The Teacher's Role in Writing: A Study of Teacher Candidates' Perceptions

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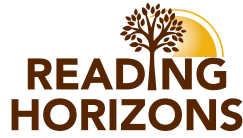
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—————————————— **Abstract** ——————————————

A team of teacher education researchers conducted a qualitative study to explore how teacher candidates viewed the teacher's role in teaching students to write. Participants (N = 107) enrolled in writing-focused methods courses across four universities completed a reflective quick write near the end of the course. Since writing is a complex and multidimensional activity, these responses were analyzed through the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory. When describing the role of the teacher, the data indicated candidates across all institutions primarily focused on the affective aspects of teaching writing, specifically supporting and developing students' confidence in writing. Some mentioned the need for explicit instruction such as developing students' writing skills and use of strategies. A smaller percentage included both the importance of affective and explicit instruction. Many candidates indicated the significance of the role that teachers play in students learning to write. Implications for writing pedagogy support within and beyond teacher preparation are discussed.

Keywords: *writing methods, preservice teacher education, perceptions*

As novice educators move from being teacher candidates (TCs) into becoming classroom teachers, their beliefs, teaching contexts, and coursework, as well as mentorship and peers, all inform and influence their growth and development as writing teachers

(Hall et al., 2021; Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). During this time, writing methods instructors are uniquely positioned to equip them with confidence and knowledge of how to teach writing.

Yet these TCs are not "blank slates" to be written on. Instead, they come into their coursework with their own ideas about and experiences with what it means to be a teacher of writing. They recognize that teachers play a powerful part in shaping students' perceptions of themselves as writers (Draper et al., 2000; Norman & Spencer, 2005), but there is also evidence that they do not agree on how to teach writing, suggesting a plurality of their views (Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). Sometimes the visions they bring are inconsistent with the ideals of the programs they are in and the teacher educators who are preparing them. For example, Kohnen and colleagues (2019) found that TCs in their program preparing to be secondary English teachers viewed English language arts teachers as those who assign and grade but do not explicitly teach writing, believing that teaching literature was their primary responsibility. Kohnen et al. contended that better understanding how TCs view the teacher's role in writing enables teacher educators to design experiences that enable a broader view.

Other work indicates that TCs view their role more broadly than simply assigning and assessing writing. For example, in studies that examined teachers' views on writing instruction, teachers described both explicit and incidental writing instruction as important (Brindle et al., 2016; Troia et al., 2011), suggesting that they saw their role as both proactive—intentionally planning specific instruction—and reactive—responding to students in the moment. Better understanding TCs' perceptions of the teacher's role in writing can help us recognize their underlying beliefs, consider what to address in teacher education coursework, and help schools know how to continue to support and develop effective teachers of writing. This understanding is critical because teachers shape the development of student writing attitudes, beliefs, and achievement (Hall & Axelrod, 2014). While in the last several years there has been a steady increase in research on writing and writing teacher education (Brenner & McQuirk, 2019; Myers et al., 2016), little is currently known about how in-service teachers or TCs view their role in writing instruction. Thus, this study sought to understand how TCs see the role of teachers in writing instruction before they have their own classrooms.

Review of the Literature on Perceptions and Beliefs About Writing

Because roles are influenced by beliefs, we began with an examination of current literature on perceptions and beliefs about teaching writing as well as what research says about the domains of writing instruction.

Related to the notion of roles is that of teachers' perceptions and beliefs about writing. Previous research indicated a connection between teachers' beliefs about their own writing, as well as their preparation and ability to teach writing, to the type and amount of writing instruction occurring in their classrooms (Cremin & Oliver, 2016; Harward et al., 2014). For example, Hsiang et al. (2020) found small but statistically significant correlations between the writing beliefs of 732 language arts teachers in Taiwan and their writing practices in the classroom. Those teachers who saw learning and effort as central to learning to write tended to promote collaboration. Teachers who valued explicit instruction tended to teach about elements of writing and to give students assistance

with their writing, while those who viewed knowledge and learning about writing as fixed were less likely to teach elements of writing. This is similar Brindle and colleagues' (2016) finding that those who view themselves as well prepared and have a positive attitude about teaching writing are more likely to teach writing, use effective instructional practices, and have students write.

These perceptions and beliefs begin well before teachers have their own classrooms. In fact, TCs' own schooling experiences often influence their beliefs about writing, indicating the powerful influence of teachers on students' writing identities (Cremin & Oliver, 2016; Hall, 2016. Unfortunately, many come to their teacher preparation programs with writing anxieties (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011) and negative self-perceptions (Ozenc & Ozenc, 2018). Less is known about what exactly TCs believe about teaching writing, so understanding their perceptions of the teacher's role in writing instruction can provide needed insight. Ng et al. (2010) found that while TCs may have well-established beliefs about writing by the time they enter college, these beliefs are continuing to evolve and grow. Thus, TCs' writing preparation can have a positive influence on these beliefs and perceptions (Hall, 2016; Hall et al., 2021).

Reflections are one means of helping to determine TCs' reasoning for how and why they plan to teach writing in certain ways as well as their perceptions of who they are as teachers of writing. Reflections often reveal how TCs perceive their teaching after lessons are taught, but reflections can also provide insight into how TCs use the experiences to grow in their thinking about teaching (e.g., Applebaum, 2014; Cheng, 2020; Scales et al., 2020). How we used reflections in the form of quick writes in this study is detailed later.

Review of the Literature on Writing Instruction

While thinking about roles and beliefs, it is also important to consider what the research says about effective writing instruction. National surveys indicate that writing teachers use a wide variety of practices (Brindle et al., 2016; Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Graham et al., 2014). However, high-quality writing instruction is essential in supporting the growth of writers as they learn to plan, compose, and revise text (De Smedt et al., 2020). Some practices are very effective for helping students grow as writers, for example, when teachers take an active role, such as modeling and providing opportunities for supported writing practice (Hsiang et al., 2020).

A large body of research supports the importance of explicit instruction, which can improve students' writing performance (Koster et al., 2015). We use Graham and Perin's (2007) definition of explicit writing instruction, which refers to the explicit and systematic teaching of writing knowledge and strategies. They and others, such as McKeown et al. (2016) and Bouwer et al. (2018), asserted that this includes genre knowledge as well as strategies for planning, revising, and editing texts.

While a person's ability to use strategies and skills undoubtedly influences the quality of their writing (Graham et al., 2012), Kennedy et al. (2012) recommended that literacy instruction should "encompass the cognitive, affective, socio-cultural, cultural-historical, creative and aesthetic dimensions" (p. 10). Furthermore, Taggart and

Laughlin (2017) wrote, "teaching and learning by extension is a complex series of related rhetorical acts" (p. 1) that require both cognition and affect.

Rahim and Chun (2017) argued that as theories of literacy move beyond cognitive and developmental dimensions, affect is more prominent in teaching and learning. McLeod (1991) suggested *affect* as an umbrella term that includes "emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods, and conation" (p. 97). Several studies have examined the role of affect in writing. For example, Smagorinsky and Daigle (2012) considered the role of emotions in the writing of high school students. Through a series of case studies, they described how a student with a strong sense of self-efficacy related to writing persevered through difficult composition tasks. Conversely, a student with negative and disconnected feelings toward writing found it particularly difficult, associating it with anxiety and stress. This same student's attitude shifted when she was given more leverage in the genre and tone of her writing. Affect can also influence what and how teachers teach. For example, Watson (2015) found that negative conceptualizations of grammar influenced pedagogical decisions.

Teaching writing is a complex act that requires an understanding of craft, students, and pedagogy (Fletcher, 2006). Understanding how TCs view their role as a teacher of writing can influence how teacher educators enact instruction and how TCs themselves enact writing instruction. Thus, the following question guided our study: How do teacher candidates view the teacher's role in teaching writing?

Theoretical Framework

Writing is a multidimensional activity, involving social and cognitive processes. It includes the interplay of the reader with the writer, understanding of genre and form, language proficiency, use of strategies and skills, and motivation (MacArthur et al., 2016). Bazerman (2015) cautioned against the view of writing as a purely cognitive endeavor: "The teaching of general skills and practices provides only some elements necessary for the complex situated problem solving of writing specific texts" (p. 18).

As we conducted our study, we kept in mind this complexity and examined our data through the lens of Flower's (1994) social cognitive theory of writing. This theory, which expands on Flower and Hayes's (1981) widely cited cognitive process theory, acknowledges the influence of a writer's attitude and feelings, as well as people and society at large, on writing. It maintains that writing is a recursive process and conceptualizes writing as a literate act:

> Literate acts are sites of construction, tension, divergence, and conflict. They happen at the intersection of diverse goals, values, and assumptions, where social roles interact with personal images of one's self and one's situation, where individual rhetorical agendas mix with highly conventional practices. (Flower, 1994, p. 19)

Further, Flower suggested that "cognition, emotions, attitudes, and social interaction are woven together in the acts of negotiated meaning making" (p. 80). In other words, she theorized that the process of writing intertwines thinking, affect, and context.

For the purposes of this study, we identified affect as the emotional aspect of teaching writing (e.g., encourage, motivate). McLeod (1991) defined affect as "emotions, attitudes, beliefs, moods and conation" (p. 97). If the complex act of writing is shaped by the cognitive and the social (i.e., affect and context), it follows that the teaching of writing must acknowledge the role each of these plays. Thus, these theories played an important role in our study.

Methods

This qualitative study traced TCs' conceptualizations of the role of the teacher in children learning to write. In order to do this, we presented TCs with a reflective quick write prompt toward the end of the course so they could explain what they thought the teacher's role was in children learning to write. We made a pragmatic choice to use the word *role* as a generic, everyday term to garner TCs' understanding of the teacher's part in students learning to write. How TCs described the role of the teacher reflected the ways that they were coming to understand the teacher's role in children learning to write.

Participants

The research team consisted of a group of teacher educators from multiple institutions across the United States. Our collaboration centered on writing in teacher education and ways that we can support TCs as writers and as teachers of writing. As a team of researchers from various education and teaching backgrounds, we consider it important to reflect on our own beliefs about teaching writing since beliefs shape how and what we teach. Many of us have conducted researched together for years. Collectively, like Graham (2019), we believe effective writing instruction involves "(a) writing frequently for real and different purposes; (b) supporting students as they write; (c) teaching the needed writing skills, knowledge, and processes; (4) creating a supportive and motivating writing environment; and (5) connecting writing, reading, and learning" (p. 288). These principles guided the course design, including syllabi, as well as our teaching.

Data were collected in writing-focused education courses at four public institutions in Georgia, North Carolina, Illinois, and Virginia. At two institutions, the courses had writing as a central focus; at the other two institutions, the courses were general literacy courses with an emphasis on writing. Three of the courses included elementary TCs, and one included middle grades TCs. The candidates enrolled in the four methods courses were at various points in their programs (i.e., sophomores, juniors, and seniors). TCs were invited to participate in the study based on their enrollment in one of the four courses.

The instructors of these courses were four of the authors of this article. Each instructor recorded key information about their course, such as course focus, program level (e.g., BSEd, MEd, MAT), and whether the course was required; each instructor also posted their syllabus in a shared folder. To determine similarities and differences across courses, we drew on this information as well as regular meetings where pedagogical approaches were discussed, shared, and developed. While there were differences in the courses across the institutions (e.g., titles, program requirements, assignments), the premise of each course was similar. That is, the courses stressed writing as a process with

an emphasis on a workshop model with explicit writing instruction that included mentor texts and teacher modeling. Each course instructor also emphasized developing TCs' knowledge of writing pedagogy, addressing cognitive and affective aspects of writing and teaching writing, building skills for explicit writing instruction, engaging TCs' reflections on themselves as writers as they learned about teaching writing, and supporting their identities as writers. TCs in each course read about, discussed, and engaged in methods for attending to affective components of writing and teaching explicit writing skills.

While each instructor brought shared beliefs about writing into their respective course, there were several points of diversity across the four courses. The courses were at suburban or rural institutions and were variously offered in online, hybrid, or face-to-face formats. TCs were either undergraduates or master's students and were in programs preparing them for elementary or middle grades certification. TCs took the courses at different points in their respective programs, so some courses included more emphasis on planning for writing instruction (e.g., developing unit or lesson plans) than others. The shared beliefs among instructors, similar course foci and assignments, and parallel emphasis on writing pedagogy provided cohesion across the four courses; the differences in institutions, programs, and course formats offered diversity across the different contexts for the study.

Across the four universities, 114 TCs in literacy methods courses initially opted to participate, and 107 completed the end-of-course quick write. Of those 107 candidates, eight identified as African American women, one as an Asian woman, five as Latina women, 86 as White women, two as African American men, and seven as White men. The demographics of our participants represented the demographics of the four universities. To protect their privacy, we numbered candidates for deidentification and created a data matrix in a password-protected site. Following our goal to learn how TCs describe the teacher's role in children learning to write, we analyzed data holistically and did not analyze data by specific course. The various courses, programs, and institutions lend breadth to the study.

Data Sources

This study examined TCs' responses to the quick write prompt: "What do you see as the teacher's role in children learning to write?" This question was developed through discussion of previous research and our goal to support TCs as teachers of writing. We also developed parameters for giving the quick write prompts. For example, the quick writes were given during class time for face-to-face courses, and each instructor allowed 15–30 minutes for the TCs to complete the task. All TCs in the courses completed the quick write as part of their regular class activities, but only the data from those who consented to be part of the study were used.

Quick writes are "short, often timed, written responses to a provocation or prompt" (Driessens & Parr, 2020, p. 415). Quick writes are an effective pedagogical tool (Driessens & Parr, 2020; Rief, 2002; Washburn & Cavagnetto, 2013) because they are short and focused. Rief (2002) noted that quick writes "help students realize they *do* have something to say" and that they can "provide accessible entrance into significant matters" (p. 51, emphasis in original).

These quick writes were a pedagogical tool, and we extended them to be a methodological tool as well. The "significant matter" for the TCs in this study was the teacher's role in children learning to write; they approached this question through a focused yet brief and therefore nonthreatening format of a quick write (Rief, 2002). The quick writes were an effective data collection tool: Their short, focused nature appealed to us because we could note trends and themes across responses from multiple TCs from multiple teacher education programs. Saylor and Walton (2018) similarly used quick writes for data collection in their study on how TCs engaged in math-talk learning communities. In their research, TCs completed quick write prompts (four questions about math-talk learning communities) at the beginning and end of the semester to understand TCs' developing practices as educators.

Data Analysis

Three researchers completed the initial content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980), which focused on how the TCs described the teacher's role, and coded 20% of the data individually. The TCs' responses were sometimes given more than one code, based on the content of each response. Then, the researchers reconvened to discuss codes and definitions, came to agreement, and ultimately assigned only one code per response. Next, two additional researchers coded the data using the established codes. The inter-rater reliability was 64%. All five researchers then met to reconcile any discrepancies ,after which the codes were added to a data matrix that helped establish themes. See Table 1 for an example of the final codes, definitions, and examples.

Table 1

Codes, Definitions, Examples

Code	Definition	Examples from quick write responses
Affective	The emotional aspect of teaching writing (e.g., encourage, motivate, support)	The teacher's role is to help the children experience the joys of writing, explore all of the different ways that writing can be used, and to show them how to use the different parts of the writing process to construct a piece of writing.
Explicit instruction	The use of instructional techniques and strategies (e.g., shared writing, modeling, feedback)	From the very beginning, the teacher is modeling for students how to write. Students learn from imitating writing through shared writing lessons, as well as in other ways. Teachers also analyze students' writing to help them grow.
Affect and explicit instruction	A focus on emotional and instructional aspects of teaching	I see them as a guide to help a child in building a passion for writing in and out of the classroom. A teacher can make or break the writing experiences of a child in the classroom. It's their responsibility to guide the child to write to the best of their ability and express their truth.

After the final themes were determined, we applied them systematically to the entire data set. This allowed us to understand how often in the quick writes the TCs described a teacher's role as affective, focused on explicit instruction, or a combination of both affect and explicit instruction.

Next, two of the researchers used discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) to examine the written responses. By analyzing the language through which TCs mediated their learning about what it means to be a teacher of writing, we could more vividly understand TCs' struggles with who they wanted to be in their future classrooms. We focused on aspects of language (e.g., use of words like *should, must, need*) that emphasized the necessity of an action, or what we consider to be emphatic language. We completed this task together, which allowed us to discuss and verify codes as they went. Once the emphatic examples were determined, we conducted frequency counts specific to each theme (affect, explicit instruction, and both affect and explicit instruction). We achieved triangulation (Miles et al., 2020) as different members of the research team took part in different stages of data analysis.

Findings

TCs' expectations about who they will be and what they will do during writing instruction has important ramifications for how they will support their future student writers. In their quick write responses, TCs varied in how they described the teacher's role as well as the language they chose to use to describe these roles.

Describing Teacher's Role

In their quick write responses, the TCs noted the multifaceted role of teachers of writing. As we reviewed the data, we identified three themes across the codes: (1) the affective aspects of teaching writing, (2) the teacher as someone who needs to provide explicit instruction to support students' writing development, and (3) the teacher who values affective and explicit writing instruction. For an overview of the numeral data related to these themes, see Table 2.

Table 2

Code Counts

Theme	Total examples	Examples with emphatic language
Affect	64	32
Explicit instruction	22	19
Affect and explicit instruction	21	13

Affect in Writing Instruction

Sixty-four of the 107 TCs indicated that the teacher's role included addressing affective aspects of writing instruction. As noted earlier, we identified affect as the emotional aspect of teaching writing. This suggests a focus on supporting a positive emotional relationship to writing, such as when a TC wrote, "Teachers are there to nurture and guide their writing students to continue to pursue their writing potential." TCs also used the word *facilitator* to describe affect in writing instruction. One TC wrote, "I believe that the teacher's role in children learning to write is to be the facilitator not the dictator." Others saw this role as a way to individualize writing instruction. For example, one TC shared:

> The role of the teacher is to be a writing guide for her students. She should prompt students to consider various aspects of writing, but allow them imaginative freedom in the content of their writing. This way students are learning how to write in a way that is unique to them.

Other TCs highlighted the importance of voice. For instance, one wrote, "I want my students to master the art of telling their stories." Modality was also mentioned specific to affect and writing and the individualization of instruction:

> If a student wants to write with the old-fashioned pen and paper method, they should be allowed to but maybe another student works better when they type, let them. Find out what works best for students and allow them to work the way that best fits them, give them choices.

Examining the language the TCs used revealed that they often chose words like *can* and *could* to describe instruction. However, the data analysis revealed TCs often used emphatic language specific to affective aspects of writing instruction. For the purposes of this article, we consider words like *need, must,* and *should* as examples of emphatic language.

Indeed, across the 107 participants, 32 examples from different participants of this type of language were used specifically focusing on affect. For instance, one TC wrote, "We *need* to help students find a love of writing rather than seeing writing as something they have to do." Another shared, "The teacher *should* be a guide into the wonderful world of writing, allowing students to explore and be creative with it." A third TC wrote:

> I think that as teachers, we *need* to understand that each child comes from a different writing background and to plan accordingly. We *need* to help students find a love of writing rather than seeing writing as something they have to do.

The TCs' use of this language indicates strong conviction in their ideas specific to the role of affect in writing instruction.

Explicit Writing Instruction

The frequency count also revealed 22 examples of responses that focused on developing students' writing skills through explicit instruction. We identified explicit instruction as when a TC described the use of instructional techniques and strategies (e.g., shared writing, modeling, feedback). For example, one TC wrote: "I think a teacher's role is to teach students how to write. They do this by teaching students how to organize their thoughts." Other TCs mentioned genre when discussing instruction. One TC shared, "The teacher can also expose their students to several different types of writing like poetry, persuasive, as well as digital literacies." Illustratively, a TC noted, "The teacher should model/teach the writing skills and techniques, as well as expose them to as many different genres as possible." This implies that some TCs saw the teacher as active in their role of teaching writing, interacting with students, rather than being passive. Furthermore, many of the other codes, such as workshop, conferencing, and choice, connect to this approach of teaching writing.

Many of the TCs also expressed thoughts specific to providing feedback as part of instruction. For instance, one TC wrote:

Practicing writing daily can help students learn skills that can help them develop into amazing writers. I also think feedback is also very important in children learning to write. In order for students to get better and to learn better ways to write, feedback and meetings with their teachers is a very important tool.

Another TC wrote about the type of feedback: "I also think it is important for children to get more positive comments and reinforcement on their work than negative comments even if there is a lot the student needs to work on."

Additional comments were specific to how teachers know what to teach. One TC wrote, "A teacher should assess where students are in their writing skills and then create individualized plans for the students." This nod toward individualized instruction to meet students' needs was seen in multiple responses, such as this one: "Teachers also analyze students' writing to help them grow."

There were 19 examples of emphatic language used to describe explicit instruction. For example, "We *must* make sure our students can write. This is the essential building block for any subject." One TC shared, "They *need* to provide [students] with lots of examples of good writing and demonstrate the writer's process." Other examples from the quick writes that included emphatic language specific to skills focused on assessment. A TC wrote, "Teachers *need* to administer assessments and then use those to inform instruction (i.e., mini-lessons)," while another TC wrote, "Teachers *should* constantly be monitoring students' writing to note their successes and their struggles." The TCs' use of this language indicates strong conviction in their ideas specific to teachers' explicit instruction.

Considering Both: Affective and Explicit Writing Instruction

In their end-of-semester quick write, 21 TCs addressed the need for affect and the importance of explicit writing instruction. One TC wrote:

The teacher's role in children learning to write would be to be a facilitator. The teacher should model/teach the writing skills and techniques, as well as expose them to as many different genres as possible. Most importantly, the teacher should emphasize having students write. Not just for academics, but in general.

Other TCs focused on finding a balance between support and feedback. One TC shared, "I also believe that the teacher's role is to encourage and critique students in their writing. Both of these things are ways that students find more courage and pride in their work." A few TCs addressed the bigger idea of writing. For instance, one TC wrote:

The teacher's role in children learning to write is first to help them understand and appreciate the power of words, or the "why" behind writing. In doing this, they should also inspire a love of writing within children. Instructionally, teachers can teach children how to write with passion and use various techniques.

A total of 13 TC responses included emphatic language to describe their thoughts on the importance of teachers not only showing affect but also concentrating on explicit instruction. One TC wrote, "The teacher's role in children learning to write is more so the role of an active guide. Teachers *should* allow students to find their own voice and writing style while giving them strategies to help reach readers more effectively." Another TC shared, "The teacher *should* be a resource for them but also allow for their own thought process to blossom." The use of emphatic language shows some of the TCs' commitment to both aspects of instruction. For example, one stated:

Teachers *need* to provide a safe environment for students to express themselves through writing in the classroom. The teacher also *needs* to scaffold the children's writing skills, adding on new techniques and practice time so that children can advance in their skills. It is also important that teachers provide critical feedback, remain patient, and provide support for children.

These TCs seemed to view the role of a writing teacher as complex, requiring affect and explicit instruction, which suggests a more holistic view of a teacher's role.

Discussion

In this study, we sought to answer the following question: How do teacher candidates view the teacher's role in teaching writing? The quick writes provide a snapshot of what TCs deemed most salient when asked about the teacher's role after completing a semester-long literacy methods course. The TCs overwhelmingly described an active, student-centered teacher role. This was evident in the terms the TCs used to describe the teacher's role (e.g., guide, mentor, facilitator), in the practices they identified (e.g., workshop, conference, teacher as writer), and in the language they used (e.g., choice, creative, expression). This understanding about writing instruction aligns with best practices (e.g., Brindle et al., 2016; Hall & Axelrod, 2014), suggesting that TCs see their role as both proactive—intentionally planning specific instruction—and reactive—responding to students in the moment. Additionally, TCs' use of emphatic language in their quick writes indicates strong convictions about the importance of the teacher's role. These findings contrast with the TCs in Kohnen et al.'s (2019) study, who believed that teachers play a

minimal role in students' writing development.

Many TCs recognized the teacher's role in addressing affective aspects of writing to support a positive relationship with writing. This could be due in part to their own experiences with writing since previous research indicated the strong influence of TCs' own writing experiences (Cremin & Oliver, 2016). The data revealed that our students recognize the complexity of writing and how affect is a necessary component of writing instruction. Other TCs noted instructional components of the teacher's role. These findings build on prior research indicating that explicit writing instruction is important (Brindle et al., 2016; Troia et al., 2011). While it is promising to see TCs who recognize the important role of the writing teacher and those who recognize affect or explicit instruction as key components of that role, fewer TCs left their coursework with a strong understanding that both affective and explicit instructional practices are necessary. This is the case despite both elements being stressed in the course syllabi and assignments, and being valued by the instructors.

Also telling is what is missing from the quick writes. There was little evidence of TCs emphasizing the importance of knowing students, their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their funds of knowledge, and their communities. Flower's (1994) social cognitive theory of writing suggests the influence of writers' attitude and feelings as well as context on writing. Similarly, Kennedy et al. (2012) noted that writing instruction should include cognitive and affective dimensions as well as attention to sociocultural and cultural-historical dimensions. While there was discussion of individualized instruction, TCs did not directly address teaching writing as a culturally responsive practice. Of course, it is possible that TCs recognized this as the teacher's role but did not write about it given the limits of the quick write prompt. However, we would like to see this more prominent in their understanding of the role of teachers (Kline et al., 2021; Mayo & Lark 2011).

Limitations

Our findings are based on one data source, a reflective quick write prompt. We found value in the brief, focused nature of a quick write (Rief, 2002), but the structure of the prompt can be interpreted as a limitation to TCs elaborating on their ideas. Although this has its limitations, we believe having parallel data from multiple institutions is a strength of this study and that the quick write reflections offer important insights. We acknowledge that there might be additional reasons why the TCs did not highlight the importance of explicit instruction and affect in writing instruction due to their interpretation of the prompt. Thus, to examine a broader view of TCs' understanding, future studies could include interviews or observations in addition to quick write responses. In addition, future studies could collect more information about where TCs are in their programs and their clinical experiences, both of which might shape how they see the role of the teacher.

Implications

This study suggests that, by closely considering the language TCs use, teacher educators and mentor teachers as well as administrators may be able to leverage what novice teachers know in ways to facilitate, rather than stymie, effective writing instruc-

tion. This has implications for not only teacher education but also schools.

Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher educators work to design writing-focused literacy methods courses to equip TCs with opportunities to see themselves as writers and as teachers of writing. The fact that so many TCs across the four universities addressed affect further highlights that affect has become more prominent in teaching and learning (e.g., Rahim & Chun, 2017). What TCs believe about writing is influential (Grisham & Wolsey, 2011; Ozenc & Ozenc, 2018) yet changeable (Hall, 2016). We will continue to reflect and take action to modify our courses to further explore how TCs define writing and, as we coax them toward a more global understanding of what writing is, remain steadfast in our belief in the need for affect and explicit writing instruction.

In addition, based on what was absent in the quick write responses, one area we need to emphasize more in our literacy methods courses is culturally responsive teaching. There is a long history of trying to prepare TCs for the diverse needs of students in classrooms through culturally responsive pedagogies (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2018; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). However, TCs' lack of discussion of such pedagogies renews our awareness that our courses need to continually be refined to ensure an emphasis on culturally responsive teaching.

Implications for Schools

As TCs transition from the university to classroom teaching, they need time to develop effective teaching practices and may experience tensions between their personal beliefs, concepts learned in teacher education programs, and the realities of their new teaching contexts (e.g., Levin & He, 2008; Scales et al., 2017). Even when they have completed multiple literacy courses, TCs will inevitably have gaps in their knowledge of effective instruction, especially when compared to more experienced teachers (Michiko et al., 2019).

It is necessary for novice teachers' understanding of the role of a writing teacher to evolve rather than remain stagnant. In order for this to happen, however, ongoing professional development must be in place. Instead of workshops that teach a specific program, we advocate for opportunities for classroom teachers to discuss their beliefs about writing, examine their teaching contexts, and discuss with mentors and peers since research suggests that all of these aspects influence their growth and development as writing teachers (Hall et al., 2021; Hall & Grisham-Brown, 2011). This is particularly important to achieve the balance of affect and explicit instruction since affect may get pushed to the side during the quest to cover standards and meet benchmarks.

As writing teacher educators, we are passionate about the content and pedagogy of our courses. As we work to revise our courses and continue to partner with school systems, we are hopeful that together we can continue the work of Flower (1994) in acknowledging the complexity of being a writer and a teacher of writing.

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