I Think I Can: How Agency Grounds Teacher Praxis

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Abstract: *This paper uses data from a larger study in response to recent literature regarding teacher professional identity. In the study, perspectives of teachers from four high schools in two states were examined through a cross-case study. Triangulated data affirmed that teaching is not easily understood by a single theoretical perspective. Additionally, teachers' instruction is heavily influenced by mentor teachers, colleagues, and teachers' own classroom experiences as sources of content and pedagogical knowledge. Our findings show how agency grounds teacher praxis in secondary English classrooms. While there is no one way to teach per se, the combination of different dialectic influencers and teachers' agentic belief play critical roles in shaping teachers' instructional practice.*

Key Words: agency, teacher beliefs, teacher efficacy, Vygotsky, Bandura

In a sociocultural context, teachers bring their own histories and learning experiences to their instruction which shape and mold their pedagogical beliefs. Pedagogical beliefs mediate the relationship between teachers' knowledge and their actions in the classroom. Extant research (Buehl & Fives, 2009; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990) concerning teachers' pedagogical beliefs shows a strong relationship between planning and instruction; but, for every study that shows teachers' beliefs impact practice there are as many studies demonstrating beliefs are inconsistent with practice (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Recent research (e.g., Hseih, 2016) has argued that a teacher's professional identity may be the root cause of this dichotomy. We disagree. We posit that agency and efficacy ground teacher praxis rather than identity (Klimow, 2018; Schoepf, 2020). Agency is the umbrella under which efficacy, identity, and belief/perception exist. To argue that identity alone influences or explains such a complex act as teaching ignores the multifaceted nature of agency, the relevance of the classroom context, and the dialogic influences that both comprise and impact the act of teaching.

Researchers attempt to explain teacher praxis through survey-based methodology that is void of classroom context and contributes to the assertion that teacher identity grounds teacher praxis (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). I am a teacher therefore learning occurs—to put it simply. But Smagorinsky (2009) reminds us there simply is no silver bullet when it comes to education—no one way to teach, no one way to understand the complex act of teaching. Teachers' beliefs about learning are shaped by the school context; dialectical influencers such as teachers' pedagogical orientation and ontological view of

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knowledge, and school/classroom context; and individual teaching situation (Klimow & Schoepf, 2021); and thus, demand understanding beyond survey-based methodologies that only tease out a distinction between knowing and doing.

Across the literature, teacher practice often represents repeated action separate from context and/or situation rather than including the grounding theory and/or beliefs behind those actions (Klimow, 2018) because teacher beliefs is often investigated quantitatively through surveys and questionnaires. Because teacher belief is both contextual and situational (Bandura, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978), we need to understand teachers' beliefs within the school context, and how dialectic influencers (Klimow, 2018) impact teachers' writing instruction. Extant research on teacher belief underscores the positive relationship between teachers' belief and their instruction (Buehl & Fives, 2009; Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016; Pajares, 1992) spotlighting the complexity of the teaching act and the need to understand context and situation when looking to improve teacher praxis.

Bandura (1986) asserts teacher behavior is the better predictor of belief compared to outcome of teaching. Teachers' beliefs are represented in their actions; evidenced in their acquired skills, knowledge, resources, practices, and interactions (Bandura, 1997); and manifested through dialectical interactions that occur during the act of teaching (Klimow, 2018; Schoepf, 2020).

Many researchers explore teacher belief as a construct governed by the Self-System (Bandura, 1986) that is representative of the Cartesian duality in psychology in which the mind and body (i.e., mental and physical, mind and body) are two equally real things, separate and independent of each other (Howard, 2020). Few researchers (Kouzlin, 1986; Robbins, 2001; Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991; Wertsch, 1985) have explored teacher belief based on Vygotsky's learning theory that originates in monist psychology (i.e., Gestalt psychology, functional, historical, dialectical monism; phenomenalism) that asserts the mind and body are one and inseparable (VandenBos, 2007). This study examines teacher belief using both perspectives in psychology—monism and dualism—providing a more robust and comprehensive consideration of teacher belief (i.e., agency) and the impact of dialectical influencers on writing instruction praxis in secondary English classrooms.

In this study, we engaged a qualitative, cross-case case study design to explore how teacher beliefs related to knowing/learning and other dialectical influencers, such as pedagogical orientation, context, and situation, influence how high school English teachers teach writing. Using a qualitative cross-case analysis approach (Tuyay, Floriani, Yeager, Dixon, & Green, 1995), we examine teachers' beliefs for teaching writing, how beliefs are represented in the classroom, and what contextual and situational factors impact teaching practices. The information gained from this study is intended to help fill the gap in the literature concerning the sources of pedagogical beliefs and teacher praxis—their origin and what influences belief— which have not been researched thoroughly, especially in high school English writing contexts.

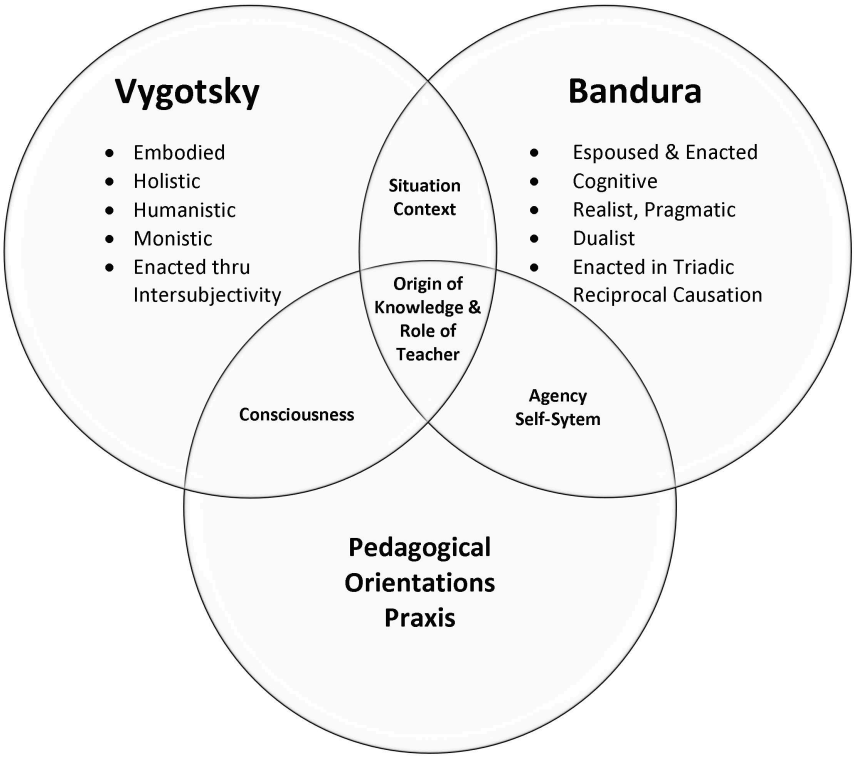
PURPOSE

The purpose of this qualitative, cross-case case study is to explore the dialectical tensions between knowing and doing in order to understand what grounds teachers' praxis. To do so we asked the following research questions: What influences teachers' pedagogy and instructional practice? What are the dialectic influencers that impact teachers' knowing how to teach? What is evident in their observed instructional practices?

Theoretical Perspective

We explore the dialectical tension between knowing and doing in terms of teachers' writing instruction through Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) in conjunction with Bandura's Socio-Cognitive Theory (Figure 1). Instruction and student learning are part of a struggle between theory and practice. However, all human action is mediated by interaction, context, experience, and belief/agency (Lasky, 2005; Leontiev, 1981). Understanding how this mediation is conceptualized is crucial to narrowing the gap between knowing and doing, instructional theory and instructional practice. During teacher preparation or in-service teacher professional development, attention must be drawn to both the intent of a lesson and the pedagogy employed to ensure learning occurs. Equally important is recognizing the desired learning goals that bridge the teacher's knowing what do with the social reality of instruction in the figured world of a classroom (Leontiev, 1981). Therefore, dialectic influences such as learning experiences, classroom cultures, and external pressures may shape a teacher's agency and impact the complex interaction between teaching and learning (Lasky, 2005). Teachers are active agents within the teaching-learning nexus. Therefore, an individual's ability or capacity to teach is the product of their agency which encompasses their values, content area and pedagogic knowledge, past learning experiences, and their professional identity. We make visible the dialectic influences by situating teacher beliefs in the analysis of the data using three categories: Teaching Orientation, Teacher Role, and Composition Pedagogy.

Figure 1:
Dialectical Influencers that Impact Writing Instruction in High School



Understanding what influences teachers to teach the way they do can inform areas of opportunity to improve teacher preparation and ultimately student outcomes. Vygotsky's and Bandura's theories offer differing perspectives of the same issue—teacher beliefs which include agency and efficacy. The construct of agency as conceptualized by Vygotsky and Bandura

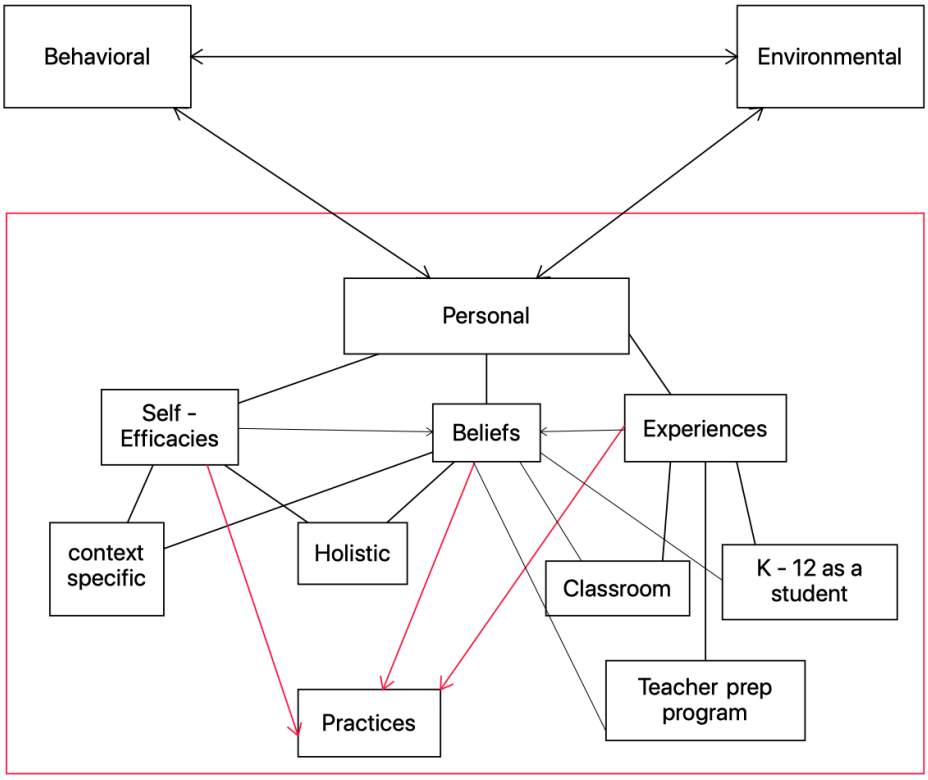
intersects at their ideas about the origin of knowledge and the role of the teacher (Figure 1). For both, agency is situational and contextual.

Vygotsky explains belief/agency as part of one's consciousness—how one sees themselves and interacts in the world. Knowing is the result of interaction and experience; it is flexible and leads development; we are transformed, always in the state of becoming, as a result of those interactions and experiences. In SCT, learning occurs during socially constructed activity among students, the teacher, and the learning content/context (Davydov & Kerr, 1995). Because the teaching-learning connection is interactional, defined by context, learning task, and the teacher, outcomes must be understood within the collective context that produced them. Classroom activity can result in material (product) and conceptual (process) outcomes (Kouzlin, 1986) as well as language development (Jones, 2008; Wertsch, 1998). The conceptual product results from the collective experience. Learning, therefore, is transformative, resulting in the learner's self-awareness, self-knowledge, and self-actualization.

Vygotsky's ideas offer an understanding of beliefs through human interaction, especially through discourse during the activity of learning. For example, a teacher can use language hybridity to leverage students' linguistic tools during learning tasks that involve writing (Emig, 1977), to help students learn sophisticated syntax. As discursive activity, teachers' beliefs then are embodied in their writing instructional practices: reflective of the teacher's consciousness and knowing and representative of the teacher's praxis.

Bandura's complexity theory (Figure 2) allows for the examination of the nestedness and interaction of systems that influence teachers based on perceptions, beliefs, and experiences (Davis & Sumara, 2006). The world of education is itself a complex system with various factors nested within or bounded to other systems (Davis & Sumara, 2006). Complexity theory allows the researchers to theorize and analyze influences that interact and overlap one another in their pedagogical impact of teachers (McQuitty, 2012).

Figure 2:
Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Causation & Complexity Theory of Bounded Systems



Bandura (1997) maintains that each person both affects and is affected by three things: (a) personal or internal influences, which include a person's sense of agency and self-efficacy; (b) behavioral influences, including a person's innovation and their chosen response to their environment; and (c) environmental influences, which entail all external factors affecting the individual. Bandura's definition of belief comes from a combination of interacting factors including environment, cognition, and behavior that contribute to the Self-System (Bandura, 1986). The self-system governs one's ability to succeed (self-efficacy) with motivation acting as an influencer on the outcome. Knowledge is acquired through observation, imitation, modeling, and verbal instruction. Thus, individuals, whether students or teachers, learn from what they work with and think upon internally, the behaviors they exhibit, and the environment in which they are working. These social cognitive elements account for the environmental influences inherent in the classroom environment. Learning is situational, contextual, and susceptible to environmental influences inherent in the classroom. For example, students would affect and be affected by these environmental influences. Specifically, the teacher models how to cite a source within the paper and then has students practice with their writing. Social cognitive theory allows for examination of the environmental influences that shape teachers' instructional practices (Goddard, Goddard, Kim, and Miller, 2015).

While teacher beliefs are epistemic in nature (Klimow, 2018; Schoepf, 2020), embodiment and enactment of those beliefs connect opposing discourses regarding teacher beliefs—their origin and their role in teachers' writing instructional practice. To improve writing instruction, so that pre-service and in-service professional learning results in improved student outcomes, we must not only identify the dialectical influencers and how they impact high school English teachers' writing

instruction within the complex dynamic system that is the classroom, but also recognize how teacher agency not teacher identity grounds instructional praxis.

DEFINITIONS

Research has defined beliefs as pedagogical (methodology for teaching), epistemological (knowing, knowledge), efficacious (in terms of ability), competency-based (in terms of capacity, capability), and motivational (attitude). In her seminal study on teachers, Nespor (1985) discovered, "to understand what teaching is, from the teacher's perspective, we have to understand beliefs which then define the tasks of teaching" (Nespor, 1985, p. 23). We define our use of belief/agency based on Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (SCT) and Bandura's Socio-Cognitive Theory and Complexity Theory as it relates to this cross-case study which seeks to understand the dialectal influencers that impact high school writing instruction.

AGENCY

Agency may be understood in many different ways. For our purposes, we adhere to an understanding of agency grounded in a sociocultural approach that prioritizes the social contexts and cultural tools that frame development of human beliefs, values, and ways of being (Wertsch, 1991). Specifically, agency is "an individual's capacity to determine and make meaning from their environment through purposive consciousness and reflective and creative action" (Houston, 2010). In this sense, the self does not operate in isolation. Instead, the self requires interaction with others in a sociocultural environment to grow and behave in a self-regulated and goal-oriented way. In classroom settings, agency presents when teachers self-regulate, control, and monitor their own actions within the figured setting of a classroom and in response to student-teacher-learning task interactions (Bandura, 1997).

TEACHER BEHAVIOR (ROLE IN LEARNING)

Epistemic beliefs are an individual's beliefs regarding knowledge and the nature of knowing (Hofer, 2002). Specifically, epistemic beliefs are beliefs about how an individual defines, constructs, justifies, and stores knowledge (Hofer, 2002; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). Teacher epistemic beliefs impact how teachers define each teaching task (Esterly, 2003)—the teacher's role and the origin of knowledge. At the metaphysical level, four epistemic theories of knowing and knowledge: idealism, realism, pragmatism (experientialism), and existentialism exist. These theories are explained by the individual's perception of the source of knowledge, the nature of the learner, the structure and function of the curriculum, the role of the teacher, the curriculum orientation, and major theorists. A teacher's understanding of their role in learning becomes visible in their teaching behaviors. For this study, we define these behaviors as expert, leader, coach, guide, facilitator, and actuator (Putney, 2002; Klimow, 2018).

TEACHER BELIEFS

Beliefs that teachers hold regarding any content or constructs relating in any way to the field of teaching, learning, or education in general (Fives & Buehl, 2008; Pajares, 2002). Additionally, the definition includes any "subjective claims that the individual accepts or wants to be true … as well as individuals' conceptions of what should be, ought to be, or is preferable" (Fives & Buehl, 2012, p. 476). Teachers bring their histories and experiences to their interactions with students, presenting them in instruction, and mediating the relationship between planning and

executing. According to Buehl and Fives (2009), "teachers' beliefs lie 'at the very heart' of education" (p 367).

PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

The reference to the term pedagogical knowledge is defined as a teacher's "personal stock of information, skills, experiences, beliefs, and memories" (Alexander, Schallert, & Hare, 1991, p. 317) that inform a teacher's practice and approach to teaching. The word "praxis" (Freire, 1970, p. 126) captures teacher practice inclusive of theory and belief, which then is embodied in teachers' actions during the act of teaching and followed by reflection. Pedagogical knowledge originates from experiences as a student as well as developed during pre-service teacher preparation programs and in-service professional development sessions.

PEDAGOGICAL ORIENTATIONS (TRANSMITTAL, TRANSACTIONAL, TRANSFORMATIONAL)

Pedagogy represents answers to questions about the purpose of education, the teacher's role, the content of teaching, and how to teach. Teaching methods (pedagogy) are informed by metaphysics: epistemology (the nature of knowing), axiology (the nature of value), and ontology (the nature of being). Together, these components form a teaching philosophy (praxis) that guides a teacher's practice (the act of instruction): the why, what, and how of teaching in action, and the nature of learning in action. While differences exist among the labels and conceptual understandings of beliefs, consistency exists among researchers who argue that epistemological views lead to differences among teachers in their pedagogy, curriculum, and instruction (Bandura, 1986, 2005; Buehl & Fives, 2009; Hofer, 2006; Kuhn et al., 1999; Nespor, 1995; Pajares, 1992; Schraw & Olafson, 2002; Scheffler, 1965; Wilson, 2014; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). For the purpose of this study, we use three common views of teaching: transmittal, transaction, and transformation (Miller, 1996).

TRANSMISSION (TRADITIONAL APPROACH)

Teacher-centered approach in which the teacher imparts a body of knowledge to students in a specified sequence. Achievement is viewed as the students' ability to demonstrate, replicate, or reproduce the body of knowledge. Classroom interaction is one way: teacher to student. Learning is a passive experience.

TRANSACTION (MODERNIST APPROACH)

Teacher creates learning opportunities in which students interact with content and construct knowledge and/or meaning. Achievement is viewed as student's ability to apply knowledge and learning to solve problems, create products, or demonstrate understanding. Students use prior knowledge as a scaffold for constructing new knowledge. Classroom interaction relies on teacher to student and student to student collaborations. Learning is an active experience.

TRANSFORMATIVE (POST-MODERN APPROACH)

Student-centered, holistic approach that invites both students and teachers to discover their full potential as learners, global citizens, and humans. Learning is inquiry-based and encourages learners to develop their interests and talents resulting in self-awareness of the interconnectedness among all life. Achievement is akin to self-actualization and is highly individualized based on personalized learning goals. Classroom interaction centers around student engagement in meaningful and authentic learning experiences.

COMPOSITION PARADIGMS

Within the context of classroom instruction, we needed universal terminology in order to capture and label teacher pedagogy related to teaching writing. Our purpose was to understand the relationship between teachers' epistemic beliefs and observed pedagogical practices. Richard Fulkerson (1990, 2005) provided that terminology in his research on the evolution of composition pedagogy and curriculum within higher education settings. Based on Fulkerson's (1990, 2005) work, we defined the Composition Paradigms, which capture what we observed as the relationship between teachers' epistemic beliefs and pedagogical practice, as: Formalism, Procedural Rhetoric, Traditional Composition, Expressivism, Critical/Cultural Studies. These paradigms are listed as a taxonomy—Formalism representing the most traditional orientation, Procedural Rhetoric begins the modernist orientations, and Expressivism launches the post-modern orientations in composition pedagogy and curriculum.

METHOD

The current study used a collective case study design (Stake, 1995), analyzing each case study (e.g., case 1 and case 2) by itself as well as a cross-case analysis approach (Tuyay, Floriani, Yeager, Dixon, & Green, 1995), to examine teachers' beliefs for teaching writing and how beliefs are represented in the classroom. The use of a cross-case study involves multiple case studies which can be evaluated and analyzed alongside one another (Stake, 1995). The cross-case study design was chosen for the study because "[e]ach case study is instrumental to learning … but there [is] important coordination between the individual studies" (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Instrumental case studies serve this qualitative cross-case case study goal as they facilitate understanding of a larger issue by shifting the focus on patterns constructed from the cases rather than on the intrinsic value of the cases themselves (Creswell, 2013, Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The desire to understand a real-world situation in context (Yin, 2014) guided this inquiry because teachers' beliefs about learning are situated within the classroom context.

Research for the two cases was conducted at four public high schools (Tables 1 & 1a) in two different states in the southwestern United States. Each high school had a distinct and specific context in terms of graduation rate, demographics, and writing proficiency. The purposeful selection of cases ensured heterogenous case studies that, when examined collectively, provide a more holistic understanding of the dialectical influencers that impact teacher beliefs relative to writing instruction. The participants' years of overall teaching experience ranged from two to thirty-six years. The longstanding careers of several participants likely confirm that the evolution of teacher beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2012) had peaked, and the espoused and enacted and/or embodied beliefs examined in this case study were firm, established beliefs. Additionally, some participants taught at the same school site, presenting an additional dialectical influencer—situation.

Table 1:
Participants

Case 1(Vygotsky)					
Roadrunner VoTech HS	**Cactus HS**			**Saguaro HS**	
Beverly	Jayne	Luise	Pete	Meryl	Reddik
English 11 Honors	English 9	English 12	AP Literature & Composition	English 12	AP Language & Composition
M.Ed.	BS/BA	M.Ed.	M.Ed.	Master's	PhD Candidate
25 Years End of Career	2 Years New Career ARL	4 Years Second Career	22 Years Mid-Career	21 Years Mid-Career	9 years Mid-Career Writing Project

Case 2 (Bandura)				
Brancastle HS				
Annie	Crystal	Jo March	Mary Shelley	Zelda Fritz
English 9	English 10 & 11	AP Language & AP Literature	English 9 & 9 Honors	AP Language & English 12
M.Ed.	BA	BA	BA	M.Ed.
17 Years Mid-Career	36 Years End of Career	12 Years Mid-Career Second Career	12 Years Mid-Career	21 years End of Career

We conducted multiple levels of systematic analysis (Spradley, 1980) in search for relationships and patterns among and within the data. Different methods to collect and analyze data within each Case led to data triangulation—a means for developing valid understanding through convergence. We achieved triangulation through comparison and contrast of the data, consultation among researchers, interviews of the participants, and methods of analysis that became part of the reflexive process of this case study (Denzin, 1989).

RESULTS

Data yielded complex data sets grounded in situated meanings and discourses, making analysis of teachers' beliefs about instruction visible (e.g., how words and actions come together to *show* meaning in classroom settings (Klimow & Schoepf, 2021). Central to the process was Vygotsky's notion of intersubjectivity, the sharing of a social world through the process of negotiating meaning (Kozulin, 1990) which allowed us to see what the participants jointly construct in their talk and actions; and thus, how practices associated with being literate in that classroom come into being (Author, 1996, p. 130).

Case One, a multi-site, multi-case case study, sought to understand teachers' expectations for teaching writing based on their embodied beliefs about learning, explore how beliefs were embodied in their writing praxis, and expose the impact of external pressures on teachers' writing. Themes present in the findings confirm extant research on teachers' epistemic beliefs and teaching (Farrel & Patricia, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007; Kiuhara, et. al., 2009). For example, participants acknowledged they did not have a methods course specific to how to teach writing during their pre-service teacher preparation coursework and exposure to teaching writing occurred during their student teaching phase (Cavanaugh, 2012; Emig, 1971; Kiuhara, et. al., 2009; McKinney & Giorgis, 2009). For example, Luise credits her "awesome mentor teacher during student teaching" for "breaking things down and teaching writing as a formula." Luise added, "I use a modified version of the Jane Schaeffer paragraph model".

Participants also shared their expectations about teaching and learning were often formed outside of teaching methods courses (e.g., learned from mentor teachers or personal learning experiences). As noted by Jayne who shared during her interview that she had "no formal training [to teach writing]" and added "teaching writing has been mostly self-taught." Pete said he always wanted to be a teacher but added that his undergraduate program did not prepare him. He said, "Experience more than anything prepares you". Meryl did not talk about any specific course in her teacher preparation program on how to teach writing. Instead, she referenced a professional development program she attended in the school district called Step-Up-To-Writing™ that provided teachers with structured instructional support for teaching writing formulaically. Participants stated praxis was not always consistent with observed teaching practices (Hillocks, 2013). For example, Reddik referred to the "Apprenticeship model" in his interview to describe his writing pedagogy. To many educators, the apprenticeship model denotes a specific pedagogy grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in which a learning task is structured or arranged so that a novice can work on it successfully. However, ongoing conversation with Reddik during the interview as well as classroom observations connoted a widely different interpretation of the Model. Reddik's understanding of apprenticeship applies more to that of traditional master and trainee—under his lead as the teacher, he directs the learning and tells students what and how to do a writing-related task. Words such as rules, structure, grammar, conventions, proofread, and edit appeared regularly in Beverly's interview transcript, photo reflection, and field notes collected during classroom observations. Beverly spoke about writers' workshop and the writing process in her photo reflections, but neither were observed.

Across the classrooms in Case 1, instruction was often teacher-led with students working independently. The desks were arranged in rows. Pete always delivered instruction from behind a lecturn while Jayne, Louise, Beverly, and Reddik delivered instruction from the front of the room. Learning outcomes focused largely on knowing how to structure an argument or how to compose correct sentences and paragraphs resulting in the narrowing of the curriculum to a singular focus on argumentation at the exclusion of the other CCSS for writing. Teaching privileged form and

correctness, teaching argumentation, using and citing evidence, and developing claims. For example, Meryl said, "I am a stickler for the end product…how the final copy presents itself and looks. [It has to be] typed and [published]. It has to various different forms of sentences in it." Pete explained, "I do sentence types, outlining…I show examples….we review essay exemplars and talk about what we need to do."

Writing was connected to reading, but students did not study models to inform their own writing (e.g., reading as a writer, writing as a reader) as recommended by *Writing Next* (2007). Instead, readings served as the topic for writing analyses or arguing the effectiveness of an author's stylistic choices. (Figure 3)

Case Two, a single site multi-case case study, sought to understand the espoused beliefs and enacted practices of writing instruction. Findings demonstrated a connection between espoused and enacted beliefs. For example, three themes identified during data analysis indicated strong similarities across participants: (a) espoused beliefs of teacher behavior, (b) espoused beliefs and enacted practices of instructional scaffolding, and (c) espoused beliefs and enacted practices of assessing student comprehension.

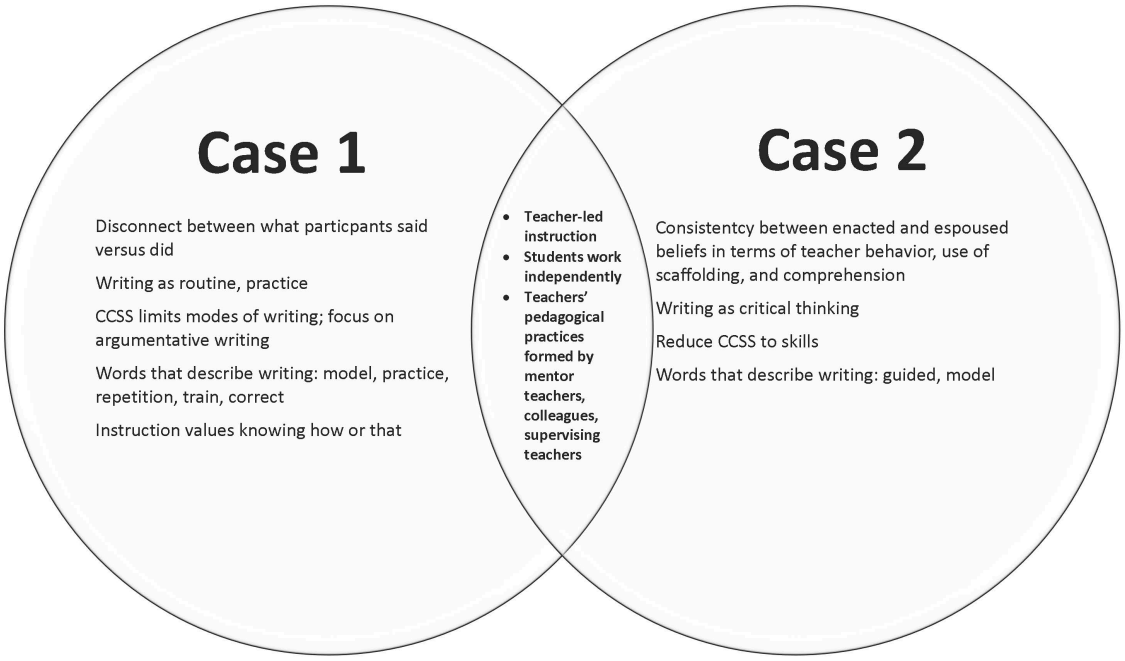
As part of the Teacher Beliefs Questionnaire (Fives & Buehl, 2008), the teachers were asked to rank 13 items in order of what they believe should be emphasized in the classroom. The ranking of these items provided an interesting contrast between the teachers (Table 2). For example, participants' beliefs all functioned as either filtering interpretation or guiding action rather than as framing a problem (Buehl & Fives, 2009). Mid-career teachers (i.e., Anne, Mary Shelley, and Jo March) indicated belief in student creativity as highly important, while end-of-career teachers (i.e., Crystal and Zelda Fritz) identified student creativity as one of the least important. All participants in Case Two indicated a priority for learning/gaining/using critical thinking skills and prioritized the learning process over products of learning as part of their espoused beliefs. (Table 2) Participants focused heavily on teaching approach, content/knowledge, and students, with few references of self, context/environment, or specific practices (Fives & Buehl, 2008).

Table 2:
Case 2: Teaching Rankings based on Teacher Beliefs

Category	Annie	Crystal	Jo March	Mary Shelley	Zelda Fitz
academic excellence	13	9	11	11	10
content specific knowledge	10	8	10	10	5
critical thinking in students	2	4	2	3	1
equality among students	7	3	1	6	8
generalized skills and abilities	6	10	5	13	2
instruction based on student interests	8	5	9	5	7
instruction based on subject matter	11	11	13	12	6
learning standards	9	12	12	8	9
life-long learning	1	1	6	4	13
the process of learning	4	2	7	1	4
the products of learning	12	7	8	9	12
student creativity	3	13	3	2	11
student independence	5	6	4	7	3

Findings from the cross-case analysis (Figure 3) affirm that teaching is a complex activity mediated by context, situation, agency, and efficacy. Additionally, teachers' praxis is heavily influenced by mentor teachers, colleagues, and participants' own classroom experiences as sources of content and pedagogical knowledge. Findings also show how the combination of different dialectic influencers impact instruction in terms of lesson design, instructional scaffolding, and enacting high leverage practices for teaching.

Figure 3:
Similarities and Differences Between Case 1 and Case 2



COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS

We used componential analysis (Spradley, 1980) to organize and represent our data to understand better how our participants' interpretations and meanings compared to how the literature defined writing praxis and teacher belief. As part of the discourse analysis, we searched for key words related to each of the domains used in the componential analysis. We used key words such as process, rules, formulas, inquiry, practice, scaffolds, tell, show, coach, peer, grammar, context, knowing/knowledge, models, teacher role, journal/journaling, conferencing, lecturing, routine, structure. The componential analysis also verified the accuracy of our analysis through triangulation with other collected data. The combined data displayed in the componential analysis (Table 3) gave meaning to patterns within the data and spotlighted significant findings across the cases. To create the componential analysis, we set up a matrix comparing the cases across the top of the matrix. Down the left side of the matrix, we listed the dialectic influencers with taxonomies within each category. Since Vygotsky and Bandura represent competing views concerning mind and body in terms of teacher belief, the matrix delineated details of relationships beyond basic contrastive methods of analysis.

Table 3:
Componential Analysis

		Case #1						Case #2				
		Jayne	*Meryl*	*Beverly*	*Pete*	*Reddik*	*Luise*	*Jo*	*Annie*	*Mary*	*Crystal*	*Zelda*
Teaching Orientation	Transmittal	X	X	X							X	X
	Transactional				X	X	X		X	X		
	Transformational							X				
Teacher Role	Expert					X	X					
	Leader			X	X						X	X
	Coach	X	X						X	X		
	Guide											
	Facilitator							X				
	Actuator											
Composition Pedagogy	Formalism					X	X					
	Procedural Rhetoric				X							X
	Traditional Composition		X	X					X	X	X	
	Expressivism	X										
	Critical/Cultural Studies							X				

When we finished, we noticed similar configurations of contrast along entire rows within each group of influencers, which fascinated us. How could they look the same when they are so different? For example, Jayne, Meryl, and Beverly (Case #1) shared identical dimensions of contrast as Crystal and Zelda (Case #2) for teaching orientation. Yet, placement on the teacher role and composition pedagogy revealed differing dimensions of contrast. By asking questions of the data to understand and analyze the results, we surfaced components of meaning related to each of the cases.

CONCLUSION

We applied a sociocultural lens to understand the active interplay of the dialectical tensions between knowing and doing in order to understand what grounds teachers' praxis. Our cross-case sought to identify the dialectic influences that shape in-service teachers' writing instruction praxis. We explored how in-service high school English teachers teach writing in their English classrooms through the lens of beliefs/agency, compositional pedagogy, and general pedagogy for teaching English. Analysis of two cases showed their K-12 school experiences as students themselves, resident-teacher-mentoring during student teaching, and early-career professional development mediated their instructional praxis for teaching writing. Their notions of teaching writing were not only interlaced with their agency and belief about what they valued as writing and their role in teaching, but also impacted by dialectic influences native to the classroom context and administrative pressures to graduate students.

Through the lens of agency, we discovered our participants struggled to narrow the gap between what they knew (applying their pedagogical knowledge related to best practice) and their intentional enactment of that knowledge in their classroom reality. Participants' instructional

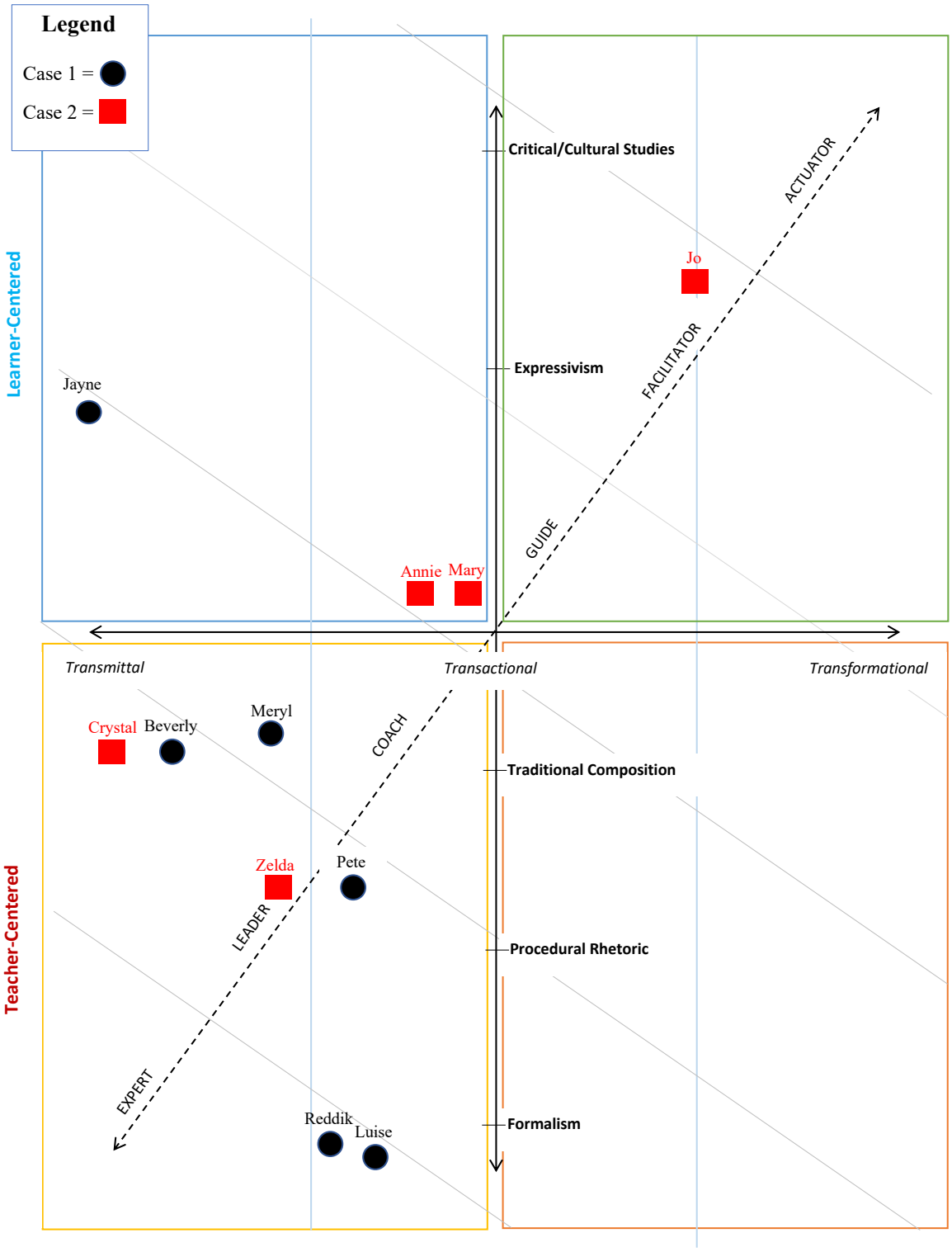
practice was heavily impacted by the combination of different dialectic influences and their agentic beliefs. As a result, we learned that teachers develop through a lifetime of lived experience that neither begins nor ends with formal teacher preparation and in-service professional development (Feryok, 2021). To illustrate the significance of our discoveries, we graphed the componential analysis as a dimensional scatter plot (Figure 4).

The Triangulated Model of Pedagogical Perspectives (Klimow & Schoepf, 2021) is a dimensional scatter plot that displays across the cases, participants' pedagogical learning perspectives on a horizontal continuum from transmittal to transformational; a vertical continuum of compositional paradigms from formalism to critical/cultural studies, and a diagonal continuum of teacher behaviors from expert to actuator. Where pedagogical orientations for teaching writing and teacher beliefs intersect is the individual's understanding of both the origin of knowledge and the role of the teacher in learning. Of all the dialectic influencers, teachers' belief about his/her role in learning and the origin of knowledge exert the greatest influence on how English teachers teach writing.

The Triangulated Model demonstrates how mediational systems and dialectic influences may exert a deeper, more enduring effect on high school English teachers' writing instruction praxis. The desire is for teachers to be in the upper right quadrant of the resulting triangulated model (Figure 4), guiding, facilitating, actuating, transformative learning that is grounded in composition pedagogy and values writing as tool for learning not just about school subjects, but also about the self; as a product of thinking and understanding the world; as a process for composing and making thought public. We wonder why none of our participants were in that desired quadrant, especially since post-modern pedagogy and values promote student-centered instruction designed to disrupt past educational structures that limited equitable access to high-quality curriculum and instruction.

One critical area of study would be to explore how pre- and in-service teacher preparation can be renovated to disrupt the stronghold that lived experience has on instructional practice as those experiences seem to shape teacher agency and beliefs about how to teach writing in high school.

Figure 4:
Triangulated Model of Pedagogical Perspectives



RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This study demonstrates that research on teacher praxis must include a field-based component to encapsulate fully how teachers' praxis is both conceptualized and enacted effectively during the act of teaching. Our study contributes to the limited research on what influences high school English teachers' planning and delivery of instruction. Results of this study indicate a need for more field-based research into the teaching beliefs of high school English teachers and its impact on the act of teaching.

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