WORKING PAPERS IN LITERACY, CULTURE, AND LANGUAGE EDUCATION (WPLCLE) VOLUME 3, April 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contributors
(Alphabetical by first author)

Martina M. Barnas is currently a Research Assistant in the School of Education, Indiana University, Bloomington. **Snezhana Zheltoukhova** is a doctoral candidate in the Second Language Acquisition Program, University of Wisconsin, Madison. The authors would like to thank Ariann Stern-Gottschalk, Elena Clark, and Viktor Kharlamov for fruitful discussions.

Beth Buchholz has finished her doctoral coursework and is currently working on her dissertation. Her research interests focus on how teachers build on nonvalidated forms of student knowledge in this era of standards and accountability. She is most interested in exploring how "writing"—in all of its diverse (and technological) forms—can position children as creators rather than consumers of knowledge, and in turn invite children to assert more empowering academic identities.

Rachel P. Feldwisch and **Kristie L. Coker** were research assistants at the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (CUME) at the time of this research and are currently doctoral students in the School of Education at Indiana University, Bloomington. CUME is an educational research center affiliated with the School of Education at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. **Shanna M. Stuckey** is the Education Research Coordinator for CUME, and **Ashley A. Rittenhouse** and **Kassi K. Kite** were undergraduate research assistants at CUME when this study was conducted. **Joshua S. Smith** is the former director of CUME. Dr. Smith now holds the position of Dean of the School of Education at Loyola University, Maryland.

Kerri Rinaldi holds a Master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Language, Literacy, and New Media. Currently she is a faculty reader at Drexel University's Writing Center and works collaboratively with graduate students to improve their writing practices. She is also a freelance writer and academic editor. Her research interests lie in adult literacy, self-initiated writing practices, and writing-center pedagogy.

Julie Rust spent four years teaching middle school and high school English before becoming a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University. Her work with adolescents triggered a curiosity about the ways that new media and popular culture are enacted in literacy classrooms. Current research projects revolve around the ways in which play merges with what is considered "legitimate learning" in ELA classrooms, as well as the negotiations that teachers make when planning for student engagement with new media and "the content."

Beth Lewis Samuelson is an Assistant Professor of Literacy, Culture and Language Education at the Indiana University School of Education, where she teaches classes in literacy theory and in the English as a Second Language and World Languages teacher education programs. She is an educational linguist with a strong background in language

learning and cross-cultural experience in non-Western contexts. She was a 2006 Spencer/National Academy of Education Postdoctoral Fellow and a finalist in the 2006 National Council of Teachers of English Promising Researcher competition. From 2008 to 2011, Dr. Samuelson was the faculty advisor to the Books & Beyond Project, a cocurricular service-learning project that supports storytelling and book publishing by elementary and middle school students in the United States and Rwanda. Her research interests include language awareness and the flows of English literacy practices across global boundaries. She has particular interests in understanding the nature of metaknowledge about language and the role that it plays in literacy learning and communication.

Christy Wessel-Powell is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education at Indiana University's School of Education. Prior to coming to IU she began her teaching career through the Teach for America program. She taught kindergarten for six years in public, private, and charter school settings in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn, New York, as well as internationally. Her current academic interests center around literacy, advocacy and legislation, and include the intersections of popular media, policy, and classroom practices in teaching literacy, adult self-education with popular nonfiction and subsequent social action, early childhood education, particularly within reading and writing workshops, critical pedagogy, and comparative education, particularly with regard to the charter school movement.

Introduction

Serafín M. Coronel-Molina

The *Working Papers in Literacy, Culture, and Language Education* (*WPLCLE*) is an annual peer-reviewed online publication that provides a forum for faculty and students to publish research papers within a conceptual framework that values the integration of theory and practice in the field of Literacy, Culture, and Language Education. The mission of this journal is twofold: (1) to promote the exchange of ideas and dissemination of research, and (2) to facilitate academic exchange between students, faculty, and scholars from around the world.

Publications in *WPLCLE* are full-length articles dealing with the following areas of research: first- and second-language acquisition; macro- and micro-sociolinguistics in education; linguistic anthropology in education; language policy and planning from local and global perspectives; language revitalization; pragmatics in language teaching and learning; literacy, biliteracy, multiliteracy, hybrid and multimodal literacies, new literacies or electronic/media/digital literacies; bilingual, multilingual and multicultural education; classroom research on language and literacy; discourse analysis; technology in language teaching and learning; language and gender; language teacher professional development; quantitative and qualitative research on language and literacy education; language related to curriculum design, assessment and evaluation; and English as a foreign or second language. Among other areas of publication interest of the *WPLCLE* are the New Literacy Studies, home and workplace literacy, indigenous literacies of the Americas, sociocultural approaches to language and literacy education, second-language instruction and second-language teacher education, literacy as social practice, critical literacy, early literacy, practitioner inquiry/teacher research, children's literacy, African-American literacies, Latino/Hispanic literacies, cross-linguistic and cross-cultural literacy practices, heritage language and culture maintenance and loss, and local and global (transnational) literacies.

This volume marks the third collection of six essays chosen from an array of submissions for our 2014 volume. The first article, titled "Discourse resources in discussions of student writing: Another look at the speaking-writing connection," was written by Beth Lewis Samuelson. This article examines a translingual approach to the effects of voice and agency on the speaking–writing connection involved in the learning process. It describes a two-part discussion between a bilingual teacher and a Taiwanese undergraduate student during a writing lab in an English-for-Academic Purposes (EAP) class. Both parties employed discursive strategies to assert agency and give it voice, in the process creating a shared dialogic context for the production of a piece of academic writing.

Beth Buchholz offers us the second paper, "'Actually, that's not really how I imagined it': Children's divergent dispositions, identities, and practices in digital production." In it she explores the range of social and digital literacy practices in which a group of 4th to 6th grade students engaged while collaboratively creating digital book

trailers. She was particularly interested in understanding how children's ways of knowing and being in the world impact their multimodal production processes. Her analysis uncovers divergent practices that suggest contrasting ethea on the part of the students, and leads her to conclude, among other things, that the visual arts could make a useful potential entry point for supporting students' critical engagement with the digital world.

The third article, "Making the invisible visible: White preservice teachers explore social inequities with the Critical Web Reader" by Julie Rust & Christy Wessel-Powell, examines the role that empathy-building practices can have in broadening the perspectives of predominantly white, middle-class teacher candidates. The researchers found that use of the Critical Web Reader helped these preservice teachers confront 'whiteness' through a growing empathy and voice insider/outsider clashes, as well as complicating their vision of America as the land of opportunity. The authors conclude by discussing the challenges inherent in social action resulting from the desire to make our world more equitable, and implications of their study for teacher education.

The fourth article, "Digital literacy: A sociological analysis" by Kerri Rinaldi, analyzes how sociological factors, access to literacy, and self-sponsored digital literacy are interrelated. The paper demonstrates the textual validity and widespread accessibility of digitally produced writing, regardless of social factors, especially socioeconomic status. The author concludes by exploring the implications for pedagogical instruction of her findings.

The fifth article, "The impact of an arts-integrated curriculum on student literacy engagement" by Rachel P. Feldwisch, Kristie L. Coker, Shanna M. Stuckey, Ashley A. Rittenhouse, Kassi K. Kite & Joshua S. Smith, examines the implementation and outcomes of the Arts Integration Program (AIP) through a mixed-method approach, including classroom observations, interviews, and a pre-post standardized Literacy Assessment Tool. Results show high levels of student enthusiasm and engagement in the AIP, as well as modest increases in literacy knowledge, which was one of the main goals of the program. The findings provide avenues for other schools to infuse arts into their literacy instruction.

The final article, "Reflections on the SWSEEL Russian program from a sociocultural perspective: Challenges and benefits" by Martina M. Barnas & Snezhana Zheltoukhova, describes the SWSEEL intensive Russian language summer training program held annually at the Bloomington campus of Indiana University. The authors identify benefits and potential challenges of the program, from the perspective of sociocultural learning theories. Ultimately, they find that sociocultural instructional strategies strengthen the SWSEEL model and validate the application of sociocultural learning design in the context of intensive language programs.

Acknowledgments

social media venues from Indiana University and from around the world for their help in publicizing the *WPLCLE* Call for Papers locally and globally.

Last but not least, we are grateful to all the contributors to this volume for choosing *WPLCE* to publish their work. Our gratitude also goes to the School of Education for hosting the *WPLCE* website and for supporting this new publication venue. Without the generous assistance of all these fine people and institutions, *WPLCLE* would not have become a reality.

Discourse resources in discussions of student writing: Another look at the speaking–writing connection

Beth Lewis Samuelson

Abstract

The social interactions surrounding the act of composing have often been theorized as microcosms of teaching, as sites where the effects of talk are intensified, and where dialogic discourse, or internal speech made explicit, promotes learning. Although the importance of the voice and agency are recognized, and their influence often implicitly acknowledged, research on the speaking–writing connection has yet to incorporate a translingual approach that gives attention to agency and voice. This study attempts to address voice and agency in a two-part discussion between a bilingual teacher and her Taiwanese undergraduate during a writing lab in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class. Discursive strategies for asserting agency and giving it voice are employed to create a shared dialogic context for reviewing, evaluating, and revising a written draft. A translingual approach to understanding the problem of dialogic context for supporting literacy practices creates both obstacles and supports for realizing the potential of dialogic interaction.

Introduction

The social interactions surrounding the act of composing have often been theorized as microcosms of teaching: sites where the effects of talk are intensified, and where dialogic discourse, internal speech made explicit, promotes learning. Discussions of student writing, whether in individual writing conferences or in whole class settings, have been viewed as windows onto the development of thought, where writers can interact with others to get feedback on their writing and actualize the reader–writer relationship already implicit in the composition process (Dyson & Freedman, 2003).

While this theoretical perspective emphasizes a connection between "learning to write and learning to interpret—potentially, to reinterpret—the social world and one's place in it" (Dyson, 1995, pp. 5-6), or helping students make sense of the larger social context that lies at the heart of learning (Sperling, 1996), writing pedagogies actually change very little when laminated onto the existing structures of schooling and customary teacher/student exchanges. While the potential of critical pedagogy for promoting participatory learning has been recognized, the "dominant interpretive framework" (Ulichny & Watson-Gegeo, 1989) is a persistent, resistant pattern of teacher–student interaction. Critical theories may reveal the role of schools in perpetuating current power distribution; these same critical theories often do a poor job of showing the processes that actually perpetuate these imbalances, as teachers and students continue to enact the same roles. This social reproduction view of schooling has been echoed by educational theorists looking at the broader picture and not concentrating solely on literacy education (Ellsworth, 1989).

Microinteractions provide opportunities for examining the perpetuation of imbalances in writing pedagogy. A meta-analysis of related studies has revealed three areas that have contributed to the failure of discussions of writing to meet the high expectations placed on them: the influence of conventional discourse roles, the impact of cultural and experiential differences, and the impact of classroom culture on writing instruction (Sperling & Freedman, 2001). First, problems can occur when teachers and students assume conventional classroom discourse roles; in these circumstances, teachers will still dominate discussions (Cazden, 1988). Second, conversations around writing may break down when teachers and students follow different roles of interaction due to cultural and experiential differences. Cultural differences in conversational turn-taking, deference for teachers, and expectations for involvement in an instructional encounter, among others, will have a significant effect on the variety of responses from students during their writing conferences (Sperling, 1991, 1996). For instance, for many students, international or domestic, whose first language is not English, a university-level writing course may be their first encounter with formal one-to-one discussions for the purposes of revision, brainstorming, feedback or critical review. The final area of difficulty occurs when classrooms are not very supportive of student writing. Although pedagogical interaction can provide students with opportunities to hear writerly thought processes and see them modelled, teacher expectations—e.g., assuming that students must participate verbally in order to benefit from the conference—might help or hinder students in obtaining opportunities to hear writerly thought (Freedman & Katz, 1987; Sperling, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992; Sperling & Freedman, 1987). These concerns raise some important questions about the critical nature of pedagogical interactions.

Of course, microinteractions are not the only evidence available. Conversations around writing can break down when teachers and students follow different roles of interaction due to cultural differences. Gender differences are one such obstacle to effective talk about writing. Teacher–student writing conference discourse has shown notable differences in the ways that male and female participants used discourse markers to index authority to speak (Black, 1998). Introducing changes in discursive patterns based on gender, however, has proven difficult (Alvermann, Commeyra, Young, Randall, & Hinson, 1997; Baxter, 2002). Perspectives due to other differences—ethnicity, class, personal history, or sexuality, for instance—can also impede effective interaction. In a study of interaction in three writing classrooms, Dysthe (1996) emphasized the importance of introducing engaging topics for encouraging student discussions and of showing students that their perspectives were valued. These approaches ultimately promoted learning about writing.

In this study, I examine how questions about critical pedagogy emerge in and through discursive interaction in a discussion of student writing. Using transcripts of taped discussions between an instructor in an English language institute and her Taiwanese undergraduate student, I explore the linguistic and discursive details through which a teacher identity or a student identity dynamically emerges in the interactional environment of the writing lab. This analysis unfolds in an episode-by-episode review of how Patricia and Tracy projected their respective roles during their writing lab discussion of Tracy's business case study draft.

Theoretical Framework

The speaking–writing connection is an important site for microanalysis of the dynamics of text production and mediation of knowledge about academic writing. This does not, of course, obviate the need to conduct careful ethnographic analyses of larger social contexts; rather, it demonstrates how institutional, sociocultural and sociohistorical expectations are observable in the discursive choices of teachers and students. Likewise, analysis that looks solely at the expectations of the participants, the roles they play or the contextualization cues they heed is not sufficient. The question is not to look at the discourse of the conference *alone*, or at the layers of nested context *alone*, but at both together. Of particular interest are the institutional representations apparent in these factors, and the dilemmas they engender for teachers and students alike. This approach can help to address questions about the perceived success or failure of an exchange.

Discussants cocreate, or fail to cocreate, a shared support structure in the dialogic process of conversation about writing. Asking how they do this is a critical element for understanding how talk about writing supports learning. An examination of the irreducible properties of the language, the relational activities of the speakers, as well as the habitual communicative practices and value orientation of the users will help illuminate the mediated nature of knowledge about writing, especially the interplay between formal knowledge of writing and the social world in which it is used and discussed. Or as Hanks so eloquently described it, language practice is saturated by context "right down to its semantic bones" (1996, pp. 140-141). This perspective invites analysis that focuses attention on how "power and control translate into principles of communication" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 47).

Examining a methodologically complex question through discourse analysis requires careful attention to the nature and study of discourse itself. Two basic schemata to studying discourse persist throughout the variety of approaches available today (Macbeth, 2003). The first takes naturally occurring discourse as its data, as exemplified by sequential analysis of discourse-in-interaction, in which the identities of the teacher or the student are coconstructed, deconstructed and negotiated in real time. Mehan (1979, 1992, 1994) and Cazden (2001), whose work has helped to expose the role of discourse in perpetuating inequality in schools, are major representatives of this approach. The second approach, exemplified by variations on critical discourse analysis, focuses on formal–analytical categories that are not part of the "real" interaction experienced by participants (e.g., Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 1999, 2011).

The current study examines naturally occurring discourse in sequence without recourse to formal–analytic categories, and does so in the tradition of conversational analysis, which has already contributed to the study of the intersection between speaking and writing, when writers speak about texts. Gumperz (1982) examined frames on the micro level of discourse strategies, establishing the embedded nature of context within discourse. Frames, he concluded, or "expectation[s] about the world, based on prior experiences, against which new experiences are measured and interpreted" (Tannen, 1993), contain metamessages, information about the contexts of social situations, about beginning, continuing, altering, and closing them (Tannen, 1984, 1987; Tannen & Wallat, 1993). They also contain contextualization cues, which provide the actors with clues to the

situatedness of social activity. Goffman (1961) examined participation frames from a sociological perspective, demonstrating how in interpersonal interactions, people respond to institutional and social expectations of the frames they encounter, while also simultaneously coconstructing these frames. Individuals not only respond to institutional and social expectations, they also coconstruct participation frames as they proceed through their interactions (Goffman, 1961). The academic literacies model attempts to explain how literacy practices are nodes of contestation, embedded in local meaning, with overlapping functions and features of both oral and literate practices contributing jointly to the achievement of many communicative practices.

The New Literacy Studies (New London Group, 1996; Street, 1993, 1999) and practice-engagement theory (Reder, 1994) have investigated how literacy practices are embedded in local meaning, defining literacy as a set of socially or culturally patterned *practices* used by learners located within larger *communities of practice*. The overlap between the functions and features of both oral and literate practices—the "many culturally-patterned communicative practices draw jointly on speech and writing in their routine accomplishment" (Reder, 1994, p. 38)—come into play in understanding how talk about writing includes both oral and literate communicative practices. Discourse analysis is embedded in ethnography of communication studies to describe individual literacy practices situated within localized cultural practices (Chafe, 1982; Dyson, 1993, 1994; Heath, 1983).

Lea and Street (1998) illustrated this dynamic in their academic-literacies study of college-level writing students. They conducted semistructured, in-depth interviews with thirteen staff members and twenty-six students at two British universities regarding their understanding of issues of epistemology, authority, and disputation of knowledge in academic discourse. Students responded that although they were aware that different courses have different requirements for academic writing, it was often difficult for them to gauge the essential differences and write accordingly; writing assignments or prompts rarely made the implicit expectations accessible to the students. For their part, teachers were comfortable with identifying and using the aspects of text that are considered essential for marking them as members of their respective discourse communities, but could not articulate these details to their students. And although many tutors claimed to know what successful writing looked like, they were unable to explain concepts such as critical analysis to the researchers or to their students.

As a result of this analysis, Lea and Street concluded "the elements of successful student writing are in essence related to particular ways of constructing the world and not to a set of generic writing skills" (p. 163). Learning to write in the academy is thus a process of adapting to a social world with many competing forms of knowledge creating and knowledge sharing. Students must struggle to negotiate the conflicting practices they confront in their various courses. While earlier models saw student writing as a technical skill (study skills model) or as a means of acculturation into the discourse community (academic socialization model), the "academic literacies" model conceptualizes student writing in this light as both "meaning-making" and "contested" (p. 172). Work with younger students has demonstrated that they must learn to project a "successful student" identity that includes behaviors and attitudes (Hawkins, 2005).

Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (1989) examined the roles of control and knowledge played out by teachers and students during writing conferences. Theorizing from a social reproduction view of schooling, they suggested that new pedagogies such as process writing actually change very little when laminated onto the existing structures of schooling and customary teacher/student exchanges, what they called the "dominant interpretive framework." Although they point out that while critical theories may reveal the roles of schools in perpetuating current power distributions, they also concluded that critical theories do a poor job of showing the processes that actually perpetuate these imbalances. The authors suggested that microanalyses of teacher–student interactions might help to clarify these processes.

Methodology

The discussion of writing analyzed here was recorded in the computer lab of a content-based academic course offered by the intensive English program at a Pacific Rim university located in the United States. The course was designed for international undergraduates who planned to major in business, but who did not yet meet the university's standards for English proficiency. The conference occurred in the middle of the semester, so the class had had time to establish the expectations for active student participation in writing conferences. The writing assignment asked the students to write a short case study on the ethics of buying handmade rugs made by child laborers in Morocco. The class had viewed a short documentary on an American wholesaler who frequently traveled to Morocco to buy rugs for sellers in North America. Tracy, a Taiwanese undergraduate student in her first year at the university, and Patricia, a bilingual English–Spanish writing teacher, met twice during the lab to discuss Tracy's first draft.

The Participants

Tracy

Tracy was a first-semester freshman, planning to major in psychology. Although she had completed high school in Taiwan, her spoken English was quite advanced, thanks to a bilingual kindergarten program and continuous private tutoring in English throughout her schooling. Her accent was very clear, and her speech fluent. As she explained in her recall interview, she was willing to play an active role in discussing her writing. Tracy had been in the United States for nine months, during which she had completed several noncredit ESL courses.

During her recall protocol interview, Tracy stated that she viewed the conferences as a chance to ask questions about written comments from the teacher that she didn't understand. While she usually looked forward to her conferences with Patricia, she expressed dismay over written corrections on her drafts—*"I'll feel like 'humph, you know. I spent a lot of time on it'…"* She also emphasized that she was willing to independently seek out solutions to her writing dilemmas—*"I would rather know why it's no good, or, you know, rather than seeing all the words crossed out, or 'you should put this rather than that.' I'd rather you tell me to change it and I will go find the words."*

Patricia

Patricia was a bilingual instructor and a doctoral student in applied linguistics. While growing up, Patricia spoke Spanish at home, acquiring English in kindergarten and elementary school, and then learning formal written Spanish in high school and college. She had five years' full-time experience teaching Spanish and English. Her program supervisor recommended her as "extremely thorough" in her responses to student papers. During her recall interview, Patricia stated that she wanted to emphasize thinking in her teaching. She professed a strong commitment to the draft process and shared how she would take her graduate seminar papers through drafts before she was happy with them. Because of this intensive drafting, she thought of writing as arduous work. Thus she had a great deal of sympathy for her students. She explained to me: "*And [writing's] a hard process. And so I figure if I don't understand, and I'm a native speaker, I don't expect them to understand. And so they need to question things.*" Her shared experiences led Patricia to praise her students frequently and sincerely; she understood that they were uncomfortable sharing their drafts. She pondered the usefulness of the writing conference as a means of improving student writing. Like Tracy, Patricia attributed the success of the conference to Tracy's efforts to participate actively.

Data Collection

In the initial data collection step, Patricia agreed to tape writing conferences during an afternoon class held in the computer lab. As she circulated among the students, she carried a small tape-recorder and turned it on when talking to participating students about the papers she had read and returned. Four students agreed to participate in this step.

As soon as possible following the writing lab session, Tracy's and Patricia's perspectives on the discussions were collected through stimulated recall protocols (DiPardo, 1994; Erickson & Mohatt, 1988; Newkirk, 1995). This procedure allowed participants to listen to the recorded discussion and to talk freely about what they thought happened during the interaction. Participants in a writing conference are like theater performers who can use a "backstage area" (Newkirk, 1995, p. 195) to privately express their tensions, frustrations, misunderstandings, and personal interpretations. This stimulated recall procedure was first used in educational anthropology by Erickson and Mohatt (1988), who replayed videotapes of classroom discussions to elicit comments from the participants. DiPardo (1994) used stimulated recall to encourage students and their adjunct tutors to talk freely about their writing conferences.

Tracy and Patricia each listened to the recording of their discussion and commented on what had transpired. Both interviewees could stop the tape at any time to make comments or describe what happened during the conference. Both also answered several open-ended questions above their writing process and writing attitudes.

Data Analysis

Because Tracy and Patricia met twice during the computer lab period to talk about Tracy's draft, this discussion occurred in two parts. The first part (1) occurred early in the writing lab period when Patricia stopped at Tracy's workstation to look over her work and give her some comments. The first part contains four episodes. The second part of the discussion

(2) took place later in the period, when Patricia stopped by to check on Tracy's progress. This part contains three episodes. Table 1 provides brief summaries of the topics of each episode. The full draft of Tracy's paper can be found in Appendix A. The transcription key can be found in Appendix B. Idea units were marked—reflecting the assumption that breaks in speech reflect a change in the speaker's object of consciousness (Chafe, 1980, 1986)—at the boundaries of major tone groups with periods, and sometimes at the boundaries of minor tone groups with commas.

Table 1. Episodes

Episode 1-1: Setting the stage (lines 01-21)
Patricia opened the first part of the discussion with a monologue summarizing her impressions of Tracy's draft, whereupon she introduced one problem to be discussed. Tracy listened quietly, and responded with "uh-hmms" at the appropriate pauses in Patricia's discourse.
Episode 1-2: Tracy's question (lines 22-28)
Tracy asked a question which appeared to initiate a frame change. After an interruption by another teacher speaking to Patricia, she asked a question about moving some text in her draft. Patricia answered Tracy's question.
Episode 1-3: Patricia's response (lines 29-50)
Patricia responded to Tracy's question with another lengthy monologue.
Episode 1-4: Exchanging maxims of writing (lines 51-62)
Tracy reiterated a *maxim of writing* that was frequently repeated in class: "so conclusion is not my opinion" (line 51). By this section, the two had achieved the highest degree of conversational cohesiveness that they would reach in this conference. They agreed on Patricia's maxim, "Just summarize it," (line 52) with a simultaneous "uh-hmmm" (lines 53-54). In Patricia's next utterance, "But you have a good organization," she summarized the conference with a statement repeated from the opening lines in the first episode. The first part of the conference ended with the conventional expressions of thanks.
Episode 2-1: Tracy's second question (lines 63-70)
In this second part of the discussion, Tracy posed a question regarding her draft after an opening discourse marker from Patricia ("OK, Tracy"). Patricia responded that Tracy had two options.
Episode 2-2: Tracy's clarification (lines 71-76)
Tracy clarified that she actually meant to compare two points: "Well actually I'm just like compare, comparing these two." She read some of her text to show how she was trying to express her comparison.
Episode 2-3: Patricia's suggestion and closing (lines 77-89)
After a brief pause, Patricia offered a possible sentence for inclusion in Tracy's draft. Tracy listened, back-channelled, and responded "Oh Okay." She had no more questions for Patricia at this time. This second portion of the conference ended, as the first, with the typical closings.

Results

The results of the case study provide a brief description of the events in the discussions, describing the major aspects of each episode. It addresses the basic question, "what went on in this discussion of student writing?"

Part One

(1) Part 1 of a writing lab conversation between Patricia (teacher) and Tracy (student) about Tracy's draft for business case writing assignment

001 P: OK Tracy when I saw your essay I thought (.2) the first thing was you have a good (.2) organization.

002 You have a good introduction and it's (.2) in terms of the grammar it's (.2) it's pretty good.

003 There's a few mistakes here that (.2) that I pointed out and there's a few more that (.2) that I didn't point out.

004 But-um (.2) your first paragraph is very good, it talks about McHenry. (H)

005 Now the only thing that I was worried about was (H) here you start talking about Morocco.

006 T: [softly]   \Uh-hmmm\

007 P: And (.2) at the end _{dec}you 'kind of tie it into McHenry _{acc}but it's almost like it's a whole separate topic. (H)

008 T: \Uh-hmmm\

009 P: So if you can (.2) s put a sentence in at the beginning (.2) that indicates how this is related to Morocco, (H)

010 _{acc}and then you can explain it in a little bit more detail,

011 and that would make thi:s (.2) paragraph a lot smoo:ther.

012 T: [softly] Or can I just move the Morocco part into the (.2) Hashad's point of view tha:t mmake (.5)

013 [*Another teacher approaches and asks the Patricia a question. Patricia responds.*]

014 P: [speaking to the teacher] No I didn't see it.

015 [speaking to T]   Go ahead.

016 T: Can I put the Morocco: situation into the (.2) this paragraph?

017 Then will make the reason why that Hashad think doesn't think (.2) s there is anything wrong abusing child labor.

018 P: Yeah you can do that, y-I- (E)

019 Yeah that was my initial thought was to move this to the paragraph with Hashad, <u>but</u> here at the <u>end</u> you do make that connection.

020 You said _{acc}"he is concerned about those children because they are too young (.2) to secide to decide what kind of job they want".

021 So it is related, _{dec}but there's a few sentences here where I thought (.2) <Q Uh (.2) _{acc}maybe she should move this. Q>

022 T: \Uh-hmmm\

023 P: So (.2) you can either put a sentence <u>here</u> (.2) to make that connection <u>earl</u>ier (.2)

024   \Uh-hmmm\

025 <u>Or</u> you can move it. OK?

026 T: \Oh\

027 P: And then the paragraph on Hashad, I know you just worked on that last week, but it needs to be developed just a little bit more. (H)

028 And (.2) um (.2) put (.2) you know (.2) another idea in there, and then you need a conclusion that summarizes everything. (H) Go ahead.

029 T: So conclusion is not my opinion.
030 P: [Slightly nasalized]   Right (.2) just <u>summarize</u> it. Uh-hmmm=
031 T: =\Uh-hmmm\
032 P: Yeah (.2) but you have a good organization.
033   And sometimes I think that's the hardest thing fer (.2) us to do=
034 T: =OK.
036 P: 'K do you have any questions?
037 T: No.
038 P: OK.
039 T: Thank you.
040 P: You're welcome.

Part One is dominated by the exchange of maxims that Tracy and Patricia used to demonstrate their shared understanding of institutional expectations for academic writing. Patricia opened Part One with a monologue summarizing her impressions of Tracy's draft, whereupon she introduced one problem to be discussed. Patricia presented her reading of Tracy's draft in the past tense: "when I *saw* your essay" (1). Tracy listened quietly, and responded with "uh-hmms" at the appropriate pauses in Patricia's discourse (lines 6 & 8).

Tracy was silent as Patricia made an "opening statement" (lines 1-11). Patricia's frequent self-repetition achieved through parallelism is easier to visualize in Figure 1, which shows the reorganization and reanalysis of Patricia's opening monologue. "Thing" was repeated twice during these lines, as a link between the opening and closing of the monologue: "the first thing" (line 1) and "the only thing" (line 5). This parallelism also signaled a change in topic. To paraphrase the teacher: *we've talked about the good things in your draft, but I do have one problem to bring to your attention.* The phrase containing "a good" was also repeated twice: "a good organization" (line 1) and "a good introduction" (line 2).

Figure 1. Transcript with Parallelism Highlighted

a.	**OK Tracy when I saw your essay I thought (.2)**			
b.	I thought ***the first thing*** was			
c.	you have a **good** (.2) organization,			
d.	you have a **good** introduction and		*it's,*	
e.	in terms of the grammar		*it's*	(.2)
f.			*it's*	**pretty good**
g.	<u>**there's a few mistakes**</u> here	that	(.2)	
h.		that		**I pointed out**
i.	<u>**and there's a few more**</u>	that	(.2)	
j.		that	**I didn't point out**	
k.	but-um, your first paragraph		*is*	very **good**
l.	it talks about McHenry, (H)			
m.	now ***the only thing*** that I was worried about		*was*	(H)
n.	here you start talking about Morocco.			

Figure 1 demonstrates how repetitive parallelism can be observed in three appearances of "it's," repeated each time with a variation in the length of the following pause. Likewise, "that" was repeated four times; contrasting pairs appear in "that... that I pointed out" versus "that... that I didn't point out." Another contrasting unit appeared with "a few": "there's a few mistakes here" and "there's a few more."

Patricia praised Tracy's draft in vague terms. She pronounced the organization, the introduction, and the grammar all "good" or "pretty good." She pointed out "a few mistakes," but there are "a few more" that she doesn't point out. She declared Tracy's first paragraph "very good." Having established the draft as a good piece of work, Patricia stated that the "only thing" she was worried about had to do with the subject of Hashad's role in the text. "The only thing" echoed "the first thing" in line b. She did not leave many opportunities for Tracy to say anything.

Further cohesion was provided in lines 19-21 through the repetition of "thought:" "that was my initial thought" and "where I thought". The contrast provided by the reformulation of "thought" from noun to verb helped to denote the boundaries of the utterance.

Tracy did not seize the chance to speak, but back-channeled "uh-hmmm" (lines 6 and 8). At line 12, she finally spoke, making an "initiation move" (Cazden, 1988, p. 65) that initiated a frame change, but she was interrupted by another teacher speaking to Patricia (lines 13-14). In lines 16-17, Tracy repeated her question: "Can I put the Morocco: situation into the (.2) this paragraph?" When Patricia answered Tracy's question, she spoke less smoothly than she had previously, as evidenced in her glottal stops and hesitation in line 18. But she quickly recovered the equilibrium she possessed early and returned to the smooth, repetitive flow, this time punctuated by fortis enunciation (lines 19-21).

Patricia also employed hedges and appeared to minimize her role through her discourse: "if you can" (line 9), "and then you can" (line 10), and "a little bit" (line 58). Patricia's use of "a few mistakes" (line 3), and "the only thing I was worried about" (line 5) conveyed a message that learning to write a well-formed essay in English was not a big deal. This may have been an attempt to level the power dynamic between the student and the teacher as representative of the institution.

In line 21, Patricia quoted herself: "Oh (.2) maybe she should move this." This form of self-ventriloquation may have a number of purposes. It may have been a face-saving presentational ritual, allowing Patricia to represent herself as a dedicated teacher who had given the draft a lot of thought. Or it may have been evidence of Patricia's discomfort with her role as a critic of her students' writing, prompting her to try to further distance herself through self-quotation from the difficult and uncomfortable task of responding to a draft.

Tracy back-channeled in lines 22 and 24, but Patricia dominated the discussion again until the end of line 25, when she concluded with, "Or you can move it, OK?" Tracy echoed softly with "OK" (line 26), and Patricia continued on through line 28.

This segment of the discussion figured prominently in the recall interviews as a key event in the writing conference that showed why it had been successful. While listening to the playback of the discussion, Patricia stopped the tape at Tracy's question on line 12 and said, "*See, right there Tracy's thinking. Ok, she's finding a ... I made a suggestion, she thought*

of a different one. So that's what I like to see is when they start thinking and making their own suggestions." She focused on the first contribution by Tracy as evidence that Tracy was learning to think for herself as a writer, and she commented that Tracy seemed to be realizing that it was possible to write this passage in a different way, and that she felt more comfortable with it. Then she offered a qualification: "*There's, you know, better ways, but she at least thought of an alternative.*" Patricia couldn't remember what Tracy ultimately ended up doing, whether moving the paragraph or making the connection.

When Tracy listened to this part of the discussion, she recalled that Patricia wanted her to "*change a little bit*" and move the part about McHenry to an earlier point in her draft, so her readers would know that what followed was related to McHenry.

In her second initiation move, Tracy reiterated a *maxim of writing* that was frequently repeated in class: "so conclusion is not my opinion" (line 29). Patricia responded by saying "Right, just <u>sum</u>marize it" (line 30), with a slightly nasalized, gravelly voice that is markedly different from her voice quality during the rest of the conference, as if to acknowledge that she was saying something that had been said many times before. By this stage in the discussion, the two had achieved the highest degree of conversational cohesiveness that they would reach. They agreed on Patricia's maxim, "Just <u>sum</u>marize it," (line 30) with a simultaneous "uh-hmmm" (lines 30-31). In Patricia's next utterance, "Yeah (.2) but you have a good organization" (line 32), she summarized the discussion with a statement repeated from the opening lines of Part 1 (see line 1 and line a in Figure 1) and also appealed to institutional expectations for starting an essay with an introduction, another maxim for writing.

Patricia's pronouns provide information about the relationship between the speakers (Fillmore, 1997). As she summarized the conference, she repeated a phrase she used at the beginning of the conference: "but you have a good organization." The conjunction "but" can imply a negation of the expectations previously expressed, or it can indicate a change in topic (Tannen, 1993). In the following line, Patricia used the first person plural in what appeared to be a hedge. This move also provides a clue to the participant frame (Tannen, 1993): "that's the hardest thing fer (.2) us to do." This was the only instance of the first person plural in this discussion. The hedges continued here in Patricia's use of a pause, and also in the first, and only, instance of non-mainstream, rather informal, pronunciation of "fer." In lines 32-33, some contextualization cues were present in the social deixis to mitigate the illocutionary force. These expressions of social deixis, together with the hedges, provide further evidence for Patricia's discomfort with the footings she had to assume in the institutional field.

The first part of the conference ended a probe for additional questions by Patricia (line 36), a negative response from Tracy (line 37), a final "OK" from Patricia (line 38), an expressions of thanks from Tracy (line 39), and Patricia's conventional "You're welcome" (line 40).

Part Two

(2) Part 2 of a Writing lab conversation between Patricia (teacher) and Tracy (student) about Tracy's draft for business case writing assignment

041	P:	[a little later] OK, Tracy.
042	T:	OK um so (.2) should I change this paragraph?
043	P:	You have two options.
044		You can either change it or just add a few sentences to it.
045	T:	To make this and this paragraph related.
046	P:	(H) Yeah (.2) to make this section on Morocco (.3) and the children of Morocco (.2) related to how McHenry feels about that situation.
047	T:	Well actually I'm just like compare, comparing these two.
048	P:	Uh-huh=
049	T:	=So I put like "<u>however</u>" in there
050	P:	Right.
051	T:	And I put "this is the reason why that McHenry concerned about what happened."
052	P:	OK. (.6)
053		[louder] What you can <u>say</u> <u>is</u> <Q However the situation in Morocco is 'different. >Q
054		<Q In Morocco there is no such system and <u>this</u> is why McHenry is so concerned about it Q> (H)
055	T:	\Hmmm\
056	P:	And then for example (.2) <Q children over the age of 12 are free to work Q>
057	T:	Oh OK.
058	P:	Okay. So if you just throw in a little bit about McHenry here then it sounds <u>more</u> like a comparison.
059	T:	Oh OK.
060	P:	Okay? Any other questions? No?
061	T:	Thank you.
062	P:	You're welcome.

Part Two of the discussion occurred several minutes later, after Patricia had circulated through the computer lab answering the questions of some other students. When she returned to Tracy, she used a discourse marker, "OK, Tracy" (line 41), to initiate a new exchange. Tracy was ready with a question regarding her draft, asking if she should change a paragraph in her draft (line 42). Patricia responded that Tracy had two options.

Tracy clarified her question, asserting that she actually meant to compare two points: "Well actually I'm just like compare, comparing these two" (line 47). She read some of her text to show how she was trying to express her comparison. Patricia back-channelled "uh-huh" (line 48) in response, but Tracy proceeded without allowing a pause. She read some of her draft out loud to show how she had altered her text to reflect her goals (lines 49, 51). Patricia continued to back-channel (line 50). But when Tracy had finished her question, Patricia said, "OK," and then waited for an extended six seconds before continuing with another lengthy monologue.

She offered some suggestions for additional sentences for Tracy's draft, raising the volume of her voice. She suggested that Tracy add an extra clause to her draft to clarify McHenry's perspective on child labor in Morocco, dictating a few sentences to Tracy and using the fortis enunciation she employed earlier while re-establishing the writing conference frame:

(53) What you can <u>say</u> <u>is</u> <Q However the situation in Morocco is 'different.>Q
(54) Q<In Morocco there is no such system and <u>this</u> is why McHenry is so concerned about it Q>. (H)

As Tracy back-channeled "\hmmm\", Patricia continued without pausing:

(56) And then for example <Q Children over the age of 12 are free to work Q>.

Tracy responded to these instructions with "Oh, OK" (line 57). Patricia summarized her statement in line 58: "Okay, so if you just throw in a little bit about McHenry here then it sounds <u>more</u> like a comparison." This marked the last substantive comment in Part 2 of the exchange. Tracy listened, back-channelled, and responded, "Oh Okay" (line 59). She had no more questions for Patricia. This second portion of the conference ended, as the first, with the same thanks and closing. Tracy later incorporated these lines verbatim into her draft (see Appendix A, lines w-x, *emphasis added*).

In Part 2, Tracy spoke up because she had been encouraged to do so. Patricia was eager to encourage her students to talk and demonstrate that they were actively participating in their conferences. But despite these expectations, Tracy's questions opening the second part of the conference once again led to a disruption in Patricia's discourse. First, Patricia answered Tracy's question, telling her she had two choices for improving her paragraph. When Tracy pointed out that she meant to compare paragraphs, and showed how she had altered her text to reflect her goals, Patricia responded with a six-second pause, then, speaking in a louder voice, she dictated two sentences for Tracy to adopt. After her second attempt to ask questions and guide the discussion, Tracy once again returned to back-channeling until the end of the discussion.

Discussion

The problem that seems immediately clear upon examination of this transcript, and has been apparent to colleagues who provided peer checks of the analysis, is that the conference was not as successful as Patricia and Tracy claimed it had been. For both, the contributions made by Tracy and the questions she posed seemed to be the most compelling evidence that all had gone well. Tracy had participated, unlike some of her classmates whose tapes are full of monotone responses mainly of the phatic type—"yes, OK, uh-huh." At this level, Tracy had indeed contributed a question, but how well, really, did she succeed in directing the course of the conversation? Both Tracy and Patricia felt that Tracy's participation—suggesting a revision to her draft—indicated that the conference was a success. The conference took place in the middle of the semester, so both would have had some time to establish the expectations that would lead to fewer I-R-E exchanges and more comments and back-channeling from the student. Although this conference is an example of a meeting between participants who are familiar with each

other, the analysis of the discourse raises serious questions about the efficacy of the discourse to allow Tracy to participate to the fullest extent possible.

It is possible that Patricia's initial monologue and subsequent responses to Tracy's questions could be interpreted as Patricia "speaking for" Tracy (Schiffrin, 1994), since as an English language learner, Tracy did not yet possess full mastery of the code. In discussing a similar monologue, Sperling has suggested that "the teacher had to work around silence in order to keep up his end of the conversation" (1991, pp. 145-146). Rules for conversation suggesting that each participant has an important role to play can be seen in the work of Grice (1975) and Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). Patricia may have been attempting to maintain her end of the conversational contract while maintaining Tracy's end as well. Or this explanation may be only part of several simultaneous reasons for her verbal performance in lines 01-15.

Her use of the first person plural may have been meant as another way of expressing solidarity, perhaps as a fellow writer, to provide some relief from the institutional aspects of her role. This mitigation may be glossed as a "good teacher" presentation: *I did the hard work of reading your draft and commenting on it.*" Patricia also may have been attempting to create solidarity with Tracy through positive presentational rituals, creating positive face for both. Or the solidarity may be built through her use of parallelism.

Avoidance rituals apparent in Patricia's discourse include tight cohesiveness of her opening paragraph that makes any contribution by Tracy difficult. There were several places where Patricia paused at a clause-final point, so Tracy had few opportunities to interrupt. If Tracy had attempted to question or respond to a teacher comment, but had done it non-expertly, the resulting pragmatic disruption may have been embarrassing for both.

Both Tracy and Patricia found themselves on different footings vis-à-vis each other, and this was reflected in the ways they addressed each other. As an outsider both institutionally and culturally, Tracy appeared to operate with a sense of the weight of Patricia's institutional position. She was aware of the articulated expectations for her involvement in the writing conference. Tracy's attempts to show involvement reflected her socially situated sense of self and participation as it changed over time. After listening to Patricia's opening lines, she attempted to ask a question, thereby switching the conversation from the primary to the secondary frame. When her attempts to work within the class frame precipitated a disruption and recovery by Patricia, she frequently resorted to back-channeling, but also took opportunities to make initiation moves that allowed her to take the floor. On both occasions when she asked a question, she received an emphatic response from Patricia. After the second such event, in which Patricia dictated a few lines for Tracy to write, Tracy did not ask any more questions.

Even though she was a fairly advanced and confident English learner, Tracy did not yet possess full pragmatic competence. Relevance requires that the speaker leave implicit everything that the hearer can be trusted to supply with less effort than would be needed to process an explicit prompt (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). In the ongoing development of understanding during a conversation, material that is repeated can be assumed to have

some specific relevance; shared information can be safely elided. Parallelism focuses on information that the speaker cannot count on the hearer to know. In instructional contexts such as the writing conference where the interlocutors do not share the same first language, this distinction seems especially important. Parallelism marks assumptions about the lack of shared context, and the need to convey important information; it points to meaning that cannot be left implicit.

Thus parallelism has an instructional purpose as a common resource in instructional talk. In the classroom context, repetition of this type can provide rhythm that reinforces group synchrony; it provides extra time for the listeners to process the message and catch up with the group. Teachers use parallelism, including the reformulation of phrases into related forms, as a way to gain and hold students' attention (Sacks et al., 1974; Scollon, 1982). Patricia may be using parallelism in the manner she is accustomed to using it while conducting classes. This analysis reveals the ways that a useful strategy in one context does not support the instructional goals specific to another context, the writing conference. Speaking in maxims does not require the kind of independent thinking that Patricia would like to instill in her students.

Implications for Research

This descriptive case study will serve as a pilot for future research that examines how discourse resources contribute to the coconstruction of context. The analysis reveals theoretical questions and invites further collection of ethnographic data, but this attempt offers suggestions for how such an approach might proceed. Assuming that the context of a discussion about writing is indexed in the utterances—in the discourse of the writing conference itself—then the speaking–writing connection is a rewarding site for examining the dynamics of text production and mediation of knowledge about academic writing. Further research is needed to understand the microdynamics of the dominant interpretive framework begun by Ulichny and Watson-Gegeo (1989). How do the structure of schooling and the distribution of authority create dilemmas and embarrassments for participants? How can these hindrances be mitigated? Can they be effectively addressed in the traditional structure of schooling? These questions promise a rich and fruitful agenda for future research.

Appendix A: Tracy's draft

"Child Labor in the Industry"

a.   The International Carpet is a rug importer and distributor in New York. The

b.   buyer of this company, Mr. James McHenry, just made a tentative agreement with

c.   the carpet manufacture, SOMARTA, in Morocco. Their agreement is that

d.   McHenry's firm is going to provide wool for SOMARTA in exchange the export

e.   of rug to the Wholesalers in New York. However, after visiting the factory in

f.   Morocco, McHenry was somehow worried about the use of child labor in the

g.   SOMARTA factory. He saw a lot of young women under the age of twelve,

h.   working four or five to a loom. McHenry comes from America, a country which

i.   is very concerned about child labor. Therefore he cannot help but feel that there

j.   is something wrong with the working age of the children. On the other hand, the

k.   managing director of SOMARTA, Mr. Abdelhadi Hachad, is not surprised about

l.   this situation. Both of them have different points of view toward the use of child

m.   labor. Their opinions can be seen in how they view the working age for child

n.   labor.

o.   First of all, McHenry feels very uncomfortable with the working age of children.

p.   He thinks that twelve year old kids are too young to work. In America, a child

q.   has to be age sixteen to work and a working permit is required. Therefore, the

r.   government and the parents of the children can clearly understand what kind of

s.   work is going to be given to these children. Thus parents can help the children

t.   decide if they should accept this job, and parents can tell them the consequences

u.   of taking the job. Furthermore, the working time and the amount of the work will

v.   also be under control since the permit will be submitted by the government.

w.   ***However, the situation in Morocco is different. In Morocco, there is no such***

x.   ***system. Children who are over age twelve are free to work***. The amount and the

y.   time of the work is not restricted in Morocco. This is the reason why McHenry is

z.   worried about the situation. He is concerned about those children because they

aa.   are too young to decide what kind of job they want. Young children are not

bb.   familiar with the style of the work, therefore McHenry thinks that they are too

cc.   young to work.

dd.   On the other hand, Hachad is not concerned about child labor. He does not think

ee.   that it is a problem because child labor is common in his country. Children need

ff.   to make living by working in Morocco. Therefore Hashad thinks there is nothing

gg.   wrong with the workers whereas McHenry is very worried about it. Besides,

hh.   Hashad relies on the maalema system which they hire older women to supervise

ii.   the children. He thinks that maalema will take care of the children. Thus he

jj.   thinks that there is nothing to worried about.

Appendix B: Transcription Key

,	clause-final intonation: falling
.	clause-final intonation: rising or falling
?	clause-final: question
:	elongated syllable
-	self-interruption with glottal stop
(H)	audible inhalation
(E)	audible exhalation
<Q…Q>	quotation-like speech
=	latched speech
…	long pause
(.5)	(five second) pause
""	quote from student writing
\ \	back-channeling by listener
__	underlining indicates fortis enunciation
acc	acceleration of rate of speech
dec	deceleration of rate of speech

References

Alvermann, D. E., Commeyra, M., Young, J. P., Randall, S., & Hinson, D. (1997). Interrupting gendered discursive practices in classroom talk about texts: Easy to think about, difficult to do. *Journal of Literacy Research, 29*, 73-104.

Baxter, J. (2002). Competing discourses in the classroom: A post-structuralist discourse analysis of girls' and boys' speech in public contexts. *Discourse & Society, 13*(6), 827-842.

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control, and identity*. London, UK: Taylor & Francis.

Black, L. J. (1998). *Between talk and teaching: Reconsidering the writing conference*. Logan: Utah State University Press.

Cazden, C. (1988). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cazden, C. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Chafe, W. (1980). The deployment of consciousness in the production of a narrative. In W. Chafe (Ed.), *The pear stories: Cognitive cultural and linguistic aspects of a narrative production* (pp. 9-50). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Chafe, W. (1982). Integration and involvement in speaking, writing, and oral literature. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Spoken and written language* (pp. 35-53). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Chafe, W. (1986). Writing in the perspective of speaking. In C. Cooper & S. Greenbaum (Eds.), *Studying writing: Linguistic approaches* (pp. 12-39). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

DiPardo, A. (1994). Stimulated recall in research on writing: An antidote to "I don't know, it was fine". In P. Smagorinsky (Ed.), *Speaking about writing: Reflections on research methodology* (pp. 163-181). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dyson, A. H. (1993). *Social worlds of children learning to write*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, A. H. (1994). Viewpoints: The word and the world—reconceptualizing written language development or do rainbows mean a lot to little girls? In R. Ruddell, M. Ruddell & H. Singer (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (pp. 297-322). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Dyson, A. H. (1995). Writing children: Reinventing the development of childhood literacy. *Written Communication, 12*(1), 4-46.

Dyson, A. H., & Freedman, S. W. (2003). Writing. In J. Flood, J. Jensen, D. Lapp & J. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts* (pp. 967-992). New York, NY: IRA/NCTE.

Dysthe, O. (1996). The multivoiced classroom: Interactions of writing and classroom discourse. *Written Communication, 13*, 383-425.

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(3), 297-324.

Erickson, F., & Mohatt, G. (1988). Cultural organization of participation structures in two classrooms of Indian students. In G. Spindler (Ed.), *Doing the ethnography of schooling*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Critical language awareness*. New York, NY: Longman.

Fillmore, C. J. (1997). *Lectures on deixis*. Stanford, CA: CSLI.

Freedman, S. W., & Katz, A. (1987). Pedagogical interaction during the composing process: The writing conference. In A. Matsuhashi (Ed.), *Writing in real time: Modeling production processes* (pp. 58-80). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2011). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Goffman, E. (1961). *Encounters: Two studies in the sociology of interaction*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.

Grice, P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. Morgan (Eds.), *Syntax and semantics* (Vol. 3, pp. 41-58). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Gumperz, J. (1982). *Discourse strategies* (Vol. 1). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hanks, W. F. (1996). *Language and communicative practices*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Hawkins, M. (2005). Becoming a student: Identity work and academic literacies in early schooling. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*(1), 59-82.

Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lea, M., & Street, B. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education, 23*(2), 157-172.

Macbeth, D. (2003). Hugh Mehan's learning lessons reconsidered: On the differences between the naturalistic and critical analysis of classroom discourse. *American Educational Research Journal, 40*(1), 239-280.

Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons: Social organization in the classroom*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mehan, H. (1992). Understanding inequality in schools: The contribution of interpretive studies. *Sociology of Education, 65*(1), 1-20.

Mehan, H. (1994). The role of discourse in learning, schooling, and reform. In B. McLeod (Ed.), *Language and learning: Educating linguistically diverse students* (pp. 71-96). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60-92.

Newkirk, T. (1995). The writing conference as performance. *Research in the Teaching of English, 29*(2), 193-215.

Reder, S. (1994). Practice engagement theory: A sociocultural approach to literacy across languages and cultures. In B. Ferdman, R. Weber & A. Ramirez (Eds.), *Literacy across languages and cultures* (pp. 33-74). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Sacks, H., Schegloff, E., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking in conversation. *Language, 50*, 696-735.

Schiffrin, D. (1994). *Approaches to discourse* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Scollon, R. (Ed.). (1982). *The rhythmic integration of ordinary talk*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Sperber, D., & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance, communication, and cognition* (2nd ed.). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Sperling, M. (1988). *The writing conference as a collaborative literacy event.* (doctoral dissertation), University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Sperling, M. (1990). I want to talk to each of you: Collaboration and the teacher–student writing conference. *Research in the Teaching of English, 24*(3), 279-321.

Sperling, M. (1991). Dialogues of deliberation: Conversation in the teacher–student writing conference. *Written Communication, 8*(2), 131-162.

Sperling, M. (1992). In-class writing conferences. *English Journal, 81*(4), 65-71.

Sperling, M. (1996). Revisiting the writing–speaking connection: Challenges for research on writing and writing instruction. *Review of Educational Research, 66*(1), 53-86.

Sperling, M., & Freedman, S. W. (1987). A good girl writes like a good girl: Written response to student writing. *Written Communication, 4*, 343-369.

Sperling, M., & Freedman, S. W. (2001). Research on writing. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (4th ed., pp. 370-389). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Street, B. (1993). Introduction: The new literacy studies. In B. Street (Ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy* (pp. 1-23). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Street, B. (1999). Academic literacies. In C. Jones, J. Turner & B. Street (Eds.), *Students writing in the university: Cultural and epistemological issues* (Vol. 8, pp. 193-227). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.

Tannen, D. (1984). *Conversational style: Analyzing talk among friends*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Tannen, D. (1987). Repetition in conversation: Toward a poetics of talk. *Language, 63*(3), 575-605.

Tannen, D. (1993). What's in a frame? Surface evidence for underlying expectations. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Framing in discourse* (pp. 14-56). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Tannen, D., & Wallat, C. (1993). Interactive frames and knowledge schemas in interaction: Examples from a medical examination/interview. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Framing in discourse* (pp. 57-76). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Ulichny, P., & Watson-Gegeo, K. (1989). Interactions and authority: The dominant interpretive framework in writing conferences. *Discourse Processes, 12*, 309-328.

"Actually, that's not really how I imagined it": Children's divergent dispositions, identities, and practices in digital production

Beth Buchholz

Abstract

This case study explores the range of social and digital literacy practices in which a group of 4th to 6th grade students engaged while collaboratively creating digital book trailers—one- to two-minute digital videos designed to entice classmates to read a particular book. The research question framing this work is how do these children's ways of knowing and being in the world impact their multimodal production processes? Fine-grained multimodal analysis was combined with retrospective think-alouds and ethnographic fieldwork to uncover traces of practice that were sedimented in their digital texts. The analysis highlights the importance of developing methodological tools for studying digital composition processes, given that much of the research in this area has focused on analyzing the final products using multimodal content analysis. The findings reveal divergent practices around image selection and representation that suggest contrasting ethea of remixing culture. Implications include considering the visual arts as a potential entry point for supporting students' critical engagement in the digital world.

Introduction (Narrative Vignette)

Four upper-elementary-aged children sit around a large table eating lunch; three of them gaze up at the large screen, eagerly waiting for the images from the digital book trailer they have created together to appear and the mysterious music to eerily fill the otherwise empty classroom. Luna, in her usual black sweatshirt adorned with self-drawn mystical creatures and bits of fabric sewn on, gazes down at a partly drawn image of a dragon on a piece of notebook paper in her lap. Her knotted hair—a kind of bird's nest—has bits of shells, beads, string, and twigs poking out at all angles. She eats with her left hand so she can continue drawing with her right. Once the music begins, Luna turns her gaze upward toward the screen but never lets go of her pen.

The students' collaboratively composed digital trailer for the book Fablehaven *(Mull, 2007) opens with the image of a lushly wooded forest (see Figure 1). Sunlight peeks through the leaves of the trees while a slight mist rises from the forest floor. In the center of the image sits a gate with a small sign that says "Private"; a deteriorating wooden sign on the left reinforces this with the words "Private Property." A slightly worn path leads viewers' eyes to the gate and eventually to the sprawling title "*Fablehaven,*" written in the same vaguely calligraphic font that adorns the cover of the book. The children launch into explaining the design considerations that went into selecting this particular image:*

> Sam: *Because that's the gate to Fablehaven! ... And also because ... I was looking at Fablehaven pictures* [online] *at my house and I was finding pictures of actors to be*

Fablehaven actors in the movie, which might come out soon. I'm really happy about that. And then I typed in Fablehaven to see what would come up—to see pictures of characters. And this came up. And so I was like, "Oh my gosh!" And then they [the teachers] *were like, "We're going to make book trailers," and I was like, "Oh my gosh, we need this!"*

Luna: [looks up from the dragon drawing in her lap] *Although, that's not really how I imagined it.*

Figure 1. Opening image in children's digital book trailer.

This short exchange between Sam and Luna—two children at odds over a modal choice in this digital book trailer—serves as a frame for the subsequent argument and analysis presented in this paper. Digital texts, such as this *Fablehaven* book trailer, are a rich source of data due to the multitude of modal choices children have to make (e.g., images, text, voiceovers, music, sounds) during the meaning-making process (Kress, 1997; Rowsell & Pahl, 2007). By exploring children's multimodal choices, one can begin to understand how such design decisions are always situated within the creator's beliefs (Sanders & Albers, 2010). Thus, the disagreement over this particular *Fablehaven* image hints at Luna's and Sam's interests, histories, and identities within school as well as those outside of school. Taking an ethnographic case study approach, this paper combines fine-grained multimodal analysis with retrospective think-alouds to position the book trailer as a window into the young digital composers' design thinking. The research question framing this work was: How do these children's ways of knowing and being in the world impact their multimodal production processes?

Literature Review

New Forms of Composing

In a Web 2.0 world, notions of writing and composing continue to evolve as technology becomes a ubiquitous part of how people make sense of and meaning in the world. Traditional views of authorship envisioned a writer working alone, with paper and pencil, composing an original piece of writing imbued with his/her own voice (Lensmire, 1994). Within this print-centric, monomodal paradigm, schools have historically valued genres such as the five-paragraph essay, the research paper, and literary analysis as encompassing the kinds of compositional skills that students need to be successful beyond school. While print has been the valued mode of expression and instruction in schools, recent advances in technology are shifting notions of composition for English educators (Miller, 2007). The literacy practices needed for functioning in the world are rapidly transforming and becoming more complex (Leu, 2002).

The school's vision of print-centric composition stands in stark juxtaposition to children's everyday experiences with digitally mediated, multimodal composing events outside of school (e.g., texting a friend, designing a blog, posting Facebook updates, tweeting a link, creating a meme, remixing a YouTube video). This disconnect between everyday engagement in digitally mediated spaces and classroom literacy experiences often make school feel "out of sync" for many children (Sheridan & Rowsell, 2010, p. 5). In children's everyday lives, print is intertwined with other modes such as images, video, audio, and music to represent complex meanings. As new digital affordances change the way children play, think, live, and communicate in everyday life, best practices in the classroom are being reconsidered to include the multimodal and interactive experiences that define how children consume and produce media outside of school (Jewitt, Kress, & Mavers, 2009).

Digital video production is just one form of multimodal composing that has received increased interest from teachers and researchers as schools have invested financially in the necessary technology (video cameras, video editing software, tablets, laptops). Within digital video production, previous research has documented multiple forms: live action (documentary style, fictional dramas), puppetry, still image (with voiceovers and/or music), and animation. However, despite the strong body of research emerging in relation to video production and middle school and secondary students (e.g., Bruce, 2009; Doering, Beach, & O'Brien, 2007; Hull & Katz, 2006; Ito et al., 2009; Kajder, 2008), there continues to be much less research in elementary and early childhood contexts (Marsh, 2006; Ranker, 2008; Wohlwend, Buchholz, Wessel-Powell, Coggin, & Husbye, 2013). This research study fills a gap in the research by exploring the composing decisions and design logics (Sheridan & Rowsell, 2010) that guide young digital-video producers. By using ethnography, this case study goes beyond the multimodal artifact to explore the dispositions, identities, and logics that guide younger children during the digital production process.

Composing as Sign-Making

When students compose any text, they are positioned as sign-makers (Kress, 1997). Sign-making (e.g., writing an essay, composing a digital video, drawing a cartoon) is always a process of actively remixing and remaking the cultural resources available—from home and school—to create representations motivated by the guidelines of a particular project as well the students' own interests. Kress's (1997) theory of the motivated sign suggests that it is possible to explore students' signs as transformations of the resources that were available to them, made in light of their interests. In other words, even when students create texts for prescribed school assignments, the signs (texts) they produce are always created in light of their interests, cultural histories, and subjectivities (Kress, 1997). Sign-making is always a personal process, even when the content/topic is not overtly personal.

Multimodal texts are considered "denser" than monomodal compositions; each additional mode adds a layer of complexity that allows for a more complete expression of the child's habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Roswell and Pahl (2007) unpack Kress's (1997) concept of the "interest of the sign-maker" by asserting that *interest* is the child's identity in practice, which can be traced back to the ways of doing and being in the world. Within this theoretical framing, modal choices are always laden with ideologies, and "once these elements are considered, digital storytelling gets more complex" (Pahl & Roswell, 2010, p. 109). Even the simplest forms of video production are an especially rich source of data because of the multitude of modal choices creators have to make concerning images, text, and sounds. Each modal decision embeds what Rowsell & Pahl (2007) calls fractal bits of habitus in the final text. When creating multimodal texts, creators "sediment" (subconsciously and perhaps even consciously) fundamental aspects of their identities into texts.

This study explores simple digital video production—specifically book trailers (1-2 minute videos aimed at enticing viewers to read a particular book)—as one of many of the new domains of multimodal composition that have gained inclusion in English classrooms over the last decade (Blondell, 2009; Costello, 2010; Doering, Beach, & O'Brien, 2007; Kajder, 2006; Miller, 2007). In effect, the book trailer project is an invitation to include remixing—the process of taking available cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them to create new meaning (Knoebel & Lankshear, 2008)—as part of the official school curriculum. Remixing is a highly valued compositional practice in the world outside of school (e.g., fan fiction, music sampling, YouTube videos); however, classrooms' notions of plagiarism and originality complicate the inclusion of remixing as a legitimate composing practice. Because of tensions around originality and narrow visions of what children are capable of, little is known about how children's identities, histories, and dispositions shape their remixing practices and design logics.

For example, how do children search for relevant content online? What do children consider when making modal decisions? Previous research in the fields of instructional technology and library science has explored how children use Internet search engines (Bilal, 2005; Foss et al., 2012; Jochmann-Mannak, Huibers, Lentz, & Sanders, 2010), but these studies often take simplistic methodological approaches that remove the personal context that makes digital remixing projects such a rich site for exploration. These studies have looked to generalize how children search for textual information online, whereas the

present paper situates searching online and selecting relevant content as a complex, personal process related to identity work as well as habitus.

Methodology

This paper draws on extended ethnographic work in a multiage classroom located in a public school in a midsized Midwestern town. As a participant observer, I spent two years engaged with 57 students (ages 5 to 12 years old) and their two teachers, exploring literacy-related learning and engagements. I worked with teachers to understand this complex classroom community. We consistently shared reflections, insights, and questions about particular students or curricular engagements. I collected data two mornings a week, audio-recorded whole-class and small-group talk during classroom literacy engagements, and took "quite thick" fieldnotes (Carspecken, 1996). Rowsell (2012) argues that ethnography is a critical component to multimodal analysis, because students' cultural histories and identities are critical in shaping design decisions:

> These histories, however, can only be understood through a medium such as ethnography, which is about finding context, about providing "thick description" and a layered contextual account of how choices were made and in what context, and about the history of the sign maker. (p. 106)

Ethnographic fieldwork provided a rich context in which to situate and explore students' artifacts, design practices, and ways of being in the world (Grenfell et al., 2012).

Participants

This case study focuses on a group of students who created trailers for the book *Fablehaven* (Mull, 2007)—the first book in the *New York Times*'s best-selling children's literature fantasy series. The group members included Megan (4th grade), Luna (4th grade), Paul (4th grade), and Sam (5th grade; all names are pseudonyms in accordance with IRB protocol). After the first day of discussing the general storyline and searching for images online, Luna and Megan broke off and began working on a separate trailer for the same book. This became a secondary, unfinished side project of sorts; the girls eventually rejoined Sam and Paul a few days later to complete the original book trailer that they collectively shared with the class. Luna and Megan never mentioned or shared their separate book trailer publicly.

Data Sources

Digital book trailers

Book trailers are an updated and tech-savvy form of the "book talk" (Chambers, 1985), which has been a familiar practice in literacy classrooms for decades (Gunter & Kenny, 2008; Kajder, 2008). Book trailers are based on the trailers that advertise upcoming feature films in movie theaters and on television, and have strong connections beyond the classroom; major book publishing companies have recently turned to these movie-style book trailers as a way to promote new books in a crowded marketplace to readers who are increasingly communicating online. In this research setting, children worked in small groups to locate images and music online that represented a book they had just finished

reading in class. These visual and musical modes were combined using simple video editing software.

Prior to this digital video project, children in this classroom primarily used PowerPoint, Word, and Microsoft Paint software for digital composing and designing. Some children in the class had created digital movies at home as part of independent inquiry projects, but the book trailer project was the first official class project where *all* of the students were asked to multimodally compose a text using video software. The trailer format was familiar enough to children that they were able to draw on explicit and implicit out-of-school knowledge about effective communication in video. Prior research suggests that using familiar genres for digital video composing (e.g., commercials, music videos, movie trailers) creates strong connections between school and the media-rich experiences and practices that students engage in outside of school (Miller, 2007).

This paper focuses on the two digital book trailers that children created based on the book *Fablehaven* (see Table 1 for an overview of the two groups and their respective book trailers). Reading across the book trailers offered a unique opportunity to use comparative analysis to better understand students' divergent compositional choices within and across modes. Of particular interest was the fact that both groups had access to the same set of tools and resources (e.g., the book, classroom computers, voice recorders, software, the Internet, previous group Literature Circle conversations), and yet the two book trailer groups reflected divergent production practices and logics, as well as representations.

Retrospective interviews

Post-production interviews were conducted with the group members to better understand their design considerations and logics while composing the digital book trailer. Bruce (2009) argues for the importance of developing methodological tools for studying digital composition *processes*, given that much of the research in this area has focused entirely on analyzing the final *products* using multimodal content analysis. In his video production work with high school students, Bruce (2009) used think-alouds in two different ways: concurrently and retrospectively. While Bruce cites the concurrent think-alouds as offering

Group	Participants (& Grade)	Group Leader	Book Trailer Details	Video Length
A	Sam (5th) Paul (4th)	Sam	Image (8 frames) Print (2 frames) Music Voice Transitions	29 seconds
B	Luna (4th) Megan (4th)	Luna	Image (4 frames) Print (2 frames) Music Transitions	18 seconds (unfinished)

Table 1: Focal Participants and Book Trailer Overview

a potentially rich data source, he discovered that students found it logistically frustrating and often forgot to do it altogether. The retrospective think-alouds, where students were audiotaped as they watched their finished movie for the first time and discussed evaluations of the process as well as the artifact, were a more reliable tool.

For this study, a revised version of the retrospective think-aloud was developed to gather data with children that could be used to explore the multimodal analyses more completely (see Appendix A for the complete version of the revised retrospective think-aloud heuristic based on the work of Bruce, 2009). All four members of the *Fablehaven* group were invited to eat lunch in the classroom (the scene from the opening vignette) to discuss the book trailer(s) and the design process. These conversations were videotaped, and a transcript was created for analytical purposes. The retrospective think-aloud was initiated by playing the group's book trailer from beginning to end. Although students made informal comments (e.g., "That's so creepy!"), I did not ask specific questions, nor did I pause the video. I then replayed the trailer, this time pausing on each image so students could talk. Although open conversation was invited, the heuristic was developed ahead of time to more systematically probe for background information and design considerations. I focused heavily on images in this retrospective think-aloud as a way to explore the complexities and patterns within the visual mode that might not be evident to viewers (including the researcher). Some of the probing questions included:

1. Describe the image. *Who/what is this? Why this particular image? What were you trying to show the audience?*
2. History/location of the image. *How did you find this image? Do you remember what search terms you used? Had you seen this image before?*
3. Choices. *Are there other images that you wish you had found or included? Were there things that you looked for but couldn't find? Did you intentionally leave out certain images?*

After discussing each image, the trailer was played additional times to invite talk about other modal decisions, as well as inviting a holistic look at the trailer design and production.

Analysis

First Layer: Multimodal Microanalysis

The first layer of analysis focused on analyzing the book trailer multimodally. Multimodal composition is considered a process of "braiding" (Mitchell, 2004) and "orchestration" of multiple modes of meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), and analysis attempts to understand the particular logics of organization and respective meaning-making affordances of different modalities. The book trailers can be considered "manageably multimodal" (Hull & Nelson, 2005) due to their lack of animation and slick transitions, which facilitates the "unbraiding" process. Each mode was pulled apart—spoken word (voiceovers), images, music, print, and transitions—by creating a visual transcript. Hull and Nelson (2005) suggest that this transcription process is a challenging but necessary step in multimodal investigations:

> One must invent a way to graphically depict the words, pictures, and so forth that are copresented in the piece at any given moment. The form the transcription scheme takes will be dictated to a great extent by the respective materialities and affordances of the focal modes. (p. 235)

I adopted a transcription style similar to Hull and Nelson's (2005) horizontal timeline, or "parallel presentation" format. For the book trailers there were six modal tracks: 1) time code, 2) actual image, 3) written text, 4) description of the image, 5) music/sound effects/voiceover, and 6) transitions. I later added fieldnotes and retrospective think-aloud data. (See Appendix B for horizontal timelines of book trailer.)

The horizontal transcripts were analyzed for salient patterns—looking for emerging patterns within each mode as well as identifiable patterns across modalities. Analyzing multimodal texts is complex work, given that multimodality cannot be thought of as an "additive art" whereby meaning is stacked up with each new mode that is added to a piece. Hull and Nelson (2005) refer to multimodal texts as a form of "semiotic tapestry" where students craft meaning "not merely in but also *in between* the warp and the weft" (p. 239). Particular attention was given to the types of meaning conveyed within each semiotic mode; in other words, I looked at how the children managed the affordances of the different modalities available to them. The image and music modes were of particular interest, based on fieldnotes that indicated students spent most of their time working within and across these two modes.

Second Layer: Retrospective Think-Alouds

For the second layer of analysis, a retrospective think-aloud was conducted with all four group members together. It was here that Luna and Megan first expressed dissatisfaction with the "group's" book trailer and began contrasting it with a book trailer they had worked on separately. I transcribed the retrospective think–aloud conversations and engaged in rich description, recursive, and iterative analyses, discerning themes and patterns in the data. While many interesting patterns emerged that will be discussed at length further on, the insight that frames the analytical direction of this paper gave clear evidence that Luna and Megan's *Fablehaven* book trailer was a significantly developed multimodal artifact that needed to be analyzed in relation to the one that Sam and Paul had predominantly controlled:

> Paul: *… we had like two computers. Me and Sam were working on one …*
> Megan: *Well, me and Luna were kind of doing one together, but they finished it first so they got to do* [share] *theirs.*
> Researcher: *So who was working together?*
> Megan: *Me and Luna.*

Given limited time for this classroom project, Luna and Megan ended up abandoning their separate book trailer after a few days and joined back together with Sam and Paul so they would have a finished piece to share with the class. The boys were basically finished with the trailer at this point, so Luna and Megan did not have significant input into any part of the design. Having two book trailers to read across offered a unique opportunity to use comparative analysis to better understand children's divergent choices within and across modes as well as contrasting logics and dispositions.

Luna and Megan offered a copy of their book trailer with the caveat that it "wasn't quite finished." This book trailer was transcribed using the same horizontal transcription format previously discussed (see Appendix B). Two additional retrospective think-alouds were also conducted: one with Sam and Paul, and another with Luna and Megan (viewing and talking about their own book trailers respectively). Working with pairs of students was more productive in that it invited all students to have a more significant voice in the conversation. In the initial think-aloud session with all four group members, Paul and Sam dominated in terms of number of turns at talk. Each session was transcribed, and recursive and iterative analyses were used to discern themes and patterns in the data. Quantitative measures, such as the number of turns at talk, as well as language suggesting ownership of specific design decisions, suggested that Sam and Luna were the leaders within their respective groups. Questions often arose during the transcription and coding processes, and my extended placement in the classroom allowed me to engage in informal conversations with students related to these questions. The quantitative indicators of leadership (i.e., Sam and Luna) mirrored qualitative ethnographic fieldnotes collected across two years of working with these children.

Findings

We now return to the opening vignette—Luna expressing disagreement over the image that Sam had chosen to open the book trailer—locating this as a place in the data to begin demonstrating how multimodal microanalysis was used in conjunction with the retrospective think-alouds to identify traces of students' sedimented identities, dispositions, and logics within the book trailers.

Sam's explanation of his image selection process suggests that he called upon out-of-school digital literacy practices during the book trailer composing process. He referenced previously searching for online images at home related to the book, and considering actors and actresses for a potential movie version of the book (i.e., a "dream cast"). He expected Google and YouTube to be sites of media convergence (Jenkins, 2006), where bits of transmedia storytelling would offer sites of continued engagement with the ideas and fantasy world offered through the print version of *Fablehaven*. This flexibility and desire to move between print and digital worlds fits closely with Prensky's (2001) description of "Digital Natives": "[they] have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age" (p. 1). For Sam, reading was an experience that also involved playing, talking, watching, searching, browsing, and creating. The "screen" was a critical piece of the reading process, even when he was reading a traditional printed book as part of a school assignment. Luna, on the other hand, offers an emphatic rejection of the image—"*Actually, that's not really how I imagined it*"—essentially questioning not only Sam's interpretation, but also the "official" interpretation of the text as expressed through transmedia released by the publisher (http://brandonmull.com/fablehaven/). Luna brought a very different set of identities and literacy practices to the multimodal composing process—ones that were at odds with the sensibilities that Sam's identities offered.

Throughout their respective retrospective think-alouds, Sam and Luna both referred to out-of-school practices and interests when discussing their modal decisions. Traces of

identities and social practices can be identified in both trailers, based on Rowsell and Pahl's (2007) thesis that "text making is a process involving the sedimentation of identities into the text, which can be seen as an artifact that reflects, through its materiality, the previous identities of the meaning maker" (p. 388). Looking across the movies, it is clear this book trailer project was about much more than the official schooled task of multimodally representing the book *Fablehaven*; it was a process infused with personal investment whereby "fractal parts of practice together with identity, [were] embedded, shard-like, within the digital story" (p. 94). The subsequent sections offer an in-depth exploration of each student, identifying their different identities, dispositions, and social practices by placing the digital book trailers alongside stories of production.

The Disagreement: Official vs. Unofficial

Luna's disagreement with Sam and Paul's image selection hinted at a clash of practices and identities as she went on to describe what she had visualized:

> Megan: *Well it IS the gate to...*
>
> Researcher: *So Luna, how did you imagine it?*
>
> Luna: *Well, have you ever been like, driving on a country road and you see this gravel path going up... and it says private... Just kind of something... kind of like that and then I imagine it having a gate on it...*

Figure 2. Sam's opening image (frame #1) compared to official cover of the book (frame #10).

Megan and Sam both insisted that this was "*the* gate to Fablehaven" despite the image not being explicitly connected to the book itself (i.e., the image was not on the cover or in any of the books in the series). Notice that they did not say that it "looks *like* the gate to Fablehaven" but rather "this *is the* gate to Fablehaven." There was a sense that this image (see Figure 2, frame 1) was "official" even though the children couldn't identify exactly what website this image came from or who created it. It was imbued with official status for two main reasons: 1) Sam found it using a Google image search for the term "Fablehaven," and 2) the image looked artistically similar to the illustration on the cover of the book (see Figure 2, frame 10). Not only are the colors fairly similar, but both images also use the same font for the large "Fablehaven" title. Although students didn't mention these aesthetic

connections explicitly, had the image looked less similar to the book cover, its official status would have been more in question.[1] With the image imbued with the official stamp of a Google Image search and appearing so visually similar to the official cover illustration, it is quite remarkable that Luna was willing to say, "that's not really how I imagined it." Taking a closer look at Luna's book trailer revealed traces of practices and habitus that help us better understand her willingness to resist the official narrative proposed by Sam.

Sam: The Digital Expert

During the initial layer of multimodal microanalysis, it was difficult to discern patterns from the images that Sam and Paul selected for their book trailer (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Storyboard of Sam's book trailer (two frames of text; eight images; 29 seconds long).

There were plenty of multimodal elements to attend to (e.g., colors, image placement, gaze, line direction, quality), but without knowing what the boys attended to, it felt as if I was attaching my own meaning to the selection process. While some looked to be official images associated with the book (frames 1, 3, 5, and 10), others looked to be hand drawn. It was only through the retrospective think-aloud that the histories and intentions behind the selection of these particular images were made evident. As the book trailer was paused on each of the eight images, Sam was able to describe the exact Google Image search terms he used to locate the images. The search terms included "Fablehaven," "Fablehaven house,"

---

[1] Because Sam relied on Google Image searches, he wasn't aware the image in question is what first greets viewers upon entering "The Fablehaven Preserve," an interactive website (http://brandonmull.com/fablehaven/preserve/), which is a small portion of author Brandon Mull's much larger site. In the "The Fablehaven Preserve" users move a fluttering-winged fairy around—instead of the typical arrow-shaped cursor—to play games, "paint" pictures, and download official images from books (desktops, avatars, and screen savers). One of the possible desktop downloads includes the image (#1) that Sam and Paul selected to begin the book trailer. Although Sam did not download the image from "The Fablehaven Preserve" (nor know about its existence), it is important to note that the image itself is part of the officially licensed media created for Mull's Fablehaven series.

"Fablehaven characters," "Fablehaven fairies," and "Fablehaven Hugo." Every search term started with the title of the book. Once the images for a particular search came up, Sam and Paul described scanning through the first few rows of potential images and discussing what seemed to best represent the character or scene. They could instantly identify that the house (frame #3), fairy sitting on top of the flower (frame #5), and book cover (frame #10) were all official images of the *Fablehaven* series (i.e., these images were found inside the books or on the covers of books in the series). Sam and Paul weren't sure who had made the other images, but they were in agreement that these images were based on the *Fablehaven* book and matched how they visualized the characters while reading.

When Sam finished reading *Fablehaven,* he had already begun exploring online media related to the book at home. The book trailer project had not been announced, so these practices had no direct connection to school. He had two main ways to look for related content online: 1) Google Image searches, and 2) YouTube searches. Sam was particularly interested in watching "dream cast" videos on YouTube, which his older brother introduced him to. "Dream casts" are a popular genre of fan-made video content where users recommend which famous actors or actresses should play the parts of the characters in the movie version of a particular book. Sam created his own *Fablehaven* "dream cast" at home in iMovie, which required that he locate and import images of actors and actresses, create text frames for the title and names of each character, as well as import music—the same remixing practices that were later utilized in the book trailer project in school. In addition to the "dream cast" videos, Sam also watched many of the user-created *Fablehaven* live-action videos on YouTube where users act out certain parts of the book. He was highly critical of the versions that he watched online, and he and Paul discussed possibly making their own movie and posting it to YouTube—implying that this sort of production would need to be done outside of school.

In the 21st century, there is an expectation by readers, like Sam, who grew up submersed in the transmedia storytelling world of Harry Potter—which has played out across television, movies, music, websites, amusement parks, and toys—that all books will have an equally rich and diverse world of peripheral texts available. These expectations of texts existing beyond the printed book were evident in the following exchange where Sam explained how and why he searched online for *Fablehaven* at home:

Researcher: *Are there any websites that you checked out related to* Fablehaven*?*

Sam: *Some. Well, not intentionally, but I like I would go onto Google Images and I would type in Fablehaven just to see what people come up with. Because I like to see what people come up with, it's like one of my favorite things. And then, so like I see "oh cool Fablehaven picture" and so I click on it to see it full screen and then it accidentally comes up with the website and I'm like wow this is a Fablehaven website, I like this website.*

Sam's searches online were always oriented toward the visual mode. He expected that "people" would come up with images and videos related to *Fablehaven* and post these things online. Websites were of little interest to him unless an image "accidentally" took him to a site. (Fieldnotes reveal that almost all students used Google Image searches to sort through results—even when searching for textual information.)

While useful in some respects, Sam's visual search techniques meant that he wasn't aware of the official websites for *Fablehaven* author Brandon Mull, or any of the other *Fablehaven* fan sites. Using a Google Image search gave him the impression that all images existed separately online, and didn't allow him to easily see where the images originated, who created them, or how they might be connected. In most of Sam's image searches at home, he simply perused the images to get a sense of what was out there and to make wider connections to a text that he loved. He even found ways to use the images to brand everyday objects:

> Sam: *…like on my iPod, like you know when you turn on an iPod or an iPad it has like, the original one* [original home screen] *is of raindrops. I changed mine to a picture of Seth and Kendra* [main characters of *Fablehaven*]*. Like that's my picture when you turn it on—you see that picture!*

Sam alluded to not only knowing how to search for and save images online, but also knowing how a person might use images to signify identity claims with everyday objects (iPod or iPads). This kind of practice connects to other digital practices such as using a found image for one's Twitter avatar or Facebook profile picture—in each of these cases a selected image is tied to particular identities and practices. Sam's book trailer sedimented his identity as a "fan" of *Fablehaven* across print and digital media, as well as that of a "digital expert."

Luna: The Artist in Residence

Luna had a computer at home but rarely used it, choosing to spend most of her out-of-school time reading, drawing, crafting, and playing outside. She often brought the craft projects to school that she had created at home. Recently, Luna brought a wallet, pencil case, and backpack that she made completely out of duct tape. This "craft" caught on immediately with classmates who wanted to learn how to make duct tape objects. Luna was considered a kind of "artist in residence": other students would run to ask for help or advice on their duct tape projects (or other art-related projects). She eventually moved on to using tin foil and duct tape to create three-dimensional dragon figurines. This art form also caught on in the classroom, and became a Friday invitation where Luna worked with small groups of classmates, teaching them how to create the intricate figures. When she wasn't creating duct tape figurines, she was drawing—constantly.

Luna and Megan's *Fablehaven* book trailer began with text instead of an image (see Figure 4, frame 1). All group members agreed on the text during the initial planning stage of the book trailer project, and the actual wording varied very little between both *Fablehaven* book trailers:
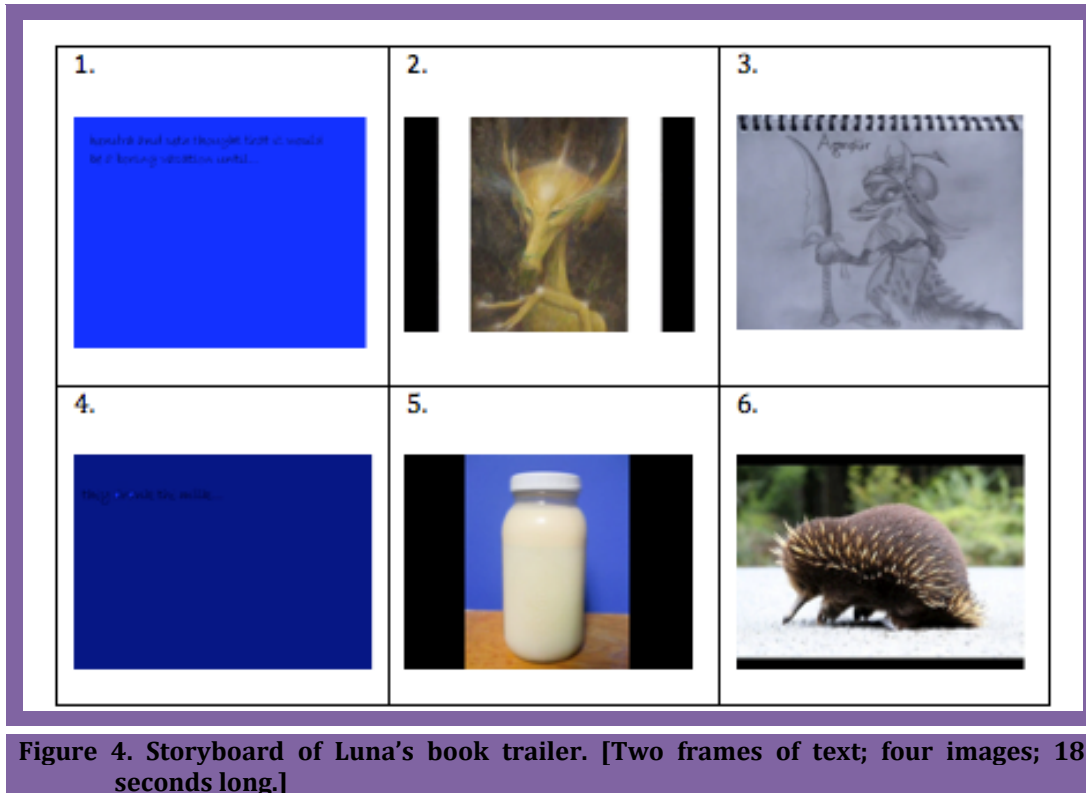
Paul & Sam's book trailer text:

> [Frame #1] "Siblings Kendra and Seth think it's going to be a boring summer at their grandparent's house."
> [Frame #3] "Until they drink the milk!"

Luna & Megan's book trailer text:

[Frame #1] "kendra and seth thought that it would be a boring vacation until…"
[Frame #4] "they drank the milk…"

Figure 4. Storyboard of Luna's book trailer. [Two frames of text; four images; 18 seconds long.]

While comparing the semantics of the textual mode offers little insight, there was a clear difference in the way the two groups decided to visually display the text. Sam and Paul used the default setting in MovieMaker: white Arial font on a royal blue background. The boys made very few conscious design decisions within this mode; Luna took a far different approach. In the retrospective think-aloud, Luna explained that she and Megan used Microsoft Paint (a simple graphics program) to write the words, saved the files, and then imported the two Paint files to Moviemaker:

Luna: *…in MovieMaker it's really hard to get it exactly. I have a lot of, and Paint is a little bit easier and I have a lot of experience with Paint because I've been drawing on it for a long time.*

Researcher: *What kinds of things do you guys do in Paint? Or what kind of stuff have you done in the past?*

Luna: *Drawing, shading …*

Megan: *She's done a lot and the only thing I've done was a complete failure, and I was trying to make a picture for magical orb in my story.*

Luna: *I could make a good one.*

Megan: *Yes you can.*

Luna: *Because Megan, you know the grayish tool with the ... kind of grayish colored one? Then make the, make it have a circle, then make it be huge, and then like this big, and then just click it once, and you'll have an orb.*

Luna knew how to create a text frame in MovieMaker, but she made the decision to use the Microsoft Paint software because its tools offered greater affordances based on her extensive prior experiences. Megan, and all of the other students in the classroom, recognized Luna as a talented artist (with pen/pencil, duct tape, and on the computer). Other students often tried to sit near her so they could watch her draw and would ask for help with their own drawings. Luna even started a "drawing group," of which she was the clear leader. The special folder she made to collect the club's artwork had two interior pockets: one labeled "Luna's Drawings," and the other, "Other People's Drawings." Her expertise and leadership was evident in the prior transcript when she explained to Megan how to create an orb in Paint—referring to the specific tools and steps needed to make it look like a three dimensional object and not a flat circle. Luna often used Paint to create images that she imported into PowerPoint presentations for her inquiry projects. She talked, thought, and enacted practices in school and out that situated her as an artist. She wanted a wide range options and felt constrained by the choices offered in MovieMaker. In Microsoft Paint, Luna felt that she had more control over all aesthetic decisions.

Using only multimodal analysis, one could infer that Luna's design decisions regarding the color, location, and font style of the text suggest that she was using these affordances in the visual mode to convey meanings related to *Fablehaven.* The font Luna chose was script-like and seemed to slightly resemble the font used for the title of the book. Luna quickly dismissed this assumption during the retrospective think-aloud:

Researcher: *And here I see you chose kind of a different font than is typically found in MovieMaker ... So I wonder if you use that font a lot or you picked it intentionally, or you thought it was ...*

Luna: *That was actually my first time using that font and I just thought the name sounded cool. I forget what the name was.*

While Luna implied the font choice was random, the fact that she made a conscious choice about it sedimented a very specific set of practices in her book trailer. Luna's text-based modal choices weren't meant to explicitly carry meaning related to *Fablehaven*, but these choices do represent ideologically shaped practices that can be traced back to the interest and identity of the sign maker. As an artist, Luna was resistant to allowing MovieMaker to make decisions for her; she maintained control over the software rather than being controlled by it.

Additionally, the ways Luna and Megan selected images for their book trailer were far different from Sam and Paul's method. Rather than using search terms such as "Fablehaven" or "Fablehaven characters," the girls searched for "Brian Froud drawings." Froud was an artist and illustrator that they both idolized:

Megan: *Me and Luna were using Brian Froud who designed like a whole bunch of puppets.*

Luna: *He is an <u>AWESOME</u> person. So Brian Froud has to be one my favorite artists. He has this awesome book called the* Runes of Elfland*. It has the Runic alphabet in the back and it has secret messages hidden all in it, in Runic…. He's a really good drawer and he helped design like the indexes in* The Dark Crystal.

Froud, an English fantasy illustrator, worked with Jim Henson as a designer of landscapes and creatures for the movies *The Dark Crystal* (1982) & *Labyrinth* (1986). Luna and Megan estimated they had seen both of these movies over twenty times and could recite the lines to specific scenes. Froud has also illustrated many books that are among the girls' favorites: *Goblins*, *The Runes of Elfland*, and *Good Faeries/Bad Faeries*. While he has drawn and created a variety of fantasy creatures, he is perhaps best known for his drawings of fairies. In the fantasy art world, many suggest that Froud's work was the first to offer an alternative interpretation of fairies that disregarded the traditional angelic, Victorian creatures in favor of creatures as multidimensional and sinister. There was no official connection between *Fablehaven* and Froud's artwork, but Luna explained that they made the connection because the book deals with a fantasy and Froud draws so many fantasy-based creatures. They found the images for frames 2 and 3 (see Figure 4) using the search term "Brian Froud drawings" in a Google Image search.

After selecting two Froud-inspired images, the girls searched for an image of milk—but not just any glass of milk:

Megan: *Milk! We looked up milk.*

Luna*: I have that* [the original milk picture] *saved on my locker* [folder on the computer] *still and you know how when it's saved there's a little name under it, that one's raw milk, which I think is good because if you think about it in* Fablehaven *they drank raw cow's milk from a magical cow.*

Researcher: *I'm assuming when you typed in milk to Google Images there's probably lots of different pictures of milk.*

Luna: *There were too many bad ones. That's like the one of three out of 50 that were actually really good.*

Researcher: *So what made you pick this image?*

Megan: *It was in a canteen. Luna liked that part.*

Figure 5. Google Images of milk that Luna & Megan debated between for their book trailer.

Luna and Megan were precise in their search to find the exact type of milk they pictured Seth and Kendra drinking in *Fablehaven.* The milk was a key element to the story: it was only by drinking the milk that the protagonists were able to see the fantasy creatures in the woods; without the milk everything looked normal. After sifting through the first few pages of Google Image results, they settled on a glass bottle of milk with a silver lid, but as they looked closer the background didn't match up with the story:

> Luna: *One of them* [picture of milk] *that I almost chose, but then I realized that in the background … I didn't pay too much attention to the background, I realized in the background someone had it sitting on the ground and had chickens walking around it.*

Luna's attention to the background of the milk image (see Figure 5) reflected her regular practice of closely analyzing images (background and foreground) to ensure that the details matched her visualizations of the book. She returned to the search results, and after scrolling through many pages—*"There were too many bad ones"*—she finally found what she was looking for on page nine. This prolonged engagement within a single search on Google Images was not exhibited by Sam and Paul. Also of note, the girls never used the title "Fablehaven" in any of their searches.

Fractal parts of Luna's practices and design logics were clearly embedded within the visual mode of her book trailer. From choosing to use Microsoft Paint instead of the default font in MovieMaker to sifting though pages of image results to find the perfect bottle of milk, her practices were sedimented in the text. These practices can be traced back to her habitus and identities as an artist and lover of fantasy culture. The multimodal project invited Luna to not only represent the story of *Fablehaven*, but also provided her with the freedom to sediment her passions and identities as an "artist an residence."

Discussion & Implications

This multimodal digital composing project offered children opportunities to expand their repertoires of ways in which they could communicate what and how they know. Sam and Luna were able to sediment their identities and draw on their dispositions in their book trailers in diverse and sometimes surprising ways. Sam called upon his experiences consuming and producing digital media, while Luna called upon her experiences as an

artist. Sam and Luna's divergent practices around image selection suggest contrasting ethea of remixing culture and digital production. Remixes are found everywhere online, and are made possible by the open design of the Internet that allows users to borrow/steal (depending on whom you ask) creative content that can be put together in "new" ways using digital editing tools. Creating the book trailers positioned children as remixers within the schooled-based project of representing a particular book. The practice of remixing is greatly contested not only in terms of copyright infringement, but also regarding the more aesthetic issue of whether remixes are creative or artistic, or are simply a high-tech form of copying. Critics tend to regard remixes as "schlock" where users steal content (e.g., music, text, video) and mash it together, thus contributing to a culture of "a nostalgic malaise … a culture of reaction without action" (Lanier, 2010, p. x). On the other hand, proponents of remixing argue that essentially every creative text ever produced has simply been a remix of texts that came before—suggesting that the romantic image of the lone, creative, original author/artist is merely a cultural myth.

Sam's and Luna's trailers sedimented divergent remixing practices that connect to their habitus. By using the title of the book in his images searches, Sam relied on Google's algorithm to search for images that had some official connection to the book—even if that connection was related to user-generated materials. Each result that appeared meant that someone (or some machine) somewhere had tied that particular image to the book *Fablehaven*. While Sam found it interesting to see what other "*people come up with*" related to the text, one has to wonder about the limitations of relying on Google to give users a diverse look at the content and visual culture available online. Google's goal with a search is to locate the images that most people are looking for—not to provide a variety of unique images. For books that have a wider web of official transmedia-related content, a Google Image search for the title will principally result in officially licensed products, images, and media related to the book. For example, a Google Image search for "Harry Potter" results in 412 million images, and almost all of the images include the official cast from the movies. In the first 25 pages of results, only two images don't use the official cast or cover illustrations in some way. There is surely a significant amount of fan-generated media online, but a basic Google Image search does not locate it.

A movie has yet to be created for *Fablehaven,* so Sam's Google Image results were fairly diverse and included unique user-generated drawings of some of the characters. However, the issue of Google Image searches raises questions about how images become officially tied to texts and what this means for children's reading behaviors in a world where people are increasingly turning to online spaces to help them make sense of books and extend their engagement with texts. Luna was able to somewhat hide from the world of official images related to *Fablehaven* by not explicitly using the title of the book in her online searches. As an artist, she felt confident using images that represented the ways she visualized the text, even though they were not officially connected to the book. It was this identity as an artist, sedimented throughout her digital text, which opened up a space for Luna to disagree with the official-looking images in the trailer.

In light of the results of this study of Sam's and Luna's sedimented identities and practices, as researchers and teachers we must more closely consider children's practices of locating and choosing bits of media online. It would seem that the 68,700 image results

for "Fablehaven" would offer a wealth of possibilities, but Sam's practices suggest that 68,700 images can just as easily lead to thoughtless acceptance of an official narrative. In Maxine Greene's (1995) book *Releasing the Imagination*, she refers to the importance of resisting an "object set of circumstances defined by others":

> As I view it … resistance can best be evoked when imagination is released; but, as we know, the bombardment of images from the divinity of Technological Communication frequently has the effect of freezing people's imaginative thinking. Instead of freeing audience members to take the initiative in reaching beyond their own actualities, in looking at things as if they could be otherwise, today's media present audiences with predigested concepts and images in fixed frameworks. (p. 124)

We must ask ourselves what kind of remixing practices lead to the thoughtful and imaginative possibilities we know are possible within the open culture of the web. Yes, digital texts offer children more choices in their meaning-making process, but we must also look closely at the ways that digital composing closes doors by defining a world of official and unofficial images: "When we hold an image of what is objectively 'the fact,' it has the effect of reifying what we experience, making our experience resistant to evaluation and change rather than open to imagination" (Greene, 1995, p. 126).

For Luna, engaging in the visual arts beyond the screen and her identity as an artist in residence offered her the space to consciously make decisions about the images she wanted in her book trailer. She was able to use Google as a tool rather than *being used* by it. In spending time looking for the "right" picture of milk, Luna demonstrated "an ability to notice what there is to notice," which is critical in that aesthetic experiences "require conscious participation" (Greene, 1995, p. 125). This "conscious [online] participation" is what Jared Lanier (2010) argues for in his manifesto: that users must struggle against the "easy grooves" that technology offers that ultimately entrap "all of us in someone else's … careless thoughts" (p. 22).

As educators we often talk and theorize about the kinds of critical practices, dispositions, and digital literacies that children need to live more informed lives online, but rarely do we consider the visual arts to be a possible entry point into these practices. Remixing can be a process of critical and engaged participation in the visual world if children are able to confidently say, "*Actually that's not really how I imagined it*" in the face of the canonical Google search: "To think in relation to what we are doing is to be conscious of ourselves struggling to make meanings, to make critical sense of what authoritative others are offering as objectively, authoritatively 'real'" (Greene, 1995, p. 126).

References

Bilal, D. (2005). Children's information seeking and the design of digital interfaces in the affective paradigm. *Library Trends*, *54*(2), 197-208.

Blondell, M. (2009). An English teacher's design of digital video composing in an urban high school: Impacts on student engagement and learning. Doctoral dissertation, University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bruce, D. L. (2009). Writing with visual images: Examining video composition processes of high school students. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *43*(4), 426-450.

Carspecken, P. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chambers, A. (1985). *Booktalk: Occasional writing on children and literature*. London: Bodley Head.

Costello, A. (2010). Silencing stories: The triumphs and tensions of multimodal teaching and learning in an urban context. In P. Albers & J. Sanders (Eds.), *Literacies, the arts and multimodality* (pp. 234-254). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Doering, A., Beach, R., & O'Brien, D. (2007). Infusing multimodal tools and digital literacies into an English education program. *English Education*, *40*(1), 41-60.

Foss, E., Druin, A. Brewer, R., Lo, P., Sanchez, L., Golub, E., & Hutchinson, H. (2012). Children's search roles at home: Implication for designers, researchers, educators, and parents. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *63*(3), 558-573.

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination: Essays on education, the arts, and social change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Grenfell, M., Bloome, D., Hardy, C., Pahl, K., Rowsell, J., & Street, B. (2012). *Language, ethnography and education: Bridging New Literacy Studies and Bourdieu*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gunter, G., & Kenny, R. (2008). Digital booktalk: Digital media for reluctant readers. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, *8*(1), 84-99.

Hull, G., & Katz, M. (2006). Crafting an agentive self: Case studies of digital storytelling. *Research in the Teaching of English*, *41*(1), 43-81.

Hull, G., & Nelson, M. (2005). Locating the semiotic power of multimodality. *Written Communication, 22*(2), 224-261.

Ito, M., Baumer, S., Bittanti, M., Boyd, D., Cody, R., Herr-Stephenson, B., & Tripp, L. (2009). *Hanging out, messing around, and geeking out: Kids living and learning with new media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence culture: Where old and new media collide.* New York, NY: NYU Press.

Jewitt, C., Kress, G., & Mavers, D. E. (2009). *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis.* London, UK: Routledge.

Jochmann-Mannak, H., Huibers, T., Lentz, L., & Sanders, T. (2010). Children searching information on the Internet: Performance on children's interfaces compared to Google. In *Proceedings from the SIGIR Workshop on Accessible Search Systems* (pp. 27-35). New York, NY: ACM Press.

Kajder, S. B. (2006). *Bringing the outside in: Visual ways to engage reluctant readers.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Kajder, S. B. (2008). The book trailer: Engaging teens through technologies. *Educational Leadership*, *65*(6). Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar08/vol65/num06/The-Book-Trailer@-Engaging-Teens-Through-Technologies.aspx

Knobel, M., & Lankshear, C. (2008). Remix: The art and craft of endless hybridization*. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(1), 22-33*.*

Kress, G. (1997). *Before writing: Rethinking the paths to literacy* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Kress, F., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lanier, J. (2010). *You are not a gadget.* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Lensmire, T. (1994). *When children write: Critical re-visions of the writing workshop.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Leu, D. J. (2002). The new literacies: Research on reading instruction with the Internet. In A. E. Farstrup & S. J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd ed., pp. 310–336). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Marsh, J. (2006). Emergent media literacy: Digital animation in Early Childhood. *Language and Education, 20*(6), 493-506.

Miller, S. (2007). English teacher learning for new times: Digital video composing as multimodal literacy practice. *English Education*, *40*(1), 61-83.

Mitchell, W. (2004, April). Sounding the idols. Paper presented at the *Conference on Visual Culture*, University of California, Berkeley.

Mull, B. (2007). *Fablehaven.* New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks.

Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (2010). *Artifactual literacies: Every object tells a story*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Prensky, M. (2001, September/October). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the Horizon*, *9*(5), 1-6.

Ranker, J. (2008). Making meaning on the screen: Digital video production about the Dominican Republic. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51*(5), 410-422.

Rowsell, J. (2012). Artifactual English. In M. Grenfall, D. Bloome, C. Hardy, K. Pahl, R. Rowsell, B. Street (Eds.), *Language, ethnography, and education: Bridging new literacy studies and Bourdieu* (pp. 7-26). New York: Routledge.

Rowsell, J., & Pahl, K. (2007). Sedimented identities in texts: Instances of practice. *Reading Research Quarterly, 42*, 388-401.

Sanders, J., & Albers, P. (2010). Multimodal literacies: An introduction. In P. Albers & J. Sanders (Eds.), *Literacies, the arts & multimodalities* (pp. 1-25). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Sheridan, M. P., & Rowsell, J. (2010). *Design literacies: Learning and innovation in the digital age.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Wohlwend, K. E., Buchholz, B. A., Wessel-Powell, C., Coggin, L. S., & Husbye, N. E. (2013). *Literacy playshop: Playing with new literacies and popular media in the early childhood classroom.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Appendix A

Retrospective Think-Aloud Heuristic (based on Bruce, 2009)

Step 1: Ask participants to watch book trailer from beginning to end. Do not ask specific questions but allow informal comments/conversation.

Step 2: Play trailer again but this time stop on each image and explicitly invite conversation. If necessary, use the following probes:

1. Describe the image. *Who/what is this? Why this particular image? What were you trying to show the audience?*
2. History/location of the image. *How did you find this image? Do you remember what search terms you used? Had you seen this image before?*
3. Choices. *Are there other images that you wish you had found or included? Were there things that you looked for but couldn't find? Did you intentionally leave out certain images?*

Step 3: After discussing each image, play the trailer additional times to invite conversation about the music (and/or other modes) and related to a more holistic look at the trailer design and production:

1. Music. *I want to understand more about your musical choice(s). Tell me to stop the trailer when you want to comment on something specifically related to the music. How did you choose this clip? Were there other clips that you considered?*
2. Holistic. *I want to understand how you thought about (or see) all these different pieces working together. Tell me to stop the trailer when you want to comment on a design decision that you made. What did your planning process look like? What mode do you consider the most important: music, written text, or images? How was this project different from writing about the book with paper and pencil?*

Appendix B
Horizontal Multimodal Transcripts of Book Trailers

Video A: Sam & Paul

0:00 [1]	0:04 [2]	0:10 [3]

TEXT:		
FABLEHAVEN	[*white text, blue background, font = Arial*] Siblings Kendra and Seth think it's going to be a boring summer at there [*sic*] grandparent's [sic] house.	

IMAGE:		
Description: Gates to "Fablehaven" **Search:** "Fablehaven" in Google Images. Sam initially found this picture at home when he was trying to create a "dream cast" movie. This picture is not in the book.		**Description:** Black and white illustration from the 2nd book. Kids seem to assume that this is grandparent's house. Light on in upper room. Evening, stars in sky. Glow surrounding house. Metal fence. **Search:** "Fablehaven house" in Google Images

SPECIAL EFFECT:		

MUSIC:		
[0:01-0:02] five quick notes on keyboard [last note holds on & slowly fades...]	[0:08-0:09] repeat original five quick notes on keyboard [last note holds on & fades...]	

Transition:				
	Fade		Fade	

Retrospective Think Aloud:
 [1] Sam: *And also because I was finding a Fablehaven, I was looking at Fablehaven pictures at my house and I was finding pictures of actors to be Fablehaven actors in the movie, which might come out soon. I'm really happy about that. And then I typed in Fablehaven to see what would come up—to see pictures of characters. And this came up. And so I was like, "Oh my gosh!" And then they were like, "We're going to make book trailers," and I was like, "Oh my gosh, we need this!"*

Video A: Sam & Paul

0:12 [4]	0:16 [5]	0:17 [6]

TEXT:		
[*white text, blue background, font = Arial*] UNTIL they drink the milk!		

IMAGE:		
	Description: Black and white image of a fairy sitting on a purple flower. This image is located at the end of the 2nd book, although students suggest that she is also a character in the first book. **Search:** "Fablehaven Fairies" in Google Images	**Description:** Black and white hand drawn image with pen/pencil. **Search:** "Fablehaven Hugo" in Google Images

SPECIAL EFFECT:		

MUSIC:		
previous last note still fading…	repeat original five quick notes on keyboard	four quick notes on keyboard [octave lower?]

Transition:		
Fade	None	None

Retrospective Think Aloud:
 [4] Students identify "Until they drink the milk!" as the turning point in the book trailer. Although they do not use the phrase "turning point," when talking about the music selection, they say they wanted the music to change here. **Sam**: *It's like whew*! **Paul**: *Yeah, it comes in fast because you just figured it out.* **Sam**: *It's like you're seeing the world for the first time, again.* **Sam**: *It was originally going to be 'Gentle Thoughts' and then we were just looking around for fun cause we thought there might be something …* **Paul***: No! That's because we were going to make it more exciting when it got to the "Until they drink the milk."* **Sam***: But then we found this and it was like perfect timing and everything.*

Video A: Sam & Paul

0:19 [7]	0:19 [8]	0:20 [9]

TEXT:		

IMAGE:		
Description: hand drawn with pen, black and white **Search:** "Fablehaven Newell and Dorin" in Google Images	**Description:** hand drawn with pen and colored pencil **Search:** "Fablehaven fairies" in Google Images	**Description:** hand drawn, black and white with pencil **Search:** "Fablehaven Muriel" in Google Images

SPECIAL EFFECT:		
four quick notes on keyboard [same pattern, two octaves higher?]	single note, even higher	repeat original five quick notes on keyboard

MUSIC:		

Transition:		
None	None	None

Retrospective Think Aloud:
 [9] Sam: *Like if people saw that, people see the cover of the book all the time. And it's not like they're oh that's Muriel, she's a witch. But I mean, if we put Bahumat in ... people would be like oh, that guy looks evil. If you see an evil big person ...* **Researcher**: *So you think that's something that should be kept for the reader?* **Sam**: *Yes! A reader's secret.*

Video A: Sam & Paul

0:21 [10]	0:26 [11]	

TEXT:		
FABLEHAVEN		

IMAGE:		
Description: Gates to "Fablehaven" [same image as the beginning] **Search:** "Fablehaven" in Google Images	**Description:** Screen goes to black as soon as soon as voiceover	

SPECIAL EFFECT:		

MUSIC/SOUND EFFECTS:		
music fades out at 00:23 → [voiceover, whispered voices] "*Beware they are rising.*"		

Transition:		
None	None	

Retrospective Think Aloud:
Sam: *So we were like, wait, but the music is just playing, and we thought this is good, but it's kind of boring for like the whole way through to be like* [begins to hum]. **Sam**: *So we thought, um, maybe we could... we were like, ok, evil people are coming, so it's like evil people are coming and the kids are like oh, evil it is rising.* **Researcher**: *So what does that mean?* **Paul**: *Evening Star.* **Sam**: *Yes, the Society of the Evening Star, which is an evil organization, so the Society of the Evening Star is a group of evil people that want to make sure, to make demons come out and kill everybody cause they think they can control the demons—like their overall goal, like I cannot tell anyone ... otherwise it gives away the whole book, but, so, we're like, "Beware they are rising," and it kind of make sense because in the first one there's kind of talk about how evil people are coming.*

Video B: Luna & Megan

0:00 [1]	0:05 [2]	0:08 [3]

TEXT:		
[*black text, blue background, font = Papyrus*] kendra and seth thought that it would be a boring vacation until …		[*incidental*] Agmour

IMAGE:		
	Description: Painting of a mytical creature **Search:** "Brian Froud drawing" in Google Images.	**Description:** Pencil drawing of a mythical creature **Search:** "Brian Froud drawing" in Google Images.

SPECIAL EFFECT:		
Alternating colored background, rainbow-like		

MUSIC:		
Classical music, quick tempo	[Continued] Classical music, quick tempo	[Continued] Classical music, quick tempo

Transition:		
	Shatter *(small pieces fly to right, upper corner)*	Dissolve

Retrospective Think Aloud:
[1] Researcher: *And here I see you chose kind of different font than is typically found in MovieMaker. … So I wonder if you guys use that font a lot or you picked it intentionally, or you thought it was …* **Luna**: *That was actually my first time using that font and I just thought the name sounded cool. I forget what the name was.* **[2] Megan:** *Me and Luna were using* [searching for] *Brian Froud who designed like a whole bunch of puppets.* **Luna**: *He* [Froud] *is an AWESOME person. So Brian Froud has to be one my favorite artists. He has this awesome book called the* Runes of Elfland. *It has the Runic alphabet in the back and it has secret messages hidden all in it, in Runic. He's a really good drawer and he helped design like the indexes in* The Dark Crystal.

Video B: Luna & Megan

0:12 [4]	0:17 [5]	0:22 [6] 0:27 [end]

TEXT:		
[black text, purple background, font = Papyrus] They drank the milk		

IMAGE:		
	Description: Photograph of bottle of milk with white lid **Search:** "Raw milk" in Google Images	**Description:** Photograph of a porcupine-like animal **Search:** ?

SPECIAL EFFECT:		
Alternating colored background, rainbow-like		

MUSIC:		
[Continued] Classical music, quick tempo	[Continued] Classical music, quick tempo	[Continued] Classical music, quick tempo→abruptly comes to end at 0:27

Transition:			
	None	None	

Retrospective Think Aloud:
[5] Researcher: *I'm assuming when you typed in milk to Google Images there's probably lots of different pictures of milk.* **Luna**: *There were too many bad ones. That's like the one of three out of 50 that were actually really good.* **Researcher**: *So what made you pick this image?* **Megan**: *It was in a canteen. Luna liked that part.* **Luna**: *One of them* [picture of milk] *that I almost chose, but then I realized that in the background ... I didn't pay too much attention to the background, then I realized in the background someone had it sitting on the ground and had chickens walking around it.*

Making the invisible visible: White preservice teachers explore social inequities with the Critical Web Reader

Julie Rust
Christy Wessel-Powell

Abstract

This study seeks to establish the role that empathy-building practices can play in broadening perspectives of predominantly white, middle-class teacher candidates. Using emergent coding and grounded theory, we investigate preservice teachers' online analyses of websites about poverty statistics. Themes emerging from their participation with the Critical Web Reader[1] included confronting 'whiteness' through a growing empathy, complicating their vision of America as the land of opportunity, and voicing insider/outsider clashes. We conclude by discussing the challenges inherent in social action resulting from the desire to make our world more equitable. We also note implications for teacher education, given the rich diversity of the US educational system.

Introduction

Becoming a teacher is rife with complex identity work (Britzman, 2003) that demands a reconciliation between perspectives of self and future students, alongside a recognition of the inequality that often colors classrooms. There is an ever-growing gap between the demographics of teacher candidates (primarily white, female, middle-class) and the wide-ranging demographics of their future students (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Rogers, 2013). A valuable preservice teacher education experience, then, involves a close examination of the assumptions and personal backgrounds future teachers carry regarding issues such as social class and race.

Many university teacher-education programs feature a stand-alone "diversity" course to address large cultural gaps that many white, middle-class teacher candidates face once they are thrust into classrooms. Such deliberate courses create space for critical, and often painful, self-reflection and discussion. Teacher candidates commonly report feeling uncomfortable in these spaces, and at times it is difficult to discern at the end of the course whether future teachers simply learn the sanctioned, socially sensitive way to speak to please their professors, or if they have genuinely internalized multiple perspectives and grown through discussions.

Here we explore how one online platform, Critical Web Reader (CWR), can potentially serve as a safe entry point into honest and sensitive reflection in one stand-

---

alone diversity course. By guiding students to reflect independently on quantitative information about social class from various websites, the CWR fosters preliminary imaginative engagement and empathy in these future teachers. Through this study, we examine the affordances and limitations of these exercises for majority-white preservice teachers with limited access to diverse communities.

Literature Review

Greene (2007) speaks poignantly about "ethical imagination," which empowers us to "recognize the familiar in the stranger" and imbues us with "the ability to try to see through someone else's eyes, the ability to reach out" (p. 32). It is in the arena of ethical philosophy where taken-for-granted assumptions or "prereflective understandings" (Kerdeman, 1998), and empathic response (Hoffman, 2000) build a bridge to true learning. Building empathy for traditionally disenfranchised groups is of central concern, since

> [i]f one empathized with this group, this could underlie the motivation for adopting political ideologies centered around alleviation of the group's plight. [It is] also an internal motive basis for accepting a system of distributing society's resources that helps the least advantaged even at some cost to oneself. (Hoffman, 2000, p. 86)

Though empathy for diverse communities is a crucial quality for preservice teachers to develop, it is an elusive quality to "teach" or foster in preservice teacher programs. There is an entire body of research on manifestations of whiteness in teacher education programs, both domestically (McIntyre, 1997; Sleeter, 2001) and internationally in countries similar to the US in terms of histories of racial tensions, such as Australia (Aveling, 2012). The overwhelming majority of this work focuses on white preservice teachers, and how they sort through (or more often, fall short of) making sense of their own identities in relation to those with less power. This task is most often approached in class through readings, class discussions, and/or reflections on field experiences.

Often, critical literacy activities are employed as entry points to such conversations to encourage position-taking (Rogers, 2013), particularly when most of the preservice teachers involved are white and middle-class; for example, inviting preservice teachers to respond to the research published on preservice teachers and whiteness (Laughter, 2011). However, technological tools for preservice teachers' entry into critical conversations on empathy and whiteness have been studied less often. Our research addresses this gap in the literature. We believe CWR has utility in majority-white preservice teacher classrooms in particular, as an additional introductory critical literacy tool.

Theoretical Framework

We approach our interpretations of student responses to race and class in the context of CWR activities through a "whiteness" lens. Whiteness theorizes power relationships between people in positions of historical dominance (e.g., white, male, affluent, English-speaking) and historically marginalized people (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, female, poor, non-English-speaking). Sources of social inequities are often invisible to those in relative positions of power, so engaging with whiteness means digging into complex and

often personally painful conversations. Disassociation from engaging fully or refusing responsibility for one's role are common responses (Lazarre, 1997; Lewis, 2004).

Although the process may be painful or overwhelming, it is particularly important for preservice teachers (Aveling, 2012; McIntyre, 1997). Whiteness is often manifested in schools through curriculum (Rodriguez, 1998; Spring, 1998; Woodson, 1990); academic tracking or 'giftedness' criteria (Staiger, 2004); normative institutional practices (Hurd, 2008; Lewis, 2003; Tatum, 2003); student perceptions of ability; or student–teacher relations (Castigo, 2008; Hurd, 2008; Staiger, 2004). Manifestations of whiteness are also often intimately linked with economic disparities and legacies of poverty (Lipsitz, 2006; McClaren, 1996). In order for preservice teachers to combat these injustices for and with their students in the context of their future classrooms, critical self-reflection on personal involvement in and positioning with regard to these issues is essential.

It is our hope that by engaging preservice teachers meaningfully in critical literacy practices (Janks, 2000; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004) that confront race and poverty directly, we can support white, middle-class participants in particular in interrogating multiple viewpoints and "disrupting the commonplace, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action promoting social justice" (Lewison, Flint, & Sluys, 2008) in their own future classrooms. We believe that asking preservice teachers to begin this critical work by reviewing web resources via CWR is an introductory step to building an awareness that should eventually lead to long-term, productive action (Behrman, 2006; Poyntz, 2006). In part, this study gauges how effective such preliminary steps can realistically be, given semester time constraints and social limitations in a majority-white university setting.

Context & Participants

In the fall of 2008, we gathered Critical Web Reader student responses for one required, semester-long course at a large Midwestern university, called "Elementary Education for a Pluralistic Society." The university's School of Education student population was 83-93% white and only 15% low socioeconomic status (Shedd, 2012). Utilizing a powerful web tool called the Critical Web Reader, students discovered and critiqued both themselves and the sources they read online. Because of the relative lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity within the class of teacher candidates, CWR was used as an effective way to initiate discussions about social class and the very real existence of poverty with predominantly young, white, middle-class to affluent students.

This study draws upon the responses of fourteen undergraduate elementary preservice teacher participants to a CWR activity entitled, "Examining the Numbers about Social Class" (see Figure 1 below). The CWR is a "a set of easy-to-use online tools designed to help address 21st century teaching and learning challenges" that "guides students to carefully and critically evaluate and read any source of information on the Internet" (*Critical Web Reader*). A flexible template, CWR allows instructors to create theme-based activities for students that involve looking reflectively at the wide array of resources available on the Internet. Once students have perused the resources (articles, charts, songs, movies, images) to which the activity links them, they look carefully at each site through a variety of lenses (such as descriptive, academic, critical, or reflexive) that ask them to

answer specific questions (see Figure 2). Student contributions are then saved for instructors to examine, assess, or share with the class.

Figure 1. CWR Introduction Page

Descriptive-QL

- What do I know and believe about this topic?
- What quantitative data is used on this site?
    - statistics
    - visual representations
- How and when was this data collected?
- What does the site tell me about the:
    - author
    - sponsor
    - intended audience
- Is the site reliable or not? Explain.

Academic-QL

- What main claim or claims does the author make?

- How is quantitative data used as evidence to support claims?

- Are the claims and quantitative evidence convincing? Explain.

- Are there other possible explanations for the data presented? Explain.

Critical-QL

- What does this site want me to think, believe or do?

- What techniques are used to influence me?

    o Generalities

    o Loaded questions

    o Biased sample

        ▪ Emotional appeals

        ▪ Distorted visual representations

        ▪ Omitted variable

    o Are the techniques convincing? Explain.

Reflexive-QL

- What affects the way I read this quantitative data?

    o My values, opinions, emotions

    o My background, culture

    o My familiarity with quantitative data

- How might people with different experiences and knowledge read this site?

- What questions do I have about the quantitative data on this site?

Figure 2. Critical Web Reader Lenses and Questions

Today's preservice teachers are likely to encounter a spectrum of student social class backgrounds that may vary widely from their own, so tackling social class in the "diversity" course is vitally important. The first site on the CWR Social Class Activity designed by the instructor features Wikipedia, offering a broad overview of "Social Class in the United States" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_class_in_the_United_States) (Figure 3). There, students were asked to examine their beliefs about sources like Wikipedia, as well as how a collective group of authors defines social class in the US.

Figure 3. Website 1

Next, teacher candidates were directed to a PBS site entitled "People Like Us" (http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/resources/index.html) (Figure 4) that included a list of decontextualized statistics.

Figure 4. Website 2

Then came a site on "Understanding Poverty" (Figure 5), sponsored by the World Bank (http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/0,,menuPK:3369 98~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336992,00.html), chosen by the instructor to help students think critically about different organizations with an investment in poverty.

Figure 5. Website 3

Finally, students ended their journey with a look at the Statewide NCCP Demographics of Poor Children (http://www.nccp.org/profiles/IN_profile_7.html) (Figure 6) in order to ground the conversation in the context of the university and the community.

Figure 6. Website 4

While visiting each website (focusing on only one site each week), students contributed answers to questions that focused on four distinct ways of making meaning. The descriptive lens pointed students to look carefully at the website itself, asking questions such as, "How and when was this data collected?" The academic lens called for a more analytical mindset, asking, for example, "Are the claims and quantitative evidence convincing?" The critical lens, among several questions, asked students, "What techniques are used to convince me?" Finally, the reflexive lens provided a space to investigate such thoughts as "What affects the way that I read this quantitative data?" and "How might people with different experiences and knowledge read this site?" These lenses seemed to serve as critical ethical scaffolds as they pointed students to question and challenge both the texts they encounter and the personal reactions they experience.

Because of the tedious nature of each thorough set of questions, students were assigned only one website each week. At the end of the six-week unit, they engaged in a Critical Web Reader debriefing during whole-class discussion. Throughout the exercise, students were encouraged to share their responses with a partner and have brief discussions. These seemingly objective sources of information proved to be a singularly

illuminating way to gain a glimpse into how preservice teachers perceive "number" data in terms of social class. Students, therefore, made sense of social class privately at first, and then transitioned gradually to more collaborative forms of meaning-making, thus providing a safe, judgment-free place for students to honestly reflect on their initial, personal beliefs. Furthermore, it gave them thoughts to draw upon, defend, or reshape during the whole-class discussion, during which clashing visions of "the good life" (R. Kunzman, personal communication, October 2010) directly confronted each other.

Our analysis looks more closely at student online comments to interrogate the nature of this critical literacy development. Specifically, we are interested in how students referenced, ignored, or displayed notions of whiteness and empathy in those comments. It is important to note that although this study critically highlights the attitudes that these fourteen teacher candidates had regarding issues of social class and inequality, we want to avoid foregrounding their evolving beliefs through a deficit lens, and also avoid perceiving them as a homogenous group themselves (Laughter, 2011). Instead, we view the sometimes problematic understandings expressed through their participation with the CWR steps in their individual journeys, not as faulty final destinations.

Methods

Our central research question is, *how do preservice teachers reflect on whiteness and react empathically when critically analyzing online texts about social class?* In order to explore this, we gathered CWR response data from the classroom of 14 preservice teachers as described above. An emergent coding approach, with categories such as "belief" or "tension," guided analysis of student responses, making use of procedures associated with building grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). We then drew conclusions on the success and limitations of using CWR to engage with diversity issues with majority-white preservice teachers by revisiting the literature on empathy and, most centrally, whiteness. By iteratively discussing interpretations of student responses, we refined three major categories of student response themes that were the most prominent.

Through analyzing CWR responses from these 14 students, and integrating theory regarding whiteness and empathy-building in the classroom, we hope to illuminate how CWR's critical literacy emphasis helps foster ethical reflection regarding diverse perspectives, and to what extent. Secondary questions that surfaced during data analysis included the following:

- How can CWR activities and diverse ranges of online texts actually add a myriad of perspectives to the classroom?
- How is a student's sense of empathy and imaginative engagement shaped through CWR participation?
- What affordances and limitations exist when using CWR to begin critical conversations about race and class within the constraints of a single semester-long course?

Results

The majority of student responses fell into roughly three thematic categories: Empathy-Building, Land of Opportunity, and Insider/Outsider Clashes. These categories or themes

are described in detail below, and illustrated with representative comments from the students themselves. We feel it imperative, however, to contextualize our findings first, with an explicit acknowledgment of what students bring to critical conversations like these in terms of personal identities, beliefs, and background experiences that shape their participation.

I Believe . . .

I know that there is a lot of inequality due to race, gender, and education. I do not believe that people are in poverty because they do not work hard enough. I also do not believe that those with the most wealth are the hardest workers. (Becky)

Students, of course, begin the identity-building and meaning-making processes long before they enter our classroom doors. If we are determined to see young people as "agents, not just patients" (Pritchard, 1996), it is vital to pay real attention to the beliefs, experiences, and attitudes that students already possess, even before engaging in the work of the classroom. The Critical Web Reader makes this explicit by directly asking, before even delving into a particular website: "What do I know and believe about this topic?" This activates the "prereflective understanding," taken-for-granted assumptions, that Kerdeman (1998) sees as so vital in leading to further understanding.

Interestingly, although perhaps unsurprisingly, in their initial responses the teacher candidates expressed attitudes and experiences that resonated with much of the content and perspectives presented on the websites. Although this could be because some students first previewed the website before answering any questions, because other in-class discussions about social class ensued simultaneously, or because students were engaging in a certain level of "teacher-pleasing," this also could be attributed to the fact that even our white, middle-class students may come equipped with funds of knowledge that could be helpful in a classroom examining issues of diversity.

One of the most common thoughts communicated initially by students was the idea that poverty is a huge problem that exists on both local and international scales. But perhaps the most recurring comment focuses on the unfairness of our current social system. John, inferring that reality does not currently match up with the ideal, states, "I believe that pay should be based on hard work and experience." Sam points out, "I know that there is a white (male) advantage in our culture." Sarah asserts, "It is not fair to the children, because they had no choice and are not responsible for any of their struggles or conditions." Even these preliminary reflections allude to an acknowledgement of an inherently unequal system perpetuated by whiteness.

Just one well-intentioned comment reveals an entirely divergent understanding: "I believe that social class is not important to me, and I also believe that is should not matter to anybody. Why do we have to group people as different from each other?" (Carrie). Although it is unknown whether this prereflective understanding evolved during the course of the semester, the themes expressed here echo as honest portrayals of a student's frustration, perhaps with a course on diversity in general. Carrie's words are undoubtedly well intentioned, and most likely resonate with the underlying attitudes of many preservice teachers thrust into the required diversity class. When explicit reflection on diverse experiences and backgrounds is seen as more divisive than community-building or

perspective-broadening, a student is unlikely glean as much as possible from such an experience. With this in mind, we move forward to describe further iterations of reflective comments, as the CRW activity moved forward over the course of the semester. First, we examine the nature of students' empathic displays.

Empathy-Building

"I have said time and time again about how I feel bad about this ... I've been a kid myself and I hate the thought of children suffering ... yes, I feel guilty." (Peter)

Many students empathized with the suffering represented by the statistics listed on these websites, sometimes to the point of articulating personal distress and guilt, or even empathetic fatigue, as in Peter's comment above. Hoffman (2000) describes empathic distress (often experienced by "helping" professionals, like teachers) as a "metacognitive awareness of experiencing empathy ... [providing a] general sense of how they would feel and how others would feel in a similar situation" (p. 63). He continues, "Victims need not be present for empathy to be aroused ... [it] can be aroused when they imagine victims, read about them, or discuss a political issue" (p. 91). Such empathic position-taking can lead to the adoption of a given political ideology or to personal sacrifice regarding a group's particular plight (p. 86) and is an important first step to unpacking white privilege (McIntosh, 1990).

Our data confirms that images, charts, videos, and articles online were effective starting points for imaginative engagement and perspective-taking that took preservice teachers beyond personal experience. Several CWR contributions, however, revealed a pointed focus on personal guilt, rather than on the plight of those in poverty. One in particular stands out:

> My race, my white privilege, along with my survivor's guilt, play out a defensive uneasiness in my emotional state. It jumps around, becoming overly compensating to those who have not had my opportunities. My success—obviously unmerited because of my unfair advantages—wants me to read into everything outside of the person as being a reason for that person's failure. Success and failure are arbitrary to a person's abilities. This all plays into how I read these cold, drab facts. (John)

While John's comment demonstrates an understanding of his role in whiteness, when processing personal issues related to whiteness, personal guilt can be a frustrating roadblock inhibiting individuals from growing toward productive action. For some it can be debilitating, and may even stifle the conversation.

Hoffman (2000) also addresses empathy's limitations: "empathic overarousal" (when empathy morphs into personal distress) and "familiarity" or "here and now" bias. Sarah describes the numbing result of compassion fatigue: "Since I was brought up in a large city, I have been exposed to people from all social classes and have seen people living in poverty on the streets, while wealthy businessmen walk right past them without even flinching." Here, the limitations to empathy are clearly articulated. Such reactions are common in critical conversations on whiteness, particularly for white or nonmarginalized participants (Aveling, 2012; McIntyre, 1997).

One student displays a way to defend herself against disabling empathy: "My first reaction is to feel bad about how these kids live. Then I try to think about how many can be strong and survive it. That is my way of dealing with feelings" (Donna). Familiarity bias, being most concerned with immediate friends or family members, also surfaced among responses: "I had these feelings of sadness and sympathy when reading the descriptions of poverty. They cause you to think about personal experiences or experiences of others closest to you" (Scott). For students with limited exposure to racial and economic diversity on a daily basis, the tendency to look for personal connection when empathizing with disparity may be limiting. Hoffman is quick to note, however, that these are natural, human ways of responding to our world, and that empathy still does provide the basis for a universal set of ethical principles that demand basic human rights for everyone.

Also notable in relation to the CWR tool, Hoffman (2000) points out that "[v]ictims need not be present for empathy to be aroused in an individual … [it] can be aroused when they imagine victims, read about them, or discuss a political issue … this is enabled by cognitive development—now we are only limited by our imagination" (p. 91).

It seems, then, that using images, charts, videos, and articles online could very well be the starting point for imaginative engagement and perspective-taking that takes students beyond their own personal situations, even if only as a tentative first step. One illustrative student comment follows: "It makes you think about [how] your own family and you live, and how much you live off of. It made me think of everything I had, and how hard my family has it, in our eyes, to make ends meet. I have no idea what these children are going through!" (Jade).

Land of Opportunity

"You can be poor and still be able to access education … you just need to take advantage of your opportunity." (Christopher)

The next theme we routinely observed in student responses regarded the United States as a "Land of Opportunity" in which anyone can succeed if they only try hard enough. Hoffman (2000) describes factors that potentially interfere with empathy: blaming, being self-centered, or minimizing a victim or marginalized person's suffering. These are typical reactions from white or otherwise nonmarginalized people confronting whiteness, because the mechanisms keeping power unbalanced are often unseen and undetectable to those who enjoy relative positions of power. Although all teacher candidates remained respectful of the trials facing those in poverty, some used talk of "opportunity" and "education" to oversimplify what should be a very complicated picture of social class. Their implication in whiteness likely made complex historico-social, -economic and -political factors "invisible" to them (Lipsitz, 2006). Kelly, for instance, after viewing statistics about the correlation between education and poverty level, concluded, "this article does confirm my belief that education and hard work will improve your class standing." Jade hinted at feeling frustrated about advantages poor people are offered in the name of opportunity:

> As an American, opportunities are presented to us in several ways. And I feel that those who are rich and considered to be high class may have more opportunities, but those less fortunate get opportunities as well to turn their life around … While

> my parents and I work hard to achieve our goals, those less fortunate can attend college under 21st century scholars for free. Like I said before, those who are rich may have more opportunities, but those considered poor are presented with opportunities to change their lifestyle.

These reactions demonstrate limitations in CWR's ability to engage students, at this point, in a historically based holistic understanding of the cycle of whiteness and poverty with regard to education and free-market capitalism (Lewis, 2003; Lipsitz, 2006).

Most often, it was apparent that students speaking about how poor people should take advantage of the opportunities offered them held an "outside" perspective as middle- or upper-class whites. Narayan (1988) cautions against such assertions, since oppressed insiders have understandings that outsiders cannot possibly have, due to first-hand experience, emotion, and knowledge. Although the student contributions listed above are in no way inherently wrong, they reveal, perhaps, a limited piece of the picture, subtly minimizing the emotional costs of oppression, missing the subtler manifestations of oppression, or failing to see oppression in new contexts. This is also apparent in the assertion several students made that race has nothing to do with poverty, such as the following: "Race is not really the issue, and we need to look more into people as a social class rather than a race" (Christopher). This is problematic given the complex and intertwining relationship between race and class systemically and historically, particularly in the United States (Lipsitz 2006).

Taking responsibility for one's role in the cycle of whiteness is an important, but often painful, step (Lazarre, 1997; McIntosh, 1990; Pixley and Schneider VanDerPloeg, 2000; Woodson, 1990). More nuanced views on the issue, however, also surfaced. Christopher complicated this notion of a "land of opportunity" by displaying some understanding of social reproduction: "[There is l]imited opportunity for underprivileged students from succeeding ... As soon as these kids walk into school, they already have a target on their back as being a failure ... The rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

Insider/outsider perspectives were regularly taken up in student responses, sometimes, though not often, flexibly (i.e., displayed simultaneously by one student), as Christopher demonstrates. John, for example, is a student who also shows an understanding of some systemic inequities that was likely developed before engaging in this class material. Subsequently, we noted his ability to articulate insider perspectives even though he occupies a relatively clear position of power in society as a white, middle-class male. The self-doubt that arises from this negotiation between the familiar and the strange is notable in several student contributions, such as John's below:

> I come from the top 5% financially, and to know that there are almost 10 times as many children now who are impoverished than were those who were more financially secure than me growing up makes me think. So many things I did not have to think about growing up that so many have to be concerned with today. This article reinforces how privileged I was: married parents for the first 13 years of my life, with the same home, being white and suburban. I was meant to succeed.

Insider/Outsider Clashes

I grew up in a single parent home, and my mother had no education. I grew up poor just like these graphs show ... in other words, things like this are very convincing because I live it and I believe it. (Angie)

The final theme we noted in student responses positioned participants as either insiders or outsiders to poverty. While some students appeared more cognizant of social class complexity in the US, nearly all students were quick to identify as poverty "insiders" or "outsiders." Students with little poverty experience had a variety of responses. Several described the impossibility of fully grasping the issue, since those who have never been in poverty "may understand that it is an issue, but since they have no experience they cannot place themselves in the shoes of a person who lives in poverty" (Becky). Others found it important to point out that no one has it that easy: "With our stock market the way it is, even our upper class people are struggling" (Angie).

Those expressing a more "insider view" of poverty also added a range of comments to the conversation. One student waxed eloquent about the unfairness of class stratification, since "all jobs are necessary for the functioning and well-being of the society" (John). Several students, referring to data about factors leading to and resulting from poverty, reacted defensively, as is common in critical whiteness engagement and identity reformation (Lewis, 2004). For instance, Becky writes, "I did come from a single mother, and I am fine. Many parents of these kids may be scumbags, missing, or dead, and that could affect them much more than a SIMPLE divorce." Another similarly inspired student points out that not all poor people are subject to an inevitably unhappy existence:

> I grew up poor, and my mother and I had to work hard for everything we had. Therefore, I may get frustrated when I hear about an argument being made about someone being poor being the reason of their tribulations. However, I grew up in a small town with good morals and ethics and a parent that cared for me. (Angie)

The real question becomes, then, is it worthwhile to "work together across difference," as Narayan (1998) calls for? Is communication and understanding reachable between these insiders and outsiders? Several students, like Jade, find this a difficult proposition, since they see irreconcilable differences in perspective: "Whatever you take out of the site depends on who you are, your point of view, and past and current knowledge of the subject" (Jade).

Most students conceive different understandings of social class to be predominantly based on one's social class membership. Kelly confidently categorizes the way each social class might see the issue:

> Those growing up in poverty will feel the rest of the people have a big advantage over them on the ladder of success. Middle-income people should have similar feelings to me that we need to help the lower-income people more. The wealthy population might believe that they are entitled to more than the rest of society, so they might not see anything wrong with these statistics.

Waldron (1996) seeks to complicate these arbitrary divisions by emphasizing that our hybridized identities go beyond distinct categories and class or cultural memberships. In his eyes, it is just such artificial generalizations about various groups that can arise from well-intentioned multicultural curricula. This is a particular danger in the context of discussions pertaining to whiteness that take place without nonmarginalized people represented. Pedagogically, then, it becomes essential to complicate neatly drawn categories and distinctions surrounding assumed identities, beliefs, and experiences. If students are able to find common ground between various social classes alongside their differences, perhaps a conversation can really begin to take place.

Action or Inaction? "Seeing" Whiteness

Given the time constraints of a semester-long course, we found that CWR effectively initiated tough conversations on poverty and race for white preservice teachers, but as a small first step to a larger engagement needed to sustain change. Though participants sometimes experienced shock, pain, or surprise, these feelings were necessary to begin to understand and confront their personal role in whiteness. Voicing unsettled responses is typical but productive in whiteness conversations (Carter et al., 2007; McIntyre, 1997) because participants are more likely to act afterward (Kerdeman, 1999). Kelly explains, "I believe this article raises more questions than actually gives answers … for me, this article actually makes me wonder more about what is true and what is not, and might make me want to do research of my own to figure it out."

Some directly related their urge to action to the empathy the sites triggered: "I feel really bad for poor people right now and feel the need to do something to help" (Carrie). Notably, however, most of the vows to take action that students made were vague. Carrie continued on to say, "I believe that somehow, someway, we should take steps to try and end poverty or at least contain it." While the tone is admirable, the lack of specificity lends doubt to whether any change in action or behavior will really result. Peter similarly complicates a social action response to the data he encountered on CWR, but in a more specific and nuanced way:

> After I feel bad about it, it [makes me want] to go out and join the cause against poverty. Honestly, though, this site annoys me. It reminds me of the people who stand outside the [campus building] handing me small slips of paper and asking me to take a minute to stop global warming. It's going to a take a lot more than a minute, and this going to take a lot more than just me.

Pushing students beyond empathy and into action requires regular opportunities to talk about whiteness and to interact in person with historically marginalized people. It also requires humility, consciousness, an open mind, and a long-term commitment. A semester-long "diversity" course with online CWR activities that open up productive conversations is a good start, but only a first step in building a teacher toolkit of self-awareness, background knowledge, and a willingness to reach out to marginalized people while respecting their expertise.

While many students discussed being moved to action, it is also important to note the several responses that indicate a sense of hopelessness or a lack of change in

understanding. Hoffman (2000) might attribute these to self-centeredness or even empathic overarousal. Some students speak of poverty as inevitable, "a big circle that will just keep continuing over time without a change in helping underprivileged students" (Christopher). Others feel the need to point out the unrealistic nature of most potential solutions to the problem: "I know that poverty exists all over the world, and it is a sad thing. At the same time, it seems impossible to fight when people are naturally greedy … While this is a fine cause, it seems impossible" (Peter). Scott, asserting his "functionalist view," adds, "No matter what, there will be unemployment, which inevitably leads to poverty. We cannot provide everyone in the nation with jobs; there are not enough of them." Others just appear to be unmoved: "I am able to regard the data without an overly surprised feeling" (Patrick). Jade goes so far as to explain why she chooses to ignore the data and the intended impact of the statistics:

> The techniques are not convincing to me as a reader. I have knowledge of social status and financial status, and I feel sad that it is sad that there are so many children who are less fortunate, but even more I feel it is sad that as a parent one wouldn't strive harder to make things better for his/her family.

 Kelly adds the disheartening comment: "I do not really feel motivated to do anything, so I hope the article doesn't want me to do anything." Whether her lack of motivation stems from not understanding the problem, not feeling empathy for others outside of her circle, or as a defense mechanism to avoid feeling empathic overarousal is not clear.

Class Discussion: Ethical Inquiry

 Although the story might end here, the instructor in this class viewed CWR participation as just a way to *begin* the conversation. The technology and the websites without reflection could potentially result in just another reaffirmation of previously held opinions. The CWR debrief classroom discussion resulting from the six-week website exploration is the space where authentic community inquiry occurs around the question "What is social class?" Such a discussion format is far from confrontational debate, and revolves around a cooperative meaning-making process, one that resonates with Tannen's (1998) preference for dialogue and Parker's (2003) description of valuable discussion, in which students discover their own sense of justice through dialogic interactions.

Much of the groundwork for discussion has occurred during personal CWR participation, since, as Parker (2003) points out, "Reversibility is an ideal form of reciprocity and means changing places with—perspective-taking, genuine exchange. It requires inclusion, dialogue, and imagination" (p. 86). In essence, then, teacher candidates are better equipped to discuss issues of social class with a diverse group of students once they have been exposed to a variety of perspectives through the websites.

Being serious about quality student discussion participation is part of Simon's (2001) vision of school-wide inquiry for moral education, moving teachers beyond a vision of mere pedagogical neutrality. Interestingly, the CWR activity, on its own, presents the potential risks of pedagogical neutrality, namely the inevitability that teachers omit, include, and shape curricular materials, thus remaining unable to be entirely neutral. The

discussion that ensues, then, is pivotal in opening up a space for the students to dialogue about their findings in a way that can be both responsive and generative.

Implications

Although our research draws upon the experience of just one class through the limited lens of their virtual contributions to an online activity, we feel it highlights the very real challenges that teacher educators face in enabling future teachers to more clearly see themselves and their future students. While every course undoubtedly provides its own set of issues, challenges, and uncertainties, a course on diversity for teacher candidates must have more than its fair share. Our work finds that the CRW, woven along with other texts, movies, activities, and discussions, has enabled students to begin thinking more broadly about issues that previously may have seemed irrelevant. By perusing quantitative data on social class, reflecting on this data personally and independently on CWR, and debriefing on the experience in a large-group-discussion, these preservice teachers revealed empathy, imaginative engagement, an awareness of their insider/outsider status, understanding, and ethical inquiry. Importantly, students did not emerge from the six weeks with easy answers. The diversity course in many ways accomplished Lewison et al.'s (2002) critical literacy goal of "disrupting the commonplace."

Of course, not every student who leaves the class has grasped the complexity of social class and how it might play out in the classroom. A few most likely left with their previous beliefs affirmed. But the work of class-wide critical–ethical inquiry isn't to indoctrinate, but to help to open up. Whether or not these teacher candidates find a sense of closure or resolution for the big questions raised in their class on diversity may not even be the point. The fact that they spent six weeks wrestling with these big questions, both independently and collaboratively, steeped in a wide range of related resources, points to the hope that they may see the value in critically looking at the big issues and confronting them in their future classrooms. After all, examining deep-seated assumptions, experiencing empathy and imaginative engagement, learning how to speak across differences, fostering real understanding, and engaging in class-wide ethical inquiry seem to be the most authentically educative experiences of all.

More research needs to be done in the ways that technology might foster these important conversations, and more work needs to look honestly at the ways that teachers' use of new media in the classroom may inadvertently work against perspective-broadening goals. The role that the CWR played in our case, as a safe place for students to privately make sense of their own deep-seated reactions and assumptions before engaging in open face-to-face dialogue, seems worth exploring, because it points to a very different way of considering technology implementation in the classroom. Future teachers need to build empathy towards action, to complicate their understandings of America as "the land of opportunity," and to bridge insider/outsider perspectives. Looking critically at the way websites present quantitative data on social class while explicitly hashing out the life experiences and assumptions that color their perspectives is perhaps one potential way in to "seeing whiteness" through the lens of social class.

References

Aveling, N. (2012). Critical engagement with whiteness: Beyond lecturing on the evils of racism. In B. Down & J. Smyth (Eds.), *Critical voices in teacher education* (pp. 111-123). Dordrecht, Neth.: Springer Science Press.

Behrman, E. (2006). Teaching about language, power, and text: A review of classroom practices that support critical literacy. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 4*(6), 490-498.

Britzman, D. (2003). *Practice makes practice.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Carter, S., Honeyford, M., McKaskie, D., Guthrie, F., Mahoney, S., & Carter, G. D. (2007). What do you mean by whiteness? A professor, four doctoral students, and a student affairs administrator explore whiteness. *The College Student Affairs Journal, 26*(2), 152-170.

Castigo, A. (2008). "I don't want to hear that!" Legitimating whiteness through silence in schools. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 39*(3), 314-333.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Critical Web Reader. (2010). Retrieved from http://cwr.indiana.edu/.

Greene, M. (2007). Art and imagination: Overcoming a desperate stasis. In A. C. Ornstein, E. Pajak, & S. B. Ornstein (Eds.), *Contemporary issues in curriculum* (pp. 32-38). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Hoffman, M. (2000). *Empathy and moral development: Implications for caring and justice.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hurd, C. (2008). *Cinco de mayo*, normative whiteness, and the marginalization of Mexican-descent students. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *39*(3), 293-313.

Janks, H. (2000). Domination, access, diversity, and design: A synthesis for critical literacy education. *Educational Review, 52*(2), 175-184.

Kerdeman, D. (1998). Between Interlochen and Idaho: Hermeneutics and education for understanding. In S. Tozer (Ed.), *Philosophy of education 1998* (pp. 272-279). Urbana, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.

Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2005). Is the team all right? Diversity and teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 56*(2), 229-234.

Laughter, J. (2011). Rethinking assumptions of demographic privilege: Diversity among white preservice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(1), 43-50.

Lazarre, J. (1997). *Beyond the whiteness of whiteness: Memoir of a white mother of a black son.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Lewis, A. (2003). *Race in the school yard: Negotiating the color line in classrooms and communities.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Lewis, A. E. (2004). "What group?" Studying whites and whiteness in the era of "color-blindness." *Sociological Theory, 22*(4), 623-646.

Lewison, M., Flint, A., & Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts, 79*(5), 382-392.

Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The possessive investment in whiteness: How white people profit from identity politics.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

McClaren, P. (1996). Whiteness is … In J. L. Kinchelos, S. Steinberg, N. Rodriguez, & R. Chennault (Eds.), *White reign: Deploying whiteness in America.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

McIntosh, P. (1990). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Independent School, 49*, 31-35.

McIntyre, A. (1997). *Making meaning of whiteness: Exploring the racial identity of white teachers.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

McLaughlin, M., & DeVoogd, G. (2004). Critical literacy as comprehension: Expanding reader response. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 48*(1), 52-62.

Narayan, U. (1998). Working together across difference: Some considerations on emotions and political practice. *Hypatia, 3*(2), 31-47.

Parker, W. C. (2003). *Teaching democracy: Unity and diversity in public life.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Pixley, M., & Schnieder VanDerPloeg, L. (2000). Learning to see: White. *English Education, 32*(4), 278-279.

Poyntz, S. (2006). Independent media, youth agency, and the promise of media education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 21*(1), 154-175.

Pritchard, M. S. (1996). *Reasonable children: Moral education and moral learning*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Rodriguez, N. M. (1998). Emptying the content of whiteness: Toward an understanding of the relation between whiteness and pedagogy. In J. L. Kincheice, S. R. Steinberg, N. M. Rodriguez, & R. E. Chennault (Eds.), *White reign: Deploying whiteness in America* (pp. 31-62)*.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Rogers, R. (2013). Cultivating diversity through critical literacy in teacher education. In C. Kosnik, J. Rowsell, P. Williamson, R. Simon, & C. Beck (Eds.), *Literacy teacher educators: Preparing teachers for a changing world*. Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.

Shedd, J. (2012). School of Education Ethnicity by Primary Program. In University Database. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

Simon, K. G. (2001). *Moral questions in the classroom: How to get kids to think deeply about real life and their schoolwork*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Spring, J. (1998). *Education and the rise of the global economy.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: Research and the overwhelming presence of whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*(2), 94-106.

Staiger, A. (2004). Whiteness as giftedness: Racial formation at an urban high school. *Social Problems, 51*(2): 161-181.

Tannen, D. (1998). *The argument culture: Moving from debate to dialogue.* New York, NY: Random House.

Tatum, B. D. (2003). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* New York, NY: Basic Books.

Waldron, J. (1996). Multiculturalism and mélange. In R. Fullinwider (Ed.), *Public education in a multicultural society: Policy, theory, critique* (pp. 90-118). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Woodson, C. (1990). *The miseducation of the negro.* Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc.

Digital literacy: A sociological analysis

Kerri Rinaldi

Abstract

This paper analyzes how sociological factors, access to literacy, and self-sponsored digital literacy are interrelated. By reviewing New Literacy Studies literature and statistical analyses of digital communication usage, this paper gives a sociological reading to self-sponsored digital literacy. Literacy as a whole is an important facet to modern society, but we must acknowledge the rise of digital textuality as a new form of literacy and recognize the profound relationship that exists between socioeconomic factors and writing. This paper demonstrates that digitally produced writing is textually valid, steeped in social capital, and is extraordinarily accessible regardless of social factors, especially socioeconomic status. Based on these conclusions, implications for pedagogical instruction are also explored.

Introducing the Overlap

A student begins her day by sending a text message to her boyfriend confirming plans to meet after school. During the school day she sends multiple text messages to various friends about her day or the latest gossip. She remembers a report that is due soon, and makes a written note of its deadline in her cellphone's calendar. After school, she checks her Facebook and writes on a friend's wall. Later that night, as she struggles with her homework, she sends a quick email to her teacher requesting further explanation.

Each of these acts a typical student might engage in is certainly *writing*—the student is using the written word to communicate an idea either to herself or another person. However, they all take place in various digital formats, textual input channeled by a digital device such as a cellphone or a laptop. The student engages with digital text numerous times a day and with extraordinary ease. In fact, digital writing is the primary way she communicates with her friends and adults in her life. What does it mean to be so comfortable with these types of writing in these types of social contexts?

The simplest way to define this is *digital literacy,* or the ability to communicate effectively with text that exists in digital contexts. Student usage of the Internet and cellphones is nearly ubiquitous in present-day America—78% of teens ages 12 to 17 own a cellphone, and 93% use the Internet regularly (Madden, Lenhart, Duggan, Cortesi, & Gasser, 2013; Zickuhr, 2010). The field of literacy instruction acknowledges the rise of digitally produced text, and has started to consider it when examining the validity of self-sponsored (defined by New Literacy Studies as extra-institutional writing that is self-initiated) texts. The study of the sociology of literature is a field that is also currently being rejuvenated, and it tackles such issues as the history of the book, sociological critique of literary aesthetics, the relationship between socioeconomic forces and the publishing

industry, and the rise of the digital humanities. I approach my analysis with a question that draws from both of these fields: what if we were to take the tools of sociological analysis of literature and apply this type of examination to literacy, and in particular, self-sponsored digital literacy? It is my aim to take these two emerging fields and join them in a manner that gives a sociological treatment, one that is garnered from the concepts of critical literary theories, to literacy in such a way that it is a new interdisciplinary application.

This sociological reading given to digital literacy diverges from prior traditional applications of social and cultural theories to literacy studies by focusing on topics important to the fields of sociology, literature, and literacy instruction. Such topics include the transition towards primarily digital textual communication, class status, and access to literature. Each of these areas undoubtedly affects literacy, and therefore has implications for literacy instruction. By framing this analysis as one that draws from the fields of sociology and literature, I make connections to pedagogy and tease out implications for it, motivated by the extraordinary changes both literature and literacy are undergoing as we transition towards a digitized society.

This digital transitioning of our society brings about new forms of literacy that raise serious questions: how does this shift to high digital literacy inform access to literature, questions of textual validity, and ultimately, pedagogy? What are the sociocultural implications of new digital literacies, and how can we use these implications to shape our literacy instruction? These questions are significant for the field of sociology as well as for educators, and are deserving of inquiry as the field of literacy changes as a result of the transition towards digital textuality and the trend towards students who are most at ease with digitally produced text. If we hope to understand this transition in such a way that we can enlighten our pedagogical instruction, it is imperative to examine the ways in which sociological and economic factors interact with digital texts and literacy.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework for conceptualizing social status that can be applied to understanding the meaning and value of social actions—like writing—is that of the renowned contemporary sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (2008) theorizes that capital is not only economically accumulated and exchanged, but that it also appears in objectified or embodied forms that can be accumulated and exchanged just as economic capital is. He terms these intangible types of capital as *symbolic*, which can be further divided into two groups: social or cultural capital. The former refers to societal status, networks, connections, and the like. Cultural capital is further broken down into embodied, objectified, or institutionalized capital. These types of capital—which can include one's accent, disposition, books owned, degrees, or institutional pedigree—take time to accumulate and have an intimate relationship with wealth. According to Bourdieu (2008), all forms of capital must be acknowledged in order to understand the structure of the social world.

In the field of the sociology of literature, Alan Liu's work looks at the ways in which the new digital age interacts with the humanities and literary instruction. In his work *From Reading to Social Computing*, Liu (2010) states that social computing is a repurposing of the social functions of reading and literary activity and should be given treatment in literary scholarship, because it is a vital coming-together of the personal experience of language. He proposes that we should also employ a new set of methodologies that are interdisciplinary, new analytical tools that are made possible by the digital age, and most importantly, new pedagogies.

To set the stage for how we will approach and situate the concept of literacy, Cook-Gumperz's work in literacy research will be used. For Cook-Gumperz (2006), historical and social contexts are inseparable from our conception of literacy: how we as a society view literacy is highly contingent upon the social, historical, and cultural environment in which we are considering it. She conceptualizes literacy in the way that is commonly accepted in the field of New Literacy Studies. That is, there is not one universally accepted, autonomous literacy, but rather multiple literacies, each functioning distinctively and holding different values in varied social and cultural contexts. Through her historical analysis of literacy education, Cook-Gumperz (2006) highlights how intimately related societal conditions, including dominant class ideology and social control, are to literacy instruction. Her work stresses the relationship between literacy, perceived values, and how literacy serves as a function of cultural power in societal contexts, which will be useful for providing a framework for understanding value-making and cultural status as it relates to digital literacy.

The relationship between writers of digital text and the writing they produce is carefully mediated by institutional influence—institutions of literary convention, institutions of socioeconomic status, and institutions of social relationships. Writing is inherently a social practice, an acknowledgment that forms the basis for orienting this analysis. When we consider literacy as a pedagogical practice, and champion its importance for success and knowledge-building in our society, we must not lose sight of the fact that being literate is not merely a means of gaining knowledge and success. The ability to write is ultimately the ability to be social via the written word—to communicate with others in textual form.

The sociology of literature has analyzed genres of literature, and this paper is predicated on the notion that the same type of analysis is possible for *categories* of literacy. Various forms of social computing can be categorized as genres of writing, according to Liu (2010), and this paper expands that idea to posit that all forms of digital writing could be classified as such, including text messages and emails. Not only could these assorted types of digitally produced writing be considered genres, but the ability to be literate in each context amounts to different possible literacies; one who is well versed in digital writing in a texting format is texting-literate, one who is well versed in a blog format is blog-literate, and so on. Though these can all fall under the general umbrella of digital literacy, there are still different conventions and rules in each digital context, thus mimicking the classification of genres.

This paper provides a sociological analysis of digital literacy by combining the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu—paying particularly close attention to his concept of social capital as it pertains to group memberships and peer relationships—with that of New Literacy Studies—which promotes the pluralization of literacy, or the idea that there are multiple literacies one can possess, each of which can hold value in different cultural contexts—and with that of the sociology of literature, which posits that even within the broader umbrella of digital literacy, there are several forms, or genres, of digital writing with whose conventions one may be familiar.

Scope and Definitions

This paper's focus is narrowed in its approach to digital literacy, as this is often the broad catchall term given to being literate in computer use. For our purposes, however, this paper concentrates on those who are not only computer literate (can operate a computer with ease, and navigate the Internet and forms of digital communications), but are also highly literate in digital *rhetoric,* or the specific style of writing that is ubiquitous in digital communication. The specific contexts in which literacy events take place, especially when they are forms of social communication, have implied conventions, rules, and structures that guide the writing within each context. The digital sphere is no exception: in order to be digitally literate in the rhetoric of this format, one must at least be aware of and able to navigate the conventions and norms of digital writing. I use the terms digital writing and digital rhetoric to signal the writing style that takes place in digital contexts. One final caveat on terminology choice: while I often refer to digital literacy as a singular concept, I recognize that it is not a single autonomous or individual literacy, just as traditional literacy is not. Rather, digital literacy also refers to multiple different possible literacies within the digital sphere. For clarity, when I use the term digital literacy, I mean all types of writing that occur in digital contexts.

Analysis

Questions of Textual Validity

Just what it means to be literate has been a question painstakingly debated in the education field since the first attempts to define literacy, and its definition has been fluidly changing shape over time, influenced by theoretical reimaginings of what it is that literacy is and does. Cook-Gumperz (2006) states that it is generally accepted by both educators and the public at large that literacy plays "a major role in the improvement of the quality of life for individuals, social groups and even for whole societies" (p. 19). In the past, functional literacy, or the literacy level necessary to function in society, has been loosely defined as the ability to read, write, and do basic calculations, as well as the ability to create new comprehensible written materials. Cook-Gumperz (2006) rightfully points out that such a definition is inherently freighted with cultural bias and implicit evaluations. The previously accepted definition of literacy was not only overly simplistically reduced, with implied cultural evaluative standards, it was also presented as a neat dichotomy. Literacy was regarded as the skill of reading and writing—that is, either you could

read and write and were literate, or you could not, and you were considered illiterate (Purcell-Gates, 2007).

Literacy was also heavily tied to institutional authority; it was thought of as a decontextualized skill learned in one specific setting—the classroom—and a lack of access to such an institutional setting meant a person was more likely than not to be regarded as illiterate (Purcell-Gates, 2007).   However, this reductionist, institutionally laden definition of literacy has fallen by the wayside in the past thirty years. Brian Street (1984) was among the first scholars to suggest that literacy was not an autonomous, decontextualized, singular skill, but rather an ideological construct defined by the social institutions and groups in which it occurs. This initiated a theoretical move towards thinking about how literacy is socially constructed and determined by specifics: localities, contexts, and social practices (Purcell-Gates, 2007). Literacy is no longer regarded as a singular, independent concept, but rather as a contextualized, pluralistic set of *many* literacies. This is referred to in the field of New Literacy Studies as multiple literacies or *multiliteracies*. In this pluralized state, different literacies are accorded different values, legitimacy, and status, all dependent upon the institution or context in which that literacy takes place. Put simply, we now recognize that there is not merely one literacy that a person can either definitively do or have, but instead, a person has several literacies, and can be literate in several different contexts, each of which are valued in a certain space or by certain people.

Given this new vantage point, there is no one universal definition of functional literacy, and providing a technical definition of literacy is now regarded as a near impossibility. What was once thought to be the correct singular version of literacy is now often referred to as Standard English literacy (specifically, the ability to be able to read and write in Standard English) or academic literacy (specifically, the ability to be able to employ Standard English critically in an academic context). From the multiliteracies perspective, academic literacy is no longer considered the only literacy a person can achieve, or the only literacy that has value or that matters; rather, it is merely one type of literacy that is given meaning and status in the narrowly specific context of the academic institution (Purcell-Gates, 2007).

As a whole, literacy practices are patterned by the personal and social everyday lives of people: they make lists for grocery shopping, write birthday cards to relatives, read instructions for taking medicine, and write in personal journals (Purcell-Gates, 2007). These are all examples of various types of literacy at play in everyday contexts. In our current time, people expend much of their literacy practices on social *digital* writing. This is especially true of our youth, who have come of age with such modes of communication as dominant.

In terms of validity, a more level playing field arises from the idea that academic literacy is but one in a sea of many possible literacies. With the advent of the multiliteracy ideology, nonacademic literacies were no longer viewed as deficient to mainstream academic literacies, only as different (Cazden et al., 1996; Purcell-Gates, 2007). Academic or Standard English literacy, as is argued by multiliteracy proponents, should not be regarded as the one correct form of writing.

After all, "[t]he emphasis upon grammar and correctness is," notes Cook-Gumperz (2006), "a historical feature of our society based upon the historical accident that the written literate language was different from the spoken vernacular at critical historical periods" (p. 45). Barton (2000) warns us, as well, that we must avoid the thought that there is some sort of natural form of language or literacy, one that is untouched by social institutions or cultural power dynamics. Those types of literacies that are contextualized and valued outside of the school setting began to influence pedagogical considerations. Extra-institutional literacies were termed *vernacular literacies*, and educators searched for ways to make use of these self-initiated literacies in the classroom as a means to increase academic literacy.

Miriam Camitta (1993) points out that vernacular writing, or what she terms self-sponsored writing, is "literate behavior that conformed, not to the norms of educational institutions, but to those of social life and culture" (p. 229). In her work at a Philadelphia high school in the early 1990s, Camitta (1993) realized that while her students rarely produced writing for their teachers in the classroom, they engaged heavily in extra-institutional writing, primarily for social purposes. At that time, self-sponsored writing included journaling, passing handwritten notes between friends, and transcribing rap collaborations. Though the classrooms of today differ from those of the early 1990s, the same can be said of contemporary students' writing practices, to an even greater degree. Even those students who produce little in the way of academically sanctioned writing (or are thought to have a low level of academic literacy) are likely to engage heavily in writing practices with their social group that are self-initiated—a majority of contemporary students write emails, text messages, and social media content—in short, digital rhetoric—on a daily basis.

What does digital rhetoric actually look like? To be sure, just like other forms of literacy that are different from Standard English literacy, it is not so far removed from standard literacy that it is unintelligible to the untrained eye; rather, it employs certain aesthetic characteristics and conventions, which appear frequently but are not necessarily a requirement. In an ethnographic study of written language used in instant messaging (or IM) by teenagers aged 12 to 17, David Craig (2003) identified four characteristics that regularly appear to differentiate and demarcate digital rhetoric. These four categories were phonetic replacements, or the usually shortened form of a word with its phonetic letter equivalent (e.g., ur for your); acronyms (e.g., omg for oh my god or lol for laughing out loud); abbreviations (e.g., ppl for people); and finally what Craig termed *inanities*, or nonsensical transmogrifications of words or other digital textual conventions that were purely a play on words, yet that still suggested a certain meaning or tone (e.g., lolz).

Craig (2003) remarks on how such conventions of digital writing seeping into other contexts, especially the institutional setting, have garnered negative comments about the devolution of the language and literacy skills of our youth, with most of the blame placed on the advent of technology. Ultimately, he resists the idea that the Internet and cellphone usage are to blame for the perceived decline of literacy, arguing that being literate in what he calls a "lowbrow vernacular" does not

damage a student's writing ability. This is because, in congruence with multiliteracy ideologies, being literate in one context does not preclude a student from developing a wide array of different literacies, academic literacy included. Being digitally literate actually benefits the student, Craig argues, by promoting regular contact with words and regular contact with a written medium of communication. Not only is regular contact with the written word fostered, but the focus on communication in written form helps students develop skills that are imperative for other forms of literacy, academic included. After all, one cannot communicate via text message or IM if the message is unintelligible, or if the spelling is so mangled or the syntax so jumbled that the intended meaning does not transmit. Despite the use of shortened spellings and other conventions that are held in esteem in their social group, the digitally literate are still writing in a manner that clearly communicates what it is they are trying to say—an important feature of literacy as a whole.

According to John Frow (2010), such a sociological consideration of different forms of writing allows us to undo the coherence of social systems that appear to neatly favor some particular cultural distinctions over others. From this vantage point, and also in accordance with New Literacy Studies, we can unravel the presupposition that academic or Standard English writing is the correct manner of writing with the highest value or prestige. In doing so, the class and economic attachments to certain forms of literacy are exposed: academic discourse is strongly correlated with value-making in middle and higher classes, while digital discourse is strongly correlated with value-making in youth social peer groups—a point which I will explore more in the next section.

Despite some teachers' or policy makers' laments that digital rhetoric is devolving language and impeding literacy, it is imperative that we look at digital literacy from the perspective of multiliteracies. While digital rhetoric is surely changing the written word in ways we never predicted (something that is easy to resist), digitally produced writing must be viewed as yet another type of literacy, one that is highly contextualized with its own set of social norms and values. Digitally mediated text is extraordinarily social, and thus richly imbued with the social underpinnings that New Literacy Studies regards as informing all literacy contexts. Liu (2010) has even admitted to at times being dismayed by the state of language, yet he reminds himself that it should be our aim to look at language where it is most lively and most social:

> It is to follow the living language of human thought, hope, love, desire, hate, and wit wherever it goes and wherever it has the capacity to be literary— even if the form, style, or even spelling and punctuation of such literariness does not conform to those stabilized in the relatively brief period of high literature roughly between Shakespeare and Joyce. (para. 26)

The multiliteracy perspective would determine digital writing as a valid form of literacy that is socially constructed to have its own meaning and status in its digital contexts. Digital rhetoric, in essence, is textually valid.

Social Status and Literacies

Having established the textual validity of digitally produced writing, we can now turn our attention more closely towards digital literacy as a social practice and interrogate the relationship between its sociological factors and its use. As it is a socially constructed event, a certain type of writing gains widespread use in a specific context because within that context, it has social value and status attached to it. From where do such meaning-making and status derive in digital rhetoric? How does this value translate to pervasive use in digital contexts? More importantly, what role does digital literacy's socially assigned status and value play in its use in academic contexts?

Before we are able to tackle such questions, it would be useful to explore the connection between socioeconomic factors and literacy in general, with an emphasis on academic success. Time and time again, research has shown that the sociological factor with the strongest influence on literacy and academic success is class status (Lareau, 2011). While other sociological factors such as race, gender, and citizenship play a strong role, economic status has been found to be the strongest influence on academic success and literacy, and though the gender and race gaps have steadily been closing, the gap in literacy skills due to socioeconomic disparities only continues to widen (Lareau, 2011; Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012). Likewise, household income is the strongest predictor for Internet and cellphone usage across all age levels (Smith, 2010), an important similarity that will be useful for our purposes.

By investigating the relationship between educational success and class status, Annette Lareau (2011) discovered that it is a distinctive difference in cultural child rearing, which she concluded led to a difference in cultural values, that is the link responsible for socioeconomic status's effect on academic success. The middle- and upper-class families Lareau studied followed a strategy of child rearing she termed "concerted cultivation"—children were communicated with as if they were equals, and were encouraged to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and negotiate rules (2011). Working-class families, on the other hand, employed the "accomplishment of natural growth" strategy, which gave children more freedom to play and interact with their social peers, but included instruction to defer to adults and treat them with quiet, revered respect (Lareau, 2011). Both strategies were employed subconsciously by parents as a means to instill cultural values that were esteemed and deemed worthy of transference in their respective socioeconomic classes.

It is important to note here the relationship between the concerted cultivation strategy of child rearing and academic success. Lareau (2011) found that the values encouraged by this strategy were the same values that are specifically held in esteem by the upper class. Being exposed early to such values acted as cultural capital for children in middle- and upper-class families and benefited them academically, since these values are conducive to successfully operating in a manner congruent with academic success. Students from these social classes learn to develop and value cultural practices that are valued by the dominant class, like high

Standard English literacy, precisely *because* their socioeconomic class recognizes these practices as cultural capital.

Questioning, negotiation, and authority testing were frowned upon in the accomplishment of natural growth method, and yet these are precisely the values that successfully translate to academic contexts, since academic institutional values are closely matched to the values of the hegemonic ideology (Lareau, 2011). The ability to question and negotiate with authority, especially when cultivated from a young age, translates to the ability to question and negotiate with knowledge, and with authority in knowledge—in other words, the ability to engage masterfully in critical analysis. The values instilled in working-class children are effective for navigating social relationships in their family and social units, but in the academic world, these values do not hold an advantage. In the academic and professional world, the ruling-class ideology prevails, and the qualities developed by upper- and middle-class children are valued much more strongly over the ones developed by working-class children. The lesson we can take away from Lareau's study is that different cultural practices are given different values, particular to social and institutional contexts. The values of the dominant upper class have a striking similarity to the values of academic institutions. This helps to explain why the dominant upper class values Standard English literacy, and why academic institutions do as well. To be sure, the institution of academia is a complex set of contexts with values that vary by location, mission, prestige, and other markers. However, it is sufficient for our purposes to conclude that the academic institution as a simplified entity (be it a public grade school, a private high school, a community college, or an ivy league university) consistently values Standard English literacy above all other types of literacies. A person's class has a strong influence on the cultural values that are fostered and encouraged, and if these values do not match those of the dominant academic ideology, the student is at a preemptive disadvantage.

Now that we have drawn out the relationship between academic literacy and social and cultural values, we can examine a similar influence of such values on the use of digital rhetoric. In drawing from theories of multiliteracies, we know that certain styles of writing and modes of speech are used in specific contexts because they benefit the user *in that context*. Vernacular forms of English are used in speech and writing as a means of asserting membership within a community, familiarity with the social norms and values of the community, and as an identity-making tool. By using the type of literacy that is valued in a specific context, one reaps benefits in the form of recognition as a member of that community. The ability to correctly and masterfully use the category of literacy and language associated with the values of a particular context, or 'field' in Bourdieu's terminology, is a form of cultural capital (2008). Those students who employ digital rhetoric in socially communicative contexts do so because it is a form of capital—it establishes their knowledge of the norms and rules of their social peer group, and is palpably beneficial to them via social acceptance. More succinctly, the ability to produce digital text is a means of asserting their place in their peer group, a membership from which they reap nearly immediate social and personal rewards.

It is this cultural legitimacy that causes digital rhetoric to be used in nondigital contexts. Students see the legitimizing power of being digitally literate in their social circles: knowing how to communicate digitally and use the rhetoric solidifies their position as an in-the-know member of the community. If the benefits of digital literacy as cultural capital in their social group are clear to students as an important part of their social identities, it follows that employing such digital rhetoric might be seen as more beneficial than engaging in Standard English literacy, the benefits of which are not so immediately clear. By placing greater emphasis on their social status in their peer group, it makes sense that some students would not make it a point to code-switch between literacies, or would fail to see the benefit of dropping text speech in contexts outside of their social field— their digital literacy legitimizes their social standing. Using digital rhetoric outside of digital contexts is therefore not merely a result of comfortability with certain types of writing, but rather a carrying of social prestige from one context to another, the decisive questioning of the benefits supposedly promised by adapting to a different type of literacy. Digital writing, therefore, serves a distinct social function for students. Just as Frow (2010) proposes that "readers are formed by text as much as texts are formed by readers" (p. 247), writers are formed by their texts as much as their texts are formed by writers.

Digital Literacy Access: The Digital Divide?

The digital divide, the name given to the gap between those who have plentiful access to computers and the Internet and those who lack access, certainly exists across the globe, including within the American context we are inspecting here. In attempting to determine what type of sociological factors correlate with this divide, socioeconomic status (primarily income and education levels) stands out as a strong influence. For instance, those with a high school diploma or less schooling are much less knowledgeable about using the Internet than those with a college degree (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008). As previously stated, there are many sociological factors that influence and relate to digital literacy and rhetoric use, but the strongest predictor of whether a person engages in digital communication is socioeconomic status. Given the existence of the digital divide, how does socioeconomic status affect access to the various means for producing digitally mediated text? In the following section, I will examine statistical evidence of this influence and show that while the digital divide exists, access to contexts in which digital literacy occurs is abundantly widespread, regardless of sociological dynamics.

The Pew Internet and American Life Project has provided valuable data on the usage of the Internet and cellphones, and has mapped out trends in usage divided by sociological markers such as gender, income level, and age. Their research confirms the existence of the digital divide, as they note that higher income levels, specifically above the threshold of an annual income of $75,000, is strongly correlated to higher Internet and cellphone usage. Of Americans earning above this income threshold, 95% use the Internet; of those below the threshold, 70% use the Internet. Out of these Internet users, 99% above the $75,000 income threshold use the Internet in their own home, and 93% of Internet users below the threshold use

the Internet at home (Jansen, 2010).

These data do underscore the digital divide's existence and confirm that socioeconomic status is a strong indicator of access to digital contexts, and thus familiarity with digital literacy. But a distant reading, a sociological methodology encouraged by Moretti (2000) and others that exercises distance as a condition of knowledge about a social arena or practice such as digital writing, is apposite here. Not only will this introduction of distance into the textual analysis let us focus on units or classifications that are larger than the process of writing (or literary event) or the digitally mediated text itself, this step back also shows us that the influence of the sociological category is less than we might have imagined in the digital divide. Even among those Americans with a lower income level, Internet and cellphone usage is still extraordinarily widespread, signaling a strong likelihood—despite the acknowledged influence of socioeconomic status—of digital literacy among all income levels. Out of all adults that make under $30,000 a year, nearly two-thirds still regularly use the Internet. The usage jumps sharply in the next income bracket: of those making between $30,000 and $50,000 annually, 80% regularly use the Internet (Jansen, 2010).

Not only is Internet use incredibly prevalent along the full spectrum of income levels and other sociological factors such as age and race, its primary functions for most users are communicative in nature. Email remains the number one functional use of the Internet for every age bracket among Americans, and fully 90 to 100% of Americans under the age of 74 use email (Zickuhr, 2010). This strongly suggests that literacy in digitized textual rhetoric is exceptionally prominent, and has a strong presence and role in the social and personal lives of the majority of Americans, regardless of sociological underpinnings.

Cellphones are even more remarkable in their flattening of hierarchal access to digital technology. Used for telephone calls, of course, but also for transmitting text messages, emails, instant messages, social networking, and sending and retrieving information via the Internet, cellphones are utilized in such manners by what amounts to virtually most of the population. Cellphone usage is incredibly widespread, regardless of race, age, or income level, and ubiquitous in our current society: 85% of all American adults own a cellphone, and of those who are under the age of 35, 95% own a cellphone (Zickhur, 2011). Ownership is increasingly prevalent even among younger students, and by 2010, three-quarters of Americans between the ages of 12 and 17 owned their own cellphone (Lenhart, Purcell, Smith, & Zickhur, 2010).

The $75,000 income threshold indicator stands for cellphone usage just as it does for Internet use, but the gap here is even smaller: of those over the threshold, 95% own cellphones, and of those below it, 83% own cellphones. Even in the lowest income bracket, below $30,000 in annual income, 75% owned a cellphone (Zickhur, 2011). A specific Pew study on mobile usage among race and class even points out that cellphone ownership is higher among African Americans and Latinos than it is among whites (Smith, 2010).

This pervasive usage of cellphones points towards a prevalence of digital literacy among all sociological sectors. Of all cellphone owners, nearly three quarters use it regularly to transmit text messages; that is, they engage regularly with and exercise their digital rhetoric literacy. Underage students are the most common users of this type of communication, with girls aged 14 to 17 in the lead (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010). More than half of all teens send fifty or more text messages in a single day, and one in three sends more than 100 per day (Lenhart, Ling et al., 2010). Such widespread use is also seen in Internet usage with this age group: 93% of teenagers use the Internet for emailing, social networking, listening to music, and information retrieval (Lenhart, Purcell et al., 2010).

If we think of access to technology in purely physical terms, that is, physical access to a computer or cellphone, then indeed, nearly all Americans do have access to digital technology. Some scholars (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008; Warschauer, 2008), however, call for a broader view of access, stating that other forms of access inform the ability to use this physical access in a meaningful way. Warschauer (2008) concludes that in addition to physical access, other forms of access that are crucial for true accessibility to the digital arena include digital resources, or an adequate amount of meaningful content available that is culturally relevant to an individual; human resources, or the skills and know-how needed to use a computer in a meaningful way; and social resources, or the social structures necessary to support effective use of technology. Thus, it might be argued that just because American teens have nearly limitless physical access to a computer or cellphone, this does not necessarily imply high digital literacy or the ability to interact with a technological instrument in meaningful ways. However, if we look more closely at how students utilize their physical access to technology, we will see that types of functional usages that indicate digital literacy remain highly pervasive, including across class lines.

While 69% of teens report owning a computer, a full 95% of Americans ages 14 to 17 use computers in their homes, school, or libraries to access the Internet. Even more striking, 82% of teens ages 14 to 17 regularly use this time online to access social networking sites, and use these digital environments to send messages to friends, create short posts that are shared publicly, and comment on pictures and videos—all practices in digital rhetoric. Though a teen from a lower-income family may lack the forms of social capital necessary to successfully use digital technology for, say, performing academic research, this does not appear to be the case for online activities that indicate strong digital literacy. In fact, teens from families who earn less than $30,000 per year are more likely to use online social networking sites than their wealthier peers (Lenhart, Purcell et al., 2010). This prevalence of social media site usage in conjunction with the pervasiveness of texting, regardless of socioeconomic status, shows not only functional ability, but also implies teens of all income levels engage with digital technology regularly in a manner that *produces text*, therefore signaling high literacy in the use of digital rhetoric. These forms of communicative usage are far more important in terms of socially esteemed digital literacy practices than other ways of using technology—which may indeed be influenced by other forms of access—that instead suggest other forms of literacies, such as academic literacy.

Digital writing, especially in the form of text messaging, is the leading type of written communication used by youth students. A Pew study (Lenhart, Ling et al., 2010) has found that "text messaging has become the *primary way* that teens reach their friends, surpassing face-to-face contact, email, instant messaging and voice calling as the go-to daily communication tool for this age group" (Overview, para. 2; italics mine). This is a fascinatingly regular usage of and contact with the written word for purposes that are purely extra-institutional, socially motivated, and self-initiated. We can then deduce that high school aged students are the leaders in digital literacy, and they typically employ this type of literacy with much more frequency than other institutional, personal, or social categories of literacy. In essence, they are truly masters of digital rhetoric and are extremely literate in the digital writing arena.

By offering a statistical exploration of the digital divide, I set out to demonstrate that even though economic factors are influential, the larger picture is that access to and participation in digital literacy are nearly ubiquitous, especially among students, regardless of socioeconomic positioning. Juxtaposed against the privileging of academic literacy as an ideology that maintains the power structure and marginalizes those lacking access to cultural capital, and thus impeding access to academic literacy (Purcell-Gates, 2007), the prevalence of digital literacy across socioeconomic factors stands out with a weighted significance.

Perhaps this indicates that not only is digital literacy a valuable pedagogical resource because of its vernacular literacy status, which is permeated with positive social and cultural value, but also because it exists as a form of literacy that is less influenced by institutional and socioeconomic factors in terms of *access*. Increased accessibility and literacy in digital rhetoric, regardless of class status or race, suggests that it is a highly valuable pedagogical resource, one that is worth mining as a means to increase both academic literacy—which is much more steeped in institutional and socioeconomic limitations to access—and literacy in general.

What can we make of the fact that nearly all students text message on a regular basis? Despite how conventions of digital literacy might differ from conventions of Standard English literacy, we should draw an optimistic hopefulness from the fact that students engage in self-initiated writing on a daily basis, and are highly skilled in using the written word to communicate in a social context. Because of digital writing's accessibility across socioeconomic statuses, it stands out as a form of literacy that is less influenced by one socioeconomic group's ideology, less hierarchal, and less rigid in its rules. This is because they are developed and legitimized by the heterogeneous users themselves, as opposed to Standard English literacy's rules, which are determined by a hierarchal and hegemonic power structure. In essence, digital literacy is a democratic form of literacy that nearly all students use with ease, making it a potentially powerful pedagogical tool.

Implications for Pedagogy

Former Assessments

Purcell-Gates (2007) has written, "in response to the educators' question 'what does this say for instruction?' … social literacy research does not necessarily have to say anything for instruction. Rather, much of this research stands on its own as literacy studies research and is interesting and significant in its own right" (p. 15). Whenever research on or analysis of literacy's connection to social factors occurs, the question always follows: how should this influence or change literacy instruction? Purcell-Gates makes a valid point: this research is significant in its own right and worthy of study without automatic attempts to implement findings into pedagogy. However, it still stands that by studying literacy, we are studying something that we regard to be intimately tied to the act of teaching and scholarship. If we change the way we think about or approach literacy, we ultimately are changing (or at least subtly influencing) the way we approach literacy instruction, and are expanding our pedagogical toolbox. For this reason, this paper's stand-alone significance should be noted, but we will also attempt to translate it to practical implications.

First, there certainly have been examples in the past of successfully marrying digital literacy (both of the digital rhetoric and the computer-usage literacy variety) and traditional critical academic engagement in the classroom. Liu (2010) provides several examples of using digital contexts his students are familiar with as a means to boost academic skills, such as close readings and critical analysis. He successfully merged social computing and literary analysis by using digital platforms, such as LiveJournal, an online journaling or personal blogging site that stresses community building, to study *The Canterbury Tales*. His students created a journal for each character, and then had characters comment on (and engage in dialogue with) other characters' journal entries in line with the plot. He also used Facebook, an extremely popular social networking site, to analyze *Romeo and Juliet* by creating a profile for each main character, and then had the students model the play by having characters friend the appropriate profiles, create events (complete with the appropriate invitations sent) that were integral to the plot, and post status updates, complete with replies, as the events transpired. These examples use a format in which the student is *literate*, and plays upon this resource to actively engage the students to explore and develop a critical understanding of the events and complex social relationships in each famous literary work. By tapping into the students' digital literacy, Liu was able to foster a deeper understanding of Chaucer and Shakespeare in his students. Not only did he focus upon his students' literacy in social computing in these examples, he also fostered a greater critical understanding of the texts vis-à-vis his students' literacy in digital *writing*—he was able to engage the students precisely because he encouraged them to write in the format and with the rhetoric in which they are already comfortable and literate.

More closely related to literacy instruction, Kristen Turner (2009) encourages educators to employ exercises that allow students to break down the correct contexts for each type of literacy, such as a worksheet in which students

search their academic writing for examples of text-speak—defined by Turner as the informal, abbreviated, and often fragmented version of English widely found in text messages—record it, and "translate" it to its Standard English equivalent. She stresses that students should be made aware of their ability to code-switch between each type of rhetoric, and that engaging them in thoughtful analysis of their own word choices allows them to understand contextual use—specifically that Standard English is more appropriate for academic contexts, and text-speak for social digital contexts. The vast number of digital contexts that students use frequently (text message, IM, email, social networking, etc.) demonstrates that students have the ability to write for many different digital platforms, and code-switch between them well. These skills are transferable to academic literacy; moreover, code-switching between standard literacies and other forms of literacies is an important skill that should be tapped into and fostered.

Liu (2010) states that by employing social computing in academic instruction, "we expand or reconfigure the nature of reading"; similarly, it is not possible to suggest that we completely reinvent literacy instruction or literacy itself in an attempt to position self-sponsored digital writing in the literacy sphere (para. 46). Rather, my analysis suggests an expansion or reconfiguration of the nature of writing instruction, that we introduce digital writing alongside more traditional forms of literacy that are normally institutionally sanctioned. Self-sponsored digital literacy not only speaks to the ongoing developments in our language and our modes of communication, it is also a deep resource for literacy instruction.

The Bigger Picture

Acknowledging the validity of digital literacy—and using it as a resource for increasing academic literacy—is useful on the practical level within the classroom, but it is important to note that pedagogical implications may also exist on an even larger scale. The analysis made earlier certainly stresses the broader idea that digital literacy does *not* negatively influence standard forms of literacy; in fact quite the opposite is true. Craig (2003) insists on this point, noting that text-speak does not have a negative impact on other forms of literacy for three distinct reasons. First, phonetic playing with language leads to improved literacy as a whole. Language play is a metalinguistic skill, one that depends upon students' knowledge of their language and cognitive awareness of how it functions. Secondly, literacies can and do develop independently of each other. And finally, languages evolve over time, and the proliferation of text-speak is just one example of this (Craig, 2003).

Viewing literacy on an even larger sociological scale, we have seen that literacies that are marked as *good* or *high* are practiced by those in economic and political power, namely the upper class. Literacies marked as *bad* or *low* are usually seen as practiced by those in the margins (Purcell-Gates, 2007). What if the propagation of a type of literacy that is prevalent among groups representing a spectrum of sociological markers, including across all class statuses, is able to play a role in disassembling this power structure? Surely, digital literacy is marked as a low literacy—there have been countless laments of text-speak creeping into

academic writing—and academic literacy will undoubtedly continue to be positioned as a high and strongly valued literacy. But it seems from our analysis that digital literacy has been more ubiquitous in use among various social and class groups than previously researched forms of vernacular literacy (such as Black English). That is to say, it is not valued primarily by one class or differently by race or gender. To be sure, digital writing is not free from influence by such sociological markers; however, being literate in digital rhetoric is given strong value and social significance across all of these social markers. Such value making is an important consideration in terms of power and status maintenance.

Textual validation is also an important pedagogical tool. By validating literacies that are commonplace in a person's everyday home and community life, such as digital literacy, an instructor would in effect motivate students in the classroom through such acknowledgement (Purcell-Gates, 2007). Not only can self-sponsored literacies act as a bridge to academic literacy, it provides—through validating extra-institutional literacies—an opportunity for discourse that explores and critiques the dominant academic literacy.

The reason digital literacy is such a deep resource for pedagogical instruction, then, is because it validates self-sponsored vernacular literacies, and exposes students to their ability to code-switch and use language contextually. It follows that the answer to why it is important for educators to acknowledge and make use of digital literacy is extraordinarily manifold. It is vital because language is evolving, literacy is steeped in social status, and it is metalinguistic language play. It also gives power to students by acknowledging the communicative power and validity of their vernacular, and opens the possibility for a disassembling of the power structure that is set in place by dominant literacies. Most importantly, since it is an extremely accessible type of literacy across all sociological groups, it is a resource worth using in the classroom. Digital literacy is, without a doubt, less hierarchal and more accessible than standard academic literacy. It is possible to use its accessibility to play with and break open the power structure, and simultaneously to teach contextual literacy usages of appropriate (and the word 'appropriate' is key here, not 'right' or 'wrong') rhetoric for matching to specific contexts. And of course, in the spirit of our ever-evolving language, such contextual boundaries should be pushed.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This analysis employs a somewhat distant and broad scope in order to give a bigger-picture view of how one might combine multiliteracies and sociological considerations to investigate digital literacy. This application could certainly be narrowed in various ways—thinking about digital literacy from a sociological standpoint opens up tremendous opportunities for further analysis. For instance, one might look more closely at the different types or genres of digital literacies that are widely used, and query how status and value operate in each specific context. Do certain textual conventions appear in only some genres? Do others span platforms?

Giving digital writing a close reading would also be a worthwhile endeavor, as there is surely much to uncover by examining sentence level structure, spelling conventions, and other characteristics unique to digital rhetoric. How are such conventions perceived by those who use them? By those who opt not to use them? One might also look more closely at how digital literacy conventions are shaped by formal constraints (the keyboard, Swype-style keypads, limited character space), and interrogate how such constraints influence textual choices. A close reading could also aim to uncover the cultural status attached to specific conventions by different producers of digital text, as well as explore the relationship between conventions and restrictions of form.

Lastly, though I have proposed that access is more open and thus beneficial, instead of restrictive, when it comes to digital literacy, important research is being done in the field of sociology on the digital divide's role as access increases. As noted previously, Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) have found that though the digital divide is shrinking in terms of access among classes, class status still strongly affects *how* computers are used. They find that higher classes tend to use Internet access for capital-building activities, to which access and knowledge about is still restricted in lower classes. It is worth investigating if and how this translates to digital literacy, or rather, if differences in *usage* among socioeconomic classes indicate differences in access to and usage of digital literacy.

Conclusion

This analysis has attempted to approach digital literacy from a sociological viewpoint. It was found that, in accordance with New Literacy Studies' conceptualization of literacy as pluralistic, digital literacy is but one of many literacies, and is equally legitimate as a form of writing. This paper also determined that because of the relationship between a literacy's perceived value and status in specific social contexts, digital literacy is employed by students, even in contexts deemed inappropriate, because their social and cultural group attach value and meaning to being digitally literate. Finally, this paper proposed that the digital divide has shrunk so considerably that access to digital literacy is incredibly widespread, and such accessibility makes it an exceptionally valuable resource in the classroom.

What, then, do we conclude from marrying these conclusions? We now see that digital literacy is a textually valid form of written communication, one that is steeped with user-beneficial social and cultural capital which leads to its use both in the appropriate context and out of context, and is a form of literacy that, due to its widespread use across various sociological vectors, is arguably more accessible to *all* socioeconomic levels than other types of literacy. These findings indicate that digital literacy is both worthy of sociological analysis, and a truly important pedagogical resource that it would be unwise to ignore. Introducing digital rhetoric into academic literacy instruction could prove to be beneficial on numerous levels. It acknowledges students' self-sponsored writing, empowers students by institutionally validating their socially prestigious literacy, and opens up the

possibility for dissecting the power structure that reveres Standard English literacy. It enables students to recognize their highly useful ability to code-switch, and opens up dialogue about context and matching the appropriate literacy to its appropriate context. Lastly, there is the opportunity for skill transference between digital and academic literacies: by transferring specific skills from areas in which they are highly literate, students can strengthen other areas in which they are less literate.

It is undeniable that a vast majority of a high school or college students' writing now takes place in digital contexts. As we explored earlier, this is having an unmistakable influence on our language, and has introduced whole new types of communication that are rife with their own social codes, rules, and judgments of validity. While the point of literacy instruction is arguably to give students the tools necessary for expression, especially in academic Standard English contexts, we recognize that literacy is not an autonomous action that serves one purpose or takes one form. Just as Camitta deduced that students' handwritten notes passed between friends was useful for exploring literacy and an untapped resource for literacy instruction, I propose the same can be thought of digital writing. In fact, given that extra-institutional digital communication is socially legitimized and an extraordinarily accessible form of literacy, self-sponsored digital rhetoric is even more fruitful for both study on a sociological level and as a resource for instruction in academic literacy.

References

Barton, D. (2000). Researching literacy practices: Learning from activities with teachers and students. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, & R. Ivanič (Eds.), *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context* (pp. 167-179). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (2008). The forms of capital. In N. Woolsey Biggart (Ed.), *Readings in economic sociology* (pp. 280-291). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Camitta, M. (1993). Vernacular writing: Varieties of literacy among Philadelphia high school students. In B. Street (Ed.), *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy* (pp. 228-246). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J., Kalantzis, M., Kress, G., … Nakata, M. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, *66*(1), 60-92.

Cook-Gumperz, J. (2006). Literacy and schooling: An unchanging equation? In J. Cook-Gumperz (Ed.), *The social construction of literacy* (2nd ed., pp. 19-49). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Craig, D. (2003). *Instant messaging: The language of youth literacy.* Retrieved from http://bootheprize.stanford.edu/0203/PWR-Boothe-Craig.pdf

Frow, J. (2010). On midlevel concepts. *New Literary History*, *41*(2), 237-252.

Hargittai, E., & Hinnant, A. (2008). Digital inequality differences in young adults' use of the Internet. *Communication Research*, *35*(5), 602-621.

Jansen, J. (2010). *Use of the Internet in higher-income households*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project site: http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Better-off-households/Overview.aspx

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lenhart, A., Ling, R., Campbell, S., & Purcell, K. (2010). *Teens and mobile phones*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project site: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Teens-and-Mobile-Phones/Summary-of-findings.aspx

Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010). *Social media & mobile Internet use among teens and young adults.* Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults/Summary-of-Findings.aspx

Liu, A. (2010). *From reading to social computing*. Retrieved from Literary Studies in the Digital Age: http://dlsanthology.commons.mla.org/from-reading-to-social-computing/

Madden, M., Lenhart, A., Duggan, M., Cortesi, S., & Gasser, U. (2013). *Teens and technology 2013*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project: http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Teens-and-Tech/Summary-of-Findings.aspx

Moretti, F. (2000). Conjectures on world literature. *New Left Review*, *1,* 54-68.

Purcell-Gates, V. (2007). Complicating the complex. In V. Purcell-Gates (Ed.), *Cultural practices of literacy: Case studies of language, literacy, social practice and power* (pp. 1-23). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Reardon, S. F., Valentino, R. A., & Shores, K. A. (2012). Patterns of literacy among US students. *The Future of Children*, *22*(2), 17-37.

Smith, A. (2010). *Mobile Access 2010*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010/Summary-of-Findings.aspx

Street, B. (1984). *Literacy in theory and practice* (Vol. 9). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, K. H. (2009). Flipping the switch: Code-switching from text-speak to standard English. *English Journal*, *98*(5), 60-65.

Warschauer, M. (2008). Whither the digital divide? In D. L. Kleinman, K. A. Cloud Hansen, C. Matta, & J. Handesman (Eds.), *Controversies in science & technology: From climate to chromosomes.* New Rochelle, NY: Liebert.

Zickuhr, K. (2010). *Generations 2010.* Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project: http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Generations-2010/Overview.aspx

Zickuhr, K. (2011). *Generations and their gadgets.* Retrieved from Pew Research Center, Pew Internet & American Life Project: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Generations-and-gadgets/Overview.aspx

The impact of an arts-integrated curriculum on student literacy and engagement

Rachel P. Feldwisch
Kristie L. Coker
Shanna M. Stuckey
Ashley A. Rittenhouse,
Kassi K. Kite
Joshua S. Smith

Abstract

This paper presents the results of mixed-method examination of the implementation and outcomes of the Arts Integration Program (AIP). The AIP was created by a national nonprofit organization that works with educational systems, the arts community, and private and public sectors to provide arts-related education to elementary school aged children. The arts-based literacy curriculum included an artist-in-residence component. The study design included classroom observations, interviews, and a pre–post standardized Literacy Assessment Tool in 11 schools in the Midwest. Results show high levels of student enthusiasm and engagement in the AIP, with consistently sustained levels of student engagement when the artists in residence facilitated learning. Student scores increased modestly in literacy knowledge, and the findings provide avenues for other schools to infuse arts into their literacy instruction.

Introduction

Embedding arts into literacy instruction fits naturally with many English Language Arts curricula across the country. The advent of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) challenges schools and teachers to view the integration of subjects and move toward interdisciplinary lessons and units. This is consistent with prior research showing positive outcomes for arts-integrated learning among students at all grade levels going back to the 1990s. Eisner (1998) concluded that arts-integrated learning had the greatest academic impact when fine arts were integrated with language arts. Researchers have explored reasons why the arts benefit language arts learners (Cowan & Albers, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Leland & Harste, 1994), how learners benefit (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000; Heath, 2004), and the degree of benefit that can be achieved through arts-integrated learning (Burger & Winner, 2000; Caldwell & Moore, 1991; Smithrim & Upitis, 2005; Trainin, Andrzejczak, & Poldberg, 2006). While most authors agree that the arts should be appreciated for their own unique contributions to the development of the individual learner, many also see the arts as a potential catalyst for learning in other subjects (Eisner, 1998).

Theoretical Perspectives and Previous Research

The Influence of the Arts on Student Motivation and Engagement

Theorists have suggested that mediators exist between communication through multiple sign systems and improved performance on measures of academic achievement. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Oldfather (1995) believed that motivation is the key to student engagement and subsequent academic performance. They suggested that artistic expression has motivated students to become more engaged in learning. Students who participated in visual art or music reported increased intrinsic motivation to pursue these endeavors, whereas students who pursued math or science reported very low levels of intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi addressed the need for teachers to motivate readers toward literacy by making learning more rewarding and enjoyable. As Oldfather (1995) stated,

> When students engage in authentic self-expression as part of their literacy activities, their learning processes become inherently connected to how they think, what they value, and who they are. They are able to become part of a community of learners that enriches and extends mutual thinking and ideas, and enhances their motivation for further engagement in reading and writing (pp. 421-422).

Oldfather's rationale could explain how educational programs that allowed students to express themselves using multiple modes of symbolic communication have motivated them to learn.

Burger and Winner (2000) concluded that children are more motivated to read and write after they are engaged in the process of creating visual art, but questioned whether other engaging activities would have the same impact on motivation. Similarly, Smithrim and Upitis (2005) evaluated the impact of the Learning Through the Arts (LTTA) curriculum by comparing data from LTTA students to control groups who participated in a technology integration program. They concluded that students' academic gains in mathematic computation were associated with engagement in the LTTA curriculum, and that these students performed better in computation than those who participated in a technology-integrated curriculum because they were more engaged by the arts-integrated lessons.

The Academic Impact of Arts-Integrated Learning

Additional groups of researchers have provided evidence supporting the inclusion of the arts in literacy instruction. In their study of drawing as a precursor to narrative writing, Caldwell and Moore (1991) compared the written expressions of two groups of second- and third-grade students, one with arts-integrated literacy instruction and one with traditional language arts activities. They found that students who participated in drawing activities prior to narrative writing scored significantly higher on the Narrative Rating Scale compared to students who participated in discussions as a prewriting experience. In a subsequent study

(Moore & Caldwell, 1993), teachers combined drama and drawing as prewriting activities. The use of multiple sign systems also produced a better quality of written work than the traditionally prepared control group. Trainin, Andrzejczak, and Poldberg (2006) provided additional evidence linking the integration of art and writing to improvements in academic achievement on standardized language arts tests. These researchers found that second- through fifth-grade students (N=342) who participated in an arts integration program called Picturing Writing showed increased quality and quantity in their written work compared to control groups (Trainin et al., 2006). Recent research by Walker, Tabone, and Weltsek (2011) revealed that middle school students in an arts-integrated classroom were 77 percent more likely to pass the language arts portion of the New Jersey state standardized assessment when compared to students in a traditional classroom. The study compared testing outcomes in four schools with a traditional language arts curriculum to four schools with a theater arts-infused curriculum. These researchers also found a higher level of student engagement as evidenced by students' days absent from school: students in the drama-infused program missed fewer days of school ($M = 5.51$) than students in the control group ($M = 6.3$). The positive outcomes of these research studies supported the conclusion that students in elementary and middle school grades derived academic benefits from the integration of the fine arts and language arts.

The Arts and Written Expression as Multiple Modes of Communication

In contrast to the arts-integration view of the arts within literacy instruction, a group of literacy researchers who are also practicing artists have encouraged educators to see the interconnection between language arts and fine arts (Albers, Holbrook, & Harste, 2010). This body of work focuses on multiple modes of communication interacting to form a new definition of literacy in education. Leland and Harste (1994) described the history of language arts education as "verbocentric," having been focused on written and oral language as opposed to other sign systems. They advocated for a view of literacy that incorporated "multiple ways of knowing for the purpose of ongoing interpretation and inquiry into the world" (p. 339). Drama, music, visual art, and mathematics were described as symbolic languages that expand student perspectives and understanding across the curriculum. Caldwell and Moore (1991) specifically identified drawing and writing as "two equally important symbol systems" that can support each other during the creative process (p. 207). Drawing was not only a precursor to students' development of written expression, but also presented a more individualized system of communication in that symbols were developed by the creators. Caldwell and Moore noted that the use of drawing as a planning strategy allowed young authors "to find a correspondence between internal and external representations of ideas" (p. 208). Cowan and Albers (2006) took the importance of symbols one step further, stressing the relationship between cognition and emotion during artistic and linguistic expression. In their discussion of the arts and writing as "semiotic representations," Cowan and Albers stated, "comprehension increases as cognition and affect are connected" (p. 134). Leland and Harste (1994) called for future

researchers to explore the interaction of sign systems when the arts are integrated with literacy.

Theoretically, we agree with Albers and Harste (2007) that "a multimodal approach in teaching acknowledges, then, that language is only partial, and that many modes are involved in meaning-making, even though one mode may be chosen to represent meaning" (p. 11). The creators of the arts-integrated literacy program that is the focus of this study infused fine arts into a curriculum that emphasizes a multimodal perspective, yet their quantitative assessment addressed the more traditional view of language art—reading comprehension and English writing skills. As a result, we selected a mixed-methods design to explore both the quantifiable gains in traditional literacy skills and the qualitatively rich experiences of students engaged in multimodal literacy instruction.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact on student literacy of an arts-based literacy curriculum with an artist-in-residence component. The Arts Integration Program was designed by a national nonprofit organization (NPO) that works with educational systems, the arts community, and private and public sectors to provide arts education to children. The program was created to enhance reading, writing, and learning skills of children in kindergarten through eighth grade using an arts-infused curriculum that combines artist residencies with lessons taught by classroom teachers. Visual arts, dance, theater, music, and literary arts were integrated with best practices in literacy education to create a program that helps teachers meet state standards in language arts. Lessons are focused around well-known literary pieces and involved between 12 and 18 hours of student instruction. The NPO created a standardized assessment tool, the AIP Student Literacy Assessment Tool (SLAT), to measure literacy gains among student participants.

The NPO enlisted researchers from the School of Education at a local university to conduct an evaluation of the AIP program for three school years. Researchers conducted an implementation fidelity study the first year and transitioned to a summative evaluation during the second and third years of the partnership. Using a mixed-method research model, the focus of the summative evaluation included analyses of the AIP's effects on students, the perspectives of teachers, and the contributions of the artists in residence. The guiding research questions for the summative evaluation were:

- To what extent do AIP lessons engage and interest students?
- To what extent do AIP classrooms exemplify teaching as modeled by the training and intent of the curriculum?
- After students have experienced AIP lessons, what is the impact on their literacy skills?

Method

Participants and Setting

From 2009 to 2011, 11 statewide schools (one rural, eight urban, two suburban) participated in the research (see Table 1). The teachers participated in training sessions specific to the unit they implemented in their classroom. Fifty-one classrooms were observed during implementation of the AIP unit. Thirty teachers participated in interviews regarding their experiences with the AIP curriculum. Throughout the three years, all five units were implemented across the 11 sites. Students in these classrooms ranged from second through sixth grade. Four hundred and thirteen students completed the SLAT before and after program implementation during years two and three. However, results were only included from students with signed parental consent and student assent forms (N = 43 year two, N = 190 year three).

School	Locale	Free/Reduced Lunch	Students of Color	Enrollment
1 Rural	Small town	49%	0%	93
2 Suburban	Urban fringe of mid-size city	47%	39%	974
3 Suburban	Urban fringe of mid-size city	46%	30%	584
4 Urban	Mid-size city	70%	57%	486
5 Urban	Mid-size city	86%	50%	254
6 Urban	Large city	77%	81%	388
7 Urban	Large city	54%	57%	338
8 Urban	Large city	35%	41%	312
9 Urban	Large city	85%	63%	454
10 Urban	Large city	86%	86%	341
11 Urban	Large city	68%	60%	213

Table 1. 2009-2010 Demographic Data of Participating Schools

Classroom assignment of the AIP curriculum within school systems was decided by the national program prior to the initiation of the research study. The national program requested data regarding all participants; therefore, our sample was essentially predetermined. While all students in the selected classrooms participated in the AIP curriculum, students were self-selected to participate in the research study. Principals signed permission for classroom observation and gathering of data, and teachers signed consent forms prior to interviews. However, students' assessment data was not included without a signed consent from parents and assent from students.

Measures and Procedures

Observations*.* Researchers conducted observations in 51 classrooms in 11 different schools. During each classroom observation session, extensive field notes were taken by an outside observer who focused on interactions between teachers and students, students' level of engagement with the AIP curriculum, and the teachers'

fidelity to implementation of the curriculum. Researchers scheduled visits according to the teachers' schedules and intentionally observed a variety of experiences, including teacher-instructed lessons, cooperative learning exercises, artist-in-residence visits, and final performances. Semistructured observations were conducted for the entire AIP lesson. Observers sat at the back or side of the room, noted the characteristics of the room, took copious notes during the lesson, and immediately noted any emergent hypotheses or assessments after each observation.

Interviews. Thirty teachers took part in interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes each, following the completion of the AIP curriculum. General program impressions and recommendations for improvement were the main focus of these interviews. Sample prompts included "Describe the atmosphere you created while conducting lessons," "Tell me how the AIP training you received prepared you for the process," "Describe your feelings about the artist residency portion of the program," and "Discuss your feelings about the AIP program in general. What went well? What would you like to change?" Interviews were transcribed verbatim in preparation for analysis.

Literacy assessments. The AIP Student Literacy Assessment Tool (SLAT) was administered before and after completion of the AIP unit during years two and three. As the NPO's tool for assessing literacy gains for students across the nation, the SLAT has been used in classrooms across the United States for the last four years. To complete the assessment, students read a short biography about the American socialite Ruth Harkness, and then answered nine to twelve (depending on the version of the assessment) open-ended questions, most of which included a series of subquestions. Sample questions included "How would you describe Ruth's personality? List as many character traits as you can. Support each trait with an example from the biography," and "If you were watching a movie of Ruth's life, what are some sounds that you might hear? Use words or phrases from the biography to support your answer." In year two, the assessment consisted of twelve questions with varying point values, with student scores ranging from 12 to 49. In year three, changes were made to the assessment by the NPO and the number of questions decreased to nine, with student scores ranging from 2 to 42.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data. Transcribed observations, open-ended survey items, and verbatim transcripts from audiotaped interviews were entered into NVIVO qualitative software. Researchers applied codes representing the sentiment of each paragraph or data cluster and/or developed codes identifying patterns within the data. As a group, the team met to discuss the relationships among codes and to combine similar codes into broader patterns or themes. Next, they divided into groups in order to return to the original data sources to identify representative examples from observations and quotations from interviews. Finally, the entire team met to share findings, which resulted in specific themes. This type of cooperative work among qualitative research teams creates an overall better understanding of the data and leads to more valid conclusions (Creswell, 2007).

Quantitative data. Students who completed both pre- and post-assessments were included in the statistical analysis. Scores on the SLAT pre- and post-measures were analyzed using SPSS. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine any differences in student scores between the pretest and post-test.

Results

Overall, the AIP program was viewed as an asset in the classroom and its implementation was related to improvements in student learning. Several trends emerged from the data, including student engagement and motivation, student gains, student challenges, and teacher perspectives.

Student Engagement

Literature regarding the impact of arts-infused programs on literacy learning touts an increase in student engagement and motivation for learning (Arts Education Partnership, 2004; Caldwell & Moore, 1991; Upitis & Smithrim, 2003). Consistent with this literature, students were described as highly motivated and engaged during AIP lessons. Behaviors typifying engagement included maintaining eye contact, refraining from off-topic talk during direct instruction, participating appropriately in activities, and displaying excitement about the curriculum in the form of smiles, eager tones, and active participation. As one teacher commented, "It was fun. It was engaging. It was wonderful to see all kids wanting to be a part of it." The theme of engagement and motivation was further defined as enthusiasm, student collaboration, and self-expression.

Enthusiasm. Student enthusiasm was a noticeable indicator of engagement in the AIP lessons. During and after classroom observations, teachers spoke directly to researchers about student involvement, indicating, "The kids just love this," and "[Students] really get into the lessons." Elevated and animated tones exemplified the anticipatory excitement of students when beginning their AIP lessons. Speaking to the eagerness of her students, one teacher commented, "The kids looked forward to doing it. So that made it so happy for everyone … Everybody is excited, clearing things off [their desks] so they could get on it." In another classroom, students expressed excitement when the teacher told them they were moving from the current lesson to the AIP lesson on motifs, a curriculum component from the music unit. Students rushed to grab instruments composed of common classroom items, such as rulers and pencil boxes. When a teacher asked her fourth grade classroom if they would like to do AIP again in fifth grade, an overwhelming majority of students affirmed that they did. Other students learning the theater curriculum were particularly excited when their teacher offered herself as a prop for the drama performance. The entire classroom laughed and smiled as the teacher curled into a ball on the floor while the narrator introduced the scene and the audience discovered that she represented a rock.

Student volunteers were never in short supply during AIP lessons. While students were noted as being more apprehensive during the early stages of AIP, there were times when almost every student volunteered during a single period.

Students bounded from their chairs and waved their arms frantically in the air to provide an answer. In one classroom, a female student volunteered to give up her time in "specials" class to show one researcher her collage and discuss her revision process.

Involving professional artists in the classroom experience has been associated with enriched learning for students (Arts Education Partnership, 2004; Deasy, 2002). According to the Arts Education Partnership (2004), residencies "can intensify the learning experiences of students, add to the skills repertory of teachers in schools, and improve the pedagogy and classroom management skills of participating artists" (p. 21). Student engagement was more pronounced during artist residencies as compared to their behavior during lessons taught by their classroom teachers. Each artist's enthusiasm for his or her artistic medium was contagious, as evidenced by students' excited facial expressions, the number of hands that were raised when an artist asked a question, and the number of students who danced along with the music, moved into position for a performance, used their most animated warm-up theatre voice, or cut and pasted onto a collage with noticeable enjoyment. One teacher described the power of these partnerships during her interview:

> The artist who came in was amazing. It makes me smile just thinking about it because he was so personable, so kind. He knew his thing. He did such a great job with the kids. He reached out. He got kids to do things that you know they just don't always get the opportunity to do and it was amazing.

Teachers repeatedly commented on the excitement of their students at having a "real" artist in the classroom. Students were eager to learn from the artist and felt privileged to be working with professionals. One teacher noted students' particular excitement through drawings she continued to see once the artist was gone. She reported,

> The kids were super excited about having an artist come in. She did a wonderful job, and I still see palm trees and monkeys on their assignments and stuff all the time ... It is really nice to get the art bug into their bodies.

Collaboration. A high level of student engagement was evident the majority of the time during observations of structured group collaboration. Student collaboration occurred in the forms of intentionally constructed group activities and naturally occurring interactions between students. For example, fifth grade students participating in collaborative poetry groups were observed working together and working through disagreements. The younger students participating in theater activities initially struggled with collaborative work as each group member fought to play the main role. However, as the lessons progressed, students became better able to divide roles and work together to achieve their common purpose. Students engaged in collages sought feedback from fellow students and incorporated suggestions as they revised their artwork. One teacher reported an increase in student enthusiasm regarding their performances after working together in groups. When working as a group, one student enthusiastically said, "I'll be the director. Or

at least say director lines." With enthusiasm, a female student exclaimed, "Y'all, let's do it again," as she rounded up her group members to reenact the scene. When moving into the second scene, the student muttered a unit vocabulary word, "level," under her breath to remind the actor as the student crouched and smiled in response to the suggestion. The group of students then gave each other high-fives after practicing the scene.

Teachers also asked students to collaborate regarding written work, and this cooperative learning helped them to gain a better understanding of the material. During group work, students adjusted their answers in their student notebooks, asking each other questions, and providing feedback to their peers.

Self-expression. Educators perceived that student engagement was related to opportunities for self-expression during AIP lessons. Teachers gave several examples of times when the particular art medium evoked expression from students who were typically resistant to traditional verbal forms of communication. A teacher using the theater unit in her classroom noted:

> In terms of the [acting aspects] and all of that, that was amazing. They loved it. I loved it. I fully intend to use it with other books. The nice part is I saw so many kids who are typically introverted children really love it.

One educator spoke about a male student who "gets stuck and very frustrated and he just refuses to write." However, when he served as a narrator for his scene, the student was able to express himself in a new way that became a source of pride and accomplishment. Another teacher noted a similar outcome from a female student working in the theater unit, "I have one girl who barely speaks and she got the one speaking part. Her mom was just beaming because she is known for not talking."

Several teachers pointed out that the artistic media contributed to overall student enthusiasm. Speaking to her experience with the dance unit, one teacher noted, "The music was very helpful to go along with the words. That kind of loosened up that free-flowing spirit for the students." Teachers working with the collage curriculum noticed student enthusiasm related to the artistic process. One teacher stated, "It was neat to see them get excited about how they used the arts to promote some of those ideas, pieces from the story."

Student self-expression was most obviously evidenced by their final products. For example, fourth grade students proudly displayed collages and chatted excitedly as they hung them in a hallway for all students in the school to see. Fifth graders studying the dance unit rehearsed for their final performances, which featured a wide variety of music, movements, and subject matter, while another group of fifth graders hosted local NPO staff when they performed their original music compositions at the conclusion of the unit. During each of these instances, students were uniquely inspired by the curriculum and noticeably excited about their creations. Teachers, parents, and other adult observers repeatedly stated how impressed they were by the depth and breadth of students' self-expressions.

Student Literacy Gains

Both quantitative and qualitative measures were used to assess the academic gains of students participating in the AIP program. The SLAT provided a quantitative measure of student gains during years two and three, while observations and interviews provided a qualitative basis for gauging student learning. After improvements were made to the assessment by the NPO, the number of questions decreased from twelve in year two to nine in year three, which is reflected in the whole sample mean scores for each year. The mean score for pretests for the 2009–2010 school year was $M = 28.98$, $SD = 9.20$, and the mean score for post-tests was $M = 32.98$, $SD = 8.90$ (See Table 2). The mean difference between the pretest and post-test for this sample was -3 points. The t score for this data was $t(42) = -1.51$, indicating that the 2009–2010 results of the SLAT were statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.10$. Cohen's $d = 0.435$, indicating an effect size that was just below the medium or moderate category.

	Total Scores	
	Pre (N = 43)	Post (N = 43)
M	28.98	32.98
SD	*9.20*	*8.90*

*p < 0.001

Table 2. Mean Total Score Comparisons 2009-2010

The mean score for pretests for the 2010–2011 school year was $M = 18.91$, $SD = 9.67$, and the mean score for post assessments was $M = 21.66$, $SD = 8.66$ (see Table 3). The mean difference between the pretest and post-test for this sample was -2.75 points. The t score for this data was $t(178) = -0.74$, indicating that the results were *not* statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.10$. Cohen's $d = 0.28$, indicating that the effect size was small. Overall, students showed an increase in literacy skills following their completion of the AIP program, but results were more significant during the 2009-2010 school year compared to the 2010–2011 school year.

	Total Scores	
	Pre (N = 179)	Post (N = 190)
M	18.91	21.66
SD	*9.67*	*8.66*

*p < 0.001

Table 3. Mean Total Score Comparisons 2010-2011

In addition to assessment results, observed evidence of student gains included vocabulary acquisition, oral communication, and achievement of unit-specific goals. Students were observed learning the AIP vocabulary words during large group instruction and practicing application of the vocabulary in small groups. During interviews, teachers stated that the new vocabulary words would be used in subsequent lessons, including lessons in other subject areas. The uniformity and

depth of vocabulary development brought to those discussions and activities were noted as additional evidence of student gains.

Several teachers reported gains related to both oral and nonverbal communication, which were not tested by the SLAT. According to one teacher whose students studied dance, they "learned a great deal about creating a performance and performing." Educators also mentioned the growth that occurred as students learned how to express their needs and opinions within a group. Researchers observed small group interactions in classrooms and witnessed students dividing tasks, making decisions, working through disagreements, and forming compromises, especially towards the end of units after students had a chance to adapt to working closely with their peers.

Student Challenges

Student challenges varied according to unit and grade level. Second graders working on aspects of the theater components of AIP expressed frustration regarding written exercises. Fourth grade students who completed collages were frustrated when asked to repeatedly revise their work. Most teachers believed that students benefited from learning about rewriting and revision, but they also felt that the repetitive nature of the revision process was a challenge for students. As one teacher noted:

> To revise the collage in fourth grade was very frustrating to the concrete thinkers in my classroom – "I did what you asked, why change it?" The abstract/creative thinkers enjoyed the process, but sometimes were frustrated with the revision as well.

While concerns regarding repetition during the revision process seemed unique to the collage unit, several teachers mentioned that their students found the student notebooks to be redundant during other units. It was hard for the second and third graders studying theater to work through the question-and-answer process multiple times for multiple stories, and both fourth and fifth graders were frustrated by repetition of the same subject matter in the collage and music units. Some teachers suggested that shortening the amount of time spent on AIP written material may have decreased student boredom, while others suggested using a greater diversity of material within a single unit.

Students were also frustrated by the SLAT that occurred before and after the unit. Due to the complexity and length of the test, students often did not finish the assessment. Some of the factors that influenced student frustration included the difficulty of the material (i.e., above grade level), the lack of correspondence between the assessment and the unit concepts, and the repetitive nature of the pre- and post-test. Several teachers also reported administering the test close to the state standardized test, which may have contributed to some student aggravation.

Teacher Perspectives

Albers and Sanders (2010) noted that teacher comfort level, collaboration, and "buy-in" are important factors when introducing a multimodal literacy curriculum such as AIP. Teachers' overall appraisal of the AIP units was consistently favorable, as many stated that both educators and students benefited from the program. "I loved the program," stated one teacher. "We all learned a little about ourselves. We were able to come out of our comfort zone." Many educators shared similar comments: "You have a great curriculum and philosophy … myself and my students greatly benefited from this unit." Beyond student literacy gains, additional benefits included students learning about performance, teachers gaining new ideas regarding integrating arts across the curriculum, and everyone enjoying the artistic processes and products. One teacher enthusiastically stated that the AIP Curriculum "gave me lots of new ideas and overall, just a great experience—I am a big supporter!"

Teacher fidelity to AIP curriculum. In general, educators approached the curriculum in ways that aligned with the AIP unit guides. Classroom teachers described strict adherence to the model when they first introduced the curriculum to students. They consistently used vocabulary and concepts during instruction that were provided by AIP for each specific unit. Several teachers mentioned making adaptations and adjustments to the curriculum as they progressed through their units, such as adapting lessons to their own teaching style, adjusting the length of the lessons, or incorporating outside resources to meet the needs of their students. While teaching the collage unit, one teacher brought in a parent who is a successful collage artist to speak with her class. Educators felt more comfortable modifying the lessons as they progressed through the curriculum and became more familiar with the unit-specific content.

Teacher collaboration and support. Teachers described collaboration with other educators, which included art teachers, music teachers, a Spanish teacher, and general education teachers. Visual and performing arts teachers were widely viewed as a resource for assistance and advice when general education teachers integrated the arts with literacy. At the conclusion of the units, several teachers invited students from other grade levels to be the audience for final performances. In this way, students from other grade levels were exposed to the AIP curriculum despite not receiving direct instruction using the AIP lessons.

Administrators and parents consistently supported the AIP program in schools. Throughout the program, administrators supported teachers by viewing displays of artwork, attending final performances, and visiting classrooms during implementation of the lessons. Parents participated by talking with their children about the units, sending in art materials, returning permission slips, and attending events such as the final performances. Several teachers received positive feedback directly from parents by email and in person following performances.

Concept transfer and application. Evidence of teacher buy-in included teachers reporting reuse of AIP strategies in subsequent lesson plans and transfer of arts-integrated learning to other subjects. Concept transfer was not directly observed by researchers because all observations were intentionally conducted during AIP lessons. Transfer of AIP vocabulary, concepts, and artistic media to other lessons and contexts emerged as consistent themes when teachers explained the impact on student learning. Several teachers expressed plans to implement interdisciplinary lessons, integrating the arts with other subject matter using strategies learned through their AIP experiences. One educator mentioned rewriting science and social studies curricula during their summer mapping sessions, to include concepts from the units. Another teacher told a story about a student who integrated the arts with the science curriculum on his own, following the dance unit:

> We did a science project and one of the students came in with a big collage with different things from the environment and put it on a nice, big wooden display board. So then I knew that the kind of work we've been doing generated that thinking.

Teacher challenges. While many teachers commonly integrated arts into their lessons and felt comfortable doing so, others reported being outside of their "comfort zones" and had to adjust to new and different teaching methods. A few of the challenges reported by teachers were specific to their particular grade level. For example, the second grade teachers repeatedly mentioned that the written material and exercises for the theater unit were "too difficult" for their students, and they had to modify the curriculum (i.e., writing group responses on the overhead for students to copy instead of working individually). Other challenges were unit-specific, such as one teacher's suggestion that the dance unit include literature from more ethnically diverse poets, as well as more opportunities for students to use prosody.

Suggestions offered to improve the program included allocation of time and scheduling of lessons. Teachers felt that the timeline in the teacher guide provided by the NPO did not match the actual amount of time needed to conduct the lessons, and should be adjusted to allow additional minutes of instruction. Educators also commented on the timing of implementing the unit within the school year. Some teachers were still conducting lessons during the final days of school, and fifth graders at one school were headed to their end-of-year celebration right after their final AIP performances. Scheduling units close to the end of the school year seemed to add stress to teachers, who repeatedly mentioned to researchers that they were tired, and in some cases, overwhelmed.

Another challenge for teachers pertained to the SLAT. Some teachers felt the assessments were not at an appropriate level for the grade they were teaching and felt challenged by the amount of time required to complete the assessment. They did not like administering the assessment, and several felt that it was a waste of time. Other criticisms included the lack of answer lines, unclear questions, and the use of the same essay in both the pre- and post-test.

Discussion

The results suggest that the AIP program was generally implemented as intended, had strong support from classroom teachers, and was enjoyed by students. Extensive teacher training, coupled with assistance from professional artists through the residency program, empowered teachers to utilize the arts as a vehicle to promote enjoyable, engaging student literacy learning.

In the existing literature, cognition and motivation are the two most commonly cited benefits of integrating the arts with literacy instruction (Burger & Winner, 2000; Trainin et al., 2006). Quantitative analyses in the current study revealed statistically significant gains in literacy skills during year two, and high levels of student engagement were consistently observed during AIP lessons. These findings align with the body of research on student learning through arts-integrated programs. In addition, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) suggested that the cognitive benefits of the arts and other areas of learning are dialectical, with academic skills being enhanced by the interaction of various educational experiences. In other words, one cannot assume that arts instruction has enhanced literacy instruction without literacy instruction having enhanced arts instruction. Symbolic communication and motivation could share a similar dialectical relationship. As Heath (2004) observed, "Much of the learning within the arts is described by young learners as 'play'" (p. 340). Children have been engaged by the opportunity to create using other sign systems, while the pure "fun" of the experience has motivated children to communicate in and through the arts. Beyond sheer enjoyment, perhaps students were motivated by the opportunity to express themselves in multiple ways, leading to the "multiple ways of knowing" described by Leland & Harste (1994, p. 337).

Limitations

To maintain consistency across programs, the national NPO enforced specific guidelines for implementation, such as the teacher guide and the instruments used for evaluation. One challenge with these mandated instruments was the inflexibility to make adaptations based on local needs. In addition, the NPO made changes to the instruments each year because of the growth, development, and desire to establish best practices. While these modifications are ultimately beneficial, this limited the ability to compare data across the first three years. We also question whether the changes made to the SLAT during year three caused the instrument to be less sensitive to student gains, impacting results.

Coordinating multiple schedules across different schools was a challenge. In addition, coordination of communication between the NPO, the teachers, and the evaluators was at times difficult due to varying schedules and multiple priorities from all stakeholders involved. Likewise, obtaining consent and assent from students and their parents participating in the AIP program emerged as a challenge, primarily due to misconceptions regarding the consent process by teachers and parents. Due to the constraints mentioned above, a limited number of pre- and post-literacy assessments were administered, scored, and analyzed. Conclusions drawn

from this sample regarding literacy gains, therefore, are limited in scope and generalization. Further, significant gains reported on the pre- and post-tests in year two cannot be causally attributed to the AIP curriculum, due to the lack of a control group to account for history and maturation effects. Future research could employ a quasi-experimental design study utilizing classrooms receiving the AIP curriculum as an experimental condition, and those using the traditional literacy curriculum as comparison groups. The matched classrooms would be identified within the same school, and statistical controls would be applied to account for differences in teacher and student demographics. In addition to examining differences in literacy assessment scores, future research should examine student affect, including attitude toward reading/writing and interest/liking school.

Implications for Practice

The experience of documenting teaching and learning as schools integrated the arts into literacy instruction presents a counternarrative to the direct instruction movement in ELA of the early 2000s. The approach more closely aligns with the CCSS and the expectation for elementary generalists to integrate curriculum. Instead of restricting or narrowing the curriculum in preparation for high-stakes exams, these schools opened the curriculum and connected literacy to the lived experiences of children in the classroom. Inviting art professionals to serve as coteachers further expanded notions of the curriculum experts and pedagogical content knowledge. Teachers gained a set of skills, and students had the chance to explore their creativity. Exploring new ways of thinking and having the "freedom to fail" when the first ideas did not work out as planned provided opportunities to build persistence and internal motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The AIP curriculum, the pedagogical guidance by the teacher, and the artist facilitated process-generated short-term successes and opportunities for students to produce knowledge.

The implications for literacy education cannot be understated in this regard. The pressure to increase test scores in English/Language Arts has resulted in a skills-based, phonemic awareness-focused environment in the early years of schooling (Walker, Tabone, & Weltsek, 2011). Teachers feel pressured to increase vocabulary, hone sentence structure, and help students write the perfect five-paragraph response to a set of story questions. The evaluation results here suggest that these important skills need not be the curricular anchor, but rather the supporting skills to an engaging literacy curriculum that is built around a particular genre of the arts. The fact that test scores increased only buoys the support for teachers to take the necessary risk of changing how literacy is done in today's schools. Teachers need solid evidence to approach curriculum directors and principals about moving away from basal readers and more static skill-based instruction, impelling them toward a multimodal approach to language arts education (Albers & Sanders, 2010). Reaching outside of the general education classroom, the findings provide support not only for arts integration but also for increased connections between community arts education and literacy instruction. When the arts and literacy were integrated through the AIP lessons program,

students became literate in more than one method of communication, gaining knowledge while also imparting knowledge, as educators gained a better picture of students' worldviews.

References

Albers, P., & Harste, J. C. (2007). The arts, new literacies, and multimodality. *English Education, 40*(1), 6-20.

Albers, P., Holbrook, T., & Harste, J. C. (2010). Talking trade: Literacy researchers as practicing artists. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(3), 164-171.

Albers, P., & Sanders, J. (2010). *Literacies, the arts, and multimodality.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Arts Education Partnership. (2004). *The arts and education: New opportunities for research.* Retrieved from Arts Education Partnership website, http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/OpportunitiesResearch.pdf.

Burger, K., & Winner, E. (2000). Instruction in visual art: Can it help children learn to read? *Journal of Aesthetic Education, 34*(3-4), 277-293.

Burton, J. M., Horowitz, R., & Abeles, H. (2000). Learning in and through the arts: The question of transfer. *Studies in Art Education, 41*(3), 228-257.

Caldwell, H., & Moore, B. H. (1991). The art of writing: Drawing as preparation for narrative writing in the primary grades. *Studies in Art Education, 32*(4): 207-219.

Cowan, K., & Albers, P. (2006). Semiotic representations: Building complex literacy practices through the arts. *The Reading Teacher, 60*(2), 124-137.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Literacy and intrinsic motivation. *Daedalus, 119*(2), 115-140.

Deasy, R. (Ed.). (2002). *Critical links: Learning in the arts and student academic and social development.* Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

Eisner, E. W. (1998). Does experience in the arts boost academic achievement? *Arts Education Policy Review, 100*(1), 32.

Heath, S. B. (2004). Learning language and strategic thinking through the arts. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39*(3), 338-342.

Leland, C. H., & Harste, J. C. (1994). Multiple ways of knowing: Curriculum in a new key. *Language Arts, 71*(5), 337-345.

Moore, B. H., & Caldwell, H. (1993). Drama and drawing for narrative writing in primary grades. *The Journal of Educational Research, 87*(2), 100-110.

Oldfather, P. (1995). Commentary: What's needed to maintain and extend motivation for literacy in the middle grades. *Journal of Reading, 38*(6), 420-422.

Smithrim, K., & Upitis, R. (2005). Learning through the arts: Lessons of engagement. *Canadian Journal of Education, 28*(1-2), 109-127.

Trainin, G., Andrzejczak, N., & Poldberg, M. (2006). Visual arts and writing: A mutually beneficial relationship. *Arts & Learning Research Journal, 21*(1), 139-155.

Upitis, R., & Smithrim, K. (2003). *Learning through the arts: National assessment final report.* Toronto, Can.: The Royal Conservatory of Music.

Walker, E., Tabone, C., & Weltsek, G. (2011). When achievement data meet drama and arts integration. *Language Arts, 88*(5), 365-372.

Reflections on the SWSEEL Russian program from a sociocultural perspective: Challenges and benefits

Martina M. Barnas
Snezhana Zheltoukhova

Abstract

The SWSEEL intensive language summer training program held annually at the Bloomington campus of Indiana University is one of the oldest and most popular intensive Russian language programs in the US. In this paper we reflect on our respective combined experience as a Russian course learner and a Russian course instructor to identify benefits and potential challenges from the perspective of sociocultural learning theories as developed in the field of Learning Sciences. We show the sociocultural lens is well suited for describing learning in the SWSEEL environment, and the Russian SWSEEL course is designed and taught in agreement with perspectives of learning in sociocultural learning theories. Ultimately, sociocultural instructional strategies strengthen the SWSEEL model and validate the application of sociocultural learning design in the context of intensive language programs.

Introduction

Since its inception in 1950, the summer intensive language workshop SWSEEL held annually at the Indiana University, Bloomington has grown into one of the most well-known intensive language programs in the country. This paper presents a first step toward the examination of the program through the lens of sociocultural learning theories, as understood by the field of Learning Sciences, a multidisciplinary field in education research that empirically studies learning as it exists in real world settings, and also how learning can be better facilitated (Sawyer, 2005). Central to education is the concept of knowledge. Since knowledge is not a tangible object, it relies on philosophy to give it its meaning. For this reason, there are varied approaches to understanding learning, but the consensus in the field is that they generally fall into one of three categories (see Case, 1996; Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996) rooted in three different epistemologies (for a review see Bredo, 2006), each emphasizing a different aspect of learning. We argue that one of the epistemologies—namely the sociocultural perspective of learning (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Greeno & Middle School Mathematics Through Applications Project Group, 1998), which has its roots in the work of Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky— provides a particularly suitable framework for a description of the learning process in an intensive Russian course. It is important to acknowledge that sociocultural (Vygotsky, 1987) and/or cultural-historical activity (Leont'ev, 1974) theory has influenced second language acquisition (SLA) research directly and profoundly (see Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf and Thorne, 2007; Thorne, 2005); however, a review of SLA

research is outside of the scope of this article. Instead we reflect on our experiences from the point of view of Learning Sciences.

Furthermore, during the preparation of this article, questions have arisen that are also beyond the scope of this paper. For example, as we will document later, teachers in the program are given considerable autonomy, yet the system is remarkably consistent and cohesive. This points to the important role of the organizers, and the interplay between the structure of the program and its various actors, which is of interest on its own. In this first study, we reflect on the combined experience of a learner and a lecturer of the program at a broad level, without distinguishing between the actors and the structure.

This paper is organized as follows: first we briefly review the fundamentals of the sociocultural view of learning in Learning Sciences, which establish a theoretical prism for our analysis. Next we describe the Russian SWSEEL program, drawing on our combined experiences with the Level 5 and Level 6 Russian courses in which we, the authors, participated as a student (Barnas) and an instructor (Zheltoukhova), respectively. We then reflect on our experience, identify numerous benefits, acknowledge potential challenges for learners and instructors within the context of an intensive summer language course, and offer some practical suggestions inspired by input from sociocultural learning theories to improve learning in this environment. We conclude with a call for research to be done in multiple learning issues within the context of intensive Russian programs from the sociocultural perspective.

Overview of Fundamentals of Sociocultural Learning Theories

The philosophical foundations of sociocultural approaches are based on the dialectic epistemologies of Hegel, Marx, and their followers. As Case (1996) states, knowledge "has its primary origin in the social and material history of culture" (p. 79), which constitutes a rejection of the rationalist view that puts emphasis on an individual, rather than a group. However, Greeno (1997) argues that the sociocultural perspective is a synthesis encompassing previous perspectives, and accommodates practices centered on an individual. Sociocultural theories stem from the work of Vygotsky (Case, 1996), who was active in the Soviet Union in the 1930s but whose work did not gain influence globally until *post mortem*. Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that through interaction with more knowledgeable adults or peers, children's capabilities are extended beyond what they would be able to do without help, a concept known as the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Some elements of Vygotsky's work were met with criticism, which led to modified theories by neo-Vygotskian scholars. For example, tools are seen as having a specific, rather than general, effect on capabilities. While Vygotsky considered language the most important milestone, contemporary neo-Vygotskian theories recognize the importance of notational systems as a vital class of intellectual tools. The unique contribution of sociocultural approaches is the recognition of "cognitive apprenticeship" (Rogoff, 1990), a practice in line with the assumption that intelligence is socially distributed, rather than confined to an individual.

Cognitive Apprenticeship

The sociocultural perspective does not view a learner in isolation; rather, the learner is perceived as a part of community. Thus, one form of knowing is demonstrated through the ability of the entire group to perform cooperative activities. This collective knowing is complementary to individual knowing, i.e., the ability of an individual to participate in the group activity. Learning is perceived as strengthening the abilities of individuals to participate in a community, or as Greeno (1997) puts it, "a progress along trajectories of participation and growth of identity" (p. 9). A question is whether the peripheral participation of beginners is legitimate. An environment of apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990) is supposed to allow for such participation. However, to be in a productive environment for learning, learners need to have opportunities to observe and practice in a way that strengthens their abilities.

The sociocultural perspective is broad and encompasses a rich spectrum of interactive components, as seen in seminal articles by Brown et al. (1989), Greeno et al. (1998), and Pea (1993), who each explore different sociocultural perspectives of knowledge and learning. Brown et al. (1989) focus on how activity and situations are integral for learning, and point out that it is impossible to separate what is learned from how it is learned. By ignoring this, education defeats its purpose of providing robust, useable knowledge. Cognitive apprenticeship provides an alternative that emerges from research on cognition and learning. The key element of the proposed approach is authentic practice, which is distinct from the typical school practice. Authentic practice is defined as ordinary practices of the culture. Brown et al. (1989) point out the artificiality of many school activities. The authors argue that authentic activities are not restricted to experts, and that novices can participate via apprenticeship.

Distributed Intelligence

According to Pea (1993), knowledge is socially constructed in interactions, and intelligence can be distributed for use in diverse artifacts. Artifacts range from physical tools to notational systems (e.g., algebraic expressions). Environments which humans create are thick with such artifacts. The concept of distributed intelligence arises in contrast to the concept of intelligence as an attribute of an individual, referring to the individual's mental representations. Distributed intelligence manifests in activity, which is enabled by intelligence, but not just the intelligence of one individual. Tools and artifacts can advance activity. Pea distinguished two types of distribution of intelligence: social and material. Social distribution comes from the construction of intelligence in social interactions; material distribution refers to the invention of uses or the exploitation of affordances of artifacts.

Pea (1993) recognizes that distributed intelligence can be augmented with computing, e.g., by creating malleable virtual realities for modeling and reasoning, including visualization programs characterized by guided participation that distributes intelligence across child and adult, employing inscriptional systems such

as scientific symbols and mathematical representations, and with situated cognition that is, according to Pea, "highly inventive in exploiting features of the physical and social situations as resource" (p. 63).

Greeno et al. (1998), for their part, concentrate on socially organized interactions, and propose that the situative perspective offers a view of learning beyond limitations of the cognitive (rationalist), while acknowledging that studies of individual cognition and interactional cognition exhibit strengths and weaknesses. The authors formulate generalizations of cognitive concepts of schemata, meaning, and engagement, but recognize that one challenge for the study of socially organized interactions is the necessity of dealing with complex systems.

Learning Communities

The theory of learning translates into educational design. Generally speaking, the favored method in the sociocultural perspective is to create a community of authentic practice in the learning environment and initiate learners into it (Case, 1996). For example, learners work in small groups, and as their understanding deepens, so does their ability to communicate it. As discussed in Greeno et al. (1996), sociocultural theories view learning as an increase in the ability to participate in distributive cognitive systems. The individual's identity derives from participation in communities. Notwithstanding this, the authors acknowledge that "effective learning involves being strongly engaged in activities that capture learners' interests because of their intrinsic qualities as well as participation in communities" (p. 26). Moreover, while some individuals may become strongly engaged in activities that are dominated by group interaction, the view does not disregard those for whom the activity is primarily a solitary pursuit, and their personal immersion defines their social role. From the situative view, curricula should concentrate on activities that students should learn to participate in, as well as subject matter. One aspect of this is organizing the curriculum of the subject matter in a way that students come to appreciate and learn to participate in authentic discourses (Greeno et al., 1996).

Sociocultural perspectives offer a pragmatic approach for fostering engagement. From a sociocultural perspective, an individual is never an isolated entity. She is inseparable from the community, and this concept includes tools and artifacts, all of which carry knowledge. Knowing is the ability to participate in activities of the community. Community plays a crucial role in engagement or motivation.

Productive Engagement

Engle and Conant (2002) present four design principles that were formulated *a posteriori* to account for the success of productive disciplinary engagement in a specific classroom. These principles identify underlying regularities in what the teachers, curriculum, and learning designers did that may explain students' engagement. While these principles were inferred in a specific content domain (biology), they are sufficiently general to be useful in other content areas. The four

guiding principles that the authors inferred are problematizing content, giving students authority, holding them accountable to others and to disciplinary norms, and providing relevant resources.

Crucial for productive engagement and any productive learning is the element of assessment. The sociocultural view provides a broader, more situated and contextually significant perspective of assessment than other perspectives of learning. According to Greeno et al. (1996), since from the sociocultural view knowing is seen as an ability to participate in socially distributed practices, assessment should evaluate this ability. Some alternative assessment practices that are acceptable from this point of view are evaluation as a direct result of an inquiry or observation of the work of groups or an individual in a group. Greeno et al. (1996) also suggest that students should be participants in the assessment, beyond being assessed. An example of meaningful participation of students in the assessment process is the students' contribution to the formulation of standards. Hickey and Anderson (2007) offer a comprehensive and practical multilevel assessment framework. They cover assessment from the immediate level—i.e., teacher monitoring and refining discourse via informal observation of a specific curricular event—to the remote—i.e., norm-referenced tests to determine national achievement that should provide input for policymakers to formulate long-term policies on broad achievement targets.

In summary, the sociocultural view of how an individual learns is that it is never an endeavor carried out in isolation. To understand learning and to design effectively to achieve it, consideration must be given to the community and the environment. The environment includes tools and artifacts, such as technology, books, and notational systems, all of which carry intelligence. Participation in a community activity fosters engagement and motivation; however, this does not negate the need for a learner's intrinsic interest in the activity. The sociocultural learning theories, seen as a synthesis and a generalization, rather than an antithesis of learning theories focused solely on an individual, broaden the perspective on assessment as well. Such sociocultural instructional design acknowledges the need for various assessment instruments without the extremes of overreliance on any single one, or rejecting any. It posits that each vehicle has its merits when used appropriately.

An Intensive Summer Russian Program from the Sociocultural Perspective

We argue that the SWSEEL intensive summer language course, held annually at Indiana University, Bloomington, exhibits sociocultural principles reviewed in the first part of the article. Notably, the sociocultural perspective, rather than an associationist or constructivist view, aligns with the recently developed sociolinguistic theories of L2 acquisition (see Tarone, 2007). In the following section we describe features of the SWSEEL intensive summer language program as a synthesis of the views of both a learner and an instructor. We share our reflections as a sixth-level Russian language student in summer 2013 and a fifth-level Russian

language instructor in the summers of 2012 and 2013, to identify challenges and benefits of the SWSEEL approach to intensive language learning.

SWSEEL: Summer Language Workshop

In the summer of 2013, at least 19 intensive summer Russian language programs operated at universities and colleges in the US, offering a variety of levels of instruction (www.aatseel.org). Founded in 1950, Russian SWSEEL offers one of the oldest intensive summer Russian language programs in the United States. In recent years the number of SWSEEL students learning Russian has fluctuated between approximately 100 and 130 per summer. In summer 2013, the Russian program had 20 faculty and about 110 students. The defining characteristic of such a program is the fact that it provides the opportunity for participants to cover the material of two academic semesters of study in eight or nine weeks of daily classes. Students may complete the first four weeks of study as the equivalent of one academic semester. SWSEEL credits are transferable to other academic institutions. The program is not limited to a particular cohort of students; rather, it is designed for domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students, professionals, and exceptional high school students over age 17. Students are grouped according to their placement test results into different levels. Some proficiency levels may require more than one group, since the size of the group is kept relatively small, with the maximum capped at 18 students. Thus, for example, in 2013 the largest group had 14 students. The Russian program at SWSEEL offers nine levels of Russian, varying from novice to advanced.

Curricular design includes a placement test, a post-test and three to five academic hours in a classroom setting every workday. Classroom hours are divided between four instructors whose primary foci are grammar, conversation, listening, and phonetics, respectively. The fact that there is a separate phonetics module is significant; to our knowledge, it is one of the distinguishing features of SWSEEL in comparison with other similar programs.

Grammar instructors are each assigned to one specific group for the duration of the course, and spend three hours with their students a day. Conversation instructors work with each group four academic hours a week. Listening and phonetics instructors teach each group for two academic hours a week. Grammar, conversation, and listening instructors involved with the same group coordinate their efforts to create a cohesive program. For example, they share their syllabi, and keep topics, vocabulary, and grammar coordinated according to the shared textbook. Phonetics instructors have different overarching topics each week, such as "vowel reduction" and so forth. In other words, their focus is on a much smaller scale of elements of language. There may or may not be some coordination with the grammar instructors, since it is not needed for the efficiency of the course.

Daily homework is an important part of the curriculum at SWSEEL. As a rule, the grammar section instructors assign the majority of the homework, with the phonetics, conversation, and listening instructors contributing only 10% to 20% of the total amount of homework. Daily grammar homework typically consists of

learning vocabulary for the next day, and of grammar exercises from a textbook, but may instead involve a creative writing assignment. Students are encouraged, but not required, to write the entire exercise, rather than simply fill in blanks, to practice their writing skills. The instructors have a considerable amount of autonomy regarding classroom materials. One major textbook is usually regulated by the SWSEEL Russian program administration, while the rest of the materials are created or provided by instructors according to their teaching goals.

Extracurricular activities include "Russian table," a biweekly lunch gathering that facilitates informal conversation among program participants. Attendance at Russian table is strongly encouraged, to the extent that it appears mandatory for students enrolled in all levels of the program. Additional extracurricular activities are comprised of lectures in the target language, film screenings, and a number of interest-based clubs (theater, choir, poetry club, Russian radio etc). This program is enhanced by one-time events such as a talent show (organized in collaboration with other language programs) or food tastings. While participation in extracurricular activities is not mandatory, for students of higher proficiency levels, some activities, most notably the Russian film screenings and lectures, may be incorporated into homework assignments for the mandatory classroom components (conversation and listening) in order to encourage attendance.

Sociocultural Principles Observed in the SWSEEL 2013 Russian Summer Intensive Program

We will now apply the sociocultural perspective of learning to the SWSEEL 2013 Russian program, based on our observations as student and teacher. The authors regularly met during the eight weeks of the program and exchanged their reflections in order to situate them within a sociocultural framework.

Knowledge as the ability to participate in a group activity

This view of knowledge is exactly the implicit view of knowledge that underlies the design of intensive courses. The aim of an intensive course is to enable a learner to communicate in the target language and effectively participate in group activities, with the ultimate goal of being able to engage with a community of L1, or native, speakers.

The SWSEEL Russian curriculum includes a conversation component in addition to communicatively based grammar classes. Such curricular design aims to provide adequate training for future use of the language by students in their personal and professional lives. As a result, intensive language courses are popular among students who intend to study abroad, as well as among Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) students.

The curricular design implies several classroom hours with the same group of colearners daily, in contrast with a typical academic year language classroom or tutoring. As a result, group activities become the main tool for language learning at both the microlevel of one academic hour and the macrolevel of overarching projects that span several weeks. Implementation of macrolevel project-based

learning is enhanced by collaboration between grammar, conversation, listening, and phonetics instructors who work with the same group of students. Specifically, instructors of Level 5 exchanged emails sharing their weekly plans, requests, and suggestions for each other. For example, two times out of eight, oral parts of weekly grammar tests were conducted by the conversation instructor during his office hours.

Such projects were enhanced by extracurricular programming. For instance, fifth-level students in 2012 and 2013 wrote and performed original plays as part of their study of law/criminal vocabulary. First they mastered the vocabulary during grammar- and vocabulary-oriented classroom hours. Then, during conversation classes they were given the task of collaboratively creating an original play with a mystery plot. Conversation and grammar instructors provided classroom time for rehearsals and guided the groups through the entire process of creating a theatrical performance. All groups rehearsed their plays in front of the audience at least once during class time, and some performed their plays voluntarily at an all-program talent show. The collaboration of instructors was crucial for the implementation of this project to guarantee efficient organizing, time framing, adequate support, and so forth. As a result, effective learning is enhanced by participation in group activities.

Learning as an increasing ability to participate in a particular community of practice

The target community of practice in language studies is a community of native speakers. Intensive courses clearly provide a trajectory that gets closer and closer to the language skill of L1 speakers and an understanding of their culture. While at first the learners need to master basics of the target language, as their proficiency increases, the cultural component needs to be implemented. This is often achieved in a classroom environment through a literature component, or through informative articles describing certain aspects of life (see, for example, a textbook used for the Russian SWSEEL Level 6 by Rifkin, 1996), which are used as a context for extending vocabulary and grammar.

The informal part of the SWSEEL intensive course, particularly the interest-based clubs, expands on classroom learning. For example, students of all levels of Russian, including beginners, had the opportunity to participate in a Russian radio club. The goal was to collaboratively prepare and conduct weekly radio shows as DJs and music programmers with the minor mediation of an instructor. Rising to the challenge, students of the second and third levels expressed their willingness to participate in this club, sharing the responsibilities equally with higher-level students. As a result, despite a noticeable knowledge gap, these mixed-skill-level groups successfully prepared and conducted radio shows. This informal learning environment gave rise to a cognitive apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990).

The first task for the DJs was to create an advertising poster, and this task was manageable even for lower-level students of Russian. The second task was to prepare a playlist of songs weekly, and this task was manageable as well, due to the

fact that Russian music is readily accessible on the Internet. For example, a search for "Russian rap" on YouTube yields several links to songs in Russian. As a result, DJs create a community by collaborating on producing a show and communicating with each other and with listeners of the show in Russian. This club successfully satisfied the often daunting demand for any apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 1990) that the participation of beginners, which is of necessity peripheral, be meaningful (Greeno et al., 1996). The context of an authentic radio studio facilitated the development of specific aspects of language and communication skills.

Another salient example is the Russian drama circle in SWSEEL 2013, which was led by three instructors. As in the previous example, students of varied skill levels were willing to participate in this club (Levels 2-6). The successful completion of the project (i.e., performance of the play during the Talent Showcase at the end of the program) could be analyzed using the important Vygotskian construct of ZPD. In terms of Vygotskian concepts, all student activities during drama circle meetings were other-regulated by the instructors, but were developed in self-regulated activities, and expanded the ZPD for the future L2 language development of learners.

Despite the benefits of apprenticeship seen in interest-based clubs, we should be aware of possible challenges for students. Time management is one such challenge, as many students experience difficulties in finding a good balance between informal activities and required work. Thus, it is important that interest clubs not be a part of formal program requirements, which allows students to define their own level of involvement in extracurricular programming without jeopardizing their overall language learning progress.

Importance of authentic practice

An important principle distinguishing sociocultural perspectives from all other perspectives of learning is the emphasis on authentic practice. According to the sociocultural perspective, authentic practice is defined as an ordinary practice of the culture, which is often different from a typical school activity. While the importance or even feasibility of using authentic practices for learning in schools in fields like mathematics or history can be debated, in language learning, especially at the more advanced levels, the importance of adopting authentic practices is undeniable. For example, many common American cultural practices such as smiling or complimenting strangers, or the way we phrase requests, would be perceived in Russia as intrusive, rude, or could be misinterpreted entirely. A target-language speaker might use correct words but not in a culturally correct context, and this potential issue can only be averted by using authentic practices when learning the target language. Such practices are taught effectively by L1 Russian-speaking instructors who teach higher levels of the program.

An example of how authentic cultural practices were brought into the subject matter was a unit on Russian telephone etiquette, which was part of the curriculum of Level 6 in 2013. This was achieved through a variety of activities coordinated by grammar, listening, and conversation instructors. The activities included role-

playing phone conversations, inspired by a recent amusing news event, watching (and listening to) a Russian comedian's performance in the form of a phone conversation during grammar class, recognizing phone numbers as they are pronounced by L1 speakers during listening class, and a continued discussion of Russian phone etiquette during the conversation class.

Often authentic practices and cultural insight are brought into the learning environment through the use of authentic literary texts. The downside, or at least a challenge, is that not all learners connect well with what they perceive as literary study. The sociocultural perspective offers an insight and a recommendation. Students are more motivated if the context is something that they already have an interest in. Therefore, if students are allowed autonomy in choosing projects, they can be exposed to the cultural aspects in a way that they may find engaging.

Distributed intelligence

Recently, using technology as an authentic learning tool in a language classroom became not only desirable, but inevitable due to the increased capability and accessibility of Internet resources and information technologies. According to Pea (1993), computing promotes both social and material intelligence distribution. Thus, contemporary intensive language programs in general, and SWSEEL in particular, extensively use various information technology resources in language classrooms. For example, grammar instructors incorporated various Internet resources in their classrooms, including the social network for education, www.lore.com, as a virtual space for discussion forums. To increase their willingness to engage, students could choose their imaginary identities while answering forum questions. The imaginary identities allowed them to practice language skills while maintaining personal boundaries. During breaks between classes, students enjoyed streaming current news from Russia, thanks to on-line TV (www.1tv.ru), Powerpoint animated presentations, subtitled videos, a document-reading camera, and so forth. Indiana University's Oncourse virtual workspace played an integral part in every class session, providing numerous benefits for learning.

This practice of bringing authentic cultural experiences into the classroom with the aid of information technology appears to be a common practice among the grammar instructors of SWSEEL. The current state of technology enables that to a considerable degree. A notable example is a teleconference with a surviving family member of a murdered journalist, organized via Skype by a lecturer in a weekly extracurricular seminar.

Nowhere, however, is the distributed nature of intelligence as evident as in the phonetics module of the course. Since placement tests do not have a phonetics component, phonetics instructors had to face the challenging task of working with students of very different backgrounds in phonetics in the same group. The phonetics module for Level 6 consisted of one weekly theoretical lecture and one weekly practice hour in lab. (Perhaps owing to the outgoing nature of the Level 6 group, even the weekly lectures became highly interactive, with students requesting

clarifications of previously identified challenges and practicing aloud, and the instructor eagerly working with them. This is further testimony to the flexibility of the SWSEEL program.) During the lab, students practiced phonemes, and concluded with a recording that they submitted via IU Oncourse to the instructor. This enabled the instructor to manage the learning of diverse groups. This echoes the sentiment of Learning Sciences in general that instructional technology is a crucial component of learning, and illustrates Pea's (1993) point of intelligence being augmented by technology. Additionally, phonetics relies on inscriptional systems (e.g., International Phonetic Alphabet, IPA) to capture pronunciation, in accordance with Pea's (1993) notion that distributed intelligence is augmented by inscriptional systems.

Small groups: advantages and disadvantages

Small-group activities are relevant not only for classes with large numbers of students but also for relatively small classes of intensive summer language programs. Such activities save classroom time in comparison with all-class activities, during which everyone is forced to listen to a language performance (e.g., either reading or speaking) of only one student at a time. When splitting the class into numerous small groups, it is possible to productively engage the entire class at the same time. Further, work in small groups fosters students' engagement. Additionally, from the perspective of the instructor, it is easier to control the activity in smaller groups of students than it is in larger groups. In larger groups, not all students have to be participating, whereas in a small group lack of engagement quickly becomes noticeable.

Typical small group activities in the SWSEEL Russian Level 5 included dialogues based on a range of topics, structured interviews with a preset list of questions, a "speed-dating" role-playing game, fill-in-the-blanks on handouts in pairs, vocabulary-based guessing games in small groups of three to four, etc. Learning in small groups is usually perceived as advantageous. However, taking a sociocultural perspective, we should be aware of the increased importance of the classroom environment in small groups. For example, one of the challenges of learning Russian is learning the correct stress. Stress is normally not marked in the written text, at least not in authentic texts. Compounding the difficulty, there are no definitive rules regarding the placement of stress. L1 speakers simply have a feel for it. Unfortunately, learners do not. For this reason, a disadvantage of working in small groups is that the learners are likely to pick up incorrect stress from each other. The instructor cannot monitor every word being said while the entire class, divided into small groups, works in parallel. Moreover, taking into account the unusually large number of classroom hours and increased pressure and stress in intensive programs, we must be aware of possible psychological problems that might occur in small classrooms due to student incompatibility or other individual learning factors.

Designing for motivation

The SWSEEL program has an advantage over a typical college language course environment due to the unique nature of its participants. The students who enroll in SWSEEL typically enter the program highly self-motivated to make the most of the course. Nevertheless, even with this favorable initial condition, designing for motivation is important to examine.

As the description of SWSEEL implies, this intensive summer program can be grueling and exhausting for both learners and teachers, and in our experience, the second half of the summer, in particular, can be marked by fatigue. Design principles that foster engagement are, therefore, critical. Engagement can be enhanced by giving students authority over formulating classroom tasks and homework. When students are allowed to actively choose the problem they work on, they are more likely to be interested in it. However, it is important that students have adequate access to resources for learning, as well as being allowed sufficient time to complete tasks (Engle & Conant, 2001).

The Russian instructors at SWSEEL strive to provide opportunities for student autonomy within the restrictions of the fast-paced, intensive learning environment. In the experience of the article authors, Russian Level 5B students had a certain amount of autonomy throughout the course by being able to choose the major focus of their homework, presentations, and projects that would fit their personal interests. Some homework tasks allowed choosing between different types of activity (either reading or writing). For weekly 5-7 minute presentations, students chose topics related to the major lexical theme of the week and used textbook vocabulary for the week. The grammar instructor tried to avoid giving full autonomy to students by localizing and charging the driving project question or topic (see the discussion of project-based learning in Larmer, Ross, & Mergendoller, 2009), in order to make a project be more engaging for students while facilitating the process of topic choosing. Likewise, SWSEEL Russian instructors have a considerable amount of autonomy in choosing the teaching materials in order to increase the dynamics of the learning process in class.

However, identical practical tasks might be accepted by different groups of students with varied amounts of enthusiasm and engagement. The same learning activities could produce very different responses and results from different groups. For example, grammar instructors of SWSEEL Level 5A and Level 5B shared materials they had created, and then shared observations on how such materials were received by their students. As a result, it became clear that groups' reactions varied depending on the preferences of students *as a group*. For instance, while one group preferred conversations, another group had a strong preference for fill-in-the-blanks tasks. This reflection on the role of group dynamics in determining student preferences was shared by a listening instructor. Her observation is valuable due to the specific teaching context for this instructor, as she worked with the same materials in two different groups of the same level, thus having an opportunity to compare learners' preferences as groups. It is interesting that materials that one group liked were off-putting or too difficult for another group,

and exercises that one group would find boring would be very engaging for the other group.

We would like to return to the question of adequate resources impacting motivation. Particularly the time element requires a delicate balance in a SWSEEL course. Undeniably, part of the students' weariness can be attributed to their devotion to reviewing what has been covered in the class each day and their diligence in doing their homework. On the other hand, without the reinforcement of students' independent extracurricular work, the intensive course would not be as efficient. Providing adequate but not exhausting homework assignments, therefore, poses yet another challenge for the SWSEEL instructors.

Assessment Consistent with Sociocultural Learning Capture

The SWSEEL program employs a whole spectrum of student assessment. Much of the assessment is used for formative purposes, not surprisingly, given the intense, dynamic nature of the program. A formative assessment takes place when a teacher seeks to respond to student work, making judgments about what has been grasped and what has not, with an intention of improving that learning. As summative assessments in her class, one of the article authors, a grammar instructor, used two major exams (a midterm and a final), weekly two-hour tests with written and oral parts, and weekly vocabulary and grammar quizzes. As a student in the Level 6 grammar module, the other article author encountered a slightly different summative assessment, in that the instructor did not employ vocabulary or grammar quizzes, but administered only written weekly tests, in addition to the midterm and final. While the instructor also assigned grades for homework, she emphasized that homework was primarily for learning.

In conclusion, while there are slight differences in the assessment as practiced by individual grammar instructors, overall a full spectrum of assessment instruments is utilized in the SWSEEL Russian language program.

Concluding Remarks

We have shown that the SWSEEL intensive Russian course is consistent with the design principles originating from sociocultural learning theories. In turn, there are insights in sociocultural learning theories that might offer practical suggestions for SWSEEL designers and instructors. Here we summarize the main points of how sociocultural theory frames a contemporary intensive Russian course such as SWSEEL, and provide recommendations for further research.

We argue that the strength of SWSEEL lies in its flexibility. It offers a plethora of learning environments that accommodate learners of numerous interests and learning preferences, allow for authentic practices, learning through inquiry, and cognitive apprenticeship. With a program this intensive, a challenge for instructors is to weigh the time needed to adequately satisfy classroom requirements (i.e., homework and review of class work) against the benefits of students participating in informal learning environments. In some instances, students felt they would not have enough time to take part in interest-driven clubs. This might be more difficult

for the advanced intermediates than for advanced or novice learners. Novice learners are not yet at a level where they can take advantage of activities such as lectures in the target language, and advanced students can participate in these more or less effortlessly. In contrast, advanced intermediates have just reached the level where they can attend the lectures, but not without exerting effort.

This paper is a first step, analogous to a feasibility study. We only briefly touched on the role of technology in SWSEEL. Learning Sciences is a multidisciplinary field, and expanding our understanding of learning as it happens in diverse environments, *in vivo* so to speak, is only one of its missions. The other, equally important, mission is advancing learning through design. One of Learning Science's main components, alongside cognitive psychology, sociology and education, is computer science and instructional technology. With the strong emphasis on utilizing technology for the advancement of learning, Learning Sciences may be of use to the intensive language programs where technology, as we established, opens new, unprecedented possibilities. Having established the suitability of this framework, the next step is more research concentrating on the design component.

References

Bredo, E. (2006). Philosophies of educational research. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 3-31). Hillsdale, NJ: American Educational Research Association/ Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brown, J. S., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1989). Situated cognition and the culture of learning. *Educational Researcher*, *18*(1), 32-42.

Case, R. (1996). Changing views of knowledge and their impact on educational research and practice. In D. R. Olson, & N. Torrance (Eds.), *The handbook of education and human development* (pp. 76-99). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.

Engle, R. A., & Conant, F. R. (2002). Guiding principles for fostering productive disciplinary engagement: Explaining an emergent argument in a community of learners classroom. *Cognition and Instruction*, *20*(4), 399-483.

Greeno, J. G. (1997). On claims that answer the wrong questions. *Educational Researcher*, *26*(1), 5-17.

Greeno, J. G., Collins, A. M., & Resnick, L. (1996). Cognition and learning. In D. C. Berliner & R. C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of educational psychology*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.

Greeno, J. G., & Middle School Mathematics Through Applications Project Group (1998). The situativity of knowing, learning, and research. *American Psychologist*, *53*(1), 5.

Hickey, D. T., & Anderson, K. T. (2007). Situative approaches to assessment for resolving problems in educational testing and transforming communities of educational practice. In P. Moss (Ed.), *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Evidence and Decision Making, 106*(1), 269-293.

Lantolf, J. P. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2007). Sociocultural theory and second language learning. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 201-224). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Larmer, J., Ross, D., & Mergendoller, J. R. (2009). *PBL Starter Kit*. Novato, CA: Buck Institute for Education.

Leont'ev, A. N. (1974). The problem of activity in psychology. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, *13*(2), 4-33.

Pea, R. D. (1993). Practices of distributed intelligence and designs for education. In G. Solomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations* (pp. 47-87). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rifkin, B. (1996). *Grammatika v kontekste: Russian grammar in literary contexts*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages.

Rogoff, B. (1990). Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social contex. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sawyer, R. K. (2005). *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Tarone, E. (2007). Sociolinguistic approaches to second language acquisition research, 1997–2007. *The Modern Language Journal*, *91*(s1), 837-848.

Thorne, S. L. (2005). Epistemology, politics, and ethics in sociocultural theory. *The Modern Language Journal, 89*, 393-409.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Ed. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *The collected works of L. S. Vygotsky, volume 1: Problems of general psychology*. Ed. R. Reiber & A. Carton. New York, NY: Plenum Press.