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FOSTERING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN WRITING ACTIVITY IN THREE URBAN CLASSROOMS

Susan Duell Martin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2002

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Fostering Student Participation in Writing Activity in Three Urban Classrooms

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Research on classroom writing has often paid scant attention to the role of the teacher in children's literacy development. This study investigated how teachers planned for and involved their diverse students in classroom writing activity. Informed by sociocultual learning theories, the study used a theoretical framework envisioning the classroom as a complex system of teaching/learning activity. It investigated three particular features of classroom teaching/learning activity: (1) how teachers planned for and organized writing activity; (2) how writing activity was enacted in classrooms to provide learning opportunities for students to engage with concepts, skills, dispositions, and strategies fundamental to written communication; and (3) how teachers fostered students participation in variety of activities across different social settings.

This study occurred in the classrooms of three elementary teachers chosen from a pool of teachers nominated as effective writing teachers in urban settings. Students in these classrooms were racially, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse. For data collection I used naturalistic and ethnographic field methods including video/audio taping of classroom interactions, interviewing of both teachers and target students, and review of students writing. Initial analyses focused on the activity in each classroom. I developed case studies of each classroom to use in cross-case analyses of patterns across the cases.

Findings from this study revealed that the teachers fostered students participation in writing activity in multifaceted ways and on a variety of levels. First, teachers planned for and involved students in complex units of study based on written genre or form. The units offered opportunities for students to experience and develop understandings of writing as social, conceptual, affective, and strategic activity as they undertook writing tasks. Second, teachers purposefully organized activity settings to foster students' participation in writing tasks. Communicative interactions in whole-class settings proactively prepared students for both the independent and interdependent work that followed. Finally, participation in writing tasks was a collaborative process. Teachers and students were co-participants in both learning and creation of written products. Fluid and constant negotiation of roles of teachers and students characterized their interactions. Implications for teachers, teacher educators, and researchers are discussed.

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In my dissertation I discuss the collaborate efforts of students and teachers in the processes of learning and creation of written products. For the last two years I have lived a similar experience. Creation of this final product has involved the participation and support of many people whom I wish to acknowledge here.

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Dedication

To my father, Jerome Tracy Duell
1925- 1993

My father never graduated from high school,
but that didn't stop him from pursuing his dreams.
From him I first learned how to take risks and
how hard work can make dreams come true.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Kevin: I love writing. I want to be a writer when I grow up. It's [writing] kind of like you get to express your feelings. And tell everyone what you like and stuff.

Angel: Writing [is my favorite subject]. Because I get to make up stuff, and write about things.

Ulayla: It [writing] kind of makes you know more ... How it makes you know more is you're writing things down, and like in between those things you find something new that you may have not known until you actually write it down and look at it and read it and think it over.

Secily: I just like the details on what I think... And so you [the audience] can have fun ...Not—'This is boring.' You'll have fun reading it!

Deion: At first in the beginning of the year, I didn't think I was quite a writer. And then, now, she says I write great poems and stuff, and I think I'm a writer. I put down what I think in my mind, and I put it right on the paper.

Undoubtedly, most educators would share my delight at the attitudes and understandings these elementary students have voiced about their joy in writing, the power they wield as writers, their connections with chosen audiences, and the transformative nature of their writing experiences. These five students came from third and fourth grade classrooms in urban settings. They represent the range of diversity that characterized the students in their classrooms, including racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic differences. The students were also diverse in their writing development, ranging from emergent to proficient according to their teachers' assessments. Despite their differences, each connected with classroom writing experiences and developed new insights and ideas about themselves and purposes for writing. The learning experiences that prompted the above remarks occurred in the classrooms of three teachers nominated as effective writing teachers in urban settings. The purpose of this dissertation study was to investigate how these three teachers involved their diverse groups of students in classroom writing activity in ways that fostered these understandings of and positive dispositions toward writing.

Few empirical studies of classroom writing activity have focused on the role of the teacher in fostering diverse students' participation in writing tasks in elementary classrooms. Research on classroom writing has often paid scant attention to the role of the teacher in children's literacy development (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998). The bulk of writing research has focused on writing processes and individual development. This historical lack of emphasis on instruction in writing research is perhaps reflected in the title of Peter Elbow's (1973) book, "Writing without Teachers." Conceptions of "best practice" have arisen from classroom intervention studies situated in theory and often small in scale. Those studies that have focused on instruction most often investigated teachers' one-on-one interactions with students rather than what occurs in whole-class activity. Certainly, educators have benefited from understandings of writing instruction that have come from these studies. But personal theories and patterns of practice developed by teachers in classroom practice have been omitted from our understandings of what counts as good literacy instruction (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998). We lack finely nuanced depictions of how teachers plan for and guide writing activity for a wide-range of students in these classroom settings.

Only within the last few years have researchers begun to examine how teacher practices support literacy learning. A small but growing body of work within the bounds of literacy education has looked afresh at issues of effective teacher practice as it pertains to development of children's literacy abilities (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Morrow, Baker, Nelson, Block, Tracey, Brooks, Cronin, & Woo, 1998; Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998). However, these studies have focused on reading instruction or early primary classrooms. References to writing instruction are minimal or contain broad statements such as "all teachers used the writing process model" (Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998, p. 112). Many of the findings from these studies are intriguing and can perhaps be extrapolated to writing or to older students, but writing is a very different task from reading. Certainly, how teachers plan for, organize, and effectively support students' participation in writing activity will differ significantly from that of reading. How do teachers encourage and support students' participation in writing tasks that fosters learning of skills, strategies, and dispositions fundamental to written communication?

As I investigated this question in the classrooms of the three teachers, I did not intend to provide a prescription for effective teaching practices. Rather I hoped to offer the reader models of the ways teachers in difficult and challenging situations have organized for and fostered students' active participation in writing tasks. This work is situated in the messy complexities of classroom life. I specifically chose to examine teacher practices in classroom settings because I agree with David Cohen, Stephen Raudenbush, and Deborah Ball (2000) that:

> What we casually call teaching is not what teachers do and say and think, which is what many researchers have studied and many innovators have tried to change. Teaching is what teachers do and say, and think with learners, concerning content, in a particular organization of instruction, in environments over time. What we often mistakenly refer to as the practice of teaching is a collection of practices, including pedagogy, learning, instructional design, and managing instructional organization (p. 9).

This study focused on complex interactions of teachers, students, and subject matter in classroom settings to illuminate how teachers planned for and involved students in writing activity. When I began this study in urban classrooms, I expected to see complex interactions between teachers, students, and subject matter. I did not know, however, what these might be and how teachers would plan for and foster students' participation in writing activity.

The genesis for this study came from my work on another research project that examined how beginning teachers learn to teach reading and writing. I observed and interviewed three beginning teachers who worked with diverse student populations in urban settings. Planning for and involving students in writing activity proved especially challenging for these novices. In particular, one teacher bemoaned her inability to foster her students' active participation in writing activity. Her students had opportunity to write for meaningful purposes on topics of their choice. She set up independent writing times in accordance with conceptions of best practice (Bromley, 1999). Yet, she spent her time managing behavior rather than fostering student engagement with learning activities. This teacher despaired, believing that her students had gone from loving writing to hating it by the end of the year. She struggled for almost two years to make this instructional approach work before she gave up on it. As I observed her struggles and the lack of students' participation in writing, I began to wonder both about her conceptions of writing instruction and the classroom as a context for learning to write. As a teacher educator, I wanted to be able to provide this teacher and other new teachers with visions of how teachers with diverse student populations successfully foster their students' participation in writing activity.

Context for the study

Understanding how teachers plan for and foster students' participation in writing activities in diverse classrooms is important for several reasons. First, demands on educators to effectively meet the needs of *all* their students have taken center stage in education. At the same time the diversity of students in our schools' classrooms is at an all-time high. Milbrey McLaughlin (1997) points out that increased cultural and linguistic diversity among American students "far exceed[s] any imagined by early proponents of universal education" (p. 79). Classroom diversity is further increased as inclusion, rather than exclusion, of special needs students in "regular" classrooms becomes more common. Additionally, increasing social responsibility for children has fallen to schools and teachers: fewer family and community resources are available to children (McLaughlin, 1997). One out of four American children lives in poverty. Increasing numbers of students are "latch key" children or live in single-parent families. While classrooms as learning settings have always posed challenges to educators, the challenge of effectively involving groups of students in literacy learning has increased.

Second, awareness of the importance of engaging students in writing activity has increased over the last twenty years as we have developed greater understandings of the significance of writing to students mental and social development (Vygotsky, 1978). Educators now talk about writing across the curriculum, writing for multiple purposes, and writing for particular audiences. The time students spend with teachers in classroom writing activity is the single most important opportunity for students to develop facility with writing as a personal and cultural tool. However, writing is particularly difficult for novices (Dyson & Freedman, 1991), and is one of the "most difficult academic areas for students to master" (Harris & Graham, 1992, p. 277). Our current understandings of writing suggest that engagement in written composition is a complex social and cognitive endeavor (Hayes, 1996). The complex nature of writing processes has profound implications for how teachers involve students in writing activity that fosters development.

Third, despite the importance of understanding how teachers involve students in writing activity in classrooms with diverse populations, few researchers have examined writing activity in these classrooms. Some researchers have investigated instructional practices and the nature of teacher-student interactions that effectively engage specific groups of students in literacy learning. Studies have focused on certain racial or ethnic groups of children (e.g. Au, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994); English language learners (e.g. Gersten & Scott, 2000); and special education students (e.g. Englert, Raphael, Fear, & Anderson, 1988; Englert, Raphael, & Mariage, 1994; Sawyer, Graham, & Harris, 1992). Certainly, these studies have informed our understandings of how educators can work to more effectively engage these students in classrooms. Based on such studies as these, researchers and educators advocate that teachers be eclectic— responsive to students needs and interests and adapt instruction and curriculum accordingly (McLaughlin, 1997). There has been little research, however, specifically focused on what teachers do to organize, manage, and encourage students' productive participation in writing activity in diverse classroom settings. This study provides an opportunity to investigate what teachers in these settings do to foster students' participation in writing activity. I specifically chose to examine teaching/learning activity in "best-case situations" (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2000) in order to illuminate the ways teachers foster students' involvement with writing tasks.

In this study I examine three particular features of how teachers fostered opportunity for student participation in writing tasks: (1) how teachers planned for and organized teaching/learning activity; (2) how writing activity was enacted in classrooms to provide learning opportunities for students to engage with concepts, skills, dispositions, and strategies fundamental to written communication; and (3) how teachers fostered students' participation in writing activity across a variety of social settings. In other words, I examined how literate activity was constructed in classrooms through interactions of teachers, students, and specific learning activities as students created written products through process writing.

I approached this study from sociocultural perspectives of human development based on the initial theories of Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1999; Wertsch, 1985). From this perspective, individual development is intimately bound up in the social context in which learning occurs. I did not choose this perspective haphazardly. Rather, the perspectives I present are enmeshed with my own understandings of teaching and learning grounded in many years of experience as a classroom teacher. I take an ecological perspective on classroom teaching and learning (Lemke, 1997; Nystrand & Graff, 2001) and assume that teachers and students actively construct literacy in classroom contexts (Myers, 1992; Nolen, 2001). Construction of writing occurs through time allotted to various writing activities, the nature of the writing activities, and social interactions that occur in writing activity. Writing activities both frame the manner in which students participate and establish the nature of the learning opportunities available for students. Two issues are important to construction of classroom writing-- the kind of learning tasks the activities promote, and students' deep involvement in these tasks in ways that foster development.

Current conceptions of writing instruction suggest that students be involved in creation of individual written products through process writing. Process writing involves a series of tasks in which the writer plans for, writes, revises, edits, and publishes a particular piece of writing. Teachers organize classroom activity so that students participate in these tasks for long periods of times during which they work independently on their pieces. Teachers work with individual students or with small groups during this time. This type of organization for teaching/learning offers challenges typical to classroom teachers: how to teach more than one learner at a time, and how to ensure that the rest of the class is productively involved when teacher attention is focused on the learning needs of only one or a few (Cambourne, 2001). In order to understand how teachers deal with these challenges to promote diverse students' participation in writing tasks, I created case studies of teaching/learning activity for each class. From these cases, I used cross-case analyses to explore the common ways in which the three teachers provided opportunities for student participation in writing activity. While, many researchers make intermittent visits to classrooms, I wanted to explore how activity was socially organized and linked as it unfolded over the course of the full writing process around one writing assignment.

Organization of the dissertation

In this dissertation I present an account of this research project and my interpretations of what I saw and heard in three elementary classrooms. I discuss the implications and limitations of these findings. In Chapter Two I review and discuss the literature pertaining to writing activity, writing instruction, and student engagement. I also outline the theoretical perspectives that undergird this study. Chapter Three is an account of my research methodology. In Chapter Four I examine how learning activity was planned for and enacted in each classroom. I then examine interactions that occurred within specific social organizations of teaching/learning activity across the three cases. Chapter Five consists first of cross-case analysis focused on how the teachers engaged students in the writing process. I then present and analyze the ways students viewed their participation in the classroom writing sessions. I discuss the conclusions, limitations, and implications of this study in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study investigated how teachers planned for and involved their diverse students in classroom writing activity. Three strands of literature were relevant to understanding the ways teachers might foster students' participation in writing tasks. First, research and theoretical positions that illuminate the nature of writing activity, writing development, and related conceptions of teacher support provide information about influences on conceptions of writing instruction. Second, studies of writing instruction provide understandings of teachers' roles in planning for and involving students in classroom writing activity. Finally, research focused on issues of student engagement in classroom activity provides insights into how teachers might foster students' participation in writing activity. After discussing the relevant studies in each of these areas, I present a theoretical framework of students' participation in classroom learning activity that serves as the foundation to this study. This model is based on sociocultural understandings of development. At the end of the chapter I list the specific research questions that guided this study.

Conceptions of writing activity, development, and teacher support

Current understandings of writing activity provide the foundation for both conceptions of writing development and teachers' roles in supporting development. Since understandings of writing activity are complex, ensuing conceptions of writing development and teacher roles are also complex and varied. These conceptions are rooted in diverse theoretical perspectives on subject matter and children's development as well as research on writing and writing development.

Conceptions of writing activity

Conceptions of the nature of writing are central to thinking about how teachers should involve students in writing activity and support their development. Current understandings do not depict writing as a singular process, but "kaleidoscopic"—involving a wide range of skills and processes, as well as a vehicle for personal expression, social communication, group membership, or all three at once depending on the author's purposes (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). Writing has also been characterized as a process from which one learns (Atwell, 1987; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Writing, as literate activity, is essentially engagement in complex conceptual, strategic, motivational, and social processes (McCarthey, Hoffman, & Galda, 1999).

People write for personal reasons and social purposes. Both purposes and forms for most writing are determined by social contexts. John Hayes (1996) contends that not only does writing serve a communicative purpose, but the products also are social artifacts for which there are inherent purposes and audiences: "Our culture provides the words, images, and forms from which we fashion text." (p. 5). According to Nigel Hall (1998), there are "*literacies* rather than *literacy* and that the use of these literacies creates engagement, involves wider networks, and is consistently related to the everyday lives of people in their communities" (p. 11, author's emphasis). In other words, according to Hall (1998), "Literacy draws its meaning and use from being situated within cultural values and practices" (p. 11).

Composing processes

Embedded in understandings of writing as complex are conceptions of the composing process. The act of composition is depicted as a complex set of cognitive and physical processes and subprocesses (Hayes, 1996; Hayes & Flower, 1980) that are mentally coordinated to complete specific writing tasks. Composing tasks include planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Each of these actions requires coordination of complex mental subprocesses. For instance, one theorized mental taxonomy for planning includes seven distinct elements (Hayes & Nash, 1996). Composing processes are connected to the immediate social and physical task environments as well (Hayes, 1996). Personal and social communicative purposes and conventions determine the forms and structures of the written pieces as products of these tasks. Writers, therefore, must coordinate strategic decision-making concerning text content, purposes and form with their composing processes. In other words, writing is considered a complex problem-solving process in which the writer orchestrates multiple demands involving various concepts, skills, and strategies. An appropriate analogy for this process might be that of the "one-man band." The musician must coordinate singing and playing of several different types of instruments as s/he plays a specific song. The musician must not only know how to play each of the instruments, but how to play them at the same time. S/he must know when each instrument is to be played during the course of the activity. The writer is engaged in a similar coordination of complex physical and mental processes during writing activity.

The complexity of the problem-solving process will obviously depend upon variations in such factors as content, genre, and purpose of the product. For example, writing a shopping list does not require the same problem-solving abilities as does composing a term paper for a college course. Writers need to utilize and coordinate far fewer conceptual and strategic tools to write a shopping list. Additionally, the reasons one writes a the shopping list are usually simple, while purposes for writing a term paper will likely include a combination of several personal and social factors. Writers bring conceptual understandings such as those to do with text and genre features, revision processes, and written formats to their writing tasks.

Furthermore, writing theorists suggest that the author's abilities, knowledge, and motivations play a significant role in how problem solving is accomplished in particular writing tasks. For instance, the ability of the writer to orchestrate various mental tasks through automated mental routines is important to successful writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes, 1996). Studies of adult composition processes also reveal that the writing process can be a recursive one as the writer interacts with the text written so far (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1991). Carl Bereiter and Marlene Scardamalia (1987) further found that problem solving in experienced writers is one of “knowledge transformation” in which the act of writing becomes a “dialectic process” between the writer’s conceptual understandings and text processing. A reciprocal transformation occurs between the writer’s domain knowledge and the text being written. Experienced writers move through the stages of the writing process to create a final product (Murray, 1982). The writer must be able to participate in several distinct problem-solving tasks to move through the stages. Planning is not the same task as revision of text. Some tasks, such as drafting, require willingness to persevere on the task. Scardamalia and Bereiter (1991) point out that, unlike other areas of expertise, expert writers spend more time at a writing task than do novices. Composing a specific piece of writing is thus an open-ended task with multiple outcomes. Outcomes will vary with the writers’ knowledge, abilities, and intentions.

Conceptions of writing development

Not surprisingly, current conceptions of writing development reflect these understandings of writing as complex social, mental, and volitional processes. Little, research, however, has investigated development of either the social or volitional aspects of writing processes. The emphasis on writing as appropriation of social genres and textual forms is relatively recent and is based on theoretical understandings of subject matter rather than on empirical studies. In contrast, researchers have focused on the mental aspects of writing. Knowledge of writing development as a complex mental process is situated in experimental studies of writing processes.

Development of social aspects of writing

For some, children’s writing development is fundamentally one of learning about and being able to use writing for various social purposes. The emphasis is on the written product as a socially designated form of communication. As Christine Pappas (1997) espouses: "Learning to read and write is learning and creating the various written genres of the culture... consequently, a curriculum must be organized to promote such literate sense-making; it must provide opportunities for students to read and write a range of written genres for a variety of meaningful purposes" (p. 287). Young children are still developing understanding and familiarity with the written discourse genres, and they need exposure to and practice writing in these genres. Writing is viewed an activity that should occur all day across the school curriculum (Pappas, Kiefer, & Levstik, 1990). There are strong indications that in our complex and diverse society, children's writing experiences are not always ends in themselves, but function as a "means to social ends" (Hall, p. 11).

Recently, ideas about text features have been added to understandings of what is important to development of these social aspects of writing. Designated as "six-trait writing," these text features are considered important to the creation of written products. The six traits of writing include: ideas (details, development, focus); organization (internal structure); voice (tone, style, purpose, audience); word choice (precise language and phrasing); sentence fluency (correctness, rhythm and cadence; and conventions (spelling, punctuation, capitalization). Six-trait writing has recently been emphasized with the emergence of content standards and statewide testing in the state of Washington. The vocabulary of six-trait writing is embedded in the Essential Academic Learning Requirements Technical Manual for teachers (1997) and district frameworks. As proponents of six-trait instruction said, " The link to instruction has become so real, so powerful, and so immediately applicable by teachers everywhere that it grows and grows every day" (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1997).

The importance of children developing ability to understand and utilize writing as an important communicative tool in our society is evident. However, little research so far has investigated how teachers plan for and instantiate these social aspects of writing in ways that foster students' appropriation of genres and text features.

Development of mental aspects of writing

Understanding the writing processes of proficient writers has greatly informed conceptions of classroom writing instruction. For example, current ideas of best practice speak of guiding children though the writing process in extended text (as opposed to filling in blanks, etc.) and establishing authentic personal/social purposes for writing, including audience awareness. As Anne Dyson and Sarah Freedman (1991) point out, however, knowledge about how adult writers compose provides an inadequate foundation for classroom writing instruction.

The complexity of writing processes and the variety of conceptual and strategic tools coordinated in writing composition pose difficulties for children (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). Children are constrained by the developing conceptual understandings and skills that they bring to the writing process (Berninger & Swanson, 1994). Virginia Berninger and Lee Swanson (1994) have found that even low-level elements of the process, such as handwriting and spelling, can interfere with composition.

In addition, the open-ended nature of the problem-solving task can also led to lack of interaction with certain processes or tools. Young children do not demonstrate the ability to interact recursively with text they have written (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have also found that knowledge transformation does not occur as children write. Instead, they believe that children engage in a different type of writing process that they call "knowledge telling." The quality of problem solving is significantly altered in knowledge telling as the writer "side-steps" some of the challenges that the writing task poses. For instance, novices may spend little effort on preplanning and organizing their ideas the way that a more experienced writer may do for similar writing tasks. Immature writing is often explained as an associative model (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) in which the topic gives a cue for the first idea. This in turn gives an idea for the second idea and so.

Thus, development of children's writing is not always a straightforward process in which appropriation of subject matter concepts and skills will occur naturally through practice. Involving children in practices demonstrated by experts, who already possess embedded automated processes, is not sufficient for learning according to Berninger and Swanson (1994). They advocate that, "Much remains to be learned about the development of writing processes—from the perspective of the developing writer rather than that of the skilled writer" (p. 80).

Conceptions of teachers' roles in supporting writing development

Due to the complexities of writing activity and development, the task of supporting students' development is complex as well (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). But since our understandings of children's writing development are limited, researchers and educators have disagreed on the amount and type of guidance teachers should provide students in process writing (Graves, 1983a). Ideas from two perspectives have been particularly influential in defining current conceptions of teachers' roles in supporting students' writing development: research on the cognitive processes of writing that I have just discussed; and sociocultural learning theories.

Conceptions based on cognitive processes research

Drawing on their research and that of others on writing processes of adults and children, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) made several recommendations for writing instruction focused on the mental aspects of the composing processes. They believe that the primary purpose of classroom writing activity should be to move students towards ability for knowledge transformation. They envision an active and didactic role for teachers to accomplish this with students. Teachers need to make students aware of the full extent of the writing process, model problem-solving and planning processes for students, and aid students in constructing challenging goals. They also suggest that teachers use "procedural facilitation" of the writing process with students. This means that teachers reduce the executive demands of writing processes by simplifying writing tasks and providing external support for students.

These recommendations are based on studies involving students in experimental, isolated situations, however. Contextual settings that might influence the both the nature of students' writing and subsequent development are not taken into consideration (Cameron, Hunt, & Linton, 1996).

Conceptions based on sociocultural learning theories

The sociocultural developmental theories of Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1999) have greatly influenced educators' ideas about the need to guide and scaffold students' involvement in writing activity. Central to the idea of instructional scaffolding is the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), (Vygotsky, 1978). The zone of proximal development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Theoretically then, writing activity should begin at each student's actual developmental level. Social support should provide students opportunity to work beyond this level. Through this support students develop new understandings and abilities to gradually move toward greater proficiency and self-regulation in writing tasks.

The move toward proficiency in writing is complex, however, because writing itself is such a complex combination of cognitive, strategic, social, and volitional processes. Catherine Cameron, Anne Hunt, and Murray Linton (1996) contend, "each subcomponent process in written expression entails its own 'zone' " (p. 144). Further, in this statement these authors simply deal with the mental processes of writing. No doubt, students have actual levels of development from which growth can occur in regards to the other aspects of writing as well. For instance, engaging students in a writing task that brings them personal satisfaction can further students' understandings of the personal rewards one finds in writing. If Cameron and her colleagues are correct in their assumptions about multiple zones of development in writing processes, then teachers not only work with many students, but each student has several different zones of proximal development as well. So, although educators may theoretically agree that students must be supported in writing activity, we have little understanding of how teachers can accomplish this complex task in actual classroom settings.

In sum, these areas of the literature demonstrate the complex mental, social, and volitional aspects of writing processes. The complexity of this activity creates difficulties for writing development. Subsequent conceptions of teachers' roles based on these findings and other theoretical positions suggest instruction that offers direct guidance and support for students. None of the recommendations are based on research in classroom settings specific to writing instruction, however. Neither do they provide guidance in how teachers might effectively organize for and implement instruction for a wide-range of students. We must also examine findings based on research on classroom writing instruction.

Classroom writing instruction

Empirical studies of classroom writing instruction have demonstrated that the manner in which teachers organize for and implement writing instruction can affect students' writing development. In an influential and complex meta-analysis of 60 studies of high school and college writing instruction, George Hillocks, Jr. (1986) investigated the effectiveness of three different "modes of instruction" on students' writing. Each study was an experimental design conducted between 1963-1982. A total of 121 experimental and control treatments were analyzed for pretest to posttest effect sizes. Hillocks identified and defined three modes of instruction.

The three modes spanned a range of approaches to writing instruction. The presentational mode was characterized by specific objectives, lecture and teacher-led discussion, study of models, specific assignment generally involving patterns just discussed, and teacher feedback on the assignment. The natural mode was characterized by generalized objectives, freewriting about what interests the student, writing for audiences of peers, feedback from peers, opportunities to revise and rewrite, and high levels of interactions among students. The teacher's role was one of facilitator. The environmental mode was characterized by specific objectives, problems selected to engage students in particular aspects of writing, and activities involving peer interactions concerning specific tasks. An important role of the teacher was to structure student activities.

Hillocks' analysis revealed that the environmental mode of instruction was most effective as measured by student gains in written essays. Hillocks suggests that the environmental mode was more effective because, " it brings teacher, student, and materials more nearly into balance and, in effect, takes advantage of all resources of the classroom" (p. 247). Both Hillocks' findings and analysis of the findings are intriguing. They suggest that teachers play an important role in student's writing development by determining both the kinds of activity students engage in and the nature of student-teacher interactions. Unfortunately, however, these studies focused on high school and college instruction. No such comparable meta-analysis of elementary writing instruction has occurred. Quite possibly, one of the other modes of instruction might prove more effective with younger children. Furthermore, student growth was determined by student products. Perhaps student products may not be as critical to development in early writing or be as strong an indicator of students' growth.

Elementary classroom research

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s much research was conducted specifically on elementary classroom writing. Many of these studies were qualitative studies conducted in classroom settings. The focus of these studies emphasized students' engagement with writing processes rather than the quality of students' products. As a result, in the last 25 years sweeping changes have occurred in understandings of elementary writing instruction. These studies suggest definite organizational and instructional approaches to elementary writing activity. The terms "process writing" and "writers' workshop" have become commonplace in educational discourse (Hoffman, 2000).

Process writing workshops

The seminal research of Donald Graves (1983b), Nancy Atwell (1987), and Lucy Calkins (1983) presented new ideas of how writing instruction could align with process writing to support developing writers. Central to their work were portrayals of writing activity that occurred in long blocks of time almost every day. Students worked independently during most of this time. They experienced and practiced each step of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, and publishing. Children were involved in making revisions and multiple drafts as an essential part of the writing process. Student autonomy and ownership were hallmarks of this instructional approach to writing instruction. Instead of assigned topics, students developed pieces based on their own ideas. In addition to independent writing time, teachers structured formalized social interactions through such things as "author's chair" and peer revision conferences. These provided students opportunities to share their writing and to receive peer feedback.

In sum, these studies depicted students in apprenticeship roles working in ways similar to expert writers (Graves & Stuart, 1985). Students were immersed in writing activity exposing them to conceptual and strategic tools central to processes of written composition.

Role of the teacher in the workshop approach to writing instruction

The focus of these studies was on students' writing development not on writing instruction per se. In fact, George Hillocks, Jr. (1986) has pointed out that in Lucy Calkins' (1983) case study of Andrea, at times Calkins attributed Andrea's growth in writing ability to developmental processes, when it could also be explained in terms of the described interactions with the teacher. Nevertheless, four roles for elementary teachers can be noted in the writer's workshop approach: organization for writing activity; instructional roles; curriculum planning, and fostering of supportive learning environments.

Organizing for writing activity. In this model, an important role of the teacher is to establish formats and routines that support student independent work through process writing. Classroom structures and arrangements are to be "deliberately kept predictable and simple" (Calkins, 1994, p. 183) so that students know what to do. Other than suggesting that teachers review the predictable structure of the writing workshop with students, just how teachers are to keep students involved during independent work times is not discussed in this literature, however.

Instructional role of teachers. The instructional role of the teacher in this model involves two modes of interaction with students. First, teachers are to offer brief whole-class "mini-lessons" on various writing concerns, share literature with students, and discuss procedural or behavioral issues in the independent work times. These mini-lessons are envisioned essentially as mini-lectures and not as classroom conversations (Calkins, 1994). One teacher saw the mini-lessons as opportunity to expose students to various writing topics: "I know these little lessons won't meet each child's needs but there're only five minute long, so I don't worry. I know they'll work for some kids, and for others they'll just be exposure" (Calkins, 1983, p. 76). Second, the bulk of teachers' interactions with students take place in writing conferences with students. Calkins (1994) states: "teacher-student and peer conferences, then, are at the heart of teaching writing. Through them students learn to interact with their own writing" (p. 223). The teacher's role in these conferences is to listen to and learn from the children. Students' interests and concerns lead the conversation. The teacher's role is a reactive one (Hillocks, 1986).

The instructional role of the teacher in the writers' workshop model varies significantly from the more active one advocated by researchers and theorists previously mentioned. However, recent research has suggested a more active instructional role on the part of teachers in writers' workshop. Jill Fitzgerald and Carol Stamm (1990) examined group revision conferences in a first-grade classroom. They found that the teacher talked about 72% of the time in these group conferences. But, this talk was also deemed purposeful by the researchers. They felt that teachers elaborated points and made statements that were likely to help students construct understandings about written composition. Student talk, on the other hand, focused on content of the written pieces. In examining her own classroom practices, Jodi Nickel (2001), found that while she served as an audience for her students in conferences, she also functioned as an "expert" by modeling and making suggestions. Even Donald Graves (1994) has commented more recently on the earlier lack of teacher support: "I think we now know better when to step in, when to teach, and when to expect more of our students.... We've learning that right from the start, teachers need to teach more (p. xvi).

Although this more recent classroom research and conceptions of writing development both suggest a more active instructional role on the part of the teacher, researchers have not investigated ways that teachers plan and organize for this instruction. Group rather than individual revision conferences have been the only organizational modification to writer's workshop investigated by researchers.

Curriculum planning. In essence, the writing process is the curriculum of the writer's workshop approach to writing instruction. The teachers' role as curriculum planner in the writer's workshop model is minimal. Students choose writing topics that interest them and motivate their writing. Students' choices of topics provide a vehicle to foster development of writing processes and their sense of self as a writer. The role of the teacher is to support students in finding appropriate topics to write on. In Calkin's (1983) work, it is notable that the student in her case study, when left to make her own decisions about topic choices, wrote continually in a personal narrative format. More recently, Calkins (1994) has talked about teachers involving students in genre study. This notion of the teacher's curricular planning role is similar to the ideas of Christine Pappas (1997) and others who suggest that teachers should plan for and implement curriculum based on understandings of the forms and features of written text as social constructs.

Fostering supportive learning environments. Recently, some discussion has emphasized the importance of establishing classroom community to support student involvement in school activity. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) advocates that encouraging a community of learners is one aspect of culturally relevant teaching. She found that in such communities children learn collaboratively and are expected to support and take responsibility for each other. Similarly, in the writers' workshop model of writing instruction, students are expected to work together through peer revision and group sharing. In the most recent edition of her book, *The Art of Teaching Writing*, Lucy Calkins (1994) writes explicitly about the importance of creating learning communities to support classroom writing.

Two recent studies discussed the active role teachers played in fostering supportive learning environments in writing. In a year-long study of writing instruction in a third-fourth grade classroom, Katherine Schultz (1998) focused on the collaborative writing that occurred in this class. She found a variety of student collaborative interactions occurred. These were supported by teacher's development of structures, routines, and understandings that supported student collaboration. Students were explicitly taught and encouraged by teachers to help each other. In a study of motivation and task structures in four kindergarten classrooms, Susan Nolen (2001) also found that teachers developed norms of social interaction in which students supported each other.

She felt that adult and peer help was enough to keep students involved during independent task times. In each these studies students were found to be enthusiastic and involved in classroom writing activity.

Establishing a classroom learning community may be difficult to accomplish, however. Timothy Lensmire (1994) discussed his research on students' learning experiences based on his efforts to institute a writing workshop in his classroom. He allowed his twenty-seven third grade students freedom of self-expression and choice of writing topics. He found that his students' self-expressions were often at the expense of classmates. Based on his findings, he advocates a critical review of student interactions in individualized writing program. Instead of individual children working on individual projects, he calls for collective writing projects that promote student engagement in pluralistic classroom communities. Unfortunately, he does not give any guidelines as to how teachers might foster such a community.

In sum, as I have mentioned, this research on process writing workshops in elementary classrooms has significantly influenced current understandings of writing instruction and the various roles of teachers. At times the nature of these teacher roles differs from those suggested in the literature on cognitive writing development, however. In particular, the instructional role of the teacher differs significantly in these two perspectives. In a classroom intervention study, a group of researchers investigated the effects of a more direct teacher role in students' writing development.

Cognitive strategy instruction

Carol Englert, Taffy Raphael, Linda Anderson, Helene Anthony, and Dannelle Stevens (1991) took a far different tack on the instructional role of teachers in their investigations of students' writing development in classroom settings. Drawing on ideas from both the cognitive research on writing processes and Vygotskian (1978) notions of the role of language in human development, they designed a complex classroom intervention focused on the instructional role of the teacher. Teaching/learning activity was very directed and structured by teachers. Englert and her colleagues implemented and evaluated the effects of Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing (CSIW) in both regular and special education classroom settings. This study included curricular materials developed by the researchers to aid students in expository writing activity. These materials included "think-sheets" designed to make the strategies, self-talk, and text structures for performing the writing process visible to students" (p. 345). Teachers were trained to lead think-aloud discussions about text features of writing sample. Teachers also modeled the writing process for the expository text structures through self-talk, planning questions, and strategies. With the teacher as facilitator, the classes constructed group papers on the text structure being discussed. The teacher introduced, modeled, and guided students' use of the think-sheets, such as the one for text planning, in this process. Students were "invited to participate" in dialogue about the writing process the group pieces were written. Sharing of strategies with peers was encouraged. Students then moved to writing their own pieces using these text structures. Teachers continued to provide direct guidance to students through modeling and feedback.

When measured against students in control classrooms, the students in intervention classrooms made considerable gains in their expository writing, particularly in their ability to organize their compositions in similar writing tasks. Students also displayed acquisition of inner language for talking about writing and writing problems. Finally, despite the controlled situation, researchers found that students in the intervention program displayed more sensitivity to their audiences and voice in their writing. They attribute this to development of students' self-regulation and classroom dialogue.

The results of this study are compelling and suggest the importance of the teachers' instructional role in students' writing development. Continued investigations of the instructional roles of classroom teachers have been limited in the last ten years, however. Instead, research on writing instruction has occurred mainly in special education classrooms.

Recent research on writing instruction in special education rooms

Recent studies on the roles teachers play in planning and establishing instructional support for students have focused on teachers who work with special education students.

In special education instructional and intervention studies, students demonstrated significant gains in writing, particularly for those children experiencing difficulty with the writing process, when teachers provided instructional guidance and structured supports for young writers, (Duke & Stewart, 1997; Englert et al, 1994; Wong, 1997). The scaffolding provided in each of the studies just cited involved combinations of instructional strategies, rather than one single intervention. Technology was used as a scaffolding device in one study with older students (Wong, 1997).

In their influential study, Carol Englert, Taffy Raphael, and Troy Mariage (1994) worked with teachers in a special education classroom to conduct a study of literacy learning of young elementary students considered to be emergent readers and writers. Samples of students' pre- and post-test writing demonstrated the impressive gains made by the students over the course of a school year. The intervention included a variety of instructional scaffolding strategies. Directed lessons dealt explicitly with the genre, topics, and skills currently being worked on by the students. This is different from mini-lessons given on general writing topics, which may or may not be relevant to students' work. One goal of the scaffolded instruction was to explicitly teach strategies for self-regulated learning to those students, who for whatever reason, are not able to acquire them on their own. Perhaps the most noticeable difference in the instruction organization in this classroom and those of the writers' workshops (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994), is that instructional activity included more whole-class interactions that allowed for group brain-storming, idea sharing, and group social support. Teachers guided planned and focused whole group dialogue. Modeling and cognitive strategy approaches such as organization maps for planning out writing were used. Students brainstormed and discussed a common topic prior to writing, rather than work individually on separate writing projects.

Drawing on their findings, Carol Englert (1994) and her colleagues, advocate that writing programs for special education students should have four underlying features: modeling of cognitive strategies through the think-aloud technique; emphasis within the context of writing papers on the writing subprocesses and steps of writing text;

development of inner speech or metacognitive skills focusing on the coordination of behavior and strategies in the planning, drafting, editing, and revising stages of writing; and placing an emphasis on what the writing strategy is and how and when the strategy should be used. Direct instructional guidance in whole class settings is considered a critical element of writing development in this approach to classroom writing instruction. In sum, the researchers conclude that teachers must, "find novel ways to permit 'performance before competence' (Cazden, 1988) by modifying literacy tasks and by providing scaffolds that would allow their students to engage in reading and writing in advance of proficient performance" (p. 7).

Although, this study did not occur in a “regular” classroom, it offers insights into how writing activity is can be organized to foster student involvement in classroom activity. Increased inclusion of special needs and linguistically diverse students in many elementary classrooms make this study particularly relevant to understandings of how teachers might foster students’ participation in writing activity. The results of this intervention are intriguing and certainly hold implications for support of students in regular classroom settings. However, we have no idea if the degree of support used for special education students is needed in with all students. Some interventions designed for special needs students have been found to be counter-productive for more capable students. Further, we are left wondering how a regular classroom teacher working with a broader range of writing capabilities might institute differentiated instruction using a more directed instructional approach to meet the needs of some students.

Section summary

In conclusion, implications from both theoretical approaches to student learning, and evidence from classroom-based research indicate the need for teachers to support students in writing activity. Teachers have several roles in planning for and implementing writing activity in the classroom. Research situated in both regular and special education classroom settings suggests the importance of the teacher’s instructional role. The findings of these studies suggest that a classroom investigation into how teachers foster students’ participation in writing activity must look beyond basic instructional organization. One must consider what occurs in the context of social/communicative interactions in the classroom and the role the teacher takes in establishing the norms of interaction and the nature of classroom activity as well.

Most of these studies were instructional or curricular interventions. Teacher roles varied across the interventions. Since, researchers' focus was on assessing aspects of the intervention, the ways in which teachers naturally planned for and fostered students' participation in writing activity were not addressed.

Fostering student engagement in classroom settings

In order to understand how teachers might foster and support students' participation in writing activity, we need to consider what is known about student engagement in learning tasks. Student engagement in classroom learning activity has long been a concern of educators. As Helen Marks (2000) states, " Engagement is an important facet of students' school experience because of its logical relationship to achievement and to optimal human development" (p. 155). Further, recent studies of classroom literacy instruction have demonstrated that students were more involved in the classrooms of effective teachers. (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Pressley, Allington, Wharton-McDonald, Morrow, Baker, Nelson, Block, Tracey, Brooks, Cronin, & Woo, 1998; Pressley, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 199).

Research has shown that students' academic achievement is related to attentiveness or participation in certain tasks or activity, based on such overt factors as "time-on-task" (Karweit, 1984, 1985). In a recent study of effective literacy instruction, Barbara Taylor and her colleagues (1999) described engagement as a combination of compliance plus student interest. They found that students were engaged often at rates of 96% of the time in the most effective classrooms, as compared to 84% for the middle group, and 61% for the least effective teachers. Since this engagement is correlated with student achievement, this study, like many others suggests that the amount of time students spend "on task" or participating in learning activity influences student achievement. Further, John Hayes and Jane Nash (1996) report that time-on-task studies in writing indicate that the quality of students' text is strongly and positively related to the time students participate in writing tasks. They advocate that when students do not spend time more time on their writing, "they will fail to face and solve the writing problems their writing assignments pose... We need to better understand how to engage student in writing tasks" (p. 53). These findings suggest that, as writing educators advocate, students need to be participating in daily writing activity with plenty of time to deal with complexities of the writing task at hand.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine if a student is participating in specific classroom activity. Martin Nystrand and Adam Gamoran (1991) argue that there are no clear behavioral manifestations of engagement since it is a "cognitive phenomenon having to do with the extent to which students are mentally involved with the issues and problems of academic study" (p. 269). A student gazing out the window may or may not be thinking about the text she is currently composing. A student who appears to be listening attentively to the teacher could be limited in understanding of spoken English and not comprehend what is being discussed. The deep mental involvement in activity that we hope occurs in classroom activity has been referred to as *substantive engagement* (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) and *cognitive engagement* (Corno & Mandinach (1983). In this type of mental participation students are involved in quality transactions with activities in ways that are transformative and affect student development.

Nystrand and Gamaron (1991) assert that deep student engagement, like other aspects of cognition, has a social foundation. Lyn Corno and Ellen Mandinach (1983) suggest that "teachers wishing to foster cognitive engagement in students will need to view motivation as... stemming from a combination of student, task, and instructional characteristics" (p. 105). In other words, involvement in classroom activity is not a due to a general intrinsic characteristic such as "motivation," but occurs through interactions of the individual with specific tasks in social contexts. Investigations of student engagement in classrooms indicate that complex interactions of many factors including the nature of the task, the student, and social interactions with teachers and students influence students' involvement in complex activity (Turner, 1995).

Interactions of students and tasks

Several factors in task-student interactions appear to influence engagement. In a study of the influences of literacy tasks on six-year olds, Julianne Turner and Scott Paris (1995) found that open-ended tasks had a strong effect on student engagement. They defined open tasks as those in which there were many correct answers. Students approached these tasks as problem-solving opportunities rather than exercises. Turner and Paris believe that the factors that motivated students' engagement with these activities were choice, challenge, control, collaboration, making meaning through reading and writing, and the feelings of competence and efficacy that followed completion of the task. Clifford (1991) also reported that tasks of moderate difficulty engaged students more than tasks that were too easy or too difficult. This finding suggests that tasks that are challenging, but not overwhelming motivated students to persevere in their problem solving.

Helen Marks (2000) surveyed 3,669 students in 24 elementary, middle, and high schools about their perceptions of their engagement in instructional activity and correlated this with achievement scores. "Authentic instructional work" in math and social studies was measured through four components: (a) you are asked interesting questions and solve new problems; (b) you dig deeply into understanding a single topic; (c) you apply the subject to problems and situations in life outside of school; (d) you discuss your ideas about the subject with the teacher or students. She found that authentic work brought about self-report of greater engagement. Marks' (2002) study revealed, however, that factors, other than the task, influenced perceptions of engagement as well. These included students' attitudes toward school and gender: girls reported more involvement in instructional activity than boys.

The nature of student involvement may also be affected by the type of mental activity inherent to the task students must accomplish. Walter Doyle (1983) distinguished four types of tasks in academic work: memory tasks, procedural or routine tasks, comprehension or understanding tasks, and opinion tasks. Students will mentally participate far differently in a writing activity that requires writing a list than one that requires a student to revise written text. Doyle asserts that tasks that are complex, such as those that require comprehension in which students are to transform previously known information, apply procedures to new problems, or draw inferences, are particularly difficult for teachers and students to accomplish well in classrooms. As writing is a complex and open-ended task, we can thus expect that engagement in writing tasks can be problematic for teachers and students. Several studies of students' writing (Casey & Hemenway, 2001; Doyle & Carter, 1984; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) indicate that teachers, students, or students in interaction with the teacher affect the task in such a way that the task demands are lessened.

Social support for involvement in activity

Support and demands from the social environment can affect the nature of student involvement in writing activities as well. Marks' (2000) study, not surprisingly, demonstrated that students reported more engagement when there was social support for learning activity. Teachers play a considerable role in determining both the nature of student activity and how students participate in this activity. They make choices about everyday tasks, they provide instruction and support for the tasks, they hold students accountable for completion of tasks, and they foster the norms for class social interactions. In a longitudinal study of how one student's ideas about writing changed from third grade to twelfth grade, Mara Casey and Stephen Hemenway (2001) found that the student engaged in writing multiple drafts in third grade, reported enjoying this process, and seeing its value. She did not create multiple drafts in later classes when teachers did not require this, however. Without social demands set by the teacher, the student did not participate in revising processes.

Teachers' abilities to foster students' "engaged time" in ways that promoted academic success were considered a major variable of teacher effectiveness studies. In their extensive review of the large body of teacher effectiveness literature, Jere Brophy and Thomas Good (1986), discussed findings that linked several teacher actions with student active participation in learning activity, most notably:

- amount of time teachers allocate for subject matter and specific learning activities
- teachers' ability to foster students' active involvement in learning over longer periods of time
- teachers' abilities to diagnose students' learning needs and provide tasks in which students enjoyed a high rate of success

While corroborated and replicated in many studies, these findings are particularly associated with the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES) (See Berliner, 1979; Brandt, 1982; Fisher & Berliner, 1985). Out of these studies come the concept of academic learning time (ALT). Academic learning time is defined as the amount of time a student spends engaged in an academic task that can be performed with high success by the student. Today we might say that ALT is the amount of time the student is engaged at the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Since we can never be sure of the nature of student engagement, the underlying the concept of ALT is the assumption that the greater time students are engaged in ALT, the greater the presumed learning (Smyth, 1985).

Findings also indicated that teachers who effectively engaged students had polite and pleasant interactions with students, gave positive academic feedback to students, but also demanded that students work hard and take responsibility for learning. These would suggest that social support of teachers coupled with student accountability is also an important factor into student engagement.

Classroom discourse and engagement

The nature of classroom communication can influence student engagement (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Nystrand & Graft, 2001; Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988). Some studies have focused on ways that teachers can engage students more actively in communicative interactions (Herrenkohl, & Guerra, 1998). Others have found that cultural differences in communication can affect students' school experiences (Heath, 1982; Philips, 1983). Still others have noted that by engaging students in communicative exchanges, teachers are able to ascertain students thinking and intentions. In their observations of effective literacy teachers, Ruth Wharton-McDonald and her colleagues (1998) noted that the most effective teachers "seemed to be able to monitor student thought processes as they taught and interceded with just enough help to facilitate learning" (p. 116).

Unlike earlier researchers (e.g. Rosenshine, 1968; Hiller et al, 1969) who focused on aspects of teacher talk as variables of teacher behavior linked to student achievement, recent researchers have looked at classroom talk as communicative interactions between teachers and students. In a study of effective instruction in fourth grader reading classes, Allington & Johnston, (2000) cited the nature of classroom talk as the most salient feature of engaging student in teaching/learning activity. They found that:

- Appropriate classroom talk was modeled and deliberately taught by teachers,
- Conversation and a good deal of talk were the norms of classroom instruction
- Teachers' talk with individual students was conversational and personal
- Classroom discussions allowed for a good deal of "tentative" talk in which students would complete someone else's idea and thus contribute to group thinking.

Nystrand & Gamoran (1991) argued that the nature of classroom talk can engage students more effectively or substantively through three types of communicative interaction-- authenticity of teacher questions, uptake, and level of evaluation. Authentic questions are those which are open-ended and do not have pre-specified answers. Uptake is a term which describes how teachers piggy-back off of and use student responses to ask another question. Level of evaluation refers to the way a teacher can validate a student answer so it affects the content and course of the discussion. Nystand and Graff (2001) also discussed how activity involving multiple actions, such as classroom conversation and subsequent student writing, can be discontinuous. In a study of classroom writing they demonstrated how the teachers' talk in a middle school undermined the way in which she wanted students to engage in the task of writing a persuasive essay.

Finally, Vygotsky's (1978) notions that language becomes internalized and that children use inner speech in problem-solving activity have influenced research on discourse in classroom settings. The work of Carol Englert and her colleagues (1991) and Monette McIver and Shelby Wolf (1999) demonstrate the role of teacher talk in influencing how students engaged in and can talk about their writing. Mary Rohrkemper (1986) conducted studies of students' problem-solving strategies in mathematics. She has suggested that inner speech be seen as the basic instructional unit in classrooms. Inner speech is seen as the tool by which students can self-regulate their interactions with tasks.

Findings from these various studies on student engagement suggest that student engagement in classroom activity is a result of complex interactions of student, task, and social contexts. They suggest that teachers' abilities to mediate students' interactions with subject matter through verbal interactions are important to student engagement with writing activity. In sum, these studies clearly suggest multiple ways that the teacher can influence student involvement with writing activity. They also raise additional questions as well. For instance, will the features of classroom talk as students engage in reading discussion be similar or different when students are involved in writing tasks? If classroom talk is important, it too is a learning task. How do teachers foster students' active participation in classroom discussion as a learning task? This would be especially important since Nystrand and Graff (2001) found that classroom discussion and writing, as two distinct tasks, were connected as they influenced students' writing development.

Theoretical perspectives

In this study teaching and learning are viewed as complexly intertwined social processes that occur in particular settings for specific purposes. Conceptualizations of teachers' work and the factors involved in effective teaching cannot be discussed in isolation from either student learning or the learning contexts of elementary classrooms. Likewise understandings of student learning cannot be divorced from the social contexts in which learning activity occurs. Few studies of students' writing development have taken a broader and more holistic theoretical perspective on classroom activity. The complexity and open-ended nature of writing activity suggest that utilizing a broader theoretical perspective may be beneficial to investigate writing instruction in classroom settings.

The theoretical perspectives that I bring to this study are situated in sociocultural learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978, 1999, Wertsch, 1985), subsequent theories of human activity and activity systems (Cole, 1996; Engestrom, 1999; Engestrom and Miettinen, 1999; Leont'ev, 1981; Wertsch, 1998), and related theories of schooling and teacher practice (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Lemke, 1990, 1997; Wells, 1999). Two main concepts of learning are fundamental to these perspectives: (1) development occurs through activity, and (2) that activity is mediated by personal, social, and physical contextual factors that affect development of the "person-in-activity" (Lemke, 1997). Essentially then, students' writing development occurs through participation in writing activity. Various factors in the classroom setting influence the manner in which students' participate in this activity.

I have organized discussion of my theoretical framework around three key interconnected points that frame this study of teaching/learning activity. First, I discuss student development as "activity" that occurs through participation in classroom learning tasks. Second, I describe these learning tasks as situated in complex social activity systems. Factors in these systems affect students' participation in the tasks. Third, I examine the critical role teachers play in establishing classroom tasks and mediating the influences on student participation in the tasks.

Productive participation in classroom learning tasks

Schooling can be thought of as activity in which students are assisted in appropriation of many of the complex tools used in our culture, such as written communication. These cultural tools are embedded in subject matter disciplines and include an array of conceptual, strategic, communicative, and material tools used within the discipline. In classroom settings children use and practice with subject matter tools by participating in actions or tasks designed for and specifically intended to provide opportunities for development of the learner's capacity to utilize the tools. Therefore, I define these tasks as learning tasks. Ideally, as students work on learning tasks, transactional processes occur between the learner and subject matter tools. These transactional processes foster increased facility with the tools and the ability of the learner to use them with increased coordination of complex mental and physical activity to serve a range of social and personal purposes. I use the word transactional rather than interactional to denote more precisely -- to use the words of Louise Rosenblatt (1995) -- "a process in which the elements are aspects or phases of a total situation. The underlying metaphor is organic, as in the ecological view of human being in a reciprocal relation with the natural environment" (p. 26).

In other words, certain learning outcomes are anticipated when learners transact with specific subject matter tools through productive participation in learning tasks. For example, consider a learning task seen in elementary classrooms--writing a thank-you letter. Accomplishing this specific task involves interactions between what the student must do physically, cognitively, socially, or strategic combinations of these in order to employ subject matter tools needed to complete the objectives of the task. To write a letter might involve physical use of material tools such as paper and pen and strategic tools embedded in a vast array of cognitive processes and sub-processes which are coordinated and automated for efficient completion of the letter writing (Hayes & Flower, 1980, Hayes, 1996). Use of social conventions and communicative forms are tools also inherent to this task. The letter is written in response to another social act, and the form of the letter may adhere strictly or loosely to social norms of letter writing depending on the social context. Through participation in this task students may develop increased automation of mental and physical processes, conceptions of letter form, understandings of certain social behaviors, or all of these.

Assigning students this learning task thus provides an opportunity for students to transact with subject matter tools in ways that promote their writing development. Essentially then, though the apparent objective of a task such as writing this thank-you letter is to create a written product, anticipated outcomes of classroom learning tasks are student constructions of mental products rather than written ones: understandings that the students can transfer and use in future tasks and different social settings. I use the word mental broadly, to refer to physical, cognitive, affective, and/or social understandings.

But, although opportunity for such development may be the purpose for assigning students specific tasks, this does not guarantee that learning will occur. Opportunities for transactions with a variety of subject matter tools may be embedded in this task, but students may not always participate in tasks in ways that enable them to take advantage of these opportunities. The learning task I just described is complex and involved. Students must utilize multiple subject matter concepts, processes, and skills to accomplish the task. Some of these may be new or unfamiliar to the students. The goals and purposes of the tasks are set by educators and may be in conflict with those of the student involved in the task. The manner in which the student participates with tools to achieve the task may be limited or rotely done without understanding. Subsequent learning outcomes may vary or not occur at all. If a letter is written, we can only be sure that the objective of the task itself, letter writing, is completed. As educators we can hope for, but we cannot assume a direct link between learners' use of the tools to meet the goals of a particular task and continued development in the use of those tools. The task thus creates only a potential site for transactions with subject matter tools to occur. Participation in learning tasks that productively fosters student development of subject matter tools will also depend on mediating factors that influence task experiences.

Mediation of participation in tasks

What persons-in-activity *do* in a task is only one aspect of what is accomplished in the completion of a task. *How* persons-in-activity participate in the learning tasks will affect the processes of doing the task, the product of the task, and experiences for the person-in-activity both during the doing of the task and after it is complete. In sum, how students experience a task may affect whether and how they use and acquire subject matter tools.

How students experience or participate in a particular task is influenced by the task contexts. Mental, emotional, social, and physical environmental factors in these contexts establish conditions that mediate students' task experiences. These conditions influence such things as where the student-in-activity focuses attention and effort in working on the task. They influence whether or not the student is capable of even accomplishing the task or if they will persevere on the task if it is either challenging or boring. Task contexts influence if and how a student will be able to later apply new understandings to novel situations.

To return to our example of writing the thank-you letter, I will suggest just a few possible scenarios of how students-in activity may experience or participate in this learning task. Students can quickly dash off one or two sentences with little thought or effort because they were told to do it or because they were unfamiliar with conceptions of audience. A student might work on the task while thinking about an argument s/he had with a friend at recess and be distracted in the process. Alternately, students might work intently, focused on creating paragraphs because it is the first time they have been asked to utilize paragraphs in forming the letter. The student can labor over handwriting and spelling rather than content because s/he believes this is important to impress or please the recipient of the note. The student may write a thank-you note with feelings ranging from joy to irritation depending on the social event which motivated the letter writing and/or other social and emotional circumstances surrounding the doing of the task. Students might consult another tool, such as a dictionary, or a person to help them complete the task. The student may also continue to engage with aspects of the task after the task is complete through reflective processes.

So, although what students may do to accomplish the same task may be somewhat similar, how they experience the tasks may vary greatly. These experiences will, in turn, affect the nature and degree of students' transactions with the subject matter tools inherent to the task. Thus, anticipated learning goals established for students can only be viewed as potential outcomes for completion of a task. If we wish to involve students in learning tasks in ways that foster development in and use of cultural tools, we must consider not just the types of tasks that we ask of students, but also the factors that mediate how students experience and participate productively in these tasks.

To establish task conditions that foster productive participation is problematic in elementary classrooms, however. In classroom settings teachers are responsible for the tasks 25-30 diverse students undertake and the task conditions that foster each students' experiences with subject matter tools. Further, the learning tasks we ask of teachers and students have become increasingly complex. For example, in writing, elementary students were once expected to accomplish worksheet tasks in which they corrected sentences that did not begin with capital letters. Expected task outcomes were singular and constrained. We now ask that students be able to use process writing to create extended text utilizing process writing across subject areas for a variety of purposes. Multiple outcomes occur in these tasks. Task conditions are affected by these and other factors in classroom settings.

Situating participation in learning tasks in an activity system

Student participation in learning tasks occurs in classroom settings that can be considered ecosocial systems (Lemke, 1997, Nystrand & Graff, 2001) or communities of practice, (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1999). Classroom settings are complex social environments or activity systems (Engestrom, 1999) that mediate the nature of student participation in the learning tasks. As Jay Lemke (1997) asserts, " Our activity, our participation, our 'cognition' is always bound up with, codependent with, the participation and activity of others..." (p. 38). Students participate in classroom activity. Individual developmental trajectories are embedded within this group activity.

In order to present conceptions of how students' task experiences and potential learning outcomes are mediated in elementary classrooms, I have drawn on work of Aleksei Leont'ev (1981), Michael Cole (1996), Gordon Wells (1999), and adapted Yrjo Engestrom's (1999) model of an activity system. Seven factors in this activity system, as depicted in Figure 1, influence how students experience learning tasks. These factors include: the student; the task; the subject matter tools needed to complete the task; the teacher; outside factors; the anticipated learning goals; and the task setting.

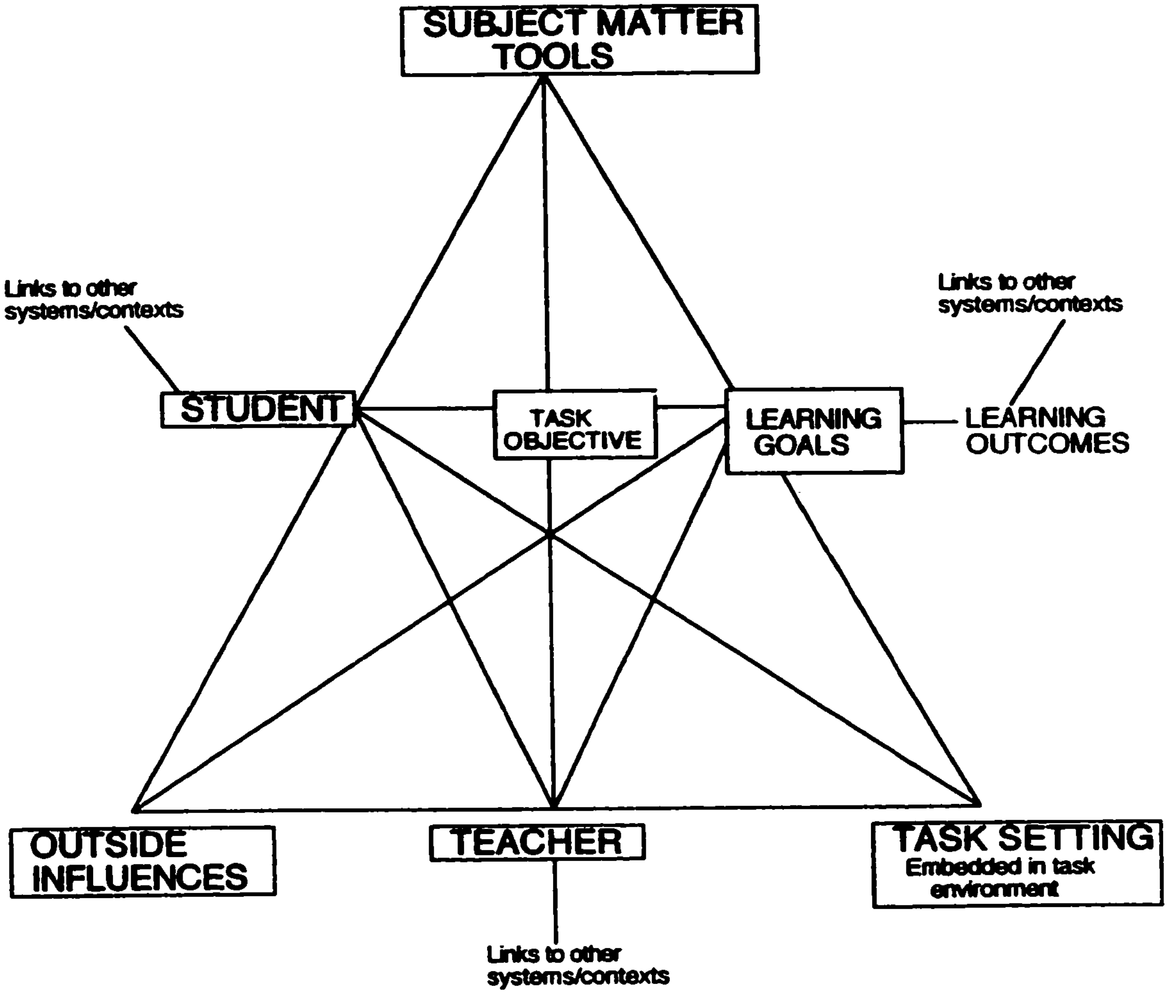

SUBJECT MATTER TOOLS
Links to other systems/contexts
STUDENT
TASK OBJECTIVE
LEARNING GOALS
LEARNING OUTCOMES
Links to other systems/contexts
OUTSIDE INFLUENCES
TEACHER
TASK SETTING
Embedded in task environment
Links to other systems/contexts

FIGURE 1: Classroom activity system.

Sets of these factors, connected by mutually mediating interactions (designated by the smaller triangles) comprise this system. Each factor adds complexity to the system not just in terms of its unique qualities, but in its combinations with other factors. For example, students' prior knowledge and dispositions toward subject matter may influence how they participate in a task. Likewise, other factors attributable to students, such as perceived social status in the classroom environment, may affect the nature and degree of student task participation as well. Mediation of students' learning experiences, therefore, lies in the complex *interactions* of these seven aspects of the system.

Learning tasks as central to both classroom activity and individual development

As you notice from the depiction of the classroom activity system in Figure 1, learning tasks lie at the center of this system as the site at which student, teacher, and cultural tools converge in a complex entanglement of teaching, learning, subject matter, and other mediating social factors. The positioning of learning tasks in this manner is purposeful and locates opportunity for learning at the intersection of classroom activity and individual development.

Classroom activity. Learning tasks are central to the way activity is structured and organized in classroom settings. Walter Doyle (1983; Doyle & Carter, 1984) has suggested that tasks create the patterns for teaching and learning in classrooms and that the inherent demands of these tasks make it necessary "to view the curriculum as a collection of academic tasks" (1983, p. 161). The term "collection" does not covey, however, a sense of the purposeful manner in which activity unfolds in the classroom through learning tasks. The task site, as a point of activity, is not a static event, but a "*moment of* action rather than as a separate process or entity that exists somehow in isolation" (Wertsch, 1998, p. 23, author's emphasis). Activity in classroom tasks develops and leads to future tasks (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2000). Thus Figure 1, while fixed, is meant to represent on-going learning tasks connected through the spaces and time of classroom life (Weade, 1992).

Individual development. Additionally, Karen Zumwalt (1992) reminds us that curriculum is fluid and "enacted" through interactions of teachers and students. Each student will participate in curricular tasks in individual ways, so that the enacted curriculum is experienced differently for each student. Therefore, although the task is a point in classroom curricular activity, it occurs as a point of activity in each student's individual development as well. When viewed from this perspective, the potential for student participation in a given task is dependent upon students' understandings constructed prior to the task. In turn, actions in current tasks create a basis for action in future tasks. Again, the fixed depiction represents how tasks sit at the center of student learning as development occurs over time.

In sum, the learning task is a point at which planned classroom learning activity intersects with each student's individual activity in ways that provide opportunity for development and growth.

Primary factors mediating task activity and engagement

Three of the seven systemic factors denote what would be considered by some to be the primary factors of the learning task, since they constitute students' basic transactions with cultural tools: the student, subject matter tools used, and the task itself. The brief descriptions below provide examples for how each of these factors can interact and affect the manner in which the student participates in the task.

Student. The student brings to the task both prior knowledge of and dispositions towards many things that influence task participation. This includes social identities and cultural background as well as attitudes towards subject matter and school in general. Students may or may not have personal skills that they bring to a task such as self-regulation. The student also brings personal goals to the task that may motivate the manner in which students participates in the task. Possibly, students' goals could be in conflict with curricular goals for the task. Further, students participate in specific tasks within particular personal states that might influence the students' participation-- such as hunger, tiredness, expectations, or anger. Each of these factors affect task conditions by influencing such things as: the nature and degree of students' focus on the task; students' willingness or ability to persevere on complex work; students' willingness or ability to bring into play factors/tools that may make the work more challenging.

Subject matter tools. The subject matter tools used can significantly alter students' transactions with task processes and products in any subject area. In writing, something as simple as understanding that revision is a strategy used in writing processes can alter the way the student participates in a specific writing task. Subject matter tools that affect how students participate in a writing task can be described as: conceptual and strategic tools relating to writing processes, text features, writing conventions, genre features and purposes; skills and strategies that the student can bring to bear on written composition; and understandings of writing as socially and personally meaningful. Each of these factors can influence the manner in which students are involved in written composition. Similarly, physical tools can also influence students' task experiences. Use of a computer instead of pencil and paper may alter the experience for a child in various ways. Ability to use a dictionary or thesaurus may affect how a student undertakes a given task.

Nature of task. The nature of the task can affect student productive participation with subject matter tools in several ways. First, varying task requirements call into play different cognitive operations embedded in the work (Doyle, 1983). One task may call simply for student recall of information or procedures, while another may require that students participate in complex problem-solving processes that place demands on students for greater substantive engagement (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) or cognitive engagement (Corno & Mandinach,1983). Tasks also place physical and social/ communicative demands on children in strategic combinations with each other and with cognitive demands as well. Simply sitting at a desk writing in a notebook places multiple demands on children. We cannot assume automated physical and social routines in young children. The nature of the task requirements also will determine whether or not the use of cultural tools can occur within the learners' zones of proximal development.

Further, the nature of the task can affect students' motivation to participate in the task. For example, the task can be challenging and novel in ways that interest students. On the other hand, more complex tasks can contribute to students' frustration or sense of risk (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2000). Participation in task activity can be aesthetically, and/or emotionally rewarding for individuals. This can occur both during the task and after it in ways that foster continued participation in the task or similar tasks. Task can also be purposeful in both social and personal ways that might motivate the person-in-activity to continue with the task. For instance, a student may be motivated to focus more on creating a well-crafted and neatly written letter that is actually going to be sent to someone.

Interactions of these three factors, students, tasks, and subject matter tools, represent the site within the system at which opportunity for learning occurs. Learning does not occur in a vacuum, however, but in concert with social factors in the system.

Social factors designate the content and tools used in learning tasks. Social contexts support students' opportunities for participation in learning tasks. Learning outcomes are attributable to the complete system.

Other four factors of the system

The other four factors of the activity system: teachers; anticipated learning outcomes; outside influences such as such as adopted curriculum and state standards; and task settings, including both the broader classroom environment and the immediate task setting, represent the social contexts that affect students' opportunities for learning. These factors influence the kinds of tasks students are expected to accomplish and the subject matter tools embedded in these tasks. These four factors also contribute to learning contexts that influence and support students' participation in learning tasks. Of these, the teacher plays the greatest role in affecting students' participation with subject matter tools in the context of classroom tasks.

Role of the teacher in classroom activity system

Supporting students' productive participation in learning tasks within classrooms is a social enterprise. Learning and teaching are complexly intertwined social/ communicative processes involving teachers and students in a common activity—student appropriation of subject matter tools through participation in learning tasks. Teachers and students are involved in mutual and reciprocal activity in learning tasks, even if their roles or types of involvement with the tasks differ. The term "instruction," usually used to denote how teachers plan for and engage students in classroom activity, does not convey the idea of this mutual involvement in learning tasks. The term conveys only the sense of active involvement on the part of the teacher. When teachers are "instructing," however, there are definite and implied expectations for how students are to actively participate as well. Even when teachers are simply talking, listening is an important form of active participation in learning tasks. I use the term "teaching/ learning activity" (Cambourne, 2001) frequently to portray the mutual interactions and "con-struction" that occur in classroom activity. My use of the word instruction implies this broader connotation of student co-participation in the activity as well.

Since teaching/learning activity is a social enterprise, each factor of the activity system is filtered through the people involved in immediate action together--teachers and students (Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball, 2000). Teachers, in the role of the more culturally competent other and the person granted authority and decision-making power in classroom situations, exert considerable influence on student involvement in learning tasks. Teachers influence student participation in learning tasks in four main ways.

First, teachers plan the content of learning tasks and therefore influence students' opportunities to transact with certain subject matter tools. Although outside factors such as curriculum, state/district standards, school programs and schedules influence how teachers plan for and establish learning activities for students, teachers make day-to-day decisions about learning tasks. Even when teachers use a mandated or adopted reading curriculum, they decide what selections will be read, what occurs during pre-reading lessons, and what the follow-up activities students will do. Teachers also make decisions about companion curriculum such as whether or not students also have access to choice reading.

Second, planning and organizing teaching/learning activity is another teacher responsibility. Teachers must organize learning tasks for groups of students in ways that provide support for individuals as well. At times simultaneous activity occurs in classrooms. Teachers need to ensure that the rest of the class is productively engaged while their attention is with one student or a small group (Cambourne, 2001). Students need to know what to do on independent work on tasks. Ronald Marx and John Walsh (1988) suggest that when teachers do not make task objects clear to students, tasks can be unfocused and promote differences in the cognitive operations used by students.

Third, teachers shape and manage the nature and formats of communicative interactions that support and occur in learning tasks. Teachers develop classroom norms and standards with their students that support students' participation in classroom activity. They also must plan and establish the social settings of a particular task. For instance, teachers decide on the nature and degree of classroom conversation in a prewriting discussion. Whether the task provides students with opportunities to revise written pieces independently, with a partner, or in a small group is also an example of how teachers influence social settings of the task.

Fourth, teachers also promote both students' active and productive participation in learning tasks. Teachers must know their students in order to provide relevant and appropriate learning tasks that encourage their active participation. As participants in the classroom activity system, students bring intentional action to the system. A student may intentionally choose to invest little effort in tasks that are challenging and require perseverance, for instance. If teachers are to counteract these hindrances to participation in learning tasks, they must consider how to interest students in tasks and how to hold them accountable for participation in these tasks. Additionally, teachers must know how to foster students' participation in ways that optimizes opportunity for use of and appropriation of the specific subject matter tools.

In sum, teachers play critical and multiple roles in planning for and establishing both tasks and that task conditions that can foster students' transactions with subject matter tools.

The discussion in this section has highlighted the theoretical perspectives that I bring to this study: student development occurs through participation in learning tasks in which students transact with subject matter tools; student participation in learning tasks occurs in a complex social activity system; and teachers play a critical role in planning for and establishing teaching/learning activity in classrooms that can foster students' active and productive participation in learning tasks.

Conclusion and questions

The literature delineating understandings of the complexity of writing activity, writing development, and teachers' roles in writing instruction contribute to the questions I formulated for this study. Likewise, theoretical perspectives related to student development, classrooms as complex social environments, and the critical role the teacher plays in planning for and involving students in learning tasks have influenced my question as well. Therefore, the guiding question and subquestions I bring to this investigation read:

> How do teachers encourage students' active participation in writing tasks that foster learning of skills, strategies, and dispositions fundamental to written communication?

1. In what ways do teachers plan for students' participation in writing activity?
    How do teachers plan for and develop teaching/learning activities?
    How do teachers understand and plan for students' participation in writing as complex social, mental, volitional, and strategic processes?
2. What is the role of teachers in fostering students' productive participation in classroom writing activity?
    What tasks were students asked to do?
    How were these tasks related to each other?
    How did teachers use social organization and interactions to support students' participation in writing tasks?

When viewed from the perspective of the classroom as a complex social activity system, teaching is seen as complex orchestration and coordination of various aspects of the system that mediate children's learning. As the juncture of learning, teaching, and subject matter, learning tasks are a crucial point at which to examine connections of teaching and learning in classroom situations and the ways in which teachers effectively coordinate aspects of the activity system to support student learning. I propose that utilizing the "learning task" as the unit of analysis in my study, is a good vantage point from which to view the ways in which teachers plan for and establish classroom learning events. Additionally, as I am interested in how teachers cope with increasing diversity of their students, this study investigated the research questions in classrooms with diverse student populations. In the next chapter I give a detailed account of the research methodology I used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study I examined interactions of teachers, students, and subject matter over the course of one writing task in three elementary classrooms. The intent of this investigation was to look for and understand patterns within complexly interwoven variables observed in these naturalistic settings (Glesne, 1999). To do this I chose a qualitative research design, strategically positioning myself (Wolcott, 1992) in what has variously been termed a constructivist-interpretative, interpretive, ethnographic, or classroom ecology paradigms or modes of inquiry (e.g. Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Erickson, 1986; Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shulman, 1986; Wolcott, 1992). I used a variety of data sources gathered with different strategies within this qualitative mode in order to investigate educational processes from two perspectives: (1) the fine details of social interactions involved with teaching and learning writing in specific classroom settings, and (2) the nature and content of the meaning teachers and learners both bring to and take from these interactions.

In order to combine the data in systematic and rigorous ways I created interim case studies for each of the classrooms. A case study approach was appropriate because the investigation took place in a real-life context, distinctions between educational processes and context were not obvious, and multiple data sources were needed to address the questions I posed (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1984). In cross-case analyses I focused on teaching/learning patterns within each case to understand how teachers across the three cases planned for and established writing activities.

The teachers

Since this investigation focused on issues of effective teacher practices within a specific subject matter area, I utilized purposeful sampling (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994) as a means to identify teachers who were strong writing teachers in urban settings.

Selection processes

For this study I selected three teachers from a pool of 18 nominated as effective writing teachers in settings with economically, racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. The nominations came from school district language arts coordinators and directors of professional development programs in writing. I gave each nominator a list of selection criteria. (See Appendix A.) The criteria were varied. Some characteristics identified in previous studies of effective literacy instruction, such as high incidence of student engagement, were included. The criteria also asked the nominators to consider factors to do with ideas of "best practice" in literacy teaching and learning derived from research (Gambrell, Morrow, Neuman, & Pressley, 1999) and state standards for writing. I had hoped student test scores could be used by nominators to help identify effective teachers, but this proved difficult. The nominators had either little or no access to test scores.

Once I had the list of possible participants in hand, I called teachers and observed in classrooms. Issues of access and project constraints arose immediately as my project would intrude into the classroom and demand much teacher time. Several nominees said that they could not be involved due to lack of time. Three fourth-grade teachers were interested, but unable to participate in the available time frame due to state assessments. After observing and talking with two of the teachers, I decided that they did not meet my criteria. Students did not appear as involved in writing activity as I wished in one class. I had reservations about the subject matter knowledge of the other teacher.

I also called principals of nominated teachers and explained that some teachers in their school had been nominated as effective writing teachers for my project. I then asked them to give me the names of teachers within a certain grade range (e.g. 3rd-5th) that they felt were strong writing teachers. Nominations of teachers were thus corroborated independently.

Three strong and experienced teachers agreed to participate in my study. Each of the three participants selected was the first teacher mentioned by principals. Additionally, other teachers, staff members, or parents in the schools gave me unsolicited commendations for each of the three. Despite the demands this project would place on them, all three participants gave positive reasons for why they wished to be involved. These reasons included benefits to their development and that of their students. One participant especially appreciated the opportunity her students would have to talk metacognitively about their writing and thinking.

The participants

The three teachers who participated in this project, Alan Legere, Diane Albright, and Gwen Wilcox, were currently teaching either third or fourth grade. Each contributed to the selection of her/his pseudonym. As partial return for teachers' participation, I gave each teacher a $50 gift certificate to a bookstore. Over the course of my stay in each classroom, I acknowledged my appreciation of the teachers with flowers, treats, and cards. I contributed in each classroom by assisting students with their work, copying papers, helping on field trips, and organizing materials for teachers.

There were a number of similarities and differences between them as shown in below. These teachers worked at different schools in two different school districts in the Puget Sound metropolitan area of Washington State. Two of the teachers were women,

Table 1: Characteristics of the teachers

	Alan Legere	Diane Albright	Gwen Wilcox
Years experience	10	10	24
Grade level	4	3	4
Professional Development	Journalism major, writing prof. dev. with consortium, science writing leader	Multiple books, workshops, discussion of writing w/other writing, teachers, lead writing workshop for district	Work with NW Regional Lab writing writers' group, state Teacher on Special Assignment in Writing for district

one was a man. All three were European American. Their teaching experience ranged from 10 to 24 years.

The three teachers were all originally nominated by different people. Therefore, no single perspective of what constitutes effective teaching or writing instruction was represented in this teacher sample. Differences in their teaching situations and how Alan, Gwen, and Diane managed and organized their classrooms were immediately apparent. For example, Diane taught in an open-classroom setting where the buzz of people's voices was most always noticeable. Student conversations were a constant undercurrent to their independent work times. Gwen's class was self-contained and writing time was quiet much of the time. Conversations were whispered. Student involvement was most readily discernible through observation rather than listening. A student might gaze momentarily out the window as if in thought and then return to writing words on a piece of paper.

Alan, Diane, and Gwen were all experienced teachers in diverse urban settings. They took delight in the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of their students. As Diane commented of her students, "It's a rich gene pool…many cultures represented, and I really like that." Each was committed to meeting the needs of all their students and appeared to include culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1994) content and processes in their classrooms. For example, Diane used the book *Save My Rainforest* (Zak, 1992) in the observed lessons because the main character is a young Mexican boy. Diane has several Latino students in her class. When I questioned Alan about one way he elicited students' participation in classroom conversations, he referred to it as a type of "call and response," a communicative form used in some African American churches. He commented that he used it specifically because of the African American students he taught.

Extensive professional development, background in writing, and commitment to their own lifelong learning were also factors these three teachers had in common. Alan was a journalism major in college. He served as the school leader for a district science writing program. He was involved in a professional development program on writing instruction associated with the consortium of local schools to which his school belonged. The first week I was there several of his students, along with students from the other consortium schools, presented their written pieces at an evening event for family and community members. Alan is currently teaching in another country as a way to continue his own professional and personal growth.

Diane had attended many workshops and read a good deal about writing and writing instruction. She had conducted a workshop on writing for her school district. She was involved with a group of teachers who meet to read and discuss student writing through her school's participation in a consortium. At the time of the study Diane was taking a college course on scientific inquiry with a focus on physics.

Early in her career Gwen was involved with the writing programs coming out of the Northwest Regional Learning Lab. At that time she was at a previous school in which she had taught for 16 years. More than 90% of her students were on free lunch, and one year, students in her class spoke 17 different languages. Gwen recounted that when she first considered the idea of teaching process writing, colleagues told her that the students in the school "could never learn that." She persisted anyway. Of this experience, she commented that, "Pretty soon my kids were writing things that nobody thought the Rock Hill kids could ever do." Gwen worked for the state as a consultant on writing instruction and served for a year in her school district as Teacher on Special Assignment in writing. She continues to be involved in a writing support group and is currently working on her third Master's degree--in marine biology.

As you can imagine, the writing programs in these classrooms were varied and multifaceted. The three teachers had their students write for multiple purposes and across the curriculum. Children's writing graced the classroom walls. Their writings were situated along side of commercial and teacher-made charts delineating writing traits or the stages of the writing process. Gwen's self-made chart on writing process took up about half of one wall. Alan consistently sat down and wrote along with his students during Silent Sustained Writing. Children had writing folders, journals, and portfolios in each classroom.

The students

The students in Alan, Diane, and Gwen's classroom were racially and ethnically diverse and varied in number from 24 –30. (See Table 2 below.) The number of students from low-income households, as measured by numbers of students on free and reduced lunch, ranged from 70% to 47%. Despite the high number of children on free/reduced lunch, the economic range within each of these classrooms varied widely. This economic diversity was an important consideration to Diane and Gwen, in particular. For example, Diane had students who went to Hawaii for spring break and others who rarely had the opportunity to leave their immediate neighborhoods. Experiential understandings that students brought to certain topics of conversation were quite varied therefore. Gwen felt it had been far easier to teach in her previous school where economic poverty was an experience shared by all the students, not just some of them.

TABLE 2: Characteristics of students in the classrooms

	Alan	Diane	Gwen
Number of students	28	30	24
Racial/ethnic make-up of classes by number of students	13 African American 12 Asian American 2 European Amer. 1 Middle Eastern American	13 Asian Americans 9 European Amer. 5 Latino 3 African American	17 European Amer. 5 African American 1 Native American 1 Asian American
Economic diversity	70% F/R lunch	55% F/R lunch	47% F/R lunch
Other student characteristics	10 ELL students 2 SPED students	16 ELL students 4 SPED Students	1 ELL student 5 SPED students

Note: F/R = free/reduced lunch.
ELL= English language learner. I use this term to identify students whose native language was not English and this language was spoken in their homes.
SPED = Special Education. Literacy instruction for these students occurred in part in resource rooms.

Linguistic diversity was also a prominent factor in Diane and Alan's classes. More than half of Diane's students spoke a language other than English in their homes. Several of these students had been retained one year in school. English language tutors came into both Diane and Alan's classes, and a few students left the classroom for English language learning sessions.

Students in each classroom also varied in their academic ability. Two students in Alan's class, four in Diane's, and five in Gwen's had formal Independent Educational Programs (IEP's) and were pulled out to attend classes in special education resource rooms. All of these students participated in the writing sessions and completed final products. But, in Gwen and Diane's classes these students missed several writing sessions when they were out of the room.

Participants

Ten students from Alan's class, 24 from Diane's class, and 20 students from Gwen's class participated in some way in the project. The low number of students in Alan's class reflects issues of access and my novice efforts to obtain parental consent. In the other two classrooms I included the teachers in a far more proactive role in gaining parents' understanding of the project.

Students eagerly entered into this project as co-researchers. They each selected their own pseudonyms. We did a little negotiating in some cases. For example, I have permission to shorten Ulaylahepzabah to Ulayla for writing purposes. Some students took this naming task quite seriously. One student altered his name twice. He started out with "Shakespeare," changed it to "Langston" (Hughes), before finally deciding on "Buddy."

I gave each participating student a thank-you card, stickers, and a pencil to show them my appreciation for their involvement in the project. I also provided drinks and treats for all the students in each class.

Target students

With the help of teachers I chose six target students from each class: two proficient writers, two developing writers, and two beginning writers. The designations came from state and district terms for writing development. In two of the classrooms I also identified two emergent writers from among the participants. In all cases, however, data are limited for these students because they were out of the classroom for much of the time. Target students were also selected to represent the various types of diversities within the classrooms. In Table 3 various characteristics of the target students are listed. Across the three classrooms ten target students were boys and eight were girls. Five students each were Asian American, African American, and European American, two were Latino, and one was of Middle Eastern ancestry. The target students represent the range of economic diversity in each classroom, and over half of them received free/reduced lunch. Seven of the target students were English language learners and spoke another language in their homes. These students' proficiency with English varied greatly. Only Adrian had an ELL tutor in the classroom and would code switch verbally as well as in his writing. Christina, who appeared very proficient in English, reported that she sometimes asked her tablemates for help with English words. The target students also

TABLE 3: Characteristics of target students

	Teacher		
	Alan	Diane	Gwen
Beginning writers	**Angel**- Asian Am./G ELL	**Adrian**- Latino/B ELL/R	**Jessie**- Eur. Am./G
	Junior– Asian Am./B ELL/R	**Justin**- Asian Am./B	**Cameron**- Afr. Am/ B/R
Developing writers	**Sherry Ann**- Middle Eastern Am./G	**Christina**- Latino/G ELL	**Ulayla**- Eur. Am./G
	Ron- African Am. /B	**Deion**- Afr. Am./B	**Ian**- Eur. Am./B/R
Proficient writers	**Angelique**- African Am./G	**Amara**- Asian Am./G ELL	**Angel**- Asian Am. /G ELL
	Jacob- African Am./B	**Jesse**- Eur. Am./B R	**Kevin**- Eur. Am. /B

Note: G= girl, B= boy, ELL= English language learner, R= reluctant writer varied in their dispositions to writing. Some students identified writing as one of their favorite subjects while others said they did not like to write. The teachers identified five of the target students as reluctant writers.

Task settings

When I explained this project to teachers, I asked to observe one writing assignment that engaged students in process writing. In each classroom this task took place over several days and varied from nine to sixteen days as displayed in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Classroom time spent in writing unit

Classroom	Time Spent
Alan	9 sessions/9 days 30-70 minute sessions Average session 50 minutes
Diane	12 sessions/9 days 20-95 minute sessions Average session 55 minutes
Gwen	24 sessions/16 days 8 days/10 sessions for individual product 8 days/14 session for group product 30-105 minute session Average session 48 minutes

Writing sessions occurred daily in each classroom and twice daily on some days in Gwen and Diane's classrooms. The twice-daily sessions were not typical, but also not novel. Each teacher adjusted their daily schedule in response to other factors. In Gwen's case the students spent the most part of several days preparing their writing, art, and dance presentations for a school-wide learning celebration to which parents and community were invited.

Sessions varied in length and averaged right around 50 minutes for each teacher. Students completed a final written product in each of the classrooms. Students in Gwen's class completed two products. They spent the first eight days working on an individual product and then worked in groups to create another product in the same form. Time in Gwen's class was also spent on class presentation and practice for the celebration presentations. In addition, in one session students were involved in directed self-assessment of their work in this unit.

Task histories

I started classroom observations in mid-March in Alan's class and did not finish in Gwen's class until early June. In each class, therefore, classroom expectations and norms of interaction were well established. Gwen had taught two-thirds of her class for almost two years. Students in all three classrooms had been engaged in a variety of writing activities throughout the year. All of them had written for a variety of purposes and been asked to work through the writing process. Gwen said her students had written fifteen different pieces at least to the point of revision.

All the students were at least exposed to the general "traits" of writing. A six-trait writing chart was on the wall in each class. Teachers and students used the vocabulary of the traits in their conversation. Students in Diane's class had reference sheets defining the six traits in their writing folders. Teachers had also taught specific lessons on writing. For example, Alan did a lesson focused on writing good "leads." Gwen mentioned teaching a lesson on "showing not telling" earlier in the year. Students talked about what they had learned earlier in the year. They mentioned such things as knowing what a paragraph is and the need to put in lots of details.

Data Sources

In order to investigate complex interactions of teacher, students, and subject matter in these three classrooms, I utilized multiple data sources in this study. These data fell into three major categories: experiencing activity through observation, inquiring or interviewing of participants, and examining relevant documents (Wolcott, 1992).

Observation

I spent a week in each classroom before the class began work on the writing assignment, and was quickly drawn into the role of "observer as participant" (Glesne, 1999) in each classroom. I helped students with their math work, organized and monitored student's use of science equipment, graded papers, ate lunch with the students, attended school assemblies, and went on a field trip with each classroom. During this time my interactions with teachers and students were mostly informal as we were coming to know each other better. I wrote notes and memos to myself in my project journal. I kept extensive field notes at times when I was not involved with the students. I took particularly thorough notes during Gwen's math time. Students were asked to write a letter to Gwen and the school staff about their recent experiences with the state standardized testing. The sequence and nature of writing activity were similar to the videotaped writing assignment in her class and provided data for purposes of triangulation across writing tasks within one classroom.

I videotaped classroom proceedings throughout the entire writing assignment in each classroom. These data served as the foundation of my observational data and provided a dense record (Grimshaw, 1982) of classroom interactions that I would be able to return to again and again. I used one camera that I could move around the room in order to capture teachers' individual interactions with students during work times. Teachers wore a lapel mike that could also pick up student voices, even from across the room at times. Most of the time the camera was focused on the teacher and nearby students. But at certain times I panned out to the whole classroom or focused on specific students. I also kept notes while I was filming in order to record off-camera events or student talk that I thought might not come through on the videotape. These notes were not as extensive as field notes, but I referred to them as I transcribed the tapes. Several times these notes provided words spoken by students not clearly audible on the tape.

Interviews with teacher

I conducted three semi-structured interviews with teachers. (See protocols for teacher interviews in Appendices B, C, and D.) These interviews lasted from 45-60 minutes or more. In the first interview teachers were asked about their own learning and background as writers and writing teachers, beliefs about purposes for education and writing, and beliefs about children as learners and writers. This provided evidence of the complex conceptions these teachers brought to their classroom practices and gave me insights into the decisions the teachers made during classroom interactions.

Teachers were also interviewed before the writing unit began and again at the end of it to debrief the unit as a whole. In the first two interviews I asked teachers such things about the writing assignment as: the kinds of previous classroom learning experiences that students brought to the task, the nature and purpose of the writing task, and plans for the intended sequence of activities. In the last interview teachers discussed the writing unit as a whole, the specific activities, and the processes and products of specific students. Additionally, I debriefed the daily writing sessions with teachers for 10-20 minutes most days. (See debriefing protocol, Appendix E.) The interviews and debriefings provided a substantial set of data from which I could ascertain teachers' planning for, assessments of, and perspectives on the unfolding classroom events. These data contained teachers' discussions of both their broad understandings of classroom events and those specific to certain students or situations. All interviews and debriefing were audiotaped and transcribed.

Through these interviews and debriefings, the three teachers played important "collaborative roles" (Glesne, 1999) in my project. Their voices, thinking, and understandings were critical to the thinking and interpretations I brought to the process of analyzing how these teachers engaged their students in writing tasks. At times the interviews and debriefings became teacher-to-teacher conversations about students, writing, and writing instruction. This was particularly true in my interviews with Diane. Alan, Diane, and Gwen also read and commented on descriptive interim case studies and analytic memos I prepared. This process of member check (Glesne, 1999) served to corroborate information and the interpretations I made in constructing the case studies.

Because teachers' intentions and ideas of how they fostered students' participation in classroom events are important to this study, I had hoped to have teachers view videotaped segments of lessons in a systematic way. This proved to be logistically impossible in the time frame set for this project. As a result, viewing of and responding to videodata was minimal and not systematic. However, during the transcription of the videotapes I found that I had few questions that were not addressed by teachers during the debriefings and final interview.

Student logs and interviews

Students' perceptions about themselves as writers and learners, about their engagement, and about the specific tasks and their involvement in these tasks were critical to this investigation of how teachers fostered students' participation in writing tasks. Students' ideas were recorded in two different ways: through student report in research logs and through audiotaped interviews/debriefings.

Student research logs. Nine students in Alan's class, 20 in Diane's, and 19 in Gwen's class kept research logs. (See Appendix F). Target students in Alan and Diane's classes made 5-8 log entries: those in Gwen's class made entries 12-16 times. The number of entries was affected by student absences. For each log entry students had to mark their perceived degree of involvement on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "not at all involved" and 5 being "very involved." Students also wrote down in each log entry what they were thinking about and how they were feeling. Students were told that they could write "private" if they wished to, although few students did this.

Research logs were used to capture students' perceptions of their involvement while they were engaged in activity. Log entries were usually made once a day, but this was not possible when the sessions were short. I purposefully sampled students' involvement across the various types of activities such as: teacher guided discussions; independent writing times; and partner and small group work. I tried to vary when I asked students to do log entries, alternating between asking them in the middle of or at the end of a particular activity. I also specifically targeted groups of students when they appeared to be either very involved or not in tasks in order to make links between outside observation and students' perceptions of their involvement.

Interviews/debriefings. Perhaps the biggest change to the original research design had to do with the interview processes and protocols for students. As I gained experience across the study, I found ways to refine and redefine the interviews in ways that allowed me to be more effective in my questioning. I found I needed to begin by conducting initial interviews in the first week I was in the classroom. (See Appendix G.) These initial interviews served three purposes. First, they provided an opportunity for students to become comfortable with the tape recorders and me in the interviewing process. Students usually ran one tape recorder and they were told they could ask me questions as well. Second, the questions focused on the students' interests, dispositions for writing, and their perceptions of themselves as writers. This helped me link student perceptions with their actions in the classroom. Third, I was able to ascertain which students were more comfortable talking in the interviews. Even though some students begged me to interview them, they were sometimes shy in the actual interviews. Because of my concern for the power differential in these interviews, I explicitly told students that if they could not answer a question, that it was okay to say, "I don't know." Some of the final decisions I made regarding target students were based on students' degrees of comfort and ability to answer questions. Initial interviews ranged from 5 to 10 minutes.

Interviews conducted during the writing unit were debriefings specific to the day's writing session(s). These interviews were 5 to 10 minutes in length. I also conducted exit interviews with students. These lasted for 10 to 20 minutes. They were slightly adapted at each school to fit the particular writing unit. (See Appendices H and I to see the debriefing and final interview protocols.) In these interviews, students talked about their engagement in the writing unit as a whole and what had been particularly easy or difficult for them. I also asked them questions about written work they had done during the unit and about their final products. Students also discussed their research logs. They explained their log ratings and comments. For example, they explained what it means and what they are doing when they are very involved in a task (a 5 on the scale) as compared to when they are not so involved (a 3 on the scale).

Due to students' enthusiasm and desire to participate, I also had to find ways to be more efficient. I interviewed all participating students at least once, and mostly twice, in each classroom. But I focused on target students. I tried to interview them on a regular and systematic basis. I aimed to interview at least one beginning, one developing, and one proficient writer after each writing session. I also intentionally interviewed target students when their actions in a particular classroom event warranted further investigation. These differences did not go unnoticed by the students. When I asked a target student in Alan's class to come for his second interview, a student sitting nearby who had not been interviewed yet commented, "That is cold."

Target students in Diane and Alan's classes were interviewed between 3-5 five times. Since I was in Gwen's class for a longer period of time, I was able to interview target students between 4-7 times. Student absences, suspensions, and pullout programs account for fewer interviews in most instances. Sometimes students did not want to be interviewed at the time made available to me by the teachers. One student in particular did not want to give up his silent reading time. While as a researcher I worried about thorough data, as a teacher I exulted in the fact that the student wanted to read. The interviews with target students were also more thorough and took longer. I adhered to interview protocols with the target students.

The data from both verbal and written student responses yielded rich understandings of students' perceptions of their participation in various classroom activities, what got them involved, and what kept them involved and persisting over the course of difficult and complex tasks.

Documents

I gathered all documents to do with planning, enactment, and assessment of the writing tasks. This included pages from writing textbooks, overheads, and charts developed during the lesson. Some of the documents are preserved on videotape. I also copied rubrics and other papers given to students earlier in the year that I found in their writing portfolios. I made random copies of target students' entries in their writing journals to document prior written work for the school year. Work from all from the participating students done during these writing sessions was copied. Student work was used in both teacher and student interviews and served as focuses for specific questions I asked. I also used student products in order to examine if their work reflected engagement with the key aspects of writing lessons. Products served as representations of student involvement with subject matter learning as it linked to the teaching observed in the classrooms.

Data analysis

In keeping with interpretive and ethnographic traditions, data analysis was an iterative process that began when I entered Alan's classroom to observe for the first time. I used writing to record impressions and thoughts and also to push my thinking and understandings about how students engaged in classroom activity. I jotted down notes and questions on my field observations. I kept a research journal, wrote summaries and analytic memos of the writing sessions in the three classes. The bulk of data analysis occurred during an eight-month period when I prepared the various data sources for analysis and created extensive interim case summaries for each classroom task. I will first give an overview of how I organized these cases. Next, I will provide the details of how I prepared and analyzed the data for inclusion in the case summaries. Then I will discuss how used these cases for cross-case analysis.

Case summaries

The purpose for creating case summaries was to reduce extensive amounts of data and to coordinate the various data sources in ways that would allow me to make sense of what occurred during these classroom tasks. I utilized a temporal approach to create the cases. By summarizing interview data I first created portraits of the teacher, the class, individual students, the task history, and task planning. In this way I was able to develop multidimensional understandings of the contexts in which the writing task took place and the people who were involved in this task.

The unfolding of the task unit as captured on videotape was the next section of my case summaries and the main focus on my analysis. In order to consider how the units occurred over time, I considered and analyzed the videotaped sessions from two perspectives. In the first perspective I looked *across* the unit lesson by lesson to examine its components and how they fit together to make the unit a whole. For the second perspective I looked closely in a microanalytic manner *within* to find the social/communicative patterns inherent to learning and teaching in each classroom. Metaphorically speaking, analysis was thus a process of unraveling both the warp and woof of the fabric of classroom life contained within one learning task in order to understand how it all fit together in ways that fostered students' participation in creating a written product. Data from teacher/student debriefings and student logs were added to the accounts of what occurred session by session across time.

I then again used interview data and student products to create post-task depictions of teachers' and students' understandings of the processes and products that occurred during the writing task. For each case summary I also completed analytic memos addressing my sub-questions.

In sum, preparing data, analyzing it, and writing of the interim cases allowed me to investigate educational processes by bringing together both the fine details of social interactions involved in specific classroom settings with the meanings teachers and learners both brought to and took from these interactions. Rich understandings of what occurred and the sense the participants made of classroom events emerged from these processes.

Preparation and analysis of data sources

Although I prepared the cases in a chronological format, data analysis was done by data set. As the focus of my analysis was on the videotapes and the unfolding of classroom events, I transcribed and analyzed the videotapes first in each case.

Videotapes. Analysis of the videotapes began with a process of viewing and reviewing the tapes one session at a time in order. I made verbatim transcriptions of almost all teacher talk and recorded teacher actions. Most of the student talk was also transcribed when students were involved in interactions with the teacher or those guided by the teacher. When talk was not transcribed verbatim, I still recorded who had spoken and summarized content. I also included descriptions of student activity seen both on the video and that which I had recorded on field notes. The video transcriptions served as the foundation for long and detailed descriptions of each session.

Analysis was a complex process that occurred both during and after the viewing/ transcription of the tapes. Throughout the transcription process I added brief accompanying thoughts and questions in bolded or bracketed print to the transcriptions. In the second and third sets of tapes, I began to add in codes in bolded print to denote patterns I was seeing across the classrooms. For example, I coded each time a teacher's discussion contained reference to specific tasks or activity in the future. I also made frequent entries in my research journal of things that I noticed as I asked analytic questions of the data. Once the transcription was complete I went back over it, making marginal notes and comments. I also identified and marked off various segments of the session as a type of coding.

Through an inductive process of bounding the action, I constructed specific segments of activity that comprised each session. I approached this bounding process from the perspective of what the students were expected to be doing. Segments within each session were distinguished by shifts in student activity. For example, students might be involved in group discussion and then asked to shift to independent writing time. These shifts in activity might be accompanied by shifts in space: students moved from sitting in a group on the floor to their desks. Shifts in activity were also delineated by shifts in norms of social interaction: students might be expected to talk in group discussion but not in independent writing time. Shifts were clearly denoted in the classroom discourse. Teachers marked shifts by giving clear and explicit directions for what students should be doing next, where they could be doing it, the amount of time students could expect to have, and what the social norms should be. Imperative and interrogative sentences and patterned use of discourse markers specific to each teacher also emerged as I viewed the videotapes. Words such as "now, okay, alright, boys and girls" indicated teacher moves that signaled a concomitant shift in expected student activity.

By using these shifts to bound the activity during any one session, I was able to identify various components of each session. By marking where the different components began and ended, I began to code the components as I went through the videotapes. Coding began with three broad categories: socially-oriented learning activity, independent-oriented learning activity, and procedural instructions. With further observation, use of discourse markers, and analysis of discourse patterns and content on the tapes, codes became increasingly refined over the course of data analysis.

I refined socially-oriented activity to include four sub-categories. Each of these sub-categories had distinguishable tools and norms of teacher-student interaction. The terms denote the role of the teacher in the activity.

- Guided discussion: As I constructed the individual cases, I coded instances of classroom talk between teacher and students in whole-class segments broadly, referring to them as "guided discussion." I chose the term "guided discussion" because development of key subject matter concepts and student links to these concepts appeared to underlie teachers' guidance of conversations. Guidance occurred even across a variety of interactional norms of teachers and students.
- Guided activity: These segments of socially-oriented activity involved classroom talk in conjunction with completion of a specific written task. Usually students each wrote and accomplished the tasks independently during the guided activity. Sometimes the teacher would write for the students, such as when the class revised of a piece of writing on the overhead.
- Facilitated sharing: During facilitated sharing times teachers did not contribute to the conversation and guide it. They simply identified which students had the floor to present their ideas as in brain-storming activity.
- Indirectly guided discussion: This code identified classroom events in which students controlled the pacing and content of conversations with other

> students. Teachers established purposes and content of these conversations before students met with each other, however. In this way teachers established activity in which they indirectly guided student interactions.

Independently-oriented activity was activity in which students were in control of the pacing of their activity during independent work times. Early on I did not sub-code independent work times. I did, however, note the norms for social interactions that were set by teachers and what occurred during the independent work times. I also noted personal patterns of social interaction for target students with the teacher and with other students. These notes served as the foundation for further scrutiny of independent work times during cross-case analysis.

Procedural instructions became a coded category of classroom activity because they appeared so regularly and predictably in the flow of classroom activity. They appeared distinct from more substantive segments of socially-oriented activity and occurred in each classroom at the transition point from socially to independently-oriented activity. I noted the content of each set of directions. Categories including references to social norms, time, tools basic categories, I made flow charts of the sessions to consider patterns of activity, frequency of the various types of the activity, and how the various types of activity fit in looking across the unit as a whole. I drew on the video transcriptions and my analytic work to make the case reports on classroom activity session by session. I then created descriptions of the nature and norms of the different kinds of activity distinguishable both within and across the lessons for each case.

Teacher interviews/debriefings. All teacher interviews were transcribed. Someone else transcribed almost all of the teacher interviews. I read and reread these interviews making comments and margin notes in order to create summaries for the case reports. These summaries contained descriptions of teacher backgrounds, their beliefs about purposes for writing, their stated expectations for social interaction in the classrooms, and the prior writing tasks student had done. Teacher debriefings and final interviews were summarized and included in the session-by-session reports in a final report for the task as a whole.

Student interviews/ debriefings. All student interviews were also transcribed. I transcribed about one-half of the student interviews. I listened to those transcribed by the other person to ensure accuracy. Some of the English language learners were particularly difficult for me to understand on the audiotapes when there were no other communicative cues to guide listening. I created portraits of each target student by summarizing interviews. Key points made during student debriefings were summarized and added to the session reports in the case studies.

I used displays and frequency counts to understand patterns of student perceptions regarding the task, their involvement, and their learning expressed in the final interview. Frequency counts were done for: perceived degree of difficulty of the task; enjoyment of the task; what they had learned; what had been most easy/most difficult; and what they were most proud of; and report of overall engagement. Student responses in some areas were then categorized. The categories that I constructed arose from my examination of student responses. For example, I divided student reports of what they had learned into categories to do with the genre, subject matter, the writing process, social interactions, and what they had learned about themselves as writers, learners, or people in society. In Gwen's class I was also able to use information from student's written self-assessment of the writing unit as supplemental data. In addition, I separately recorded and analyzed students' responses to questions about the 1-5 engagement scale in their logs and their perceptions of their own engagement. I included reports and summaries of the above information in the case reports.

Student logs. The written segments of the student logs were coded and counted in a manner similar to the student interviews. Again the categories I constructed were based on student responses. The numerical scores from these logs were recorded on a data display that allowed me to view all the scores and the averages for individual students, for each recording point, for particular types of activities, and for the unit as a whole. Additionally, I could compare averages of target students to averages for the participants as a whole to ensure that the target students were as representative of the class as possible.

Written products. I perused the final work of all students and more systematically analyzed the written work of students. I specifically identified and marked the key elements focused on in the writing instruction. I also analyzed the final products for more general writing elements such as thorough information and organization. I also used the written products to see specific links in what the teachers may have said and what individual students did. For example, Torquame's final product included a closing sentence after Diane suggested this as they looked at his rough draft in an individual writing conference. It was not clear from the videotape that this student was engaged in listening during this conference.

Cross-case analysis

As is typical in case studies, the cases were developed independently one at a time. I continually asked analytic questions as I worked on these cases. Developing and writing of the second and third cases provided opportunity to begin to find patterns that appeared across the cases. I found confirming or disconfirming evidence for these patterns and for themes I suspected early on. Several early ideas dropped by the wayside. At times the questions I raised influenced me to go back and reread literature on writing processes and think about how it connected to what I was seeing. Constructing the cases also fostered my understanding of the areas of where I would need to reexamine the data for further cross-case analysis.

Once the cases were complete, continued cross-case analysis occurred through interactions of such processes as creation of data displays, further coding, and writing as I continued to ask analytic questions of the data. Attention to and contemplation of differences as well as similarities led to deeper considerations and more finely-honed examination of classroom activity.

Closer examination

Broad coding categories served well as a foundation for initial data analysis, but differences across teachers forced me to investigate more subtle aspects of both socially and independently-oriented activity. I found that the concept of guided discussion was too broad to explain the complex nature of these segments of classroom activity across the three classrooms. For instance, I noted differences between teachers in the length of their talk on the transcribed pages. I wanted to know what this meant for student participation. Interest in these differences caused me to examine more systematically the content of classroom talk and how teachers encouraged students' active involvement in communicative activity in the classroom. I sought out literature to help me make sense of and articulate what I had noticed in classroom communications. I then reviewed particular sections of videotape.

Delineation of the nature of guided discussion become more refined as I identified and coded for various components of this discussion including unidirectional teacher-talk formats, more interactive teacher-student(s) formats, and student-student conversational formats. I noted patterns of interactional norms during these various formats within and across classrooms, asking questions of the data such as: How did teachers foster student participation in classroom discussions? By examining the content of classroom talk, I was also able to investigate how communicative patterns in these units apparently fostered students' involvement with subject matter concepts and skills.

Additionally, this closer focus on whole-class interactions caused me to reconsider the communicative interactions that occurred during independent work times as well. I coded for who initiated teacher-student interactions and did frequency counts of how often a particular student had social interactions with teachers and other students during the work times. This more finely-tuned analytic work occurred in conjunction with development of data displays as well.

Creating data displays

Because of my own need to see the data in an organized manner, I also created visual displays that allowed me to look and compare across the cases. For instance, I created displays for each classroom that depicted instruction and student involvement in different stages of the writing process or in different social settings as the unit unfolded. In this way, I was able to view such things as amount of time spent in prewriting and genre-specific activities and how this compared across the three cases. Table 5 below is an example of a data display I created that shows comparisons of students' log scores across social settings in Diane's class. These are the averages of log scores based on a scale of one to five. Five is "very involved."

TABLE 5: Data display of students' average log scores in differing social settings

	Target students	All students
Whole-class lessons	4.0	4.38
Independent work time	4.0	4.16
Formal partner work	4.4	3.9

I constructed data displays using words and frequency counts to create matrices of student/teacher responses across the cases. I also created layouts of the various components of each session across each unit. Essentially this meant viewing the entire writing session as a sequence of linked tasks. These layouts allowed me to see patterns both within each case and then what was common across the cases. Table 6 below in an example of a display I created. It simply compares the number of distinct lessons that occurred in different parts of the units across the cases.

Table 6: Data display to compare lessons across writing stages and classrooms

	Alan	Diane	Gwen/individ.	Gwen/group
Prewriting	4	6	6	6
Other parts of process	2	1	3	2

Moving from organization to meaning

Data analysis became increasingly complex and involved as I moved from "organization to meaning" (Glesne, 1999, p. 149). Identification of patterns, processes of description, and interpretation overlapped. I looked for connections between data displays and descriptive analyses. After constructing displays, I reread data to see what teachers and students said that might link to engagement in different aspects of the unit or issues of time and energy spent at each point of the task. I used matrices of teacher/student responses in conjunction with displays to create a deeper understanding of the nature of classroom events. At times data displays served as an impetus for further analysis, especially when I noted either similarities I was not expecting or differences across the cases. I wrote memos and notes to myself. Writing, in turn, generated the need to more carefully consider patterns or discrepancies within the data. These efforts to grapple with and make sense of the data through cross-case analyses resulted in identification of significant similarities and differences across the three cases.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways that three teachers planned for and involved students in writing tasks amid the complexities of classroom life. This was a qualitative study involving observation of teaching and learning within one writing task in three elementary classrooms. Data sources included videotapes and field notes from classroom observation, interviews with teachers and students, and student logs and other relevant documents. Data analysis was a multifaceted endeavor in which data was prepared and analyzed for inclusion in case studies and used in cross-case investigation. In the next two chapters of this report, I will discuss the rich findings that emerged from these processes.

CHAPTER 4

PLANNING FOR AND INVOLVING STUDENTS IN COMPLEX LEARNING UNITS

In this chapter I examine how Alan, Diane, and Gwen planned for classroom teaching and learning activity, and how it was enacted in each classroom. First, I discuss how each teacher planned for writing activity and explain the similar considerations that emerged in all three cases. Next, I describe how writing activity occurred in each of the classrooms. Task organization and other commonalties across the three different cases are noted. In the third section, analysis focuses on the ways in which the three teachers engaged and guided students in a variety of social organizations for writing in each classroom.

Planning for complex learning units

As Alan, Diane and Gwen talked about their plans, each discussed their intention to engage students in units of study. Creation of a specific written product accomplished through the writing process framed what students would be doing in the units. Alan defined this product as a persuasive letter on a topic of students' choice. Diane planned to have her students write formal business letters after they had read the book *Save My Rainforest* by Monica Zak together. Gwen said her students would write two-voice poems based on the format used by Paul Fleischman in his book *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices.*

Each teacher considered three factors as they planned learning units based on these particular products. As Figure 2 depicts, the units were first of all planned with purposeful learning goals in mind. In addition, teachers' choices for particular subject matter and activities of the unit were linked to understandings of their students — student interests, prior knowledge, and backgrounds. Each particular task was also linked to the teaching/learning writing activity that preceded the unit.

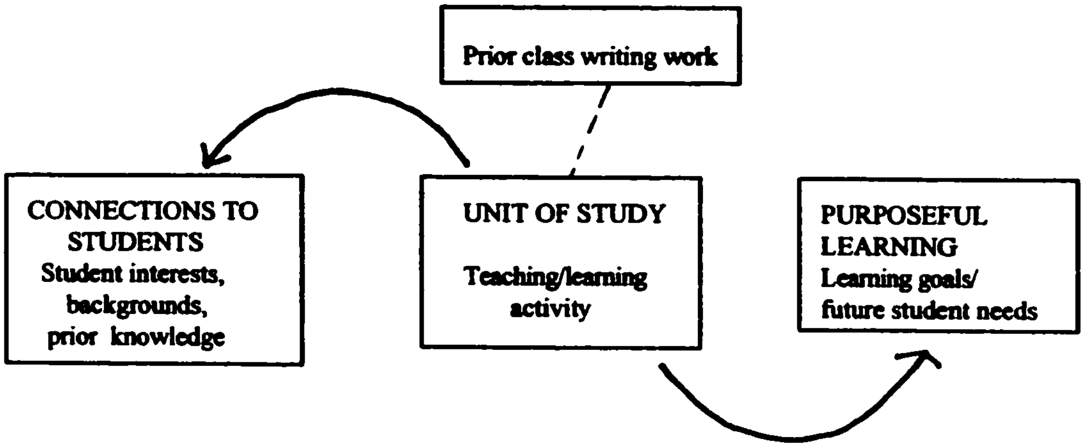

Prior class writing work
CONNECTIONS TO STUDENTS
Student interests, backgrounds, prior knowledge
UNIT OF STUDY
Teaching/learning activity
PURPOSEFUL LEARNING
Learning goals/ future student needs

FIGURE 2: Task planning

Engaging students in purposeful learning

Alan, Diane, and Gwen each had multiple reasons for choosing to spend class time on the particular form of writing. State standards and curricular content of textbooks were mentioned. Teachers also articulated their own reasons why the particular written forms were important for students to know and be able to use.

These teachers envisioned the units as one point in students' developmental trajectories. They referred to students' futures and talked about preparing students for independence. Gwen claimed that "towards independence" was her motto. Planning decisions were thus executed with an eye to the future, even if it was just the next poem or the next level of development. Gwen referred to a developmental continuum for writing and believed that developmentally her students needed to learn how to manipulate and use different forms of writing. Once they had done that, they could move to the next level and make decisions about which form would best suit certain purposes.

Since these units took place near the end of the school year, the genre or form was juxtaposed with what had occurred earlier in the year. For example, Alan's students had already participated in instruction on narrative writing, research reports, and poetry. They had not yet studied persuasive writing. Gwen wanted her students to be able to add two-voice poetry to "their repertoire" of writing forms and genres.

These three also discussed preparing students to use the genre/form for their own personal and social purposes in the future. Ultimately the desired products or goals for the unit task were mental—new understandings that could be transferred to other situations and systems. Alan mentioned persuasive pieces that could be submitted to newspaper as "letters to the editor." Diane stated, " I think, that as the future, it's important that they know how to communicate about something that they care about." She wanted to empower her students, give them an opportunity to learn that they could use their voices for specific social purposes. Diane was concerned that her students also learn how to "easily" use the business letter form and still keep the "creativity and spark of their writing." Gwen saw writing primarily as a tool for learning. She was adamant that the inherent comparing and contrasting structure of two-voice poetry was an important personal tool her students could use despite the fact the district did not officially recognize this form:

> I tell them this will always be a tool they can use... the two-voice poem and the process you went through to create this can be a problem-solving tool for you... I've had kids come back years later and say, ' I wrote a two-voice poem in seventh grade'... or 'I wrote a two-voice poem when my mom and I got in a fight. And I pretend I'm my mom, and I write about that, and it helps me understand how my mom feels.' That's one of the more amazing ones to come back... It's not on the approved list of forms to teach in the grade, but la-de-dah.

Fostering understanding of purposes for form and developing positive dispositions towards writing that would transfer to future efforts was also important to these teachers. For example, Diane commented:

> Because the one thing is, will this child be able to write with confidence when you're not in the room? Will they choose to write in their journal? Or will they

> write well when they get to another class? That's when you know you've succeeded.

In addition to goals related to written language, the teachers envisioned these units as providing opportunities for students to take risks, develop critical thinking, and discuss important social issues such as deforestation. Alan said, " I'd like to have them leave the class with, and it's kind of immeasurable, a love for learning, a love for reading and writing. And growth—allowing themselves to take a risk and grow."

Alan, Gwen, and Diane planned with student development in mind. But planning was also influenced by the need to engage their students in specific learning activity in the present.

Encouraging students' connections to writing tasks

Each of the three teachers considered various ways to interest and involve students in creating the written pieces. Both Diane and Alan used the phrase "buy in" as they talked about their plans for the genre/form units. Teacher plans included two basic ways to provide opportunities for students to make personal connections with the writing tasks: fostering connections between students' backgrounds, interests, and prior knowledge with the unit activities; and engaging students in decision-making processes that provided students opportunities to create their own connections to their writing.

Fostering links between students and unit activities

The ways teachers hoped to encourage students' connections with the writing units were specific to the particular products and to their students. Alan said that his students "have great arguments, and so my goal is to get them to put this argument in writing." He mentioned activities in which oral argument would precede writing. Alan linked the task with oral strengths of particular students. The very first activity was planned to jump-start the unit by use of a planned scenario that would emotionally engage students. Alan intended to take off from there as students developed their own purposes for writing a persuasive letter.

Diane planned an integrated reading/writing unit. She intended to have her students read the book, *Save My Rain Forest*, to serve as motivation for letter writing.

The book tells the true-life account of how an eight-year old Mexican boy, Omar, walked 870 miles to see the rainforest. He later met with the President of Mexico in an effort to bring attention to deforestation in his country. Diane specifically selected this book for several reasons. She hoped students could identify with the characters, the place, and the social/environmental issues involved in the book so that they could find their own purposes for writing business letters. Additionally, she had several Latino students in her classroom. Two of her students had moved to the United States from Mexico. Her class had recently finished a student-selected social studies unit on Mexico, so the students had some background knowledge of the country to draw upon. Further, the main character was an eight-year boy who demonstrated bravery and perseverance. Diane commented that many of her students deal with difficulties in their lives, and she hoped that the boy might serve as a model for them. Diane also felt that the book would provide students with a very real sense of their audiences for their letters.

The unit in Gwen's class began after a month of state-mandated testing. Gwen commented that, "We needed socialization again," and specifically planned the unit with social interaction in mind. She wanted to give students a chance to first explore the two-voice poetry with their own topics before they worked on group poems. As in Diane's unit, the designated content for the group poem was chosen carefully to link to students. Students would choose to write about one of several Puget Sound tide zone animals. The class had earlier been involved in more extensive research on Puget Sound tide zone creatures, so they could bring background knowledge to their poetry writing. Further, the students lived close to Puget Sound. Some students had first hand knowledge of the creatures.

Each of the teachers also established immediate goals for the projects that might provide personal or social incentive for students in ways that long-range outcomes might not. Alan planned to tell students that their letters would go in their district portfolios as evidence of their learning. Although this may seem like a narrow incentive, helping students learn how to be successful students was important in his school. Posters in the hallway of successful people of color, special programs, and comments made at school assemblies suggested the emphasis the school placed on creating models of academic success for its students. Student comments also made it clear that parents had high expectations for their child's success in school. For instance, Jacob, an African American student said, " I'm supposed to be like a kind of straight A student. Like if I mess up at school, my mom's going to get mad at me." Diane intended to have the students send their letters to people. Gwen's students would prepare group poems for presentation to their parents and their community in a school-wide learning celebration.

Engaging students in decision making

While teachers established some parameters of students' products, they also planned to engage students in decisions regarding topic, audience, and specific purpose. In this way teachers provided students opportunity to establish their own connections with their written work. Student decision-making was planned for differently in each of the classrooms and related to the learning goals of the unit. Individual products would develop through joint teacher and student decision-making processes over the course of the unit. Table 7 depicts how the teachers planned for student involvement.

TABLE 7: Teachers' planning for decision-making in the unit

	Genre/form	Content	Purpose	Audience
Alan's planning	T	S	T/S	S
Diane's planning	T	T/S	T/S	T/S
Gwen-Individual	T	S	T/S	T
Gwen-group	T	T/S	T	T

Note: T represents teacher decision
S represents student decision
T/S represent joint decision/student decision making is limited by teachers

In Alan's unit, the genre and form he selected, writing a persuasive letter, dictated the purposes for writing. The content and the audience for the specific written piece, however, would be left to the discretion of the students. Therefore, the choices students made established specific and personal purposes for writing persuasive letters. Sherry Ann, for instance, wrote to a known audience for specific personal reasons. She wanted to convince her mother's boss that her mother deserved a raise. Others, like Ron, wrote to the governor or the school board to plead the case that students need more computer equipment in classrooms.

Similarly, in the individual two-voice poems in Gwen's class, students would choose their content. Choice of content eventually affected students' personal purposes for utilizing the genre as well. For some students, creating the two-voice poem was a way to learn new information about certain subjects. Jessie did research to complete her about poem, *Two Natural Elements*, as she compared fire and water. On the other hand, Lauren's piece titled *Sisters* explored her feelings about and her relationship with her older sister. The immediate audience, the classroom community, was designated by Gwen. In the group poems, students had choice of topics, but the range was limited to the tide zone creatures of the Puget Sound -- subject matter specific to designated science content standards. Gwen also designated the specific audience.

Diane set the business letter as the form students would use. Through use of the book *Save My Rain Forest,* the individual audiences, purposes, and specific subject matter for writing would be constrained. She directed students' attention to the announcement in the back of the book telling the reader where they could write to Omar, the main character, or how to get more information on preserving the world's rainforests. Each of these would vary by student. Diane felt it most important that students have a "purpose that they care about."

Decision making in each class appeared a negotiated balance between student choices and teacher decisions. All three teachers planned units of study that they felt would engage their students in purposeful and meaningful learning that pushed their development. Significantly, they also considered ways to provide opportunity for students to forge links with teaching/learning activity in these units. Framing of the writing tasks in these units was not simply one of either student or teacher selection. Instead, selection of the writing task was a complex endeavor focused on opportunity for student growth.

Each teacher considered the connections students could make that could foster engagement with learning opportunities.

Each of the final products was a complex written form, however. Writing in these particular forms was a first-time experience for the children. None of the students in the classes had ever written a business letter or a two-voice poem. Only a couple of the students in Alan's class indicated that they had written a persuasive piece before. Further, creating a product in the genre/form would also involve using content knowledge and addressing particular audiences new to most students. In addition, students would need to coordinate complex mental processes and physical activity to create these the products. They would need to persevere over a several day period to create a final product. Therefore, while creating a specific product was the task that framed each unit, students faced a broader task posed to them in the unit: learn the purposes, concepts, processes, and tools needed to create this written product. To engage students in accomplishing this complex learning task successfully, Alan, Diane, and Gwen each planned an array of teaching/learning activity -- essentially involving students in a sequence of learning tasks embedded in the lessons of the unit.

Planning for teaching/learning activity

To foster students' abilities to achieve both the final product and the accompanying learning objectives, the teachers planned for and engaged students in a series of lessons that took place over several writing sessions. All three planned for teaching/learning activity that would engage students in exploration of the social and personal purposes, conventions, and formats within the particular genre/form of writing. The series of lessons would also guide students through the writing process.

Alan's planning

Although letter format would be familiar to Alan's students, writing a persuasive letter would be new. He planned, therefore, to involve students in several lessons focused on learning the purposes and elements of persuasive writing. One can take several tacks in writing a persuasive piece such as appealing to reason or emotion, or using advertising techniques such as testimonials. Central to Alan's ideas of preparing students to write a persuasive piece of writing was the need for the writer to "make a good argument" based on fact not opinion. Alan stated that "going beyond opinion and supporting that as fact" would be new and most challenging for his students. He also said:

> I'll be teaching, you know, the different arguments, the types of persuasion. And I'll be asking them to find those elements in their own writing and include some of those. I need to teach those elements. If they don't get them, then I'm not going to see them in their writing.

He planned to address this through explicit lessons and by going "step by step."

At the planning stage Alan had certain lessons sketched out in his mind. For example, he planned to begin the unit with a scenario intended to get students "excited " and provoke discussion of purposes and means of persuasion. However, he also wanted to see how the various elements of persuasion would be "picked up" by the students. He would "monitor as we go... these things are based on their progress and what I'm seeing and if they're ready for it or not. I won't know that until it starts." The unit would unfold in concert with his students' learning needs.

Alan stated that revision lessons and conferences would focus on the elements of persuasion. As a matter of established classroom routine, students would conference with him after completing their rough drafts. He stressed that genre concepts, not conventions, would be the focus of the conferences. Students were responsible for conventions and could rely on each other and classroom resources for help.

Diane's planning

Diane planned the unit on business letter writing in conjunction with specific content. She would first have her students read the book, *Save My Rainforest*. She then planned to have students write a formal business letter to present "their concern or their perspective" about a particular problem based on book content. Although students had experience with friendly letters, the "formal letters" would be new for her students. These letters would actually be sent, as Diane said, to "someone who is older, somebody in a position of influence or power." Most significant to her about involving students in writing these letters would be that they "know how to put their thoughts or their ideas together in such a way that they validate their cause." She also talked about attending to "pieces" that would help scaffold students' writing. In particular, she mentioned giving the students a rubric so they would know what they needed to include in their work and be able to "fit their passion, what they care about, into the ritual of a business letter." In other words, students would need to present a point of view and adjust their writing in a manner consistent with the norms and conventions of business letters. Diane stated that her students would also have to learn about business letter formats— such things as the heading.

Gwen's planning

The unit in Gwen's class centered on the creation of two-voice poetry. Since her students would be writing poems, Gwen wanted them to explore issues such as, "How does it sound? How does it work? What is the rhythm and cadence of it?" Gwen said she would explicitly have to tell students that the poems would not need to rhyme.

The format for this type of poetry is unique and complex. The words spoken by the characters are recorded in two separate columns on the page. Sentences are written vertically, as phrases and single words. Horizontal positioning of the words across the two columns denotes when the speakers talk and when they are silent. At times the characters speak in unison, but not always using the same words as each other. Talk is directed at the audience. As in other forms of poetry, word choice is important as each voice creates visual images. Additionally, through the two voices Fleischman presents very factual information about insects. Gwen planned to use the poem "Honeybees" as a specific model for the students. Part of this poem is displayed below. Through the juxtaposition of the content of the talk, similarities and differences of the lives of a queen and worker bee are revealed. Gwen felt that because of the inherent comparing/ contrasting, this form of poetry provided students with an important "thinking, cognitive tool."

Gwen planned to engage her students in writing two poems during the unit. The first would be an individual poem. Students would then compose group two-voice poems. She likened this process to allowing students to free explore with math manipulatives. Students would first have an individual opportunity to explore this new form of writing. This, she believed, would lead to a "real high quality" product for the group piece. Gwen planned to have the students present these pieces at a school-wide learning celebration open to the community.

Honeybees
By Paul Fleischman

Being a bee	Being a bee
	is a joy.
is a pain.	
	I'm a queen.
I'm a worker.	
I'll gladly explain.	I'll gladly explain.
	Upon rising I'm fed
	by my royal attendants.
I'm up at dawn, guarding	
the hive's narrow entrance.	

Gwen anticipated students' difficulties with the two-voice form. She was prepared for the times when students would get "stuck." She would also "interrupt them a lot in the writing and revising process because, for one thing, young developing writers can only go so long before they are no longer practicing richness." She felt students would have difficulty coming up with "rich details" for both of their topics in order to "deepen the poem." She said she would need to think ahead to what would be an effective "compare and contrast graphic organizer in terms of the cognition that has to occur with this." Further, Gwen discussed issues of appropriate resources the students might need, and how "long to allow them to research before we just go ahead and give the rough draft a go." Planning time for students to reread their work was also an issue that Gwen mentioned. Due to the nature of the two-voice poem students would need to reread their work with someone else.

Summary

Alan, Diane, and Gwen each planned a writing task for their students that was embedded in a multifaceted unit of study. All three designed purposeful units that would engage students in exploration of and practice in using particular forms of written communication. Conceptualizing these units went beyond creating a written product linked to these forms, however. Teachers considered authentic social and personal purposes for involving students in these unit tasks. They designed the units to relate to the lives, interests, and background knowledge of their particular students. In the next section I describe teaching/learning activity as it unfolded across the units.

The writing units unfold

Through complex arrays of teaching/learning activity, students and teachers worked together in common enterprise across each writing unit. Brief overviews depicting how activity unfolded over the course of the unit in each classroom follow. Three main commonalties were evident: (1) the focus on development of genre/form purposes and formats; (2) moving through the writing process framed the progress of the unit; (3) teaching/learning activities were varied and ranged over several different social settings.

Alan's unit of study

Alan engaged students in a sequence of nine daily writing sessions in which students ended up with a final draft of a persuasive letter on an issue of their choosing. The students did not begin drafting of their letters until midway through session seven. Instead the unit began with a focus on development of the key concepts of persuasion and identification of issues that students felt strongly about.

In the first session the principal came in and abruptly announced that recess had been cancelled until further notice. Although contrived, Alan hoped that this action would motivate students' passions, provide a natural way to set purposes for writing an initial persuasive letter, and give opportunity for the class to begin identifying the key concepts of persuasion. The activity served the purpose. The average of students' log scores for engagement was higher for this lesson than any other lesson in the unit. Students' initial written responses to the principal began with threats and demands — "So give us are recess…you're going to get your butt kicked, " I'm going to call your boss and ask your boss to fire you." "What kind of cold twist plot are you running here?… When I get your boss to fire you from any future job as priniciaple don't come crawling back to us." Some students left these initial letters unsigned or added closings such as "Mystery writer in room 1," suggesting that even though there had been no talk of actually giving these letters to the principal, students were aware of issues of power in the situation. A few students chose to share their letters with the whole class and discussion and modeling ensued in which Alan and the class together identified three concepts of persuasion — avoid threats, try to understand the other's perspective, and support your argument with facts. Alan recorded these ideas on a chart as they developed through discussion. Students then wrote group letters to the principal trying to persuade him to reinstate their recess. The principal later came back to the classroom, and students read the group letters aloud. The letters did not contain threats, but questions about why the recess had been taken away and reasons why they needed the recess time. The principal told the students that they had done a good job "convincing" him and their recesses were reinstated.

In the second session Alan facilitated class brainstorming as students developed a shared list of meaningful and interesting topics. Next, Alan displayed and read aloud a persuasive essay written by one of his previous students. He directed students' attention to the facts the student had used to support his point of view in this model. After more individual work and continued sharing of ideas for possible topics, Alan asked the students to choose a preliminary position statement and write down three reasons why others should agree. Some of these brief sketches were shared aloud with classmates. Alan pointed out the elements of persuasion used by the students.

The next four lessons of the unit were like "studies" designed as practice to increase students' facility with and appropriation of genre concepts before they had to complete the final assignment. Alan referred to these concepts as the "pieces" that the students needed to write their letters. Each of these lessons was directed and involved students' writing on topics of the teacher's selection. Students were given opportunity to examine issues from different perspectives. Sometimes students chose the perspective from which they would write. Other times they were assigned--even to a perspective opposite of the one they held. For example, some students were assigned to be court-appointed defenders for Goldilocks and had to reason out how she could possibly be innocent of "breaking and entering." In two lessons students had to defend both sides of an issue. Another lesson involved oral development of arguments as students worked in groups and then debated each other before they wrote individual paragraphs on the topic. Several times Alan set himself up as the specific audience for these persuasive studies. He presented a point of view on a topic most of his students would have definite opinions about, such as " Cats make better pets than dogs." Alan invited students to give reasons why they did or did not agree with him. Students enjoyed this opportunity to "argue" their point of view with the teacher.

In session seven students began drafting their letters. Students then moved at their own pace through the writing process, but remained more or less at the same stage of the process during the remaining two sessions. Periods of independent work time were interspersed with whole-class activity. Alan involved students in whole-class revision lessons. Examples of persuasive writing were displayed on the overhead. Discussion focused on organization traits to do with over-all and paragraph organization within the persuasive genre.

In addition to leading students in whole-class activity, Alan worked individually with students. During the independent work time Alan worked informally with students. Both Alan and students initiated interactions for various reasons. He also conferenced with students before they began final drafts. In individual conferences Alan asked questions and offered suggestions that focused student attention on certain aspects of their written text. He remarked on genre-specific issues, such as the need for writers to support their arguments. He also reviewed letter format with students on a one-to-one needs basis as they worked on their final drafts. Letter format had been the focus of writing instruction earlier in the year.

Alan also had students work with each other during the writing process time, asking students to share their work with each other about midway through the drafting time. Students worked in partners. They were asked to read with and ask questions of each other. Norms of interactions during independent work time allowed for students to interact informally with each other as well.

In sum, in Alan's class students spend the bulk of their writing unit involved in learning activity and practice of the genre concepts that he wanted them to use in writing their letters. Alan used models and focused attention on key aspects of the genre when discussing these models with students. Students worked through the writing process during independent work times to complete their letters. Independent work alternated with socially-interactive activity -- whole-class activity, individual interactions with the teacher, and interactions with peers. Students were involved in a wide range of activity in the unit across multiple social settings.

Diane's unit of study

The unit in Diane's class consisted of twelve sessions that took place over nine days. This was an integrated reading/writing unit, and the first five sessions provided the introduction to, reading and discussing of the book *Save My Rainforest.* Diane initiated the unit by engaging students in a discussion of "what critical thinking looks like." Diane then connected this to the thinking they would do as they read and discussed the book. After a brief pre-reading lesson, students read a specified section of the book with a partner. The class came back to discuss what they had read together. The next three sessions were similar in format.

Diane had students write in response to their reading during these sessions. Students were asked to keep notes of the key points made during class discussions of the book. Diane modeled note-taking and reinforced concepts in the story. She made notes of key concepts in poster-like form and shared these posters with the class. In one session Diane asked students to elaborate on the story events from the perspective of one of the characters. In another, the writing assignment occurred spontaneously as Diane responded to a student remark. She had students described how they might feel being in the rainforest. These assignments built foundations for purposeful letter writing as students focused their attention on the content and characters of the story.

Like Alan, Diane also wanted the idea for writing letters as social action to come from the students in response to reading the story. But she prepared students for their eventual letter writing while they were still involved in reading the book. In related activity, Diane read *Dear Mr. Henshaw* by Beverly Cleary to the students. This book is written in letter form. In addition, the students were involved in writing friendly letters to the school librarian from the perspective of a story book character.

Sessions five and six served to create a purposeful connection and transition from reading the book to writing a business letter. The idea of writing a letter was first discussed in session five after the final group discussion of the book. Presenting letter writing as a task connected to reading the book was actually set forth by Diane rather than by the students as she had intended. She directed students' attention to the announcement in the back of the book telling the reader where they could write to Omar, the main character, or how to get more information on preserving the world's rainforests. Just prior to this Diane had guided the students in a conversation in which the class was very divided in their opinions about the book. Diane felt that the time spent on this discussion precipitated her direct move into letter writing. Students brainstormed possible recipients for their letters. Class discussion followed in which the class continued to discuss the possible recipients and what they might say to that person. Session six was short and engaged students in a whole-class vocabulary activity that connected reading of the book to words and concepts students might need to write their letters.

Sessions seven to twelve comprised the third section of the unit in which students planned for, wrote, revised/edited, and rewrote business letters to specific people. In these letters students either stated and defended a position or asked for information. During session seven the class worked together to list specific purposes for writing the letters to three possible audiences. Diane identified the letter specifically as a business letter. She and the students discussed how business letters are more formal than the personal letters they had written and have norms that must be followed: "So you want to be very polite all the time, and come on with very strong solutions." Diane then had the students read together and discuss the section from the students' third grade text titled "Writing Business Letters." This section included information on what makes a letter a business letter and explained two purposes of business letters. Diane then modeled and gave instructions in the use of a "tree" graphic organizer. Students began working on prewriting graphic organizers in preparation for drafting.

In the next five sessions students moved at their own pace through planning, writing, revision/ editing, and rewriting as they worked in independent work times. But as in Alan's class, the students were at similar stages of writing. Additionally, some students were writing letters to the same people for similar reasons. As students moved through the writing process in subsequent sessions, independent work times were interspersed with whole-class work sessions. Diane directed whole-class lessons on the general format of a business letter, the specific information students needed to complete their business letter formats, and the information students would need to address their envelopes. Diane also gave directions for and discussed two handouts designed to guide and help students pace their revision processes. The first paper was a checklist to guide students through revision procedures. It included directions such as read your draft to yourself, read your draft with a partner, and conference with teacher. The second paper provided student with questions they could ask of their work like, "Are all of the ideas in the best order?"

Diane, like Alan, also interacted with students on an individual level during the independent work portions of these sessions. Interactions were initiated by either teacher or students. Students were asked to meet and conference with Diane after the completion of the graphic organizer and then again after the first draft. During individual conferences regarding the organizer, Diane asked questions and gave students feedback on their planning, such as need for thoroughness of details. In the second conference, held before students began their final drafts, questions and feedback focused students' attention on specific aspects of the written text. Diane addressed several issues, including of students' efforts to use the new social forms, norms, and purposes for writing. For example, in this exchange with Anna, Diane reiterated the norms of writing a business letter to a dignitary, in this case the President of Mexico:

> Diane [pointing to greeting written "Dear Fox"]:
> What is another way I can say it?
>
> Anna: Dear President Fox?
>
> Diane: Super, super. Sometimes if you consider your audience. It's the way you ask questions that will get a good answer. And in Mexico they are very formal. You don't just come up, 'Hi Prez.

Diane expected students to work with each other during these independent work times. Students met formally with a partner in order to get and give feedback on written products when they were ready. They used peer revision papers Diane had given them. Students also worked together informally during independent work times. Some students worked very closely together through the whole process although they created independent products. Several computers were available for student use in this class. Some chose to make their final drafts on the computer. Students supported each other in their computer work. Diane rarely assisted students on computers, but at times asked students to go help a particular person.

Students addressed their envelopes and placed stamps them. Something some of them had never done before. As the final class event in the writing unit, Diane had the mail carrier come into the classroom and pick up the students' letters, all stamped and ready to go.

To summarize the activities in this writing unit, students spent several sessions reading and discussing a book that could provide opportunities for them to find purposes, passion, and clearly defined audiences for writing subsequent business letters. Students then worked at their own pace through the writing process to plan for and complete their final letters over the rest of the writing sessions. Students' independent work times were interspersed with whole-class lessons, individual conferences, and interactions with peers. Students in Diane's class, like those in Alan's, engaged in a wide range of activity in the unit across multiple social settings. Diane's guidance appeared designed to focus students' attention on specific aspects of letter writing.

Gwen's unit of study

Gwen began this unit by asking me to join her in reading aloud one of the two-voice poems by Paul Fleischman titled "Honeybees," a humorous comparing and contrasting of the lives of a queen and worker bee. Over the course of the next 16 school days, the students first spent eight days on creating individual two-voice poems based on Fleischman's model on two topics of their choice. They then worked in groups for another eight days to create two-voice poems about Puget Sound tide zone creatures.

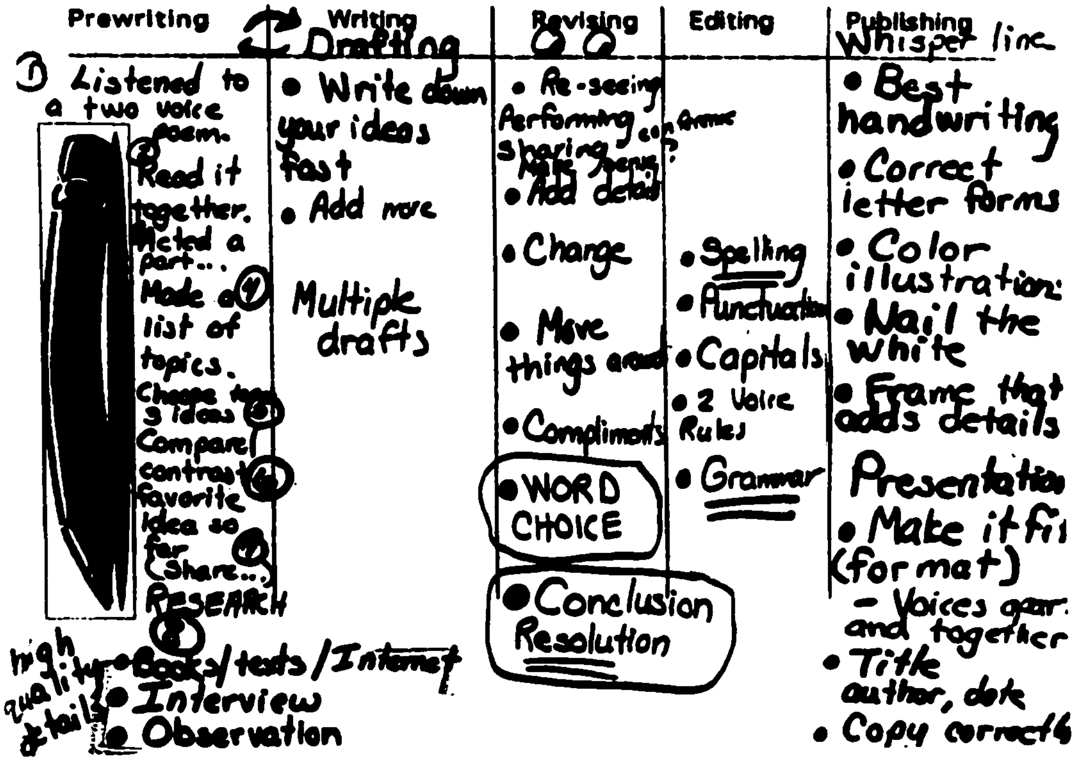
Individual poem

In the first two sessions Gwen introduced the students to the purposes and form of a two-voice poem. Students experienced the two-voice format by listening to the poem and through choral reading of it from both perspectives. Gwen guided discussion, asking students what they noticed about this form of poetry. She asked students how the two of us knew when to read in unison and when to read separately. She focused their attention on the inherent comparing and contrasting of the form.

Gwen established immediate social and personal purposes for the unit with the students in this first lesson. She remarked to the students, "We're learning a form because I want you to know this form. Because we're going to use this form for our performance on June 7th." In this performance students would share with others their knowledge about tide zone animals through presentation of their poems. Gwen characterized the students as "experts in the topics that you are choosing and thinking about."

Gwen then asked students to begin thinking about the two things they wished to compare in their poems. As in Alan's classroom, the task of finding appropriate and relevant subject matter for writing involved a process of sharing and distributing knowledge with the group. Gwen and students brainstormed and shared ideas both before and after students worked independently on lists of possible pairs. Gwen then asked students to use a three-column graphic organizer to organize and record what they knew about the similarities and difference of their pair. Details particular to each animal would be recorded in the outside columns; similarities would be written in the middle column. Gwen also mentioned Venn diagrams as an option for organizing information. She further explained that they could then choose to do research to find more information on their topics if necessary or change topics altogether.

At the end of this first session Gwen began keeping a chart delineating all of the stages of process writing as shown in Figure 3 below. In whole-class work, she used this chart as a tool to record students' remarks as they reviewed the writing activity they had done that day. The responses were all specific to the two-voice poetry form.



Prewriting	Writing Drafting	Revising	Editing	Publishing Whisper line
① Listened to a two voice poem. [redacted] ② Read it together. Acted a part... Made a ④ list of topics. Choose top 3 ideas ⑤ Compare/contrast ⑥ favorite idea so far ⑦ (Share...) RESEARCH ⑧ high quality details • Books/texts/Internet • Interview • Observation	• Write down your ideas fast • Add more Multiple drafts	• Re-seeing Performing, conference Sharing Make Sense? • Add details • Change • Move things around • Compliments • WORD CHOICE • Conclusion Resolution	• Spelling • Punctuation • Capitals • 2 Voice Rules • Grammar	• Best handwriting • Correct letter forms • Color illustrations • Nail the white • Frame that adds details Presentation • Make it fit (format) - Voices apart and together • Title author, date • Copy correctly

Figure 3: Writing Process Chart

Gwen pulled this chart out almost daily. She used it to review with students the tasks they would be working on that day. Gwen had students add to the chart as the class moved through the writing process. Her students thus not only had to create written pieces, but also were asked to articulate the process they had utilized in their work.

Gwen began session two with a review of the two-voice form. She again engaged students in reading of "Honey Bees." She also guided discussion about how much detail about the bees' lives is evident in this poem. She linked this to the thoroughness of details she wanted to see on the students' organizers. Near the end of this session Gwen began to publicly ease students into drafting by announcing that those who were ready to begin drafting could begin to do so. Gwen specifically modeled recursive practices and the importance of going back to prewriting stages as a strategy if one got "stuck."

In the next four sessions students worked at their own pace through writing, revising, editing, and publishing of their two-voice poems during long, independent work times. As in the other classes, the students were in similar stages of the writing process. Alternation of independent work times and socially interactive times was even more noticeable in Gwen's class during these writing sessions. Gwen "interrupted" independent work times, just as she said she would in the planning conversations. Some of these interruptions were whole-class lessons. In session three Gwen involved students in discussing what makes a "high quality" two-voice poem. Gwen conducted lessons on revising for more details, strong word usage, and composing a "satisfying ending." She included a lesson on formatting and visual presentation of the poems in the unit. Gwen also consistently interrupted independent writing sessions with whole-class sessions in which students shared works in progress.

Unlike Alan and Diane, Gwen's individual interactions with students remained informal. She did not expect students to formally conference with her at certain points in the writing process. Students initiated most of these informal student-teacher interactions. Gwen did, however, initiate one-on-one work with students when she perceived a need. For example, a few students had difficulty setting up the formatting of two-voice poem on their papers. She gave individual guidance to these students.

But this does not mean that Gwen did not provide important feedback to her students. She did this in whole-class situations, essentially creating whole-class conferences about specific issues. First, she seized public opportunities when students were sharing to further reinforce genre issues, writing concepts, and traits as she remarked on students' drafts. The comments Gwen made after individuals shared were always positive in nature. She also conducted whole-class lessons that were more critical and discerning. For instance, after Jessie shared her poem with the two characters arguing, some students appropriated this new format for themselves. Unfortunately, they did not develop information about the topics through these arguments as Jessie had. Some soon had whole pages of, "I am too. You are not. I am too. You are not." Gwen publicly addressed issues of student alteration of the form that moved them away from the inherently more complex comparing/contrasting into what Gwen referred to as "empty argument." Students in Gwen's class had multiple drafts of their pieces.

Gwen also expected students to work with each other during the independent work times. Gwen had students share their work with partners and table groups. Students interacted informally during independent work times also, but not to the same degree as in Alan and Diane's classes. During one independent work in which most students were working on publication, she asked for a silent work time so that students could concentrate on the difficult and precise work.

In the final session of this part of the unit Gwen had students share their final pieces with the class if they wanted to. Some students shared their poems with the other fourth grade to provide them with models of two-voice poems. At the end of this session students made lists of what they had learned in this first part of the writing unit.

Group poem

In the second section of the unit students wrote group two-voice poems in 14 sessions over eight days. Students self-selected their choices from a list of tide zone creatures that they had studied and reported on earlier in the year. Some students stayed with the same animal while others changed to a new one. Groups varied in size due to student selection. Working to complete a group two-voice poem was a complex process. In the first four sessions, students first worked independently and then in groups to research and record information about their animals. Students then wrote group paragraphs connecting their information under such topics as habitat, physical characteristics, prey, and predators. In addition to reading and writing, Gwen had students visualize, drawing, and move like their creatures. After the movement sequences, she asked students to add any information that they had learned from this experience to their notes.

Next, Gwen and the students identified and discussed possible poem match-ups such as predatory-prey and symbiotic relationship pairs. Together they established four pairs of animals for the group poems. Once these pair groups were established, Gwen had the two smaller groups come together to work as one group using the graphic organizers to talk about and record ways to compare and contrast the two animals. The patterns of student sharing with the whole class and within small groups noticed in first part of the unit continued.

In the next eight sessions the groups of students moved through the writing process to compose, revise, edit and publish group two-voice poems. Students worked together throughout this process except for publishing. One student from each group created a master copy from which Gwen made copies for the whole class.

During these sessions, Gwen continued to meet informally with groups. Group work times were also "interrupted" by student whole-class activity in which students shared work and Gwen led whole-class lessons. In session 16, for instance, she had the class revisit and add new ideas to the list from their previous discussion of what makes a quality two-voice poem. In session 18 Gwen quite bluntly told the students that the poems had fallen "flat" in word choice and imagery because they were "so busy trying to work as a group." She then led the class in a revision lesson in which students identified "tired sentences" and others gave suggestions for "showing not telling" words and phrases.

In the last two sessions, using copies of the poems that Gwen had given them, the students constructed and illustrated anthologies of the group poems. They practiced performing their poems. Students also wrote and debriefed their evaluations of the unit. Students performed their poems for the community in choral readings during an evening school learning celebration. The class anthologies, individual poems, and artwork were displayed in the hallway.

To recap this unit, it was a complex two-part unit in which students created both individual and group poems comparing and contrasting two items in the two-voice format. Students were first involved in activities designed to familiarize them with the complex features of the poem. Students were asked to identify and discuss these features throughout the unit. Students researched and recorded information about two different topics in order to compare and contrast them. Students worked at their own or the group pace through the writing process to create their products. Independent and group work times alternated with whole-class activities and interactions with peers. Students engaged in a wide range of activity in the unit across multiple social settings. They composed text individually as well as with others. Activity included art and movement as well as reading, writing, and discussion. Students' work served as models for others. Gwen focused attention on certain aspects of the poems with her comments and questions. She also used the writing process chart to garner students' participation in recounting the processes they had used.

Thus, Alan, Diane, and Gwen each involved their students in complex learning units that focused on development of purposes and concepts for specific genre/forms. Teachers guided students through the writing process over the course of each unit. Teaching/learning activities were varied and occurred across different kinds of social settings. In the next section, I will further examine the teaching/learning activity within the various settings and common ways in which Diane, Gwen, and Alan fostered students' active participation in learning tasks within these social settings.

Involving students in complex units of study

Complex learning units in each classroom occurred in multiple writing sessions over the course of nine to sixteen days. In each case genre/form exploration served as the focus of the unit. Each of these units involved students in a variety of teaching/learning activity that occurred across several social settings. In this section I first discuss the focus of genre/form study. I then describe the organization and social settings of activity across the three units. Descriptions of the activity settings include an examination of the ways teachers provided opportunities for students to participate in learning tasks embedded in these activity settings.

Genre/form study

Each teacher set the task product in terms of the written genre or form and then involved the students in exploration of this form as they had planned. They, first of all, provided opportunity for students to engage in activities that focused on introduction to and understanding of the concepts, formats, and social norms and purposes of a specific form/genre of written language. Alan focused five sessions completely on introducing students to the key concepts and purposes of persuasive writing. These were reviewed again before students began their final letters. Gwen and Diane's lessons were fewer in number, but the writing forms were continually reviewed and discussed in whole-class sessions. As students prepared to work on their final drafts, Gwen even pointed out how some writing conventions are different in poetry than in prose. Students then practiced using these forms as they worked their ways through the writing process. Individual conferences with students in all three classrooms included information on the genre or form.

Planning for and involving students in genre/form study was purposeful. Each teacher felt the genre/form would empower students with important personal and social communicative tools. Writing in the genre/form was an impediment to writing enjoyment for a few students, however. All but one of the students who said the unit was not fun stated that it was because they preferred to write in other form such as narrative. Because creating a product within a specific genre/form was dictated by the learning demands of the unit, each teacher thoughtfully considered ways in which to make the writing as meaningful and relevant as possible for all students. Even the students who said that they did not enjoy writing in the genre were involved in making choices. In all three cases, teachers planned for and initiated units in which students would have some input into aspects of their final product. The topics, audiences, purposes, and forms of the final products were a result of negotiated decision-making between teachers and students. Students in all three classrooms mentioned they liked the fact that they were able to choose their own topics or purposes. Teacher appeared to negotiate a balance between their perceptions of students' learning needs and student desires as they established these units.

Organizing and fostering participation in learning activity

Cross-case analysis revealed that each of the three writing units was characterized by a series of writing sessions. Sessions were organized into a variety of teaching/ learning activity settings. Every session but one involved students in at least two different types of activity setting. The number of settings per session averaged 2.8 in Diane's class, 3.7 in Alan's class, and 4.2 in Gwen's class. Five types of activity settings were observed across all three classrooms. These settings were distinguished by the nature of the social interactions or participant structures (Philips, 1983) within the various settings. These five settings include: the teacher and the whole class working together; independent work times in which students worked on writing tasks; the teacher and individual students; cooperative interactions in which students worked with each other without direct teacher guidance; and the teacher and small groups or partners. Each learning setting presented a distinct learning opportunity for students.

Learning tasks were embedded in the activity settings. Although various social interactions characterized each setting, the settings were linked by these learning tasks. The settings were purposefully organized to promote opportunity for students to develop and practice the concepts, tools, and strategies needed to create the final product, which I refer to as the overall unit task. So in session eight in Alan's class, conceptual understandings about revision were first developed and discussed in a whole-class setting. This setting connected to the following setting, an independent work time, in which students were expected to apply these understandings to revision of their own pieces. Some learning tasks stretched over more than one activity setting. For instance, in Gwen's class three settings constituted a lesson on identifying possible topic pairs. First, Gwen and the whole class shared ideas for topic pairs. Next, students worked independently make lists of ten pairs. Then, students shared new ideas with the whole class. Students could add these to their lists if they wanted during this time. Although these learning settings differed, they were segments of the same lesson and were linked through Gwen's lesson purpose: have students identify a pair of topics that will serve for rich and fun comparing/contrasting as they wrote two-voice poems.

Participant structures and learning purposes within each of the five settings created distinct social, physical, and mental demands on learners. Social interactions were facilitated by teachers in some settings and by students in others. Verbal interactions were the focus of activity in some settings, but writing or reading was in others. The varied activity settings required students to make several shifts in their activity in each session. Although these shifts were purposeful to learning tasks and goals, these shifts added complexity to students' active participation throughout the writing sessions. In Gwen's lesson, for example, students were first expected to listen to the teacher, look up at writing on the overhead screen, and think about the topics listed. The next minute they were working independently -- facing a blank piece of paper with pencils in hand. Ten minutes later they were expected to be listening to peers and/or speaking out themselves. To maximize learning opportunity in the task within each of these settings, students needed to be actively participating in the prior settings as well.

In order to foster student continuous participation in learning tasks, therefore, teachers had to attend to interactions specific to each of the varied activity settings across the writing sessions. Engaging students was complex, varied, and specific to the types of interactions that occur in the different settings. In the following sections, I describe the five types of learning settings observed in the three classrooms during the writing units. For each section I have delineated the nature, content, and purpose of teaching/learning activity. I have also focused on the ways in which teachers interacted with students to foster student participation within each setting. The organization of these sections displays how settings were linked to promote student learning in each case. Learning activity was usually initiated in whole-class settings and then shifted to independent settings. Embedded within these independent settings were teacher-individual settings in which teachers continued to support and guide students individually. Sometimes whole-class settings or independent settings shifted to small group/partner work. Teacher-small group/partner interactions were embedded in these settings.

Whole-class settings

Whole-class learning settings occurred when the teacher and all the students were involved in the same activity. Communicative interactions were fundamental to whole-class activity in these settings. Common knowledge (Edwards & Mercer, 1987) and information relevant to the learning units were developed through these interactions. The inherent learning challenge to students in whole-class activity was to, as one student commented, "take up information" that they would need in order to create a final written product through the writing process. The bulk of new information that students needed to create specific products was presented in the formal teacher-initiated lessons during whole-class interactions.

Content of these lessons was complex and varied. The teacher-initiated topics for the lessons in each class are displayed in Table 8 below.

TABLE 8: Content of teacher-initiated lessons

Content topic	Unit			
	Alan	Diane	Gwen/Indiv.	Gwen/group
Genre	X	X	X	X
Purpose	X	X	X	X
Topic	X	X	X	X
Audience	X	X		
Content development		X	X	X
Graphic organizer/planning		X	X	X
Revision	X		X	X
Editing	X			
Format		X	X	
Process			X	X

Ten individual topics were addressed across the three units. Although some topics were addressed in individual interactions with students, the bulk of new information occurred in the whole-class learning settings. Each unit contained six or more formal lesson topics that were intended to help students develop understanding of concepts and tools that they would need to create specific final products.

As teachers sought to engage students in developing these critical concepts and skills in whole-class settings, interactions in these settings were distinguished by three common characteristics. First "taking up of information" in whole-class settings was a process that was teacher-directed and paced. All three teachers, however, also sought students' active involvement through a variety of more interdependent communicative formats. Second, communicative interactions were not constant, but fluid. Formats overlapped as teachers encouraged students' participation. Third, all three teachers used verbal repetition and visual tools extensively in whole-class interactions involving either development of new concepts or providing of procedural information students needed for independent work times.

Varied communicative formats

Interactions in whole-class settings occurred through a diverse array of communicative formats across the lessons in each classroom. Very unidirectional teacher-talk formats were observed in each classroom. Students' roles were to listen. These formats served specific purposes. Teachers gave directions, read aloud to students, and provided students with understandings of concepts and formats that they might not otherwise learn on their own. These one-directional formats, however, represent a small portion of the time spent in whole-class activity.

Most of the communicative activity in whole-class settings was more interactive and interdependent. Students were expected to listen to class members as well as the teacher. They were also expected to participate through talk and, at times, be simultaneously engaged in writing. Interactive formats provided opportunity for students to participate in discussion as speakers as well as listeners. Students were expected to contribute to the flow of conversation. Concepts, skills, and other information important to creating a final product were developed and reinforced in these more active formats. Active participation also provided opportunity for students to share ideas, feelings, experiences, and their writing with the teacher and classmates. Interactive formats that the three teachers instituted in the units included: discussion; student sharing; and guided activity.

Discussion. The most predominant form of interaction in whole-class settings in all three classrooms was what I broadly refer to as discussion. Common to discussion in all classrooms was students' active participation as speakers or non-verbal communicators as well as listeners. Discussion was fluid and norms of interaction shifted constantly. A traditional teacher initiation-response-feedback sequence might blend into a student initiated line of conversation in which students posed or answered questions or initiated sequences of conversation.

Encouraging students to actively participate through talk was especially noticeable in Diane and Alan's classes. In fact, Diane once began a group discussion by reminding students to be "excellent citizens and conversationalists." Alan called it "classroom dialogue." In some sequences students responded directly to each other. Alan visibly stepped back during such an exchange between two students in the front of the class to ensure a line of sight between the two. All three teachers sometimes redirected students' questions to other students. Alan consistently stopped his own response to a student if he overlapped with another student.

During discussion, teachers constantly asked students questions. Alan referred to this as an "inquiry" approach to teaching. Choral responses occurred in all three classrooms. Although most often the questions to which students responded in a choral fashion had a limited number of responses, Diane asked open-ended questions to which all the students responded at once. For example, in session two she and the students were discussing events of the story. Diane first asked, "What's happening on the next day of the trip? Several students simultaneously put forth their answers. She then asked, "So what does that tell us about what is happening here?" Again many students answered at once. At this point Diane altered the format of discussion and asked that students respond one at a time so the ideas could be heard by all.

A portion of dialogue from a segment of whole-class teaching/learning activity in Alan's class demonstrates the way in which he, like Diane and Gwen, sought to actively engage students in whole-class discussions. The topic focus of the discussion is the development of key concepts of persuasion. Prior to this segment, students were sharing their initial written responses to the principal. Two students had just shared two very threatening letters. Eugene called out from the back of the room.

Eugene: I don't think that will get us our recess back.

Alan immediately responded to this call-out.

Alan: Eugene, why not? Why won't those methods get your recess back?

Eugene: I don't know. It just don't sound right.

Other students responded to Alan's question through side conversations and call-outs that overlapped and immediate followed Eugene's response. One student called out, "It will get us expelled." Alan next recognized another student and granted him the floor.

Student: " It's too violent."

Alan: Okay. So, it's too violent. Their response is too violent? Or what they plan on doing is too violent?

Student: It's threatening.

Alan made a statement reiterating the concept of "threat." Then he asked for letter that would serve as a counter example to the threatening letters.

Alan: It's like a threat. Okay. Boys and girls did anybody write a letter that wasn't threatening?

Eugene said he did and Alan asked him if he wanted to read it. After Eugene finished reading his letter. Alan added this comment to move the discussion towards identification of a key concept of persuasive writing.

Alan: So it sounds like, Eugene, you have more questioning as to why. So you want an explanation.

Three factors are noticeable about interactions in this section of discussion. First, a student initiated the conversation about how threats were not likely to persuade people to change their minds. Second, many students were actively involved in conversation through both call-outs and side-talk (Lemke, 1990) with tablemates. A constant conversational buzz filled the room during this time. Third, although the communicative norms allowed for students to actively participate in talking out, Alan, through both questions and summary statements, focused the discussion on the important content that needed to be developed: the concept that one should "avoid threats." As discussion continued, Alan and the students together established two other key components of persuasion.

Student sharing. All three teachers fostered students' active participation in whole-class activity by facilitating brainstorming and sharing of students' written work. Students brainstormed possible topics for their pieces in both Gwen and Alan's classes. In Diane's class students brainstormed possible audiences for their letters after completing the book.

Whole-class sharing occurred on an almost daily basis in Gwen's class. Students shared drafts of their work and final products. Sharing occurred more occasionally in Alan and Diane's classes. Sharing in all three classes included products of specific lesson tasks. In Diane's class students shared their written responses to one part of the story. Initial journal entries in response to the discrepant event were shared in Alan's class. Sharing of work was left up to the discretion of the students in each class.

Guided activity. Guided activity was that in which teachers directed the whole class in simultaneous activity involving more than discussion. Students had to write as well as listen and talk. At times, activity and discussion intertwined. Other times students were asked to work independently on the activity, then class discussion or debriefing followed. Gwen especially involved her students in guided activities as a class. She asked her students to put stars over strong words or phrases that "show not tell" on their rough drafts. Discussion followed. She asked students to reread their rough drafts silently to themselves. During the group projects she guided students through visualizations and movements of the creatures. Diane guided students' activity as they shared and added to their "A to Z" lists of vocabulary associated with the *Save My Rainforest* book. Alan guided students in processes of whole class revision using common models.

In sum, variation of communicative formats served definite task purposes. Additionally, through more interactive communicative formats in whole-class segments each teacher essentially established a classroom public forum. This provided students with opportunity to actively participate in both presenting their thinking/writing and hearing the ideas of their peers. Student input and voices were valued as they contributed to the development of common understandings of writing concepts and tools.

Fluidity/complexity of communicative formats

Communicative interactions during whole-class settings in each class were distinguished by varied, overlapped, and fluid shifts of the various communicative formats just discussed. Formats at times shifted rapidly from discussion in which students were expected to speak out, to teacher-talk in which students were to listen, and then back again. Brainstorming ideas sometimes occurred without discussion, but other times brainstorming and discussion were overlapped. Sharing formats provided opportunity for students to share their work. But sharing also provided opportunity for teachers to comment on the pieces. Below is a summary of session two in Gwen's class that will serve as an example of the fluid changes of interactional formats during a whole-class setting. Nine shifts in format occurred in a 22-minute whole-class activity setting.

> 1:06: **Student sharing**: Students were asked to contribute information about what makes a two-voice poem.
> 1:08: **Teacher talk**: Gwen reiterated what students did yesterday in the writing process. She wrote it on the overhead/collective product.
> 1:10: **Discussion**: Gwen and students discussed where they could find more information about their topic pairs
> 1:11: **Teacher talk**; Gwen shared information about the author of the poem and then reviewed the format of the poem.

1:13: **Guided activity**: Choral reading of the poem.
1:16: **Teacher talk**: Gwen stood at writing chart and reviewed the writing process with students.
1:18: **Read aloud/teacher talk**: Gwen read a poem done by another student and pointed out certain aspects of the poem.
1:22: **Discussion**: Gwen asked students to identify and talk about various strategies on what to do if they got stuck and when they know it's time to move on from prewriting to drafting. She added to the discussion by elaborating on student comments.
1:27: **Teacher talk**: Gwen gave instructions for the work time.
1:28: Students began independent work time

These shifts of format seem purposeful for the development of knowledge students would need to create specific written products. Concepts of two-voice poems were being developed and reinforced, as were concepts of writing process activity. Although the content of the teacher talk contributed to the information students needed, teacher talk sections were interspersed by fluid changes to formats in which students had opportunity and were expected to actively participate in more than just listening. These fluid changes in format kept students more actively involved in communicative processes as development of new understandings occurred in the classrooms.

Fostering students' active participation in communicative interactions

The whole-class segments of the writing sessions were often about thirty minutes in length. The flow of conversation was fluid and contained important content. Teachers provided opportunity for students to participate in communicative events as more than listeners. But students cannot revisit talk in the same way they can with written text. All three teachers appeared to foster students' involvement as listeners as well. Each created a focus for students' attention during the complex flow of communicative interactions through repetitive talk and use of visual tools. In essence, redundancy of information was built into communicative interactions.

Repetitive talk. Gwen told me that she felt the only difference between her current teaching and that with large numbers of English language learners in her previous school was that she did not need to repeat so much. However, repetitive talk was still quite abundant and noticeable in her teaching and in that of the other two teachers.

Teachers consistently repeated themselves, repeated what students had said, and even asked students to repeat themselves. Additionally, cycles of repetition occurred. More than once, Gwen repeated whole sections of information, especially those to do with instructions for independent work times.

Vocabulary and concepts were used and referred to again and again throughout the units. Terms taught and used by teachers were then redistributed through students during classroom conversations. Students also used these terms in interviews with me. "High quality details" was a term heard publicly and privately from students in Gwen's class. In exit interviews, many of the students in Alan's class said that they had learned to "avoid threats" in persuasive letters. This was the first concept discussed in Alan's class and was reviewed and repeated throughout the unit. Diane's students often mentioned the need to be "polite" in business letters. Students used exact words and vocabulary often repeated in the classrooms.

Visual tools. Gwen, Alan, and Diane constantly used and created visual tools throughout the various formats. When Diane discussed the two kinds of business letters, she gave her students pages from writing text to help guide and focus the discussion. When Alan involved students in whole-class revision activity, he displayed a text on the overhead as a common referent.

Each teacher also consistently used the overhead and created charts on paper to record the account of developing knowledge in the classrooms. Alan's class filled three large pieces of bulletin board paper with topics they felt interested in for their persuasive letters. Below is an example of the information recorded on one of the charts in Diane's room. Students had suggested reasons for writing to Omar. The ideas were recorded like notes.

> Omar-purpose
> To help Omar fight for the rain forest
> To learn more about Omar.
> To tell Omar how you feel about what he did

If students were not cueing in auditorially to the flow of conversation, they could see the highlights and key points written down. I sat at the back of Diane's room one time when I was not videotaping to watch a lesson. The noise from the other class in the open space made it difficult to hear and follow what was going on. I asked the student sitting next to me how he stayed focused. He pointed at the screen and said, "By watching up there."

The following excerpt from Gwen's unit displays the way in which she used a visual focus to reinforce telling the students about the format of the two-voice poem before she asked students to choral read.

> Let's, take a look at that, okay. The ones that are said together as a choral reading, because they are both bees, are written on the same line -- right next to each other.
> **[Gwen put a piece of paper as a straightedge under these lines to demonstrate how they were on the same horizontal line.]**
>
> That is how each performer, each voice knows that's their part; how Mrs. Martin knew to say, "It's a joy!" because she's the queen.
> **[Gwen moved the paper down to the next line. She pointed to the vertical column.]**
>
> And certainly, with all the details that followed we'd agree with her. Her life was a joy — was there. And the worker bee finished the line with "is a pain," and they both explained it with lots of details.
> **[She moved paper to the next line.]**
>
> And there — our "We'll gladly explain" — how we knew how to do that together. That was kind of our introduction for "here comes the details all together."
> **[Paper moved under the next line the two bees speak together.]**

In this manner Gwen demonstrated the way the lines fit together. She focused attention on the features of the poetry format as she talked.

The use of visual tools coupled with classroom conversation created dual opportunities for students to focus on and think about key concepts as they were developed in whole-class settings.

Summary

In sum, whole-class settings provided the major portion of the new subject matter concepts in each of these units. Teachers involved students in "taking up" and development of information that they would need to create the final products. Content was complex and varied in regard to genre/form, subject matter, and writing process. Teachers engaged students in communicative interactions with varying formats. These formats were fluid and overlapped. Although teachers directed these interactions, students in all classrooms had opportunity, to varying degrees, to actively influence the direction of classroom conversation. Students were able to bring up and talk about the links that they were making with the content of classroom discussions.

Students in all three classrooms talked about the nature of their mental involvement during learning activity. These comments suggest that students' attention is "divided" or that it goes "in and out" when they are less then optimally engaged in learning tasks. Commonalties across all three cases demonstrate that teachers sought students' active participation in whole-class activities in order to keep students involved and focused in these learning tasks. All three also used repetition of information and visual tools to create redundancy of focus during the flow of classroom conversation. In this way teachers created multiple opportunities for students to participate mentally in classroom events. Engaging students in the communicative interactions in these whole-class settings prepared students with tools needed for the tasks in the independent settings that followed.

Independent work settings

Like the whole-class settings, independent work segments were complex and far from monolithic social settings. Independent work settings were those times in which students worked on learning tasks to create an individual written product. Three features characterized the independent work settings across the cases: independent work settings included a variety of activities; students could pace their social interactions; and each teacher took action that seemed to encourage and support student independence.

Variety of activities

Although students spent most of their independent time working on writing, revising, and publishing their pieces, students were engaged in other formal activity as well during the units. Table 9 below displays the variety of activity in each class.

TABLE 9: Independent activities

Activity	Teacher		
	Alan	Diane	Gwen
Writing/multiple drafts	X	X	X
Reading/research		X	X
Worksheets	X		
Take notes/journals	X	X	X
Use of tools	X	X	X
Make lists	X		X
Use of computers		X	
Art/graphics			X

In Gwen and Diane's classes independent work settings also included reading activity designed to provide students opportunity to develop subject matter knowledge to use in their writing. Alan's students completed worksheets in some lessons. These worksheets provided students opportunity and space to organize and list ideas before they had to write in connected text. Students recorded information, wrote down their ideas in journals, or took notes kept in project folders for use during drafting. Students used tools such as dictionaries in all classrooms. Diane's students worked independently on computers to make their final drafts. Independent work settings did not just involve routine activity. Students in all three classes were engaged in a variety of learning activities during the independent work times, ranging from conducting research to completing a worksheet. Each activity posed different challenges to students, even if it was simply knowing what to do.

Student-paced social interactions

Students' interactions with teachers, other adults, and peers varied across classes. Students in Diane's class had far more control over their social interactions in independent settings than students in Gwen's class usually had, for instance. Although norms of social interaction during independent work settings varied, the opportunity to share and exchange information pertinent to the writing task was observed in each classroom. Individual differences occurred in the degree and nature of interactions student initiated with teachers, other adults, and peers. For example, Jacob talked frequently with tablemates. Sherry Ann, a classmate, rarely talked with peers, but often talked with Alan.

In all three classrooms students initiated informal cooperative settings with peers within the independent work settings. The way in which students worked together varied. Students were observed spontaneously reading their drafts to each other while waiting to conference with the teacher. A few students in Diane's class worked together very closely for most of the project even though their products were individual. Angel, a beginning writer and English language learner, was observed and talked about how she depended on Angelique a good deal to know what to do in Alan's class. In interviews Angelique corroborated the degree to which she helped Angel.

Students were linked to their peers through a common project in each class and were at similar stages in the writing process. No one was on prewriting while others were on publication. Sometimes students were on the same exact task, such as choosing a topic to write on or "visualizing tide zone creatures." Information thus appeared to be shared during independent work times as well as whole-class settings. For example, in Gwen's class Cameron, a beginning writer, choose to create a poem about a cobra and a frilled lizard. In his poem, he highlighted a common characteristic of the two: "I have a hood to alarm my enemy/Well, I have a big frill to alarm my enemy." Cameron commented that he learned that "two different reptiles mostly have things in common" and that he never knew "I liked so many reptiles in the book." He considered this a fun project for him because he learned about a new animal, the frilled lizard. From what Cameron said, the success of this project for him can be linked to one of his classmates: "I just talked to my partner when I was in my old seat about, because we were sharing the books, we were doing the exact same lizard and snake. But we're doing a different lizard and snake. So I just asked him if I could use some of his books and some of his information."

Students in each classroom had opportunity to negotiate interdependent interactions during independent settings that could provide access to information that appeared to further their participation in learning activity. Although students did not attribute classmates as much as they did teachers to knowing what to do, they served as "funds of knowledge" (Moll & Greenberg, 1990) for each other.

Fostering independence

In addition to providing and encouraging opportunity for student interdependence in the independent settings, each of the teachers directly fostered student independence as well. Students were responsible for pacing of their work during these work times. Alan, Diane, and Gwen each were observed supporting students' independence in three ways.

Removal of self. Students in these classrooms had opportunity to take risks and participate on tasks independently. Alan said that his students were afraid to make mistakes and take risks. He routinely removed himself from interaction with students at the beginning of work times, so that they would have to attempt working on the task by themselves before asking for help. Sometimes he wrote himself during this time. After 5 to 10 minutes he would then begin to circulate around the room to monitor and mentor students. Gwen described how she sometimes removed herself and stayed "aloof" during writing workshop time. Diane's students also worked independently while she worked with other students.

Instructions. Just before each independent work session, no matter what its length, teachers provided students with the directions and instructions that they would need to be self-pacing and self-directed. Directions included what to do, what tools to use, how to use tools, expected social norms, and expected time frame. In the example below Alan gives students instructions just before they move into the independent work times.

> Boys and girls during your revising/editing today, you'll be working silently because the last time we met you had a chance to read it with somebody. Today using your editing-- pens, pencils, and markers. Go ahead. Edit. Some of you may

> be at a point where you'll be making a final copy. Tomorrow is our deadline, so we have today's writing session of twenty minutes, and then tomorrow you'll have time also. Okay. Questions before we begin?

Gwen, in particular, made lists of independent work time tasks the on the chalkboard for students as well. Since the tasks students were to accomplish during the independent work times varied, teacher instructions prepared them with critical information about what to do. Students then had opportunity to be in charge of their work and were given responsibility for pacing and completion of learning tasks.

Initial monitoring. At the beginning of the independent work times teachers primarily monitored to make sure students had begun working and were working appropriately on the task. Invariably, at the beginning of independent times, students asked questions about what to do. Some English language learners in Alan's room asked him to repeat directions each day. Diane commented that she had to give special attention to some of her students to get them started on their work. Once she had them going, she felt they would be able to stay independently involved.

Initial monitoring directly followed the teacher giving instructions for the independent work times. This suggests that teachers provided multiple ways to make sure students were prepared to work independently.

Summary

During independent work settings students were involved in a variety of activities. Teachers established classroom norms that fostered students' interdependence. Individual patterns of activity suggest that students themselves mediated the pacing and nature of social interactions in ways the helped them know what to do and how to do it. All three teachers also tempered their guidance with fostering of student independence. Each provided instructions for students and monitored students' initial attempts to tackle the tasks.

Teacher-individual settings

Alan, Diane, and Gwen also directly guided individual students during the independent work settings. This type of social organization occurred simultaneously with independent work times. Monitoring students' involvement with task procedures was one way in which the teachers guided students during this setting. Teachers also mentored students in teacher-individual settings. Mentoring students in individual settings gave teachers a chance to extend their guidance of concepts developed in prior whole-class settings in ways particular to individual student needs. These settings allowed teachers to informally assess student work and hold students accountable for demonstrating use of these concepts in their written work.

Most of the time these mentoring interactions were informal. Teachers responded to students' raised hands or focused on students whom they suspected would have difficulties. As in the whole-class settings, the nature of conversation was fluid and varied during conferences. Although the conferences included segments of teacher talk, discussion formats were prevalent as teachers involved students in the conferences. All three asked students questions, and often they countered a student's question with one of their own. Teachers and students both influenced the topics and nature of talk. If the conversation focused on issues to do with the written product, the product itself served as a presence in the discussion. The text very noticeably became the focal point of teacher/student activity. Both students and teachers looked at the written work at they talked. Teachers often sat or knelt down to be at the same eye level as students. They lifted papers at slight angles off of students' desks so text could be more easily read. In essence, at this point teachers involved students in guided activity during the writing conferences.

Diane and Alan each interacted with their students in more formal revision/editing conferences as well. Before moving into publication of the final draft, students had to meet with their teacher. Students' written text always served as the focal point of teaching/learning activity in these conferences. Both teachers held students accountable for demonstrating use of certain concepts in their texts that had been developed during prior whole-class settings. Students in Diane's class, for instance, needed to show through their texts that they had used appropriate politeness toward their reader. In Alan's class students were expected to have three reasons to support their main ideas. Information was directly conveyed to students about their use of new concepts in these conferences. Students were either socially reinforced for their use of these concepts or given guidance in how to more fully approximate them in their written text. This teaching/learning activity was jointly negotiated, however. Diane, for instance, told Jesse that he would need to "rework" the questions he asked of the President of Mexico. She told him that the "heavy-handed tactics" he used in defense of the rainforest would be unlikely to get the response he desired. After Jesse revised and came back to talk with Diane again, he had changed little in his text. Although Diane was still concerned about this, she asked Jesse, "Okay, Jesse, do you think that is your best work?" When Jesse responded that he had "tried his hardest," Diane said, "If you think that's a good letter, go for it." Clearly at this point, Diane felt that holding Jesse accountable for this concept was not as important as giving Jesse the opportunity to express his thinking in the way he deemed important.

In sum, teacher-individual settings served as opportunity for teachers to continue to guide students in ways specific to individual learning needs. Participant structures in teacher-individual settings were fluid and negotiated. Teachers encouraged students' active participation in communicative interactions in a manner similar to whole-class settings. Students initiated these interactions as much as teachers did. The written text served as the focal point of teacher and student joint involvement during these interactions. Through these teacher-individual settings, teachers provided students opportunity to be actively involved in questioning and assessing their use of new concepts in their written work.

Cooperative settings.

Cooperative settings were those involving partners or small groups of students working together. Alan, Gwen, and Diane each involved students in partner work/small group work during the units. During drafting/revising students read their pieces aloud with a partner. Diane's students also read with partners. Groups of students in Gwen and Alan's classes composed text together. Almost all students expressed pleasure at having the opportunity to work with other students in these formal work times. Working with others to compose text proved particularly difficult for a few students in Gwen's class, however.

Cooperative activity was done simultaneously most of the time in each classroom, therefore, usually occurring as a separate segment of activity. In Alan and Diane's classes, partner discussion was embedded in whole-class discussion at times. Diane would have students turn and talk with a partner before resuming whole-class discussions as a way to give students more opportunity to participate in the conversation. Partner work was not always done simultaneously. Students did formal partner revision during independent work time in Diane's class. One writing group took far longer than the others did in Gwen's class, and this too coincided with independent activity segments.

Cooperative activity, while paced by students, was indirectly guided by teachers. Each teacher provided guidelines for the peer interactions before students moved into these activity settings. Indirect guidance was social, procedural, or both.

Social guidance. Students in all classes were told at times whom to work with. The three teachers asked students to turn to people at their tables or assigned them to partners. Working with others seemed to be routinized in all three classrooms by this time of the year, especially in terms of appropriate peer interactions. Not one student complained about an assigned partner publicly. One student in Diane's class, a very proficient reader, did talk privately to me about how hard it was to work with her reading partner, a very slow reader. Students in Alan and Diane's classes chose their own revision partners since they had to be at similar points in the writing process to be ready to interact.

Students were given social guidance in terms of turn-taking. Diane gave specific directions for turn-taking during the partner reading times. She and Alan reiterated to students that turn-taking should occur in revision conferences. Before small group sharing, Gwen twice even designated the manner in which students were to go around the table and present their ideas.

Teachers also provided guidance on the necessary social roles in cooperative settings. Just before students worked together to create the group products, both Alan and

Gwen stated that each group would have to choose a recorder. Gwen also directed her groups to choose a "publisher" for the group poem.

Procedural guidance. As with the independent work settings, teachers gave specific directions, length of time, and tools to their students just before the cooperative settings. Diane gave her students pieces of paper as tools to guide their peer revision.

In sum, while students paced their cooperative interactions, teachers' indirect guidance influenced several aspects of student engagement in partner and small group setting. Managing social interactions and learning activities is difficult. All three teachers continued to directly influence cooperative settings through direct interactions with the groups and partners. It is reasonable to assume that this teacher guidance provided scaffolding of social roles and procedures in ways that allowed students opportunity to focus on the substance of the learning tasks set before them.

Teacher-small group settings

Since cooperative partner and group work almost always appeared as a separate segment of activity, Alan, Gwen, and Diane interacted with the partners and small groups simultaneously with the cooperative settings. Teachers monitored and mentoring in a manner similar to the teacher-individual settings.

Noticeably however, a large portion of this time was devoted to providing guidance in social interactions whatever the nature of the activity. For instance, in partner reading Diane wanted to move about the room and listen to students' reading. Her ability to do this was constantly being compromised by the need to make sure students were engaged in the task. She moved books so that they could be seen and read by both students, even though only one was reading aloud. She moved students closer together. She prompted them to have their eyes on the text and to take turns in the reading.

When discussion was the common task, teachers moved from group to group monitoring turn-taking and the nature of the interactions. In session one Alan repeatedly visited the group near me which included two very vocal boys and two very quiet girls. Alan attempted to make sure the girls' were able to express their ideas and that the boys were listening.

Since Gwen wanted her students to be able to choose their animal, one of the eventual two-voice groups eventually ended up with ten students. This group attempted to compose a common piece of writing. Gwen had to step in and directly facilitate social interactions because the students were unable to do so. She eventually divided this group into two smaller groups so that students could facilitate their own interactions as they composed text together. Even then, Gwen constantly visited these groups and the others to monitor social interactions. At times she had to speak individually to students to soothe feelings or to suggest alternative ways of interacting in a cooperative manner.

Thus, teacher interactions with students during in the teacher-small group/partner settings focused on fostering the social interactions designed to engage students in specific learning tasks. Teachers provided guidance and support for social interactions in order to foster student participation in learning tasks involving peer interactions.

Summary

These five learning settings contained different learning opportunities for students. The ways in which the teachers worked to actively involve students in learning tasks embedded within the settings varied. The nature of social and communicative interactions in the activity settings especially seemed to have affected the way teachers sought to foster student participation. These five settings occurred in purposeful patterns in each writing session and across the learning units. In the next section I will describe the patterns that were noted in all three cases.

Patterns of learning settings

Every writing session but one across the three cases included at least two settings. The one exception was a short seventeen minute whole-class setting in Diane's class cut short by an unexpected school assembly. More time over-all was spent in independent work settings in each case, almost as much was spent in settings focused on social/communicative interactions. Fifty-four percent of the total writing time on the individual poem in Gwen's class was spent in independent work settings, 53% of the time in Alan's class, and 58% of the time in Diane's. On average 55% of the writing session time were spent in independent work settings. More than 45% of the writing sessions were spent in whole-class or small group settings. These figures, however, do not take into account the amount of time individual students spent in social interactions with teachers and peers in settings embedded within the independent work settings. Thus, even more time on average was spent in social interactions during each of these writing units.

Almost all of the social/communicative activity was spent in whole-class settings. Whole-class settings alternated with independent work and cooperative settings. Daily writing sessions in each class were thus characterized by distinctive alternating of these settings. Close investigation into the natures and sequencing of these settings suggest purposeful patterns of classroom activity that fostered students' capacities to actively participate in developing the concepts and skills necessary to accomplish the unit task. In the next chapter I continue to explore these patterns of classroom activity. I discuss the ways teachers purposefully organized activity to involve students in a series of tasks inherent to the writing process.

Conclusion and summary of chapter

While differences across the three classrooms were obvious, the similarities were striking. Gwen, Diane, and Alan all planned for and involved students in complex writing units. They each considered ways to provide students opportunities to connect with the writing units. They were deliberate in designing units that were purposeful and involved students in creation of authentic and complex written text. As the units unfolded, the ways in which teachers structured and guided student participation in each unit was revealed.

Teachers involved students in an array of learning activities ranging from writing to reading to artwork. These activities moved students through the writing process as they explored certain genres/forms and subject matter in order to create specific products. Learning interactions occurred in a variety of classroom activity settings. Patterns of independent settings interspersed with whole-class settings occurred in each class. Teachers fostered active participation in learning tasks in a variety of ways specific to the activity settings.

CHAPTER 5

INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE WRITING PROCESS

In the previous chapter I described how Alan, Diane, and Gwen planned for, organized, and supported students' participation in complex units of study. I now focus on patterns and sequences of activity as teachers involved students in the writing process across the units. This chapter consists of five main sections that examine how similar patterns of classroom interaction focused students' participation in learning activity across the three units. In the first section I describe how teachers guided and scaffolded student participation in learning activity throughout the writing process. Students participated in various tasks in order to create specific products as they moved through the writing process. In the next two sections, I examine patterns across individual lessons. Section two investigates how teachers prepared students for independent work on writing tasks through whole-class teaching/learning activity. Section three explores how teachers continued to support students' participation as they worked independently on the tasks. The fourth section focuses on students' comments about the writing units. These comments are discussed as one indicator of students' participation in writing activity. Section five is a summary and conclusion to this chapter.

Guiding student participation through the writing process

Students in these classrooms were not just told, "Here's as example of a two-voice poem, please write one." They were not even asked to write a business letter using all the steps of the writing process. Instead, close examination of the unfolding writing units demonstrated that teachers guided students' creation of written products. In each unit the complex activity of the writing process was broken down into separate tasks. Teachers then involved students in teaching/learning activity specific to these tasks. The nature of the tasks changed over the course of the writing process as text emerged, as did the manner in which teachers fostered student participation in the tasks.

Demarcations

As the units unfolded, teacher guidance of activity created demarcations between components of the writing process. Prewriting occurred through a distinct set of lessons in each unit. In Alan's class all the students moved into drafting at the same time. During work on the group poems, Gwen gave her students permission to move to drafting when they were ready. Although the students did not all begin drafting immediately and some students returned to prewriting at times, most groups made the shift into drafting during the following independent work time. In Diane's unit and in Gwen's individual poem the shift was more individual. But students' entries into drafting were determined by completion of a final prewriting activity in each class. Students completed this activity at different times, but no one worked on it longer than one or two independent work times before moving into drafting of text.

The next demarcation, between writing/revising and publishing, was more individual, but again mediated by teachers. Some students in Alan's room expected to move to publishing before he did specific revisions lessons with the class. He told them and the class that no one was ready to go on to publishing. Gwen specifically announced publishing days. She wore a special "publishing vest." Students in both Diane and Alan's classes had to conference with the teachers before moving on to writing their final drafts.

Diane's and Gwen's units also included post-writing lessons. The mail carrier came into Diane's class and picked up the letters. Students in Gwen's class shared their written products with peer, school, and community audiences. Gwen also involved students in written self-assessments after both the individual and group poems were completed. Although the post-writing can perhaps be considered an important aspect of learning in these classrooms, it is not part of the writing process or creation of the task object per se. I will therefore, confine discussion in this section to the first three parts of the units.

Three stages

The demarcations served to divide writing process activity into three stages; prewriting or preparation for drafting; writing and revising one's work; and preparing one's work for social presentation to audiences. Each of the three stages of the writing process presented different problems and tasks for students. In prewriting the students prepared to write. They learned new genre/form concepts, purposes, and formats. They decided on topics, personal purposes, and audiences for their written pieces. Students also recalled and /or learned more information about specific subject content. Students then had to bring this mental knowledge to bear on creation of written text during the second stage of the process. In the second stage students both drafted and interacted with their text as their pieces developed -- revising, editing, and continuing to draft. The final stage, preparing the text for social presentation, was also an active process that placed social, mental, and physical demands on students. Creating the final draft was far more than preparing a "neat sheet" in these classrooms. Students expressed awareness of both social conventions for written work and their audiences. Neither Diane nor Alan discussed letter formats until this point. Arranging the lines for the two-voice poem format was difficult. Students had to incorporate new information and any changes they had made on their rough drafts into their final drafts. They continued to revise and edit as they created final drafts. Students in Alan's class were required to write with pens, causing consternation among the students.

Creating these demarcation points within the unit created opportunities for teachers to guide and deepen students' engagement with the tasks in each of the components. Alan, Diane, and Gwen achieved this in three ways. First, teachers designated the length of the time students were to be involved in each stage of the process. Second, teachers made clear what tasks students needed to work on during this time. Together these affected how students could and would participate in the specific tasks. Alan and Gwen both used length of time to provide opportunity to deepen student interactions during the writing/revision process. Students could not just dash off a couple of sentences and be done. Student had to revise and edit before creating a final draft. In

Gwen's class in particular, long periods of time over several sessions were spent on writing and rewriting. This appeared to be routine -- established over the year. Several students in her class wrote multiple drafts. Revisions covered their papers. Third, students were held accountable for the quality and thoroughness of their work at the end of some stages, in essence, demonstrating mental involvement with the relevant tasks. For example, Diane's students had to show and discuss their graphic organizers/ planners with her before they moved on into drafting. Some of them had to go back and add more details to their planners. All teachers gave students either group or individual feedback before they moved into publication tasks. Feedback often came in the form of questions to provoke students' further mental interactions with text. They also suggested or modeled changes that students could make in order to produce a final draft.

Despite establishing demarcation points that broke the process into stages, recursive processes were encouraged and observed in Diane and Gwen's classes, especially between drafting and prewriting. A few students also mentioned their recursive processes. For example, in Diane's class Anna commented on the changes she had made over the course of the unit, "Because in my planning I didn't know what to write about, so I had to think a lot. And I changed everything around from my rough draft to my final draft." Students were not always at the same exact place in the writing process, but they were close together as they shifted from one stage of the process to another.

Teaching/learning activity within stages of the process

Teachers engaged students in a series of teaching/learning activities within each stage of the writing process. Teacher-initiated lessons were inherent to each activity. Lessons in the three units tied directly to the decision-making, problem solving, and information gathering tasks of students as they moved through the writing process. Through these activities each stage was further divided into the discrete tasks of the writing process.

Prewriting accounted for the bulk of teaching/learning activity in each unit. Donald Murray (1982) has suggested that 70% of the time spent in writing should be at the prewriting level. Seventy-five percent of the unit time in Alan's class was spent on prewriting. His students did not begin drafting their individual letters until mid-way through session seven in a unit of nine sessions. Fifty-seven percent of the unit time was spent in prewriting activities in Diane's class. In the time allotted for completion of the product in Gwen's class, prewriting took up 33% of the time in the individual poem sessions, and 46% of the time in the group sessions. In part, the lower percentage in Gwen's classes can be attributed to publication. Creation of both final products was a time-consuming process in her class as students published work that was both "art to look at and a musical joy to hear." A good deal of time was spent in artistic presentation of both the individual poems and of the class anthologies that resulted from this unit. Gwen herself considered all the work on the individual poem to be the "prewrite" for the group poem. And while students did spend time during prewriting doing research on their tide zone creatures for the group poems, this was not new subject matter for them. Students used information from their earlier reports on tide zone creatures as well as conducting further research.

The difference in the amount of time spent on prewriting was linked to the number of separate tasks in this stage of the process and the lessons that accompanied those tasks. The prewriting component of the units included: development of genre concepts and purposes used to compose text; decision-making regarding personal purposes, topics, audiences; learning and use of planning tools; and development of understandings of the writing process. Eleven was the average number of prewriting lessons initiated by teachers as compared to an average of seven lessons in the other two stages combined. Not all topics appeared in all classrooms. The number of lessons per topic varied, and sometimes topics overlapped within a lesson. But in each class, all or some of the prewriting task processes were discrete lessons.

During the writing/rewriting in the second stage of the process, Gwen and Alan conducted whole-class lessons focused on revision tasks specific to the genre or form. Gwen and Diane developed concepts and understandings of formatting tasks with their classes during the publication stage of the unit.

Differences in guidance across components

The most noticeable difference in teaching/learning activity as students moved through the writing process was the amount of time spent in whole-class settings as compared to independent work settings. (See Table 10 below.) The amount of time students and teachers spent in whole-class settings was considerably greater during the prewriting stages of the process. 53% of Alan's prewriting time, 56% of Diane's and 60% of Gwen's was spent in whole-class settings. Considerably less time was spent in whole-class settings during the other two stages.

Table 10: Time spent in whole-class settings

	Whole-class settings	
	Prewriting stage	Other stages of the process
Alan	53%	16%
Diane	56%	22%
Gwen	60%	43%

These figures indicate that the manner in which teachers guided student participation in writing tasks differed across the three stages. During the prewriting stage the various tasks each student undertook were first addressed in long lessons that occurred in whole-class settings. As students' written text emerged during the drafting stage, whole-class settings were fewer and the bulk of teaching/learning activity occurred during independent work settings. Individual guidance was most evident during writing, revision, editing, and publication as differing needs for guidance arose.

In sum, teachers involved students in lessons for tasks that they needed to accomplish as they moved through the writing process. The various tasks of the writing process were broken up into discrete teaching/learning activity that engaged students in both learning about and doing tasks as they created written products through the writing process. Much of the teaching/learning activity occurred in whole-class interactions, but guidance became more individualized over the course of the unit. In the next section I will discuss how teaching/learning activity began in whole-class settings as teachers prepared students to work independently on writing tasks.

Preparing students for independent participation in learning tasks

Lessons in these classrooms usually occurred across several activity settings. Teachers initiated lessons in whole-class settings and then the students moved to independent or small-group work times. This patterning of lessons prepared students for participation in independent learning tasks. The length of time spent in these whole-class settings varied. Whole-class segments of the lessons were sometimes brief. Teachers provided students with instructions and information about procedures that would allow students to work independently. Other times, whole-class activity segments were quite long and involved. These longer whole-class segments usually lasted about 30 minutes, and one of Alan's segments was 43 minutes long. They were strategic and purposeful as teachers engaged students in developing understanding of the multiple tools, concepts, and strategies specific to the problem solving and decision-making tasks they were about to undertake. The purposes and nature of teaching/learning activity within these whole-class segments varied as students in the three classes worked their way through the writing process.

Purposes for whole-class activity

Student decision-making and problem-solving processes in all three classes were preceded by teacher guidance and interdependent interactions with other students. This teaching/activity served to prepare students with the information, strategies, and concepts that they needed to work independently on writing process tasks. Whole-class activity prepared students to engage in immediate, future, or complex independent work and combinations thereof.

Immediate tasks

Sometimes whole-class segments of the lesson occurred just prior to independent work times that required either decision-making or problem solving. For instance, choice of topic in Alan and Gwen's classes and the choice of audience in Diane's class were preceded by interdependent lessons in which multiple ideas were shared. During these lessons, lists and charts were developed by the class and remained posted during the independent work times. At times, students made their own lists as well. A few students, mostly emergent/beginning writers, mentioned that simply deciding on a topic was one of the most difficult parts of the unit for them. Both individual and group lists were helpful to these students and others. Lists provided students with information that they could utilize to decide who and what to write about. Gwen specifically talked about making a personal list as a writing strategy for students. She told her class that they would have these lists to refer back to if the topic they chose did not work out once they began planning. A few students in each class moved on to a second topic or audience.

Whole-class teaching/learning activity sometimes prepared students for immediate problem solving. Gwen guided students in finding and discussing alternatives for "tired sentences" in their work during a guided activity segment just before students worked independently on revision. Just prior to the independent work time in which students would begin revision work, Alan involved his students in guided activity. Together they reviewed and revised samples of student writing for specific purposes. In these cases teachers used models and examples to provide students with mental tools they could use in their own revision processes.

Future tasks

Given the nature of the writing process, however, much of the time whole-class activity prepared students and gave them practice for tasks that they would not undertake immediately. For example, Alan developed key concepts of genre, such as "avoid threats" over a six-day period before students had to apply the concepts in writing their individual letters. In addition, students were not always at the point in their work where they could directly apply the lesson. They might be close, but some students were still drafting when teachers led whole-class revision lessons. In these situations, physical tools were developed with students to aid their participation in independent tasks that they would undertake at a later time. In Alan's class, for instance, he and the students developed a list of key concepts of persuasive writing during discussions. They reviewed and added to this list just prior to drafting. It remained hanging during subsequent independent work times. This chart, written on bulletin board paper read: avoid threats, try to understand the person's point of view, offer a solution or alternative, a conclusion. Not all the information discussed and developed during the genre work was contained in this chart. The chart, however, did provide a visual reminder of some of the concepts developed during previous writing sessions.

Charts in all classrooms remained up and served as guidance to students even if they were not ready to move directly into the activity during the independent work time. Students were observed using these charts, even going right up to and reading them. Additionally, both Diane and Gwen reviewed and discussed charts that were already on the walls. In this way, each refocused students' attention on relevant information or models for writing activity previously discussed in the classroom.

Other times students took notes, made their own lists, or were given papers for individual use. Alan handed out and reviewed an editing sheet with students. Diane engaged her students in discussion of the purposes and form of business letters. But she also provided them with the pages from the third-grade writing text that gave the guidelines for information to be used in writing business letters. Students in these classes reported using these tools. For instance, Christina stated that she learned, " I have to write why I am writing, some questions that I have, what do I want them to do, and thank you. When I asked how she knew what to do, she replied, "Because of the sheets."

Interactions of students with lists and other forms of written language available as tools for their use during independent work times suggest that these served as effective contextual support (Cameron, Hunt & Linton, 1996) for conceptual and memory processes involved in composition. Students had tools to assist them as they engaged in mental integration of writing subprocesses. Significantly, these tools were developed with students, not simply handed to them before they participated in writing tasks. Additionally, teachers refocused student attention on charts as tools by revisiting them prior to students' engagement in independent writing tasks. Students had opportunity to develop knowledge about these tools and how they could be used.

Complex tasks

Written composition is complex, and at points in the process students had to coordinate a variety of information and concepts. The juncture of prewriting and writing is one of these points. Students had to take information from their prior decisions and conceptual understandings, coordinate it, and generate written text. Essentially, students had to transfer their thinking into words and write them down on paper as indicated in Figure 4. Student responses to the question of what was hardest in their writing units varied. But, not surprisingly, most of the students across the three classes indicated that this point in the process was most difficult.

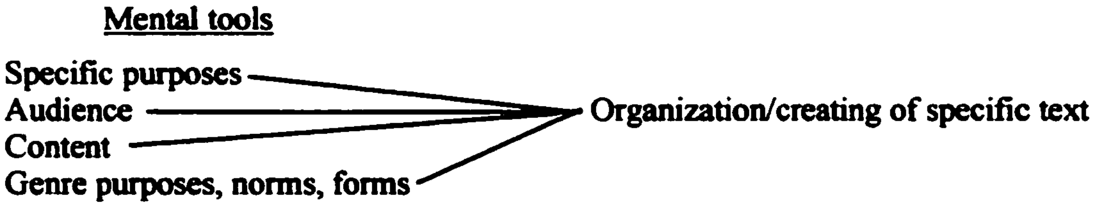

Mental tools
Specific purposes
Audience
Content
Genre purposes, norms, forms
Organization/creating of specific text

Figure 4: Coordination at the juncture of prewriting and drafting

In all three classrooms, whole-class lesson segments at this juncture were all "layered," with multiple lessons that prepared students for independent involvement in the complex task of text generation. Layered activity prepared students to work independently on parts of the writing process that required complex coordination of a variety of knowledge and skills. Below I describe a twenty-five minute whole-class setting in Diane's class as an example of the way layering occurred. This segment occurred just before students began planning for their letters.

> 1:28: Activity began with instructions as Diane told students to open up their writing notebooks and take notes to use later during independent time. She

reminded them to "give themselves lots of personal space" in their seating arrangements on the floor.

Lesson 1– 1:29- 1:39. Activity focused on purposes/audiences/content for specific letters. Teachers and students developed three charts together.

1:29: The lesson began with a brief informational format as Diane told the students that the first step in writing a business letter is to decide what the purpose might be.

1:30: Diane then asked a question that precipitated a discussion format. In this section of activity Diane and the students brainstormed and discussed purposes people might have to write to each of the three audiences previously decided upon. Students took notes and Diane made a chart recording students' responses for each of the three.

Lesson 2—1:39-1:47. The focus was on purposes, norms, and content of business letter.

1:39: Diane directed students' attention to the paper she had handed out to them. This paper, a page from the writing text, provided descriptions of two types of business letters. After each description was a list of items that should be included in the type of letter. Diane read the information for the first type of letter as students read along on their papers. She then guided discussion, helping students to link this information with their purposes for writing. This sequence was repeated with the other type of letter. During this lesson Diane reinforced norms of politeness of tone in business letters.

Lesson 3—1:47-1:51. This lesson focused on purposes of graphic organizer and how to use it for planning and organization.

1:47: Diane assigned and explained the specific independent task for the day—plan one's letter using a graphic organizer. Diane explained and modeled use of the graphic organizer. She linked the organizer both to those done previously by students and to the expectations for the final written product.

1: 51: Diane gave specific instructions for the independent work time.

At this end of this time, students had information and tools from all three embedded lessons to use both in their immediate work time and future work on their written products. Figure 5 below depicts the way in which the layered lessons provided students with the information they would need to complete the next independent task in the lesson. In this lesson Diane provided the students with instructions on how to use the graphic organizer as a planning tool before they began to draft. Providing students with a planning tool seemed particularly important to student participation in the complex task of coordinating information while composing text. This issue warrants closer investigation.

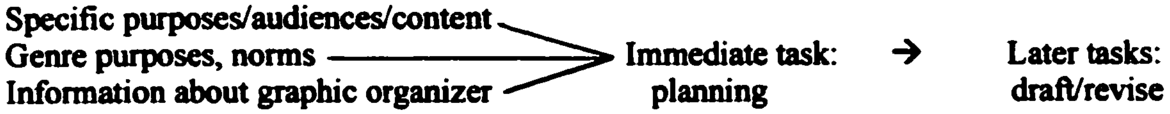

Specific purposes/audiences/content
Genre purposes, norms
Information about graphic organizer
Immediate task: planning
→
Later tasks: draft/revise

Figure 5: Layering in Diane's lesson

Gwen and Diane both directed students in a final prewriting task that engaged students in activity at this juncture in the writing process. Students were asked to complete a graphic organizer that required them to record and organize their ideas and information before beginning to write in the designated form. Each teacher specifically modeled a certain type of organizer, but also suggested that other models might work as well. A few students in Diane's class and one in Gwen's opted for another kind of organizer with which they were familiar. Both teachers gave explicit directions to add "lots of details" that could lead to thorough and quality products. Gwen even had students brainstorm of list of sources for gathering more information on their specific topics and provided resources for the students to use in their group poems as well. Students were held responsible for thoroughness of information and completion of this task before they could move onto drafting.

When they began to write their rough drafts, students in Gwen's and Diane's classes were observed going back and forth between their organizers and emerging drafts. Students also reaffirmed their use of the organizers to aid in drafting when I talked to them. Mike, a developing writing in Diane's class commented, "I took some of this [points to organizer] and put it on that [points to rough draft]. I just kept using what I had here and put it on that." Mike later commented that during the unit he had learned, "How to do my facts first. And then do my rough draft and do my final draft." These organizers appeared to serve as a bridge for the students at the point of transition between mentally coordinating one's thinking across subject matter and rhetorical domains and putting ideas down on paper. Students could explore their thinking, delve into memory without struggling to simultaneously coordinate and organize their ideas into unfamiliar forms of writing. In essence, it appears as if the planning tools scaffolded students' participation in the task in ways that could provide opportunity for knowledge transformation (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) to occur.

Lack of a planning tool

Three of the four genre activities that Alan used in his unit involved students in listing and organizing their ideas before writing in sentence or paragraph form. Alan did not, however, explicitly involve students in doing this prewriting activity for their final letters. Instead, just prior to the first drafting session, Alan shared and discussed three models of persuasive pieces with the students. He called attention to general organization of the letters, paragraph formation, and specifically talked about adding a conclusion. He added "write a conclusion" to the list of genre elements. Students then began their independent work on the task. Students did not spontaneously use a pre-organizing tool, but just began writing their rough drafts.

Problems with students' organization of text emerged during the independent work sessions. Alan had to provide both whole class instruction and individual mentoring on organization and thoroughness of ideas. His guidance was done retroactively, during revision, rather than proactively as Diane and Gwen had done prior to and during initial drafting. Alan led a directed whole-piece revision lesson in session eight after students had already worked on their rough drafts the previous session. Whole-piece revision is much more difficult than revision on the word, sentence, or paragraph level, especially if one does not have firm conceptions and internalized models of holistic organization to begin with. Most of Alan's individual feedback to students came after they had already their written rough drafts. In some conferences with students he assumed part of the work of organizing for his students by giving them specific information about what belonged where. Although this perhaps served learning needs, students did not get the proactive guidance that could scaffold their ability to work independently on planning and organizing tasks.

Using products to indicate task participation

Looking at student products is one way to try to glimpse how students participated in writing processes and worked on a particular task. The rough drafts of Alan's students can indicate how his students participated in initial drafting. The task set before his students was: state a point of view and then give three reasons to try to persuade the recipient of the letter of this point of view. This task was similar to the tasks students had just been working on in their genre studies. Several of the rough drafts suggest that lack of a planning tool influenced the ways in which students participated in text generation. Without this tool to scaffold their thinking and actions, students did not appear to grapple with the difficult aspects of planning for and organizing of thoughts for their written products. For example Junior's (beginning writer) rough draft reads:

> Dear [School Cook], I think the school lunches
> be bigger because most all the kids are not
> even fuul when they get there lunches thats why most
> all the kids ask if they can get extra food thats why
> I think the school lunches should be bigger even the feild
> trip lunches thats why I think school lunches should be
> bigger and feild trip lunchs thats all I wanted to say
> about the lunches at school.[1]

Junior appears to have had a definite purpose and audience in mind as he wrote. But as he generated text it seems as if Junior just wrote down what came to his mind. His statements are repetitive, and the lack of periods and punctuation suggest a train-of-thought kind of writing rather than thinking about and planning for each idea. While, we do not know the mental planning processes Junior used to compose this piece, we do know that he was not afforded the opportunity to deal with issues of text planning and organization that a graphic organizer might provide.

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[1] Copies of Junior's original writing and those of other students' whose rough drafts are displayed in this section (Angel, Adrian, and Justin) can be found in Appendix J.

Despite the models and explicit directions for the task, lack of a tool to guide students' interactions with the task at this point appears to have let some students alter the task considerably. Jacob, a proficient writer, wrote two paragraphs for his rough draft. Each paragraph was brief and on a different topic. Jacob did not develop and elaborate on his three supporting reasons for either of his topics. He simply wrote them out in a series in a single sentence. Angel, an English language learner and a beginning writer, wrote a four sentence rough draft. Each sentence addressed a different issue instead of developing one topic:

> Students should not have school for the whole year
> because we get to much work and you have to
> wake up early in the morning.
> Students should not smoke when they grow up because
> when they smoke it'll get in your system and your lungs
> will turn black or purple.
> Students should respect others and do as your parents say.
> Students should go to school, but not get homework.

Angel's rough draft suggests that she did not deal with the task of creating a persuasive letter in the way that Alan had hoped. She has not developed one issue and given three reasons to support it. More importantly, however, it does not appear that Angel has planned through and thought about convincing a specific audience with her ideas. Angel's draft does not make it clear what happened mentally for her, however. We do not know if she was unclear about what to do or was having difficulty with the task itself. In either event, she appears that she is not sure about how to engage in the task. Perhaps a planning tool would have helped both her and Jacob in participate in more complex activity aimed at a specific audience required by the task.

This is not to say that all of Alan's students had difficulties at this stage of the process. Angelique and Sherry Ann's rough drafts displayed fine organization and development of supporting facts. Their letters appear written with audiences and purposes in mind. Further, there were students in the other classes that appeared to have difficulties with organization and thoroughness as well. Students were asked to complete complex tasks in each class. But the rough drafts in Diane's class indicate that even her beginning writers were provided opportunity to deal with the complexities of coordination and organization at this juncture in the writing process.

The task set for Diane's students was: write a letter that explains why you are writing; tells about yourself if you wish; asks questions; states what you would like; and thank them for their help. Most important to Diane, and stressed in her interactions with students, was that students were able to formulate questions that were meaningful to them.

In contrast to Angel, Adrian, also an English language learner, a reluctant writer, and beginning writer in Diane's class, first spent a long time thinking about and developing his ideas for his letter as seen on his organizer in Figure 6 below.

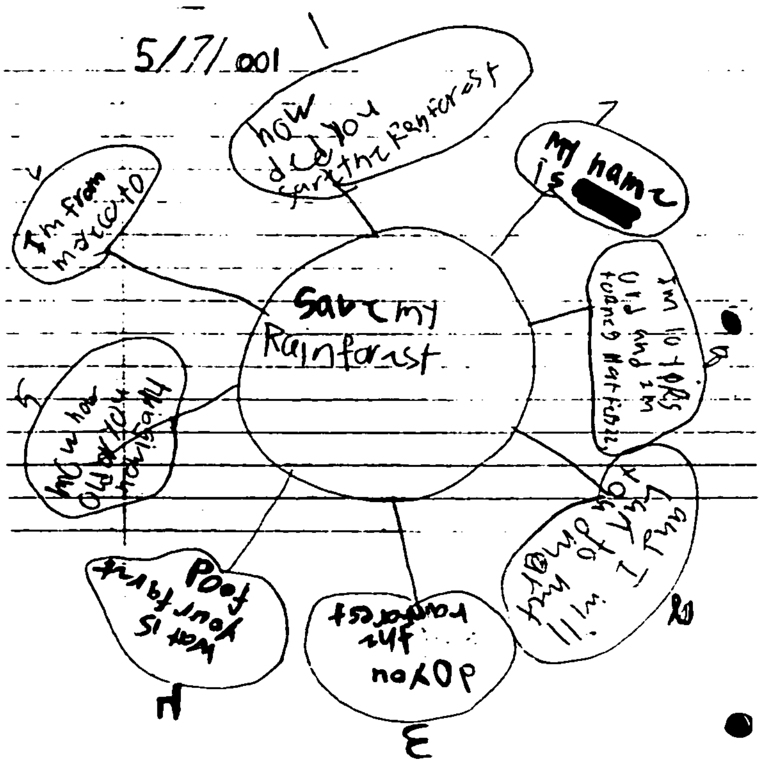
5/7/001
how did you sart the Renforest
My name is [redacted]
Im 10 yeRs
Im from mexico
Save my Rainforast
wat is your fayrit Food
do you hav the ranforest

Figure 6: Adrian's organizer

This is his second attempt at organizing his ideas and the bubble design was a departure from the tree organizer Diane modeled. Note his use of numbers on the outside of the bubbles to show in order in which he will put his ideas in his rough draft. It is possible that he was given guidance in putting in these numbers from his English language tutor.

Adrian's rough draft, like Angel's, is an example of beginning writing, but it contains two distinct sections with connected sentences. The first section contains the questions he has for Omar, the eight-year old Mexican boy in the book. The second section is sentences about himself and his connections to Omar. His product displays a sense of purpose and audience. Adrian's letter reads.

> 4/30/01
> Omar wat mayd you thenk to save the
> rainforest And wat mayd you brave. And now how
> old are you Omar. I'm asking Because in
> the story you were 8 and my guess how old you
> are is 15 or 14. That's my guess.
>
> Now I'm going to introduse my self. Omar. My neime is Adrian in spanech
> it is Adrian the same as
> inglish. And I'm from mexico too and,
> I spik spanesh and I was Born there But not were
> You are from. I'm from guanjuato and I keim
> To Los estados unidos cand tenia 7 anos
> Ohala ke pe ethas harin espanol. [2]

Certainly, this is the work of a beginning writer. But by working first with an organizer, Adrian appears to have had to grapple with the thinking required of the task set forth by the teacher.

Justin, another English language learner and beginning writer in Diane's class, also spent a good deal of time on his organizer, and finished it well after others had already been drafting. Justin's organizer is shown in Figure 7 below.

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[2] Adrian translated this for his teacher as, "I hope you can read in Spanish."

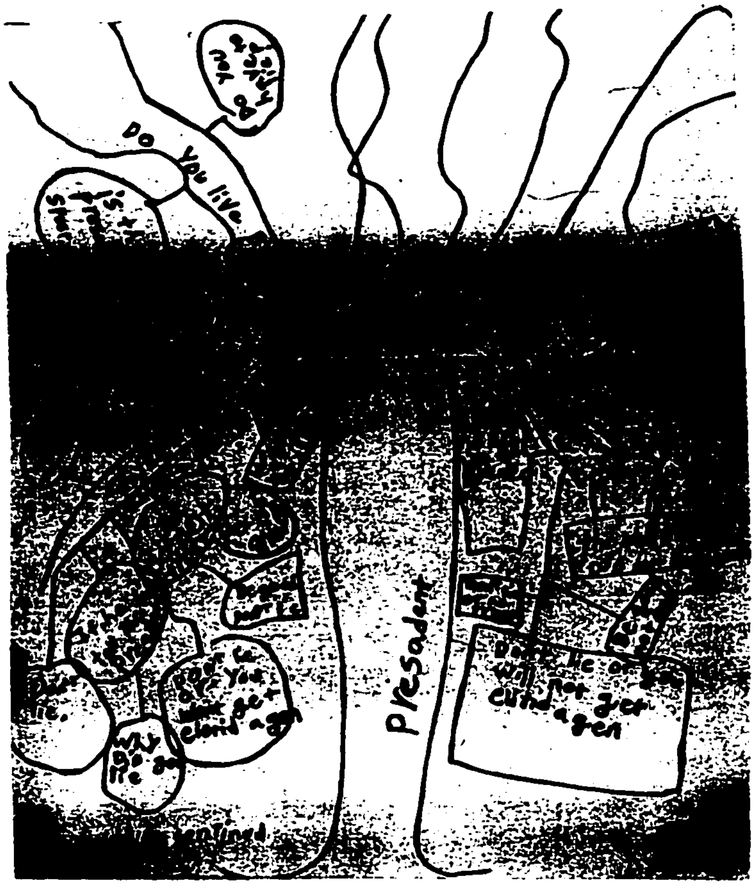

Figure 7: Justin's Organizer

The quality of Justin's subsequent rough draft is definitely that of a beginning writer. Diane remarked that Justin could not write a coherent sentence at the beginning of the school year. Justin did have distinct sections in this letter, though, as he made reference to characters in the book -- a former President of Mexico and a governor of a Mexican state. The sections correlate with the main branches on his organizer. His letter reads:

> Dear, Mr. Fox
> I have some qistons and other
> things. Like ther was a governor
> He told a lie I Don't know his
> name and one more thing
> Some of the questions my relate to the old presadent. Question
> one. Is the presadent spost to
> not lie? 2.Is spost to lie? 3. Do you

> have to lie? now maybe
> some tips in hear and remember
> it my do with the old presadent.
> Why did the old presadent lie
> Why did he not keep his promise
> Why did he do some thing like
> That? lieing. 1.why did the
> Govner lie I ment the old govner
> And one for the govner. 2. Why
> Did you lie to that kid named
> omar 3. Why did he lie?
>
> Thank you for your time
> Mr. Fox and govner.
> Sinserly, Justin

Perhaps the task in Diane's room was easier than the task set forth for Alan's students. Certainly, the task has been simplified somewhat by these two authors. But, Adrian and Justin appear to have known what they needed to do to organize and plan for drafting. They appear to have grappled with the problems set by the specific task at this point in the process by having to think through what they wanted to say.

Alan did not involve students in a task that asked them to plan at this critical juncture of the writing process. Presenting students with textual models of organization prior to drafting did not seem as effective as providing students with planning tools to grapple with planning and organization. Alan appears to have missed an opportunity to provide beginning and developing writers with a tool that would allow them to independently deal with a particularly difficult aspect of the writing process. Alan, Gwen, and Diane were all fervent in their desire to support increased student independence. Almost paradoxically, it seems that by increased scaffolding of student learning, delineating one more task along the way and giving students tools to help them solve the problem, students had more time and opportunity to participate deeply and independently in their writing tasks.

Strategy instruction

Intriguingly, however, Alan's students had recently used graphic organizers to write persuasive paragraphs on several topics. Perhaps the real opportunity missed was that Alan did not teach his students that the graphic organizers on the worksheets were tools that they could use as a strategy for planning and organizing. Strategy instruction is a way to engage students in learning how to do a certain task rather just involving them in doing of it. Strategy instruction that might serve students beyond the completion of one specific task product varied across the three classrooms. Strategy instruction occurred both formally and informally in whole-class settings.

Formal strategy instruction

Formal strategy instruction occurred in lessons. Only Gwen consistently initiated lessons that provided students both with concepts they needed to complete a specific product and understandings that these concepts were tools that could apply to future writing. Gwen was very explicit in telling her students that the graphic organizer was just one method a writer might use in prewriting for a two-voice poem. But she asked them all to use it as part of learning the "tools that writers use."

Gwen also involved students in lessons designed to review and make evident to students the tasks they had been doing and the tools that they had used. She used the writing process chart shown in the last chapter (See Figure 3, page 90.) to delineate the tasks of the writing process. Most days she and the students debriefed what they had been doing in the different components of the writing process. She also used it to prepare students for the tasks they faced in the next independent work setting. Gwen asked students to provide information regarding what they would be doing next in the writing process based on their prior classroom writing experiences. Gwen also used the chart to prepare students for release of scaffolding. Although the chart divided the writing process into stages, Gwen used it to teach students that returning to prewriting is a strategy that writers use when they get stuck in drafting or realize that they need more information. She drew arrows between the prewriting and writing columns to demonstrate the recursive nature of writing processes. Additionally, as students were ready to shift into drafting, she asked them to think and talk about how they know when they are ready to move on.

The chart was completed over the course of the unit. Gwen commented that she used this chart this every time students were involved in projects that went through the complete writing process. Through debriefing students were responsible for talking about and identifying what they had done. Gwen thus provided students with opportunity to participate in thinking about and understanding what they had done in a metacognitive manner. Understanding the multiple tasks and the way they unfold and can recur in the writing process provided students with conceptual understandings that they could use strategically to understand new writing tasks.

Informal strategy instruction

Informal strategy instruction occurred through the course of classroom conversation. Writing strategies were told directly to students in teacher-talk formats as "tips." For example, in preparing students to move into revision processes, Diane said:

> So here's a tip. When you get done with your rough draft, first thing I want you to do –same thing as always, read it to yourself quietly in a very soft voice. Because you are doing, you are seeing it, you are hearing it. And you're looking at the same time. You're seeing if the words sound just right to you...So when you do that you have to be your best critical friend.

Both Diane and Gwen also consistently changed to first person voices during teacher-talk formats in which they were presenting strategies to students. In the same whole-class segment in which she gave students the tips, Diane remarked: "After you've read it to yourself, you might go, 'Oops. I need to go back and see if there's something that I need to do.'" Later she said, "And you have to say, 'Alright. Does this sound good to me or it doesn't sound quite right.'" The following quote is an example of how Gwen talked to her students this way also. She demonstrated the self-talk that students could use to know when to return to prewriting: "You'll find, 'Okay, I've got four lines to my poem, but I certainly don't have three pages, like Paul Fleischman does. And it doesn't tell a story of a day in the life or the type existence that these two things have that I've chosen.'" In each of these cases the teachers modeled the internal talk students could utilize to strategically monitor their own progress through the writing process.

Observing students utilize physical strategic tools, such as graphic organizers, is fairly straight forward. Trying to understand how students interpreted and used the conceptually strategies presented in both formal and informal lessons presents difficulties and was beyond the scope of this study. We can assume, however, that both formal and informal strategy instruction provided opportunity for students to learn ways to participate in mental processes. Through this strategy instruction the two teachers made invisible and implicit processes apparent and provided students with language to aid them in problem solving.

Conclusion.

In sum, students participated in whole-class activity that was strategic and linked to the independent work that followed. Students were observed using strategies, tools, charts, and lists discussed and developed during whole-class activity to grapple with writing tasks. Further, whole-class activity provided students with information, concepts, and tools designed to give support to specific types of writing tasks. Planning tools, in particular, appear to influence the nature of students' mental participation in complex activity.

But, creation of a particular piece of writing through the writing process was complex and novel in some ways for all students. Teachers continued to support students as they worked on these tasks independently. In the next section I will discuss the nature of continued support during the independent work times.

Supporting students' participation in independent work times

Several patterns of teaching/learning activity demonstrate the manner in which all three teachers supported students' participation in writing tasks during the independent work time. Each teacher provided both differing amounts and types of guidance to foster students' participation. Furthermore, instruction and reteaching continued on both whole group and individual levels. Student-teacher interactions during the independent work times occurred through processes of negotiation of students, teachers, and the emerging text. Creation of written products was accomplished through joint participation of teachers and students.

Differing amounts of teacher guidance

Alan, Gwen, and Diane each sought to foster independence of all their students. They balanced this with the need to support students as they engaged in writing tasks. The amount of time teachers spent with students during independent work times varied considerably from student to student. Teachers did not initiate contact with students equally. Even in the required conferences in Alan and Diane's classes some students had only one interaction with their teacher while others had repeated interactions. During a 39-minute section of class time in which Diane checked students' graphic organizers, she met with most students just once. But she interacted with Romeo three times and twice each with Jesse, Joseph, and Reggie.

Teachers appeared to rely on prior knowledge of their students to know who might need more support during independent work times. For example, Alan regularly monitored some of his students, especially his special education students — his emergent writers. Not once did he initiate interactions with Angelique, a very proficient writer. Gwen and Diane interacted with students similarly. If teachers initiated interactions with students who were working along quite capably and independently, they were social in nature with comments like, "How's it going?"

The three also relied on informal assessments of students' written text to determine when and how to provide support that would help students engage in their tasks. Lack of text, lack of thoroughness, and incorrect format were two of the indicators teachers used to determine if students needed help with the task.

This did not mean, however, that teachers were unavailable to their students. Students also initiated contact and requests for help. Jesse initiated the conversation the second time he talked to Diane about the organizer. While Alan never initiated contact with Angelique, she raised her hand and asked Alan questions. Students were observed being willing to wait to get help from teachers rather than asking classmates. Some students appeared to constantly initiate contact with teachers just to gain reassurance or to have a social encounter to share an idea or their work. Ian, in Gwen's class is an example of this. Not only did he raise his hand frequently to speak with Gwen, he was very aware of his need to socially share his work. He once commented, " I get really anxious to share when I get a finished product... I get really excited."

These differences in interaction suggest that for the most part, students came well prepared to work independently on their writing tasks. Teachers could thus focus their attention on students who needed more guidance to engage in learning tasks. Teacher guidance was strategic and specific to student needs and concerns.

Differences in nature of guidance

Each of the three teachers gave more personal time and guidance to students who needed emotional and behavioral as well as academic support as they worked independently on writing tasks. Even if it just meant responding more frequently to students who initiated many interactions, extra support was there for students who needed it. The tasks students worked on were difficult. They had to persevere for several days on creating a single product. One example of the extra support provided to encourage students' participation in writing tasks is a writing conference Diane had with Adrian.

Adrian was an English language learner with an IEP in writing. He told me that he did not like to have to "work hard." Diane, however, strongly believed from conversations with Adrian that he was reluctant to write because of lack of confidence and fear of failure in reading and writing. Prior to this conference Adrian had had a very hard time working independently. He sat with his head down a good deal of the time. But Diane had insisted he be accountable for his work. This conference was much longer than most of the teacher-student conferences. I've cut out part of the conference in the interest of brevity.

> Adrian: I don't feel good.
> Diane: I know. Let's sit close together. [She puts her arm around him.] What's the matter?
> Adrian: I've got a headache.

Diane: Let's get through this, and you know what? It will be a liberating thing.
Adrian: Like what?
Diane: I don't know what. Just to know you did it. If there's something that feels—anytime something's been tough you can go 'I did it!"
Adrian: Okay, let's read it.
Diane: Can you read this to me?
Adrian: Some of the words I wrote in there were in Spanish.
Diane: That's fine. So you can tell me what it means.
Adrian: I wrote all of this.
Diane: Wow!
You're writing to Omar, so do we want to say Dear Omar? [Diane writes "Dear Omar" on the paper.]

*****

[Adrian continues to read his letter as they both look at it.]
Diane: I like that. It's personal. Nice voice.
[They both start reading at the same time as Diane pointed to the word. She dropped out after one word and Adrian proceeded. He read and got to the part written in Spanish. He read it and translates it along with Diane.]
Diane: Okay—I came to the United States… [pause]
Adrian: When I was seven years old.
Diane: You haven't lived here long have you?
Adrian: No.
Diane: And what does this say? [Pointing to next sentence]
Adrian: I hope that you can read in Spanish.
[Diane laughs. Adrian smiles.]
Diane: So you're showing him. You know there's not too many people in this room who could write in two languages.
Adrian: There aren't?
Diane: Of course not. That's why, I mean look at what you're doing!

This conference is a rich example of the various types of support teachers afforded their students. Diane and Adrian worked on revision together during this conference, but they also touched upon several issues important to his social and affective development. First, while Diane acknowledged Adrian's physical and emotional state, she did not release him of his responsibilities for participating in either the writing task or the conference. She warmly and quite literally brought him "into" the conference when she put her arm around him. Diane suggested to Adrian that perseverance rather than giving up will ultimately be an experience he can revel in. Diane also validated Adrian's code switching and ascribed intention to his choice to write in Spanish when she commented, "So you're showing him." She pointed out individual strengths of which he seemed unaware. She commented on his personal tone and use of voice in his writing. But more importantly, she provided Adrian with awareness that being bilingual is an asset and a skill that few in the class possess. In these ways Diane provided Adrian with models and insights into participation in writing tasks and the personal strengths he brings to his role as writer.

This conference also demonstrates the collaborative nature of teacher-student interactions with the written text serving as the focal point of the interactions. Diane use of the inclusive "we" in the question, " Do we want to write Dear Omar?" indicated the joint participation that characterize creation of a final product in this class. When she wrote "Dear Omar" on the paper as a model for Adrian, Diane's written as well as spoken language became intertwined with Adrian's. Diane's interactions with Adrian provides an example of how the teachers dropped back in this process of joint participation when students demonstrated that they could move ahead independently. Diane began the conference by reading the letter herself. Once Adrian began to read, she stopped and let his voice take the lead.

The next day Adrian worked very independently creating his final letter on the computer. He remained involved with his task the whole work time. In the exit interview Adrian told me he worked as hard as he possibly could because it "takes lots of effort out of me." Adrian also told me that the project was "fun" because "I like to write." When I mentioned to him that he had told me earlier that he didn't like to write he remarked, "Well, now I'm getting into writing." While I was there Adrian also chose to read a piece of his writing to the class during author's share. Diane told me it was the first time he had chosen to read his work to his classmates all year.

Adrian's comments and actions suggest that Diane's support of both his academic and social needs was a valuable factor in Adrian's willingness to persevere and participate in difficult writing tasks.

Continued instruction

Teaching/learning activity continued in both the whole-class and individual settings during independent work times. Students' emerging text became the focus of personal teaching/ learning activity.

Whole-group guidance

Teachers interrupted independent work times both in formal and informal ways. Each served different purposes.

Informal. As student text appeared, teachers occasionally interrupted work times to talk with the whole class. Despite clear and explicit instructions and prior preparation for independent work, all three teachers at times had to repeat information or repair students' understandings of the task. In one of Alan's genre activities students had to write persuasively about why the turkey should be our national bird. This activity was based on a historical event. The class had brain stormed many ideas before the writing occurred. As students began to write, however, it became clear to Alan that the reasons students were writing down sounded more like reasons for having turkey to eat rather than have it as a national symbol. He stopped the writing and discussed the concept of national symbol more thoroughly with students. Students returned to their writing.

Diane and Gwen also interrupted individual work time to redistribute or share information that had occurred in the teacher-individual activity settings. One of the students in Diane's class asked her if she could tell Omar some things about herself in her letter. Diane immediately announced this idea to the rest of the class. Gwen made brief little announcements to her class like, " I see a whole lot of prewriting, writing, revising, writing, revising, prewriting, writing, revising happening. " These interruptions not only socially reinforced students' actions, but also provided a model for what she wanted students to be doing.

Formal. Formal interruptions to student independent work shifted teaching/learning activity temporarily back to whole-class settings. Students then resumed on the same task. Both Alan and Gwen had students share their texts with other students before resuming drafting. Gwen did this on a regular basis.

Personal guidance

Students' written work became the focus for teacher/student interactions during the independent work times. Teacher and student huddled together; their common visual attention directed at the student's written work. Personal guidance for students became more specific to individual needs based on the text.

At times, this guidance served to engage students on a one-on-one basis with concepts and information that had already been developed in preceding whole-class activity. Gwen again explained and helped three of her emergent writers set up the form of complex form of the two-voice poems. Diane discussed appropriate tone of business letters with Jesse. Alan worked with Buddy on whole piece organization.

Personal guidance became more directed towards a final product as writing and revision processes proceeded and written products took form. For example, Diane corrected spelling and punctuation and offered suggestions for paragraphing. She recommended that students add thank you sentences at the end of their letters if they had forgotten this part of the business letter norm. Diane and Alan provided feedback to students in written form directly on their papers at this time as well. Gwen did this far more sparingly. But she did work directly with students as together they corrected spelling and punctuation errors with white-out and black pens on the group poems, which were going to be published and sent home.

This process of written feedback was a far cry from the infamous "red ink" assessments teachers make on student work. Instead, teachers served as mentors and resources to students. Teachers' expertise in socially designated norms of organization and conventions was shared with students in personal interactions. Teachers discussed text with students and told them what they were writing on their drafts and why. Teachers provided students with information they could use to make the best products possible as they tackled the next task of creating a final product. One student commented that the written words on the page helped her remember "what the teacher said." When asked about unsolicited advice from the teacher at this point of the process, Anna, a proficient writer in Diane's class, stated that. "I don't care. I just want to fix it." Students sometimes sought their teachers' help on their work, especially when the social stakes for the final product were important. As Justin, a developing writer commented, "I'm only in third grade, so I might need help, that's why." A few students also felt that the teacher could have supported them more at this point of the writing process. As student in Alan's class said, "He could have checked it afterwards, so that I wouldn't have to worry about having to change the spelling…So I wished he would have checked it." Students had their own goals and ideas for their products.

In sum, continued guidance on writing tasks during independent work times varied according to the needs of students. It varied in terms of both time and content as teachers worked to foster students' productive and positive participation in writing tasks. Teachers relied on a variety of factors to making decisions regarding the nature of their guidance. Providing support for some students meant dealing with multiple aspects of writing processes. Students were active participants in this guided process. They initiated interactions. Teacher and students were collaboratively engaged in both learning tasks and creation of written products.

Student Voices

In these two chapters I have discussed several ways in which teachers worked to foster and guide students' participation in units of study. I would like to end this chapter by presenting what students had to say about these writing units, what they learned, and how they felt about their final products. Student responses provide another window onto how they participated in learning tasks as they moved through the writing process to create written pieces in a particular genre or form. The complexity and variety of student responses indicate the multiple ways in which they were engaged. Not surprisingly, students talked of learning about the genres, the writing process, and subject matter. But they also talked about other ways that they had connected with and participated in learning tasks. Most striking perhaps, was the high number of students for whom participation in challenging and difficult tasks created feelings of success and competence. Student comments demonstrate the joint nature of knowledge construction as they participated in the writing units. Some students' comments suggest generative understandings applied to new task situations.

Product and processes

Some students in each class clearly recognized and talked about the purposes teachers had for involving them in specific genres or forms of writing through the writing process. In Table 11 below I have listed student comments from each class that display how students engaged with the specific genre or form in which they were writing, other aspects of writing, and the writing process. Since Alan focused so much on genre study, his students commented more frequently on this than in the other two classrooms. The comments suggest that students not only learned about subject matter concepts, but that they also have a sense of successful accomplishment for tackling new and complex problems.

Product content

Students also referred frequently to the topics of their products. Some students in each class talked about how they liked the fact that they were given opportunities to pick their own topics. This was true even when choice of topics were limited as in Diane's class and in Gwen's group poetry. Comments also suggest that students were involved in subject matter in ways that promoted both learning about subject content and a sense of accomplishment as they worked through complex tasks. Students most frequently referred to subject matter in Gwen's class. She had intended that learning the two-voice format would allow students to develop deeper understandings of subject matter. Like Cameron, some students talked mostly about content when asked what they had learned: "[I learned that] two different reptiles mostly have things in common." For Jessie, her involvement with research processes affected her sense of engagement with the task: "I'm proud about my topic. I did a lot of research about fire and water and came up with true facts."

TABLE 11: Students comments/involvement with writing units

Subject matter	*Teacher*	*Comments*
Genre/form/ purpose	Alan	**Jacob:** Because it's like I'm telling them how I feel about it and negotiating how they can do it. **Angel:** I didn't write any threatening words. **Sherry Ann:** I learned that you can't force people to do what want them. And a non-threatening letter could help you make the people understand what you want.
	Diane	**Deion**: I'm telling him that he's doing a nice job for what he's doing for his country. **Christina:** [I learned] that I have to write why am I writing, some questions that I have, what do I want them to do and thank you.
	Gwen	**Angela:** How good I wrote it. It had a beginning and it had an end. I didn't make them fight. **Josie**: I wanted to teach the audience something about my topic. I think that was really important. **Kevin:** We accomplished what we wanted, making a high quality poem.
About writing	Alan	**Jacob:** My paragraphs, probably writing it today, because I was talking here. But on the paper it's probably this. Because at first I didn't know how to write [in paragraphs.] **Angelique**: Support your topic and don't go far off the subject.
	Diane	**Justin**: Yes, I keep forgetting to put a paragraph. **Jesse:** I think because I did my best handwriting.
	Gwen	**Ulayla**: I have more neat handwriting than I did before. **Billy**: The title-because it took me a long time to think it up.
Writing process	Alan	**Sherry Ann:** I went to the workplace and observed.
	Diane	**Anna**: In my rough draft the questions weren't—I kind of changed the questions around so it made more sense. **Justin**: Because writing a business letter really like right now we're going to have to do steps and steps and steps until we're done.
	Gwen	**Josie**: I learned that revising is sometimes frustrating. **Jared**: It's like a cycle. Learning. Like writing, pre-writing, revising and drafting

In Diane's class students focused on common content gained through their reading of the book as the foundation for their letters. Students' different interactions with the content were evident in the range of audiences and purposes they chose for their letters. Some like Adrian and Deion personally connected with the character Omar and issues of deforestation. Several students made comment similar to Deion's, "I think what Omar is doing about the rainforest is important to the country. It lives. It's supposed to help us. It's nature." Others focused on more general issues like Justin, Christina, and Jesse, "We learned that the president should not lie," and chose to write to the President of Mexico to ask questions and present their points of view.

Alan's students wrote on individual topics and had to rely on prior knowledge to make their points and their arguments. But even this limited interaction with content affected some students' learning as they thought through the points they wanted to make. Jacob, who wrote to the principal about filling in the holes on the playground stated; "I was really noticing about the [football] field. In my mind I was really noticing that." Ron also commented about his topic, "I learned that we need lap tops on our desks."

Purposeful learning

Students' comments revealed that involvement in the writing units was meaningful and relevant for them. Comments were varied, reflecting the individual connections students made that engaged them in the writing units. Some students were able to identify the goals that teachers had set for the unit as a whole. For example, Deion commented, "I think my teacher wanted us to learn to be able to express what we wanted and give reasons. You've got to challenge yourself. And you just have to step up and take the risk and do something like Omar did." Others were not so articulate. When asked why his teacher would want them to learn to write persuasive letters, Jacob said, "Maybe like when we get older and like we're voting and stuff this way, it's in our heads." Although the long-term picture perhaps eluded most students, they were very engaged in several ways in regard to purposes of the unit. Students' were very clear on what was important to them about the writing units.

Connection to self

Student comments suggest that they connected to the unit in terms of their achievement in successfully completing difficult tasks. When asked what they had learned or what they were most proud of, student comments across the three classrooms included: "Don't give up. Just keep on going until you get it finished;" [I was most proud of] "getting it done;" "[I was proud of] the whole thing, I really worked hard." [I learned that]" be focused and don't be distracted. Just focus on your work." Perseverance yielded further feelings of success and positive attitudes toward writing in some students: "I thought of some new ideas;" "I'm proud because I have good ideas," "Writing can be fun if you work at it."

For some students the writing units most importantly afforded them opportunity to express themselves in important ways. In Gwen's class, Ian was most proud of the fact that he "made a five voice poem and everybody else has two." Deion said he was proud of his letter to Omar because, " I'm speaking from the heart. I'm telling him, I'm speaking from my own words." In Alan's class Junior was "proud that I told [the principal] why we didn't go out to recess."

Connecting to other systems

Knowing what students learned and if they will then take what they have learned and use it is always an unknown in the field of education. Students' participation in learning tasks provided only opportunities for development. But I would like to conclude by sharing two examples of how teachers' guidance of student participation in these classrooms fostered new understandings that transferred to new situations and tasks. I will first share the experiences of Joslyn.

Joslyn was a proficient writer in Diane's class. She chose to write to the President of Mexico and voice her feelings about deforestation. Her letter reads:

> Dear V. Fox
>
> My name is Joslyn. I live in Seattle
> Washington. I wrote to you because I

would like to know more about
the Mexican rainforests. I was wondering
how many rainforests do you have
left in Mexico?

What are you going to do about
saving the rainforest? Because I
want to help the rainforest so
the animals can live. So people will
stop knocking the trees down so that
there won't be any more oxygoin and
shade for people.

I also would like to know have
you had any experience with the
rainforest? Thank you for listening
to my letter, and I hope you
got this, and write me back.
Sincerely,
Joslyn

Of this experience she exclaimed, 'It's like 'Wow! You're writing to a famous person. I can't believe I'm actually doing this'...I've probably dreamed of doing this or something." By writing her letter, Joslyn has learned that she could communicate her concerns to people in power.

At the very end of the unit, when she was done with this letter, Joslyn went up to Diane and told her that there was a question that she always wanted to ask someone about: "Why do people have wars?" When she discussed this with Diane, Joslyn said she felt that maybe she should send this to someone in the army, and Diane suggested Colin Powell. I do not know if Joslyn ever wrote or sent this letter. But she has learned that voicing her concerns, asking questions of people in power, is an option for her.

Secily was an emergent writer in Gwen's class. Her two-voice poem is displayed below.[3]

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[3] Copies of Joslyn's original letter and Secily's poem can be found in Appendix K.

School

Teacher	Student
I'm a teacher	
	I'm a student
I get coffee	
	I get homework!
I teach a whole lot of 4th graders	
	I go to college
My 4th graders go away	
And thats school!	And thats school!

In my final interview with Secily, she talked about how she was now teaching her younger niece to write a poem.

> When I first heard it [the two-voice poem] I thought it would be frustrating. Now I know it's so easy. I'm now teaching my niece to do a two-voice poem.

When I asked her what she was teaching her, Secily replied:

> Well, I'm telling her on how to use it, that you need to have two columns, and I tell her that you could pick any animal that you want. And now I think that she's on doing her rough drafts…I'm helping her to do her writing and her ideas.

Both Joslyn and Secily have developed rich and understandings about writing and themselves from the way their teachers organized and guided their participation in classroom writing units. From their experiences each has gained generative understandings that they have applied to new situations and tasks.

Conclusion

Alan, Diane, and Gwen guided students' participation in learning tasks through the writing process as they created products in specific forms and genres. The three teachers broke the process up into its multiple tasks and involved students in teaching/learning activity focused on these tasks. Teachers initiated lessons through whole-class activity. Students had opportunity to develop understandings of concepts, strategies, and tools that could support them in subsequent independent work. In addition, teachers and students made records of information that supported students' independent participation. Teachers continued to support and guide students as they worked independently on writing tasks. Support was varied and individualized to meet student needs. Students' responses concerning the units revealed that students' participation in learning tasks lead to a variety of new understandings about writing and self.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers planned for and encouraged students' participation in classroom writing tasks to foster learning of skills, strategies, and dispositions fundamental to written communication. This study revealed that the teachers fostered students' participation in writing activity in multifaceted ways and on a variety of levels. In this concluding chapter I first discuss these findings. I then describe the limitations of this study. Finally, I discuss implications for teachers, teacher educators, and future research.

Discussion of findings

The findings from this study are best summarized and discussed through three major conclusions: (1) teachers planned for and involved students in multidimensional units of study; (2) teachers purposefully organized teaching/learning settings to foster students' participation in writing tasks; (3) participation in writing tasks was a collaborative process -- teachers and students were co-participants in both learning and creation of written products.

Planning for and involving students' in complex units of study

Each teacher planned for and involved students in complex learning units that fostered students' participation in writing as a multidimensional process. The units offered opportunities for students to experience and develop understandings of writing as social, conceptual, affective, and strategic activity as they undertook writing tasks. A multidimensional approach assumes a comprehensive perspective on learning to write. For example, it is not enough to prepare students to write well, if they do not develop personal understandings of the purposes and reasons for writing, or if they cannot persevere in their work. Conversely, it is not enough to provide students opportunity to see themselves as writers if they cannot use their writing purposefully as a social/communicative tool. Teaching/learning activity in these units was complex, comprehensive, and varied in order to foster students' participation with the different aspects of writing activity.

In many ways the multidimensional writing units that unfolded in each of the classrooms were similar to conceptions of "engaged reading" (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999). As in the conceptions of engaged reading, learning activity in these classrooms addressed writing from the perspective that motivations, social interactions, and cognition are equally important processes. These multidimensional units appeared as a balanced approach to writing activity that incorporated elements from both writers' workshop approaches to writing instruction and the more heavily scaffolded instructional interventions of Englert, Raphael, and colleagues (1991, 1994). It may well be that balancing of the various aspects of writing activity may be critical to the participation and subsequent writing development of students.

Teachers' roles in planning for and involving students in multidimensional writing units were varied and complex. As planners, the three teachers considered how to foster and support students' participation in the various aspects of writing. Teachers worked to balance subject matter considerations with facilitation of students' personal connections with the writing unit. Fostering students' involvement in multidimensional writing units was a complexly orchestrated process in these classrooms. Over the course of the units, Alan, Diane, and Gwen wove together teaching/ learning activities to create rich and varied tapestries specific to multidimensional writing processes. They engaged students in a variety of social settings and fluid communicative interactions. Each fostered students' participation in classroom activity in both varied and differentiated ways. Three findings, in particular, illuminate the ways in which these teachers planned for and involved students in these multidimensional units of study.

Framing of unit with genre/form

First, all three teachers engaged students in units of study framed by the genre or form of the final product. By framing the units in this manner, each teacher placed emphasis on writing as a problem-solving process rather than on writing as one of knowledge telling. Students had to consider form and genre features, purposes, and audiences as they worked to compose text on specific topics. Students in each classroom demonstrated that problem-solving processes promoted development of new understandings.

The teachers' choices of genre/form were purposeful and grounded in perceptions of writing as socially and personally meaningful. The teachers discussed with students how the forms/genres were tools that students could use for their own personal and social purposes. In two classrooms purposefulness extended into social issues and provided students' opportunity to participate in roles consistent with democratic citizenry.

Choosing genre/form as the foundation of these units provided a focus for teaching/learning activity that was narrow enough to support students' development of key concepts of writing. In each unit teachers engaged students in developing understandings of social purposes and forms for the written product. On the other hand, using genre/form focus of the units provided enough space for students to contribute to decisions regarding purposes, audiences, or topics that made creating of the final product meaningful and relevant for them. Through student choices, these units based on genre became personalized learning experiences for each student as well. Students connected with the learning activity in a variety of ways and demonstrated a broad array of learning outcomes.

More than genre-studies

Second, to simply label these units as genre studies oversimplifies their complexity. Although the genre/form provided the foundation for the units by designating the nature of the final product, teaching/learning activity in the units unfolded across the stages of the writing process. Each teacher guided students through the writing process as students constructed specific written texts. Unit lessons focused specifically on writing processes. Furthermore, information specific to science or social studies curriculum and six-trait writing emphasized in Washington State were integrated into the units as well. Some have suggested that teachers need to strive for a balance between process and product in writing instruction. In these classroom units, however, process and product appeared interwoven rather than balanced. The three, and especially Gwen, engaged students in long and layered lessons in which writing processes, science content, and text features were contextualized within the genre or form.

Scaffolding and guidance in all dimensions of writing

Third, all three teachers guided and scaffolded students' participation with all the dimensions of writing in these units. The nature of support for students in mental dimensions of writing common across the cases was strikingly different from that espoused in writers' workshop approaches to writing instruction, but similar to the instructional scaffolding in the intervention studies of Englert, Raphael, and their co-researchers (1991, 1994). Both in their interviews and in classroom decisions, each of these three teachers clearly demonstrated that writing, as a mental endeavor, was an integral focus of teaching/learning in each unit. Diane even began the unit in her class with a discussion of "What is critical thinking?" Each teacher thought beyond just what they see to try to understand what is happening in the invisible mental processes of their students. These teachers scaffolded writing tasks in order to foster students' abilities to more deeply participate in the mental aspects of writing.

Alan, Gwen, and Diane each supported their students in both the learning of and utilizing of mental processes involved in writing in several ways. Each set forth a complex problem for their students. They then involved students in a series of mental tasks by breaking down the problem into the inherent tasks of the writing process. This is similar to conceptions of reducing "executive demands" of a task (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987). In breaking down the problem into smaller components, these teachers made very clear on the social and external level through classroom dialogue and modeling, exactly what the students were to be doing each step along the way.

Additionally, teachers provided students with strategic tools to help them complete the tasks. Tools were varied and served different purposes. Some of these tools were procedural, such as the checklist Diane gave her students to guide their independent and partner revision processes. Other tools, like the graphic organizers/planners, were more substantive and essentially provided students with conceptual and strategic means to work on difficult writing tasks. Unit events suggest that providing students with such tools at critical points in the writing process no matter what the genre can deepen their involvement with the mental work of written composition.

Thus, teachers proactively provided students opportunities to know exactly what to do and the tools to do it. The problem space was narrowed for students, not to constrain but to scaffold students' abilities to work independently towards quality products. Catherine Cameron, Anne Hunt, and Murray Linton (1996) theorize a zone of proximal development for each mental subcomponent process in written expression. Explicitly breaking down the writing process into its component tasks perhaps provided contextual supports that fostered beginning and developing writers' abilities for deeper transactions with subprocesses of composition. We can assume that appropriation of conceptual and strategic tools and likelihood of subsequent transference to other situations that can occur only if appropriate transactions are occurring.

Furthermore, teacher support of students' participation in these units occurred in a variety of ways that went beyond cognitive and strategic interactions with writing tasks. In addition to making social and personal purposes of the genres clear to students, teachers bolstered students' affective interactions with writing tasks. They were observed scaffolding and modeling positive attitudes and responsibility for students who were unable to demonstrate such capabilities alone. Teachers held students accountable for persevering on the task. All students moved through the stages of the writing process to complete a finished product. Teachers also indirectly guided social participation in small group and partner work.

Teachers provided purposeful and differentiated guidance throughout the units. Appropriately involving students was complex work as teachers tried to meet both group and individual learning needs. Guidance was both common to all students and specific to each. In each class students had similar learning needs. For example, social norms and personal purposes for writing two-voice poetry were new to all students. At the same time, each brought different prior knowledge, interests, goals, and skills to the task. The nature and degree of how teachers supported student participation in writing task varied by student as well. Each students' learning experience depended, in part, on their overt interactions with the writing tasks as demonstrated through their written text, their questions, and talk. So that, Alan's revision interactions with Buddy focused on organization of the text, while he discussed the need to support one's ideas with Jacob. For some students, such as Adrian, teacher support served to engage students in self-regulating behaviors and affective interactions with writing tasks.

In sum, these findings suggest that the teachers played complex and multiple roles in planning for and involving students in complex units of study. Teachers analyzed the various aspects of the writing tasks and the ways students participate in these tasks. Teachers considered how to both support class and individual participation in multiple aspects of writing tasks. Providing students with a variety of strategic tools was one way each teacher fostered students' participation in writing tasks.

Purposeful organization of teaching/learning activity

In each of the three classrooms teachers planned for and organized distinct patterns of teaching/learning activity. Student participation in activity alternated between social/communicative interactions in whole-class settings and independent literacy activity. Lucy Calkins (1994) has stated that teacher-student conferences may be the "heart" of the individualized instructional format of writer's workshop. In the three classrooms in which I observed, social interactions and dialogue in teacher-directed lessons appeared to serve as the "heart" of guidance for student participation in writing activity. The goodly amount of time spent in whole-class interactions and the manner in which it diminished as written text emerged suggest that these interactions served a definite purpose and placement in the units of study. Whole-class, teacher-directed activity appeared to have served specific and critical functions for students' participation in writing tasks within each unit. These functions go beyond issues of teaching efficiency when dealing with the learning of 25-30 students. In whole-class settings each teacher fostered both independent and interdependent student participation in ways that provided opportunity for rich interactions with varied learning tasks. Additionally, organization of teaching/learning activity allowed teachers to vary their interactions with students to meet learning needs.

Proactive preparation for independent participation

Whole-class, teacher-directed activity preceded all student-directed work times. The independent and small group work times that followed whole-class time involved more than just routine activity with which students were familiar as suggested in the writer's workshop model. Learning tasks varied from session to session as students moved through the units. A variety of tasks occurred during the independent work times specific to either the stages of the writing process, or content, form, purposes of the written product. Tasks varied in terms of cognitive demands, use of various tools, self-pacing, self-regulation, and regulation of social interactions. Students needed to know what to do and how to do it as they engaged in different tasks to prepare for creation of a written form new to them. The whole-class segments preceding these complex independent work times served this informational purpose. Whole-class segments were not mini-lessons but "focus lessons" (Routman, 1996) in these classrooms. These were long, involved and very purposeful and strategic to the students' current tasks. During the focus lessons teachers proactively prepared students for the specific task at hand both procedurally and substantively. Responsibility for mental, strategic, and social participation in tasks was then transferred to students. In essence, teachers indirectly scaffolded and guided independent work times, thereby providing opportunity for students to participate in deeper transactions with learning tasks as they worked independently. Or, as Gwen put it, students had opportunity to "practice richness" in their writing.

This study suggests that proactive preparation for independent work was complex and involved both communicative interactions and development of written language tools specific to the writing tasks at hand. Students needed to participate in these communicative interactions in the whole-class settings to be prepared for independent work. In essence, these interactions involved students in communicative learning tasks that prepared them with the information they would need for the subsequent task activity.

In order to be proactively prepared with the information for the following tasks, students needed to actively participate in "taking up" of the information. All three teachers thus encouraged students' active participation in these communicative tasks. Although teachers directly presented some new information to students, they also involved them in conversation formats in which students spoke as well as listened. This active participation provided students opportunity to make and discuss connections with new information. Teachers also created focuses on key information through guidance of the conversation, oral repetition of concepts and directions, and visual reinforcement of spoken language to encourage students' active involvement with information. Additionally, teachers and students together developed charts or discussed handouts that students used as tools in their independent work.

Fostering interdependent participation

Meeting together in whole-class activity established a classroom learning community linked through a common endeavor. Whole-class lessons involved students in social interactions with each other as well as with teachers around similar writing projects. The lessons kept the students close together in the stages of the writing process. This whole-class time provided a broader communicative context for the learner/writer than individual student-teacher conferences. Although teacher-directed, students influenced the direction of whole-class activities. Student voices were heard. Opinions were expressed on an array of topics. Often students just volunteered information or reacted directly to the comments of other students. Students were privy to both alternate perspectives and personal links others made with similar subject matter and processes. Certainly, the events in Gwen's class to do with altering the two-voice poem format demonstrated the ways in which students built off each other to construct new understandings. During independent work times, all three teachers interrupted private spaces in order to make public individual ideas and experiences.

Interdependence carried over into independent work times in these classrooms. The shared experiences and information developed together prior to independent work times, coupled with classroom norms that supported student interactions, facilitated students' abilities to support each other's participation in writing tasks. Knowledge and information were distributed and redistributed through communicative interactions. Although social interactions between students are stressed in writer's workshop as well, emphasis is placed on structured interactions for specific purposes such as author's chair or peer revision conferences. In these classrooms carry-over of interdependent interactions in an informal way paced by students seemed critical to some students' abilities to participate in a variety of writing tasks.

Katherine Schultz (1998) advocates that educators broaden their concepts of collaboration in the classroom. Classroom collaboration can be thought of as a process in which interdependent interactions foster each individual's development and ability to participate in learning tasks. This study highlights the manner in which whole-class communicative events fostered students' abilities to collaborate with each other as both writers and learners in units of study.

Flexibility and variability of teacher guidance

By preparing students proactively, responsibility for particular writing and social activity was successfully transferred to students in most cases. This instructional organization allowed teachers flexibility in their individual interactions with students. Individual conferences with students were held on an as-needed basis all the time in Gwen's class and much of the time in Alan and Diane's classes. Teachers were able to spend more time with students who needed extra guidance and attention in order to participate productively with writing tasks. Sometimes, the guidance simply was a repeat of what had been discussed in the whole-class lessons. Every student in the three classes was able to move through the writing process and complete a written product.

In sum, the ways in which teachers organized of teaching/learning activity appear to have created opportunities that fostered students' participation in writing tasks. Some organization aspects of writer's workshop are evident in these classrooms such as the independent work times. In fact, all three teachers referred to these work times as writer's workshop. Fundamental differences were noticeable, however, in the way the teachers organized for whole-class and teacher-student activity. These differences are related to different understandings of the role of the teacher in supporting students' participation in writing activity.

Collaborative construction of teaching/learning activity

This study found that teachers involved students in ways that emphasized co-participation of teachers and students in writing and learning processes. Writing in each of these units was constructed through collaborative interactions of teachers and students. Both development of information regarding multiple aspects of writing processes and emergence of specific written text occurred through joint efforts of teachers and students. Collaboration implies participation of all involved. Gwen, Diane, and Alan each provided opportunity for students to actively participate in the units.

Providing opportunity for active participation of students

Each teacher provided space and opportunity for students to actively participate in decisions that fostered their links to learning activity. A case in point is the integration of teacher-generated writing curriculum with student- generated purposes, audiences and content I have previously discussed. Writing curriculum, as exemplified by these units was not teacher-imposed (Morgan, 1997), but co-constructed with students. As Diane commented:

> I guess there's an objective and we're going to get to the objective. But there are choices of the route. And I think sometimes if the child can have their voice heard and realize that they can make some choices as to how we're going to get there, then that's okay. It's that synergy that makes it work.

All students in each class were involved in creating specific forms of written text using process writing. But experienced curriculum varied from student to student as they choose topics, content, audiences, and purposes to help frame the problem-solving tasks that they faced. Student comments indicate that making personal decisions is not so much an issue of power and control at this age level, but of the ability to forge personal links that foster interest and participation in writing tasks.

Fluid and negotiated roles

Fluid and constant negotiation of roles of teachers and students characterized collaborative interactions in these classrooms. Classroom activity was messy and spontaneously interactive. Teachers and students alike participated in roles as people, writers, readers, social activists, tutors, and content experts. Activity in which teachers directed the pacing and focus of interactions segued into student-directed activity and then back again. Shifts in who paced activity were purposeful and linked through task purposes. Further, even within activity settings in which either students or teachers appeared to direct activity, close analysis revealed constantly shifting roles. Students at times took the lead in classroom conversations and teachers provided both direct and indirect guidance to students' independent and group work. Through these fluid interactions, students and teachers were jointly involved in construction of knowledge that pushed both class and individual understandings.

The findings of this study suggest that conceptions of both writing and learning as collaborative and joint undertakings are important to teachers' understandings of their role in fostering students' participation in writing tasks. Yet, the language we use to talk about understandings of teaching/learning activity in writing continues to dichotomize teacher and student roles and simplify the processes of teaching and learning. For instance, we use phrases such as student-centered and teacher-centered, ownership and scaffolding, independence and dependence, autonomous and interdependence in dichotomous rather than synchronous relationships. With these dichotomous terms we perpetuate the "old tired binary that separates teachers from students along traditional hierarchies of power and expertise..." (Alvermann, 1999, p. 137). This study suggests that we consider more complex conceptualizations of student-teacher interactions in classroom writing activity.

Summary of the conclusions

The conclusions I have drawn from this study suggest that the ways in which teachers fostered student participation in writing tasks was complex and varied. Alan, Diane, and Gwen each involved students in writing units based on form/genre. Conceptions of writing as multidimensional social, mental, and affective processes were embedded in teaching/learning activity within the units. Creation of the written products involved students in a complex problem-solving task. Organization of teaching/learning activity was purposeful and proactively prepared students for productive participation in writing tasks. Teaching/learning activity occurred in a variety of social settings. Interactions in these settings were complex and fluid. Both creation of written products and writing development occurred through teacher and students' participation in collaborative activity. Teachers provided opportunities for students to actively participate in teaching/learning activity. Support for individual participation in writing task was embedded in class participation.

In sum, the ways that teachers planned for and encouraged students' participation in writing tasks appears to be similar to what George Hillocks Jr. (1986) referred to as the environmental mode of writing instruction. Teachers brought students and subject matter into balance. Teachers were also part of this balancing act, however. They played critical roles in fostering and guiding students' participation in writing activities.

Limitations to the study

The findings of this study are illuminating and intriguing, particularly since commonalties were noted across units of differing forms and genre taught by three different teachers. Although I have paid considerable attention to the manner in which I established trustworthiness of my interpretations of classroom events, the findings must be understood in the context of the limitations of this study. Discussion of the limitations of this study focus on three main areas: research methodology; assumptions about tasks, engagement, and teacher-student interactions I brought to the study; and the focus and scope of study.

Methodological considerations

First, as in any study, the conclusions I have drawn are limited because of various methodological considerations.

Time. Time is an important factor in ethnographic approaches to educational research. The amount of time spent observing events and interacting with participants contributes to trustworthy data (Glesne, 1999). Although I spent from three to six weeks in each classroom, the amount of time was limited and occurred near the end of the school year. This study only provides a snapshot of the ways in which the teachers involved students in writing activity. Through teacher and student interviews, I did ascertain the task histories, classroom routines, and the variety of ways in which writing was constructed across the curriculum. Examination of the interactions in which teachers established and engaged students in particular routines of teaching/learning activity, especially at the beginning of the year, was beyond the scope of this study, however. Likewise, I was not privy to building of relationships of teacher and students in formal and informal ways over the course of the year.

The time frame may also have constrained the interactions I had with either teachers or students. Three to six weeks is a short amount of time to establish trusting relationships with participants so that they will feel comfortable being forthcoming in their statements. I had more time to interact and establish relationships with teachers than I did with students while I was in schools. My time with students was limited by the constraints of the classroom and the large numbers of children who wanted to participate. Years of teaching contributed to my ability to quickly establish rapport with students and gain their trust during this project. But, I also feel that the amount of time I could spend with students was not enough to make some of them feel comfortable in their participant roles. I also felt that lack of time to establish trust with students before I sent home parental consent, may have contributed to the limited number of students who participated in Alan's class. By the end of the three weeks some students told me that their parents would now agree for them to be in the study.

The time frame may also have limited my understanding of participant responses. In particular, a few weeks is not enough time to get to know patterns of students' responses. I was limited in ascertaining whether or not a student might be giving an answer to create a certain effect, if the student may be saying what s/he thinks you want to hear, or if students were presenting certain images of themselves. At times I suspected each of these with certain students.

Identification of teachers. I relied on nomination of "effective" teachers to establish the pool of participants. Although I provided nominators with a range of criteria to guide nomination, it is not clear to me that these criteria were used. Links between teachers' abilities to encourage student participation in writing activity and scores on writing assessments are unavailable for this study. I also found that in large school districts, administrators' understandings of which teachers are "effective" may be based more on who is known and visible, such as teacher leaders, rather than on what goes on in classrooms. In fact, one administrator asked for the name of a participant in my study nominated by someone else. She wanted to know who else was considered effective in her district so she could include them in district language arts activities.

Within this pool of applicants, several teachers were unable to participate. I cannot be sure that the three teachers in my study were the most "effective" teachers even within this nominated group. Additionally, of those who did not participate, at least two were not of European American background. Most teachers in urban settings are European American. However, the lack of diversity in the teachers' background is a limitation to this study, especially when the students in the classrooms were so diverse and I looked closely at social interactions that appeared to involve students in writing.

Other teacher issues. This research investigated practices of only three teachers. It may only be coincidence that the study involved three teachers with similarities in the way they organized for and involved students in writing activity. It could be argued though, that similarities are particularly striking since different people originally nominated each teacher. Curricular constraints in each school/district were also minimal. Broad district and state requirements seemed to influence the three teachers, but each was able to design and implement writing curriculum. None were asked or required to implement these units of study.

Complexity of classrooms. Classroom research is messy work under the best conditions. It is constrained by teachers and students' schedules and other factors in the school environment. I was, at times, limited in my opportunities to talk with students. My requests for log entries interrupted the flow of students' engagement in classroom events.

Further, the amount of activity that occurred in these classrooms was tremendous. My focus was on the ways in which teachers interacted with students. Although I "swept" the room at times with the video camera or focused on a particular group of students, much of the detail of students' interactions with each other during independent and small-group times was unavailable for analysis.

Conducting classroom investigations also places the researcher in contradictory roles that can perhaps limit the trustworthiness of data. Although interview data from both teachers and students served important purposes in this study, establishing the kinds of relationships needed to create good interviewing situations for each was at times hard. For example, to support teachers I went around the room and helped students during math time. This, however, positioned me into a teacher-type role with students, especially since they knew I had been a classroom teacher before. Potentially, students could withhold critical accounts of their engagement if they viewed me as in league with their teacher. On the other hand, I had access to student information that was kept private from teachers. This may have affected teachers' relationships with me. Although, I did a great deal to keep a fine balance and gain the trust of both teachers and students, I cannot be certain that the complexity of the researcher role in this project did not influence what teachers and students said to me or what occurred in classroom settings.

Research with children. Findings revealed the role of student agency in classroom participation. Despite reliance on multiple sources such as observations, logs, interviews, and students' work to gather a sense of the degree and nature of student participation in writing tasks, I felt real understanding of students' involvement sometimes remained hidden and illusive. Students' abilities to discuss their participation in classroom activity astounded me at times and revealed information that could never be garnered in on-task sweeps or assessments of students' work. However, at other times relying on student self-report seemed to reveal little about how students were mentally or affectively participating in writing activities. Sometimes students' self-reports did not line up with observed events. Students' conceptions of their mental or social involvement were often confounded by conceptions of personal enjoyment. I felt that language was a problem for some students. Some of the emerging and beginning writers, in particular, had difficulty in either understanding my questions or in articulating their thinking. Perhaps cultural considerations played a part in this as well.

As an adult in the classroom, students also positioned me into a teacher role. For example, they complained to me about what other students were doing. Because of years of habit, I had to be continually on guard for this. Certainly, my experiences interacting with children were of benefit in conducting this research project. I think it likely, however, that those same experiences could have framed the manner in which students participated in this project.

Assumptions about tasks, participation, and classroom interactions

Harry Wolcott (1997) has suggested of researchers that "Most of us feel so well-versed about what goes on in schools that *we become our own key informant in school research*" (p. 338, author's emphasis). Without doubt, because of my years as a classroom teacher, I brought deep understandings and biases about classroom culture and teaching/learning activity to the completion of this project. These unique understandings and assumptions created subjective lenses (Glesne, 1999) that focused my interactions with participants and the interpretations I made of classroom events. For instance, as committed as I was to understanding member meaning, I know that my own biases influenced my interactions with the three teachers. When differences between my assumptions and those of the three teachers arose, I had to consciously work to have these differences prompt inner dialogue and ask further questions of the participants or data. I found, however, that congruity in thought with the three teachers caused me the most difficulty. At times I made assumptions about their thinking or classroom events instead of delving deeper. I had to work hard to make the "familiar strange" (Erickson, 1986).

This study found that teachers fostered student participation in writing tasks by establishing writing units that were multidimensional, organizing teaching/learning settings to proactively prepare students for tasks, and providing opportunity for co-participation of students. Certainly, assumptions about writing tasks, participation, learning, and classroom interactions that framed this study influenced the interpretations made of classroom events. For example, one of my beginning assumptions, linked to Vygotskian notions of inner speech and the role of language in mental development, was that classroom talk would mediate learning. I assumed, therefore, that if teachers provided students with models and explicit instruction, they would support and guide student participation in writing tasks. What I see as scaffolding in this study could be interpreted by others as too much teacher direction that could stifle students' own intentions for writing. In another example, I came to this study with assumptions that students' productive participation in writing tasks involves social and affective processes as well as cognitive ones. Therefore, the fact that teachers highlighted affective considerations rather than things such as text features at times with their students indicated effective individualization to me. Others might view this same event as evidence of ineffective teaching in light of the push for assessment of content standards for all students.

I have used interviews with teachers and students to help develop and corroborate my interpretations of classroom events. I have looked across three classrooms. I went back to other research and written perspectives on writing instruction. Still, the fundamental assumptions I bring to this study influence what I have chosen to discuss in this research report.

Focus and scope of study

As this dissertation report has unfolded over the last year, I have also recognized the limitations presented by the focus of the study itself. For instance, it turned out that certain patterns in teacher talk that might relate to internalized speech in children were similar in the two of the three classrooms. I know that students used vocabulary first introduced by teachers in their classroom conversations and in interviews. But this study does not specifically investigate whether or not students actually used the oral and written language of the classroom as a tool when they participated in writing tasks. This study establishes no direct link between teacher talk and students' self-talk while involved in writing tasks. Furthermore, the findings in this study suggest that students reported and appeared to be very involved in each of these classrooms for particular tasks. This study even revealed some instances of near transfer of concepts learned in the units to different tasks by students. But this study does not follow-up students to determine if students ever wrote on their own using these genres/forms. We do not know if students continued to use the different kinds of tools modeled and practiced in these units.

Although examining the practices of effective teachers adds to our theoretical understandings of teaching and the knowledge base for teaching, the scope of this study is limited in a practical sense. This study does not address issues such as how do we motivate teachers who do not choose to spend large chunks of class time devoted to writing instruction. Gwen, Diane, and Alan were all committed to writing as a vital aspect of the curriculum. They shared many other conceptions of students and learning.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study are illuminating and can be of value to others concerned about teacher roles and student participation in writing tasks. The findings have implications for teachers, teacher educators, and suggest paths for continued investigation of teaching/learning writing activity.

Implications for teachers

The ways in which these three teachers involved their students in units of study have implications for teachers. Analyses of interactions in these classrooms suggest several overlapping roles for teachers in fostering students' participation in classroom writing activity. These roles include teacher as planner and framer of complex writing units, teacher as organizer of teaching/learning activity, and teacher as co-participant in students' learning and writing activity.

Teacher as curriculum planner

Planning and implementing writing curriculum presents difficulties for teachers in ways that reading does not. In reading tools such as basal readers and text selections can serve to support teachers' curricular decision-making. Designing and planning for writing curriculum presents more difficulty for teachers, however. No distinct tools are available to frame students' participation in writing. Teachers must frame the ways in which students engage in creation of written products. In some cases teachers might plan topic-centered writing curriculum in which all students write on the same topic. Teachers could also center the curriculum on development of writing processes and have students self-select topics to write on as in the traditional writers' workshop. Alternately, text features or cognitive strategies might determine the way in which teachers plan for teaching/learning activities. Constructing written text in socially designated genres through the writing process serves as a useful model to help teachers plan meaningful writing curriculum in classrooms.

The manner in which these three teachers planned for involved students in multidimensional writing units framed by socially designated forms of writing suggests an alternate and very integrated approach to writing curriculum for upper elementary grades. In these units of study teachers considered the social, affective, strategic, and mental aspects of writing processes. They blended together processes, products, and skills in purposeful ways. But the curriculum was not entirely preset. Each also planned the unit to allow students' choices to interface with opportunities to learn and practice new forms of writing that could empower students socially and personally. Integrating various components to create this balance in the writing curriculum addresses the concerns of educators and policy makers in many states who ask that students in our schools be prepared to write for a variety of purposes. But it also creates flexibility for teachers to accommodate the various needs and interests of diverse students.

Teacher as organizer of classroom activity

In this study teachers established purposeful patterns of classroom activity that appeared to foster students' participation in writing tasks. Socially-oriented activity that preceded independent work was linked to and focused on the independent writing tasks that followed. Whole-class conversations that occurred in social activity appeared critical to development of both the conceptual understandings and practical tools students needed to participate in writing tasks. Whole-class conversations proactively prepared students for both independent and interdependent work. Teachers continued to support students' participation in writing tasks individually during the independent work times.

These patterns suggest that teachers need to understand the various purposes of the different segments of teaching/learning activity and how they fit together to support student development. Learning through participation in writing activities is not separate from the instruction that guides students' involvement in these activities. Classroom activity should be purposeful and linked as it unfolds across time. Therefore teachers, as organizers of classroom activity, need to think critically about teaching/learning activity and how it is linked rather than try to implement a particular model of instruction. Teachers need to ask themselves questions about the social, mental, and volitional aspects of the writing tasks they are asking students to do. Once they have analyzed these aspects of the writing tasks, teachers then must essentially work backward to consider what needs to precede students' participation in the tasks to maximize learning opportunities. In doing so teachers must consider elements specific to writing as multidimensional, to the class as a whole, and to particular students. In this way social organization of classroom writing is connected and grows purposefully out of teaching/learning activity.

Teacher as co-participant

In this study teaching/learning activity occurred through complex and fluid interactions of teachers and students engaged in a common enterprise. Teachers supported students in multiple roles as people, writers, learners, and students as they engaged in teaching/learning activity. Each encouraged students' participation in learning tasks. These findings corroborate the work of others that a critical aspect of engagement in writing is that teachers must provide space for students to make decisions and bring their own intentions and interests to writing tasks. But in addition, the nature of teacher decision-making and interactions across the three classroom suggest that teachers need an underlying ideology of the critical role teachers play in planning for, guiding and supporting students' participation in writing tasks in ways that promote development. In the movement toward visions of classrooms that more effectively support student participation in writing, the role of the teacher has been often neglected and forgotten. Gwen, Diane, and Alan played significant roles in students' participation in classroom activity through social/communicative interactions. Furthermore, teachers participated along with students in creation of a written piece. Student(s) and teacher voices were conjoined in multivocal learning and writing activity. In this collaborative, communicative process, teachers not only need to listen and watch for students' interactions with writing tasks, but foster their development. In a co-participatory role teachers guide students' development of conceptual, physical, and language tools that push student growth and move them towards independence in writing tasks.

Implications for teacher educators

In this study I investigated the practices of experienced teachers. As I considered the implications this work may hold for teacher educators, I thought about the struggles of the novices I had observed. Teacher educators can never fully prepare their students for the complexities, contradictions, and uncertainties of classroom teaching. However, the work of Pam Grossman, Sheila Valencia, Kate Evans, Clarissa Thompson, Susan Martin, and Nancy Place (2000) demonstrate the importance of providing prospective teachers with both practical and conceptual tools for teaching reading and writing. The following implications for teacher educators may have provided the novices I followed with tools that would prove useful to them even in their first two years of teaching.

Subject matter knowledge

First, this study implies that conceptual understanding of writing as a multidimensional process is important to the ways teachers plan for and involve students in classroom writing. In particular, understanding of writing and learning to write as complex mental work seemed critical. Mental work is invisible, and writing is such an open task that the manner that students engage with writing tasks can lead to little development. This study also suggests the importance of understanding writing as social, personal, and learning tool. Evident in the thinking of each of the three teachers are conceptual understandings of: written genres and key concepts of the genres; and the writing processes and the purposes and problems evident at different stages of the process. Teacher educators therefore need to help their students develop complex understandings of writing.

Planning writing curriculum

Without the support of teacher materials novices can be at a loss for how to plan for and establish appropriate writing curriculum. Knowledge of particular instructional models focused on process writing was not enough to aid in curriculum planning for the novices I observed before. Even though their students were involved in process writing, each of these teachers in this study relied on the genre or form of writing as a way to structure writing in their classrooms. Further, genre or form, unlike a topic approach to writing, is situated in subject matter. Authentic social and personal purposes for writing are embedded in genres/forms. Key concepts of the genre/form, as well as how the form plays out in writing process or text features can also be developed in genre/form studies. As I have commented earlier, constructing writing units around genre also provided elementary students enough space to contribute to framing of the final products. Providing opportunities for preservice teachers to create a writing unit that takes students through the writing process seems like good use of course time.

Conceptions of teacher roles

This study demonstrated the complex and active roles teachers assumed in organizing for and fostering students' participation in writing activity. Teacher educators must help their students construct complex rather than simple visions of their interactions with students and how to support student participation in learning activity. Inexperienced novices may be more prone to dichotomous terms and thinking that oversimplify classroom life. Additionally, as we provide new teachers with visions of more complex and socially interactive types of teaching/learning activity, teacher educators must also make students aware that participation in tasks occurs on social and well as cognitive levels. The teachers in this study did not assume that the task itself would engage students, no matter how purposeful or fun it might seem. Novice teachers need conceptions of how to analyze writing tasks and then proactively prepare students for engagement in these tasks. In sum, beginning teachers need to understand the critical and multifaceted role they play in supporting student participation in writing tasks.

Implications for further research

There are many avenues that this study suggests for promising future research. I did not anticipate that all three teachers would involve their students in units of study focused on genre or form. One avenue would be to look at writing units across several classrooms. Studies across a larger number of classrooms could investigate if these findings hold up, especially in states in which do not so clearly designate that students need to learn to write for a variety of purposes. Both differences and similarities across genres could be further explored. Alternately, further exploration of similarities and differences within genres could add to our understandings about how to involve students in writing tasks. Participation within genres could be investigated with a closer eye on how it correlates to the quality of the written products. To compare and contrast students' discussions of what they learned in units that are topic-focused compared to units that are genre/form focused would also be interesting.

I also did not anticipate the fact that writing strategies would be presented through informal classroom conversation rather than through explicit strategy lessons. The ways in which two of the teachers gave tips to students and changed to first person language are intriguing. This issue warrants further investigation to see if teacher talk is linked to strategies students actually use during task completion. Understandings how this approach to strategy instruction plays out across a range of students would be particularly interesting.

The focus in this project was altered by classroom events I found intriguing. I took a broader view of classroom events than I intended. I have further questions I would like to explore within my own data that perhaps go deeper into understanding classroom interactions. At this time, three issues in particular intrigue me. First, I have not yet fully investigated student data. Students' reports on their understandings of their mental participation are fascinating. I would like to investigate further how students' understanding varied across classrooms and across students, and what this might mean for student participation. Second, I have more questions about teacher talk and it links to student engagement. I noticed evidence of substantive communicative interactions

(Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991) such as up-take and elaboration. I have also noticed other patterns of teacher talk that I feel may pertain to affective participation of students in classroom activity. Further analyses might focus specifically on teacher talk in these classrooms. Third, I am interested in closely investigating differences across the classroom in students' metacognitive understandings of writing process and purposes. Only Gwen asked her students to write self-reflectively on the unit. I would like to see if there are differences across classrooms in student understandings that take them beyond the immediate task and prepare them for future tasks.

Concluding remarks

I began this dissertation project seeking to answer specific questions I had about how teachers working with diverse students effectively fostered students' participation in classroom writing tasks in ways that promoted development writing. Throughout this dissertation I have reported what I observed in three elementary classroom and heard from both teachers and students. At the same time, I have interpreted and discussed the multiple ways in which teachers and students participated in writing activity.

Analyses of the ways these teachers and students participated in writing have provided rich conceptualizations of literacy teaching/learning activity in classroom settings. The results of this research revealed that in these classrooms engaging students in writing tasks involved planning for multidimensional units that immerse students in mental, social, strategic, and affective writing processes. These units were intentionally planned with opportunities for students' to make connections to the tasks at hand, yet link them to their futures. Writing and learning to write involved students and teachers in a variety of social settings through communicative interactions. Teachers supported students' active participation in interactions across these diverse social settings. Engagement in teaching/ learning activity was marked by fluid changes in teacher-student roles, as interactions ranged from dependent, to independent, to interdependent.

The multiple ways in which Alan, Diane, and Gwen engaged their students in writing tasks present wonderful models from which educators can benefit. I appreciate as never before the intricacies of classroom interactions and the ways in which teachers provide opportunities for children to bring their voices into the world.

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APPENDIX A: NOMINATION CRITERIA

1. **Target student populations**
   Exemplary teachers who work with the following classroom populations or combinations there of:
   A. Diverse student populations based on race, ethnicity, language, and/or inclusion of special needs students
   B. 50% or more racial/ethnic minority children in school
   C. 50% or more students on free/reduced lunch

2. **Test scores on state/district writing assessments**
   Teachers whose classroom average test scores indicate one or more of the following:
   A. Better than average scores on assessments
   B. Scores that are better than classrooms/schools with similar demographics—particularly if this is a pattern over time
   C. Test scores that indicate on the average, student improvement from the previous year. If possible, it would be helpful to know that scores generally improved across student differences—e.g. students with incoming low scores improved as well as or more so than student who came in with higher test scores

3. **Criteria identified in teacher effectiveness studies**
   Teachers who demonstrate;
   A. Ability to foster overt signs of student engagement. One of the main findings of the studies on effective literacy teaching is that students who were engaged in learning tasks showed greater achievement as indicated by tests. Engagement was defined as compliance (doing what the teacher wanted) plus signs that the students were genuinely interested in and enjoying the task.
   B. General teaching characteristics—well planned, good classroom management, positive support of student learning.

4. **Criteria based in subject matter as indicated by district frameworks and the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements**
   Teachers who demonstrate:
   A. Instruction and practice in the writing process
   B. Evidence of support for six-trait writing
   C. Development of positive disposition towards writing
   D. Multiple purposes for writing

5. **Intangibles/professional judgement**
   A. This is a teacher you would want your own child to have for writing instruction.

APPENDIX B: INITIAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Teaching experiences/writing instruction experiences

1. Tell me about your decision to become a teacher. What influenced your decision?
2. Give me a brief recap of your teaching career in terms of length of time, places, grade levels, subjects.
    Prompt: School organization/context
    Community contexts/student demographics
3. What have been your favorite subjects to teach? Why?
4. Tell me anything else you would like me to know about you as a teacher.
5. What are some courses, workshops, books, colleagues, and/or articles that have influenced your ideas about writing and writing instruction?
6. How do you think your writing instruction has changed over the course of your teaching career?
7. Describe your writing instruction as it occurred over the course of this school year.
    Prompt: Across subject matter/day

Personal philosophy/conceptions of literacy

1. In your opinion what does good elementary instruction entail?
2. In your opinion what does good writing instruction look like?
3. What do you think are the main purposes for teaching writing?
4. What do you think a teacher needs to know in order to teach writing?
5. What do you think a teacher needs to know about learning?
    Prompt: learning to write?

How do you think children learn to write?
What is the most important thing you want your students to learn in your class?
What do you want them to learn about writing?

School/Classroom Context

2. Tell me about the mandated curricula, frameworks, and assessments that guide your writing instruction.
    Prompt: professional development around these?
    What are students held accountable for?
    What are you held accountable for?
3. Tell me about your group of students this year.
    Prompt: academic, social characteristics
4. Tell me about your classroom expectations for student behavior.
    Prompt: Kinds of interactions
    Student responsibilities
5. What are your expectations specifically for writing tasks? Listening tasks?
6. How did you establish these expectations? How do you continue to sustain them?

APPENDIX C: TASK/TASK CONTEXT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

1. Tell me about the writing assignments that you've had students do this year.
   Prompt: Across time
   Across subject areas

2. What did you want the student to learn from each of these assignments? How do you know they learned it?
   Prompt: Areas other than academic, e.g.--Disposition/Self as writer/Social

3. What can you say generally about your students' progress in writing so far this year? Target students?

4. What have the students just been working on in writing? How does it relate to what they are about to do?

5. Tell me about the assignment I'll be observing.
   Prompt: Purpose—process/product
   Goals/expectations for students/target students
   What kinds of social interactions are planned?
   What will the students be doing? Learning? Thinking about?
   What will you be doing?
   What difficulties do you anticipate?

6. How would you describe the type of writing the student will be doing? What considerations do you think about for this type of writing as opposed to [name another very different genre]? What do you do differently is this type of writing? What do you think the students do differently?

APPENDIX D: FINAL TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Lesson as a whole

1. How do you think it went overall?
    Prompt: Student involvement
    Student work
    Typical?
2. What changes would you make, if any, if you do this assignment again? Why?
3. What do you think of the student products as a whole?
4. What do you think the kids learned?
5. Who do you think got the most out of it? Why?
    Any students it didn't work for?
6. What will you/students do now in writing?
7. Anything else you'd like to add that you've not mentioned before?

Respond to target students' written products

7. Tell me about [student's] written work.
8. How did you assess this piece?
9. What does this tell you about what [student] learned? Why?
10. What does this tell you about [student's] engagement in this assignment? Why?

Questions for observation of videotapes

Questions will vary depending on what seems unclear on the videotape.
Sample questions:

7. What was your intent here?
8. Why did you....?
9. What was your understanding of ___________at that moment
10. What cue were you responding to?

What was your concern? Academic/social/emotional? Protocols—Final Interview/debriefing with teachers

APPENDIX E: TEACHER DAILY DEBRIEFING PROTOCOLS

4. How do you think the lesson went?
5. What surprised you? What challenged you?
6. Any changes? Why? What do the changes means for tomorrow?
7. What worked well/didn't work well for the target students?
8. Other—questions specific to observations of teacher/student interactions.

APPENDIX F: STUDENT LOG SHEET

RESEARCH LOG

Time__________

How involved are you in what is happening right now? (Circle a number)

1	2	3	4	5
not at all	a little	so-so	mostly	very

I was thinking about ____

____

I was feeling____

APPENDIX G: INITIAL STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

1. How's third/fourth grade going for you? Why?
2. What's your favorite subject? How about writing?
3. How are you as a writer? What is your favorite kind of writing?
4. What kind of job do you want when you get older?
5. Do people speak languages other than English in your home?
6. Anything else you want to say into the tape about yourself?
7. Questions for me?

APPENDIX H: STUDENT DAILY DEBRIEFING PROTOCOLS

1. So what did your teacher ask you to do in writing time today?

2. So how did it go for you today? [How about when_____________?]
    Probe: Fun
        Focused
        Difficulty
        Personal goals

3. What did you have to think about/remember to do this work?

4. How did you know what to do?

5. What did you learn? What do you think your teacher wanted you to learn?

APPENDIX I: FINAL STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Find out about final paper and what students think about it.

1. Writing is an accomplishment. Tell me what you feel is the best thing, what are you most proud of in this piece?

2. Think back over all the other writing you've done this year.
How does it compare to your other writing this year? Is this an example of your best work? Why or why not?

3. Do you think you worked as hard as you possibly can on this piece? Why do you think so?

4. Do you think anything could have helped you to work harder or do an even better job? (time, help, more concentration)

5. What were you trying to accomplish as you worked on this assignment?

6. Was this unit easy, hard, or in the middle for you? Why do you think so?

You and the class have spent the last two weeks working on _________.

1. If you have to [use this form again in the future] what have you learned that will help you? How did you learn that?

2. If you have to do some other kind of writing in the future, what have you learned about writing that will help you? How did you learn that?

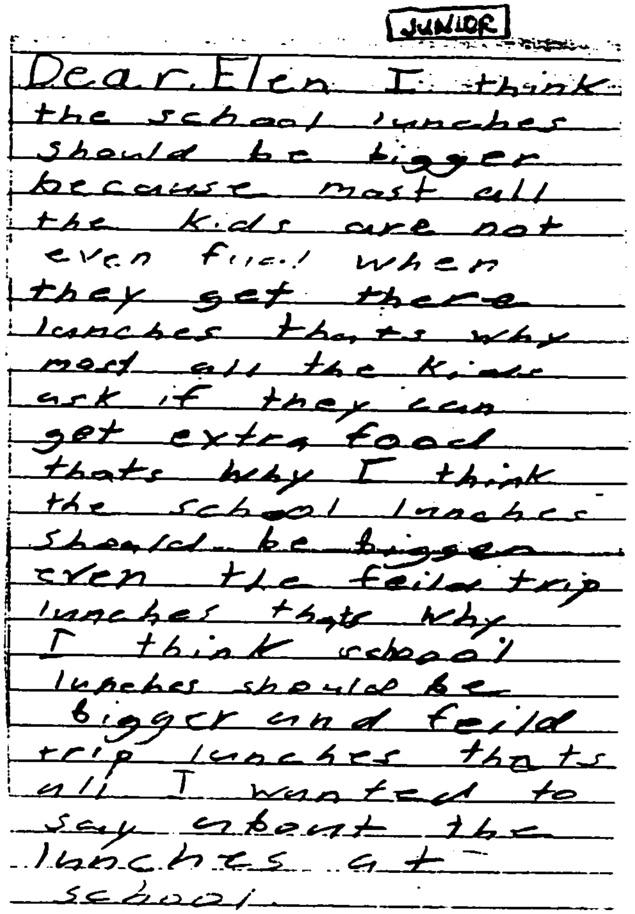
Last thing I want to do is look back and your log and have you explain your ideas.

1. What words would you use to describe what you were feeling and doing if you were at 5? Tell me what you mean by a 5, 3, 1.

2. Do you think sometimes your brain is working hard and thinking even if you don't think it's fun.

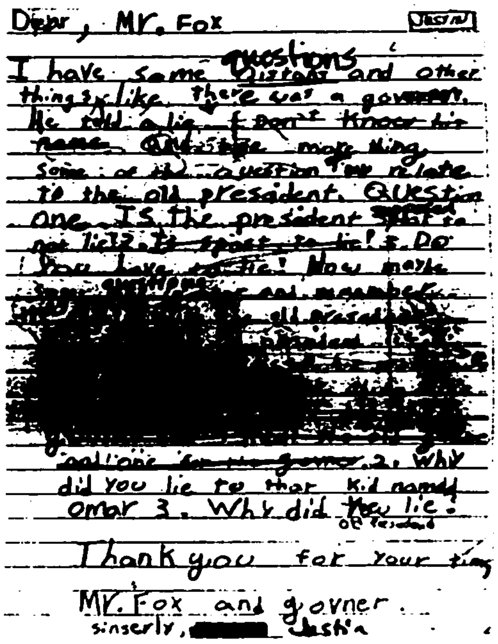
3. What needs to be going on for you to feel at a five in listening to other, working with a group, writing independently?

APPENDIX J: ROUGH DRAFTS OF STUDENT WORK



JUNIOR

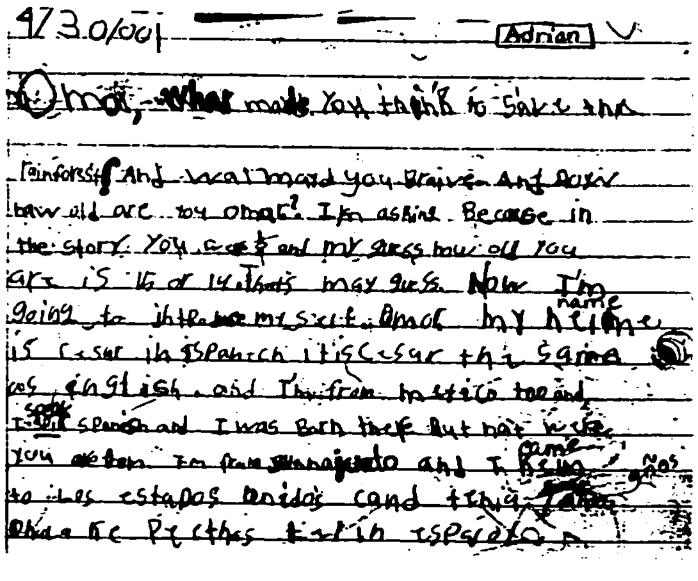
Dear. Elen I think
the school lunches
should be bigger
because most all
the kids are not
even full when
they get there
lunches thats why
most all the kids
ask if they can
get extra food
thats why I think
the school lunches
should be bigger
even the feild trip
lunches thats why
I think school
lunches should be
bigger and feild
trip lunches thats
all I wanted to
say about the
lunches at
school.



Dear, Mr. Fox JUSTIN

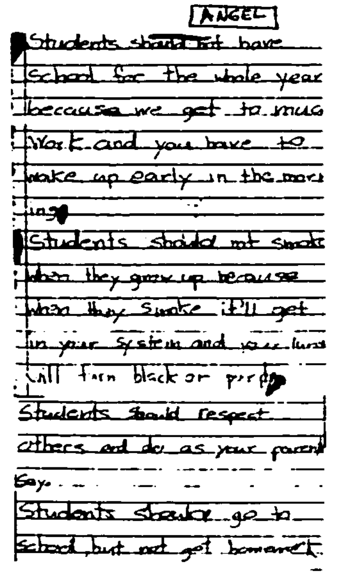
I have some ~~Qistans~~ questions and other
things like there was a governor.
~~He told a lie I don't know his~~
~~name.~~ [illegible] ~~more thing.~~
Some of the question are relate
to the old president. Question
one IS the president ~~spost~~ to
not lie?2. ~~Is spost to lie?~~ 3. Do
you have ~~to lie?~~ Now maybe
[redacted]
~~all one for the govner.~~ 2. Why
did you lie to that kid named
Omar 3. Why did ~~they~~ lie?
of resident

Thank you for your time
Mr. Fox and govner.
sinserly, [redacted] Justin



9/30/00 [redacted] Adrian ✓

Omar, ~~What~~ made you think to save the
reinforsst? And what made you brave and ~~[illegible]~~
how old are you omar? I'm asking Because in
the story you ~~[illegible]~~ and my guess how old you
are is 16 or 14 that's may guss. Now I'm
going to interduce my self. Omar my ~~nime~~ name
is Cesar in Spanich it is Cesar the same
as english. and I'm from mexico too and
I ~~[illegible]~~ spoak spanish and I was Born there But not where
you ~~are from~~ I'm from Guanajuato and I ~~[illegible]~~ came
to Los estados unidos cand ~~[illegible]~~ años
[illegible]



ANGEL

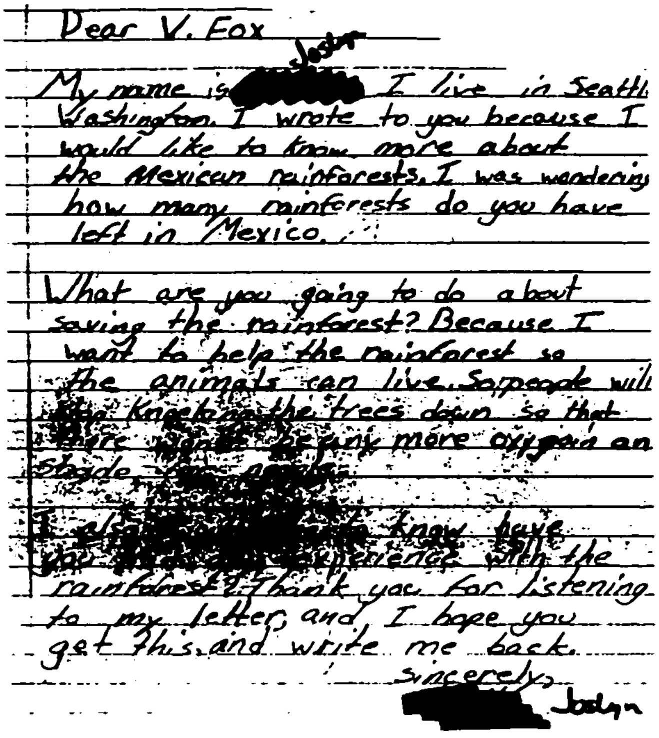
Students should not have
School for the whole year
because we get to muc
Work and you have to
wake up early in the morn
ing.

Students should not smoke
when they grow up because
when they smoke it'll get
in your system and your lungs
will turn black or purple.

Students should respect
others and do as your parent
say.

Students should go to
school, but not get homework.

APPENDIX K: JOSLYN'S LETTER AND SECILY'S POEM

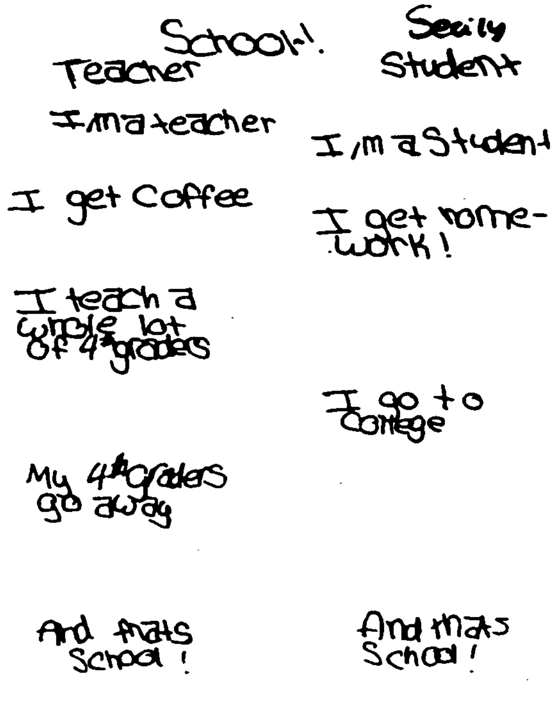


Dear V. Fox

Joslyn
My name is [redacted] I live in Seattl
Washington. I wrote to you because I
would like to know more about
the Mexican rainforests. I was wondering
how many rainforests do you have
left in Mexico.

What are you going to do about
saving the rainforest? Because I
want to help the rainforest so
the animals can live. So people will
[illegible] Knocking the trees down so that
there [illegible] be [illegible] more oxygen an
Shade [illegible]

I also [illegible] to know have
you [illegible] experience with the
rainforest?. Thank you for listening
to my letter, and I hope you
get this and write me back.
sincerely,
[redacted] Joslyn



School!. Secily

Teacher	Student
I'ma teacher	I,m a Student
I get Coffee	I get home-work!
I teach a whole lot of 4th graders	
	I go to college
My 4th graders go away	
And thats School!	And thats School!

VITA

SUSAN D. MARTIN

Education

Ph.D. , Elementary Teaching and Teacher Education (Literacy), University of Washington, 2002
M. S., Curriculum and Instruction, University of Oregon, 1982
Multiple-subject teaching certification program, University of California, Irvine, 1978
B.A., Aesthetic Studies/Dance, University of California, Santa Cruz, 1975
Undergraduate studies, English/History, University of California, Berkeley

Professional Experience

University and College

1997-2001	Research Assistant Project: Transitions Into Teaching, five-year longitudinal study of beginning literacy teachers with Dr. Pam Grossman and Dr. Sheila Valencia, University of Washington, sponsored by the Center for English Learning and Achievement (CELA).
1999-2000	Teaching Assistant, Masters and Certification Program, College of Education, University of Washington, three-quarter literacy sequence. Also led reflective and portfolio mentoring sections.
1999	Instructor, College of Education, University of Washington. Proposed and taught C&I 495D: Constructing a Classroom Community/Classroom Management.
1994	Tutor/Substitute Teacher, ESL classes, Lane Community College, Eugene, OR.

Public School

1982-94, 96-97	Classroom Teacher, Grades 1, 2, 1-2, 4, 5, 4-5, Creslane Elementary School, Creswell, OR.
1981-82	Classroom Teacher, Grade 4, Gilham Elementary School, Eugene, OR.

1978-81	Classroom Teacher, Grades 2, 2-3, 5, Turtle Rock Elementary School, Irvine, CA.
1976-77	Title I Reading Assistant, Grades 1-6, Aurora 7 Elementary School, Boulder, CO.

Private and Abroad

1998	Curriculum writer, Bellevue Art Museum: Northwest Artist Education Program, Bellevue, WA.
1995-96	English Language Teacher Trainer, E.S.L. Teacher--elementary/secondary, U.S. Peace Corps, Department of Education, Culture, and Sports, Republic of the Philippines.
1992, 1993	Coordinator/teacher/writer, Oregon Children's Choir Summer Workshops, Eugene, OR.

Publications

Martin, S. D. (under review). Finding balance: Impact of classroom management conceptions on developing teacher practice.

Martin, S. D. (2002). Intertwining of voice and structure: Reflections on teaching and learning. In E. Mirochnik & D. Sherman (Eds.) Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation, and transformation in teaching. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Grossman, P., Valencia, S., Evans, K., Thompson, C., Martin, S.D., & Place, N. (2000). Transitions into teaching: Learning to teach writing in teacher education and beyond. Journal of Literacy Research 32 (4) 631-662. Also reprinted: Roller, C.M. (2001). Learning to teach reading: Setting the research agenda. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Grossman, P., Valencia, S., Evans, K., Thompson, C., Martin, S.D., & Place, N. (2000). Transitions into teaching: Learning to teach writing in teacher education and beyond (CELA Tech. Rep. No. 13006). Albany, NY: National Research Center for English Learning and Achievement.

Martin, S. D. (1998). Making Meaning Through Transformation. Dorothy Grant: Sculpting with Fabric. Curriculum for Bellevue Art Museum.

Martin, S. D. (January-February, 1985). Graphing Candy Hearts. The Oregon Mathematics Teacher.

Professional Conference Presentations and Workshops

Impact of beginning teachers' conceptions of classroom management on development of teacher practice. Research report presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 2001, Seattle, WA.

Who owns what? Critically rethinking metaphors guiding literacy instruction from a Bakhtinian perspective. Work-in-progress presented at the NCTE Research Assembly Mid-Winter Conference, February 2001, Berkeley, CA.

Beginning teachers and curriculum materials: Navigating the terrain. Research report presented with Dr. Sheila Valencia at the National Reading Conference, December 2000, Scottsdale, AZ.

Navigating coursework and field experience: The Process of learning to teach. Symposium presentation with Dr. Pam Grossman and Dr. Sheila Valencia at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, April 2000, New Orleans, LA.

Transitions into teaching: The paths of beginning elementary teachers. Research presentation with Dr. Sheila Valencia at the National Reading Conference, December 1999, Orlando, FL.

Becoming a teacher: The role of subject matter and setting. Interactive symposium with Dr. Pam Grossman and Dr. Sheila Valencia at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, April 1999, Montreal, Canada.

How learning feels: An action research case study of learning in the context of an aerobics class. Research presentation at 24th Annual Conference of the Research on Women and Education SIG, American Educational Research Association, October 1998, Lansing, MI.

Teachers' developing conceptions of assessment across activity settings. Roundtable research discussion with Dr. Pam Grossman and Dr. Sheila Valencia at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA, April 1998.

Reading and critical thinking. Invited activity-based workshop for teachers/teacher educators at annual conference of World Council of Curriculum and Instruction, Manila, Republic of the Philippines, June 1996.

Introduction to the theory of multiple intelligences. Activity-based presentation for parents of students in the Talented and Gifted Programs, Creswell School District, Creswell, OR, 1992.

Problem solving in the primary grades. Presentation at the 22nd Annual Northwest Math Conference, Northwest Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Eugene, OR, November 1987.

Awards and Grants

James Doi Dissertation Grant, University of Washington, 2001.
American Educational Research Association: Division K Graduate Student Seminar, 2001.
University of Washington Committee on Student Affairs Travel Grants, 1998, 1999, 2000.

Undergraduate
California State Scholarship
University of California, Berkeley, Alumni Scholarship

Professional and Community Service

"Conquering Your Conference Proposal Jitters." Co-coordinated proposal writing workshop with two other doctoral students. University of Washington, April 1999.

Creswell School District Training Academy. Member of in-district committee to plan and implement district-wide school reform. 1996-97.

World Wise Children's Museum. Member of a committee to establish a children's museum in Eugene, Oregon, 1992-94.

Oregon Math Leaders Invitational Conference, McMinnville, OR, August 1984.

Math for the Curious programs in Lane County. Member of original cadre to plan and conduct Saturday workshops for parents and children, 1986-88.

University of Oregon Children's Choir. Choreographer/stage director for choir productions including "Snoopy!" 1982-1994.

University of Oregon Children's Choir. Board member, 1984-85.