children understand it best? (PHA, p. 6)

Preservice teachers experienced some problems with conceptualizing concepts and pedagogy in other subject areas and were sometimes tempted to compare language arts teaching and learning with other subjects, such as math or science, for example. In doing so, language arts seemed even more vague and more difficult to teach. Maggie noted:

> ...when I taught math, there was only one way of teaching a concept. This is a bar graph that is how you do it. It is concrete and easy to get across. I had no problem teaching math. In science, it is all facts and remembering them, understanding what happens when and how. It is simple and to the point. However, language arts and literacy there are

'making connections', 'synthesizing', 'determining important ideas', 'repairing comprehension', 'inferring', 'and 'visualizing' among others. There are oral, writing and reading skills and interpreting media. There is just so much to think of when I am preparing a lesson. (FRP, p. 4)

Other concerns about planning included developing engaging lessons that would keep students motivated. For example, Nat indicated that "Some of my concerns would be that I wouldn't be able to engage the class like I wanted to" (FRP p. 3), while Kim was concerned that "making language arts engaging and interesting to some students may pose a challenge" (TR, p. 3).

Preservice teachers expressed some concerns with respect to integrating language arts into other subjects. As mentioned earlier, preservice teachers recognized that language arts was woven throughout the subjects and should be integrated. Without prior experience, except practicum placements, however, preservice teachers had limited experience to inform how exactly that could be done and the prospect of integration was of concern to them: "I am concerned I will not be able to incorporate language arts and literacy into other subjects that I will be teaching, and unintentionally put it aside" (Tina, FRP, p. 3).

Assessment

Preservice teachers voiced a number of concerns about assessment both in terms of assessment tools as well as the evaluation of students. The concerns that preservice teachers expressed related to standardized testing, objectivity, and evaluation tools.

With respect to standardized testing, five preservice teachers were concerned about the volume of testing that students participated in. Zack explained:

> Another thing which surprised me was the amount of testing that educators are responsible for. My AT found it difficult to keep up with the demands of the Ministry to test her grade 8 students, and it seems that while I was on placement a fair share of allocated literacy time was spent on testing alone. (TR, p. 4)

With respect to evaluation, several preservice teachers were concerned with their lack of understanding of effective and accurate evaluation methods. Mac was worried that he wouldn't be objective when evaluating student work:

> There are so many ways of critiquing a piece of work by a student. My interpretation of a student's reflection may be different than another teacher's interpretation, such as read alouds. If I do not think a student's reading is up to the level I want it to be, who says another teacher can disagree with me and say that it is? I am basing these students' oral communication on my own communication skills, which may not be good in other teachers' eyes. Thus, I find it difficult to put a grade on a child's views and thoughts about literacy. (FRP, p. 3)

Some participants expressed concerns that their lack of understanding would have adverse effects on their students. For example, Mac stated:

> I feel like assessment will be extremely difficult; distinguishing the difference between a level 3 and a level 4 and justifying why I think this is the case. Unlike mathematics, where the answers are typically right or wrong, language arts can be subjective depending on the teacher, the grade, the background of the student, and the specific criteria of the assignment. This is a huge barrier for me because I would never want to disadvantage a student because of my wrong or biased opinion of their essays, opinion pieces, short stories, etc. (FRP, p. 4)

Preservice teachers such as Tom also indicated that they "would like to learn about formative and summative assessment [because] I do not understand the finer details of language assessment" (FRP, p. 4). For others, assessing students was hard especially using rubrics effectively: "Assessment has been hard for me. I have observed and learned very quickly that it is hard to create rubrics that meet everyone's needs" (Kerry, FRP, p. 3).

Resources

Preservice teachers identified several kinds of resources that were essential to effective teaching and learning in Language Arts and Literacy. They noticed that the lack of these resources could have a detrimental effect on their ability to teach and on a student's ability to learn. Resources that preservice teachers were concerned about included materials and time.

Access to adequate and appropriate materials was a primary concern to thirteen preservice teachers. Preservice teachers indicated that they needed further experience in determining what materials would be appropriate for classroom use. In other cases, preservice teachers expressed frustration with the demands of the curriculum, Ministry expectations, and the instructional resources that were required but not available. This attitude is exemplified in Maddie's statement:

> How would you help a class be computer literate, for example, if they have very rare access to computers, or associated technology? How would you effectively teach a novel to students, if you cannot get a whole class set of novels? How will you reach all the students with learning difficulties if there is a 35:1 student teacher ratio, with few or no EA's [educational assistants], TA's [teacher assistants] or other help? Perhaps the photocopier is broken, and students have limited access to important handouts and worksheets. (TR, p. 3)

About half of the participants were acutely aware of time as an issue in teaching language arts and literacy. Preservice teachers indicated that they required further experience with time management: knowing how to plan within allotted time frameworks on a daily basis, but also on a unit basis. Further, several preservice teachers lamented that there wasn't enough time in the schedule to meet all of the curriculum demands. Jon described these concerns in the following statement:

> I believe that time management will be a large barrier to teaching language. Sometimes there is just not enough time to fully immerse your students into that great activity you had planned out for the day, and sometimes there is just not enough time to find alternative strategies and methods while also keeping things current. (TR, p. 4)

Perceptions of Ability to Teach Language Arts and Literacy

One big idea that emerged out of the term reports was that the participants really wanted to be great teachers; they wanted to have the knowledge and skills necessary for being effective and engaging teachers. The reports also clearly indicated that many teachers perceived that their own personal inadequacies would interfere with their ability to achieve such goals. Three related

concerns arose: a concern about preservice teachers' ability to teach language arts and literacy in general; preservice teachers' skills and knowledge of spelling and grammar; and preservice teachers' ability to meet the needs of a diverse population of students.

One-third of the participants had concerns about their personal struggles with language arts and literacy. In most cases, these concerns stemmed from their feelings of inadequacy or lack of interest in the subject as students themselves. For example, Kara noted "I am a student of music who has always struggled with the language process" (PHA, p. 3), while Nancy admitted: "I was never a strong reader or speller, and dislike reading or writing in front of people to this day" (PHA, p. 6). Participants' perceptions of preparedness extended to include beliefs about their ability to teach language arts and literacy. Lia was concerned that, "because literacy is becoming so prominent in the school system it is very intimidating for me. I am so worried that I will not be able to teach literacy and the language arts effectively" (TR, p. 5).

Preservice teachers' feelings of inadequacy were most visible with respect to spelling and grammar usage. For example, Van stated:

> Another area of Language Arts that I worry about is writing. This area frightens me because I have never been the best writer and my spelling skills are not strong … I did not learn phonics when I was in school and feel that this is an area of language arts that I have never been great at. (PHA, p. 6)

Further, some preservice teachers worried that their lack of skill in grammar and spelling would have a detrimental effect on their ability to teach such skills effectively to their own students. Anthony lamented:

> Grammar is one of my phobias. Apparently I have no problem talking or writing properly, but when asked to isolate adjectives, adverbs, and so on, I become completely lost. How can I teach something to students that I don't completely understand myself? (PHA, p. 4)

Students

Preservice teachers also expressed concerns about patterns involving students they observed while on placements. Some of these concerns included ability, interest, level of motivation, background, and technology. Although student ability was described in the Beliefs theme, it seemed important to address here as well since these findings describe preservice teachers' concerns about students' ability.

In general, it seems that preservice teachers were surprised at the degree to which students varied in their levels of ability as well as the amount of help students needed to complete tasks. Nancy expressed her concerns:

> The amount of help that students needed in class, particularly while writing, surprised me. I needed to prompt a lot in order for them to write even one paragraph. We tried journals, word walls, free writes and many other strategies to get them ideas but they still struggled. (TR, p. 4)

Along with confusion about students who were seemingly able to complete tasks, but chose not to, came a related concern: students who were seemingly unable to complete grade level tasks, but were promoted to the next grades. Nancy questioned this practice of continuous promotion:

> [students who]…never understand the basics themselves; yet, they are placed higher and higher in the educational system, with the inability to read and write at the expected level…in today's classrooms students are pushed through the education system, whether they understand the course material or not. It is almost impossible to fail. Therefore, many students who do not obtain the requirements in something as important as language arts and literacy are moved onward in the educational system, to fall further and further behind. (TR, p. 4)

As preservice teachers progressed through the teacher education program, they developed an understanding of complex characteristics of students as literacy learners and how these characteristics shape the ways in which they address the needs of individual students in their roles as literacy learners. They came to understand that children have multiple learning styles:

they learn at different paces, in different ways, using different resources and different approaches. Mark, for example, realized that "…not all students learn at the same level and in the same way…there is a great deal of differentiation among students" (TR, p. 2). Similarly, Maddie explained:

> This brings me to my former belief that most students learn best from a single teaching style. I have somewhat revised my thinking on this subject, after being taught in teacher's college and on placement, that not only do people have multiple intelligences, but they also can use those intelligences to learn any given subject more easily if the subject is taught in a way that allows them to use those intelligences. (TR, p. 2)

The lack of appropriate and effective learning strategies used by students was noted as a potential barrier to teaching. Bonnie believed that "many students in the Ontario school boards have not developed good learning strategies" (TR, p. 1). However, Bonnie was able to consider her role in this lack of knowledge and took on some responsibility for student improvement by noting that "…it is up to the teacher to help students to become better learners" (TR, p. 1).

The term "learned helplessness" was used in several reports to describe students' lack of motivation toward learning language arts and literacy. These participants used the term to articulate their concerns about the lack of motivation to learn and participate. Bonnie noted:

> Many students have developed in one form or another, a sense of learned helplessness. If they struggled with literacy in previous grades, they just assume they will not be able to understand in the present grade what is being taught so no effort is being put into the material. (TR p. 3)

Preservice teachers identified several elements of student backgrounds (country of origin, culture, first language, socioeconomic status, and home environment) that they felt they needed to be aware of as teachers. Although preservice teachers appeared to embrace these differences, they did express some concerns about the inherent challenges each presented. Maddie encapsulated many of these concerns:

> Students themselves can also represent barriers to effective teaching, although it is likely

not intentional. They all come into the classroom from different backgrounds. Some of them may have been encouraged to read, while others discouraged from it. They may have different first languages, different cultural contexts through which to understand things, VERY different interests, and they will have varying degrees of parental support. Beyond that, they have different learning styles, strengths and weaknesses, different school histories where things are taught in a different order or style, and they may be at incredibly different levels of their literacy development. They could be behavioural problems which interrupt the flow of the lessons for the entire class as well as distracting themselves. Getting a new class is like playing roulette-each year is random. (TR, p. 4)

Some preservice teachers were concerned about students' reliance on computers for word processing functions. Some, such as Tina, asserted that students relied too heavily on the spell check feature, and that this reliance was partly the reason for rampant spelling mistakes.

The findings described above relate specifically to Phase One of the study. The themes that emerged in this segment of the findings relate to entering and exiting beliefs. In addition, the findings described influences on preservice teachers' beliefs, perceptions of changes, as well as concerns preservice teachers held about teaching language arts and literacy. The following section interprets phase one findings.

Interpretation

The discussion below addresses, firstly preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Although the findings were described in two categories of evolving beliefs (entering and exiting beliefs), the first section considers the findings holistically; the second section describes the changes experienced by preservice teachers during the teacher education program. I then discuss the influences on preservice teachers' beliefs and concerns that preservice teachers held about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Finally, I address gaps that emerged.

Beliefs about Literacy Teaching and Learning

Although there is some research in the literature supporting the notion that preservice

teachers enter the teacher education program with a set of beliefs (Ashton & Gregoire-Gill, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001), there is minimal research that describes what those entering beliefs are. This study confirms that students enter the professional program with beliefs, and expands the literature by describing specific beliefs held by preservice teachers as they enter the teacher education program. Preservice teacher beliefs about teaching and learning language arts were diverse and varied in nature. The interpretation considers how language arts and literacy were defined by preservice teachers, and how they made sense of the practice-theory dilemma.

Developing a Contemporary Definition of Language Arts and Literacy

There is some evidence in this study to suggest that the beliefs of some preservice teachers align with current theories which suggest that literacy is socially constructed (Courtland & Gambell, 2010; Gee, 1996; Kress, 1997; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Street, 1984). Although they did not use the language 'socially constructed,' they did describe 'group work' in which students interacted socially.

Some preservice teachers provided evidence of contemporary views of multiliteracies, including technological and media literacy. They recognized that technology is an important vehicle both for teaching (shared reading) and for learning (Internet research) (Henry 2005; Leu, 2000). Nevertheless, preservice teachers did not describe beliefs relating to other multiliteracies, such as visual literacy, digital literacy, or in-school versus out-of-school literacies.

Preservice teachers described language arts as important, cross-curricular, and integrated. They described the need for effective language arts and literacy programs to be interesting, engaging, and offer student choice. They also noted that they should build on students' strengths, and perceived themselves as learning teachers. At no time did they view language arts through a postmodern perspective which current theorists contend is necessary for effective teaching in the

21st century (Courtland & Gambell, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005). These findings, along with the beliefs presented above suggest that, for the most part, preservice teachers did not develop a holistic understanding of language arts and literacy as a discipline, but rather they viewed language arts and literacy as a series of fragmented strategies and approaches.

Kosnik and Beck's (2009) findings indicate that faculties of education need to weave the broader concepts of teaching such as assessment, planning, inclusivity, multiculturalism and so on, throughout all courses. Without these seamless connections between courses, a fragmented view of teaching might emerge (Kosnik & Beck, 2009). One university in the United States, well-known for its cutting-edge agenda and results, claims that one of the reasons they are so successful can be attributed to closely-connected faculty with a common vision of teaching that is projected through the teacher education program as a whole, not just course by course (Graber, 1996).

Theory and Practice

Disconnections between the kinds of beliefs that preservice teachers described with respect to theory and the kinds of practices they described as being important emerged in this study. For example, Jon believed that assessment did not have to be a paper and pencil task but that it could, in fact, be a part of a conversation. When these beliefs in theory were examined against practices that Jon valued, a conflict emerged. For example, Jon believed that standardized tests were important because students rely too heavily on word- processing spell check features. In Jon's case, there appeared to be some disconnect between beliefs about theory and applications in practice.

Jon seemed to understand, for example, that assessment can take many forms. He also recognized the importance of engaging and interesting curricula, as well as the need to integrate

current literacies such as media literacy into his teaching. And yet, in practice, Jon believed that

more standardized literacy tests were needed because students rely too heavily on technology.

This kind of disconnect has not been well represented in the literature thus far. There has been,

as described in the review of the literature, much debate regarding conflicts between theory and

practice, but this debate has rested largely in the sphere of instruction in the university

classroom. Beck, Brown, Cockburn, and McClure (2005), for example, found that some

participants appreciated the basic developmental and educational theory learned during their

teacher education programs, while others commented that the theory was not explained clearly

enough, nor in sufficient depth. Of the few studies that relate to connections between theory and

pedagogy in preservice teacher practice, one conducted by Graham and Thornley (2000) might

provide some explanation for the theory/practice disconnect. The authors argue that preservice

teachers relate theory acquisition to the university classroom and pedagogy to field experiences.

If students conceptualize them as separate entities, preservice teachers may not readily make

connections.

Changes in Preservice Teacher Beliefs

The findings suggest that, upon entering the teacher education program, preservice

teachers held a simplistic view of the teaching profession. They believed that teaching would be

easy and that they would be good teachers. These findings are consistent with those of other

scholars (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1989; Whitbeck, 2000; Wienstein, 1988). A significant finding

that emerged, however, suggests that, although preservice teachers in this study did indeed enter

with these beliefs, some of these beliefs changed over the course of the program.

The findings of this study with respect to changes in preservice teachers' beliefs are not

consistent with early literature. Many researchers (Kagan, 1992; Kennedy, 1999; Pajares, 1992;

Richardson & Placier, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998) note that changes in beliefs are quite uncommon. Later studies have found that changes to preservice teachers' beliefs can and do occur during the teacher education program, but portray change as a process (Magolda, 1996; Schommer-Aikins, Mau, Brookhart, & Hutter, 2000); or as guided by the use of various approaches/interventions in teacher education programs for the specific purpose of influencing change (Hollins & Guzman, 2005).

In this study, preservice teachers described changes in their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Participants described change in their own way (Magolda, 1996) because they experienced different kinds of changes to their beliefs at different times. This phenomenon may be due, in part, to the fact that the study was not designed to gauge the evolution of changes and may represent a topic for further study. In terms of Magolda's (1996) ideas about knowledge acquisition, some preservice teachers' comments were indicative of absolute knowing, in which knowledge was viewed as certain and in which acquiring knowledge was important. For others, such as Maggie, transitional knowing (in which knowledge is seen as uncertain, but in which understanding of the knowledge was increasingly important) was more evident. For example, Maggie described how, during the first term, much of what she learned in class was "over my head" (TR, p. 3), but that during the second term "I was able to more fully understand" (FRP, p. 4). This attitude was echoed by other preservice teachers such as Van who described themselves as becoming more comfortable with teaching language arts and literacy over the course of the academic year.

Of the many preservice teachers who talked about their role as teachers and their perceptions of themselves as educators, none viewed him/herself as transmitters of information. Using Schommer-Aikins, Mau, Brookhart and Hutter's (2000) categorization of changing

beliefs, the researcher found preservice teachers believed that they were the sole base of knowledge (omniscient authority believer). Rather, most were simple knowledge believers (for whom knowledge is a considered collection of pieces of information instead of integrated concepts). This finding suggests that preservice teachers' beliefs are multidimensional (Rukavina & Daneman, 1996; Schommer-Aikins et al., 2000) and that preservice teachers might have beliefs in different categories progressing in a non-linear fashion. As a result, changes to beliefs might be hindered and/or difficult to pinpoint.

Preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with a set of beliefs about what it meant to be a teacher of language arts and literacy. According to the preservice teachers, these beliefs were largely rooted in their own experiences as students. This finding is consistent with the research (Lortie, 1975; Numrich, 1996; Woods, 1996). Preservice teachers described how their experiences as students shaped their beliefs. As elementary and secondary students, they had experiences as student learners that led them to believe that language arts was boring, consisted of grammar and spelling, was easy to teach, and so on. The changes to these beliefs occurred as they began to examine program quality and pedagogy through the lens of a teacher. When this process happened, preservice teachers' beliefs sometimes began to change. A similar finding was reported by Anderson and Holt-Reynolds (1995).

Many years ago, Lortie (1975) reported that some preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with a belief that teaching was easy–after all, they had observed teachers teaching for more than a dozen years. However, Calderhead (1988) contended that preservice teachers are not privy to the substantial planning, organizing, and thinking that takes place before lessons are taught. Preservice teachers in this study indicated that the transition from student to teacher was much more difficult than they had imagined. Kosnick and Beck (2008, 2009) found

that even first through third year teachers were surprised at the degree to which they were expected to plan for instruction. They noted that preservice teachers "tended to assume that teachers simply make their way through the mandated curriculum for a given subject and grade" (p. 48). Making decisions about planning, unit- and long-range planning was challenging for my sample of preservice teachers, as was making decisions about expectations and connecting instructional strategies best suited for implementation of those expectations.

A significant finding, not well recorded in the literature, relates to a low correlation between preservice teachers' perceptions of change versus their comments about changes to their beliefs. The preservice teachers sometimes perceived that they had not experienced any changes in their beliefs; yet, they described significant changes. The changes were significant qualitatively–they often represented a shift from beliefs that were traditional in nature to beliefs that were current, contemporary, and more constructivist.

One explanation for this lack of congruence might be that the preservice teachers might not have identified these new understandings as changes to their beliefs. They may have perceived the notion of changes to beliefs as being more over-arching and significant in terms of quantity. A second explanation may be that changes to beliefs were most often described in the Final Reflection Papers. When thinking about if and how beliefs changed, preservice teachers may have been using the beliefs they described in their Term One report as a baseline. In other words, preservice teachers may have focused solely on attempting to identify changes in beliefs described in Term One reports, and therefore failed to identify any other beliefs–beliefs not identified in the Term One reports that may have changed. On another level, these findings might indicate that preservice teachers lack metacognitive awareness of these changes.

Winisky and Kauchak (1997) articulate a theory that entering beliefs can be either vague

and fragmented or firmly entrenched. In the case of vague and fragmented beliefs, it might make sense that preservice teachers would not easily identify changes. However, this theory does not necessarily provide space for newly emerging beliefs. In this study, preservice teachers were required to focus on language arts and literacy. It might be argued that the beliefs they described as having changed throughout their teacher education programs were new beliefs–beliefs that had not otherwise been considered by preservice teachers. If one considers the research literature through such a lens, the meaning changes somewhat, so that the findings of Winisky and Kauchak do not apply. Kennedy (1990), on the other hand, found that the structure of the preservice education program had little effect on preservice teacher beliefs and knowledge when students were exiting the program. Regardless of preservice teachers' ability to clearly articulate changes to beliefs, the findings of this study demonstrate that their beliefs changed.

This study provided preservice teacher participants with opportunities to identify their beliefs early in the program and to self-identify areas where their beliefs might have changed over time. Although it was not a requirement, participants often referred to the degree of change they experienced from 'not at all' to 'immensely'. This finding is important because preservice teachers themselves decided if their beliefs changed over time.

Influences

Participants described a variety of factors that influenced their development as literate learners. Family played a significant role, as did elementary, middle and high school experiences, and the teacher education program.

All participants in the study described the historical perspective from which they emerged as literate learners. These singular events (Boggs & Golden, 2009) included experiences both in and out-of-school, positive and negative, elementary and secondary, as well as individual and

social events. Every participant had predominantly positive experiences with literacy as a youngster, although some struggled with particular aspects of learning to read and/or write. Most of the participants described their past experiences with literacy learning as an influence on their beliefs about literacy teaching. This finding was consistent whether those experiences were positive or not.

Preservice teachers also indicated that the teacher education program (Graber, 1996; Graves, 2007; Linek et al., 2006), the quality of the field experience (Graves, 2007; Linek et al., 2006), and associate teachers (Graves, 2007) were influences on beliefs. Preservice teachers sometimes questioned their role in the classroom, and found themselves conflicted by what they were learning in their program and the expectations of the Associate Teacher in the field. This conflict sometimes caused preservice teachers to use strategies or techniques that were not aligned with their own beliefs of effective approaches. Since field placement experiences often differed or contradicted beliefs and/or new learning about teaching language arts and literacy, preservice teachers might be encouraged to make sense of these contradictions through deconstruction of field experiences in literacy methods classes.

Concerns

Preservice teachers articulated several concerns about teaching language arts and literacy. For many, these concerns stemmed from their perceptions of themselves as learners, but these concerns also emerged through observations and experiences in their practicum placements. Preservice teachers held concerns regarding planning, assessment, and perceptions of their own abilities, and availability of resources. Many of these concerns echo the findings of Kosnik and Beck (2009).

Preservice teachers expressed concerns about planning for language arts and literacy;

they were at times surprised and overwhelmed. They described planning lessons only. Although they might have had to plan units, and would have had specific unit planning instruction, they did not mention unit planning in any of the data sources. Program planning for the year was not an option for preservice teachers. Kosnik and Beck (2009) suggest that preservice teachers do not understand the true extent of planning that classroom teaching requires. This study demonstrated that, without consistent opportunities to plan for varying lengths of time, preservice teachers felt apprehensive and concerned about their abilities to do so as future teachers.

Assessment was also of concern to several preservice teachers. They expressed concerns about developing assessment tools and being "objective" (fair and equitable) in their use of assessments. For the most part, preservice teachers referred to evaluation (assigning a mark or grade), but used the term assessment (on-going monitoring of student growth, over time). Consequently, they did not have a well-developed understanding of current theories about assessment for, of, and as learning; rather, they thought of assessment mostly in terms of summative evaluation. Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that assessment is a significant component of teaching in general, and that it should be emphasized in all preservice courses and linked to all teaching.

Preservice teachers were concerned about their own capabilities with language-related concepts. Preservice teachers wanted to make a positive impact on children (Auh, 2005), and were worried that their own limitations might influence students in unintended ways. Preservice teachers struggled with their developing teacher identities as well. For many, entering beliefs were equated to perceived inadequacies. The changes that preservice teachers experienced often contributed to improved perceptions of self and the development of positive teacher identities

(Korthagen, Loughren, & Russell, 2006).

The findings suggest that most of the concerns stemmed from things in teaching other than content—the day to day mechanics, organization and orchestration of a classroom. This finding represents new thinking, but does connect to the findings of Lortie (1975), who reported that preservice teachers believed that they knew most of what they needed to know about teaching even before entering the teacher education program, and extends Calderhead's (1988) findings that being a student observer of teachers does not provide preservice teachers with any experience of what goes on 'behind the scenes.' This "unknowing" at the end of the teacher education program is a genuine cause for concern. In this study, the findings suggest that the inner workings of a teacher's work-related life—those things that contribute to positive and safe learning environments, equitable learning experiences, rich and appropriate tasks, assessment and evaluation—are what the preservice teachers were most concerned about. For these reasons, subject-specific methods courses should embed learning about teaching-related tasks such as planning (daily and long-term), assessment, differentiated instruction, and so on, into their course content.

Fuller (1969) contended that one's feelings towards any type of change or innovation can be addressed as concerns. As a result, understanding preservice teachers' concerns is important in teacher education programs and, by extension, in helping preservice teachers make changes to their beliefs (Amit & Fried, 2002).

Fuller and Brown's (1975) model of teacher concerns does not fully represent the findings of the current study. Participants in this study did articulate concerns that fell into each of the three categories, but not pervasively in the first, self-survival stage, as Fuller and Brown suggested they would. Fuller and Brown argue that preservice teachers would have more self-

survival concerns than either teaching situation or student impact concerns. When looking at the data sources holistically, that is sources accumulated throughout the course of the teacher education program, the researcher found a spread of concerns across the stages. In this study, the fact that preservice teachers held different entry points resulted in varying levels of experience, and, therefore, concerns that spanned the stages. In addition, preservice teachers gained considerable field placement experience so that, by the end of the program, they were responsible for a 100% teaching load, including planning, assessment, and overall care of students. As a result, different kinds of concerns emerged, including those related to teaching and students and, by extension, concerns that fell into the second and third stages of concerns.

Gaps

There were several gaps that emerged in the findings, including the absence of various important elements in language arts and literacy programming: current theories in literacy acquisition and development, gender equity, inclusive education, Canadian children's literature, classroom management, and the role of parents. The current research in language arts and literacy identifies reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 2004), transmediation (Smagorinsky et. al. 2007), critical literacy (Comber & Simpson, 2001; Luke, 1997), the roles of the reader (Freebody & Luke, 1990), and balanced literacy, as relevant and important. Preservice teachers did not refer to any of these constructs in any of the data sources. These constructs all require higher-order thinking skills. These skills are difficult to identify and difficult to teach–they are not tangible. It appears that preservice teachers were more aware of the tangible or visible aspects of language arts teaching and learning–read alouds, group work, reading, and writing, for example. In some ways, this tendency might be attributable to preservice teachers' lack of adequate academic and professional language to describe appropriately and exactly what they believed or even 'meant'.

Britzman (2003) explains this phenomenon as preservice teachers "trying to represent something of the self but in doing so, bumping up against the language, or the prevailing discourses in education…" (p. 17).

Despite the current interest in gender-driven literacy instruction (Guzzetti, Young, Gritsavage, Fyfe, & Hardenbrook, 2002; Booth, 2002), few preservice teachers identified 'gender' as an important factor in teaching and/or learning in any of the data. This finding suggests that preservice teachers have not had adequate opportunities for identifying and addressing the potential of gender as an influencing factor on literacy development.

Kosnik and Beck (2009) note that "one of the greatest challenges new teachers face is the range of ability in their class" (p. 37). Preservice teachers in this study described diversity in many ways, but the overall gist of the comments with respect to diverse populations was that they represented a challenge. Preservice teachers identified students as being diverse in learning style, in culture and attitudes, and, for the most part, perceived that addressing this diversity would be challenging. To this end, Kosnik and Beck (2009) argue that preservice teachers need to observe varying ability levels in practicum placements, as well as learning strategies for dealing with the wide range of abilities they are going to encounter as teachers. Although this is sound advice, there remains the issue of relinquishing all control to associate teachers to provide these experiences. Faculties of education have very little, if any, input into the kinds and ways of knowing that take place outside of the university setting. For this reason, recommending that preservice teachers should have certain opportunities in no way guarantees that they will get them.

Although the literacy course used literature, particularly culturally-representative Canadian literature, in every class, preservice teachers seemed unaware of the role of literature,

particularly multicultural literature, in planning culturally-relevant and culturally-responsive curricula.

A noticeable gap in the findings relates to the absence of classroom management as the substance for any kind of reflection on the part of preservice teachers. One might argue that, as a study about language arts and literacy as a specific discipline, classroom management might not be related and might be better relegated to a study on methods. Campbell and Thompson (2007), however, conducted a study of preservice teachers of music, as a specific discipline, and found that classroom management emerged as one of the top five overall concerns held by preservice teachers, as well as one of the top five concerns in each of Fuller and Brown's three levels.

Preservice teachers rarely mentioned the role of parents in any of the data sources (except their own parents as influences), and at no time did they mention parents as a concern. Other studies found that parents and their role in their children's education was a concern. This finding might be attributable to (a) lack of experience in the classroom, and therefore lack of contact with parents and/or (b) lack of awareness of the important and influential role that parents play.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the study followed by the discussion and interpretations of the beliefs that thirty-nine preservice teachers had about teaching language arts and literacy. Preservice teacher beliefs were organized around the three research questions and then broken down into themes that emerged from the data. These themes were then interpreted in light of the current research literature.

In Chapter Five, I present three case studies based on Phase Two of the study. New data sources will be introduced, including transcribed focus group discussions and learning journals. These data sources, coupled with those used in Phase One, inform the findings and interpretation

that follow.

CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDIES OF THREE PRESERVICE TEACHERS:

PHASE TWO

Setting the Context

Chapter Five presents an in-depth look at three preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. I present the stories of three of the eight participants who made up Phase Two of the study. Of the eight participants, seven were female, while one was male; seven were traditional teachers, while one was nontraditional; one was a parent, while 7 were single. Of the eight, three had science as a teachable, two had English as a teachable, and others had math, physical eduation, or French . Phase Two data sources included transcripts from three focus group interviews and learning journals. The case studies were supplemented with the phase one data sources. The personal history accounts provided me with a window into the personal histories of the participants while term reports, final reflection papers and Partners in Education lesson plans and reflections provided specific data about preservice teachers' beliefs.

Each case study begins with participants' histories as literacy learners, followed by beliefs, changes to beliefs, influences and concerns about teaching. Maggie is featured in the first case study. Her early literacy journey took place in the culture and traditions of her Spanish family. She had rich, historical experiences rooted in literacy events and practices that shaped her current beliefs about literacy. Heta is introduced in the second case study. Heta entered into the teacher education program as a mature student. She was a mother, wife, researcher, scientist, and working teacher without professional certification. I then describe Sherry's journey. Sherry's story is shaped by a love for sports and competition, and a familial lifestyle centered on healthy living and well-being. Her case study illustrates how these experiences influenced her perceptions of herself as an educator.

Case Studies

Maggie

Historical Context: The Beginning

Maggie's first language was Spanish, and her early childhood was influenced by her grandmother, who cared for Maggie when her parents went to work. These early days were vivid in her memory "standing beside my grandma, hanging on her skirt, as she cooked in the kitchen" (PHA, p. 1). This is where Maggie's story starts—in the kitchen beside her grandma, steeped in the traditions of Spanish cuisine, accompanied by poems told to her and songs sung to her, both reminiscent of the rich oral traditions of her Spanish historical background.

Literacy practices were a ritual and important part of Maggie's upbringing. She read and wrote in Spanish as a youngster—skills she was proud of and that distinguished her from her peers who could read and write only in one language. Maggie also practiced poetry taught to her by her grandmother, and would perform poetic recitations "standing up on a coffee table when my father would come home from work" (PHA, p. 1).

Maggie's literacy history continued to be closely tied to family traditions rooted in the Spanish culture. With her siblings and cousins, she planned and staged productions that included dance presentations, lip-synching and plays. Her family would gather together and share a big meal as a prelude to the performance.

Maggie's parents made choices for her and her three siblings that contributed to her literacy development. She noted that "anything I received from my parents was usually educational or very practical" (PHA, p. 2). As a youngster, she was permitted to view educational television shows only. Video games were not part of her upbringing. In fact, when her brothers begged for a Nintendo system, her father bought them a computer instead. This

incident, too, had significant benefits for Maggie. She was required to practice her keyboarding skills while she and her brothers competed against each other for fastest typing times. She noted other benefits of having a computer in the household: "I prided myself on being able to type fast…. I was able to type my journal entries, my emails, my composition and assignments on the computer much faster than most of my friends by the age of 10" (PHA, p. 2).

A diary that Maggie received as a Christmas present inspired her life-long love of recording her thoughts, feelings, and the important events in her life—a practice she continues today. The books which her parents bought her for Christmas spurred another life-long love—reading. Maggie loved going to the public library, where her brothers would help her find 'cool' books and she loved Scholastic book fairs.

Maggie, a second-generation Canadian, as a youngster attended a Saturday morning Spanish class. She explained that "we would be in our own classes having discussion about anything, as long as we were speaking Spanish and not English" (PHA, p. 1). In this way, her first language and the traditions of the culture were preserved.

All of these practices helped to build a strong sense of literacy for Maggie in many modes including reading, writing, drama, dance, oral storytelling and digital literacy. As a youngster, she was immersed in the Spanish language and culture, but also felt confident speaking English. Her attitudes started to change, though, as she entered mainstream English public schools, where she found she was apprehensive about her language skills. She used personal critical reflection to try to understand how this shift in confidence might have occurred:

> Reflecting now on my literacy experiences, I think the reason for this was because I was often afraid of not speaking properly, or making a mistake when I read because English was not my first language. I remember mispronouncing words and not knowing what certain words meant even if they were very simple words to another students vocabulary. I had never heard these words because in my home, Spanish was spoken. In this sense my writing and reading experiences were not primarily positive. (PHA, p. 3)

Despite these difficulties, Maggie experienced success in school. She attributed her ability to overcome her weaknesses in English with assistance from great teachers: "I do recall all of my teachers from grades 1-8 and I can confidently say each of them helped me feel better and improve my speaking, reading and writing proficiency in English and similarly in French" (PHA, p. 3).

Today, Maggie continues to immerse herself in literacy events:

> When I get a chance, or something happens that is overwhelming for me, I write it down. It is not always a diary. I haven't kept a formal diary in years. Now I will just make documents on my computer and save them. I really like writing. (PHA, p. 3)

She is still reading: "I also enjoy reading. Due to school circumstances, I find I do not have as much time to read for pleasure. However, I always have a book that is for pleasure nearby" (PHA, p. 3).

Maggie perceived that her early literacy experiences would influence her as a teacher:

> Having had some trouble myself as a student I believe I will be very empathetic towards my students if they are having a hard time reading and writing in my class. Just as my parents were very encouraging and supportive of my slowly expanding vocabulary I will be extra patient with students who may have difficulty understanding certain words. I have experienced first- hand how important reading and writing is in an individual's life to be part of this society. Visual representation, vocabulary, listening and reading skills are essential. Having grown up in a very technologically fasted- pace growing society, I see myself making reading and writing much more exciting for my students with all the software available today. I will try to make the language arts as exciting as I can because I know that sometimes children can find reading from a book rather boring. My parents are still encouraging me to continue reading for pleasure (even though I do!) especially in Spanish, because it expands my vocabulary. I will say the same thing to my students. The more you read, the more you learn. I am a strong believer in that the more you learn and know, the more you realized you don't know. The more you realized this, the more you want to know...As I go into teach the junior and intermediate grades in the near future, my emphasis for them will most definitely be on the language arts and literacy. I believe social studies, math and physical education are very important as well. However, as I reflect on how much literacy has impacted my life, I will try to pass on the same values to my students. (PHA, p. 4)

Beliefs

The learning journals and focus group interviews (Phase Two data sources) allowed Maggie a forum for talking about her beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. They were also a forum for questioning preconceived notions and assumptions about effective instructional practices, teaching, and students.

Maggie observed instructional approaches and strategies that she believed were effective. For instance, she described oral language and communication several times and in different contexts. First, she noted that "I had a thought while in the car listening to music. The spoken language of kids is highly affected by music" (LJ, Jan. 19). On another occasion, she wrote "...their oral language was great...very verbal and creative with presentations" (LJ, Feb. 20). Maggie referred to oral language as being important in physical education classes:

> Communication is key in sports: saying 'mine' in volleyball, encouraging each other on, calling out loud short words to a teammate to let them know where you are and if you are open. These are all examples of communication needed in sport. (LJ, Feb. 27)

Maggie also noticed that, in her placement, media as an instructional tool was an effective resource strategy: "We've also watched movies/documentaries; ...students were very engaged" (LJ, Feb. 20). Further, she used technology as a means of engagement in her own teaching: "Students are very visual. I have now used the smart board twice and the kids are hooked immediately" (LJ, Mar. 12).

Maggie observed guided reading in the classroom. She connected her understanding of guided reading to learning French by watching DVDs and simultaneously reading the subtitles in French. She wondered: "Is this the same as guided reading? Is this why it works so well to read to kids as they follow along? YES! No wonder I picked it as my method of studying/brushing up on my French" (LJ, Jan. 23). Maggie believed that some instructional approaches and strategies

were less effective. She explained that in the grade 9 class placement, copying notes from the board was difficult for students and took up too much instructional time (LJ, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, Feb. 20).

Maggie described her beliefs about students and the range of abilities in any given classroom. She said: "I'm astonished and a little shocked at the amount of 'identified' students in schools now and the importance of IEPs [Individual Education Plans]" (LJ, Feb. 12). She also noted that "There is such a huge range of abilities in the Grade 9 science class" (LJ, Feb. 12). She connected this aspect of current classrooms to teaching language arts when she said: "So far it seems like math is modified a lot–is language? How? I have some ideas but it is it at par with math? It [literacy] is just as important if not more important" (LJ, Jan. 29).

Oral communication and ESL were of particular interest to Maggie. Half of the entries in her learning journal focused on these topics. In one entry alone (March 5th), Maggie developed four important points about English language learners:

- There are 4 ESL students who are Spanish and need a lot of help understanding the language. While I'm observing I am able to help them one on one and during my lessons I make sure I speak very clearly and slowly to them to make sure they understand

- I feel like my AT [associate teacher] isn't doing as much as she could–sometimes–actually a lot of the time. She talks very quickly and I know the students are not catching all of the instructions. When I communicate with them I try to speak in English–if they don't understand a word or a phrase then I will translate to Spanish–but I don't just give them all the work in Spanish because then they will never learn.

- I don't know if these 4 ESL students practice English outside of school. They may only have friends who speak English and watch English TV and speak it with their parents. But from experience, there are some families that are extremely cultural–they only hang out with other Hispanic people and everything they do is Spanish. Spanish TV, Spanish gatherings, Spanish friends. So they never get a chance to develop another language. Basically the language outside of school doesn't correspond with the one practiced at school.

- And it's the same situation for all the other kids and trying to learn French as a second language. It just doesn't happen because everything out of school is English and there is not effort towards the French.

Changes

Perhaps it was the power of her early literacy experiences that led Maggie to believe that "language would be very easy to teach" (TR, p. 1). After some time in the teacher education program, however, she realized that language arts and literacy are much more complex than she originally believed:

> When I began my teacher education I had the idea teaching language arts and literacy would be a piece of cake. In the past few months, this idea has changed drastically. During my first block teaching, I taught one language lesson. For the most part, it ran smoothly. However, I was not looking forward to teaching another one. I believed language arts was simple and to the point. I have realized it is everything but that. (TR, p. 1)

Maggie noted on several occasions that her comfort level with teaching the subject may have been an important factor that influenced her perception about whether teaching language arts was easy or not.

- I think I just need more experience teaching and becoming comfortable with the material. (TR, p. 1)

- As I mentioned before, I think for me it's a matter of getting comfortable, knowing the curriculum and having a pool of ideas. (TR, p. 1)

- I began to feel more comfortable teaching language to the students but I still did not feel I was doing the best job I could. (TR, p. 2)

- Right now, I am still working on getting comfortable. (TR, p. 2)

- I think I can start to be creative with teaching language once I become comfortable. (TR, p. 2)

This reference to comfort level with respect to beliefs about and attitude toward language arts is important in light of Maggie's final reflection paper. In this document, Maggie noted that her beliefs about language arts and literacy evolved again: "…it is not as difficult as I initially thought…. I think I have become a lot more comfortable in a classroom and so I was able to…talk to other teachers to find out it is not as difficult as initially experienced" (FRP, p. 2).

Another explicit change in beliefs concerned the availability of resources in the classroom. Initially, as described in her Term Report (p. 2), Maggie stated that she believed that classrooms were not well equipped for teaching an effective language arts and literacy program. Later, in her Final Reflection Paper she explicitly articulated a change in her beliefs, and provided a rationale as well:

> I think my previous belief that resources were scarce was due to the fact that I was too busy with other things and getting comfortable just being in the classroom that I did not have time to hunt down resources to teach my lessons. As the second and third placements came around, I found resources were right under my nose and if they weren't somebody in the school knew where I could find them. (FRP, p. 3)

With respect to degree of change, Maggie believed that her beliefs about teaching and learning language arts: "have drastically changed because of my recent experiences" (FRP, p. 3).

Influences

Maggie had rich and robust early experiences with literacy. Her grandparents, parents and siblings all played significant roles in shaping who she was and is as a literate learner, but also

who she would be as an educator:

> Just as my parents were very encouraging and supportive of my slowly expanding
> vocabulary, I will be extra patient with students who may have difficulty understanding
> certain words. I have experienced first-hand how important reading and writing is in an
> individual's life to be part of this society. Visual representation, vocabulary, listening and
> reading skills are essential. Having grown up in a very technologically fast-paced
> growing society, I see myself making reading and writing much more exciting for my
> students with all of the software available today. I will try to make the language arts as
> exciting as I can because I know that sometimes children can find reading from a book
> rather boring. (PHA, p. 3)

Other teachers in her placement schools influenced Maggie's beliefs about teaching language

arts: "Talking to teachers with more experience and having more practice teaching time in a

classroom" (FRP, p. 3) influenced her beliefs. She also identified reflection as a necessary part of

her learning and one that influenced her beliefs:

> I think another influence has been reflecting. As much as I'm tired of reflecting, it is one
> of the best tools to learn. I learned from [reflecting on my] actions in the classroom, from
> feedback from my associate teacher and from my own thoughts right after I finished
> teaching a lesson. (FRP, p. 3)

Concerns

Through her reflections in her learning journal, Maggie identified a number of concerns

about teaching as she encountered new instructional strategies. For example, Maggie talked

about observing the use of running records:

> I had never heard of them before this LA [Language Arts] class. I've never been a part of
> one as a student and never seen another teacher administer one or even talk about it. It
> seems like a good thing…very time consuming–do teachers actually do this for every
> student? (LJ, Jan. 26)

Spelling did not go unnoticed in Maggie's experiences. She was concerned that "in my Grade 5

classroom I saw a lot of wrong spelling" (LJ, Jan. 19). She tried to establish some kind of

explanation for this problem. She wondered if the slang and mispronunciations used in song

lyrics were the cause. Additionally, she considered technology and the role it might have played

in students' spelling development: "It almost makes me think that their writing abilities have not been developed as well because of the technology advancements we've had" (LJ, Feb. 11). She used her experiences to inform her perceptions of how she, herself, might address the issue of spelling in her own classroom: "We have to encourage students to use dictionaries" (LJ, Jan. 23).

Maggie also described concerns about the nature of teaching language arts and literacy and her ability to plan and implement a program. She noted that

> I find teaching language is very abstract and broad. There are so many aspects of it to teach and so many ways of getting it across. Which is the better way? How will the children understand it best? For example, when I taught math, there was only one way of teaching a concept. This is a bar graph and this is how you do it. It is concrete and easy to get across. I had no problem teaching math. In science, it is all facts and remembering them, understanding what happens when and how. It is simple and to the point. However, language arts and literacy there are 'making connections', 'synthesizing', 'determining important ideas', 'repairing comprehension', 'inferring', and 'visualizing' among others. There are oral, writing, and reading skills and interpreting the media. There is just so much to think of when I am preparing a lesson. (TR, p. 1)

Heta

Heta is a unique example of a preservice teacher, both with respect to this study and with respect to her cohort. As a mature student, Heta began her teacher education program as the mother of children who were the same age as most of her peers. As the most mature student in the class, she was looked up to by others in her cohort. A quiet, unassuming woman, she nevertheless spoke passionately about the things in which she believed. Her peers respected her for this passion and she was a model for them.

Because Heta entered the teacher education program after having raised her family, she brought with her the wisdom of someone who had many and varied experiences compared to her classmates, including many years teaching in a private school system. The most significant of her experiences, however, was her professional background as a research scientist with a passion for both science and mathematics. You will see, as her story unfolds, how her year as a preservice

teacher was a means of preserving her passions, but, at the same time, adding new ones.

Historical Context: The Beginning

Heta's mother and father provided her with a "loving environment" (PHA, p. 1) and that

is where her literacy development began. Her mother and father read to her often; but she

preferred the oral stories her parents would tell: "I can also remember the stories that came from

their imaginations and how I could not wait until the story resumed the following night" (PHA,

p. 1).

Heta had a modest upbringing with parents who worked hard to provide for the family.

Her parents were hopeful that their children would have educational opportunities that they did

not, and to that end, they "instilled in me that I must work hard and I could be anything I wanted

to be" (PHA, p. 2).

As Heta grew older, her passion for books and literature grew as well. She did not have

access to a community library so she eagerly, yet patiently, waited for the weekly library bus (a

mobile library) to come to town:

> At about the age of five the reading library bus would come to my street every two
> weeks. I remember it arrived at 4:30 pm and left at 6:00 pm. This was so exciting; I now
> had my own library card and the independence to choose the books that I was interested
> in. (PHA, p. 1)

Heta believed that this early access to the mobile library allowed her to take some control over

the kinds of texts she engaged with and she believed that it "was my first baby step in becoming

an independent learner" (PHA, p. 1). In fact, she attributed her early experiences with certain

texts from this library bus with her eventual first career choice: "The All About Nature Book

instilled in me the wonderment and beauty of the world we live in. Looking back, this book

moved me toward my initial career as a research scientist" (PHA, p. 2).

Heta's primary grade teachers played significant roles in fostering her love of school and

learning. Mrs. Penner inspired Heta's fascination with "Dick and Jane" (a basal series popular in the 60s and 70s) and Heta believed that "This [the *Dick and Jane* series] helped me make the jump from observation to reading" (PHA, p. 3). But her favorite teacher, Miss Trelevan, made learning fun by connecting musical, kinesthetic, and visual intelligences with reading:

> She [Miss. Trelevan] played the mandolin and we sang songs such as Yellow Bird to her accompaniment. Miss Trelevan put the words of the songs we sang on chart paper and inserted beautiful colourful drawings of difficult key words to help us as we read the lyrics. (PHA, p. 2)

School wasn't always easy for Heta and she did struggle at times. Cursive writing, in particular, caused her grief; but encouragement from her teacher helped: "I remember her showing me how to hold my pencil as I practiced. But the thing that I remember most of all was her constant encouragement" (PHA, p. 2).

As Heta began high school, things began to change. She realized that her passion and love for school was not 'popular'; she found that it was easier to hide her real feelings about fiction and literature. Peer pressure, she admitted, "really began to show itself. I remember trying to fit in and hide the fact that I loved being at school" (PHA, p. 3). Her grades began to slip until she reached Grade 10 when the positive influence of another teacher helped her to 'fit in' and ultimately contributed to her current goal of becoming a teacher:

> The class was asked to do a project that combined music with writing about real media events. This was a move away from fiction to nonfiction. The project involved using a song and depicting how it was relevant to the news of that day. I chose Paul Simon's Sound of Silence. Something spoke to me in those words that I have never forgotten about listening, speaking, writing, and vision. For me it was one of those ah ha moments. To this day the books that give me the most pleasure are nonfiction texts. Grade 10 English class put me on track again and it is here I realized I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others. (PHA, p. 3)

Heta is the mother of a boy with dyslexia. She described this aspect of parenting as "both a challenge and a great learning experience" (PHA, p. 3). She watched her son struggle to read

and write, but she also observed the powerful influence that a caring and genuinely concerned teacher had had on her son's confidence level and, ultimately, his success. These observations, also contributed to her desire to become a teacher:

> Today, my son is a second year university student and with the help of his computer achieved 89% for a first year English. Over the summer my son sat down and thanked me for providing him with the teachers that allowed him to get where he is today. I personally want to be a teacher who supports and encourages my students and makes the difference in their lives. (PHA, pp. 3-4)

Beliefs

Heta held beliefs about the content, characteristics, and instructional approaches that should be used in an effective language arts and literacy program. She also held particular beliefs about the role of the teacher. Her beliefs emerged in her reflections through descriptions of what she observed on placement and how she herself taught in those placements. One of the Heta's strongest beliefs, a belief that kept recurring in her reflections, was about modeling. The following description of Heta's practice on placement illustrates this belief:

> The teacher handed out the rubric and explained the task but did not model what the students were to do. Group work never occurred in language arts during my placement. However, group work was a constant feature of the lessons that I taught which were mathematics, science, medieval times and physical education. I put in place clear expectations for behaviour and what I wanted students to accomplish. I would model each step that was required. I used the strategies of pair and share, jigsaw, small group and large group discussions. These strategies promoted student interaction. (FRP, p. 5)

Another belief that emerged regularly throughout Heta's reflections concerned the notion of integration. Although she explicitly identified integration as a concept that she believed was integral in a language arts program, she also implicitly provided evidence in her reflections on her practice:

> Fractions can be a difficult concept for grade four students to grasp. I also wanted to hook them in a way that did not use the conventional fraction pizza math. I was experimenting and tried on my language arts learning in the mathematics environment. I read during the start of every math class one of the fraction stories. Each story introduced students to a

new concept from what was a fraction, to addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of like and unlike denominators. The stories were fun and engaging and the students looked forward to them. For their culminating task students were asked to work in groups to produce a fraction story that they could share with the class. The students were very excited by this activity. I modeled how the authors had built their stories in class. I then worked on examples with the whole class. This scaffolded practice was part of my Nipissing training and helped to make my students successful. I was excited as their teacher to see how engaged they were not only with the mathematics but by the way they were going to represent their story. They were given the choice of a comic strip, mystery or fictional tale. Their work was outstanding. What I witnessed as their teachers was further proof that language arts supports all other subject matter. (FRP, p. 6)

For Heta, modeling and integration were the means to providing students with opportunities for successful learning experiences. When these were connected, she believed that students were being provided with optimal learning experiences:

No subject is in isolation in the curriculum they are all supported by language arts. I want my students to have the ability to communicate and translate their learning in a meaningful way that is important to them. I want to arm them with the tools to search out and direct their lives and fulfill their individual goals. (FRP, p. 2)

Heta believed that the teaching of language arts was an integral part of the curriculum and "critical for the development of every individual learner" (FRP, p.1). She also believed that in order for literacy curriculum to be effective, it had to be presented in an engaging manner: "The teaching of language arts in our classrooms needs to be exciting, relevant and at the same time have the ability to challenge our students" (FRP, p. 1).

Through her experiences in the teacher education program, both academically and practically, Heta believed that there was much to learn about language arts and literacy. She believed that more emphasis should be given in placements to language arts, and she recognized that associate teachers needed opportunities to improve their teaching continuously.

Heta often talked about the need for professional development in language arts and recognized her role as a life-long learner. She believed that teaching a language arts program the same way, year after year, was not in the best interests of her students:

My goal is to ensure to the best of my ability that I keep up to date with new ideas in helping my students toward language based independence. I have seen in my placements that it could become very easy to deliver the same program to your students yearly. I will not do this. My personal goal is to seek out further education to help me develop as a teacher of language arts. (FRP, p. 3)

Heta believed that teaching and being a teacher were profoundly important and, once taken on as a career, of utmost importance.

You have to care; you have to be professional; you have to care; you have to do your job to the best of your ability. Guess what? Everybody has a bad day, no matter in what job you're in. and guess what? Suck it up, get back in there and do what you've been trained to do because this is a profession that is not an easy profession; but it's a profession that if you choose it, you choose for the right reasons I hope. (FG2, p. 4)

Changes

Although Heta had many and varied positive early experiences that contributed to her literacy development, her first passions were science and math. Before she began the teacher education program she believed "that the sciences and mathematics were the ultimate subject matter" (FRP, p. 1). However, her experiences in the teacher education program led to a significant change in her beliefs:

I just found, science, I'm really strong – I've a Masters in Science. And I've taught in the private system, and for me the most important subject was science. My view has ultimately changed. I do not think that. I think that the best subject, the subject that our students need to learn more than anything else is literacy, being able to communicate because if we don't spend the time there, they'll lose interest in science, in everything… And my learning will be in language arts because I realize that it is the focal point of all knowledge that we teach our children. So without those skills I can't teach them even math, I can't teach them science. And if you would have asked me that when I first walked into this program, I'd have laughed at you. I would have said "I'm sorry, math is a language; it is the most important language." Not now. My math and my science are further and further back. (FG, 3)

Heta's beliefs about how students learn best changed during the course of her teacher education program. Initially she believed that students were most productive when they worked independently. By the end of the school year however, she believed that "students' working in

isolation slows the learning process down for every member in the classroom. Group work is essential in the classroom" (FRP, p. 3). In addition, her beliefs about how such groups should be organized also changed. She intuitively believed that students should be grouped based on ability, but later came to realize that

> It is not always a good idea to place academically weak students with academically strong students. I have witnessed students not wanting to be 'clever' students because it left them feeling like a liability. I have tended to do this in the past. (PHA, p. 3)

Heta's beliefs about assessment also changed during the year. Coming from a very traditional academic background, Heta was most familiar with basal readers (PHA, p. 2), independent work, and an absence of classroom discussions (FG1, p. 2). As her understanding of how literacy and teaching in general have changed over the years, she thought about how her new understandings might impact her beliefs about assessment. Although she had not developed a complete understanding about how to approach assessment yet, what she experienced in her teacher education program had given her much "food for thought." She was able to transfer (or connect) new learning across subjects. For example, Heta described assessment in light of her new understandings about how students learn:

> I'm also thinking of assessment in a different way too. I'm thinking maybe of having papers that the children rotate around with different activities on the table. Maybe they have to read something and do the illustrator role instead of having it just totally on paper. I'm thinking- I don't know how I'm going to put that together but I can see putting in hands-on for kids to do things, so it hits all of the different kinds of ways that they learn. I think this is coming about because I see the value of it in math. Because math is a language, this is a language. We need to put some of that stuff in. (FG2, p. 1)

Heta's view of her role as a teacher changed over time as well. She was, in fact, surprised at the nature of this new role, one of facilitation rather than direction:

> I found that my role as their teacher in class discussions became more of a facilitator to who would speak next. I have taught for many years but never had this occurring in any other classroom experience. It was as if I gave up control and became a guide and the text and the children became teachers. This was amazing. (FRP, p. 2)

Finally, Heta believed that she could transform daily instruction in order to engage children in ways that made them want to be at school and to want to succeed:

> I think we can do this…I know we can. I just have to think about it and put it into action because I can see it. I can see what it will do; it will make them feel confident. Because I see so many kids who got to write the narrative story, who gotta write it in this amount of time, you've got to do it this way. We don't need to go that way. It's almost like putting them in a box and setting them up for failure. So if we put some of the activities as they relate to, I think that will make a major difference in their success. I don't know yet, but I'm figuring it out. (FG2, pp. 1-2)

Influences

Family was an important influence in Heta's life, as is documented in the historical context above. School experiences were also of importance, and are also documented in the historical context. The teacher education program including associate teachers, placements, and coursework were sources of influence on Heta's beliefs about teaching and learning language arts. She also perceived reflection to be an influence on her awareness of her entering and emerging beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.

In her learning journal, Heta described several instances when she observed what she perceived were ineffective teaching practices. For example, she noted that "Language arts at this time has slipped back to almost the way I was taught at school– rote" (LJ, Week 1). Even practices that Heta believed were ineffective provided grounds for informing her future practice:

> There is very little reading to the children. I seem to be the only one reading literature/non-fiction in my worksheets. There is no teacher reading for the pure pleasure of hearing a story. I appreciated how wonderful it was to be read to -my Language Arts teacher at Nipissing visited this in my course. I think I would read to my future students daily. (LJ, Week 2)

And despite very difficult experiences in her second placement, Heta believed that they nevertheless provided her with opportunities to grow as a teacher: "I am growing. I make connections to all subject areas and to students' personal experiences. My teaching I know is

growing" (LJ, Week 2).

The use of technology in the teacher education program influenced Heta's beliefs about language arts as well as strategies she would use to incorporate it into her teaching. She explained that getting access to a computer or Smart Board was "impossible" (LJ, Week 2) so "I am taking in my own projector etc. and using my Nipissing training to incorporate Notebook/ Powerpoint in class everyday" (LJ, Week 2). She was amused that she was a leader and more knowledgeable about technology that her colleagues: "I think it's funny that I am more computer-competent here. I struggled to learn technology. I can't tell my profs how grateful I am for their training–the kids love what I am bringing into my class" (LJ, Week 2).

The language arts course in her teacher education program influenced Heta significantly. She described herself as a left-brained learner, one that she saw as being very different from the kind of thinking associated with language arts. When she was given opportunities to experience literacy-related events and practices, her thinking changed and she believed that her pedagogy was influenced in a positive way:

> I'm totally left-brained I would say totally. This course has made quite a difference to me. You've made me read fiction - like the book I read "Milkweed." I cannot tell you. I looked at language as I was reading that book in a different way. When I was reading, I thought "Oh my gosh, this is artistic." The way you string words together. I don't think I could ever be a writer, but you can sit there and you can look at the beauty that that writer can create. And I would love to let my students experience this kind of thing. I feel like I've been in a vacuum. And I have personal growth, from language arts, is total. I cannot wait, I have so many ideas I want to put in place. I also will go further [with my education in language arts]. (FG3, p.2)

Heta believed that the tasks and assignments in her Language Arts and Literacy course influenced her beliefs. As a science major, she became accustomed to reading nonfiction texts– she had forgotten how to read for pleasure. By using read alouds in the class, her professor helped to nudge early memories and the importance of literature:

> Even if it was a fiction book I was looking for the step by step approach: why the character would do this [for example]? I wasn't looking at it as like a work of art. I was looking at it as an information text. I've done that all the way through from an early age, I think about as early as grade 3 or 4 when I stopped reading for the pleasure literally of the read. It's very strange as I'm finding the stuff we're reading in class now; I'm beginning to read again in a different way. (FG1, p.2)

Heta believed that what she referred to as her "Nipissing training" was extremely influential on her practices in the classroom. For example, when describing her pedagogy, she noted: "I believe again that my Nipissing training in language arts has given me not so much theory but practical ideas that work in the classroom setting" (FRP, p. 3).

Finally, Heta believed that the use of reflection as a tool for metacognitive thinking allowed her to solidify a repertoire of best practices in teaching. Although she is "fed up with reflecting" (FG3, p. 2), she recognized its worth and described it as a tool that she would continue to use:

> But I have to tell you that reflecting has helped me a great deal and I hate to actually say it cause I'm so reflected out, but I know that that is something that I will maintain all the way through and I probably will do it daily – what worked as I'm doing lessons, just write "this worked" very briefly, but I think I will continue that. (FG3, p. 2)

Concerns

Heta repeatedly expressed concerns about the quality of her practicum placements. She observed associate teachers struggling with their own teaching and recognized the impact that struggle could have on her and the students in the classroom:

> I wish we had a practicum doing language arts with a teacher of excellence in this area. By going out in practicum, I see teachers struggling here. They realize that language arts is the focal point of all other disciplines and a student can falter academically because they lack these skills. (LJ, Jan. 28)

Heta also expressed concern about what she perceived to be a lack of understanding about language arts by administrators: "I have found even the 'experts' on the school boards are not necessarily in tune with the big picture and are only focusing on language arts in isolation"

(LJ, Jan. 28). In her reflections about these issues, she developed the idea that a mentorship program with a focus on language arts was needed for new teachers.

Heta made a comment in her final reflection paper that I believe should stand alone as a culmination of the beliefs, changes and influences that have contributed to her developing teacher identity over the course of the year:

> For me, literacy has opened up a world of opportunities. It has helped me to develop as a person. By communicating with others my world has expanded. Today, I am more willing to try new things that are not necessarily in my comfort zone. This is due, I believe, because my teachers have shown me that by taking baby steps at a pace that is right for you is okay…how you move forward in literacy, [is]by slowly acquiring the skills that are needed. As a university student I know I am still on a literacy journey. I am learning new ways to communicate knowledge and present ideas to my future students… As a teacher it is my responsibility to ensure that my students have every opportunity to accomplish this [becoming literate 21st century learners]. As their teacher my goal is to provide them with the keys that will open all the doors that lead to literacy. (PHA, p. 5)

Sherry

Historical Context: The Beginning

Sherry's story is rooted in familial relationships and experiences that embraced the outdoors and healthy, active living. From an early age, Sherry had a competitive streak that she believed shaped, to some extent, her literacy development. On the court and on the field, Sherry was a confident competitor, motivated by a desire to win—to come first. Her motivation and confidence helped her to experience success as an athlete. However, in the classroom, Sherry experienced something different. She felt shy and uncertain of her abilities.

> In my early years of elementary school, reading literature was never my forte. I dreaded having to read in front of people, whether it was in school or for family functions. I did not like the idea of having everyone listening attentively, scrutinizing every word that came out of my mouth. (PHA, p. 1)

Fortunately, as a youngster, Sherry had peer influences that helped her connect her love of winning with areas in the curriculum that she believed were not important. With respect to the

arts, specifically painting, she believed that it was "…absurd to see someone paint something and tell others that that is how they felt" (PHA, p. 2). In Grade 6, when a school friend suggested that she could enter a contest where she would create an artistic representation of her beliefs, attitudes, and values, and possibly win first place, she was hooked. Sherry considered herself "the competitive type of student; always wanting to win" (PHA, p. 3), and this contest was an important first-step in helping her connect arts-based literacy practices with her athletic nature:

> When my friends told me that every year they enter something that represents who they are as a person hoping they would win first place, I was all ears. You could enter a piece of art, write poems or stories, invent something, etc. I was all about winning! I had entered short stories and poems as well as a piece of art where I had people looking up into the stars… As I got older, I got over this fear and began to express who I was through discussions, reading, writing, and art regardless of anyone else's opinion. (PHA, p. 2)

Competition continued to be an important motivator for Sherry. In middle school, her teacher informed the class that they were to keep a reading log that would be collected monthly. At the end of the year, the teacher would calculate the number of pages each student read and gave a medal to the winner. Sherry continued: "Guess who the winner was? I had won the grade 7 reading log competition. I even have the medal still hanging in my room" (PHA, p. 3).

Experiences in her early education helped her to recognize that finishing first is a goal best left for the sports field:

> I can recall one specific time in grade 1 where we had to read silently. I was not the strongest reader and I knew that most of my classmates were well past the pages that I was on. I suddenly felt helpless and started to cry. My grade 1 teacher then approached me and told me that she does not care what page I was on. She was more concerned with me reading at my own pace and getting through the couples of pages that I could get through. A sudden weight was lifted off of my shoulders and I read at my own pace. I still felt helpless but then again, crying did not help. As a teacher, one must always remind their students that they should take their time with everything they do in life; life is not a race that applauds the person who gets their work done first. (PHA, p. 2)

She listened to that advice throughout her schooling and eventually she "had no difficulties when

it came to public speaking and my highest marks, other than physical education, were English" (PHA, p. 5). And, during the formative years, Sherry had plenty of positive influences including parents, teachers and peers:

> I had lots of help along the way from both my teachers in school as well as my family and friends. They were constantly editing my stuff and giving me ideas that not only pertained to that certain day, but has stuck with me throughout my life. (PHA, p. 3)

But games and contests seemed to have provided her with a motivation to move outside of her naturally-reserved self. Even Sherry was surprised at the change in herself: "It is remarkable to think that I was once that little girl who cried because I was behind the class in reading and I could not accept the fact that I had struggled with it" (PHA, p. 5).

Sherry's competitive nature gave her the determination and perseverance to rise above challenges in her life. She believed that she learned from those challenges and intended to use this learning in her own teaching.

> Going through what I had gone through in the past in terms of reading, writing, and visually representing myself was not easy for me. However, with perseverance and dedication, I was able to grow into the individual who I am now. The challenges that arose in my past are not stuck there. As an educator, I want to use my past to encourage my own students that they can and will get through any bumps in the road when it comes to literacy. (PHA, p. 5)

Beliefs

Sherry described literacy practices and events in the learning environment in both contemporary and traditional ways. She believed that language arts is important, and described literacy in the following way:

> Whether it is a religion reflection, analyzing a newspaper article for social studies, or even answering a word problem in math. When we read a certain piece of writing, listen to a particular form of voice, speak to others, write, view a movie or image, or even when we represent something in a non-written manner, so that others may view it, we are partaking in some sort of literary work. (PHA, p.5)

She also cited Bainbridge, Heydon and Malicky's (2009) definition of literacy as being

influenced by cultural contexts and that cultural contexts may actually act as a barrier to literacy learning.

Sherry believed that expression of understanding and ways of communicating with others went beyond traditional paper and pencil tasks. She described how she approached book talks in her placement teaching using a contemporary stance:

> As opposed to reading the book and then telling the class what it was about, they dressed up as the main character and discussed a part of the book they enjoyed, trying to be as creative as possible, such as talking similar to what they thought the character would sound like. This is an excellent way for the students to practice the aspects of literature that are not emphasized a lot today, such as representing, viewing, and oral. (TR1, p. 2)

Some of Sherry's beliefs were more traditional in nature. For example, she believed that standardized tests were important indicators of student knowledge. She also believed that grammar and spelling should be taught as isolated topics.

Sherry believed that language arts and literacy could and should be integrated with other subjects. She described how, in her placement, she was able to connect literacy activities with religion and drama:

> When teaching religion I usually have students reflect on the reading by answering questions about the passage, which gives them practice with their writing skills. If we are reading a play I will allow others to act out the scenes, which helps them with the representation aspect of literature. (TR, p. 3)

Changes

Sherry expressed changes in her beliefs about language arts teaching and learning as she viewed it through the lens of a teacher versus that of a student. When she used a 'teacher lens', she noticed how her understanding of language arts and literacy was different from her ideas as a student:

> However, my mindset was not always like this. I never really understood concept of literacy and language and how it would tie into the curriculum when I was a student in school. It is much more different than any other subject like science or math. I now

understand that it is not a concrete thing that could be learnt from a textbook. Now that I am on the other side of the fence, I realize the importance of literacy and language and how it is critical throughout a child's life. (TR, p. 1)

Sherry's first field placement experience led her to believe that teaching literacy was boring, but subsequent placements and course learning changed her mind:

Another thing that changed for me was the fact that you can actually make language arts and literature fun. When I was in my grade 5 placement, I dreaded teaching language arts because it all came from a manual. (FRP, p. 2)

Finally, she reflected that in her first placement she did not find language arts 'useful'; she then indicated "a change in this belief for the better" (FRP, p. 2).

Influences

Sherry described several influences on her beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. Her love of sport emerged repeatedly in her teaching. For example, all three lesson plans that she developed for the Partners in Education program were rooted in sport: the first lesson opened with a sport-related riddle, followed by a reading of *The Hockey Sweater* and closed with the creation of a jersey described as follows:

My plan is to have the student(s) design their own jersey (sport of any choice, but preferably hockey to stick with the theme of the book). On the back I will have the students write down their favorite number with a couple personal attributes they believe are necessary when playing a sport. (LP1, p. 1)

The second lesson she titled "Mad Libs Hockey" in which she connected writing to hockey vocabulary.

Sherry's associate teachers influenced her beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. In her first placement, she did not see a lot of literacy-related teaching, and had difficulty seeing where it fit in the curriculum. In her second placement, however, the associate teacher provided many opportunities to see children engaged in authentic literacy-related tasks across the curriculum: "However, I was in a grade 8 classroom this time and my associate

teacher presented the class with a lot of activities that integrated language arts and literacy within other subjects" (FRP, p. 1).

As with many others in this study, Sherry believed that her past personal experiences as a literacy learner have shaped and will continue to shape the pedagogical decisions she makes as a teacher:

> Going through what I had gone through in the past in terms of reading, writing, and visually representing myself was not easy for me. However, with perseverance and dedication, I was able to grow into the individual who I am now. The challenges that arose in my past are not stuck there. As an educator, I want to use my past to encourage my own students that they can and will get through any bumps in the road when it comes to literacy. This way, the students can have a sense of direction as to where they are going when it comes to language arts. By having a teacher who can relate to their students when it comes to reading and writing difficulties is a form of comfort for the students. (PHA, p. 4)

Concerns

Some of Sherry's beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy generated concerns. For example, she wondered why, in the 21st century, with technology being so pervasive, media literacy wasn't given more attention. She believed that more attention should be given to this area of the language arts curriculum. Sherry also had concerns about assessment in language arts and literacy:

> My interpretation of a student's reflection may be different than another teacher's interpretation, such as read alouds. If I do not think a student's reading is up to the level I want it to be, who says another teacher can disagree with me and say that it is? I am basing these students oral communication on my own communication skills, which may not be good in other teacher's eyes. Thus, I find it difficult to put a grade on a child's views and thoughts about literacy. (TR, p. 2)

Interpretation

This chapter began with descriptive case studies regarding beliefs, changes to beliefs, influences, and concerns of three preservice teachers: Maggie, Heta, and Sherry. Each story began with an historical context: the experiences preservice teachers had that they perceived to

have influenced their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. I then described the participants' elementary and secondary experiences as well as the literacy course, program, and practicum field experiences. The interpretation of each case is presented in the next section followed by a cross-case analysis.

Maggie's early experiences with language were an influential force in her own language development. Her grandparents, parents, and siblings all played significant roles in her literacy development. The power of the familial influence cannot be underestimated. Maggie developed a thorough understanding of the role that oral language and communication play in adolescent learning and expression. Her comments illustrate how profoundly her cultural experiences as a literacy learner influenced her perceptions of teachers, teaching and students. She developed this understanding based on observations of what she perceived seemed to be effective and even ineffective in her placements.

Maggie described particular instructional strategies that were effective when teaching ESL students. She garnered this knowledge through personal experiences as an English language learner herself, and she used her knowledge to make teaching decisions. The research literature to support these findings is minimal and, at best, covers only the surface of potential meaning. For example, Boggs' and Golden's (2009) research identified family as a category of influences on preservice teachers' beliefs, neither described the ways in which family is an influence nor the degree of influence. Further, singular experiences (Boggs & Golden, 2009) such as school events were identified as influences. In Maggie's case, both singular and family influences proved to be significant in her understanding of ESL learners as well as her beliefs about their unique needs.

In the final focus group interview, Maggie indicated that "I liked it [language arts] so much that I've accepted a language position in Mexico." In Maggie's case, it appears that her

personal history may have influenced her decision to become a teacher of language arts and likely influenced her decision to teach in Mexico. This finding aligns with that of Zulich, Bean, and Herrick (1992) who found that a preservice teacher's personal history influenced his/her decision to become a teacher of a specific discipline.

Before entering the teacher education program Maggie believed that teaching would be easy. This is a common belief among preservice teachers (Hollingsworth, 1989). After a term in the program, Maggie became convinced that teaching language arts and literacy was much more difficult that she had first believed–this shift represents a change in her beliefs. Then, after a further term in the teacher education program, Maggie's beliefs changed again–back to her original belief that teaching language arts and literacy isn't that difficult. This evolution of her beliefs suggests that significant change did take place for Maggie. Dissonance was created when she was faced with a dilemma (Helfenbein, 2008). For Maggie, her lack of knowledge led to a sense of 'discomfort' that forced her to purposefully find ways to alleviate the dissonance–to find ways to become more comfortable (she refers to resources and teacher assistance). This finding calls into question the assertion of several studies (Kennedy, 1999; Pajares, 1992; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998) that preservice teachers' beliefs rarely change between entry to and exit from the teacher education program. Could the dual change in Maggie's beliefs be representative of other preservice teacher experiences? How many of the participants in previous studies experienced transformations similar to Maggie's? That is, they entered and exited with the same belief, but over time experienced significant change nonetheless.

Heta was an experienced teacher who had taught for several years in a private education system. As a mature adult, she decided to formalize her teacher training with a Bachelor of

Education degree. Although she enjoyed teaching in a private school, she wanted to open the doors to teaching in the public education system. Heta was surprised by all that she had to learn, similar to the participants in Kosnik and Beck's (2009) study. Although passionate and determined to be a good teacher, she lacked experience and knowledge of current best practices in education. Grossman (1989) found that teachers who entered teaching without formal teacher preparation relied on memories of themselves as students to shape their views of teaching. If this contention is true, Heta's previous experience as a non-qualified teacher would have been shaped by her experiences as a student. This experience would explain that she was surprised by what she perceived as having so much to learn. This realization on her part also speaks to the notion of life-long learning and how even seasoned teachers need to be on a continuous quest of self-education and self-improvement (Cain, 2001). Ingersoll (2002) argues that the commitment to life-long learning may provide new teachers with the tools they need to survive in the teaching profession, and that those very tools may well be what keeps them from leaving the profession.

Heta spoke often about her perceptions of her role as a teacher. Her reflections resonated with exuberance, excitement about the prospect of being a teacher, and a determination to make learning effective and engaging for her students. Heta's views of her role as guide align with the findings of Darling-Hammond (2006), who advocates for a shift in the teacher's role from transmitter of knowledge to that learner. She was, however, concerned about the challenges she was about to face. Armed with a powerful set of beliefs, many of which had been transformed over the course of the year, Heta also came to believe that she had the tools to be a great teacher. This finding is similar to those of Hollingsworth (1989) and Weinstein (1988). Hollingsworth (1989) found that preservice teachers believed that teaching would be easy, while Wienstein (1988) found that participants consistently underestimated the difficulties that first year teachers

face and that they consistently perceived themselves as having less difficulty than the average first year teacher.

Heta's case is interesting, given the fact that her first love was science. She had previously earned a Master of Science degree, and had worked as a research scientist. Heta had loved literature, fiction and nonfiction, as well as reading and writing as a youngster, but had gravitated toward the sciences as an adult. Throughout her story, she retained her passion for science and math, but supplemented it with a renewed vigor and interest for language arts and literacy.

Throughout this study, I refer to changes in beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy. It has in fact been a difficult aspect of the research since the findings don't seem to align well with the current literature. But when one considers Heta's story and the profound changes she articulated regarding her beliefs about the role of literacy and science/math, we see how carefully and adeptly she has been able to preserve her previous beliefs about the importance of science and math and extend these to an appreciation of the importance of language and literacy.

Heta was influenced by her family and siblings (Boggs & Golden, 2009). Her beliefs about how children learn and the kinds of relationships that should be developed between students and teacher were influenced by singular experiences (Boggs & Golden, 2009) in school. However, the preponderance of influences described by Heta relate to the teacher education program (Graves, 2007; Kosnik & Beck, 2009; Linek et al., 2006). She identified associate teachers, field placements, language arts and literacy assignments, the language arts course itself, and the teacher education program as influences on her beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. Powell (1992) noted that teacher education programs are a powerful influence for

nontraditional teachers as compared to traditional teachers. Traditional teachers as defined by Powell (1992) are those who enter the teacher education program immediately after attaining an undergraduate degree. Nontraditional teachers are those who return to the teacher education program after some absence from university. Maggie and Sherry were traditional teachers, while Heta was nontraditional. Powell (1992) noted that nontraditional teachers relied more heavily on the learning that took place in teacher education programs, while traditional teachers tended to be influenced by all schooling experiences–elementary, secondary, and college, in a more balanced way.

Heta did not express many concerns about teaching. As an experienced educator, she viewed the teacher education program as an opportunity for growth in her craft (Powell, 1992). She experienced new learning, but embraced all experiences as examples and means to becoming a better teacher.

Heta's reflections resonated with comments about her vision for the future. She exuded a sense of, not necessarily confidence, because she 'hasn't figured it out yet', but rather a sense of determination. Heta is able to envision the possibilities, and she is determined to make a difference in the lives of her students. This attitude is consistent with Powell's (1992) findings.

Sherry described literacy in both traditional and contemporary terms. This attitudes suggests that she hasn't a fully developed understanding of teaching and learning language arts and literacy and that she is struggling to develop a teacher identity. Kosnik and Beck (2009) also describe the emergence of this phenomenon where preservice teachers often find it difficult to develop a teacher identity while in the teacher education program. Sherry, however (as compared to the other participants), talked about the meaning of language arts, literacy, and literacy tasks through a teacher lens, and compared this perception to her views of these topics when she was a

student. This was important learning for Sherry. The use of the Personal History Account, Term Report and Final Reflection Paper may have given Sherry the impetus to engage in the kinds of reflection that permit this kind of thinking.

Sherry self-identified changes in her beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy. When examining the data, the researcher realized that Sherry began to view classroom tasks and experiences through the lens of a teacher. As a result, tasks that she once viewed as irrelevant became more important.

The influences on Sherry's literacy development were family and school experiences. Boggs and Golden (2009) and Richardson (1996) described similar influences on preservice teachers' beliefs. Sherry mentioned her competitive nature and how games and contests provided her with the impetus to work hard. But, more importantly, the characteristics of a competitive person (determination, perseverance, and being strong-willed), also served as tools for overcoming academic obstacles. However, it appears that she still needs to learn that cooperation and collaboration, in keeping with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the social construction of knowledge, will be more useful to promoting students' literacy development.

Practicum experiences (Graves, 2006; Linek, Sampson, Raine, & Klakamp, 2006) and reflection were critical for Sherry, as they were for most preservice teachers. In Sherry's case, her reflections indicated that what she experienced as a preservice teacher in the classroom, helped to shape her beliefs about language arts and literacy.

A cross case analysis of the three cases described above reveals several important similarities and differences between cases. The following section explores the stories of Maggie, Heta, and Sherry, and describes the ways in which their stories are similar and the ways in which they are unique. The case studies suggest that there are many pathways to becoming a good

teacher. Maggie, Heta, and Sherry have idiosyncratic backgrounds; they are particular to each individual—and yet there exists a pattern of similarity. All three were influenced by family, school, and singular experiences—aligning with the findings of Boggs and Golden (1999) and Richardson (1996). Yet the degree of influence and the manner in which those influences shaped their philosophies of teaching are different. For example, all three were influenced by their families; however, Maggie's and Sherry's specific fields of study (ESL and Phys Ed) were shaped by family and school experiences. Heta's conceptual views of teaching were grounded in experiences with her own children. As a mother of a dyslexic boy, Heta learned first-hand the ways in which teachers and schooling could shape the future of her son. She developed some understanding of the power of the teacher and the kinds of experiences needed to facilitate success. Powell (1992) also found that preservice teachers' experiences as parents shaped their beliefs about teaching children.

Although the three participants experienced changes to their beliefs about teaching literacy, they did so in different degrees and in different ways. Heta experienced changes to her beliefs, but she was undergoing a transformation as part of a process similar to the process described by Kuhn et al. (2000), Magolda (1996), and Schommer-Aikins, Mau, Brookhart and Hutter (2000) whereby preservice teachers progress through a series of conceptual changes during their teacher education training. Heta's beliefs did not change in the same way as Maggie's and Sherry's. With Maggie and Sherry, beliefs swung widely from one end of the spectrum to the other and, in Maggie's case, back again. Heta's change was more gradual, with the exception of her beliefs about the importance of language arts in the curriculum. As a mature student, Heta remembered literacy in school as basal readers, and paper and pencil tasks. She readily identified that these strategies were not engaging students, and began to amend her ideas.

By her own admission, she hadn't a fully developed sense of her philosophy of teaching, but she was on the right track. Her primary goal was to use authentic tasks to keep students wanting to come to school and wanting to learn. She was determined to do whatever she had to, to make that happen. As such, Heta was going through a process of change. One explanation for the differences in changes to beliefs might be supported by claims that some entering beliefs are well established (Ashton & Gregoire-Gill, 2003; Danielewicz, 2001), while others are less firmly entrenched (Winitzky & Kauchak, 1997).

All three participants expressed some concerns about teaching, but Maggie and Sherry more so than Heta. Again, we might connect this difference to their roles as traditional and nontraditional teachers. Powell (1992) found that traditional teachers, who had recently completed their high school years, had ideas about what students should do in the classroom and how they should behave, while nontraditional teachers felt they needed to spend more time in the classroom getting to know students. In addition, Powell found that traditional teachers had difficulty articulating their beliefs about teaching while the nontraditional group did not. Taken together, these two differences between traditional and nontraditional teachers might explain why Maggie and Sherry expressed more concerns about teaching than Heta did. As traditional teachers, Maggie and Sherry did not have well developed philosophies of education, while Heta seemed to have more of an understanding of what she believed she needed to do as an effective teacher. Similarly, preconceived notions about student behaviour in the classroom may have generated concerns about teaching for Maggie and Sherry that Heta might not have considered given the stretch of elapsed time since she had been a student herself.

Although all three participants believed that they would be good teachers (Weinstein, 1988), Maggie and Sherry accepted the status quo of education, while Heta believed that there

were some problems in what she observed in classrooms and teaching that she felt needed to be addressed. Perhaps it was this observation that motivated Heta to leave a teaching position in a private school to enter the teacher education program. She believed that what she was providing for students was not adequate, that learning and teaching could and should be more effective. She did not just want to be a teacher; she wanted to be a *better* teacher. She wasn't prepared to perpetuate past practice; she was prepared to use critical thinking, action, and reflection to open up new possibilities for teaching and learning.

Summary

This chapter delved into the personal stories of the three teacher candidates in Phase Two of the study. The stories were analyzed and interpreted. In the following chapter, the findings from both Phase One and Phase Two are used to draw conclusions, describe implications, and suggest further recommendations for teacher education programs, as well as for future research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify the beliefs that preservice teachers entering a teacher education program had about literacy teaching and learning, to describe how their beliefs about literacy teaching and learning change over time in the literacy course, and to identify the influences on preservice teachers' beliefs about literacy teaching and learning. The study was carried out in two phases. The thirty-seven participants in Phase One of the study were students in one section of a Junior/Intermediate Language Arts and Literacy Class at a Faculty of Education. The participants in Phase Two of the study were eight students selected from Phase One among participants. The design of the study was qualitative and emergent. Data were collected over four months from several data sources: personal history accounts, term reports, final reflection papers, Partners in Education lesson plans and reflections, learning journals, and transcribed focus group interviews. Analysis was constant comparative (Patton, 2002).

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data: beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy; changes to beliefs; influences on beliefs; and concerns about teaching language arts and literacy. I begin this chapter by drawing conclusions based on the findings and interpretation, followed by implications and finally recommendations for future research.

Conclusions

This study described beliefs that preservice teachers possessed when *entering* the teacher education program, those that emerged as they progressed *through* the program, and beliefs they held as they *exited* the program. The findings of my study are consistent with current literature that, in large part, speaks to teacher preparation. However, this study describes teacher candidates' beliefs as they relate specifically to teaching and learning language arts and literacy, and in this way represents new knowledge and adds to the current body of literature.

Preservice teachers entered the teacher education program with beliefs about pedagogy that included modeling, spelling, grammar, and phonics. They believed that language arts programs should be engaging and interesting. Some recognized the importance of learning basic literacy skills at home, and most recognized how important language development was to the overall success of student learning. It is not surprising that, as the preservice teachers entered the teacher education program, they described language arts and literacy in a fragmented way; few participants described language arts and literacy through a holistic lens. Aspects of language arts and literacy that were tangible were more frequently named, for example, reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and group work. Those less tangible, metacognition and higher order thinking, were rarely mentioned. It appears, then, that most preservice teachers described language arts and literacy pedagogy in traditional ways. An exception was Heta who was a non-traditional teacher whose learning was informed by parenting experiences and teaching in a private school. This phenomenon is not surprising since preservice teachers entering the program only know about teaching what they have experienced as students. They recognized that literacy teaching has to be interesting and engaging because they have been students, and they understand the effects of using engaging programming based on experience. Their student experiences, however, cannot inform them about appropriate instructional approaches, and as a result, when entering the program, preservice teachers did not have the knowledge or the language to conceptualize or describe literacy in contemporary terms.

This study showed that preservice teachers' entering beliefs were influenced by their own personal histories, consistent with earlier research. However, this study also revealed that, although personal histories were significant in shaping preservice teacher beliefs, backgrounds were idiosyncratic and there were in fact, multiple pathways that lead participants to the teaching

profession.

As preservice teachers gained practical and theoretical experience, their beliefs about teaching literacy began to change and evolve. The teacher education program served to interrupt some existing beliefs, and, in some cases, changes in philosophy included a complete turn-around in thinking. In other cases, the changes were more global in nature. The notion of changes in preservice teachers' beliefs is significant because (a) there is a discrepancy between the findings of this study and the literature; (b) there is little in the current literature about *how* beliefs change; and (c) the changes that are described in the current literature are rooted in conclusions made by researchers rather than self-identified changes described by preservice teachers themselves as was the case in this study.

This study found that preservice teachers experienced many changes in their beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy, including changes to philosophy; pedagogy; perceptions of students; and perceptions of themselves.

Change emerged in this study in a way that has not been previously described in the literature—neither with respect to teaching in general nor to teaching literacy specifically. In some cases, preservice teachers entered the program with particular beliefs and exited with the same beliefs. This finding is significant because, despite what transpired during the course, including adaptations, modifications, and changes to entering beliefs, beliefs about literacy finally reverted to the entering set of beliefs. The most prevalent example of this kind of change occurred with preservice teachers who entered the program believing that teaching language arts and literacy would be easy. I use this example of change because it provides us with a practical example for deconstructing what might have happened and why change occurred. As preservice teachers gained theoretical and practical experience through the course and teacher education program,

they began to see the complex nature of literacy teaching and learning. These experiences initiated changes in beliefs to thinking that teaching literacy might actually be more challenging than they had thought. By the exit point of the program, some of these preservice teachers expanded their understanding of literacy-related theory and pedagogy, so that they became less apprehensive about their teaching tasks–reverting back to their original thinking that teaching literacy would be easy. This twice-over change in beliefs illustrates how the teacher education program, both in-class and practicum, influenced changes in their comfort levels about literacy teaching.

As preservice teachers entered the program, they were often unaware of the complexities of teaching language arts and literacy, and they were confident in their abilities to teach. Once they began to learn about what literacy teaching really meant, they developed a sense of apprehension about their abilities to be effective teachers. Then, with further practice and experience in the classroom, confidence levels increased and they no longer perceived teaching language arts as complicated as they had just months earlier. In some ways, comfort level was closely related to confidence, whereas earlier they had not known how to address challenges they encountered. This feeling rendered students helpless and unable to see the possibilities. With experience, comfort level increased, as did confidence, and, at the same time, a change in beliefs about teaching language arts occurred. This kind of change to beliefs is not addressed in the current literature. It is significant for its contribution to the body of knowledge we have about beliefs, but also because it adds a new dimension. Beliefs do more than change, some evolve over time in an education program. Changes to preservice teacher beliefs evolve in ways that are sometimes linear, but also cyclical in nature.

By the end of the program, exiting beliefs indicated that preservice teachers were able to

articulate more ways to describe language arts and literacy programs, but their descriptions were still largely fragmented. Preservice teachers recognized that literacy experiences needed to be authentic, offer student choice, include a variety of resources, meet personal needs of students, and allow students to co-construct their own knowledge. However, no one used these descriptions in their exiting beliefs; participants listed only one or two ideas. With respect to content and instructional approaches, the preservice teachers focused more on traditional literacy strands such as reading, writing, grammar, spelling, and independent reading. Only two mentioned differentiated instruction or metacognitive thinking. This finding suggests that preservice teachers were struggling to connect their entering beliefs with what they learned in the teacher education program. The degree to which, if any, they used metacognitive approaches in their own learning may have influenced their ability to transfer new learning from one course to another and eventually into practice.

With respect to evolving and exiting beliefs, the use of reflection appeared to have been a significant influence on preservice teacher beliefs. Although the focus of reflections was rooted in language arts and literacy, much of what preservice teachers reflected on concerned teaching in general. Pedagogy considered effective in literacy programs was considered effective in all areas of the curriculum. This finding suggests that beliefs about how to teach literacy might be transferable to learning across courses.

This study also revealed the concerns of preservice teachers about teaching language arts and literacy. Preservice teachers had concerns about perceptions of their ability to teach language arts and literacy effectively. They also voiced many concerns about issues that emerged during their field placements: how to plan; how to assess; how to motivate students; and how to address the diversity in classrooms in terms of culture, ability, and background.

Several gaps emerged in the beliefs of preservice teachers. First, none of the participants described the instructional approaches as part of a balanced literacy program. The literacy course I taught was developed around these approaches, but no one connected them as an overall philosophy. Since the course was divided into two-hour segments, different instructional approaches were addressed in each class. More attention to integrating the approaches and connecting them over several courses may have helped preservice teachers to see literacy programming in a more holistic way.

Second, preservice teachers did not describe literacy as empowering, as a vehicle for representation, or as a means of becoming a global and culturally responsible citizen. In this, the 21st century, one wonders how and why realization failed to occur. Despite the instructor's setting the stage for literacy instruction in the Literacy course using the four roles of the literate learner, for example, and given the attention to social justice issues in the course, the connection between literacy as empowering and illiteracy as marginalizing was not recognized by many preservice teachers. Teacher educators could use the classroom forum to ensure that preservice teachers have a global understanding of the implications of literacy practices and events.

Finally, the role of parents was rarely mentioned in any of the data sources, and classroom management was not mentioned at all. Previous studies have shown both classroom management and the role of the parent to be areas of concern for preservice teachers (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Harito, 2004). This gap might have emerged as a result of preservice teachers' limited opportunities for meaningful contact with parents, but also because preservice teachers did not connect relationships with parents or classroom management specifically with literacy teaching.

Implications

Preservice teachers need opportunities to examine their entering and exiting beliefs, as well as the evolution of their beliefs and, ultimately, their conceptions of what it means to be a teacher. Accessing this information and reflecting on a metacognitive level will enable them to develop a professional identity that includes all the knowledge and skills that characterize multifaceted teacher-knowledge. They should also engage in reflective practices because, as Pajares (1992) points out, "unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices" (p. 328). Reflection is also important for teacher educators because knowing and understanding preservice teachers' entering beliefs will allow them to tailor programming in ways that activate background knowledge so that literacy teaching and learning are more purposeful.

In this study, the kinds of prompts used to elicit preservice teachers' beliefs about language arts and literacy might shed light on why preservice teachers had difficulty articulating conceptions of literacy teaching. For example, preservice teachers were asked: "What are your beliefs about language arts and literacy?" This framing of this question might have implied listing a series of things about language arts and literacy, which, in turn, might have been interpreted as fragmented beliefs. On the other hand, asking "What is literacy?" might have encouraged preservice teachers to connect some of their ideas into a more holistic response.

Opportunities for preservice teachers to deconstruct practicum field placements in light of entering and emerging beliefs about theory and pedagogical choices made in the classroom is necessary (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cochrane-Smith, 2004). Lo (2005) recommends that language courses should "relate concepts to teaching situations through practical case studies, collaborative reflection, and discussion to give trainees a chance to uncover, express and modify

their beliefs" (p.152). Further, Thomas (1997) argues that "prospective teachers need help in forging theory-practice links" (p. 141). For this reason, teacher education programs should provide preservice teachers with opportunities to make connections between university classroom learning and field classroom experiences through a variety of strategies: reflection, dialogue, experiential learning, and in-course collaboration.

The personal history account was an important task for preservice teachers to complete in two ways. First, the account provided preservice teachers with a focused and structured opportunity to examine who they were as literacy learners and their perceptions of the influences on their literacy development (Angelova, 2005; Bartels, 2005; Lo, 2005). This process allowed preservice teachers to name, in a purposeful way, those influences and to consider them in light of becoming a teacher. Second, the account was a useful tool for the instructor to begin building a relationship with students. These accounts provided a window into the early experiences of students in a way that a teacher educator might not glimpse otherwise. Building personal history accounts might help teacher educators understand the unique experiences of their students and how they serve to shape preservice teachers' current understanding of literacy teaching and learning. Teacher educators need to consider the beliefs of preservice teachers early in teacher education programs as a way to raise the consciousness of their belief systems. A tool such as the Personal History Account allows access to preservice teachers' entering beliefs as a means to informing teacher educator practice and as a means of questioning teacher educators' assumptions about their students.

An important next step for preservice teachers would be to examine how their emerging and exiting beliefs will inform their future teaching. For example, some preservice teachers identified practices that they considered effective; others identified practices that they believed

were less effective. Dialogue in the preservice teacher education program regarding what these beliefs and observations mean for future teaching is critical. Preservice teachers need to consider whether they will continue past practices based on their own experiences in schooling and placements or will they infuse into their practices opportunities for student learning that hold interest for the students? Having preservice teachers keep a learning journal and using the dilemmas that emerge would be an excellent springboard for deep discussion, identification of beliefs that lead to ineffective and effective teaching practices, as well as the collective development of solutions to problems. In this study, preservice teachers observed ineffective strategies, and recognized that these were not working well; they also observed effective strategies that promoted literacy learning. Preservice teachers must be aware of these issues and adjust their beliefs and approaches accordingly.

A number of participants were able to transfer understandings across courses. This ability enlarged their understandings of teacher knowledge. We must begin to consider the development of teacher education programs that facilitate cross-course and field experience connections to strengthen the growth of their teacher identities.

Recommendations

The recommendations are divided into two components, including those designed for Bachelor of Education programs (literacy courses and field placements), as well as recommendations for future research.

Bachelor of Education Programs

1.   *Preservice teachers should have structured opportunities to identify their beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy as they enter their teacher education programs.*

Most entering beliefs were rooted in experiences as students and, as a result, were lacking in deep understanding of what constitutes teaching. Further, these beliefs were revealed as a result of completing structured assignments in the literacy course. Preservice teachers had idiosyncratic backgrounds, but all were influenced by similar categories, particularly family, home environment, and school experiences. It is important, then, that teacher education courses have built-in opportunities to identify what beliefs teacher candidates bring to their education programs as early in the program as possible. In this way, they can explicitly use their existing understandings as a foundation for constructing new meaning.

2. *As teacher educators prepare to provide opportunities for learning, an understanding of preservice teachers' concerns can help to identify their needs (Fuller et al., 1973) by identifying concepts that have been internalized and those requiring further attention. In turn, teacher educators can develop learning opportunities geared to minimizing preservice teacher concerns (Lotter, 2004) that may be most essential for students as they progress through their teacher education program and, eventually, into the field.*

3. *Teacher educators should make explicit instructional approaches that align with current theories about effective literacy teaching and learning.*

This study found that preservice teachers had a fragmented understanding of language arts and literacy. All of the instructional approaches in a balanced literacy program were presented to students in two-hour workshops over the first several weeks of the course. It seems that this fragmented approach may have contributed to preservice teachers' fragmented understanding. Further, although a constructivist approach was used to inform the ways in which the content would be delivered in the literacy course, few preservice teachers named

constructivist theory as one that would guide their own teaching. In retrospect, if the theories underpinning the strategies presented in class were never identified as being constructivist, it would be unlikely that preservice teachers would make that connection on their own. Explicit naming of the strategies used in teaching (in the literacy course) and connecting them to theories would be beneficial for students and promote metacognitive understanding.

4.   Teacher educators need to build stronger and more salient partnerships with local schools.

The findings of this study suggest that field placements should provide preservice teachers with experiences that include observation of effective teaching of subjects in grades that they intend to teach and that the content and pedagogy they observe should closely match their university classroom experiences.

Teacher educators and Faculties of Education can build relationships with local schools in which practicum experiences are embedded in subject-specific courses. The Partners in Education is representative of one such strategy in which preservice teachers were partnered with elementary students for the academic year and in which preservice teachers had structured opportunities to teach literacy-based lessons.

5.   Teacher education programs should consider instituting a course, perhaps an internship that integrates the above recommendations as an extension of the teacher education program.

Such an internship might provide preservice teachers with an arena to connect content area subjects with literacy in a more meaningful way. Preservice teachers could be given opportunities to develop the curriculum, to establish and set goals for their own learning. Kosnik and Beck (2009) propose a similar model of teacher education that seeks to bring teacher

educators and preservice teachers together to collaboratively construct understandings of teaching that are aligned with current theories of learning. This kind of internship, rooted in dialogue and reflection, could be designed for this purpose and might better prepare teachers for effective practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

Reflecting on the research questions, review of the literature and findings, two further questions emerged:

1.   What is the nature of the evolution of teacher beliefs within literacy courses? What interventions and instructional approaches promote reflection and the development of metacognition?

2.   How do preservice teachers' evolving beliefs align with practice on field placements? How do these align for novice teachers?

3.   How do preservice teachers articulate their understanding of teacher identity, particularly in relation to their understandings of literacy teaching and learning and social justice?

Summary

This study identified the many and varied beliefs that preservice teachers hold about teaching and learning language arts and literacy, beliefs that previously were not defined in the literature within a literacy framework. This study demonstrated further that preservice teachers' beliefs are, in fact, prone to change. The notion that beliefs do more than just change, but evolve in ways that are not linear, but rather are cyclical, is important. These findings suggest that critical reflection and metacognition play roles in the development of preservice teachers' beliefs, particularly the shift from using a student perspective to that of a teacher.

This study identified influences that shape preservice teacher beliefs beginning in early

childhood and progressing through to the teacher education program. Preservice teachers enter the teacher education program from multiple entry points, so that different influences contribute to their understandings. Most of them enter their professional programs with a common belief that they will become good teachers and that they have what it takes to be effective educators. This is promising news for all stakeholders, it and represents the beginning stages of a teacher identity that will change and evolve over the course of a teacher's career. The introduction of new ideas and instructional approaches within teacher education often serve to interrupt beliefs as do practicum placement experiences. It is critical that programs, teacher educators, and associate teachers facilitate opportunities for preservice teachers to raise into consciousness what their beliefs are, how well they align with current theories, to negotiate barriers, concerns, and change, so that, over time, they can fulfill their dreams and promise of being great teachers.

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Appendix A

Lakehead
U N I V E R S I T Y

October 30, 2008

Principal Investigator: Dr. Mary Clare Courtland
Student Investigator: Ms. Anna-Marie Aquino
Faculty of Education
Lakehead University
955 Oliver Road
Thunder Bay, Ontario   P7B 5E1

Dear Researchers:

Re: REB Project #: 159 07-08
   Granting Agency name: N/A
   Granting Agency Project #: N/A

On the recommendation of the Research Ethics Board, I am pleased to grant ethical approval to your research project entitled, "Preservice Teacher Beliefs About Teaching Literacy".

Ethics approval is valid until **October 30, 2009**. Please submit a Request for Renewal form to the Office of Research by September 30, 2009 if your research involving human subjects will continue for longer than one year. A Final Report must be submitted promptly upon completion of the project. Research Ethics Board forms are available at:

   http://bolt.lakeheadu.ca/~researchwww/internalforms.html
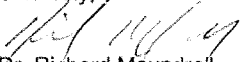
During the course of the study, any modifications to the protocol or forms must not be initiated without prior written approval from the REB. You must promptly notify the REB of any adverse events that may occur.

Completed reports and correspondence may be directed to:

Research Ethics Board
c/o Office of Research
Lakehead University
955 Oliver Road
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1
Fax: (807) 346-7749

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Maundrell
Chair, Research Ethics Board

/len

cc: Faculty of Graduate Studies
     Office of Research

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NIPISSING
U N I V E R S I T Y

January 5, 2009

Anna-Marie Aquino
150 Veronica Drive
North Bay, ON P1B 9K7

Dear Anna-Marie:

Re: REB File # *08-11-04* (Please quote on all correspondence)
        Project Entitled: <u>Preservice Teacher Beliefs About Teaching</u>

It is our pleasure to advise you that the Research Ethics Board at Nipissing University has granted ethical approval for your research project entitled <u>Preservice Teacher Beliefs About Teaching</u> for the period of *12/22/08* to *12/22/09*. Ethics approval is valid for one year from project approval.

Tri-Council Policy Statement requires you to submit an annual/final progress report annually and upon completion of your project.

If there are any changes to the project you are required to submit a Request to Renew/Revise an Approved Research Protocol to the Research Office at ethic@nipissingu.ca.

At any time during your research should any participant(s) suffer adversely you are required to advise the Research Ethics Board at Nipissing University, (705) 474-3461 ext. 4198 within 24 hours of the event.

We wish you all the success in completion of your project.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. John Long, Chair
Research Ethics Board

cc: Martee Morin, REB Coordinator
        Research Services

100 College Drive, Box 5002, North Bay, ON   P1B 8L7
tel: (705) 474-3450 · fax: (705) 474-1947
tty: (705) 474-8797 · www.nipissingu.ca

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Appendix B

Letter of Invitation: Phase I - One section of Preservice Teachers

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

Dear Preservice Teacher,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I am conducting in partial fulfillment of the requirements of my doctoral program. The title of the study is Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Literacy Education.

The purpose of the proposed study is to identify beliefs that preservice teachers have about teaching and being a literacy teacher; to determine if literacy beliefs change over the course of the year; and to identify what events and experiences preservice teachers perceive as influencing these beliefs.

The findings of the study will add to the limited body of knowledge about preservice teacher beliefs about teaching literacy. The findings of the study will provide you with insights into your beliefs about literacy education and the events and experiences that influence your beliefs about literacy education.

There are two phases involved in the research. All of the tasks associated with Phase I of the study are requirements of the Language Arts and Literacy course. However, if you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to submit the following documents to be used as data in the study: your personal history account and the final reflection papers.

In Phase II of the study, I shall invite eight preservice teachers in the course to participate. These individuals will be invited to keep a learning journal for the duration of the study; requested to submit lesson plans and reflections from the Partners in Education program; and participate in three audio-taped focus group interview sessions of approximately one hour each.

The study is consistent with the ethical guidelines mandated by the Research Ethics Board of Lakehead University. These include:

◆ There are no risks associated with participation in this study.
◆ Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time.
◆ The right to refuse to participate in any part of the study.
◆ All data will be coded to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (using pseudonyms).
◆ The data will be accessible by the researcher and supervisor only.
◆ Data will be stored securely at Lakehead University for 5 years after which time they will be destroyed.
◆ The findings from this study will be disseminated to the academic community through publication as a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed journals articles and presentations at conferences.
◆ Findings of the study will be available to participants upon request to the researcher's email address provided below.
◆ **Participation in the study will have not have any effect impact on grades in the Language Arts and Literacy course.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you can contact me at annama@nipissingu.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland at mccourtl@tbaytel.net or (807)345-4695, or the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University at (807) 343-8283.

Thank You,
Anna-Marie Aquino
(705) 474-3461 ext.4152

Appendix C

Consent Form: Phase 1 – One section of Preservice Teachers

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

I have read and understood the letter of invitation from Anna-Marie Aquino describing the study called Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy. I have read and understood the details of the study and the following ethical considerations:

◆ There are no risks associated with participation in the study.
◆ Participation in the study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time.
◆ I can refuse to participate in any part of the study.
◆ All data will be coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (using pseudonyms). although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups.
◆ Data will be accessible to the researcher and supervisor only.
◆ Data will be stored securely at Lakehead University for 5 years after which time they will be destroyed.
◆ The findings from this study will be disseminated to the academic community through publication as a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed academic journals and presentations at conferences.
◆ I can request a summary of the findings by emailing the researcher.
◆ **Participation in the study will not have any effect on grades in the Language Arts and Literacy course.**

I agree/do not agree to participate in the study.
(please circle one)

_____
Name of Research Participant (please print)

_____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   **Date**
_____

I would be willing to participate in Phase II of the study: Yes_____No_____

Contact Information:

   Name:_____

   Telelphone:_____

   Email: _____

Appendix D

Letter of Invitation: Phase 2 – Purposeful Sample of 8 Preservice Teachers

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

Dear Preservice Teacher,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that I am conducting in partial fulfillment of the requirements of my doctoral program. The title of the study is Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Literacy Education.

The purpose of the proposed study is to identify beliefs that preservice teachers have about teaching and being a literacy teacher; to determine if literacy beliefs change over the course of the year; and to identify what events and experiences preservice teachers perceive as influencing these beliefs.

The findings of the study will add to the limited body of knowledge about preservice teachers beliefs about teaching literacy. The findings of the study will provide you with insights into your beliefs about literacy education and the events and experiences that influence your beliefs about literacy education.

Phase II of the study consists of eight preservice teachers selected from the population of preservice teachers in Phase I. If you agree to participate in Phase II, you will be asked to keep a learning journal from September until December; submit the learning journal for use as data in the study; submit lesson plans from the Partners in Education program; and participate in three audio-taped focus group interview sessions of approximately one hour each.

The study is consistent with the ethical guidelines mandated by the Research Ethics Board of Lakehead University. These include:

♦ There are no risks associated with participation in this study.
♦ Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time.
♦ The right to refuse to participate in any part of the study.
♦ The focus group interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed.
♦ All data will be coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (using pseudonyms), although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups;
♦ The data will be accessible by the researcher and supervisor only.
♦ Data will be stored securely at Lakehead University for 5 years after which time they will be destroyed.
♦ The findings from this study will be disseminated to the academic community through publication as a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed journals articles and presentations at conferences.
♦ Findings of the study will be available to participants upon request to the researcher's email address provided below.
♦ **Participation in the study will have not have any effect on grades in the Language Arts and Literacy course.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you can contact me at annama@nipissingu.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland at mccourtl@tbaytel.net or (807)345-4695, or the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University at (807) 343-8283.

Thank You,

Anna-Marie Aquino
(705) 474-3461 ext.4152

Appendix E

Consent Form: Phase 2 – Purposeful Sample of 8 Preservice Teachers Preservice

Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy

I have read and understood the letter of invitation describing the study called Preservice Teacher Beliefs about Teaching Literacy. I have read and understood the details of the study and the following ethical considerations:

- There are no risks associated with participation in the study.
- Participation in the study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time.
- I can refuse to participate in any part of the study.
- I can choose not to answer any questions in the focus groups.
- The focus group interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed.
- All data will be coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity (using pseudonyms), although confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups.
- Data will be accessible to the researcher and supervisor only.
- Data will be stored securely at Lakehead University for 5 years after which time they will be destroyed.
- The findings from this study will be disseminated to the academic community through publication as a doctoral dissertation, publication in refereed academic journals and presentations at conferences.
- I can request a summary of the findings by emailing the researcher.
- **Participation in the study will not have any effect on grades in the Language Arts and Literacy course.**

I agree/do not agree to participate in Phase II of the study.
(please circle one)

_____
Name of Research Participant (please print)

_____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   **Date**

Appendix F

Personal History Account

The personal history account will engage you in the recall and construction of your own story as an independent literacy learner. Uncovering our literate selves and our literate lives shapes who we are in the classroom and how we interact with our students.

> *These stories become a kind of primary text in classes, enabling us to uncover our unspoken*
>
> *assumptions; examine the contradictions between our pedagogies and our experiences;*
>
> *complicate our understandings of literacy, learning and teaching; integrate our examined*
>
> *experiences into our working conceptions of literacy and learning; develop intimacy and build*
>
> *community. They also provide us with a sense of our own authority to resist and revise the*
>
> *powerful culture of schools.* (Wilson & Ritchie, 1994, p. 85)

The journey towards developing your personal history account begins with a critical analysis of who you are now as an independent literacy learner. Ask yourself: "What do I know about myself as a reader, a writer, a speaker, a listener, a viewer, and represener? What are my attitudes about myself as an independent literacy learner? What are my beliefs about literacy? How does all of this influence my ability to teach?"

Once you have uncovered some beliefs and attitudes, it is time to explore the influences, the events, the objects and the people that helped shape the literacy learner that you are today. How did you arrive at this state? Where did the journey begin? Who was influential in this development? What are some of the significant memories or events that shaped what you believe today about literacy and yourself as an independent literacy learner?

The following prompts are designed to help trigger significant memories. You may wish to talk to a parent or significant person who would help shed light on long forgotten memories and events.

Family and Friends:

- Recall your experiences, as a child and adolescent, of being spoken to, read to, listened to, written with, of actively viewing, and visually representing. What are your favourite memories? Which stories do you remember best from childhood? What is it that you remember about them?

- What opportunities were there for you to read, write, talk and discuss, view (TV, movies/videos, informational technologies) and visually represent (e.g., visual and dramatic arts, pretend games, role play)? How did these influence your reading and writing development?

- Were your experiences at home different from your experiences at school? If so, in what ways?

Elementary School

- Can you detail your first memories of reading and writing instruction? Are your memories of reading and writing primarily positive, negative or neutral and why? Do you recall the type of instruction you received? Can you describe any instructional materials that were used? Do you recall reading and writing in any specific content areas?

- Can you detail early (or later) memories of speaking and listening, viewing and visually representing?

- What can you recall about specific instruction in speaking, listening, viewing and visually representing?

- What was your attitude about literacy (in particular reading and writing) in your intermediate or junior high years? How did you feel about required readings (novels) and designated writing topics in junior high or high school?

- Think about your experiences with literature: your favourite fiction or information book, "forbidden pleasures", libraries, book stores, favourite genre, purposes for writing

Awareness of Self

- What are you currently reading or writing? Do you read and write for personal pleasure or are these activities a means to an end?

- What do you currently like to listen to, talk about, view, visually represent? For what purposes?

- What contributions have your reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing abilities made to your life? How would you feel modelling these to your students?

- What impact might your literacy experiences have on your own developing sense of self as a literacy teacher and therefore the future literacy experiences of your students?

With these questions in mind, construct your own personal history account to be shared at our first focus group interview. It is important that you be introspective and explore these early experiences and memories as it is these that shape who you are and what you think as you enter the world of teaching. Your current attitudes and beliefs have been shaped by your past experiences.

Appendix G

Lesson Plan Template

1. Lesson Plan Information	
Subject/Course:	Name:
Grade Level:	Date: Time:
Topic:	Length of Period:

2. Expectation(s)

Expectation(s) (*Directly from The Ontario Curriculum):*

Learning Skills *(Where applicable):*

3. Content

What do I want the learners to know and/or be able to do?

Today learners will:

4. Assessment (collect data) / Evaluation (interpret data)
(Recording Devices (where applicable): anecdotal record, checklist, rating scale, rubric)

Based on the application, how will I know students have learned what I intended?

5. Learning Context

A. The Learners

(i) *What prior experiences, knowledge and skills do the learners bring with them to this learning experience?*

(ii) *How will I differentiate the instruction (content, process and/or product) to ensure the inclusion of all learners?* (Must include where applicable accommodations and/or modifications for learners identified as exceptional.)

B. Learning Environment

C. Resources/Materials

6. Teaching/Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION
How will I engage the learners? (e.g., motivational strategy, hook, activation of learners' prior knowledge, activities, procedures, compelling problem)

MIDDLE:
Teaching: *How does the lesson develop?*
How we teach new concepts, processes (e.g., gradual release of responsibility - modeled, shared, and guided instruction).

Consolidation and/or Recapitulation Process: *How will I bring all the important ideas from the learning experiences together for/with the students? How will I check for understanding?*

7. My Reflections on the Lesson

What do I need to do to become more effective as a teacher in supporting student learning?

Appendix H

Term Report
Due Date: 2nd class of week 7

The following questions should be used to guide your thinking in the development of a 2-5 page, double-spaced report that describes your experiences with literacy teaching and learning thus far in your teacher education program.

1. What are your beliefs about teaching and learning language arts and literacy?

2. How have your beliefs about language arts teaching and learning changed/altered since you started in the teacher education program?

3. What events/experiences influenced these changes?

4. What concerns/good points do you have about teaching language arts and literacy?

5. What do you see as barriers to teaching language arts and literacy?

6. What things about teaching/learning language arts and literacy surprised you the most?

7. What do you hope to learn about with respect to teaching language arts and literacy in the upcoming term?

You must address questions 1-3 in your report. In addition, you must respond to any two of the remaining questions. Therefore, be sure to address 5 questions in your report. The following rubric will be used to guide evaluation of your report.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Describes beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy in thorough detail.	Describes beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy in some detail.	Describes some beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy with little detail.
Describes changes in beliefs about literacy	Describes changes in beliefs in thorough detail	Describes changes in beliefs.	Describes changes in beliefs in some detail.	Describes changes in beliefs with little detail.
Describes events/ experiences that contributed to these changes	Describes the events/experienc es that contributed to these changes in thorough detail	Describes events/ experiences that contributed to these changes	Describes events/ experiences that contributed to these changes in some detail	Describes events/ experiences that contributed to these changes with little detail
Describes concerns/good points about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes concerns/good points about teaching language arts and literacy in thorough detail.	Describes concerns/good points about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes concerns/good points about teaching language arts and literacy with some detail.	Describes concerns/good points about teaching language arts and literacy with little detail.
Describes barriers to teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes barriers to teaching language arts and literacy in thorough detail.	Describes barriers to teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes barriers to teaching language arts and literacy with some detail.	Describes barriers to teaching language arts and literacy with little detail.
Describes surprises with respect to teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes surprises with respect to teaching language arts and literacy in thorough detail.	Describes surprises with respect to teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes surprises with respect to teaching language arts and literacy with some detail.	Describes surprises with respect to teaching language arts and literacy with little detail.
Describes what is needed for instruction in language arts and literacy second semester.	Describes what is needed for instruction in language arts and literacy second semester.	Describes what is needed for instruction in language arts and literacy second semester.	Describes what is needed for instruction in language arts and literacy second semester.	Describes what is needed for instruction in language arts and literacy second semester.

Appendix I

Final Reflection Paper
Due Date: 1ˢᵗ class of final week

The following questions should be used to guide your thinking in the development of a 2-5 page, double-spaced report that describes your experiences with literacy teaching and learning thus far in your teacher education program.

1. What new beliefs do have about teaching and learning language arts and literacy?

2. How have your beliefs about language arts teaching and learning changed/altered since Christmas?

3. What are your perceptions of the influences on your beliefs about literacy teaching and learning?

4. What connections have you made between theory learned in the University setting and your placement?

5. What practices did you observe that you think you will use in your own practice?

You must address questions 1-3 in your report. In addition, you must respond to any one of the remaining questions. Therefore, be sure to address 4 questions in your report. The following rubric will be used to guide evaluation of your report.

Criteria	4	3	2	1
Describes new beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes new beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy in thorough detail.	Describes new beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy.	Describes new beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy in some detail.	Describes some new beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy with little detail.
Describes changes in beliefs about literacy.	Describes changes in beliefs in thorough detail	Describes changes in beliefs.	Describes changes in beliefs in some detail.	Describes changes in beliefs with little detail.
Describes influences on beliefs.	Describes influences on beliefs in thorough detail	Describes influences on beliefs	Describes influences on beliefs in some detail	Describes influences on beliefs with little detail
Describes connections between theory and practice.	Describes connections between theory and practice in thorough detail.	Describes connections between theory and practice.	Describes connections between theory and practice with some detail.	Describes connections between theory and practice with little detail.
Describes observed practices to use in teaching.	Describes observed practices to use in teaching in thorough detail.	Describes observed practices to use in teaching.	Describes observed practices to use in teaching with some detail.	Describes observed practices to use in teaching with little detail.

Appendix J

Focus Group Interview Guiding Questions

Sample Questions: Focus Group Interview # 1

The first focus group interview will take place in January, 2009. Guiding questions include:

1.   Using your personal history account as a starting point, what were your experiences as a learner of literacy?

2.   What literacy practices did you find helpful or positive?

3.   What literacy practices did you find detrimental to your becoming a literate learner?

4.   What have you learned so far about literacy teaching and learning through your participation in the literacy course?

5.   What have you learned so far about literacy teaching and learning through your participation in the Partners in Education program?

Sample Questions: Focus Group Interview #2

The second interview will take place in February, 2009. The focus of this meeting will be the generation of dialogue around beliefs about teaching literacy and literacy practices used. In this session, the following questions may be used to begin discussion.

1.   What are your beliefs about teaching language arts and literacy?

2.   What are the characteristics of an effective literacy program?

3.1   What literacy teaching practices did you observe and/or implement in your field placement that you considered contributed to an effective literacy program?

3.2   What were your concerns about the literacy teaching practices you observed and/or implemented in your field placement?

4.   What are the barriers to implementing an effective literacy program?

5.   How might you begin to implement your literacy program?

6.   In what ways has participation in the literacy course influenced your beliefs about literacy education and teaching literacy?

7.   How has Partners in Education influenced your beliefs about literacy education and teaching literacy?

8.   How have your beliefs about literacy teaching and learning changed or evolved since you began your Bachelor of Education program last August?

Sample Questions: Focus Group Interview # 3

The third interview will take place in April, 2009. The focus of this meeting will be general in nature, allowing the investigator to use the themes that emerge from the data as necessary. Participants will draw on practice teaching field placements, Partners in Education field experiences or instruction in the literacy course to aid in the discussion. Participants might also draw upon notes from their learning journals.

Guiding Questions:

1.   What experiences in the last four months have provided you with new insights about literacy teaching and learning (i.e. readings, Partners in Education, literacy classes, practice teaching?

2.   How have your beliefs about literacy teaching and education changed since the beginning of the course?

3.   What do you think has influenced these changes in your beliefs?

4.1   What questions/concerns do you have abut literacy teaching and learning?

4.2   How might these be addressed in the Winter term?

It should be noted that although the initial direction for the focus groups has been pre-established, the investigator intends to allow the discussion to follow the lead of the participants so they can share ideas that are relevant to their own learning and experiences.

Appendix K

NIPISSING
U N I V E R S I T Y

Faculty of Education

Anna-Marie Aquino Office: H339, ext: 4152 annama@nipissingu.ca

Course Outline: 2008-2009
EDUC4214 -- Curriculum Studies I: Language Arts/Literacy (Junior/Intermediate)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the factors influencing language and literacy learning. Specifically the course will examine the language and literacy processes (listening, speaking, reading, writing viewing and visually representing); language and literacy usage as functions of children's communication needs; current theories of reading and writing instruction: current junior and intermediate literature; the issues surrounding developmental programs in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and visually representing; as well as integrating drama as an expressive art which enhances language and literacy learning.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

The course will be built on the following:
- Taking responsibility for personal learning
- Learning through professional collaboration
- Identifying and resolving professional issues
- Becoming a reflective practitioner
- Developing an understanding of the six language arts (listening, speaking, reading writing, viewing and representing), the connections among them, and the increasing role of 'multiliteracies' in teaching and learning literacy

Cambourne, B., Kiggens, J., & Ferry, B. (2003). Replacing traditional lectures, tutorials and exams with a Knowledge Building Community (KCB): A constructivist, problem-based approach to pre-service primary teacher education. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 2 (3), 34-48.

COURSE TOPICS

Course topics will reflect the objective of preparing participants to teach diverse learners in contemporary classrooms. Relevant teaching and learning strategies will be integrated throughout topics, course readings, class discussions, class/group activities, assignments, and the ongoing study of youth literature and other resources. Consistent opportunities will be provided for all participants to read, to write, to think, and to engage in the development of their own reflective practices.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bainbridge, J., Heydon, R., & Malicky, G. (2008). *Constructing meaning: Balancing elementary language arts.* (4th. Ed.). Toronto, ON: Nelson Education.

Ellis, D., & Walters, E. (2007). *Bifocal.* Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Limited. ISBN 155455036X

Ministry of Education. (2006). *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 Language.*

Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 and 10 English.*

Ministry of Education. *The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1-8 The Arts.*

Ministry of Education, *Think Literacy: Cross Curricular Approaches Grades 7-12.*

Ministry of Education *Guides to Effective Literacy Instruction (Grades 4-6)*: Vol. 1: Foundations of Literacy Instruction; Vol. 2: Assessment; and Vol. 3: Planning & Classroom Management; Vol. 4: Oral Language; Vol. 5: Reading; Vol. 6: Writing; Vol. 7: Media Literacy.*

**All of the Ministry documents are available on-line at: www.edu.gov.on.ca

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

Course topics and related chapters are indicated on the table below. You will be expected to have read the readings in order to fully participate in class discussions and activities as a developing professional teacher.

Term 1

Week	Date	Chapter/Article
Week 1	Class 1	Introduction to Language Arts and Literacy
	Class 2	Introduction to Language Arts and Literacy
Week 2	Class 3	Literacy for the 21st Century
	Class 4	Ontario Curriculum Documents (expectations and exemplars)
Week 3	Class 5	Balanced Literacy: Reading (comprehension)
	Class 6	Balanced Literacy: Reading (reader response theory)
S. 29 – O. 17		Practice Teaching
Week 4	Class 7	Balanced Literacy: Writing (traits, process)
	Class 8	Balanced Literacy: Writing (formats)
Week 5	Class 9	Listening
	Class 10	Speaking
Week 6	Class 11	Viewing
	Class 12	Visually Representing
Nov. 10-28		Practice Teaching
Week 7	Class 13	Vocabulary and Word Building
	Class 14	Vocabulary and Word Building
Week 8	Class 15	Literature Circles
	Class 16	Literature Circles
D. 15-J. 02		Exams and Break

Term 2

Week	Date	Chapter/Article
Week 9	Class 17	Partners in Education
	Class 18	Partners in Education
Week 10	Class 19	Mulitliteracies
	Class 20	Media and Critical Literacy
Week 11	Class 21	Literature (Text sets, multicultural texts)
	Class 22	Responding to Literacy
Week 12	Class 23	Assessment and Evaluation
	Class 24	Baseline Assessments
Week 13	Class 25	Drama
	Class 26	Drama
Feb 9-Mar 27		Practice Teaching and Study Week
Week 14	Class 27	Partners in Education
	Class 28	Partners in Education
Week 15	Class 29	Literacy Across the Curriculum
April 20-24		Exams

COURSE EVALUATION

Successful completion of this course is based on **ALL** of the following:

1. Professionalism	**10%**
2. Personal History Account	**15%**
3. Term Reports	**20%**
4. Young Adult Literature – Reader Response	**35%**
5. Partners in Education	**20%**

Assignment #1: Professionalism **Due Date:** Ongoing **Course Weight:** 10%

Teacher candidates will come prepared for all classes and will actively participate in whole and small group tasks and discussions. This requires that all readings for each class are completed and that you are prepared to discuss and apply the material. You will complete a self-assessment based upon the following:

- Attending all classes
- Being punctual for classes and Partners in Education
- Completing the readings for each class and being prepared to discuss and apply the material
- Participating in large and small group discussions
- Being aware and respectful of the opinions of others
- Using the laptop appropriately during class time

Assignment #2: Personal History Account **Due Date:** Week 2 **Course Weight:** 15%

Details will be distributed during the first week of classes.

Assignment #3: Term Reports **Due Date:** Week 8, Week 15 **Course Weight:** 20%

You will be required to complete a term report at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the second semester. These reports will describe what you perceive your beliefs about literacy education and literacy teaching are, how those beliefs might have changed over the course of the semester, and what you perceive as having influenced the development and/or change in your beliefs. Further details will be distributed in class.

Assignment #4: Young Adult Literature - Reader Response **Due Date:** Term 2 **Course Weight:** 35%

We will read the novel Bifocal and engage in a variety of strategies including comprehension, connection-making and responding to text. Details will be distributed in class.

Assignment 5: Partners in Education **Due Dates:** TBA **Course Weight:** 20%

Purpose of the Task

You will be part of a project that will allow you:
1. To build a relationship with a junior/intermediate learner
2. To try new strategies in a non-threatening environment
3. To develop skills in creating lesson plans
4. To be a part of an initiative that aims to establish a connection and relationship between Nipissing University and local schools

Your Task:

- You will be partnered with a junior/intermediate student early in September. We will visit the school 3 times (September, October, December) with specific goals for each visit.
- You are expected to take on the role of teacher. Your appearance and demeanour should clearly indicate this.
- You must arrive at your designated school as indicated. Travel time will be built into the schedule, but please be reasonable and considerate of the fact that time is limited.
- Please make every effort to carpool as parking space is limited at both schools.
- For the first visit, you will be expected to complete a one page Description of Plan for School Visit. Use the following headings in your plan:

Introduction: outline how you will introduce yourself to your student. What questions will you want to ask and what will you tell about yourself. The use of an ice-breaker or game might be effective here.
Read-aloud: What book will you share with your student? Provide a brief rationale for selecting the text.
Strategy: What teaching strategy will you implement in conjunction with the read-aloud? What task will your partner be expected to complete?
Materials: What materials will you need to implement all aspects of this lesson?
Consolidation: Conclude the session in a way that ties all loose ends together.

- For the remainder of the visits, you will be expected to complete a lesson plan using the General Planning Format.
- I will review each of these assignments prior to your visit to the school to ensure that you are well-prepared. You will then have time to consider the implementation of the feedback I provide.
- Reflections are to be submitted on the class following your school visit. You should use the criteria below to guide your reflections.

Lesson Plan
Plan follows the required format (2), Plan is appropriate to the learner (2), Plan uses strategy that will benefit the learner (2), Application is appropriate (2), Consolidation is effective (2)

Reflections
Identify areas of strength-things that went well in the lesson (2), Identify areas of weakness-things that didn't go well or as planned in the lesson (2), Describe next steps-what you will continue to use or what you would not do again (2), Demonstrate connections between theory and practice; personal connections (2), Identify something that was learned about the J/I learner or teaching in a J/I classroom (2)

Appendix L

CHART OF THEMES

THEME 1: BELIEFS		
Category A. Characteristics of an Effective Language Arts and Literacy Program		
Source	**Subcategory**	**Code**
Tom FRP	Reality-based lessons	I also find that when you have an engaging topic, which directly relates to their lives, you spend less time explaining the process, because it no longer seems like just another abstract concept.
Tony PHA	Engaging	I think that when I will teach literacy and language arts I will do my best to engage the students as much as possible.
Rick TR	Enjoyable	Literacy should be made enjoyable for the learner so they have a lifelong desire to use what they have been taught and find their own way to apply it"
Sandra FRP	Student Choice	Including students in the decision making of activities makes students feel that they have power of choice in their learning.
Kerry TR	Variety of approaches and resources	There are endless opportunities for learning. The students should be exposed to a large variety. The students should be exposed to fiction texts, non-fiction texts, issues in the community, global issues etc.; an endless variety to increase interest".
Van FRP	Gender Appropriate	I was aware of the differences in how both sexes learn but I was quite surprised that boys' literacy was so much more intricate than previously thought...I believe that this new information about gendered learning in language arts and literacy will be highly beneficial in my future teaching career because I will be able to incorporate these new ideas and techniques to help my students become better language learners.
Anthony TR	Group Work	I believe now, that with group work students not only learn more by listening to other students, but also help each other in the process.
Terry PHA	Personal Interests	My future as a literacy teacher is shaped by my experiences. I believe it is important for students' to pick things they are interested in. This I learned from a young age, picking books for my grandpa or practicing my sisters' homework with her. I believe that teachers need to have more creative ways of teaching literacy, because my experience was boring.
Category B. Holistic Nature of Program of a Language Arts and Literacy Program		
Rick TR	Building Block	Literacy is the building block for all subjects and it is crucial for all elements of learning.
Jon FRP	Foundation	I now believe that la is the basis for every subject and can be incorporated into almost every lesson.
Van FRP	Woven through	Once I began teaching a variety of subjects I realized that la was everywhere.
Nancy TR	Cross curricular	I think that language arts is completely cross curricular and applies to every subject. A literacy teacher has very important job because the students need the skills taught in every single class they will take in any subject. If a student does not know how to write it does not matter what class they are in – they will not be able to succeed. There are life skills taught in language arts and literacy that are a basis for

		everyday tasks.
Sandra PHA	Technology-bound	Technology needs to be incorporated into literacy in a positive way. An example would be to use a wide variety of computer programs to get children to read an interactive book on the Smart Board. By getting up and touching the screen to make objects in the book move, make noise and change colour, children will be captivated and as a result, want to read more.
34TR2p2	Positive environment	I was able to experience how a safe environment allowed every student to participate and want to learn.
Van FRP	Parents-family	There was a lack of parent involvement in many of the students in my class. Few parents attend school interviews or leave comments on their child's report card and there is a general lack of communication between parent and teacher. Many students were not regularly fed breakfast at home and few routinely did not receive lunch from their families. It is hard to motivate oneself at a young age when it seems your parents or guardians are disinterested in education themselves. It is important to try to get these parents actively involved in their child's education in order for students to have the support and motivation they need at home as well as at school.

Category C: Content And Instructional Approaches In A Literacy And Language Arts Program		
Carlie FRP Sandra FRP	Reading and writing	Writing is a very important part of all subject areas. Students should be given as many opportunities to write as possible.
Frank TR	Listening and speaking	I believe that most of the focus today is on reading and writing, and there is not very much emphasis put on listening and speaking. It may be a product of necessity, but I do not think that this is a good thing.
Mag PHA	Independent Reading	First of all I would like to have reading time everyday in my classroom for the pure enjoyment of it. I am always reading a novel and feel it is a great way to relax, escape, and stimulate ideas.
Tom PHA	Read aloud	During the teacher's read aloud I was always mesmerized by the rhythms in her voice, and the enthusiasm. The highs and lows in their voice allowed me to stay interested and entertained. When I am a fully fledged teacher I will employ the read aloud, because it allows the students to enjoy a book without having to focus on the words. It allows them to focus on their comprehension and not get distracted by getting the words right, and sounding like a fool in front of their peers.
Maggie FRP Van FRP	Grammar/ spelling	Although I believed before that it was important to teach students proper grammar and sentence structure by engaging in meaningful conversations with them, I found that while trying to build a rapport with students, worrying about grammar and sentences is not as important as I once thought. One practice that I observed that I would use in my own practice is implementing grammar lessons into everyday lessons.
Sandra TR	Media/ technology	Technology ahs also made ways to make reading and writing interesting and interactive for students, by use of Smart Board and Dragon. Technology should be used inn order to male language arts fun and engaging for all students"
Kim FRP	Modeling/ scaffolding /constructivism	Another new belief that I have about teaching and learning lal is the way that they la material is presented to the students. In more traditional methods of teaching, a teacher may stand at the front of

		the classroom and lecture to the students; this does not involve students in their own learning. I believe that this more traditional method of teaching should be minimized in the teaching of lal and that learning la should take a more student centered approach.
Jack FRP	Differentiated instruction	I need to teach to as many different learning styles as possible in each lesson so that all students have an equal opportunity to learn from the material presented to them.
Frank TR	Higher order thinking	Students need to learn some higher-order concepts and skills in order to trying achieve a high level of language literacy. For instance, I believe that learning how to organize one's thoughts and ideas, learning to think critically and to develop analysis skills are vital to a student's language literacy.
Terry pHA	Critical Literacy	With regards to literacy learning, I believe it is important to be aware of the source the material is coming from, and thinking critically about the material. Also, I believe it is important to hear multiple opinions so that you can develop your own feelings or position on a topic.

Category D: The Students' Role In A Language Arts And Literacy Program		
Meg FRP	Multiple learning styles	Another new belief that I have gained since Christmas is the importance of being aware of the different styles of learners in a classroom and catering the language and literacy program to suit them.
Rosemary FRP	Not meeting standards	This has shown me that most students are not at the level of comprehension which is expected of them by the Ministry.
Terry TR	Learned helplessness	I saw a real lack of initiative when capable students had adapted a feeling of "learned helplessness" and would always rely on teacher prompts as opposed to showing their independence
Kerry PHA	Diversity	In consideration of the diversity that is now apparent in many classrooms I will not focus solely on holidays but rather a theme like medieval times, which all students can participate in without having to draw on religious or cultural values.

Category E: The Teacher In A Language Arts And Literacy Program		
Rick TR	Lifelong learners	I will never know all there is to know and I will never think that I have all the resources there are to have. Learning about literacy is an ongoing process that will continue through my education, my colleagues' expertise, and workshops that will keep me up to date on literacy and its implementation into me classroom.
Meg PHA	Enthusiastic	I believe my passion for literacy will greatly benefit my future students because as a role model, they will look up to me and mimic my excitement for the subject area (one can only hope).
Van FRP	Role model	I used to think that I needed to be the perfect role model for my students in the classroom, but have learned what students' need more is a realistic role model...they can relate and connect to.
Maddie TR	Knowing students well	You really need to know your students before you can decide what THEY need to know.
Anthony TR	Perception of Self	Grammar is one of my phobias. Apparently I have no problem talking or writing properly, but when asked to isolate adjectives, adverbs, and so on, I become completely lost. How can I teach something to students that I don't completely understand myself?

THEME 2: PERCEPTIONS OF HOW BELIEFS CHANGE		
Category A: Philosophy of Teaching and Learning		
Van TR	Easy-Hard	My belief that good language arts skills could be instilled in students easily was changed after one week in the classroom. After observing how much the student stalked out, didn't listen during instructions and talked over one another, I began to realize that the students lacked some skills in the areas of speaking and listening. Although I told the students over and over again not to talk while others were talking and to listen and pay attention while other students or I were speaking, it did not seem to work.
Tony TR	Boring-Engaging	Before starting the teacher education program I used to think that lal was a boring subject. I used to think that the only think that I would be able to teach my students is spelling and grammar, but now I know that this is just a little part of the big picture. When I started doing my placement I noticed that students enjoyed doing language arts and they were looking forward to the subject. This was something that was different for me since being in elementary school...I believe that it is possible for me to teach language arts to the students and to make it fun and exciting.
Morgan TR	Dislike-like	To be quite honest I was not thrilled about having to take a lal course as part of the faculty of education. I am aspiring to become a French teacher but there is just something about the terms language arts and literacy that did not appeal to me. Perhaps I associate them with the grade 10 literacy test which I dreaded when I was in high school. I knew how I wanted to teach French, and never gad I included the term literacy. it was right after my first partners in ed visit that things started to change. I was paired with a wonderful student, we had such a great time together and she really enjoyed the activities we did together, as did I. I left quite pleased with the work we had done; I was already looking forward to my next visit. Partners in education really helped me view literacy in a completely different way.
Sherry TR	Unimportant-important	I never really understood the concept of literacy and language and how it would tie into the curriculum when I was a student in school. It is much more different than any other subject like science or math. I now understand that it is not a concrete thing that could be learnt from a textbook. Now that I am on the other side of the fence, I realize the importance of literacy and language and how it is critical throughout a child's life.
Frank TR	Different approaches	I have quickly found out that he way la is taught (and learned) is much different today than it was when I was in elementary student.
Anthony FRP	Isolated-integrated	My beliefs have changed in the sense that it can be incorporated into other subjects quite easily, allowing students to be use or learn new literacy techniques while doing math and science experiments.
Category B: Pedagogy		
Frank TR	Rigid-Flexible	when I was in elementary school the focus was on steps and rules. These were inflexible rules, which guided teachers especially in the writing process. Everything had to be written and the steps were always taught in order. They were never meant to be flexible.
David TR	Narrow-broad curriculum	I used to feel that language arts was based mostly around grammar and story writing and now I have found so much more can come from

		this subject.
Nancy TR	Traditional-contemporary	I have seen many new approaches to ways in which students can read and write and this has changed my perception of the language arts program.
Sandra TR	Picture books	here at NU I have sent he reading of picture books modeled to young adults, the positive response that we as a class have had because of it. I had not been read to in years, and this made me realize that if I did this my class may like it as well. It seems almost nurturing to me that I am able to listen and comprehend while absorbing a story. As a reader it has challenged me to listen more and be more aware. While in the classroom on placement I tried this and the class reacted in a very positive manner.
Category C: Perceptions of Self		
Bonnie FRP	Confidence	Teaching literacy to junior and intermediate students will be very challenging, yet I feel that my experience in both classrooms (placement and Nipissing) has prepared me to begin my journey as an educator of literacy.
Andrea TR	Ability	I have also realized the importance of the background of the students.
Category D: Perceptions of students		
Kara TR	Ability	Viewing the different levels of literacy in the classroom was something that I had never been involved with before. When I was young, learning about the literacy process, I assumed that everyone was at the same level. Understanding now that each students is at different levels in a literacy process is a key to furthering development in the subject.
Van PHA	Backgrounds	From reflecting on my literacy experiences I also think that the use of various teaching strategies is critical when working with students from different backgrounds and with varying skill levels.
Van PHA	How students learn	I would use techniques that worked for me as a student as well as use some techniques that did not work for me, but worked for others because I know students learn in different ways.
Category E: Degree of change		
Mark FRP	No change	My beliefs about language arts teaching and learning have not altered very much.
Sherry FRP	Change	I feel that my views on teaching regarding literature, language arts, and my disciple (sic) being physical education, has changed **dramatically** since November.
Maddie FRP	Significant change	My beliefs about language arts teaching and learning have changed in a way that I would not have expected...I believe that my influences on my beliefs about literacy teaching and learning have **greatly changed** the way I thought about literacy.
THEME 3: INFLUENCES ON PRESERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS		
Category A: Family		
Tom PHA	Grandparents	My grandmother, who I called Nanny also, supported my literacy. She was from England and she would give me Rupert books to read with her. They were a bit above my reading level, but that never seemed to bother me. We would sit in the rocking chair and when I knew what a word was I would scream it out. We also sang old English nursery rhymes together.

Kerry PHA	Parents	Throughout my adventures in literacy my mother was a very influential role model. My mom is a lifelong student learner and an educator. She has gone to post secondary schooling for eleven years. I can remember books being around all the time when she was studying to be a paramedic, nurse and then completing her Masters to be a professor. My mother always taught me to value books and literature and she provided many opportunities for me to expand my learning.
Mag PHA	Siblings	I remember practicing reading with my sister in English at home. My earliest memory of reading was with my sister as I guessed what the words were. She would laugh and instruct me to sound it out phonetically.
Category B: Pre-School Experiences		
Anthony PHA	Oral traditions	But what I remember the most, are the stories my grandfather told me. I can still see myself sitting on his lap listening to him tell the story of "Rindecella and the sluggly upsisters", or in normal words, "Cinderella and the ugly stepsisters". He would tell the story I knew so well, all mixed up and backwards, but I loved it, and so did my sisters over 12 years later.
Frank PHA	Drama	We had a dress-up box filled with lots of different costumes and props which both my brother and I loved to utilize. Sometimes my brother and I would dress-up and play make-believe on our own, other times we would include other children who came to our house. Thus, both my brother and I developed a real fondness for using our imaginations (representing) from very early on, and it only grew with time and experience.
Tony PHA	Television	When I was younger I used to watch a lot of educational TV shows such as Sesame Street, Barney, and various educational videos I would get from my teachers.
Maggie PHA	Reading	As I got older and stopped playing class, I spent most of the time I had without my sisters reading to myself.
Kerry PHA	Public library	When she would go to the library I would always go with her and was given plenty of time to take out books that I chose.
Andrea PHA	Positive early experiences	Every day, I saw my parents reading novels, newspapers, and magazines. They often had long discussions about what they had read with each other, friends and eventually with me and my brother.
Category C: Elementary school experiences		
Zack PHA	Writing	As far as writing was concerned, I would always look forward to both receiving and composing letters from one of my pen-pals.
Kerry PHA	Reading	I can remember gaining interest in *Goosebumps* books and then an even greater interest in *Fear Street* Novels. By the end of grade seven I was an avid reader and felt very confident in my skills of reading and communicating with others.
Tony PHA	Positive teacher influence	I was very lucky to have such a wonderful teacher that embraced my inability to communicate and helped shape me into the literate individual I am today.
Zack PHA	Negative	I had a few teachers who I felt were not exact confidence builders.
Category D: High school experiences		
Zack PHA	Positive	My English and History teachers were knowledgeable, interesting

	experiences	and approachable, which made all the difference in the world to me. . High school also introduced me to some real bona fide fictional novels.
Terry PHA	Negative experiences	And during high school, I had the same awful English and Drama teacher over five years. He gave us boring reading assignments, his classes did not change over the years, and he was quite unfair in his evaluations. Most of all, I did not learn anything from him.
Carlie PHA	Changed attitudes	In grade 6 my love for reading quickly dissolved. Language arts quickly became to focus almost solely (in my experience) on reading a particular text on a certain prescribed timeline and write an essay. This became a reoccurring theme in my literary arts classes; I quickly began to dislike reading and stopped reading for my own pleasure. I hated having to read books that the teacher selected; often it was something I couldn't relate to or that I wasn't interested in. I didn't so much hate writing the essays it was that the further on in school you got the more you had to analyze the story and think about where the author was coming from and why they may have written the story. This took a lot of fun out of the mystery and excitement of the story for me.

Category E: Teacher education program		
Hetta TR	The Bachelor of Education program	These changes have come about as a direct result of the Nipissing Education program that uses collaborative work in the classroom and for many of the evaluation assignments. I have found I appreciate the ideas that others bring and I have grown as a teacher, student and a person.
Diana TR	Language Arts course	This course is going to help me to become a more effective la teacher and I feel as though I am gaining much more of an appreciation for the subject than I had before this year began.
Parker TR	Practicum placements	My views on the influences about my beliefs on language and literacy stem mainly from my practicum this year.
Meg FRP	Teachers - associate and other classroom teachers	My associate teachers have been a big influence on my beliefs about language arts. My first at used strategies in la that I was familiar with from my studies at nip. Her strategies mainly involved group work and literacy workshops. My second at is a "old school" teacher and often gives students independent work. For example, every few 2 months students had to complete a book report at home. I did not totally agree with this teaching style. Both at's [associate teacher] were positive influences on my own teaching beliefs because they gave me insight on what to do and what not avoid doing in a language arts class.
Jackson	Partners in Ed	The Partners in Ed activities also contributed to my changes about language arts teaching.

F: Past personal experiences		
THEME 4: CONCERNS ABOUT TEACHING A LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY PROGRAM		
Category A: Planning		
Meghan TR	Broad Nature	I feel that the curriculum is too broad, and therefore becomes left to much up to the teacher to decide what is taught and how; it is all up to interpretation. The curriculum for other subjects, while can also be

		interpretive at times, it has somewhat more of a set of definition for what is to be taught and learned, than in the language arts curriculum…There are so many aspects of it [language arts and literacy] to teach and so many ways of getting it across. Which is the better way? How will the children understand it best?
Maggie TR	Vague	…when I taught math, there was only one way of teaching a concept. This is a bar graph that is how you do it. It is concrete and easy to get across. I had not problem teaching math. In science, it is all facts and remembering them, understanding what happens when and how. It is simple and to the pint. However, language arts and literacy there are 'making connections', 'synthesizing', 'determining important ideas', 'repairing comprehension', 'inferring', 'and 'visualizing' among others. There are oral, writing and reading skills and interpreting media. There is just so much to think of when I am preparing a lesson.
Nat TR	Engaging	Some of my concerns would be that I wouldn't be able to engage the class like I wanted to
Tina TR	Integration	I am concerned I will not be able to incorporate language arts and literacy into other subjects that I will be teaching, and unintentionally put it aside.
Category B: Assessment		
Zach TR	Volume	Another thing which surprised me was the amount of testing that educators are responsible for. My associate teacher found it difficult to keep up with the demands of the Ministry to test her grade 8 students, and it seems that while I was on placement a fair share of allocated literacy time was spent on testing alone.
Jack FRP	Standardized	I believe that our current Ministry of Education has placed way too much emphasis on the testing and assessment of students, which in turn has a negative impact on the actual learning component of literacy.
Sherry TR	Lack of objectivity	There are so many ways of critiquing a piece of work by a student. My interpretation of a student's reflection may be different than another teacher's interpretation, such as read alouds. If I do not think a student's reading is up to the level I want it to be, who says another teacher can disagree with me and say that it is? I am basing these students oral communication on my own communication skills, which may not be good in other teacher's eyes. Thus, I find it difficult to put a grade on a child's views and thoughts about literacy.
Rick TR	Impact on students	I feel like assessment will be extremely difficult; distinguishing the difference between a level 3 and a level 4 and justifying why I think this is the case. Unlike mathematics, where the answers are typically right or wrong, language arts can be subjective depending on the teacher, the grade, the background of the student, and the specific criteria of the assignment. This is a huge barrier for me because I would never want to disadvantage a student because of my wrong or biased opinion of their essays, opinion pieces, short stories, etc.
Category C: Resources		
Maddie TR	Materials	How would you help a class be computer literate, for example, if they have very rare access to computers, or associated technology? How would you effectively teach a novel student, if you cannot get a

		whole class set of novels? How will you reach all the students with learning difficulties if there is a 35:1 student teacher ratio, with few or no EA's, [educational assistants]TA's [teacher assistants] or other help? Perhaps the photocopier is broken, and students have limited access to important handouts and worksheets.
Jon TR	Time	I believe that time management will be a large barrier to teaching language. Sometimes there is just not enough time to fully immerse your students into that great activity you had planned out for the day, and sometimes there is just not enough time to find alternative strategies and methods while also keeping things current.
Category D: Perceptions of Ability to Teach Language Arts		
Lia TR	Ability to teach language arts	Because literacy is becoming so prominent in the school system it is very intimidating for me. I am so worried that I will not be able to teach literacy and the language arts effectively.
Van TR	Skill/knowledge of spelling and grammar	Another area of Language Arts that I worry about is writing. This area frightens me because I have never been the best writer and my spelling skills are not strong ... I did not learn phonics when I was in school and feel that this is an area of language arts that I have never been great at.
Kerry TR	Meeting diversity needs	I also feel that the academic levels of my students will cause me some stress in terms of knowing exactly what resources to use to best suit their individual needs.
Category E: Students		
Maggie TR	Ability	A challenge I found was modifying the work and accommodating certain students that had a harder time understanding the language.
Tony TR	Interest	Students themselves may lack the interest in what is asked of them to do and do it in a fashion that does not showcase their best work.
Bonnie TR	Motivation	A concern of mine is that my students may become disengaged and bored of the material.
Carlie TR	Background	In today's society, classrooms are often multicultural and often many students in the classroom do not speak English as their primary language. In addition students will come from varying degrees of socioeconomic backgrounds.
Tina TR	Technology	Student spelling and grammar mistakes are rampant. I find that it was the case mostly because no one really mothers to peer edit but also because students are reliant on computers to do all their spell checks.