The purpose of this multicase study was to investigate second language teachers’ practices in teaching academic writing to English as a second language (ESL) students at the higher education level. This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of how ESL teachers are currently teaching academic writing to ESL students and the particular methods and strategies used to help these students to succeed in their disciplinary communities. This study also strived to explain why teachers choose particular approaches to second language academic writing instruction, as well as the sources that have informed their instructional practices and the kind of preparation that informs their pedagogical practices. A multicase study approach was used to study this phenomenon. The participants were two ESL teachers teaching advanced ESL courses at an intensive English program at a university in Northeast Ohio. Multiple sources of data were collected: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and instructional documents.

Findings revealed that the teachers’ training/preparation and their previous academic writing experience in second language academic writing instruction have played the most influential role in their instructional practices. Participants also mentioned challenges, needs and kinds of support they need to better prepare ESL
students and to advance academic writing instruction. This study calls for ongoing research to identify necessary preparation for ESL teachers who teach ESL academic writing at the higher education level, the students’ changing needs, and most importantly, the kind of L2 writing instructional pedagogies teachers will integrate to help L2 writers overcome these issues and challenges.