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## **Learning to write book reviews for publication: A collaborative action research study on student-teachers' perceptions, motivation, and self-efficacy**

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this collaborative action research-based study was to explore the effects of learning to write book reviews for publication on 57 student-teachers' experience with academic writing in initial English language teacher education (IELTE) in Argentina. The initiative was embedded in four different modules at three institutions. Data were gathered from March to November 2018 through an online questionnaire and group interviews. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis of the data collected show that writing book reviews for publication improved student-teachers' motivation, sense of self-efficacy, and overall perception of academic writing given the authenticity of audience embedded in the writing tasks. The findings confirm that learning to write for publication, when based on genre pedagogy, helps student-teachers develop professionally through experiential learning and therefore teacher educators may need to consider embedding similar initiatives in IELTE. Unlike previous studies, peer collaboration did not have a positive effect on the student-teachers' writing development. Pedagogical and research implications are included.

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*Key words: academic writing; student-teacher; motivation; publication; self-efficacy: authenticity*

## **1. Introduction**

Writing for publication is a highly competitive activity for advancing knowledge and securing a promotion, tenure-track positions, and research funding (Jalongo & Saracho, 2016; Luiselli, 2017; Schluer, 2014). While academic literacy is investigated at undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels (e.g., Ho, 2017; Ferris, 2018; , Jin, Liu, & Lei, 2020; Lee, Hitchcock, & Elliot Casal, 2018; Worden, 2015), practices of and studies on writing for publication in particular appear to be reserved for postgraduate students (e.g., Ho, 2017, Huang, 2010; Ma, 2019; Morton & Storch, 2019; Tang, 2012) and novice as well as experienced university-based lecturers and researchers (Curry, 2011; Paltridge & Starfield, 2016; Tang, 2012).

It may be concurred that writing for publication is not an essential part of teachers' job profiles in primary or secondary education. Nevertheless, they may still wish to engage in academic writing as a professional development opportunity that promotes local knowledge flow beyond gate-keeping practices in higher education (Banegas & Cad, in press; Pain, Kesbin, & Atkins, 2011). In this regard, teacher education may accommodate modules or initiatives that prepare teachers for

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publishing. However, little is known about how learning to write for publication may impact on (future) teachers' initial English language teacher education (IELTE).

Aware of this lacuna in the literature, in this study we, a group of tutors, aimed to investigate the effects of learning to write book reviews for publication on three groups of student-teachers in the last year (Year 4) of their respective pre-service or initial English language teacher education programmes in Argentina, a context under-represented in high-impact journals. In particular, we examine the effects of learning to write for publication on student-teachers' motivation, self-efficacy, and general perceptions of academic writing as these three constructs may provide a clear relational understanding of student-teachers' professional growth in context. Studies at the intersection of language teacher development and academic writing show that improvement in academic literacy and L2 learning experiences are often associated with such **constructs (e.g.,** Piniel & Csizér, 2015). In addition, we believe in the importance of this study as it examines the practices and effects of academic writing in IELTE in less represented settings (Guo, Tao, & Gao, 2019). Understanding and exploring the effect of learning to write for publication in IELTE may contribute to aligning English language courses with teacher preparation so that the latter meets the demands generated by the former.

In the sections below we describe the theoretical background informing this study, the research context, the research methodology and pedagogical background. The interventions, findings, and discussion are presented respecting the chronological

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order in which the collaborative action research (CAR) project unfolded to reflect the changes exhibited. Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations are included.

## **2. Theoretical background**

Drawing on process writing pedagogy (Ariza Martínez, 2005), we conceptualise writing as a “complex problem-solving act involving memory, planning, text generation and revision” (Bruning & Horn, 2000, p. 26) and as a meaning-making cognitive phenomenon (Ruiz Funes, 2015). The literature on writing in language teacher education is assertive about the positive effects that (future) teachers’ explorations of writing and learning to teach writing have on learners’ writing (e.g., Assaf, Ralfe, & Steinbach, 2016) particularly when they promote process writing (Lee, 2010, 2013) in tandem with linguistic accuracy (Qu, 2017). For this reason, it is usually agreed that writing instruction needs to be strengthened and diversified from pre-service teacher education (Barr, Watts-Taffe, & Yokota, 2000) through experiential activities.

Learning to write for publication can increase student-teacher motivation as it is an activity that features authenticity of audience, goals, and task (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Pinner, 2019). Regarding the association between motivation and authenticity, Magnifico (2010) states that teachers can obtain or maintain membership of a community through an authentic audience as writers, and remarks that an authentic audience increases students’ planning, reflection and textual organisation as they need to ensure clarity and detail. She also indicates that “authentic tasks motivate students to engage more deeply with their work because they can see the importance of the

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tasks as well as the potential for transfer of learning beyond the classroom” (p. 177).

For example, in a study carried out with IELTE student-teachers, Banegas, Roberts, Colucci, and Sarsa (2020) found that those student-teachers who had their essays and short stories published as part of an interinstitutional initiative experienced an increase in motivation and language awareness as they became conscious of the authentic audience their contributions would have. However, the study did not include a comprehensive description of the student-teachers' perceptions, nor did it focus on one genre in particular as this present study does.

In addition, motivation in academic writing is influenced by teachers' pedagogical practices. Scholarly work in L2 academic writing underscores the importance of teaching academic writing through genre pedagogies as they contribute to developing language awareness and professional knowledge (Hyland, 2007; Lee, 2013; Leki, 2009). Despite these benefits, academic writing courses are not always aligned with this practice. For example, Cumming, Lai and Cho (2016) found that higher education students who do not receive explicit instruction on genres often struggle with integrating source material in their texts making their writing practices gravitate between plagiarism and simple lack of awareness of conventions. Conversely, Macbeth (2010) examined undergraduates' deficiencies with academic writing and found that the judicious use of model and sample texts, albeit inauthentic, could support understanding conventions and borrowing grammatical structures, general academic vocabulary, and text structure. These two studies provide sobering evidence to support the delivery of teacher education courses on writing which include implicit and

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explicit genre awareness as studies show that it produces a positive influence on teacher preparation and development (e.g., Hedgcock & Lee, 2017).

Using sociocultural theory as an undergirding framework, studies on academic writing from a genre pedagogy perspective (Hyland, 2007) converge on the benefits of peer collaboration in writing, sometimes aided by digital social media to support peer/group communication (e.g., Cho, 2017; Elo & Oskoz, 2017). Collaboration is often encouraged to promote interaction and negotiation of meanings in language learning. In an experimental study with first-year university students, Shehadeh (2011) observed that peer collaborative writing had positive effects on content, organisation, and vocabulary and students' perceptions on their enhanced self-confidence, critical and creative thinking. Martin and Dismuke (2015) found that pre-service teachers taking a collaborative writing course developed a higher sense of engagement as writers and future teachers thus establishing stronger links between teacher preparation and practice.

As mentioned above, student-teachers' first-hand experience with academic writing in their preparation programmes can have a positive effect on their sense of self-efficacy. For example, in a study with 42 pre-service teachers completing a writing methods course, Morgan (2010) found that engaging student-teachers in systematic writing experiences proved to be significant in developing a sense of self as future teachers. Such findings highlight the relationship between success in academic writing and L2 teachers' sense of self-efficacy as teachers developed greater levels of grammatical awareness (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2019). Similarly, Rathert and Okan (2015) interviewed teachers of English who published in professional journals and found that

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writing for publication contributed to teachers' developing ownership, agency, and authority in the profession. Thus, the scholarly literature indicates that experiencing writing for publication is positive among L2 teachers. Therefore, it may be beneficial to include such initiatives earlier in L2 teachers' trajectories.

The studies included in this section show that investigating the relationship between academic writing and motivation, collaboration, and self-efficacy can contribute in the understanding of how to calibrate writing courses in IELTS programmes. Notwithstanding, the literature reviewed shows that there is little research on the effects of engaging IELTS student-teachers in learning to write for publication through action research as a way of promoting pedagogical knowledge of academic writing through personal experience. In this study, we respond to this niche in the literature through a teacher-educators-led CAR investigation. In addition, the article intends to fill another gap: the underrepresentation of Latin American L2 writing studies in international and high-impact journals.

Against this background, our research questions are:

1. In what ways does learning to write for publication have an effect on student-teachers' perceptions of academic writing?
2. Does a learning-to-write-publication project enhance student-teachers' academic writing in relation to (a) motivation, (b) peer collaboration, and (c) self-efficacy?

### **3. Research methodology**

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Our ontological and epistemological beliefs are embedded in the choice of research methodology: collaborative action research (Burns, 2019; Hyland, 2009). By embracing CAR, we believe in the social construction of knowledge and in the need to fuse pedagogy-informed research and research-driven pedagogy (McKinley, 2019). While this framework allowed us to examine a situation from a privileged emic perspective, our identity as tutor-researchers investigating our own practices and learners may have influenced the learners' responses as well as our own interpretations.

In CAR pedagogy, research and systematic reflection are intertwined in a synergistic dialogue (Burns, 2019). The tasks learners may be asked to complete within a module become research instruments for data collection. Hence, teaching, learning and researching are all concomitant parts of a complex whole (Banegas & Villacañas de Castro, 2019). Following the regular programme organisation into two terms, the CAR project was divided into two cycles including the following stages: reflection on the issue, action (intervention design), intervention, and evaluation. Findings from Cycle 1 had an effect on the pedagogical intervention implemented in Cycle 2. Below we describe the pedagogical issue that initiated the CAR project.

The motivation for the present study arose from a series of informal online exchanges. We, the authors, were based in different cities, had different professional backgrounds and interests, and IELTE programmes had a few differences regarding the curriculum. However, we noted that on the issue of teaching academic writing, the student-teachers did not show considerable improvement. In addition, they



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complained that they lacked engagement with writing as the writing tasks were not authentic. Drawing on a previous experience with creative writing for publication in IELTE (Banegas et al., 2020), we discussed with them whether learning to write for publication could improve their views and experience with academic writing.

In terms of the pedagogical intervention, findings, and discussion, these have been divided into Cycle 1 (Section 4) and Cycle 2 (Section 5) to reflect, what Silverman (2017) calls, the “natural history” (p. 457) of the CAR project.

### *3.1. Context and participants*

In Argentina, IELTE programmes are offered by state and private universities and tertiary teacher education institutions. In compliance with national regulations, their duration is of four years; each academic year runs from March to November, and the modules included in the curriculum respond to national guidelines. Nevertheless, each institution or jurisdiction (e.g. a province) has the autonomy to define the content of each module. IELTE programmes are usually structured around three areas (König et al., 2016): (1) content knowledge, i.e. modules such as English Language Development, Grammar, and Literature; (2) general pedagogical knowledge, i.e. modules such as Philosophy of Education; and (3) pedagogical content knowledge, which includes methods and approaches for English language teaching (ELT) and the practicum found in modules such as Professional Practice or ELT Methodology. Table 1 provides contextual information about the institutions, modules, and participating student-

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teachers (all had Spanish as their L1) involved in this CAR project. The student-teachers belonged to three intact classes.

**Table 1.** Research context.

	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C
Location in Argentina	North-west	North-west	South-west
Type	Private, university	State, tertiary	State, tertiary
Modules involved	Written Composition English Language Development	English Language Development Literature	English Language Development Research in English Language Teaching
Number of student-teachers involved	28	21	8
Student-teachers' English language proficiency (ELP) level according to the CEFR bands at the end of Year 3 (C1 represents advanced learners)	C1	C1	C1

Despite different instruction foci, the modules involved shared an interest in academic writing and in engaging student-teachers in reviewing module materials. Hence, we agreed on teaching book review writing and asking student-teachers to review a book that was connected to the focus of each module. The task of writing a book review appeared to be manageable in terms of cognitive skills (describing, summarising,

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evaluating) and length (between 600 and 1,500 words in academic and professional journals).

### 3.2. *Instruments, procedures and analyses*

Within an action-research framework, data were collected through mixed-methods. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire and two group interviews with the student-teachers after Cycles 1 and 2. These sources of data were part of the pedagogical intervention over a complete academic year. In this article, we present the student-teacher data analysis as one group as there we noted no major differences across the institutions when we carried out cross-analysis of each data set.

Regarding ethical considerations (Brooks, Riele, & Maguire, 2014), participants' anonymity and confidentiality were protected in the study. Students also received assurance that not participating in the research dimension of the project would not affect their grades. With the aim of minimising coercion and inherent power asymmetries between the student-teachers and us as both tutors and researchers, all research procedures were disclosed to them at the start of the project. If the students felt pressured to participate, the programme director of each institution was their contact person to discuss the situation and we would immediately exclude them from the study without any penalty. In addition, pseudonyms have been used in this article for all participants. We sought study credibility through member-checking. Three

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randomly selected student-teachers were invited to read the findings and provide feedback.

The online questionnaire (Note 1) included closed- and open-ended items organised into three sections which responded to the selected constructs for this study. The first section comprised (1) a list of 14 statements (Appendix A) to be answered by means of a three-point Likert scale (agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree) describing perceptions and motivations on writing, (2) an open-ended question about what writing meant to them, and (3) a list of text types they enjoyed writing in English. The second section concentrated on academic writing and included closed- and open-ended items on features and practices of academic writing, with special items on book reviews. The questionnaire was first piloted with Year 3 student-teachers, and after adjustments (e.g., adding options in the closed-ended questions, adding instructions in brackets to the open-ended questions, reducing the number of points from five to three in the Likert scale as the students found them confusing and unnecessary), it was administered at the end of Cycle 1 and at the end of Cycle 2 for comparative purposes.

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation, Appendix A) was used for the 14 closed-ended items. We used Principal Components Analysis (PCA) (e.g., Bartholomew, 2010) to factor analyse the items into the two underlying constructs - motivation and perception of academic writing. However, PCA details are not provided as the questionnaire is specific to the context and purpose of our CAR study. We computed an average construct score for each participant and then ran a t-test to

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compare the differences. Based on the two t-tests run, an alpha value of 0.025 was established, which meant that the results were significant if the p-value was below 0.025. Internal consistency of such items according to the two constructs (motivation and perceptions) was measured through Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). While the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of *motivation* was 0.78, the Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of *perceptions* was 0.72 (a value higher than 0.7 is considered a good indicator of internal consistency) (Woodrow, 2014). Frequency of responses and thematic analysis were employed for the open-ended items.

Last, each of us tutors carried out two in-class group interviews. We did not conduct individual interviews as we wished to favour collaborative reflection and avoid adding pressure (and use of personal time) on the students. At the end of Cycle 1, we asked the student-teachers about their perceptions and experience of writing a book review in pairs (Note 2). At the end of Cycle 2, we asked them about their perceptions on the whole project and the extent to which it had influenced their views on their motivation and awareness of academic writing (Note 2). Around 40-minutes long, the interviews were carried out in Spanish, audio-recorded and orthographically transcribed. In Section 4 and 5 we have included interview extracts that represent the most recurrent student-teachers' shared views on different aspects.

Following Braun and Clarke (2006) and Saldaña (2016), thematic analysis was carried out as an iterative process. Thematic analysis comprised several stages. First, each teacher-educator read and coded their student-teachers' data individually. Second, we engaged in reading and re-reading the data for categorisation, axial coding,

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and identification of unifying themes by detecting recurrent key words and organising thematic maps to find relationships. Based on an agreed code book, we finally carried out cross-analysis, re-reading, and discussion until we reached an inter-rater agreement of 86%, a figure we considered acceptable.

#### **4. Cycle 1**

##### *4.1. Pedagogical intervention*

The first intervention spanned over four months (March-June 2018) and it featured the process of learning to write book review, which was already part of the curriculum. With a focus on purposeful writing for an authentic audience (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014), we used a combination of two pedagogical approaches: genre analysis (Hyland, 2007) and process writing (Ariza Martínez, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2010). Book reviews published in regional and international journals (e.g., *ELT Journal*) were used as samples from which the student-teachers could find support for grammatical structures, cohesive devices, vocabulary, and overall text organisation after raising their awareness on specific genre features as recommended in Hedgcock and Lee (2017). Through these decisions we aimed at enhancing student-teachers' experience with L2 writing as proficient language users.

In Cycle 1 (March – June 2018), we agreed to carry out the following activities:

- Student-teachers were shown different professional and academic journals for them to navigate and detect common features. They were provided

with a description of the publication process and the different genres (e.g. research reports, literature reviews) found in journals. They were also provided with sample texts to identify features of academic writing (e.g., hedging, explicitness). They were guided to find and read book reviews.

- With the student-teachers we created a corpus of published book reviews for structure, moves and language analysis, and comparison through awareness-raising activities. From such samples, the student-teachers identified book review features (e.g. summary of the book, recommendation).
- Student-teachers were drawn to author guidelines in online journals and discussed guidelines on writing book reviews (Note 3).
- Student-teachers grouped themselves in pairs to write a book review of a book read in previous years and modules. Peer-review was implemented within each institution by asking each pair to exchange their review with another pair.
- Student-teachers compared their review with reviews published on the same title. They identified commonalities and differences in terms of content, textual cohesion and organisation. They reflected on issues such as diversity of writing styles and clarity in academic writing.

#### 4.2. *Student-teachers' initial perceptions*

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Appendix A shows the survey results from both CAR cycles. The items respond to two categories: motivation (M) and perceptions (P). Readers will notice that items 12-14 refer to feedback. However, these are not addressed as they exceed the scope of this paper and the findings did not offer any new insights.

In Cycle 1, the student-teachers exhibited a tendency to agree that teachers should be proficient at writing in English (Item 3) and that writing required practice (Item 5). Such views illustrate that writing is a sign of professional identity. They also expressed enjoyment from writing in English (Item 2) and, to a lesser extent, Spanish (Item 1) even when they did not feel fully confident in the former (Item 8). Thus, motivation was perceived as a powerful dimension of writing development. In terms of writing tasks in the programme, the overall perception was that these were not authentic (Item 9). It should be highlighted that the student-teachers showed mixed reactions towards essay writing (Item 4), collaborative writing (Item 10), with a slight preference for individual writing (Item 11). Despite these unclear results, we pursued collaborative writing in terms of peer support and feedback in Cycle 1 as we wished to allow the student-teachers to experience a social constructivist view of learning writing (e.g., Shehadeh, 2011) since this view is encouraged in the programme modules on language teaching methodology the student-teachers attend.

In Cycle 1, analysis of the questionnaire open-ended items yielded the following frequency results (in brackets) in terms of student-teachers' perceptions of features of academic writing: coherence (55), formal grammar and lexis (53), pre-established textual organisation (53), cohesion (50), objectivity (48), logical support from research



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and authors (44), high level of ELP (36), and informativeness (35). Such responses show that by designing instruction on one genre in particular (Cumming et al., 2016), we allowed the student-teachers to develop genre awareness concerning books reviews.

When the student-teachers referred to the features listed above, they exhibited a tendency to word them in rule-like statements as if they were instantiations of declarative knowledge and applied models of writing:

When we have to write an essay, we have to apply rules of a clear structure, and we have to follow rules of complex grammar, and follow the use of formal vocabulary and expressions. We have to apply passive voice and rules to avoid the use of personal pronouns because we have to sound objective. (Elsa, E1)

In relation to book reviews, the genre in focus, at the end of Cycle 1 only 32 student-teachers (N=57) acknowledged having read a book review before or after purchasing a fiction or academic book. When asked about where book reviews featured they mentioned (frequency in brackets): magazines (30), catalogues (25), newspapers (21), blogs (20), and academic or professional journals (13). For example, a student-teacher wrote:

In a book review a person gives his or her opinion about the book and summarises its main arguments. (Valentina, E2)

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All the student-teachers concurred that a book review consisted of a descriptive and opinion-giving text. As illustrated in Extract 2, their answers tended to be simple but they highlighted the functions of a book review: description and evaluation. In the section below we present the intervention carried out in Cycle 2 and the relevant findings. These are integrated with the discussion as readers will see differences between both cycles.

## 5. Cycle 2

### 5.1. *Pedagogical intervention*

Drawing on the findings in Cycle 1, we increased a focus on learning to write book reviews for publication. In addition, the student-teachers transitioned progressively from peer writing to individual writing. We incorporated the use social media (Facebook) and instant messaging (WhatsApp) for intra- and inter-institutional support. Although this pedagogical change was not identified as a need in Cycle 1 we agreed that it would enhance communication among us tutors and student-teachers.

In Cycle 2 (July – November 2018):

- We set up a WhatsApp tutor group for notifications and arrangements regarding inter-institutional reviewing.
- Each student-teacher chose a recent book from a list (Note 4) to write a review for publication. Each of us tutors read two or three of the titles in order to provide feedback at a later stage.

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- Student-teachers read and analysed the author guidelines in the *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics*. Based on them, they collaboratively developed a checklist. (Note 5)
- A private Facebook group was created to encourage interinstitutional interaction among those who read the same book. Each group analysed the book to review and shared their analysis through oral presentations in class.
- Content and structure of the book reviews were discussed and agreed. The checklist (Note 5) was also used for peer review.
- Each student-teacher wrote a first draft. The draft was reviewed by a peer from the same class and who had not read the book. This step was organised by each tutor.
- Each student-teacher wrote a second draft reviewed by a peer from another institution. In this case, the peer had read the same book. We paired the students according to the book reviewed and provided a list of contact emails for them to initiate the correspondence.
- Each student-teacher wrote a third draft and received language and content focused feedback from the tutor who had read the book. Our emails were provided to each group.
- Each student-teacher produced a final draft following the checklist and submitted it to the their class tutor.
- Student-teachers completed the survey a second time for comparative purposes.
- Seven student-teachers submitted their book reviews to the journal.

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We also made an agreement with the *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics* to submit the student-teachers' reviews in 2018 and 2019 for potential publication after undergoing review by the journal editorial team. We approached this journal in particular as it is published by an Argentinian teacher association and the journal editors welcome manuscripts authored by student-teachers from Argentinian institutions. The student-teachers received feedback from the team and worked on a revised version supported by the tutors and resubmitted the review. The reviews were published in 2019. This part of the experience exceeds the scope of this article.

### *5.2. Students' final perceptions*

Appendix A shows that the differences between Cycles 1 and 2 were statistically significant only in relation to items 4, 6, 8, 11, and 14. After both interventions, overall perceptions on aspects on writing in L2 teacher education remained stable or shifted in different ways. We first address those that remained unaltered.

The student-teachers stressed that proficiency in L2 writing was a desirable characteristic of EFL teachers (Appendix A, Item 3). This latter aspect confirms that L2 writing ability emerges as a sign of professionalism in L2 teaching (Matsuda, 2017), and that, as expressed below by a student-teacher, teachers need to be models for their own learners. In this regard, being a model can be associated to future teachers' sense of self efficacy (Wyatt & Dikilitas, 2019):

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If you're going to teach writing, then you need to be good at writing. You need to have experience in writing for real, I mean, writing and publishing models for your own learners. You need to walk your talk. (Melisa, Extract 3)

The student-teachers also maintained that learning to write required practice (Appendix A, Item 5) and that writing could only be learnt by engaging in reading and writing, as expressed in one interview at the end of Cycle 2 (Extract 4). These views are consistent with studies (e.g., Morgan, 2010) that stress experiential learning particularly in teacher education.

Writing is writing and writing more, and deleting, and starting again. But in our case, because it's academic English, academic writing is about reading and reading and paying attention to the way authors write, the phrases they use, the grammar they use. It's like imitating some bits and including them in your own writing. (Chachi, E4)

Concerning those aspects that underwent change, the student-teachers showed a shift in their perception of academic writing and book reviews after the interventions. At the end of Cycle 2, new features of academic writing were identified and incorporated to those mentioned at the beginning of the experience (frequency in brackets): coherence (55), formal grammar and lexis (52), pre-established textual organisation (51), cohesion (50), sharing one's ideas honestly and respectfully (45), logical support from research and authors (44), high level of ELP (36), objectivity (25),

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commitment (24), clear authorial voice (23), and conciseness (22). These features reveal that the student-teachers extended their understanding of academic writing and genres to other features which exceed the text and language as a system, and included authorial voice and identity. Furthermore, student-teachers' conceptions of academic writing incorporated categories related to writing as part of a community of practice interested in sharing their insights and engaging with a clear audience as Extracts 5 and 6 illustrate:

Academic writing is a distinctive form of writing. It entails the use of a particular style, and a set of principles somehow agreed by the community on academic genres such as book reviews. The most important feature of academic writing is the opportunity to make your voice heard, state your stance, and support it by mean of concrete evidence. (Lucio, E5)

[Academic writing] should have an authentic target audience included. I think that the most important feature of academic writing is that it is clear and concise, well explained and supported in order to make the piece of writing appealing to read. (Karina, E6)

After the pedagogical intervention, completion of the questionnaire item about what a book review consists of displayed improvement. Out 57, 50 student-teachers offered detailed answers which reflected the sessions and material provided. For example, in contrast to her contribution in Cycle 1 (Extract 2), Valentina wrote:

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Information about the book, the author, a thesis statement, a summary, an analysis and a conclusion. The most important parts are the analysis and the conclusion. In the analysis the reviewer assesses the organisation of the book, the content, and whether the goal of the book has been achieved or not, and the conclusion usually includes a reflection about the contribution of the book and if it is material for recommendation. (Valentina, E7)

From a critical perspective, Valentina may seem to repeat input (declarative knowledge) provided by the tutors in class. While in Macbeth's (2010) study undergraduates benefitted from inauthentic texts, in our study the use of authentic book reviews coupled with genre awareness activities impacted positively on student-teachers' understanding of where book reviews may feature. At the end of Cycle 2, they associated book reviews to (frequency in brackets): academic and professional journals (57), newspapers (7), and English language teaching blogs (6). Learning to write for publication became an authentic and purposeful task (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014) that allowed student-teachers to (1) understand academic writing as meaningful activity provided there was an authentic readership (Pinner, 2019), (2) become aware of writing conventions and genres (Hedgcock & Lee, 2017), and (3) reflect on their sense of self (Morgan, 2010) and role as L2 writing models for their future learners.

Motivation remained influential at the end of Cycle 2. The mean with item 4 (I don't like writing essays) dropped from 2.04 (SD 1.32) to 1.68 (SD 0.37). When queried

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about this statistically significant difference, 55 student-teachers mentioned authenticity as a reason for this change. One student-teacher explained:

We may all like writing a bit more, and even though we wrote book reviews for this project, we also wrote a couple of essays, it was different because we could picture a specific readership, like we transferred what we experienced with the book reviews to other genres. Like writing became genuine, an authentic way of practising our English. (Renata, E8).

Renata's words illustrate that authenticity of audience and task, as Pinner (2019) recommends and Banegas et al. (2020) found, acted as major drives. Authenticity of audience and task as leading motivational factors with an impact on ELP also emerged from Item 6 in the questionnaire (Appendix A) and from the Cycle 2 interview:

I liked writing the book review because it was the first time that I wrote something with a clear meaning, with a clear purpose, paying attention to accuracy, and that was because I became aware of the fact that I was writing for real people outside the programme. (Antonia, E9)

Authenticity of audience and task became materialised in the pedagogical decision of asking student-teachers to write a book review for potential publication on an Argentinian journal. This decision became a major motivational drive among the



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student-teachers for it combined a genuine task and audience, in this case a specific professional community of practice which they could be part of in the future. At the end of Cycle 2, the student-teachers were asked whether they would like to see their book reviews published. With two exceptions, all the student-teachers agreed on the positive effect of seeing their book reviews published. Those two student-teachers who differed stated that they perceived that their ELP still needed further improvement.

Thematic analysis showed that learning to write for publication was seen as (frequency of responses in brackets, N=57):

(1) A sign of reward and recognition for ELP improvement (36):

I would like to see my book review published as it would be rewarding to see something written for myself after so many years of studying English. A recognition to all of us who worked on this and paid so much attention to language proficiency. (Valentina, E10)

(2) A confidence booster (23):

Seeing my review published would heighten my confidence in my own writing skills. (Ignacio, E11)

(3) An important element in their CV (8):

It would strengthen my CV and become a distinct element when compared to other newly graduate teachers (Renata, E12)

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(4) A path to teacher research engagement (5):

It'd be an introduction to the world of academia and my first step in my aim of doing research in ELT. (Antonella, E13)

The four categories indicate that learning to write for publication not only increased student-teachers' motivation (Banegas et al., 2020; Magnifico, 2010), but also their sense of self-efficacy as L2 writers (Rathert & Okan, 2015). Regarding the first category above, Figure 1 shows extracts from two student-teachers' book review drafts as evidence of their self-reported English language proficiency improvement (For a detailed analysis of the participants' ELP development see Banegas, Loutayf, Company, Alemán, & Roberts, 2020). The extracts show improvement in terms of sentence construction and complexity, cohesion, and clarity.

Figure 1. Student-teachers' book review extracts.

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The book had an introductory chapter which was written by Prof. Anne Burns and Dr. Joseph Siegel. The authors explain the themes and issues that come up when we teach the four skills. On the other hand, the volumen is divided into four parts. There is one part for each one of the skills. Each chapter is in turn separated into mini-sections. Some of the sections can be Introduction, Implications, Conclusion, Questions for Reflection and a Reference section.

(Valentina, Cycle 2, first draft)

The book opens with an introductory chapter written by the editors Anne Burns and Joseph Siegel in which they explain the themes and issues that may emerge when teaching the four skills. Furthermore, the volume is divided into four parts, one for each one of the skills. Each chapter is in turn divided into sub sections such as Introduction, Implications, Conclusion, Questions for Reflection and a Reference section.

(Valentina, Cycle 2, final draft)

I think that the contributors did well in developing different tools within their classrooms in order to improve the children's autonomy and their relationship among the children themselves and with the teachers. On the other hand, the editors also achieve the aim of communicating effectively the benefits of having children and contributors working together with examples they took from real classrooms in real contexts with real people and because of this I think that all educators should read this book because of they are interested in making research as a tool for improving their classroom outcomes and for taking into account their students' voices and feelings. This book clearly states the advantage of children getting involved in their own learning, which is that they are much more motivated and learn more, which is important.

(Ignacio, Cycle 2, first draft)

As a student-teacher, I consider that the contributors succeeded in developing different tools within their classrooms to improve learner autonomy. In addition, the editors achieved the aim of communicating effectively the benefits of having children and contributors working together with examples taken from real-life experiences. I would highly recommend this handbook to all the educators who are interested in research as a tool for improving their classroom outcomes and for taking into account their students' voices and feelings.

(Ignacio, Cycle 2, final draft)

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While the studies reviewed above did not concentrate on the relationship between learning to write for publication and ELP, our findings show that the student-teachers' motivations signal that ELP is a critical component in EFL teacher professional development. Hence, publishing may become a validated sign of self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy in L2 writing skills within a given professional community of practice (Rathert & Okan, 2015; Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2019) even when it is not expected from teachers. These findings are consistent with studies that highlight that process writing needs to be cultivated among pre-service teachers through pedagogies that promote both meaning and accuracy as it is the case of genre pedagogy (Barr et al., 2000; Lee, 2013; Qu, 2017).

Learning to write for publication as a confidence booster also emerged in the questionnaire. Comparison of the questionnaire results showed an increase in self-perceived confidence (Appendix A, Item 8) at the end of Cycle 2. We believe this is particularly important in the context of our study as learning to write for publication became an opportunity for empowerment, agency, and knowledge generation in L2 education (Worden, 2015) from an underrepresented setting. One student-teacher synthesised this aspect of our project as follows:

Who would have thought that student-teachers from a small town in Argentina could publish book reviews!! We always read publications from native-speakers and on very few occasions, publications from Latin America. But now, here we are, seeking to publish some book reviews that could be the beginning of saying, hey, here we are, look at what can do. (Fernanda, E14)

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Extracts 13 and 14 confirm previous studies (e.g., Magnifico, 2010) about the relationship between authentic tasks and audience and obtaining membership of a community. What is new in our study is the connection between motivation and self-efficacy and membership of a community from student-teachers who acknowledge the dominance of native-speakers' authors and the underrepresentation of local expertise in their IELTS programme. In this sense, self-efficacy was thus connected to English language proficiency exhibited in publications that the student-teachers identified as an enabling tool to become part of a professional community.

Different from previous studies on collaborative writing (e.g., Martin & Dismuke, 2015; Shehadeh, 2011), the student-teachers expressed a preference for individual writing (Appendix A, Item 11). This inclination increased in Cycle 2. Therefore, collaborative writing tasks in Cycle 1 were replaced with individual tasks in Cycle 2. When asked about the effects of our pedagogical decision informed by the student-teachers' answers, two student-teachers commented:

At this stage, we want to become more independent and even though we may like a second opinion, it's important to develop our own writing style, practise alone, and see what we can do with our own resources, knowledge, and proficiency. (Luna, E15)

It's a matter of time. I value that we do the writing tasks outside classroom time. But it's hard to arrange a meeting time. This is why I prefer working on my own at my own pace and whenever I can. (Lisandro, E16)

These extracts indicate that student-teachers' preference for individual writing was based on a practical reason, individual time availability, and a developmental reason, individual writing development. Unlike Year 1 students in Shehadeh's (2011) study, the student-teachers wished to strengthen their confidence and ELP through personal examination of their own trajectory as independent, capable, and autonomous L2 writers. Therefore, individual writing permitted them to see personal writing improvement.

Findings pertaining to the effects of learning to write for publication supported by genre pedagogies (Yasuda, 2017) show that 55 student-teachers experienced positive effects, with varying degrees, on the following three areas: (1) their perceptions of academic writing (e.g., E1-7), (2) their L2 writing motivation (e.g., E9-14), and (3) self-perceived ELP (e.g., E10, Figure 1) as an indicator of self-efficacy in IELTE (Valmori & De Costa, 2016). In contrast, two student-teachers did not perceive ELP improvement or a stronger sense of self-efficacy even when they felt motivated.

Findings related to the influence of collaborative writing (E15-16) even when digitally supported (e.g., Cho, 2017) suggest that this pedagogical decision did not have a positive effect on the student-teachers' experience given their time constraints and

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interest in independent personal growth. Such a preference for individual writing may be associated to the student-teachers' interest in developing self-efficacy as autonomous and independent L2 future teachers. In contrast to Shehadeh's (2011) findings, the student-teachers sought self-confidence as individuals working alone.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this study, we examined the effects of learning to write for publication on student-teachers' experience with academic writing in initial English language teacher education in Argentina. In relation to our research questions, findings show that learning to write book reviews for potential publication not only improved the student-teachers' perceptions of academic writing but also increased their awareness of and knowledge of academic genres and features of academic writing given the experiential and authentic nature (task authenticity and authenticity of audience) of the project. Also, the findings attest to student-teachers' increase in motivation and a stronger sense of self-efficacy. However, peer writing did not prove meaningful given student-teachers' personal availability and time management.

Although our findings may enable other tutors to engage their student-teachers in learning to write for publication, they need to be taken with caution. First, out of the 57 student-teachers involved in the study, only seven submitted their book reviews for publication. This indicates that despite the student-teachers' motivation, the book reviews may have been written to fulfil the module requirements. In this regard, we

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failed to explore the student-teachers' reasons for (not) submitting the book reviews. Second, we only relied on student-teachers' self-reported perceptions. Last, student-teachers' comments may have been influenced by our dual identity of tutor-researchers examining our own practice. Therefore, student-teachers' responses and our analysis may have been biased due to familiarity and subjectivity.

In terms of pedagogical implications, our experience shows that learning-to-write-for-publication projects which transcend locality contribute to student-teachers' subject-matter and pedagogical content knowledge. Student-teachers may see themselves as capable future teachers who can contribute to local knowledge production (Pain et al., 2011) through writing and research engagement. Thus, it is important that IELTE programmes at undergraduate level include (academic) writing projects with an authentic readership in mind as the experience may offer multiple effects in language teacher education. Such projects could be small-scale and centre on one genre within academic writing. It is important, however, that the projects are a constitutive part of and the result of systematic teaching practices aimed at developing student-teachers' academic writing awareness. These projects could become an opportunity to promote local knowledge production if, as it was our experience, agreements are made between educational institutions and local academic and professional journals.

In terms of research implications, future directions for IELTE tutors and L2 writing researchers include inquiry into student-teachers actively involved in writing for publication to examine the processes that lead to actual publication of student-



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teachers' work and their reasons to (not) submit for publication. In addition, future studies should confirm the extent to which writing for publication leads to increase in English language proficiency through quantitative analysis of student-teachers' written productions (Ruiz Funes, 2015). In so doing, student-teachers' perceptions of linguistic improvement can be corroborated with measuring linguistic production. In this case, tutors can systematically collect student-teachers' written productions throughout an academic year and measure reduction in linguistic errors (e.g., word choice) among other variables (e.g., syntactic complexity).

## Notes

1. Online questionnaire at <https://forms.gle/9R4PxkbPH2HPAMGg7>
2. Interview questions at [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yfh3oUqLiM4ImAKZijJceo6las2iHY9QZF1\\_09gZa0A/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yfh3oUqLiM4ImAKZijJceo6las2iHY9QZF1_09gZa0A/edit?usp=sharing)
3. Guidelines on book review writing at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xmh4cWWnvsgnyi7bMyDEfTqfm3omm-It/view?usp=sharing>
4. List of books for review <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UOYM8PPtWImmJHTkfhXY8VQseNQV4HQE/view?usp=sharing>

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5. Checklist and peer review form at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1570QV7Wj5c8Hd6PpTWB1Ccl6JWoGvmRY/view?usp=sharing>

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#### Appendix A. Survey results.

Item	Category	Cycle 1 (N= 57)		Cycle 2 (N= 57)		<i>p</i> -value
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
1. I like writing in Spanish.	M	2.45	0.56	2.48	0.62	0.091
2. I like writing in English.	M	2.56	0.83	2.71	0.79	0.042
3. I believe that teachers need to be proficient at writing in English.	P	2.76	0.41	2.88	0.39	0.071
4. I don't like writing essays.	M	2.04	1.32	1.68	0.37	<b>0.021</b>
5. Writing requires a lot of practice.	P	2.97	0.45	2.98	0.22	0.063
6. I feel motivated to write when there's a clear audience/readership.	M	2.47	0.66	2.93	0.43	<b>0.022</b>
7. Writing in English is similar to writing in Spanish	P	1.38	0.92	1.45	0.89	0.045
8. I feel confident when writing in English.	M	1.91	1.04	2.57	0.61	<b>0.014</b>
9. Written assignments at the programme are similar to the written activities I write in my daily life.	P	1.36	0.56	1.26	0.09	0.032

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10. I like writing in pairs or groups.	M	1.94	0.82	1.16	0.91	0.041
11. I prefer writing on my own.	M	2.66	1.24	2.85	0.64	<b>0.022</b>
12. I benefit from peer-reviews.	P	2.61	0.37	1.86	1.02	0.029
13. Teacher's feedback is the most important feedback.	P	2.48	0.45	2.88	0.20	0.031
14. I like to know whether my classmates agree or disagree with my position statement or if they like the narratives I write. My classmates' feedback is important to me.	P	2.47	1.38	1.86	1.03	<b>0.016</b>

Scale: 3 (agree), 2 (neither agree nor disagree), 1 (disagree).

Note: Statistically significant differences appear in bold.