

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



Universidad de El Salvador

Hacia la libertad por la cultura

**“The Teachers beliefs about the English Language
Learners”**

PRESENTED BY:

Mejía Cruz, Sonia Arely (MC03039)
Meléndez Arita, Donna Mariela (MA00029)
Ramírez Mejía, Mauricio Enrique (RM03010)

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ACADEMIC ADVISOR:

Mti. Jose Israel Oliva

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UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES

**ING. RUFINO ANTONIO QUEZADA SÁNCHEZ
RECTOR**

**ARQ. MIGUEL ANGEL PEREZ RAMOS
ACADEMIC VICE-RECTOR**

**MRTO: OSCAR NOE NAVARRETE ROMERO
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HEAD OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

**LICDA. RIHNA FRANCO RAMOS
COORDINATOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS**

**MTI. JOSE ISRAEL OLIVA
ACADEMIC ADVISOR**

Table of contents

TOPIC	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION_____	1
II. GENERAL OBJECTIVE_____	2
III. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES _____	2
IV. JUSTIFICATION -----	3
V. THE TEACHERS BELIEFS ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS -----	4-12
VI. METHODOLOGY-----	13
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS-----	14
VIII. REFERENCES-----	15
IX. ANNEXES-----	16-24

I. INTRODUCTION

The teachers beliefs about language learners greatly influence the way how the teaching – learning process is achieved. Beliefs are culturally bound and, since they are formed early in life, they tend to be resistant to change. This constitutes the reason why the following essay will, above all, focus on the importance or the role of the teachers' beliefs about the English language learners that they bring into the classroom.

By going through this awareness, teachers will be able to examine why they do what they do and, perhaps, to choose to think about things differently. Part of the content of this essay comes from the contribution of the beliefs demonstrated by some teachers at the Foreign Language Department trough five years of academic activity which has allowed the recognition of their thoughts and ideas about the teaching activity. In addition, different bibliography has been taken into account to get a variety of information, opinions and thoughts that teachers have about the English language learners.

This bibliographical research paper contains an introductory section to provide a brief overview on what it is about continuing with the stating of the general and specific objectives aimed to achieve. A justification is also included to present the intentions why this work has been conducted and who will be benefited following with the body of the work. The methodology that was used is also explained and some recommendations are offered. At the end, there are the references for the bibliography that was consulted along with the annexes including the detailed steps performed to achieve the final paper work.

II. GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

- ✓ To carry out a bibliographical research based on the teachers beliefs about the English languages learners.

III. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ To find information related to the most common beliefs teachers have about the English languages learners based on a variety of bibliography consulted.
- ✓ To interpret the teachers beliefs from the data gathered and the way such beliefs take part in the learning process.

IV. JUSTIFICATION:

This paper has been carried out in order to know the most common teachers beliefs about the English Language Learner. The conducting of this bibliographical research that provided valuable information fulfilling the paper intentions emerged from an interest on knowing what teachers believe in, besides what they do in the classroom. This paper also seeks to provide valuable and significant information about how such beliefs influence the manner the teaching activity is performed and, as a result, the way the students succeed in the English command.

The major benefit that comes from the development of this written paper goes to both the teachers experiences and students academic achievement. Teacher will find this paper as a guide reminder of those beliefs to be taken into account when teaching students. In addition, the students at the Foreign Language Department may also use this work as an assistance tool when thinking about the writing of any bibliographical paper, a small research or when interested in knowing the teachers beliefs about the students.

V. The Teachers Beliefs about the English Language Learners.

Teachers beliefs about language learners greatly influence the way how the teaching – learning process is achieved. Beliefs are culturally bound and, since they are formed early in life, they tend to be resistant to change. This constitutes the reason why the following essay will, above all, focus on the importance of the role of the teachers beliefs about the English language learners that they bring into the classroom. This awareness allows teachers to examine why they do what they do and, perhaps, to choose to think about things differently.

Teachers beliefs shape the manner in which teaching will be administrated. Teachers have constructed their own thoughts, ideas or opinions about what learning is and how learning should be acquired by the students. The students level of knowledge acquisition is more likely a direct result of teachers beliefs on how they should learn. Since teachers beliefs are formed early in life and they are, often, hard to change, this bibliographical essay reflects below some of the teachers beliefs that are present when teaching.

First of all, the teacher personality influences students learning process. The role of teachers' personality has become one of the most important aspects of teaching field. Considering that class management and the ability to control groups of students is one of the fundamental skills that each teacher should own. Harmer (2001) suggested that there are also some other qualities which carefully analyzed can be divided into two essential parts: the basic and human qualities. Both of the previously mentioned parts

become equally important when valuing the teachers' personality which directly influences the way students acquire the new knowledge.

The basic qualities suggested in each teacher are related to the vocation each person has for teaching, which is easily detected by the students when the teacher is right in front of the class. The owning of a dynamic and an open personality refers to the movement that is imposed in the foreign language class, and the tolerance with the students behavior is part of each teacher humanistic interest in cultural practices of his or her classroom. These all are areas of the teachers personality towards the learning-teaching interaction successful mastery. There come the human qualities that functions as a complement of the basic qualities to enhance a proper teacher personality. The human qualities include aspects such as sense of humor, patience, kindness, charisma, attractiveness, enthusiasms, honesty, etc. All of the above qualities work as a team with the basic qualities that may make teaching more effective.

Secondly, the teachers believe that their role in the classroom is important. Although the personality of the teacher is crucial in each teacher development, the role of the teacher is considered as another of the major interests in the teaching and learning process of the English language. The role of the teacher depends on the activity that is taking place. Harmer (2001) claimed that there are, some other functions to be performed by the teachers: Each teacher should perform the role of a "facilitator." This is the main and most important role a teacher should have and through which teachers provide students with different, interesting and challenging tasks. The teacher should also be a "mediator," he or she should use the appropriate teaching approaches. If what is thought to be the appropriate approach has been selected, then the teacher should function as a "monitor" letting the students to work alone.

Functioning as a “language model” is also another of the teachers role. In other words, teachers have to make use of the target language as much as possible. At last but not least, teachers should also function as a “motivator”. Teachers have to keep in mind what arises the students interest to learn. So both, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should of great help for the teachers’ labor.

Thirdly, educational goals for the twenty-first century are very different from the goals stated on earlier times. Language teaching now is characterized by a frequent change and emerging innovations and by the current development of new language teaching ideologies. Various influences have affected those changes, including the different purposes of learning English has. Therefore, the methodology used in each class must be revised and classified accordingly. Some teachers consider the grammar translations method as effective while, on the other hand, there are some others who rather prefer the direct method. There is also a wide variety of institutions considering the community language learning approach; nevertheless, there are also a few institutions that have demonstrated to have clear preference for what is known as “Total Physical Response”.

In an English class, it is expected from the teacher that s/he takes into account the different aspects and features to catch the learners attention and interest to feel motivated in learning the new language in a more effective manner as aimed. Thereby, the best option is to include a variety of activities and perform task oriented to enhance students’ participation, behaviors, attitudes and learning. Some teacher have arrived to the conclusion that having a method that combined the best from every other seems to be the most effective way to teach English, this has led to the development of what is a

single method that takes the best contributions from all other, that is an “eclectic method” .

Bransford et al (2002) concluded that the “pre-existing knowledge” also influences students’ new learning. When attending a new class, students join it with an already existing set of capabilities and knowledge that just need to be further developed through a new learning process.

However, all of the new pieces of knowledge to be acquired are greatly influenced by a range of preexisting acknowledgements that each one of the students brings into the class. There are some skills, beliefs and concepts that they have already processed and acquired through a former learning process or even from an empirical acquisition.

The conception that new knowledge must be constructed from existing backgrounds demands of some special points where teachers need to provide of special attention. Between the main important key aspects to considered are: first, an incomplete level of learning that students might have experienced in the past or in a present content being taught. And the false conceptions and beliefs that students might own about the new content, or even, about their own capacity to process and learn new contents. Thereby, teachers must also be prepared to attend different needs in order to make the learning objectives possible.

It is a fact that learning of a new language, such as English, is better enhanced when teachers pay attention to the know ledges and beliefs that each student brings to the class. If the teacher discovers that significant students’ backgrounds exist in his class, teacher then, has to be willing to operate as a mediator, facilitator or even model. Teaching goal will then achieved effectively and adequately

One of the most common beliefs of every teacher is the one related to what drives students to learn. The term motivation is strongly related to achievement in the English language learning. The most successful learners are not the ones to whom the new language comes very easily, but the ones who display certain typical characteristics, most of these are mainly associated to motivation. (Naiman 1978).

The personal characteristics identifying motivated students considered by most of the foreign language teachers are summarized in: learners' willingness to task and challenge with him or her as well as with others peers. Students with self confidence in her or his own eminent success, etc. Students ego participation plays also an important role, students find through the learning process their own way to conquer personal intentions.

Students are well oriented and aware of the goals that their own learning represents; therefore, they pass to devote their best efforts on their personal learning process. The above mentioned characteristics qualify highly motivated students at any level of the learning process.

Following, the own students role in the learning process is a must. Students should heavily participate in the language learning process. Special emphasis should be given by teachers to an interaction for students with other students. In the English learning environment such interaction can also be made with student and teachers and among peers. The more the students interact and participate in the activities the better they will learn. Students' final learning achievement is seriously influenced by the existing opportunities to interact and participate with and among members of the target language community.

Despite of the importance that active students participation in class has in their own learning process, not much effort is done to promote students interaction and

participations neither inside nor outside the classroom. Teachers tend to underestimate the fact of giving additional efforts to more participation. As a result, several students continue to view their own academic success process as a deficient and not as an effective learning achievement.

Teachers have some sort of commonly belief about the students having a “good learner role”. As per teachers, it has been observed that those students who actively participate and fulfill their assignment are often categorized as a “good student”. It is also important to point out that there are other kinds of students who do not seem to participate in classes and still they are as good as the former ones. This can also lead to establish a search another common belief teachers have: Learning is also a matter of shared responsibility, levels and rules.

There are still some facts in these ideas demanding what, then, the actual role of students, besides participating in class, should be. Teachers, on the other hand, have to prepare themselves to know how to handle new emerging situations which required a different level of awareness to know how to address raising troubles (Underwood 1995)

In addition, teachers belief that students learning styles influences, in a large extend, the way they learn. There seems to be as interest arouse from the students pattern to be established to address the new content or what they think, works better for them. Several research have been conducted in this matter and most of them tend to reinforce the idea that there are several learning styles and they all have their own set of learning strategies to acquire the new knowledge and to know how and when to use it.

Willings (1990) conducted the “learning styles research”, and such results showed that the styles employed by students can be categorized in four types: One: “Converges”. These students are by nature solitary, they prefer to avoid groups and are

independent and confident about their own abilities. They are also analytic and can easily impose their own learning strategies. Two: “Conformist”. They emphasize learning about language over learning to know how to use the language.

The other two remaining learning styles categories are mainly related to a more social aspect of the language. Those known as “Concrete Learners”. These enjoy the social aspects of learning and like to learn from direct experiences. Last, the “Communicative Learners”. They are language oriented and feel comfortable outside the classroom. They are confident and willing to take risk which their peers seem to lack of. They operate without the guidance of the teacher.

Due to the difference there might exist between students styles and students actual language achievement, there are also some other aspects that lead teacher to categorize students. For instance, there are levels of language managements that can be broken into: Beginner level, Intermediate level and Advance level.

In the meantime, the lack of practice of what students have learned makes them fail. Students successful mastery of the English language is also related to the level of practice of the target language. Students knowledge can exists but it is also important to practice what they have learned. Although repetitions and conversations drills are performed in class, special practice is to be also done so that students can be exposed to a “more realistic language usage”.

Besides, teachers beliefs that the lack of the government support impacts the students learning. Government authorities have to grand the necessary conditions to facilitate the learning and education to wider populations. The lack of access to education system enables thousands of people to get basic education. This is observable in different rural areas where no schools are available, as a result, potential students

rather decide to quite their academic goals spending time in not fruitful activities such as: drugs, crime and immigrating to the United States.

Low payment rates also demonstrate the lack of efforts from the authorities to support a worthy educational system. In addition, no didactic material is found at schools. Those schools, where any, lack of the basic services that guarantee an adequate educational system: such as: water, energy service, safety and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, globalization makes students to learn differently. Since the world is in transition, the English language has taken new forms itself. Teachers know that due to the brisk globalization everywhere, a new leading age has now arrived. Mainly technological, scientist and English language management are important elements within this career: Globalization. Within a decade or so, the number of people who must speak English as a second language and foreign language will exceed the number of native speakers.

Since late 2004, many international companies have been investing high amounts of money in order to provide many jobs opportunities. Therefore, teachers beliefs about globalization as a phenomenon are currently emerging with a new perspective: Economical and financial world trade purposes are moving peoples interest to learn English a long with technical advances. Technology will continue to play an important role when, as teachers, new planning and designing of teaching for new learners is established.

Finally, the economical backgrounds are equally believed to be of a great importance in the learning process. Teachers are daily faced with different students' issues affecting or influencing the learning process at any level. Society and academical aspects also is believed to influence in students own learning process. One of the

strongest thoughts is the fact that students economical background makes a different on the students successful mastery of the learning of English.

This is closely associated to the idea that “the more expensive, the better it is”. Students from a high economic level are associated to have access to a better educational system and therefore to be a better student. Moreover, teachers also believe that students from a low economical background might be directly affected from the lack of necessary resources to afford education for them: Didactic materials, scholarships, etc. In addition, this also creates a kind of social conflict since students suffer from a social and economic pressure: accomplish their academical goals and afford their own educations. Students make additional intellectual efforts developing learning difficulties and demanding from teachers to attempt to overcome certain duties that are actually limitations in the learning process.

To conclude, according to the bibliography consulted it is believed that there exists a significant relationship between the teachers beliefs and the students learning. The above mentioned described conceptions represent a considerable sample of teachers beliefs about English language learning and the direct and most important aspects influencing the new language learning process. Indeed, there are several aspects that must be examined with the purpose of facilitating students to reach their goal of learning English successfully.

VI. METHODOLOGY

This final research paper has been written by following the six basic steps suggested by Lawrence A. Machi et al in the book "Literature Review". The process begun by selecting a research topic from an everyday interest, the topic that we selected was "The teachers beliefs about the English language learners". Such topic was emerged as any other research topic which was later redefined as the main research interest. Then, on step two, the literature to consult was researched. In order to accomplish with this stage, this literature was first discovered and the key information was organized after having scanned, skimmed and mapped. The core ideas and the best authors contribution were also found.

Afterwards, an argument was developed through the step three. Such argument contained the stated reasons, support, claims and advocacy. During step four, the literature was surveyed; that is, the data already collected was assembled, synthesized and analyzed as the authors tentative ideas were expanded and the storyline was eventually created.

To conclude, the literature researched was critiqued through this stage, the topic questions were reviewed and the main argument of the work was rebuilt. Finally, the writing of the final version of the research paper arrived. All the findings previously discovered about the topic were written at the same time, the first draft was created by developing all the gathered ideas into the first original body of the work.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AUTHORITIES

- ✓ To coordinate the graduation process according to the human resources available.
- ✓ To organize the stages within the graduation process in such a way that all the academic activities can be performed according to the time planned.
- ✓ To provide the advisor with the necessary resources through the graduation process.

TO THE ADVISOR TEACHERS

- ✓ To agree in a common understanding how to assess and evaluate the students job.
- ✓ To work as a team with the FLD authorities to achieve an effective graduation process completion.

VIII. REFERENCES

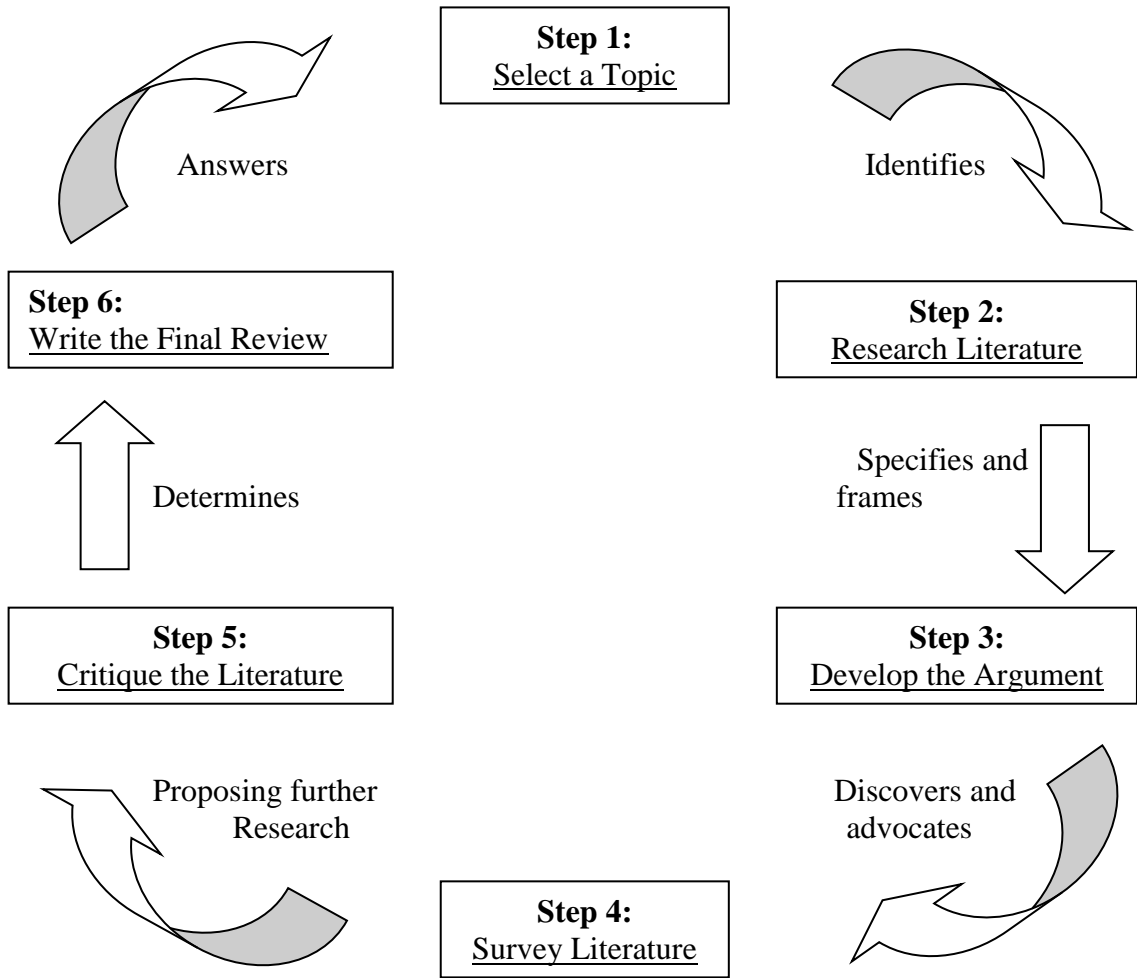
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IX. ANNEXES

THESIS STATEMENT

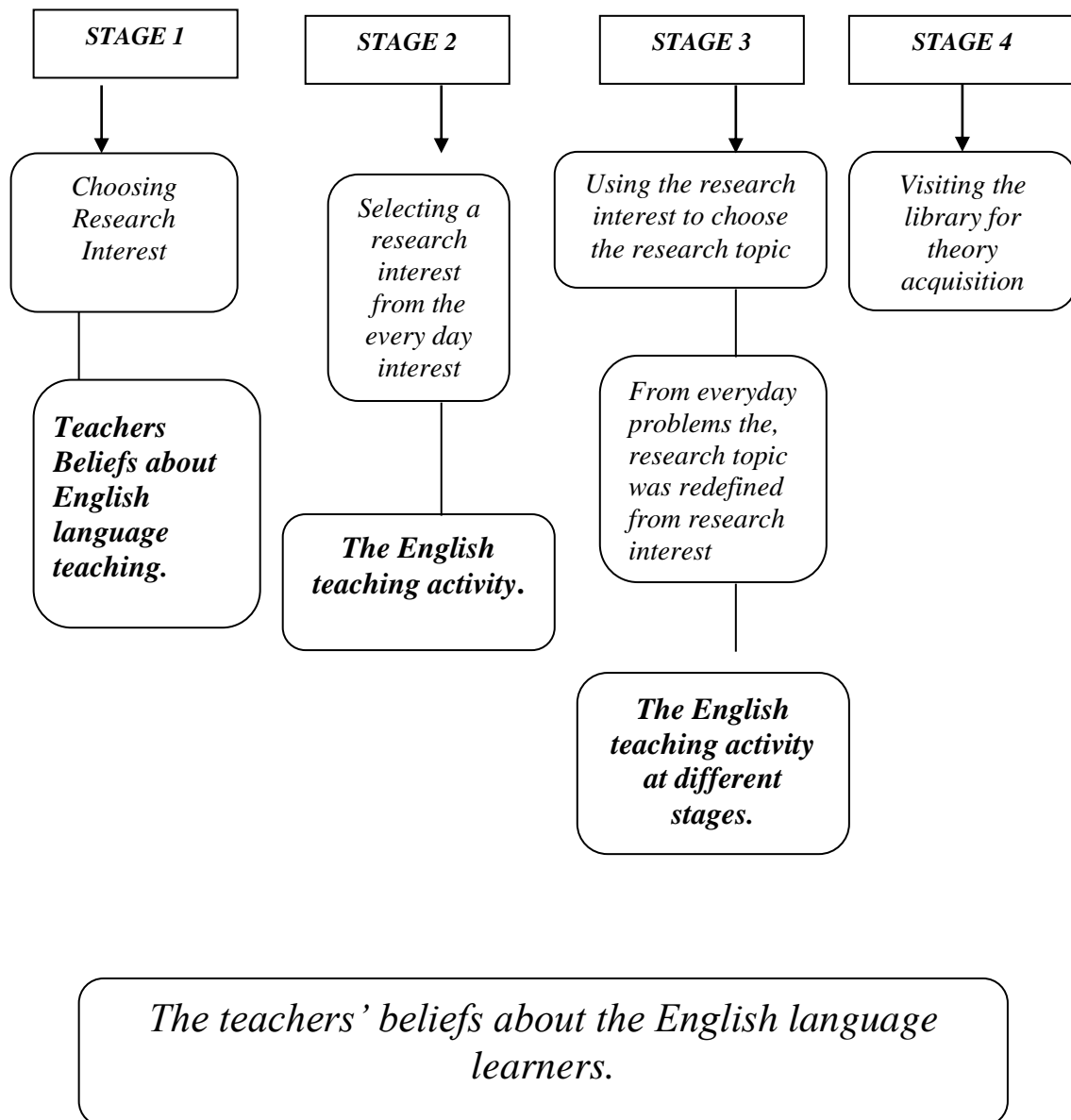
Teachers beliefs about the English language learners greatly influence the way how the teaching – learning process is performed

PROCESS STEPS



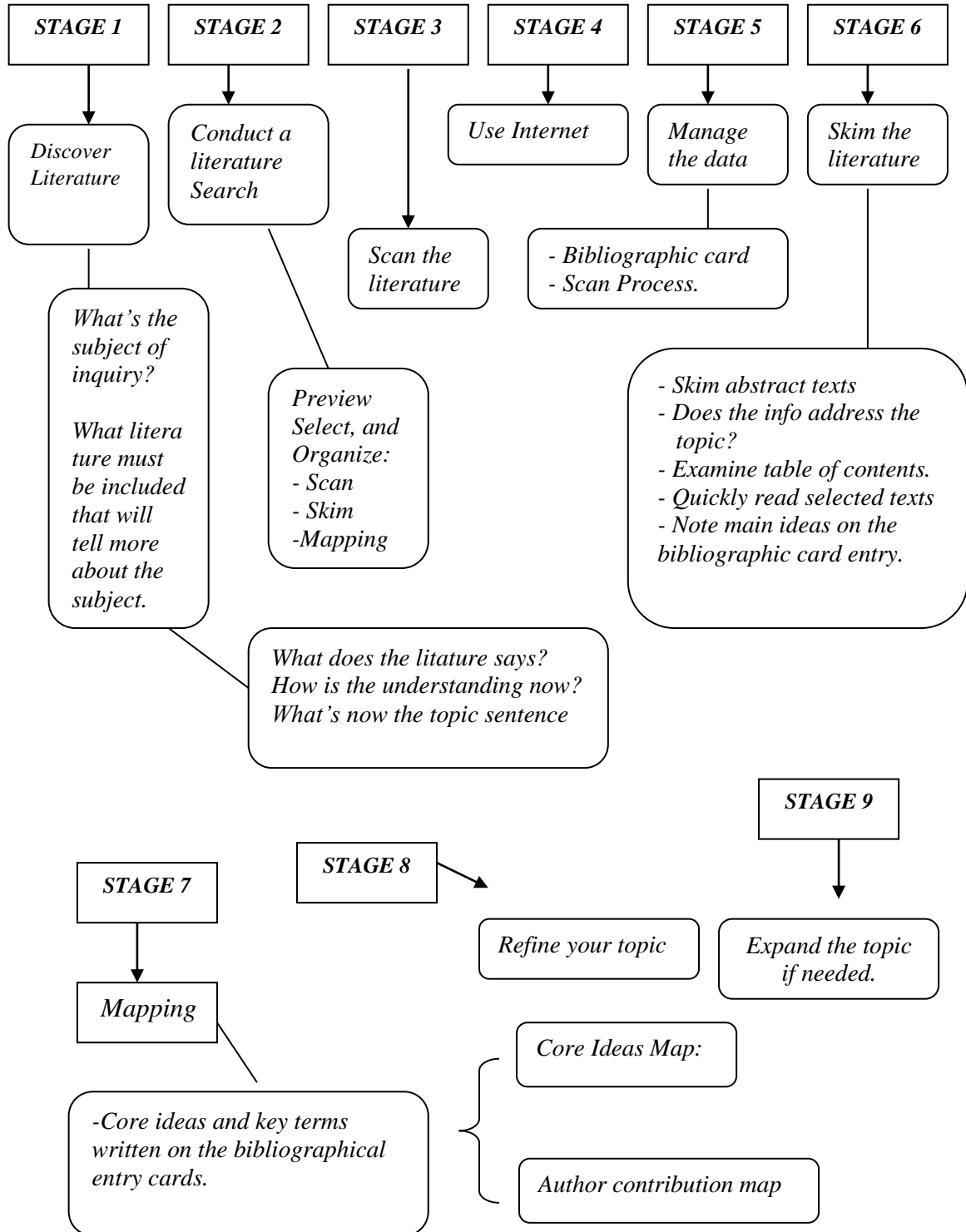
Step 1

Selecting the topic

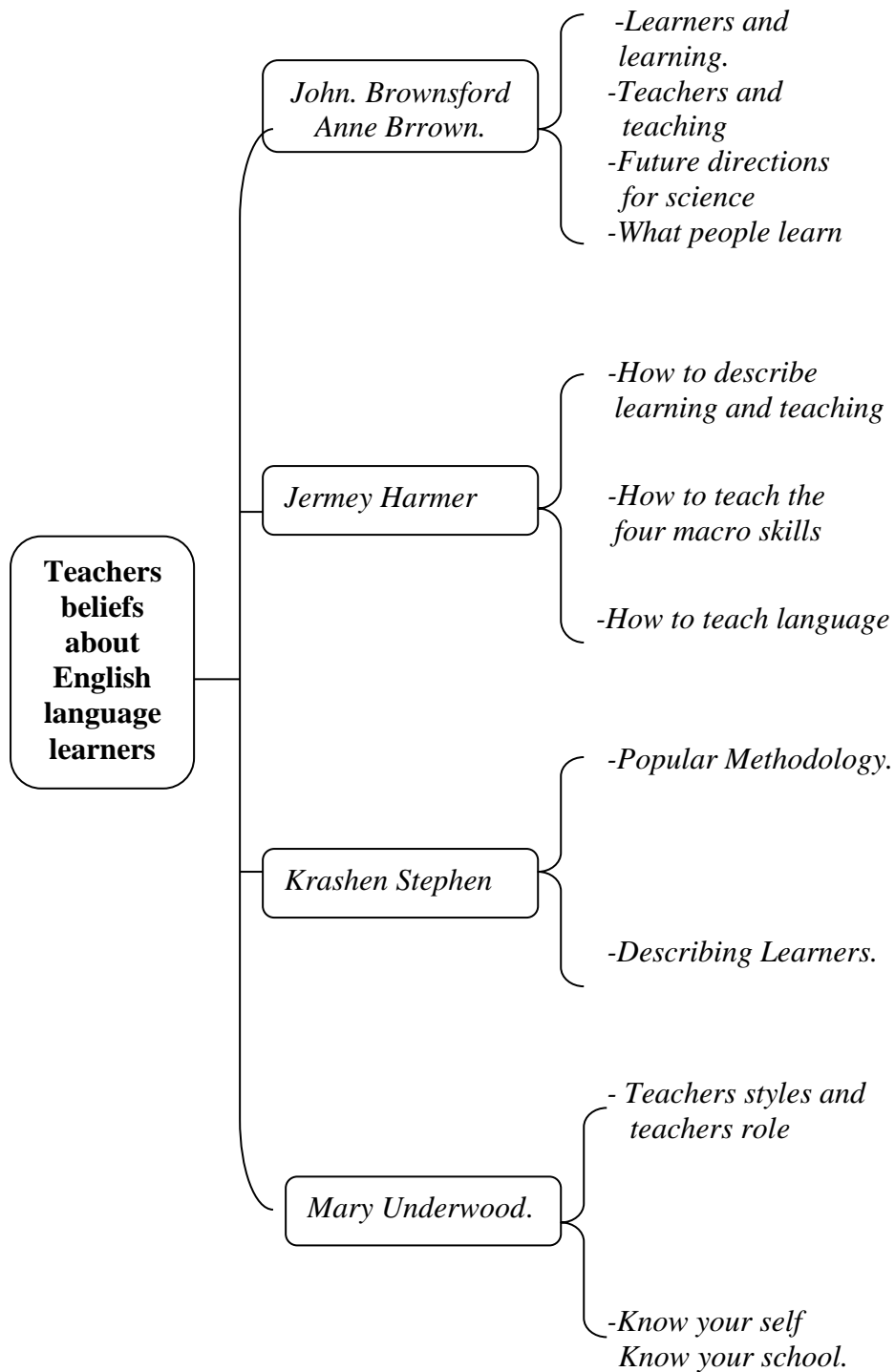


Step 2

Searching the Literature

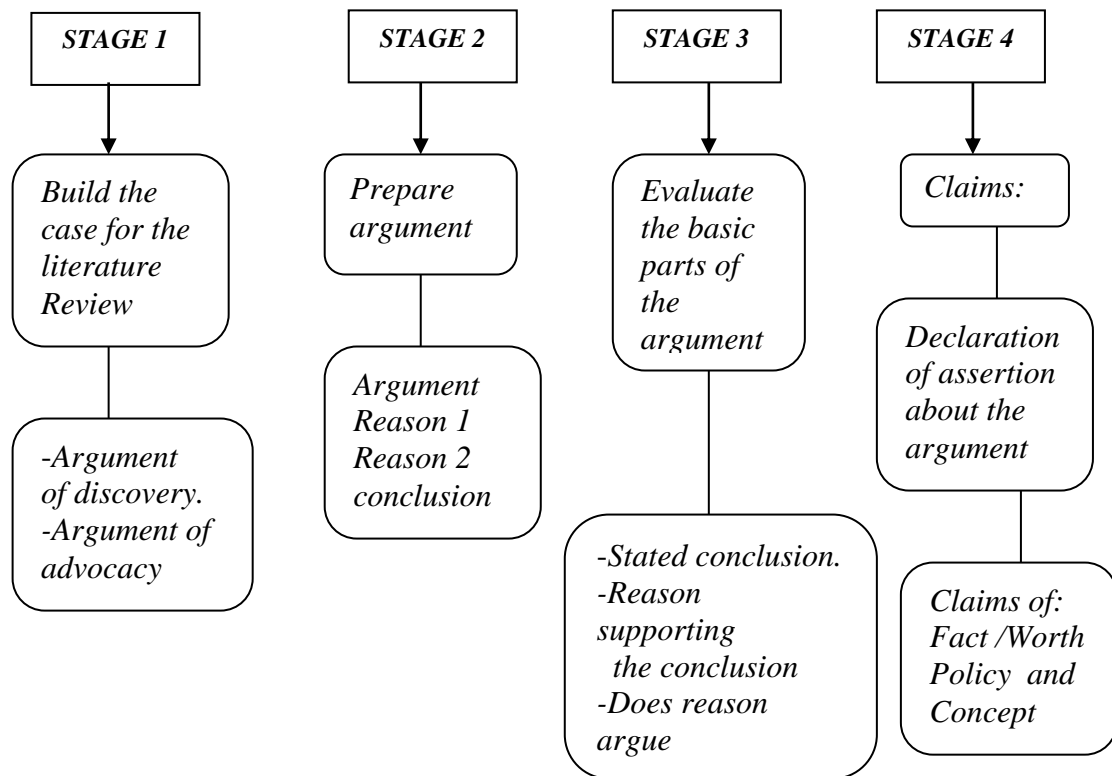


THE AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION MAPPING:



Step 3

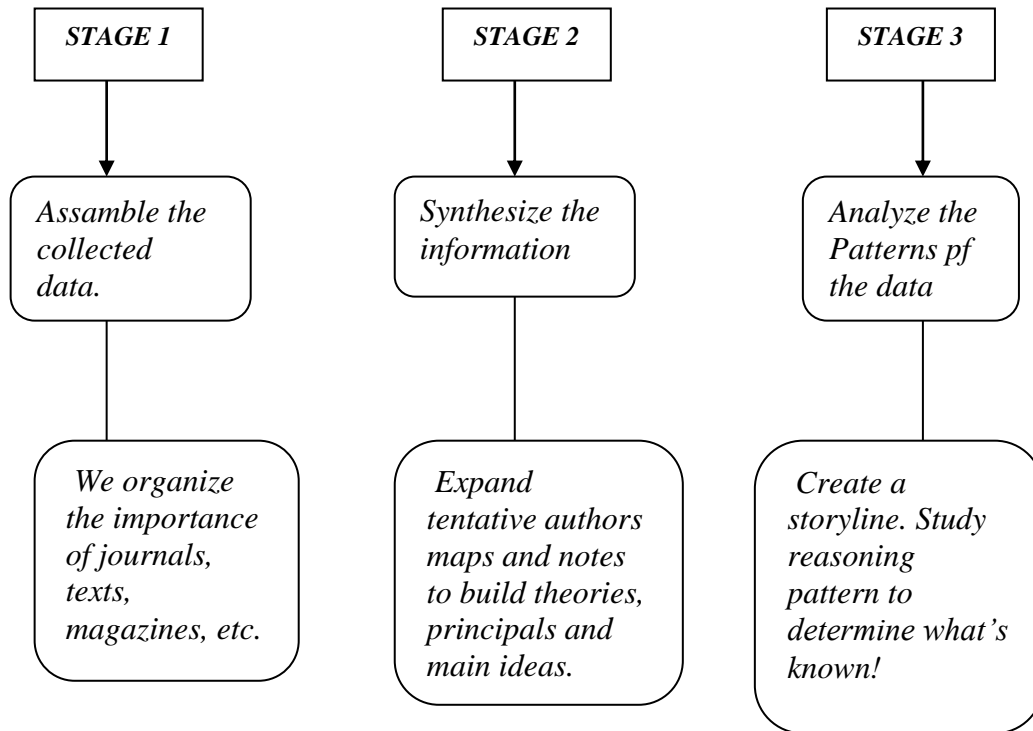
Develop the Argument



Teachers beliefs about the English teaching play an important role at the school. According to Larsen – Freman (2000) “Its very important for you to become aware of the thoughts that guide your actions in the classroom. With this awareness you will be able to examine why you do what you do and perhaps chose to think about or do things differently” As also mentioned earlier by Jeremy Harmer –“Each student requires of specific attention to address their own needs, competences and cognitive skills at their own stage”

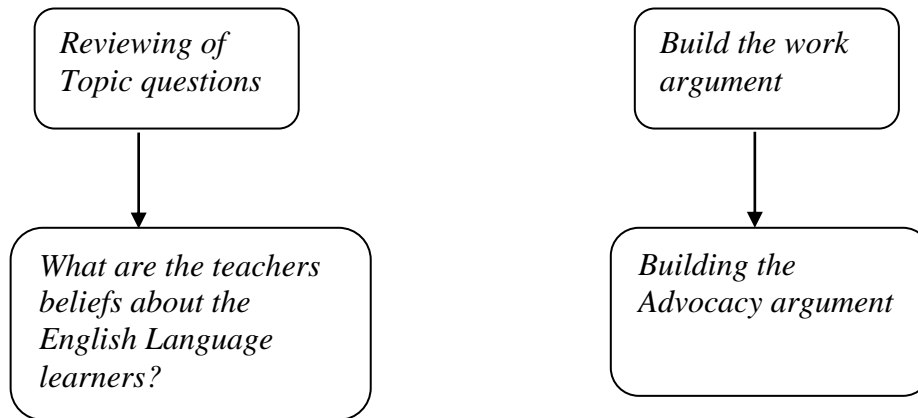
Step 4

Survey the Literature



Step 5

Critique the literature



Step 6

writing the final version of the essay.

