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Writing in Teacher Education: A Brazilian and Argentinean Account

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This panel discusses the role of writing in initial teacher education and in teacher development. Paula Carlino will speak about literacy across the curriculum in secondary teacher education in Argentina. She will present an analysis of a national survey about what teacher educators in different degrees say they and their institutions do with regards to reading and writing to learn. Through analysis of written reflective reports:

Reading and writing across the curriculum in secondary teacher education in Argentina: What lecturers say they and their institutions do.

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The present study examines lecturers' reading and writing conceptions and (declared) practices in the Arts and Sciences degrees of non university teacher education in Argentina. An online administered survey of 32 questions was developed by a team of six researchers with the support of the National Institute of Teacher Education. The study focused on lecturers of prospective secondary teachers. A stratified random sample at a national level was designed, selecting 544 lecturers working in 50 institutes at different locations of the country. Besides the quantitative statistical processing of the obtained data, a qualitative analysis of the answers to open questions in the survey was performed. This paper concentrates on the responses to one of these open questions, in which teacher educators were asked to describe the actions performed by themselves, with other colleagues or at an institutional level to help overcome the difficulties that 90% of them recognize their students face when trying to read and write in the content areas. The analysis of the answers reveals that most of the lecturers mention that they include some literacy instruction in their classes. Nevertheless, a careful examination of the actions described shows that in most cases instruction takes place just at the beginning of the reading and writing processes (through requesting tasks, giving guidelines, teaching techniques) or at the end (assessing student's final products). A minority group of teachers, instead, also get involved providing regular instruction during these processes, frequently devoting some of their classes' time to reading and writing to learn tasks. Within this group, a minimum proportion of the respondents promote teacher-student interaction. In other words, just a very few of the lecturers endorse dialogic teaching strategies, advocating for a multiple way feedback (between what the students do, what the teacher contributes and what the students transform, repeatedly) as well as peer interaction through reading discussions and comments on written drafts. Regarding institutional programs, numerous respondents

report actions addressing literacy outside of the content area teaching (student workshops, freshmen courses, advisers' support). A reduced number of answers inform about institutions promoting collective actions that might have some impact on literacy teaching in the future (improvement projects, professional development workshops, faculty agreements). Within the convergent theoretical frameworks of the "didactics of language practices" and the "WAC/WID" contributions, as well as the "academic literacies" and the "dialogic teaching" perspectives, we analyze these results in terms of a) conceptions on the nature of reading and writing and of literacy learning which could underlie the declared practices, b) consequences of these practices on the prospective teacher's scholarship and c) actions that could be undertaken to produce changes in the current state of pre-service teacher education in Argentina. To illustrate the analysis we include quotes of teachers' responses.