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Conceptual Paper

Three Perspectives on the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Second Language Writing and Future Orientations for Practice and Research

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Abstract

In response to the need to turn the spotlight on second language (L2) writing teachers, this article surveys the extant literature to proffer conceptualisations of L2 teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW) from three distinct perspectives. A categorical perspective has its focus on interconnected knowledge categories and elucidates the functions these categories fulfil in writing instruction. Rather than construing PCKW as a static entity, a situative perspective advocates for understanding PCKW as an integrated entirety and as a socially situated phenomenon encompassing knowledge of and in practice, given its contextually conditioned mutability. From a participatory perspective, PCKW is posited as emerging in and through teachers' active, agentive, and iterative participation in critical experiences in their socio-professional lives where problems of practice are addressed to enable the evolution of knowledge and adaptive expertise. Based on the situative and participatory perspectives, the paper emphasises the importance of a social constructivist approach to exploring the dynamics of PCKW and its manifestations in particular L2 contexts. Also discussed are critical recommendations for L2 writing teacher education, epistemological implications for the study of L2 writing teacher knowledge, and potential agendas for future research into this area of inquiry.

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1. Introduction

L2 writing has established itself as a distinct academic discipline (Hirvela, 2019; Lee, 2013); however, the prevailing scholarly focus within the relevant literature has predominantly centred on learners of writing rather than teachers of writing (Freeman, 1996; Hirvela, 2019; Hirvela & Belcher, 2007; Seloni & Lee, 2019). Over a decade ago, Hirvela and Belcher (2007) observed that the field “tended to keep teachers on the sidelines, despite the crucial roles they play in students’ acquisition of L2 writing skills” (p. 13). This observation retains its relevance in the contemporary landscape of L2 writing, where there exists modest attention to writing teachers (Lee, 2024). A recent review documented a modest number of studies on writing teachers (Zheng et al., 2022), compared with the bulk of studies on learners in the field. This noticeable underemphasis on L2 writing teachers has clouded our understanding of their teaching and learning to teach, the reasons behind their practices, the difficulties they encounter, and their way of building expertise as writing teachers (Lee, 2013) as well as resulted in a lack of a unified, well-defined framework to guide the preparation of L2 writing teachers (Lee, 2024).

In the literature on L2 writing teachers, scant attention has been paid to the knowledge base for teaching writing (Ballock et al., 2018; Hirvela, 2019; Myhill et al., 2021). Reviewing the related empirical literature, Myhill et al.

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(2021), for example, identified a mere seven studies giving accounts of writing teacher knowledge. Given that students' writing standards worldwide have become a grave concern, especially in non-English dominant contexts (Lee, 2018), that L2 writing is a difficult skill to teach and learn (Lee, 2024), and that teachers' knowledge for L2 writing instruction correlates directly with teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes, it is imperative to deliberate on the pedagogical content knowledge of L2 writing teachers. This knowledge is indeed "one of the most critical elements of improving teacher quality" (Karaman, 2012, p. 56). A thorough understanding of it opens a window into what the writing teacher should know and do to ensure effective delivery of the subject-specific content (Shi & Baker, 2022).

In response to this imperative, this conceptual paper surveys the extant literature to proffer three distinct perspectives on the pedagogical content knowledge of writing (PCKW) in the L2. It specifically aims to (1) revisit L2 writing teacher's PCKW based on accumulated insights from both second language teacher education (SLTE) in general and L2 writing teacher education in particular, (2) take a critical look into the contextually situated, participation-induced nature of teachers' PCKW, and (3) give suggestions for L2 writing teacher education and for prospective research to unravel significant topics related to this realm of inquiry. Through a critical discussion of PCKW, it is hoped that this paper will stimulate on-going debate and research efforts on this matter to address the current limitation in the field, where there are currently an "expertise gap" (Seloni, 2022, p. 1) and a modest amount of empirical evidence which leaves teacher education programmes with limited direction on writing teacher preparation (Ballock et al., 2018). In what follows, three perspectives, namely categorical, situative, and participatory, will be elaborated on in specific connection with the

theoretical and empirical literature on SLTE and L2 writing teacher education.

2. A Categorical Perspective

In early models of language teacher knowledge (e.g., Richards, 1998; Roberts, 1998), pedagogical content knowledge is divorced from other knowledge categories such as subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of context. However, it has been argued that the nature of pedagogical content knowledge blurs the boundaries between all these categories (Aydin et al., 2015; Loewenberg et al., 2008; Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Nilsson & Vikström, 2015). On this ground, there is a compelling need to rethink the PCKW of L2 teachers by placing emphasis on its inherent interconnectedness with the other domains of knowledge.

According to early conceptions, PCKW is construed “as the control of two crafts, teaching and writing” (Graves, 1983, p. 5). This ability encompasses the instructional beliefs, skills, and knowledge necessary for teachers to help students to develop effective L2 writing proficiency (Hirvela, 2019). In so doing, teachers need to possess a repertoire of the unique language of writing, understand its complex and nuanced meanings, and, most crucially, know how to apply that language effectively in teaching practice (Houghton et al., 2006). Drawing these views together, Donovan et al. (2023) characterise PCKW as:

a concept that combines each PCK component in a disciplinary-specific application that includes the specialised content knowledge of writing necessary for instructional design (e.g., genre knowledge, literary elements and devices, composition processes, and strategies)

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and knowledge of effective writing pedagogies that are responsive to both individual students and writing development. (p. 3)

This view of PCKW gives credence to its encapsulation of *subject matter knowledge* (SMK). SMK is considered as “insider knowledge” of writing (Bentley, 2013, p. 223), one that develops through teachers’ experiences in learning to write and writing on their own. This knowledge is applied in writing by expert writers (Myhill et al., 2021) and “enables them to successfully practice the art and craft of writing” (Leigh & Cramer, 2011, p. 82). This craft refers to teachers’ knowledge of the L2 system and writing theories (Lee & Yuan, 2021), including “the technicalities” of written language (Flynn, 2007, p. 145). To be a craft expert, teachers need to understand (1) the role and values of writing as a major language skill, as a creative cognitive process, and as a means of communication, self-expression, and self-discovery; (2) the cognitive, socio-affective, and sociocultural factors influencing writing competence; and (3) the transferability of writing knowledge and strategies across languages (Karaca & Uysal, 2021). The nature and depth of teachers’ SMK impacts, at least in part, on “their capacity to transform what they know into effective teaching and learning pedagogies” (Myhill et al., 2021, p. 3). SMK is thus a foundational element for successful writing instruction.

Donovan et al.’s (2023) definition assigns equal significance to writing teachers’ *knowledge of pedagogy* (KoP), echoing prior perceptions (e.g., Li, 2017). KoP in general encompasses two subdomains. The first is *general pedagogical knowledge* (GPK), which involves generic, discipline-independent principles of instruction such as classroom management, monitoring, and mentoring. The second is referred to as *subject-specific pedagogical knowledge* (SSPK). It represents the knowledge essential for

effectively instructing a specific subject to students and tailored to their capabilities and interests, whilst also promoting their understanding of the subject matter (Borg, 2006). The SSPK of L2 writing, as delineated by Karaca and Uysal (2021), includes a technical mastery of writing instruction approaches (e.g., product, process, genre pedagogies), writing process (e.g., pre, whilst, post), writing strategies (e.g., planning, composing, revising, editing), and other pedagogical essentials of L2 writing instruction such as explicit writing teaching, writing tasks, the role of model texts, in-class and extramural writing practices, and the application of technologies for teaching. Also indispensable is teachers' literacy of writing assessment (e.g., rubrics, portfolios, in-class and out-of-class assessment, dynamic assessment, assessment technologies), feedback (e.g., peer feedback, teacher-student conferences), and scoring. GPK and SSPK however are not necessarily separated because teachers' instructional decision-making and practice are influenced by a fusion of general teaching principles and subject-specific pedagogies (Nunan, 2004).

Although not explicitly delineated in Donovan et al.'s (2023) conceptualisation, *curricular knowledge* (CK) can be treated as an integral category of PCKW, because teaching L2 writing in most contexts requires adherence to the curriculum. In general, CK alludes to teachers' "material medica of pedagogy" (Shulman, 1986, p. 10), broken down by Shulman (1987) as the teachers' assessment and understanding of programmes, including "indications and contraindications" (Shulman, 1987, p. 10). These could be designed to provide directions for the delivery of L2 writing instruction and of the prescribed or suggested resources for planning and carrying out the instruction. Roberts (1998) adds that CK also covers teachers' awareness of the nature of examinations, and by extension, how they align their teaching with this nature. Moving beyond the knowledge of

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curricular specifications, researchers (e.g., Goodwin, 2010; Hardré, 2003; Hardré et al., 2006) have also called for involving teachers in designing curricula and fostering their curriculum literacy as well as curriculum consistency expertise by, for example, equipping them with subject matter and pedagogical knowledge (Huizinga et al., 2014). L2 writing teachers' CK contributes to their pedagogy and plays a central role in their instructional effectiveness (Worden-Chambers, 2020).

Given that teaching takes place in a particular context with multiple layers (Banks et al., 1999) and that L2 teachers' knowledge base is "characterised by specific work in the context of place and time" (Freeman, 2020, p. 6), a portrayal of PCKW should encompass *knowledge of context* (KoC). In fact, scholars (e.g., Borg, 2006; Loughran et al., 2006; Park & Oliver, 2007) have considered KoC as impacting teachers' instructional practice powerfully. The micro-layer refers to the classroom, or particular student groups, where teachers deliver their prepared instruction and interact constantly with their students (Banks et al., 1999; Borg, 2006; Li, 2013; Shulman, 1987). Donovan et al.'s (2023) emphasis on the importance of the responsiveness of teachers' PCKW to students' writing development indicates that it is interlinked with *knowledge of learners* (KoL). This knowledge includes learners' personal histories, beliefs, identities, emotions, agency (Le, 2020), motivation, interests, needs, and learning difficulties (Park & Oliver, 2007). In fact, scholarly arguments exist that support this connection (e.g., Le, 2020; Park & Oliver, 2007; Shulman, 1987). To address learner characteristics in teaching, teachers need to cultivate a learner-centred pedagogy, coined by Le (2020) as *pedagogical learner knowledge*, with a focus on recognising and harnessing learners' personal agenda—prior knowledge and experiences (Le, 2020) and fostering their motivation and confidence (Lee & Yuan, 2021). Learner factors are "a pedagogical advantage" that shows teachers how to

“accommodate their subject-matter knowledge and knowledge of L2 [writing] teaching to their learners’ varied learning trajectories” (Le, 2020, p. 77). These arguments indicate that teachers’ KoL significantly shapes their pedagogical orientation and influences their selection of approaches, methods, and strategies for teaching a specific group of students (Park & Oliver, 2007).

The meso-layer goes beyond the classroom to school settings, where there are institutional culture, policies, guidelines, and practices to which teachers ought to conform, whilst the macro-layer extends its reach to political, historical, and sociocultural norms in the wider social world (Banks et al., 1999; Borg, 2006; Fulmer et al., 2015; Kozma, 2003; Li, 2013). This macro-level context can even transcend national boundaries, expanding itself towards globalisation, the status of English as an international language, and sociological phenomena such as human mobility as well as international education and employment (Goodwin, 2010; Goodwin & Kosnik, 2013). L2 writing teachers’ KoC can therefore serve as a backdrop for teaching (see Holliday, 1994) against which teachers harmonise their instructional decisions with contextual affordances and constraints. With KoC, they can make meaningful associations between the micro aspects of their teaching with the sociocultural and sociopolitical settings outside their classroom (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006), and more importantly, shift their focus on formal pedagogies “to examine learners’ need as nested within multiple socio-cultural-economic-political locations” (Goodwin, 2010, p. 24).

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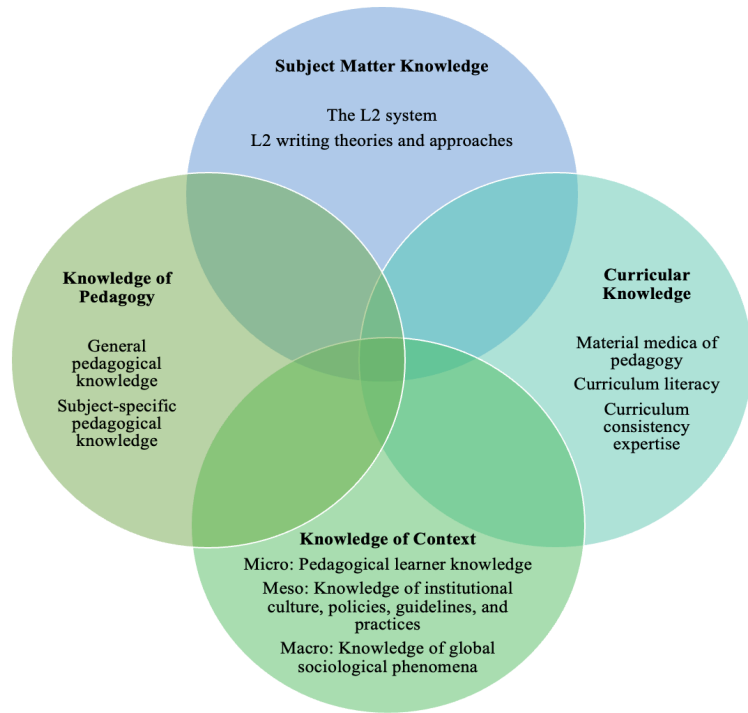


Figure 1. Interconnected categories of PCKW

Overall, PCKW includes the interconnected system of SMK, KoP, CK, and KoC (*Figure 1*), in comparison with earlier models of knowledge that features the separation of these categories, as mentioned earlier. Extending the periphery of PCKW is a necessary response to the need for a move away from a narrow, simplistic conceptualisation of it as “the technical implementation of specific methods” (Goodwin, 2010, p. 25). Li (2017) also argues that teachers’ expertise is indicated by the integration of subject matter, pedagogical, and contextual knowledge. Indeed, “ways of doing” (i.e., how to teach writing) should be accompanied by “ways of thinking about what to do” (e.g., pedagogical reasoning in context) (Goodwin, 2010,

p. 25), a notion that appears to further justify the need to bring together different categories of knowledge into PCKW. This idea is supported by Johnson and Golombek's (2011) argument that:

knowledge for teaching must be understood holistically, and the interdependence between *what is taught* and *how it is taught* becomes crucial to both the processes of learning-to-teach as well as the development of teaching expertise. (p. 3, original emphasis)

It is critically important to note here that, in context-specific L2 writing instruction, categories of teacher knowledge do not operate independently, but they are intertwined in ways that adapt flexibly to a particular context of teaching. They all dovetail to shape teachers' pedagogical decision-making, planning, and enactment in complex ways when they interplay with specific contextual factors.

3. A Situative Perspective

Whilst categorising PCKW can facilitate a systematic description, organisation, and exploration of teachers' knowledge base, of note here is that PCKW is not something static and universally applicable across all teaching contexts. This observation finds an echo in an earlier argument that:

A typology of teacher knowledge is a useful starting point for design, but it does not capture the real nature of teaching, which we would characterise as essentially social and dynamic, an exercise of intention rather than certainty. (Roberts, 1998, p. 106)

Teachers' instructional work, as Roberts (1998) further explains, is "characterised by ongoing trial and error rather than certainty about learners'

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reactions and individual learning outcomes” (p. 107). Teaching is thus not the job done only by teachers, but it is a social activity where they and their students build meaningful discourse through expending joint efforts.

Accordingly, it is essential to acknowledge the central premise that fundamentally, teachers are sociocultural beings and their knowledge is socially situated (Freeman, 2020; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2011, 2020). Indeed, it is true that “L2 writing teachers... are socially situated in different educational contexts and social communities” (Zheng et al., 2022, p. 1) where their instruction interacts dynamically with and is impacted by local realities (Seloni, 2022), shaping their knowledge (re)construction. Teachers’ knowledge, as Freeman and Johnson (1998) observe, is shaped by their lived experiences and classroom teaching and should be understood in the context of their socio-professional lives, the environments in which they operate, and the conditions under which they work. This observation has remained relevant to date, with Johnson and Golombek (2020) remarking that:

For L2 teachers, this means that they are shaped in and through their experiences as learners engaging with teachers and other learners, the cultural practices of teacher education, and the particulars of their teaching contexts: all embedded within larger sociocultural histories yet appropriated in individualised ways. (p. 118)

For many scholars, contexts influence teachers’ pedagogical orientation and practice (Dogancay-Aktuna, 2006; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2020; Park & Oliver, 2007), but these are also sites where their expertise grows because, in manoeuvring astutely through contextual factors, including learner factors, they constantly reproduce their pedagogies. As

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2007) suggest, besides understanding, acquiring, and using *knowledge for practice*, that is, propositional knowledge gained through, for example, teacher education (Nazari & Oghyanous, 2022), and intended to provide generalised knowledge applicable to teaching (Loughran, 2019), teachers also generate *knowledge of practice*. They achieve this by exploring the connection between knowledge and practice and intentionally working to build knowledge that fosters learning and growth often through teacher research or support from a professional learning community (Loughran, 2019). In other words, teachers construct theories from their own practice in the context of their inquiry communities and connect these generative theories with relevant issues from the larger social context (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2007). They also reflect critically on their practice on an on-going basis (Schön, 1987) as well as appraise and use new knowledge emerging during such reflection to formulate their pedagogical adaptations in accordance with contextual dynamics. These points illustrate the need to critically consider teachers' social contexts and practices as

these practices and contexts will shed light on the social interactions... as central to the development of new forms of thinking... [which] will ultimately lay the foundation for the development of teaching expertise. (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 3)

This claim is reminiscent of criticism against any attempt to sever the teaching activity and the authentic social context accommodating it from teachers' knowledge base (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). In L2 writing instruction, teachers contextually theorise their practice whilst teaching in a particular cultural context reveals much about how their knowledge develops in and through context (Nazari & Oghyanous, 2022). It is thus appropriate to

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consider teachers as active creators of knowledge and their knowledge as characterised by a substantial extent of contextual sensitivity and mutability.

Furthermore, teachers' personal agenda, including their histories of disciplinary and professional learning (Lortie, 1975) as well as their prior knowledge, beliefs, values, and academic experiences (Freeman & Johnson, 1998), is an influential factor in the process of their knowledge generation. When they bring this agenda into their professional practice and use it as a basis on which they reflect critically on and draw subjective conclusions about their practice, they generate *personal practical knowledge* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1985; Elbaz, 1983). It is a kind of *knowledge in practice* growing out of teachers' "narrative and autobiographical probing of practice" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2007, p. 612). This knowledge is the accumulated outcome of many years of their prior learning and teaching experiences (Loughran, 2019), representing their disposition about teaching, learning, and associated matters. For Lortie (1975), it emanates from teachers' intuition and imitation rather than from formal theoretical principles of pedagogy. Owning this self-created knowledge, teachers operate professionally with a very subjective view of the subject matter and also of what it takes to be effective teaching (Moon, 1999). Therefore, the teacher as an active learner of teaching and their subjectivity have been highlighted as central to the ongoing (re)construction of knowledge throughout their careers (Freeman & Johnson, 1998).

In light of the arguments above, it can be contended that the (re)construction of PCKW defies simplistic comprehension as a linear progression from not knowing to knowing—a conventional novice-expert model inadequate in explaining contextually driven and situated processes of writing instruction (Seloni, 2022). The trajectory of such development does not occur in a vacuum; instead, it is invariably imbued with oscillations

arising from the interplay between teachers' contexts of practice, personal agenda, and critical self-reflection. Therefore, it is prudent to transcend an exclusive focus on the pedagogical process and recognise that teachers actively learn, experiment, and generate knowledge and that the teaching activity and the social context are where they do so and where their knowledge metamorphoses (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Seloni, 2022). This line of reasoning necessitates the incorporation of not only teachers' formal *knowledge for practice* but also experiential, subjective *knowledge in practice* and contextually-driven *knowledge of practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2007) to achieve a sufficient understanding of how L2 teachers' PCKW evolves across contextual boundaries. Indeed, this development unfolds in a complex, spiral manner, especially when entwined with contextual conditions and fluctuations.

4. A Participatory Perspective

As discussed in Section 2, theories of formal L2 writing pedagogy can be fixed, prescriptive principles that underlie disciplinary ways of thinking and doing; nevertheless, teachers' PCKW should not be subject to any normative conception. Rather, it is socially situated and contextually generative, and its (trans)formation unfolds dynamically at the nexus of teachers' personal agenda (e.g., professional dispositions, prior learning, and practical experiences), their teaching activity, and the socio-professional environments in which they participate (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2020; Seloni, 2022). This notion connects L2 writing teachers' *knowledge of* and *in practice* with a participatory perspective which holds that PCKW is a state of "*becoming*, with an iterative and participatory quality" (Donovan et al., 2023, p. 26, original emphasis). According to Donovan et al. (2023),

participatory PCKW is a process of
actively, agentively, and iteratively

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seeking and engaging in *critical experiences* to learn and grow as writers and teachers of writing who are empowered to *solve problems of practice*.
(p. 30, emphasis added)

The definition highlights the development of PCKW as an on-going, lifetime process. This evolving process involves various stages: from learning to teach during teacher education, socialising into professional communities, implementing process pedagogies, spearheading professional development, challenging incongruous policies and practices, and continuing to improve practices (Donovan et al., 2023). Throughout this dynamic journey imbued with exposure to external sociocultural resources and critical experiences, teachers continuously exercise their agency to resolve practice-related problems and adapt to contextual challenges, which in turns (re)shapes their PCKW and thus their writing teacher identity and pedagogical cognition. Comprehending this process thus necessitates a heightened focus on the routine practices and activities related to L2 writing within local contexts of practice that should leverage deliberative engagement and participatory frameworks, entailing ongoing self-reflection, collaboration, critical reflexivity, and the adaptation of individual and collective comprehension (Morgan, 2004; Seloni, 2022).

The concept of participatory PCKW aligns well with the notion of L2 writing teachers' *adaptive expertise* (Hayden et al., 2013; Hirvela, 2019; Lee & Yuan, 2021). It is characteristic of expert writing teachers with the ability to understand the 'why' of their practice, including their purposes, values, and visions (Lee, 2024) and to evaluate, judge, and adapt their professional knowledge and practice to the exigencies of their ever-changing profession (Hayden et al., 2013). Adaptive teachers continually enhance their conceptual understanding and apply it to adapt their work according to changing

circumstances, steering clear of dependence on automated routines (Hirvela, 2021; Lee & Yuan, 2021). Good writing instruction indeed requires adaptive skills for applying knowledge in a productive, strategic, and effective manner (Stigler & Miller, 2018), commitment to ensure this adaptive application takes place on a regular basis (Bransford et al., 2005), as well as visions and moral purposes in pedagogical decision-making (Lee, 2024).

Furthermore, linking L2 writing teacher expertise with a participatory perspective, Seloni (2022) argues that “participation to inquiry-based interactions is essential in understanding emerging and evolving expertise” in L2 writing instruction (p. 2). This participation allows teachers exposure to social interactions where their learning and development are shaped by scientific concepts and human experts (Johnson et al., 2020). These concepts and input from experts constitute teachers’ expertise, which indeed has a highly adaptive quality, especially when applied in response to contextual idiosyncrasies.

Bearing the participatory, adaptive nature of PCKW in consideration, L2 writing teacher knowledge should no longer go by “a uniform set of knowledge and skills that apply to all situations” (Eick et al., 2017, p. 59), but it mutates alongside the micro, meso, and macro changes to a particular instructional setting in which teachers draw on critical experiences to self-author their PCKW (Donovan et al., 2023). In this setting, adaptive teachers “engage in active experimentation which creates a greater possibility to acquire conceptual knowledge” (Hanato & Inagaki, 1984, p. 33) essential for them to answer the question of “why they do what they do” (Lee & Yuan, 2021, p. 3). They also reflect regularly and critically on their teaching and its impacts on student learning (Hayden et al., 2013), and through such profound reflection, they transcend the limits of their existing knowledge and push themselves to strive for a higher level of expertise (Atkinson, 2020). The

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context-derived knowledge they acquire constantly serves as a filter to refine their PCKW *for practice*. It is through this process that focus is drawn to teachers' acquisition of not only propositional knowledge but also the subjective, contextually situated representations of such knowledge that is developed *by*, not *for*, the teachers themselves (Figure 2).

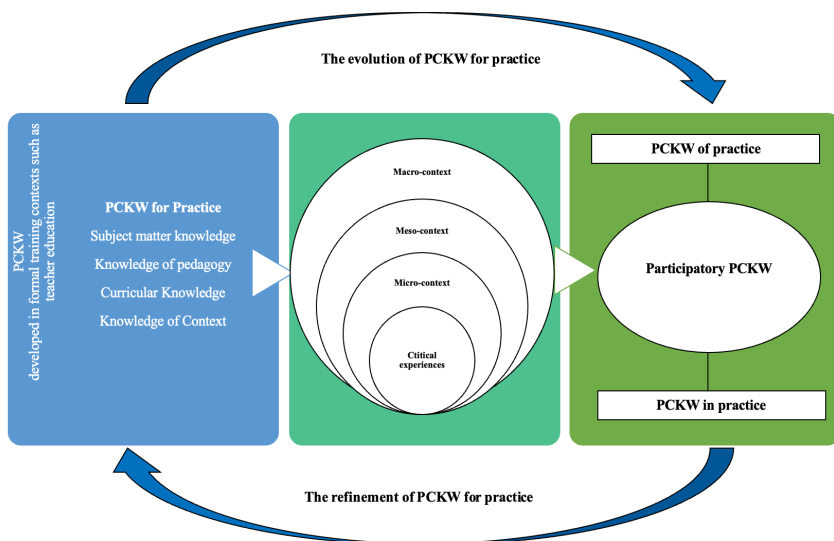


Figure 2. The evolving process of PCKW (adapted from Truong & Nguyen, 2024)

By and large, teaching L2 writing is a socio-professional activity where teachers and vested stakeholders (e.g., learners, colleagues, mentors) are co-creators of knowledge and co-agents of pedagogical change (Donovan et al., 2023; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Roberts, 1998). A widespread consensus exists that “practitioners in teaching know a great deal more about teaching than our theories can yet account for. That is the essence of the notion of the wisdom of practice” (Shulman, 2000, p. 134). Wisdom of practice, as

Shulman (1987, 2000) puts it, is not simply the quotidian job of imparting disciplinary contents to students, but it is “the maxims that guide (or provide reflective rationalisation for) the practice of able teachers” (p. 11), whose instruction exhibits itself “as comprehension and reasoning, as transformation and reflection” (p. 13). One important note here is that these guiding maxims are often exhibited in highly subjective ways and should consequently be deciphered through teachers’ very personal outlook on and contextually crafted approaches to teaching L2 writing.

5. Conclusion and Future Orientations for Practice and Research

This article has focused on the three perspectives of PCKW and on its thesis that this knowledge is socially situated, participatory, and adaptive by nature—mutating alongside the interplay between teachers’ personal agenda and the social, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts of their teaching activity. Following this thesis, in what follows, some suggestions will be provided for L2 writing teacher education and future empirical attempts concerned with the complex, multifaceted construct of PCKW.

Given the context-dependent, participatory, and adaptive characteristics of PCKW, teacher educators concerned with writing teachers’ learning and knowledge development should recognise the importance of guiding their trainees to understand, be attuned to, and adapt to local teaching and learning conditions (Casanave, 2009). This is crucial because “whether writing is taught, trained or acquired as a skill, a competence, a process or a social and intercultural activity shall all depend on considerations of different contexts for academic writing” (Xu, 2016, p. 205). Teacher educators can do their job strategically through promoting “professional learning communities, networking opportunities, and systematic PD [professional development] experiences” (Donovan et al., 2023, p. 29). For L2 writing teacher education programmes, besides a focus on fostering pre-service teachers’ formal

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PCKW, they also need to inject into their curriculum a situative perspective, offering the teachers opportunities and resources tailored to the social-historical-cultural-institutional contexts of their professional practice and development and to the needs of teachers, students, and the community (Johnson & Golombek, 2020). These attempts can ensure that pre-service teachers enter the teaching profession with a comprehensive base of participatory PCKW to effectively enact L2 writing instruction.

Research into PCKW needs to adopt an epistemological approach compatible with its socially situated, participatory, and adaptive nature. In SLTE, a positivist approach has been widely employed, focusing on teachers' acquisition and application of model skills, whilst a humanistic approach deals mainly with teachers' individual characteristics (e.g., autonomy) (see Nguyen, 2016 for a detailed discussion). These approaches, however, do not take into account the complex personal and contextual factors that influence teachers' learning (Nguyen, 2016), nor do they align with the widely accepted notion that the process of teacher learning involves knowledge being produced, applied, and reproduced in socially meaningful contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2007; Loughran, 2019; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). A more suitable alternative should be a social constructivist approach, one that sees teachers' learning as an ongoing, intricate, developmental process shaped by their involvement in social practices and environments related to learning and teaching (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). This approach also takes into account teachers' previous experiences, personal values, and beliefs, which influence their understanding of teaching and affect their classroom practices (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). Accordingly, research on PCKW conducted from a social constructivist perspective can draw upon a rich source of qualitative data collected from teachers' socio-professional activities in relation to their past, present, and future across different spatial

contexts. This corresponds to Seloni's (2022) call for shifting the focus from individual teacher knowledge and skills to the "*network of activities*" (p. 1) involved in writing instruction and suggestion for using activity theory as a potentially valuable framework to analyse teachers' adaptive L2 writing instruction. Triangulating such data from teachers' socio-professional activity systems in relation to L2 writing instruction can elucidate "how [they] make sense of themselves, their students and their teaching worlds and how their sense making shapes language learning opportunities for their students" (Kubanyiova, 2018, p. 5), but more importantly, it can also provide a window into how their knowledge evolves in complex ways and how this evolution is mediated by sociocultural resources.

As regards potential topics into which studies on PCKW can delve, here, some suggestions are offered. Firstly, in the field of L2 writing, there has been discourse about writing in English as a second language (ESL) and as a foreign language (EFL). The former is associated with Anglo-American writing pedagogies from English-dominant contexts (e.g., the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand), whilst the latter refers to the learning and teaching of writing in English as a non-native language in non-English-dominant contexts. This field has been "heavily ESL-oriented" (Ortega, 2004, p. 3) and focused scant attention on writing teachers (Hirvela, 2019; Hirvela & Belcher, 2007; Lee, 2024), leaving a significant question as to how they apply formal PCKW in their local contexts. Some studies in this area of inquiry (S. H. Lee & Pandey, 2019; McCarthy, 2019; Saenkhum, 2019; Tsui & Ng, 2010; Únaldi et al., 2019; You, 2004a, 2004b; Truong & Nguyen, 2024) have provided ample evidence (i.e., local contextual factors) to challenge the wholesale embracement of L2 writing pedagogies from ESL settings in EFL writing instruction, and in many cases, teachers have had to adapt these pedagogies in conjunction with their local contexts. Calls

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(Casanave, 2009; Seloni & Lee, 2019) have been made for the localisation of L2 writing pedagogies; still, not much has been known about how EFL writing teachers' PCKW mutates as their enactment of these pedagogies is mediated by local conditions. Further studies in this line can continue to explore how L2 writing teachers' formal PCKW metamorphoses alongside the changes in their EFL contexts.

Secondly, another growing line of SLTE research is concerned with language teacher cognition (LTC), defined as “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching—what teachers know, believe, and think” (Borg, 2005, p. 190). Studies in this subfield has generated illuminating insights into “the complexity of teachers' mental lives” (Borg, 2015a, p. 54), that is, their “complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs” (Borg, 2003, p. 81) and especially into the symbiotic, mutually constitutive relationship between teachers' cognition and classroom practice (Borg, 2003, 2005, 2015). In fact, many LTC studies (see Borg, 2015, for a review) have probed into teachers' cognition as embodied by their knowledge. However, not many studies (e.g., Shi & Baker, 2022; Shi et al., 2019; Worden, 2018, 2019) have investigated L2 writing teacher cognition from a knowledge-based perspective. This gap opens an interesting avenue where future research can employ the reconceptualised model of PCKW presented above as a means of looking into teachers' cognition and practice about various aspects of L2 writing instruction. An interesting area that merits attention is how L2 writing teachers' knowledge-based cognition (re)forms whilst mediated by various sociocultural factors present in their multiple socio-professional activities.

Overall, in the sections above, whilst this article has made an attempt to represent PCKW in its categorical forms, its consistent argument is that L2 writing teachers across the globe teach writing in a range of contexts

characterised by distinctive sociohistorical, sociocultural, and sociopolitical idiosyncrasies that influence their adoption and adaptation of formal L2 writing pedagogies in their teaching activity. Accordingly, a better understanding of their PCKW (re)formation can be achieved by looking at its contextually conditioned mutability across different times and spaces. Interesting insights into this topic is anticipated to come from more studies that align their epistemological orientations with the sociocultural turn in SLTE research, which concerns the roles of social, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts in teachers' professional learning and knowledge development (Johnson, 2006, 2018).

Conflict of Interests

This article is based on the author's doctoral thesis research on Education (TESOL) at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. The author declares that there are no competing interests related to the article.

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