Writing toward Published Selves:
Teacher-Writers and a Practice of Revision

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, action research study examines how teacher-writers’ identities are constructed through the practice of revision in an extra-curriculum writing group. The writing group was designed to support the teacher-writers as they revised classroom research projects for submission for a scholarly journal. Using discourse analysis, the researcher explores how the teacher-writers' identities are constructed in the contested spaces of revision.

This exploration focuses on contested issues that invariably emerge in a dynamic binary of reader/writer, issues of authority, ownership, and unstable reader and writer identities. By negotiating these contested spaces—these contact zones—the teacher-writers construct opportunities to flex their rhetorical agency. Through rhetorical agency, the teacher-writers shift their discoursal identities by discarding and acquiring a variety of discourses. As a result, the practice of revision constructs the teacher-writers identities as hybrid, as consisting of self and other.
DEDICATION

To my grandmother Cora who by listening allowed me to hear my own voice

And to Matt who showed me how to craft it
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A few years after we moved to Arizona, Matt would tell people that we moved to the desert to acquire things. We rescued our dog Chomsky from the Animal Welfare League a week after we moved here. We had our first son Keegan about a year and half later and our second son Cooper five weeks after I advanced to candidacy. And now with the dissertation finished, in Matt’s words, the acquisition is complete.

But the truth is we haven’t acquired a life. We’ve built one. We imagined a story for our life in the desert, and then we crafted the narrative by cultivating deep friendships, re-imagining ourselves for parenthood, constructing a family for our boys, and generating a life that has allowed me to be a mother and a teacher, a wife and a writer, a woman and a scholar. Without Matt, this story is impossible. Without Keegan and Cooper, it doesn’t make sense.

In crafting my intellectual life, I have been fortunate to be supported by teachers and scholars who have encouraged me to take risks, try on ideas, and grapple for meaning. I am indebted to Karen Smith, Duane Roen, Gustavo Fischman, and Jessica Early for their supportive but critical guidance.

I am grateful for Karen Smith’s mentorship throughout this entire process. I admire her quiet activism and her love of books and her commitment to teachers and students. Her legacy as a teacher and a scholar—as a teacher researcher—lives in my words. And I will never forget her unwavering belief in me. There is nothing more powerful than someone who believes in the possibilities of your future self. But the most blessed thing about Karen’s mentorship is that although it began in the intellectual spaces
of the university it did not end there. She extended her kindness and generosity to me as a friend, and for that, I will be forever thankful.

Duane Roen committed to co-chair this dissertation through its final stages. When I asked him if he would be willing to join the committee, he did not hesitate. He was the catalyst I needed for the last part of this journey. And it is Duane’s life as a writer that I used for inspiration. I am also very lucky to work with him every day as he tirelessly advocates for students.

Gustavo has been integral to my process of developing a critical but constructive eye. His course on Paulo Freire influenced my thinking more than any course I have ever taken. And it was in this class, when I started to write and think about Freire as a writer, that the idea for my dissertation emerged. Gustavo taught me that we must construct a place of learning with others, where hope can compete with inhumane ideas.

Jessica was a critical listener during the drafting and revising of my dissertation. She was sympathetic to my frustrations but was constructive in her feedback. I always left her office feeling as if she had heard me, but her mentorship went well beyond mere listening. She challenged my opinions about the process, forcing me to take responsibility and move forward as a writer.

I am also thankful for the teacher-writers who participated in this study. I would not be the teacher or the researcher I am without the experiences I shared with them. They are gentle and brilliant women who let me capture all their words as we fumbled together through the most difficult process of writing. They shared more than their talk and their texts with me: they shared their lives. And this gift pushed me to sit with them
all these years, long after the writing group ended, rewinding and fast-forwarding their words. I wrote for them as much as I wrote for myself.

Of course, I wouldn’t have been prepared to learn and grow from any of these experiences if I wouldn’t have been raised by loving, resourceful, and strong-willed Texas women: my mom Debby, my sister Christy, my aunt Brenda, and my grandmother Cora. From them, I learned criticism is more beneficial than empty praise, that pursuing dreams make a life, and that my courage comes from a well that runs deep through our matriarchal line. It is this courage that allowed me to finish what I started all those years ago.

Besides having such amazing women in my family, I am also blessed to have been raised by a grandfather whose unwavering belief in me sustained me through many long nights of writing. My peepaw also showed me how pride must always be met with humility. So as I finish this journey, I am humbled by others who like my Texas family selflessly shared their grace with me across long distances.

I am humbled too by the love and support of my sister-in-law and best friend Melissa. She never tired of listening to my tales. Her strength buoyed me on more days than I can count, and my heart was made lighter because she let me burden her almost daily. My in-laws Lynn and Carolyn encouraged me throughout this entire process and filled up my boys’ lives, so my absence wouldn’t be felt. Carolyn took care of us in more ways than I will ever know, and I am honored to call her Mom.

I am also blessed for friendships that made all of this more worthwhile, women whose lives I aspire to. These women—Jade Ratliff, Jayne Lammers, Faryl Kander, Tiffany Bourelle, Susanna Steeg, Charlotte Frambaugh Kritzer, Elizabeth Stolle, Melissa
Rivers, Amy Markos, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Maryellen Ohrnberger—are changing the world. They are blazing to address injustices with their ideas and love, words and hope.

And finally there was the one who endured all of this with me: every late night, every birth, every death, and every word I fought to put on the page. He would send me emails late at night after he had made dinner for our boys, bathed them, read to them, and tucked them safely into bed: “You’re almost done;” “I know it's tough right now, but the boys and I are rooting for you, and you're gonna do this; ” “Put your head down, and go. We'll still be here when you're done.” He is as much a part of the story within these pages as he is a part of our story here in the desert.

Tim O’Brien writes, “Stories are for joining the past to the future. Stories are for those late hours in the night when you can't remember how you got from where you were to where you are. Stories are for eternity, when memory is erased, when there is nothing to remember except the story.”

Onto the next story.
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PREFACE

Before I collected the data for this study, even before I had the idea for it, I promised teachers who enrolled in my Teacher as Researcher master’s degree course that researching and writing would make a difference in their professional lives. I supported my claim with many articles and books. I gave them access to the National Writing Project website, Teacher Research networks, calls for conference proposals, and journal calls. And then I gave them a grade for the semester and sent them on their way.

Of course, I did and still do believe that writing and researching can impact a teacher’s professional (and personal) life. But what I understand more deeply now is that teachers must be guided and mentored as they—like their text—are read, revised, resubmitted, accepted and rejected. In short, they need opportunities to learn how to incorporate these practices into their professional lives instead of merely being expected to.

Unfortunately, I had expected them to carry the torch for writing and researching even after the Teacher as Researcher course was over; however to pretend that writing and researching, without the classroom support, the deadlines, the extrinsic motivation of a degree, could be done just because I said it could be done was insincere. They needed to learn that writing happens “bird by bird” (Lamott, 1994), which means that they need to learn to proceed slowly and methodically if they want to write their idea into being. To tell the students that they have the right to, they should, or they must is to begin at the end. What I should have shared is how unpredictable writing is, and that at times, it will feel anything but liberating. And even when the writer has declared it finished, the audience might disagree. Instead of sharing the messiness of the process—writing,
sharing, listening, revising—I shared an empowerment narrative (Ellsworth, 1989; Sternberg, 2006) with the students about the impact of the final product, a narrative constructed in the future without implications in the present, a narrative rooted deeply in my desire to liberate these teachers from the position of silence I believe they had inherited. In particular, for teachers’ performances to be judged by principals, parents, politicians—en mass, the public—against more mandates and standardized tests meant teachers had been disempowered, de-professionalized, and devalued. The access I hoped my curriculum would provide was predicated on the idea that pedagogy was not a set of skills or generalized strategies easily mastered by anyone; pedagogy was the production of knowledge about teaching (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000), what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) describe as “posing—not just asking—questions, taking practice as a site for inquiry, interrogating one’s own and others’ practices and assumptions, and learning from and about practice by collecting and analyzing the data of daily work” (p. 108).

This purpose drove much of my curriculum choice and much of my delivery style, but I wouldn’t have questioned its ability to travel beyond my classroom—to make a difference in teachers’ lives—as soon as I did had it not been for Jessica. This is where I want to start; this is where, as researcher and writer of this study, my story begins.

I finished my coffee, looked over at the row of orange trees that ran perpendicular to the library and secretly wished the last student wouldn’t show. I had spent four hours working with these master’s degree students in one-on-one conferences, kneading their research, listening to their excitement and angst, reading their drafts, and suggesting revisions. I was tired. It was late. As I looked down to see whose name was scribbled in the last time slot for the evening, I was relieved to see it was Jessica’s.
She was a secondary master’s degree student in education who was studying the socialization of the students she taught, all of whom had been labeled as gifted and placed in a program that she described as a school within a school. Like her own research participants, Jessica had also participated in a Gifted and Talented program when she was in middle and high school. As an undergraduate, she had graduated from the university’s Honors College. In my methodology course, she exhibited many of the skills and voiced many of the particular tastes—books, travel experiences, homework habits, writing craft—that have been historically recognized by schools as indicators of a student’s potential for success (Levinson, Foley & Holland, 1996). Through her ways of being in the classroom and through her localized discourses and practices, Jessica performed (Butler, 1993) what I would call a good student, a perception that was as much informed by my white, middle-class subjectivity as it was by my strong identification with the academy, education, learning, and teaching.

When she finally arrived for her conference with me, she began rummaging through her backpack for what I thought would be her rough draft. Although all the students were pushing to revise and edit their final pieces, I had prepared them for the course’s culminating project by asking them to complete a myriad of written assignments—memos, vignettes, and interview analyses (Hubbard & Power, 2003)—that were meant to be used to support the writing of their research findings. Jessica had dutifully turned in each of the pieces on time and polished, staying after class to discuss my comments. So the evening she came to sit across from me for her writing conference, I asked, without reservation, what she wanted to discuss. Handing me the disheveled
papers she pulled from her bag, she asked if I would read what she had written. She fidgeted. When I finished reading, I prodded. I questioned. I poked.

In the absence of a response from Jessica, I began my monologue. I used my best Sermon-on-the-Mount voice to reassure her that the final write-up of her study was a chance to share her research journey, what Stock (1995) calls a “uniquely appropriate method for improving practice and constructing knowledge in [the teaching] profession” (p. 100). I believed that Jessica had forgotten the message from twelve weeks of writing, reading, and discussion, forgotten how to participate in my empowerment narrative. I re-voiced a common thread from class discussions: The final written piece was a moment to highlight her own expertise, an expertise grounded in her search to understand and improve her practice through an intentional and systematic study. I argued that this was her moment to influence others by sharing her analysis with an audience beyond her classroom (Hubbard & Power, 2003). Stylistically, I encouraged her to craft her study in ways that would allow her to challenge the cultural stories about teachers embedded in more traditional forms of research, ones that relegate teachers to objects of study instead of producers of educational knowledge. In doing so, she would be free to challenge the traditional academic style required of most research writing, a style that had been thoroughly critiqued for its limitation in telling the stories of those on the margins of academia, a style researchers and scholars (Barone, 2001; Britzman, 1993; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Fecho, 2003; Fleischer, 1995; Stock, 1995) had fought to legitimize. By taking this course, she had been placed in a position to challenge the status quo, the dominant ideology, and the hegemonic practices of knowledge production that had been privileged in institutional settings.
“I can’t do it,” she said. “I don’t know how.”

I never asked her to explain her seemingly confused, anxious and frustrated self. I had prepared remarks, statements I had used over and over in these conferences. I made assumptions about what was holding her back. My feedback followed much of my curriculum, which was meant to authorize teachers. I was giving her access to something I believed that all teachers wanted: a platform to participate in change. In this case, the platform I offered was a research paradigm that privileged the local knowledge of classroom teachers and their students, a view that conflated learning with transformation and teaching with changing the world.

“I don’t want to do this,” she said, resisting my call. “I just want to be finished.”

Unfortunately, I didn’t understand at the time how vital it would have been to inquire about what this was or even what she meant when she claimed she didn’t know how. It could have been that she didn’t know how to participate in the script—this empowerment narrative—to which I was wedded. It could have been that she didn’t know how to make her story seem relevant using any style. It could have been that she didn’t understand the structure of the assignment. Simply put, it could have been my directions or her time management skills or apathy. I will never know her reason, though, because I never asked.

Even if I would have, I am confident that I still would not have had an answer. I wasn’t ready to listen to her because I privileged my perception of Jessica as a student over what she was actually showing me, which ultimately discounted her historical body and mind, ignored her past educational experiences—Talented andGifted, Honors
College, graduate school—and constructed an image of a teacher with which she might not have felt comfortable. Even if she wasn’t resistant to the idea that research and writing could empower teachers, she might have believed the assignment itself—writing and researching for a class or an instructor or a final grade—was too contrived to be empowering. Was turning in an assignment to an instructor a legitimate practice for inciting change? On the one hand, I wanted the teachers in my course to stop fearing rejection from a scholarly community who had constructed teachers as subjects in their own research instead of subjects in the process of constructing knowledge. On the other, I wanted their subjectivities to be molded by my more benevolent methods. Ultimately, my desire for Jessica, for all my students, was to give her permission to write her way into the research, instead of fretting about how to write herself out of it.

As a self-identified advocate for teachers, I realized my lack of an intimate understanding of what it might have meant for the teachers in my course to write and share. I began asking myself how I could believe that in one semester of engaging in a research methodology course with literacy practices that celebrated the local construction of knowledge, teachers would feel fully prepared to do the following: pursue the intellectual thought fostered in the classroom beyond the required course and its assignments, rectify all the contradictions and tensions this position constructss, and assert themselves publicly through publication.

Although I didn’t hear Jessica in the moment of our conference, the residual impact of my reflections on her voice made this study possible. And although my encounter with her challenged me to rethink my pedagogical narrative of empowerment, I will not relinquish hope that researching and writing hold potentialities for democratic
participation beyond our local spaces. Pamuk (2007), a Turkish novelist, wrote, “If a writer is to tell his own story—to tell it slowly, and as if it were a story about other people—if he is to feel the power of the story rise up inside of him, if he is to sit down at a table and give himself over to this art, this craft, he must first be given some hope.”

Fostering that hope in teachers undergirded my pedagogy, but Jessica taught me how delicate of an idea it was. Teachers needed nurturing outside of the institution to be motivated to construct their teaching around research and writing “grounded in the problems and contexts of practice in the first place and in the ways practitioners collaboratively theorize, study, and act on those problems in the best interest of the learning and life changes of students and their communities” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 123). They needed an opportunity to learn the habit of researching and writing. Not for a grade. Not for a diploma.

The institution had introduced me to the idea that teachers could use researching and writing to challenge the cultural assumption that those who can’t, teach; it had given me the space to discuss these ideas with teachers; it had given me access to stories and practices that I could share with teachers so that embedding these ideas in their everyday practice was even a possibility. Nevertheless, it was up to me and the teachers to figure out what all this meant outside the institution—to answer the tough questions about the sustainability of ideas in one’s everyday practice.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This study examined four teacher-writers crafting their stories with others. More accurately, this study examined these teacher-writers revising with others. And because revision means, literally, to see again, this study examined how a myriad of relationships influenced not only the teacher-writers’ second look at their manuscripts, but also the inevitable consequences of revision on the writer as text. In the following chapters, I will share my interpretations of the discoursal negotiations (Ivanič, 1998) of these four teacher-writers. Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to identities as discoursal construction—intentionally choosing the adjective “discoursal” over the more commonly used adjective “discursive.” This decision reveals the intellectual and theoretical tree (Bakhtin, 1981; Ivanič, 1994, 1998, 2005) to which my study is indebted (and which I will unpack in detail in the next chapter).

The teacher-writers joined the writing group with the hope of publishing and sharing their findings with the larger scholarly community in literacy studies, which was really a commitment to revise their practitioner research stories and, consequently, to revise themselves. To support this hope, I formed a writing group for teachers who had been enrolled previously in my teacher as research master’s degree course. The idea for the group was based on the belief that writing was a critical tool for exerting professional agency, a space socially constructed that had the potential to allow for “the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power” (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007, p. 18). Consequently, I viewed the teachers’ participation in the writing group as a
commitment for them to rethink what it meant to act as a teaching professional. In addition, the writing group was also a way for me to re-craft my pedagogical narrative—an opportunity for me to commit to a new idea, at least for me, of empowerment arising from participation in the process. On the other hand, when I sent the email asking former students to participate in the writing group, I was transparent about an end goal. I wanted the teacher-writers to submit their research studies for publication, so although I wanted to study the process, I believed deeply that writers needed an authentic purpose for writing and an authentic audience for whom to write. Revising would be more meaningful if the teacher-writers were using their time to write for an audience beyond the writing group.

Ironically, when asked during our first writing group meeting why they were interested in participating in a writing group, none of the teacher-writers said, “To get published.” Even though I explicitly stated publishing as the intended goal of participation in the writing group, the teacher-writers’ rationales were much less tangible: to live a writerly life, to address the post-graduate school “now-what” syndrome, to reconnect with an intellectual community, or to better mentor students and fellow teachers. Reading across these abstract, altruistic, and unassuming explanations about why these teacher-writers had sacrificed a Sunday afternoon to attend the first writing group meeting, the assumptions and expectations—their latent ideas about artists and teachers, writing and publishing, intentions and consequences—began to emerge. A writing group, whose purpose it was to bolster teacher-writers’ opportunities for publication, would construct artistic, pedagogical, and intellectual opportunities that mirrored some of the teacher-writers’ remembered experiences from graduate school.
Moreover, to meet the discursive needs of the teacher-writers, the writing group would also need to foster their desire to be more artistic, more writerly, support their insecurities in seeking and producing knowledge, and mentor their attempts at sharing, editing, and writing with others.

Interestingly, these unspoken purposes influenced what this study would be about, and although it is definitely a study with implications for a pedagogy of publishing (Aitchison, Kamler, & Lee, 2010), it is ultimately a story about writing with others, practices of revision, and the construction of identities. These teacher-writers arrived at the writing group with discourses about writing and learning to write (Ivanič, 2004). They had all been teachers for at least a year, which meant they had all taught writing, in some form, to their students. As students themselves, the teacher-writers had also been schooled in these discourses by participating in discussions about writing. Three months prior, they had all taken a teacher research and applied project course with me. As their instructor, I was influenced by my history as a former English teacher, a former first-year composition instructor, and a former instructor of English methodology, positions that required a deep theoretical and pedagogical understanding about writing. Therefore, in the teacher research course, discourses of writing and learning to write (Ivanič, 2004) pervaded my curriculum. As a result of the teacher-writers’ backgrounds and experiences, their identities as student-writers had been formed by years of schooling; and their identities as writing teachers were beginning to emerge; however, their identities as teacher-writers, as published authors, had yet to be explored.

To explore how these myriad identities (even the ones yet to be formed) were influenced by revising with others in a writing group, my research study focused on the
messiness of writing and revising, of teaching and learning, of praising and critiquing (Spigelman, 2004). In short, I was concerned with the tensions and conflicts of identity building. To better understand the tensions and conflicts inherent in the act of writing, learning, and teaching (hooks, 1994), I began this study with the assumption that the writing group—defined by its moment-to-moment discourses and practices—would exist along a continuum of potentiality, meaning I understood the teacher-writers’ commitment to the group to be as much about giving up something as it was about gaining something.

To deeply understand how a teacher-writer vies for recognition through the revision process, I analyzed the discourse of the writing group participants to understand the shifts that occurred in the contested spaces of revision and how these shifts were influenced by the relational positions in the writing group: writer versus responder. These teacher-writers were learning how to write for publication, a socially situated practice with unique audiences and unique criteria. To explore the situated experience of the teacher-writers’ engagement with a scholarly community’s expectations, knowledge, and discourses (Bartholomae, 1986; Brodkey, 1996; Lea & Street, 1998; Lillis, 2001), I studied how the teacher-writers’ identity formation toward published author—their discourses and their texts—was mediated by two significant relationships: the writing group and an editorial board. Narrowing my research eye on these two contexts grounded my analysis in specific times and spaces. Therefore, to focus on how a writer’s identity construction is inextricably linked to both situated episodes and larger sociohistorical moments (Ivanič, 2004), I asked the following questions:
Research Questions

- How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with others in a peer-writing group?
- How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with journal editors?

Theory

Beginning with the idea that writing is a contextualized literacy practice, this study is situated within a critical, sociocultural (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) framework as a way to explore how discourses construct writing identities in the moment-to-moment negotiations of the revision process, with the understanding that revision is never merely an autonomous decision. Instead, changes (or shifts) to discourses—either in texts or through talk—are influenced by social, historical, and political factors, which leak into situated moments and impact identity negotiation and formation. Consequently, although this study examines literacy practices in a very specific context with a specific group of teacher-writers, these teacher-writers employed literacy practices (Ballenger, Kaser, Kauffman, Schroeder, & Short, 2006; Grimes, 2001; Klingner, Scanlon, & Pressley, 2005; Rose & McClafferty, 2001) that were embedded within larger, historical literacy practices and bounded by institutional parameters. Some of these practices could have been tacit for the teacher-writers, especially given their past experiences as students and teachers, while others might have remained implicit depending on how many opportunities the teacher-writers had been given to employ them. In short, the participants and I—all who had been schooled in university graduate programs—could not escape the historical residue of the literacy practices we employed. We came
together with the intention of disrupting the legacy of educational research with its almost indiscernible whispers of teacher voice, research, and expertise, but, ironically, to accomplish this subversion we relied heavily on academic literacy practices, seeking out scholarly journals and writing for an academic audience.

Therefore, I studied how the teacher-writers used literacy practices to craft a manuscript that would be accepted by a scholarly journal in their field by evaluating their peers’ revision suggestions, suggestions that were projected as echoes of the journal’s expectations and audience. I also examined how one teacher-writer negotiated the revision suggestions of a journal’s editorial board. In both situations, I sought to understand how shifts in the teacher-writers’ discourse indicated shifts in their constructed writing identities, which would contribute to my larger goal of understanding the consequences of literacy learning with others. To understand these discoursal acts used by both the teacher-writers and me, I used three theoretical threads to inform the analysis of the data: (1) writing as a praxis oriented, dialogic process; (2) discoursal construction of writer identities; and (3) agency.

**Writing as a Praxis Oriented, Dialogic Process**

In this study, writing is conceptualized as a praxis-oriented activity, a moment where a writer crafts and simultaneously reflects (Freire, 1970), which means the act of crafting language is a negotiation between what is and what is yet to be. Therefore, for writing to fulfill its potential as a praxis-oriented activity, the writer must recognize that the construction of meaning happens with others. In this way, the writer acknowledges a responsibility to more than herself; she recognizes an obligation to the audience, what Bakhtin (1990) calls an ethic of answerability. This ethic relies on an author imagining
an active and engaged audience and subject (Halasek, 1999). In doing so, the author generates a rhetorical possibility that recognizes her position as less centralized, potentially allowing for a dialogic interaction between audience, author, and subject. This Bakhtinian re-imagining of Aristotle’s rhetorical situation—one that decenters the author—allows one to begin to theorize the rhetorical and artistic force of writing as predicated on a view of language that also recognizes and addresses the ideological differences inherent in the position between author, audience, and subject, where the subject, or what Bakhtin calls the “hero” (Schuster, 1985), is not objectified by the author. Instead, these ideological differences that exist between the agents of the rhetorical situation “speak, listen and influence each other equivalently” (Schuster, 1985, p. 596).

This idea is central to Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and begins with the premise that the “self does not coincide with itself” (Holquist, 1990, p. 49). The self exists only in relation to its ability to construct meaning with the other. Consequently, when a writer decentralizes her subject position—as the sole constructor of meaning through intent and consciousness—she acknowledges that her ability to construct meaning is contingent upon an active and engaged audience. In short, this decentering recognizes that for writing to be dialogical it must actively negotiate meaning with its audience(s) and subject(s). On the other hand, there are times that to participate dialogically, a writer might need to push for a more centralized role in constructing meaning, especially if the audience for whom she writes is rigid in their expectations of her or her subject, an audience that might speak in a seemingly authoritative voice.
For Bakhtin (1981), authoritative discourse is a “special script” that resists ideological embeddedness, resists dialogizing with the writer/speaker’s internally persuasive discourses, allowing for only a single meaning that leaves little to no room for play (p. 343). Internally persuasive discourse, then, are always in a contentious relationship with authoritative discourses. On the one hand, authoritative discourses are sustained through monotonous repetition across contexts; on the other, internally persuasive discourses are influenced by one’s sociohistorical story, allowing for nuance and craft, for personal and intellectual inflection. Therefore, metaphorically, if audience is conflated with Bakhtin’s definition of authoritative discourse and the writer is conflated with his definition of internally persuasive discourse, then it can be argued that the ideological becoming of the writer is bound to the struggle of answering the call of the audience in a voice that is at once recognizable by both audience and writer.

Consequently, I argue that agency, for Bakhtin, is ideological becoming. He writes,

The importance of struggling with another’s discourse, its influence in the history of an individual’s coming to ideological consciousness, is enormous. One’s own discourse and one’s own voice, although born of another or dynamically stimulated by another, will sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other’s discourse. (p. 348)

And if for Bakhtin (1981) the potential for agency relies on contact between authoritative discourse and internally persuasive discourse, discoursal contact that can be rendered “half-ours and half-someone else’s,” that is at once authoritative and internally persuasive (p. 342), then to be agentive a subject must position and be positioned in a context that allows for playful iteration—stylistically and semantically—of another’s
discourse (p. 347). To do this, a writer’s rhetorical decisions are a negotiation of the heteroglossia of language, and, for Bakhtin (1981), heteroglossia is the friction inherent in any utterance, friction that is caused by the myriad possibilities of style, genres, context, and intent that influences a speaker as she strives to construct meaning with others. In short, heteroglossia exists within and between utterances. He writes,

The utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity.

And this active participation of every utterance in living heteroglossia determines the linguistic profile and style of the utterance to no less a degree than its inclusion in any normative-centralizing system of a unitary language. (p. 272)

In this way, to be dialogical, writing, as a specific type of utterance, can be theorized as simultaneously centering and decentering the author, audience, and subject, a movement—fraught with tension—that is also contextualized, social, and historical. And if performed in this way, writing constructs and deconstructs identities through an author’s discursive choices. And it is through these choices, choices that are bounded by the situated limitations of an author’s, audience’s, and subject’s discourse, that construct an ethical dilemma for the writer, a dilemma whose resolution relies on the historicity of the writer’s intended meaning and her understanding of the possible interpretation of meaning—in short, its consequence—its ability to be answerable to its past and its future.

Moreover, if this ethic of answerability through writing is always situated (Kent, 1999), then it is an opportunity to read, be read, imply, and infer a particular meaning within and beyond a context; it is a way to challenge and reinforce normative structures
of meanings and discourses. Defined this way, writing is a chronotopic activity (Bakhtin, 1981) because time and space influence how one crafts language (Bloome & Katz, 1997; Prior & Shipka, 2003) by simultaneously increasing and limiting accessibility to discourses and genres for the writer and the audience. Within any given context, there are myriad opportunities to make meaning with others, but there is not an infinite amount of opportunities, and this limitation is important when theorizing about discoursal constructions of writer identities (Ivanič, 1998). Moreover, in later research, Ivanič (2005) argues that there is a finite amount of “socially available possibilities” for selfhood at any given point in time (p. 398). Therefore, I argue that the ideological becoming (Bakhtin, 1981) of the writer and the audience—the figurative movement toward or away from one another’s resources, worldviews, values, and ideals—is as much about intention and interpretation as it is about when and where the writer and audience have been and are going. Like Halasek (1999), I recognize this contextualized rhetorical dance to be “a contested process with great consequences and great rewards” (p. 110). Therefore, the varied positions between writer, audience, and subject—none of which I am claiming are static or overly deterministic—set a tone of possibilities for dialogic interactions between writer and audience, reader and text. As result, studying how one’s craft influences the potentiality of dialogic interactions with others before the interaction actually occurs—writing for an audience one has yet to interact with—poses opportunities to explore the inevitable dialogic tensions that emerge in the discoursal construction and deconstruction of writer identities.
Discoursal Construction of Writer Identities

Ivanič (1998, 2005) argues that the ubiquity of the term identity as a reference to some psychosocial concept of an autonomous and unified being has forced many scholars to rebuff the term all together (p. 392), opting for a less totalizing word like subjectivity. Other researchers who have studied the discursive construction of identity (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 1993; Gee, 2005, 2011a, 2011b; Clarke, 2008; Ivanič, 2004, 2005; Gonzalez, 2001) use the term “identity” as something other than an autonomous assertion of self-will or an unmitigated force of societal determination. Instead, they understand that people use language to construct a practice of participation in a variety of “social groups, cultures, and institutions” (Gee, 2004, p. 1). Using Bakhtin (1981), this study defines identity as a construction born out of a contact zone between another’s word and the context (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346), meaning that identities emerge out of tension between speaker and audience. Identities are bound to the Bakhtinian (1981) notion of heteroglossia I described earlier: using another’s speech to express one’s intention—double-voicedness (p. 324). Bakhtin writes,

Thus at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradiction between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form. These ‘languages’ of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying ‘languages.’ (p. 291)
Simply put, identities are ways of being that are made possible through the struggle within the utterance to make sense of the double-voicedness of language. Therefore, the heteroglossia of language not only becomes the point of identity construction, it also allows for the possibility of indefinite revisions of self, an indefinite commitment to one’s ideological becoming that hinges on the re/formulation of language-in-use. Since identities emerge from language, and language for Bakhtin (1981) “is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world” (p. 293), then identities emerge from the speaker’s ability to utter simultaneously an answer that is at once recognized by its similarity to the normative discourses-in-use while simultaneously being an active address that recognizes the friction between self and other (p. 272). And it is at this fault line that identities are (de)constructed (p. 293) between the discoursal authority of an audience’s already existing space and the discoursal opportunities the writer brings with her as she enters the space. And although these opportunities are limited, they are constructive, which means this tension between self and other has as much potential to change the discoursal landscape of the audience as it does to change the writer. Although opportunities for shifts in the discoursal landscape of either writer or audience are present in dialogical exchanges, Bakhtin argues that these ideological shifts are reliant on their ability to impact the internally persuasive discourses of the writer and/or audience. And it is the need of the speaker (or writer) to articulate these internally persuasive discourses that suggest the importance of revision. Bakhtin (1981) writes about the semantic openness of internally persuasive discourses:

We have not yet learned from it all it might tell us; we can take it into new contexts, attach it to new material, put it in a new situation in order to wrest new
answers from it, new insights into its meaning, and even wrest from it new words of its own (since another’s discourse, if productive, gives birth to a new word from us in response. (p. 346-347)

By using Bakhtin, then, I am arguing that identity construction resides in language-in-use, but more importantly I am conceptualizing identity construction as an act of revision. Similarly, when considering the discoursal construction of identities through writing—ones that have the ability to simultaneously contradict and support the intentions of the author—one must also consider how the author’s discoursal intentions are influenced by the context in which they occur as well as the context in which they will be read. This study considers the production and consumption of texts across time and space, seeking to understand how writers’ identities are dynamic even within the same text because a change in context indicates a change in audience, and with a change in audience comes the possibility of new tensions, new meanings, and new discoursal identities. Consequently, this potential for an array of intended and interpreted meanings influences how a writer constructs her identities, those discoursal constructions that beg for reflection on the sub-text—the author, her style, and the context—in an attempt to be knowable and definable (Bakhtin, 1986).

And although I am claiming, like others (Gee, 2005; Ivanič, 2005), that the identities of the writers are discoursally constructed, I want to be explicit that all discourses are validated and recognized, ignored and silenced through conversational moves like re-voicing and repetition, silence and topical disagreements, and this is the case because all contexts—always, already—have an established (but negotiable) way of interacting with others through language. As Clarke (2008) argues, “It is through
discourse that the social production of meaning takes place, through discourse that social relations are constructed and maintained and through discourse that social identities are produced” (p. 18). Like Clarke, I believe that the recognition of one’s participation in any context is predicated on one’s ability to appropriate (and revise) the accepted norms and discourses of a context in meaningful ways that will be recognized by others. But this does not mean that participation is determined by the context; it means that participation is influenced by the context. Moreover, if we think of this influence as residing on a sliding scale of determinism, we can begin to discuss how the participants (and their relational identities) impact where on the scale of determinism the influence of context reside. And as we begin to discuss the participants’ identities, as reflected through their discoursal participation, we get closer to understanding why some people are recognized in certain contexts while others are ignored; we understand that fissures in participation are reliant on discourse, recognition, appropriation, and revision. In short, to be recognized, our discourse must always be “half ours and half-someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). In short, legitimated identities integrate others’ discourses to generate dialogic interactions.

Agency

Bakhtin (1981) writes, “Another’s discourse performs . . . strives rather to determine the very bases of our ideological interrelations with the world, the very basis of our behavior” (p. 342). And because these ideological interrelations are determined by time, place, and social interaction, they emerge in the space between self and other. Therefore, using Bakhtin, I conceptualize agency as recognizing, reflecting, and acting to address the distance between self and other. For Bakhtin, agency is neither heroic nor
overly deterministic. Agency is subtle; it is embedded in the everyday practices of language-in-use, constituted in the ideological becoming of beings, an opportunity to commit to a movement that is always unfinished.

Defining agency from this perspective also allows me to focus on the local because Bakhtin’s interpretation of agency begins in a contextualized relationship, whose acts over time have the potential to change normative practices. Simply put, Bakhtin allows for a conceptualization of agency as a linguistic or rhetorical movement that generates a hybrid discourse between what is and what can be, between the self and the other, between the authoritative and internally persuasive. Using Bakhtin (1981), agency is possible when another’s discourse “performs . . . as authoritative discourse, and an internally persuasive discourse” (p. 342), ameliorating, however briefly, the power that binds us to the authoritative word (p. 342). Agency, then, can simply refer to a writer’s ability to revise her identity and her text through the process of rhetorical production and reflection in the space between the authoritative and internally persuasive word. Through a variety of rhetorical tropes—metaphor, metonym, aporia, enthymeme—a writer indicates the tension between what is expected and what is intended, and to negotiate this tension through the revisionary act writers will either need to be able to consciously perform the expectations of audience (or critic) through the reproduction of these expectations while simultaneously filtering her rhetorical performance through her own contextualized and historical lens, navigating the tension by seeking external feedback and then engaging in that feedback to construct a dialogue between the subject, the imagined audience, and herself, what Bakhtin (1981) calls dialogism.
In vetting her rhetorical moves and interacting with the criticism, the writer addresses the ideological distance between herself and other. Moreover, rhetorically, writing for an audience—one that is positioned as critic—constructs a binary where writer is situated as *lesser than* critic because binaries are never neutral, especially when the audience strongly evokes a particular identity in a writer (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Therefore, writing reveals one’s identities in power relations because the writer is forced to choose or not choose specific discourses to which she may or may not have access. And this means, a writer’s agentic potential lies in her ability to address, move, and challenge the binary by acting within it. Consequently, the agency of the writer is contingent upon a subject’s access to space, discourses, and identities. Therefore, agency, even improvised, relies on a subject’s ability to unite the “authority of discourse and its internal persuasiveness” in a single word (Bakhtin, 1981).

**Summary**

Revisions to discourses are the method by which we gain access, maintain relationships, and have our participation in a particular contexts recognized. Therefore, the writing group was an ideal context for studying this revision because the utterances of the teacher-writers were dynamic representations of the speakers’ varied ideological positioning, especially since the words used by the participants are directed at one specific object: a written text in progress. These utterances, then, positioned the participants in a relationship with the text-in-progress, an object that is fraught with what Bakhtin (1981) calls “thousands of dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness” (p. 276). And because the writing group was founded on one fundamental idea—revision—it was important to examine these dialogic threads, examine them across
time and categorize them as belonging to particular discourses, as “acts of production” (Highberg Moss, & Nicolas, 2004, p. 2). Consequently, these acts of production illuminated, in practice, Bakhtin’s idea of ideological becoming because the teacher-writers acted in spite of the tension between the authoritative word of the publication and the internally persuasive word of their local, first drafts, navigating “a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weav[ing] in and out of complex interrelationships, merg[ing] with some, recoil[ing] from others” (p. 276). And because the manuscript was believed to be a sub-text of the writer, any revision to text-in-progress pointed to a revision of the author’s identities.

**Overview of Dissertation**

In Chapter 2, I trace the intellectual lineage of my study, positioning the research and scholarship I reviewed within the three chords of a social theory of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). I look specifically at studies that examine writing groups, teachers as writers, and revision, positioning my study as residing in-between and outside.

In Chapter 3, I share the methodology of my action research study. I explain the purpose for forming the writing group with the teacher-writers, introducing each of the participants and sharing their reasons for joining the writing group. Finally, I discuss my analytic approach to the data, detailing the analysis process and addressing issues of trustworthiness.

In Chapter 4, I share my analysis and findings. I used episodes from the practice of revision in the writing workshop, showing how the teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in the contested spaces of revision. Furthermore, I argue that the contested spaces of revision were constructed as the teacher-writers navigated issue of authority
and ownership and the dynamic binary of reader/writer, relying on particular discourses of writing (Ivanič, 2004) to navigate these spaces.

Furthermore, I argue that these contested spaces, the discourses used by the writers and readers, as well as opportunities for rhetorical agency are predicated on where the practice of revision occurs and who participates in its construction. To address this situated nature, I divide the chapter into two sections. The first section illustrates how the teacher-writers’ identities were constructed during the writing workshops in the writing group. The second section is concerned with how the revise and resubmit process with journal editors’ impacts the writing identities of one participant.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I explain why these findings are relevant to teachers of writing and teacher-writers. I discuss the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, I situate my study’s textuality—its position in a chain of utterances (Bakhtin, 1986/2004), meaning that this chapter is a demonstration that “any utterance, in addition to its own then, always responds . . . in one form or another to others’ utterances that precede it” (p. 94). Specifically, the purpose is to illuminate the intellectual and pedagogical roots of my study. Therefore, this chapter intentionally traces itself to the researchers and writers who, through their research and scholarship and varied positions at the university and in the public school English classroom, have been writing my story long before I could. In short, this chapter is an unpacking, of sorts, of this study’s double-voicedness (Bakhtin, 1981).

I first attribute the idea for this study to one overarching theoretical cord: literacy as a social practice, a framework that is organized into three categories: events, texts, and practices. I then argue that the event of my study is the writing group, the text is the teacher-writer and her manuscript, and the practices are attached to the act of revision. This leads me to unpack studies that have examined writing groups, teacher-writers, and revision, respectively. Finally, I identify how my study, which is aimed at understanding how writing groups contribute to the discoursal writing identities of teachers-writers engaged in the process of revision, contributes to the research.

The Intertextuality of Ideological Becoming

This tapestry is crafted around one big idea: to write is to become (Bakhtin, 1981; Freire, 1970, 2000). Despite the translation of Paolo Freire’s ideas about liberatory pedagogy, Conscientization, and banking models of education, I want to argue that it is
Freire’s history as a writer that is the subtext of my study. His influence as a writer stemmed from my interpretation of Freire as an educator who recognized the act of writing as a potential space for remaking the world. Freire was a writer\textsuperscript{1} who acted upon the possibility inherent in the word to re-imagine the world. Therefore, for Freire, the act of writing has the potential to be an intervention in history, an “insertion in the struggles in order to intervene in reality” (Olson, 1992, para. 29). His oeuvre is a testament to this not only because this particular meaning resides in the words of Freire’s written texts, but because his participation in the very act of writing, in all its volatility and ubiquity, became (and continues to be) an intervention against the socially unjust models of education, schooling, and learning that exist around the world. Writing gave Freire the opportunity to illuminate the practice of literacy as a commitment to unfinishedness and to live the idea that to write is to become, an idea that is as much Bakhtinian (1981) as it is Freirean (1982, 2000). To write is to wield an opportunity to act and speak in ways that could potentially alter the seemingly historical destiny of discourses and ideas (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 270). Consequently, an opportunity to use writing as a tool in one’s ideological becoming would require one to generate a text that could open up dialogue with the audience, a sharing that would allow author and audience to connect to a word that “awakens new and independent words, that . . . organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition” (p. 345). It would require one to address the tension between writer and audience, between internally persuasive

\textsuperscript{1} Freire did not self-identify as a writer. In an interview with Gary Olson (1992), Freire claimed that he did not view himself as a writer because he says, “I do not make literature.” He at least acknowledges that “perhaps there are moments that give the impression that somewhere inside of the educator is a sleeping writer” (para. 11).
discourses and authoritative discourses, and in using the tension to be agentive, the writer suggests a “self-other experience, mutuality, interchange, assimilation . . . [which] theoretically articulates personhood as a dynamic process of becoming” (Bowers, 2005, p. 371). By bringing Bakhtin and Freire “in dialogue in regards to learning and transformative practice,” Rule (2011) presents research that explores educational access of marginalized groups in two different South African settings: a rural, early childhood education project and a university certificate programme [sic] for community development workers. The purpose of his research was to illuminate the idea of boundaries in learning, zones where tensions arise but potential still abounds and where all of this is negotiated through reading and writing. Much like my study, which is theoretically bookended by Bakhtin and Freire, Rule explores learning as “profoundly dialogic” (p. 940), existing in zones where human beings are “unfinalized, as always becoming” (p. 934).

Like Rule (2011), many practitioner researchers also describe how zones of activities can structure opportunities to support the intellectual and emotional aspects of learning, which provide more opportunities for the learner to grow, to become, to change. Therefore, the paradigm of teacher research with its methods and theories helped shape this study and its participants, giving the participants and me a foundation to commit to move our research, writing, and sharing into a manuscript that would travel beyond our classrooms and schools. Teacher research/inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009) is a deliberate seeing, a documenting of a teacher’s ability to make the familiar strange through research and writing. In crafting an insider’s eye to research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), teachers could commit to re-craft classrooms, students, and schools. As a
result, teacher research became an accepted method for the production of knowledge about teaching and learning, one that challenged a history of research on teaching and learning that had objectified teachers and their experiences rather than valued their work and expertise. Moreover, this movement celebrated writing and researching, particularly for teachers, as tools of empowerment (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Hubbard & Power, 2003; Lytle, 2008; MacLean & Mohr, 1999; Ray, 1993; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Smith & Stock, 2001; Stock, 2001; Swenson, 2003; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Reading across this body of literature, two reasons emerge to explain why there seems to be an inherent ideal of empowerment for teachers who research and write: (1) Research and writing are viewed as tools of praxis; and (2) Research and writing are viewed as intentional acts of shaping and re-shaping cultural worlds.

Therefore, this study emerged from the idea that teacher research can be a vehicle for change, especially when it’s more subtle tenets are practiced: moving the reflections, the inquiry, the systematic and intentional research to a space beyond the classroom (Smith & Stock, 2001; Stock, 2001; Swenson; 2003). Similarly, teacher research can only disrupt the highly individualized manner of implementing curriculum (i.e., I close my door, take part in my practice, do what’s best for my students), what Little (1990) calls the persistence of privacy, if the teachers allow their research on their practice to be shared, critiqued, and validated by others. In this way, research and writing can be shared, revised, submitted, and resubmitted as an answer to an educational call (Bakhtin, 1990), a call that asked teachers to be change agents by researching, writing, and collaborating (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).
If trends in the scholarship on teacher research are rooted in the importance of teachers systematically collecting classroom practices for the purpose of crafting them into relatable narratives that allow for praxis-oriented texts, ones that illuminate, what Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) call, the public relevance of local knowledge (p. 131), it is important to move this trace toward another theoretical thread: literacy as a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 2000).

In the following section, I will explain in more detail this thread, and then I will trace the triad of a social theory of literacy—events, texts, and practices—in studies focused on the following: (1) writing groups; (2) teacher-writers; and (3) revision.

**Writing as a Situated Practice: An Ecological Approach**

When I claim that writing is a socially situated practice, I implicitly reject other theories of literacy, what Street (1984, 2003) calls autonomous models of literacy: an “assumption that literacy in itself—autonomously—will have effects on other social and cognitive practices” (p. 77); what Bloome and Katz (1997) critique as a “set of psychological skills or processes” (p. 205); or what Russell (2006) disparages as a current-traditional rhetoric in writing theory, an approach that privileges parts or divisions (words, sentences, paragraphs), correctness (mechanical), and imitation of prescriptive models (exemplars). Instead, I embrace a social theory of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Street, 2003) and discourse (Fairclough, 1993; Gee, 1999), what Pantaleo (2009) and Barton (2007) call an ecological perspective, an understanding that when examining reading and writing processes one must first situate the writer, her text, and her audience in relation to time and space. Of course, I understand that the consequence for conflating writing as literacy is that my work will be read as a simplified
notion of literacy, what Gee calls “the ability to read and write” (Gee, 1989, p. 5). Instead, I intend to use a more nuanced understanding of literacy, a nuance that resides in what Gee (1989) claims is the individual’s embodied instantiations of “historically and socially defined discourses” that in their everyday use generate the potential for change over time (p. 3). This nuance is necessary for my study which defines writing as more than an individual cognitive skill. In my study (and the ones I will highlight in this literature review), reading and writing are defined as tools needed to navigate discourse communities, literacy events, and domains of life (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), all of which are ideologically situated in particular times and spaces (Lillis, 2003). Therefore, I define writing as the practice of concerning oneself with how a variety of discourses allow for the determination of—in a particular time and place—what language, style, and structure should be employed in written form to persuade one’s audience of the beauty, the grotesque, the truth—in total, the life—he or she has interpreted to exist. Simply put, writing is intentionally conveying one’s perception of the known, crediting oneself as a reliable knower, and convincing others to subscribe to this particular habit of knowing, a practice that is very much “rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being” (Street, 2003, p. 78). Equally important is that this intentionality is embedded within social relationships, which inherently involve social positions/identities, institutional histories, and a lived materiality (Bloom & Katz, 1997).

This conceptualization of writing as a situated practice, as much influenced by the sociohistorical context in which it is crafted as it is by the sociohistorical context in which it will be read and interpreted, encourages researchers to explore “what this means . . . by making connections between empirical data and social theory . . . and locating
literacy in time, space and discourse” (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanič, 2000, p. 1). My study is grounded in a social theory of literacy, one that understands both learning to write and as happening between literacy practices, events, and texts (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 9).

Specifically, my study examines the crafting of academic texts whose purpose was influenced by the expectations of a university graduate course curriculum and then revised and re-crafted for the expectations of a scholarly journal. Like my research, many of the studies in rhetoric and composition, literacy, and English education that influenced my research begin with the purpose of understanding “a discourse of academic learning and negotiation in student texts” (Donahue, 2008). Accordingly, Haswell (2007) writes: “The postsecondary institution as a locus, its function in loco parentis, has been a primary factor of much research into the academic performance of students, but not much of it deals systematically with student writing” (p. 342). In rhetoric and composition, scholarship that explores how writing—as a socially situated process within post-secondary institutions—was used to acculturate, how it was appropriated, and how it was resisted or reified is attributed to scholarship that emerged out of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) movements (Russell, Lea, Parker, Street, & Donahue, 2009); in the field of literacy, this idea is born out of New Literacy Studies and academic literacies (Street & Lea, 1998; Lillis, 2001); and in English Education, “an interdisciplinary field of inquiry focused on the preparation of English Language Arts teachers, and, by association, the teaching and learning of all aspects of English Studies” (Alsup et al., 2006), the roots can be tied back to the whole-

Both WAC/WID and academic literacies (ACLITS) explore writing in the university using a genre approach, where genre is conceptualized as a form or structure that emerges in the negotiation between writer, context (e.g., disciplines), and the practices and discourse employed (Russell, Lea, Parker, Street, & Donahue, 2009). In the field of English Education, the studies, influenced by a sociocultural, critical, and ecological framework, explore reading and writing in K-12 classrooms with the intention of illuminating the students’ and the teachers’ role in the social and ideological constructions of writing. Gee (2000) argues that it is a “‘social turn’ away from a focus on individual behavior . . . and individual minds . . . toward a focus on social and cultural interactions” (p. 180) that occurred in a variety of disciplines—New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Barton; Gee; Street) and modern composition theory (Bazerman; Meyers) to name a few—that generated “overlap at many points . . .and influenced each other in complex ways” (Gee, 2000, p. 183).

My study was designed to explore how teacher-writers’ identities construct and are constructed by the writing group, their navigation of the activities of the writing group, the manuscripts produced in the writing group, and the discourses of the writing group—practices, events, and texts identified as being more or less academic in nature. Therefore, I used two criteria to select the literature that I reviewed: (1) a research purpose grounded in a desire to understand the act of writing through an examination of

\(^{2}\) See L. Rosenblatt (1976, 1978)
how writing practices are employed, validated and garner recognition (Bazerman & Prior, 2004, p. 2); and (2) a social context described as academic, whether it be post-secondary institutions or K-12 settings.

The Literacy Event: Writing Groups

Barton and Hamilton (2000) define event as “activities where literacy has a role,” where a text is the center of an activity and where talk mediates the activity and the text (p. 8). Thus, using their definition of events as “observable episodes, which arise from practices and are shaped by them” (p. 8), a writing group is the literacy event I studied (Highbert, Moss, & Nicolas, 2004, p. 2). In her foundational work on writing groups, Gere (1987) claims: “Writing groups highlight the social dimension of writing. They provide tangible evidence that writing involves human interaction as well as solitary inscription” (p. 3). Some twenty years later, Spigelman (2000) argues that writing groups celebrate the postmodern idea of intertextuality, and in citing Bakhtin, she further claims that when people form writing groups they are acknowledging that “no text is totally original, the private property of an autonomous creator” (p. 17). Like Gere (1987), Highbert, Moss, & Nicolas (2004) echoes Gee’s (2000) assertion: “Words and context are two mirrors facing each other, infinitely and simultaneously reflecting each other” (p. 190):

Writing groups enable writers to make decisions about their personal texts with the supportive influence of readers/writers who are like-minded in their views of what it means to belong to and participate in a community of writers but who represent a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and opinions as readers and writers. (p. 3)
Much like a classroom or a workplace, a writing group constructs, what appears to be, a boundary around its practices and text, but because this localized event is populated by a variety of actors, with multiple purposes and varied functional repertoires of practices—social, cognitive, and psychological—the supposed boundary leaks, allowing a researcher opportunities to observe the sociohistoric and institutional migration of people, practices, and texts in time and space. In short, like Highberg, Moss, and Nicolas (2004), I believe that “studying them [writing groups] enables one to explore the pressures of negotiating the relationship between local and global discourses” (p. 5). In short, writers must rely on familiar discourses to gain access to spaces where their writing will travel. To do so, they must bring their everyday discourse into a dialogue with the privileged discourse of the space to which they want access. Therefore, they must allow the local discourse—in this case, the one in the writing group—to be influenced by the global discourse of their audience.

Gere (1987) argues that the idea of writing group theory is both “new and old” (p. 11), and I would argue it is foundational to scholarship in expressivist writing theory (Elbow, 1998; Murray, 1978), collaborative and dialogic learning theory (Bruffee, Stock), writing center theory and practice (Harris, 1995; North, 1984), writing workshop theory (Bomer, 1995; Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1994), teacher learning communities (Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth, 2001; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), and National Writing Project (Lieberman & Wood, 2002). Although the writing group I formed was not bound to a particular institution or its curriculum, it employed practices, texts, and discourses that were attempting to be recognized and legitimized by scholars and researchers who reside in institutions of higher learning. Therefore, the writing
group where the teacher-writers and I attempted to deepen our understanding of the institutionalized practice of publishing research was an extracurriculum group with an academic intention (Highberg, Moss, & Nicolas, 2004).

Many studies have looked at extracurriculum writing groups in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes: in prisons (Jackson, 2004), in recovery programs (Daniell, 2003; Jensen, 2000), community engagement and service learning (Gere, 1994; Moss, 2010; Westbrook, 2004), and although like these studies—which privileged the idea that there are emotional, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual benefits to writing with others outside of school—my study also acknowledged this benefit, the participants and I were intimately connected to academia. The extracurriculum writing group in this study—the writing with others—became a method for the teacher-writers to stay tethered to the university, to find a way to be legitimated by the scholarly community that exists at a university. Similar to Day and Eodice (2004) who studied co-authors, the teacher-writers in this study were “members of a recognized culture” (p. 117), seeking legitimation for their academic literacy practices like other scholars, and they believed, like the co-authors in Day and Eodice’s study, that the best way to achieve this recognition was to write with others. On the other hand, unlike the co-authors in Day and Eodice’s study who faced potential professional risks on their road to tenure by co-authoring with their colleagues, the teacher-writers in my study were not co-authoring in a literal sense, although, like the co-authors, ownership and authority were issues the teacher-writers and I had to navigate on our journey together of writing together. Moreover, just like the tenure-track co-authors who faced scrutiny and professional suspicion, the teacher-writers in this study—although following a long tradition of
professional development that encouraged teachers to write in groups—also found themselves in contact zones within the group and with editors of journals. Like Day and Eodice, Westbrook (2004), who studied the South Carolina Writers Workshop (SCWW), also focused on the tensions of a writing group. Using ethnographic methods to “account for the social and cultural contexts of literacy practices outside the classroom” (p. 233), she crafted vignettes to explore the contact zones that emerged within a community group whose purpose was to improve writing. And although I am focused specifically on teacher-writers, I do take up one of her suggestions in the end of her chapter: namely, to treat writing groups as “safe houses” to the world of publishing. Although in my study, I characterize the writing group as existing in the margins—or off-stage—to support a teacher-writer as she navigates the practice of revision for the revise and resubmit process of a journal.

**The Literacy Text: Teacher as Writer**

In defining a social theory of literacy, Barton & Hamilton (2000) define the literacy text as mediating interactions between participants in a literacy event, as they engage in utilizing literacy practices. Moreover, these practices—and I would argue the text—are influenced not only by the context in which they occur, but also by the participants who reside in the context. With this in mind, this section of the literature review is less concerned with a type of literacy text and more concerned with researchers who examined the practices, discourses, and interactions of teacher-writers as they engaged in the construction or co-construction of a variety of literacy texts.

Many studies that focused on the literacy events of teacher-writers emerged from two complementary professional practices aimed at providing teachers more authentic
and critical professional development: teacher research/inquiry groups (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Cochran-Smith, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 2009; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Fleischer, 1995; Lytle, 2008; Ray, 1993; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000; Smith & Stock, 2001; Stock, 2001) and the National Writing Project (NWP) (Whitney, et al., 2008; Whitney, 2009a; Whitney, 2010; Lieberman & Wood, 2000). In her journal article “Classroom teachers as authors of the professional article,” Whitney (2010) asserts that as early as the ‘90s research, writing, and publishing were a widely practiced form of professional development by teachers in the “field of Language Arts education (such as composition, reading, and English education)” (p. 237), with organizations like the National Writing Project (NWP), the Bread Loaf Teacher, local groups, and other networks generating opportunities for teachers to get support for this kind of professional development. Whitney then argues that although these types of organizations have been providing this support for decades:

there is only a little empirical evidence about how those voices develop and are situated among teaching peers and among the range of other voices contributing to that literature, and even less evidence is available about the role teacher networks might play in the publication activities of teachers. (p. 237)

In citing these few studies, she uses three categories to name the tangentially related ideas that have emerged from work with teacher-writers. First, there is “practical literature”—the how-to for teacher’s interested in publishing and the literature for those who are interested in conducting writing workshops for teachers. Then, she describes the literature that explores how academic discourse becomes a barrier for teacher-writers wanting to publish. Finally, citing herself and others, she describes a small but growing
body of literature focused on how writing-based professional development impacts classroom teachers’ practices (p. 238-239). And much like my study, which emerged out of the teacher-as-research literature, she also attributes many of the studies categorized above as being in dialogue with this same literature.

To address this dearth of empirical studies, Whitney has conducted a number of studies designed to examine not only the practices of teacher-authors, but also the motivation for teacher-authors’ writing practices and the personal, rhetorical, and practical challenges of aspiring to be a teacher-author (Whitney, 2010). Using survey data from a larger NWP study of 2,114 teacher-participants, Whitney used the following two criteria to select her participants: (1) long-term teaching position; and (2) published articles about their classroom practice. These criteria allowed her to focus on eight in-depth interview transcripts, where these participants had been asked directly about their publication history. Using thematic coding, Whitney categorized three areas of challenges for the teacher-writers: personal, rhetorical, and practical. To understand how these eight participants navigated these challenges using NWP resources, Whitney explored what resources were the most beneficial to these writers. She concluded that NWP offered them resources for content, access to people, support during the process, and ways to imagine themselves as a writer. In her conclusion, Whitney also argued that the more we study these NWP sites for the resources they offer teacher-writers, the more we can begin to craft other opportunities for supporting writing-based professional development programs. Although the impetus for my study did not emerge out of a formalized desire to support writing-based professional development, much like the participants in Whitney’s study, the teacher-writers in my study were looking for a
community to support their desire to write for publication. For them, the teacher-as-research literature had inspired them to write and go public with their writing. And if Whitney’s study was designed to name the challenges and identify the resources used to navigate these challenges, my study was focused on understanding how a writing group—an informal professional development space—supported the teacher-writers through the process of publishing, giving them access to a community, invitations to write and respond, and rituals for daily writing (p. 243).

In another study, Whitney (2008) examined the long-term impact of National Writing Project on teachers’ writing practices, striving to understand the transformative nature of teachers’ participation in the NWP. To get a better understanding of how the scholarly field had received teacher-authors and their articles, Whitney (2009a) conducted archival research on scholarly journals in the field of Language Arts to assess how many teacher-authors had been published in them. Finally, she used her empirical data and experience with teacher-authors to show them how to “open the door” to publishing (Whitney, 2009b), which is reminiscent of others’ work in the field that has explicitly addressed the lack of pedagogical frames for publishing by constructing helpful guides or tips (Ballenger, Kaser, Kauffman, & Short, 2006; Klinger, Scanlon, and Pressley, 2005; Rose & McClafferty, 2001). Recently, Whitney (2012) published a practical reflection on important lessons that teacher-authors have learned from their experiences in writing groups (Whitney, 2012). She wrote these lessons in very accessible language, using metaphors to describe the lessons, establishing ethos with her audience through allusions to prior research and attributing the lessons to countless conversations with teacher-writers. First, she tells teachers not to “fear the lawnmower,”
meaning teachers cannot let the anxiety keep them from writing, especially anxiety produced from a fear of being ostracized by fellow teachers for seeking intellectual endeavors. Those teacher-writers who wrote learned that writing an article is less about telling other teachers what is best practice and more about “describing with complexity one’s own decisions and walking readers through the ideas behind those decisions” (p. 53). Her next lesson for teachers is to treat professional writing “like a party” (p. 54). In this way, the teacher-writer should engage in professional writing as if she is responding to an invitation to attend a party, which should prompt one to study the invitation for clues to the formality of the party, talk with other insiders who have knowledge of the party etiquette, and rely on one’s ability to study context, language, and other semiotic codes. Finally, Whitney advises teacher-writers to “group up” (p. 54). She acknowledges the importance of being supported by a community of writers. All of the lessons articulated by Whitney were echoed throughout my study—in the transcripts from the writing group meeting, in the teacher-writers’ articulation of why they joined the writing group, and in the transcripts from our collaborative writing sessions for the conference proposal. I helped the teacher-writers from my course “group up,” and once we had arrived, we engaged in a genre analysis of the journal for which the teachers wanted to write. They complained anecdotally about their colleague’s poor attendance at their local conference presentation and the lack of support received from fellow teachers at their school sites as they wrote and prepared their manuscripts for national conferences and scholarly journals. And although I did not focus on these lessons for my study, those experienced by my teachers—and articulated by Whitney—were key to understanding the professional identities of the teacher-writers in my study.
Although Whitney’s scholarship has enriched our understanding of teacher-authors, in particular the “personal, rhetorical, and practical” (Whitney, 2010, p. 243) challenges facing them, most of her work has centered around teacher-authors whose identities as writers are intimately tied to their experience in the National Writing Project, albeit in spaces beyond the NWP site itself. Like many of Whitney’s participants, the teacher-writers in my action research study were focused on producing a publishable manuscript, but their writing practices emerged from their experience in higher education and the lack of professional spaces beyond it to continue researching, writing, and teaching. Moreover, unlike Whitney, my study is concerned with the process of publishing, particularly how the teacher-writers revised their manuscripts for publication. Instead of focusing on the professional benefits of writing for publication, to which I believe there are many, I wanted to understand how the teacher-writers engaged in the practice of revision for publication. In particular, I explored how the practice of revision impacted their identities, what discourses the teacher-writers used during the revision process, and how these discourses opened up or closed off an agentic space for the writer. In particular, I examine the discourse of the teacher-writers to understand how the identities of teacher-writers are constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with others.

The Literacy Practices: Revision

To design a study based on a social theory of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000), one that defines literacy practices as “purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices” is to underscore the importance of scholarship on learning and identity. Moje and Lewis (2003) argue in their critique of the limitations of sociocultural
theories of learning that there is a lack of adequate explanation about “how subjects are produced through language and discourse” (p. 1980). Therefore, to add a critical lens to sociocultural theories of learning, researchers need “to focus on how identities are shaped within and shaping of social and cultural context” (p. 1979). Since practices are employed, events are constructed, and texts are generated, this study foregrounds identity as constructing and being constructed by the literacy practices of revision.

Like any literacy practice, the idea of revision has a rich and varied history contingent upon the epistemological frame being used to analyze and discuss it. In Revision: History, Theory, and Practice, the editors give readers a synthesis of definitions, studies, and theories that have colored how we participate in the revision process, how we teach revision, and how we observe this particular literacy practice. Harr (2006) argues that many scholars in the field have used contrastive metaphors to describe revision: Murray’s (1978) internal and external; Lamott’s up, down, and dental draft; Bishop’s (2004) revising in and revising out (as cited in p. 11). But if these metaphors helped scholars to think about the purpose of revision, there were many others who focused on how to best teach revision to writers. In the 1980’s, as the process movement—with its emphasis on the writer and the writer’s movement toward a publishable draft—began to impact the pedagogical practices of the writing classroom, Flower and Hayes developed a cognitive model to help teachers understand the process involved in writing, but even Flower and Hayes’ model relied on contrastive ideas: writer-centered versus reader-centered (pp. 11-12). Harr (2006) believes Elbow relies less on metaphor and more on the idea of time by labeling revision either as quick or thorough (p. 12). Then, she argues that some scholars see revision as craft (Horning,
2002; Harris, 2003). All of these ideas—whether they are metaphorical or practical, theoretical or artistic, define revision as a change, as movement—as the writer moving from one space to occupy another. In practice, Harr (2006) argues that revision has been researched from the following perspectives: (1) revision as correction; (2) revision as development and discovery; (3) revision as rhetorical goal-setting and function; (4) and revision as assertion of identity.

My study is situated within the research that conceptualizes revision as an assertion of identity (Harr, 2006). This means that when studying (or teaching revision) it is necessary to recognize that “revision sometimes means undermining and challenging assumptions, philosophies, or practices and then remaking them” (p. 20). And like Harr (2006) who references Welch (1997), my study, like Welch’s, is focused on what I call the contact zones emerged during the revision process. Welch shows that revision is less about consensus between the writer and the audience and more about the tension and discord between the writer and the discourse community for which she is writing. She writes, “[T]he classroom’s tense, charged, and sometimes even erotic and antagonistic attachments are central to revision—revision as strategy for intervening in the meanings and identifications of a text, revision as strategy for intervening in the meanings and identifications of one’s life” (p. 55). Welch (1997) uses feminist theory and psychoanalysis to inform her ethnographic case studies as she explores revisions in three settings: a writing center, a composition course, and a graduate project for K-12 teachers. Like Welch, my study begins with the premise that to revise a text is on some level a commitment to revise one’s identity in the discordant space, what she calls the restless space. And although the practice of revision may look like a focus on syntax or diction,
it is really a focus on identity construction—on what Welch (1997) calls mirrors—because to change the words, the syntax, or even the structure alters the meaning of a text by changing the way a reader will interact with it. And although my study, like Welch’s, is not influenced by Freud and Lacan, this theoretical frame leads her to make a significant claim that colored the way I approached revision in the writing group. Welch (1997) writes that revision is “not as that one-way movement from writer-based to reader-based prose, but instead as that moment of looking back on a text, asking how it’s already reader based, already socialized and reproducing the limits of a given society, and whether there’s something missing, something else” (p. 159).

Conclusion

Whitney (2008) claims that her research about teacher transformation in a writing-intensive setting illustrates that “writing activities are certainly important sites where issues of stance, authority, and identity are worked out” (p. 177). Moreover, Roz Ivanič (2005) claims that when a researcher is concerned with the discoursal construction of a writer’s identity then she focuses on how “the writer’s identity is inscribed in the communicative resources on which he or she draws when writing” (p. 391). And although my study looks at teacher-writers participating in a writing group whose practices and texts generate a writing-intensive setting, it is mostly focused on understanding how the revisions made by the teacher-writers—indicated by their shifts in discourses and changes in their texts in the discordant spaces between writer and reader—may indicate opportunities to construct dynamic relationships, relationships that are influenced by the position of the writer and the reader, particularly the interactions between a writer and her peers and a writer and journal editors. More importantly, even
though the related literature within this review has constructed spaces for my study, my study’s research lens is focused on the moment-to-moment discoursal negotiations during the practice of revision to show their impact on the emerging identity of the teacher-writer. In short, my study has implications for teaching writing, learning to write, and more importantly learning to write for an audience.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In *The Things They Carried*, Tim O’Brien (1990) challenges the reader to recognize that stories have the potential, whether “happening-truth” or “story-truth” to make “things present” (p. 180) by allowing one to look at ideas, people, and places that were never looked at, attach people to emotion—fear and hope and love—and make relevant through memory the forgotten, the ignored, the disregarded. In short, sharing stories has the potential to democratize the human experience by giving it a stage beyond its seemingly improvised and fleeting relevance in a particular time and space, and it is with this intention that I write about my experience as a researcher and a research participant. Some in educational research might think me naïve for comparing the intentions of a fiction writer to that of a qualitative researcher, but I take this risk, at least in this moment, to be transparent about my motives for designing a study that, at its core, is about finding some congruency between our theories about how and why teachers/practitioners should write and our actual practice of writing as teachers/practitioners (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). And like all narrative structures, which inevitably expose the values and beliefs of a researcher and writer, the design, methods and analysis of my study reflect my epistemological assumptions: the legitimation of knowledge construction occurs between individuals (literally or symbolically) in moment-to-moment discoursal interactions that are imbued with myriad opportunities for discoursal agents to engage in localized meaning-making while using culturally normative discoursal practices.
These epistemological assumptions influenced where I focused my research lens. Merriam (2002) asserts that qualitative research is concerned with understanding how participants in a particular context interpret and construct their lived experiences (p. 4). Moreover, the qualitative researcher, in sharing her findings, crafts her prose to illustrate her interpretive eye, which is defined by “learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world, the meaning it has for them” (p. 4). This epistemological frame also influenced me to collect data that would allow me to answer the following questions:

- How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with others in a peer-writing group?
- How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with the journal editors?

**A Collaborative Practitioner Research Design: Becoming with Others**

To conceptualize/theorize how teacher-writers in a small, local inquiry group navigate the process of revising for publication, I designed a practitioner research study (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 1999, 2009) rooted in what Cochran-Smith & Lytle (2007) call the “scholarship of teaching and learning” (p. 26), and what, in citing Lee Shulman, they describe as “studying, understanding, and enhancing teaching and learning across disciplinary areas at both K-12 and higher education levels by making the scholarship of teaching public, accessible to critique by others, and exchangeable in the professional community” (p. 26). Furthermore, like other practitioner studies, my research design was rooted in Kemmis’s (2007) belief about action research: “Action research aims at changing three things: practitioners’ practices, their understandings of
their practices, and the conditions in which they practice” (p. 463). For this study, I wanted to expand the authorial intentions of the teacher-writers’ literacy practices, their professional habits in regards to their literacy practices, and ultimately their support networks (or lack thereof) for these literacy practices. Like MacLean & Mohr (1999) before me, my intimate understanding of the challenges the teacher-writers faced when trying to balance professional goals, teaching mandates, and personal obligations with their desire to research, write, and publish influenced the design of this study. Moreover, in striving to find my own way to perform legitimated professional selves, I, too, had struggled to find time to attend class, teach, research, write, publish, and participate fully in my family. Like the teacher-writers, I craved a space that would give me the impetus to revise my habits with others and, in doing so, begin to name, reflect, and analyze “the multiple and varied ideologies” informing my participation inside and outside the writing group (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000, p. 171). Therefore, after listening to countless stories from my students about their inability to fully embrace the possibilities inherent in the teacher research movement (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, 1999, 2009; Goswami & Stillman, 1987, MacLean & Mohr, 1999) and reflecting on my own experiences, a kairos emerged, a moment to address this imbalance of practice and construct opportunities for change. And so, like many other practitioner researchers, after discovering this kairos and “questioning the ways knowledge and practice are constructed, evaluated, and used,” I decided to address them through a collaborative, action-research project grounded in bringing the tensions “between competing ideologies and experiences into the open” (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000, p. 57), competing ideologies rooted in my repeated proclamations to my teacher-students about the benefits of research and writing and the
lack of practical support for these teachers to pursue these benefits. Furthermore, like many action researchers (Kemmis, 2007), I committed to pursue this kairos with other teacher-writers. Moreover, to live a tenet of the teacher research curriculum I had espoused for semesters, I designed a research project that allowed me to align my values with my practice (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). To do this, I asked former students to join me in my quest to address the disconnect between what the teacher research movement promised and the lack of a local network for fulfilling this promise. I believed that if we could demystify writing and publishing by writing and publishing, then we could begin to view teacher research as something other than an ideal practiced elsewhere.

**An Emic Perspective: Participation in the Writing Group**

Like others (Gere, 1987; Moss, Highbeg, & Nicolas, 2004; Spigelman, 2000), I believed a writing group—a space theorized to “reduce alienation through collaboration” (Gere, 1987, p. 5)—would give us the opportunity to address the tensions from our professionalized and personalized narratives, becoming a gateway for understanding how writing with others would influence my identities and the identities of the teacher-writers. Therefore, I designed an activity—a writing group—that would allow us to participate and study the process of writing and publishing with others in a way that would fully validate our knowledge, our experiences, and our voices. I understood that by examining the local discourse and practices—the moment-to-moment interactions—of the writing group I could achieve a three-fold purpose: (1) mentor the teacher-writers through participation; (2) theorize about the local practices of this particular group; and (3) contribute to an understanding of revision as integral to how writers use discourse to
shape their identities, their capacity to act, and their learning in ways that could be interpreted as multiple, complex, and unstable. Furthermore, participation in a writing group would give me an insider’s perspective on the teacher-writers, while also allowing me to be intentional and accountable in this writing space where we could redefine professional life to include researching, writing, and teaching. In short, the writing group would construct a space for us to conceptualize a professional teaching identity that permit us to write and share beyond the local space, generate opportunities to construct a counter narrative to the regime of standardization, and ultimately allow us to “democratize the locus of knowledge” (p. 11). In an email message after our first writing group meeting, I wrote:

It was so wonderful to see all of you this afternoon. Fina and I felt very excited after the conversation, knowing we are all working toward the same goal—to have our voices heard in a profession to which we have dedicated ourselves, our families, and our livelihood. When I first started teaching, I believed that shutting my door was enough, but now it seems to me that silence implies complicity (A. Clark-Oates, personal communication, August 19 2007).

This correspondence echoes many of the tenets of the teacher research movement. For example, like many national teacher-inquiry groups—National Writing Project, The Prospect Center—we were determined to contextualize the local knowledge we produced in the writing group within a larger context, to expand our identities as practitioners to include writing and researching, and to establish our learning community as a site of action for addressing our tensions. Because these tensions were often voiced as an absence of time and relationships, the writing group was an appropriate learning space
because it provided a time, a network, and a methodology to guide us to move our inquiries beyond “time- and place-bound classroom research projects” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p. 120). In short, the writing group provided us with opportunities to develop and sustain the habits of mind of a writer and researcher. Therefore, the organization of the writing group was predicated on a desire to understand how teachers, in spite of their overcommitted and hectic lives, engaged in a process of revision that would prepare them to submit their manuscript to a scholarly journal, and through this revision process produces hybrid discourses for discussing writing and revisions that could impact their writing identities—as writers and teachers. With this goal in mind, I examined the process of revision for the ideological positions of the teacher-writers, the group, and publishing culture, inquiring how opportunities for revision were simultaneously conferred and denied.

**The Ethics of Participatory Action Research**

The action research design gave me an opportunity to engage in a rich first-hand look at writing, researching and publishing with the teacher-writers. And although for this particular iteration of the research, I have excluded the teacher-writers from contributing to my interpretation of data, which I will present in the subsequent chapters, a position that poses ethical issues of representation (Newkirk, 1996), I believe that tensions and dilemmas around ownership and voice, style and representation are an inevitable (and unavoidable) consequence of any practitioner research. Furthermore, I understand literacy practices “serve multiple interests, incorporating individual agents and their locales into larger enterprises that play out away from the immediate scene” (Brandt & Clinton, 2002, p. 338). To account for these absent stakeholders, I participated as a
writing group member as I collected data. In this way, I lived the story before I wrote it, embodied the experience before I analyzed it, and, most importantly, wrote with the teachers before I wrote about them. I also went public with the teachers before I wrote this dissertation at local and national conferences. In doing so, the teacher-writers discussed the how and why of their participation in the writing group, addressed their own tension as teachers and aspiring researchers and writers, and related the knowledge they had constructed about writing to a larger national public, what we called going public.

On the other hand, I am aware of the unique ethical dilemmas that come along with speaking for others, especially in the high stakes genre of dissertation writing, where my interpretations, like other singular teacher-researchers, may be implicated in school environments, departmental politics, and professorial markers” (Ray, 1996, p. 291). So in this case, since years have passed since I formed those initial relationships with the teacher-writers, I have since reached out to the participants, to discuss their experience and memories. This practice is critical in sustaining my belief in the importance of promoting a dialogic, reciprocal relationship between the research participants and researcher (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005), which also continues to influence my belief in the “the transformative possibilities of a dialogic community” (p. 41).

Equally important in designing this study was to tether the writing group, the teacher-writers, and me as the researcher to a larger, historical backdrop of institutional writing practices, one that accounted for our varied institutional positions: doctoral student and graduates of a Master’s program, instructor and student, writing expertise and teaching expertise, organizer/researcher/participant and teacher-writer/researcher/participant.
Institutional Context

Like many of the writers discussed by Whitney (2012), the teacher-writers and I were consumers (and investigators) of the texts we aspired to write, which meant we interpreted these pieces as aspirational texts. We gave these mentor texts the power to influence our words and structures and methodologies. In doing so, we felt at once liberated because of this knowledge source and stifled in the authority we granted it. Therefore, to study teacher-writers in a specific context who were writing for a specific purpose was to pursue “the ways writing mediates learning and enculturation to specific communities’ ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and communicating” (Prior, 1995, p. 289) and, more importantly, how this enculturation is influenced by the intellectual and cultural privilege of the learner. Lewis, Enciso, and Moje (2007) argue,

Some participant in discourse communities may have better access to or control of tools, resources, and identities necessary for full participant and control of Discourses and material goods. This access or control is not only an artifact of expertise . . ., but also of qualities of difference such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or economic status, depending on what aspects of difference matter most or are most marginalized in a given discourse community. (p. 17)

The formation of the writing group was predicated on the belief that although teacher education programs have a legacy of infusing writing into their curriculum by asking pre-service and graduate students to use reflection (Schon, 1987), qualitative research methodologies (Frank & Uy, 2004; Hubbard & Power, 2003), literacy autobiographies, and writing workshop methodologies (Atwell, 1998; Bomer, 1995; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983), there is still a pervasive lack of faculty talking explicitly to students about
how to address issues of “academic standards and rhetorical purpose” in their own writing (Rose & McClafferty, 2001). And although Rose and McClafferty (2001) published this article a decade ago, many other scholars have continued to research the lack of explicit writing instruction, especially in graduate education (Casanave, 2002; Micciche, L., 2011; Phillips, 2012; Sallee, Hallett, & Tierney, 2011). Even when using process discourse—invention, crafting, revising—it is difficult to convey the messiness of writing to students without giving them an opportunity to write for an audience beyond the classroom or the professor, for a purpose beyond curriculum design and methods.

As in most disciplines, graduate students, professors, and scholars in the field of education are expected to use the cultural practice of writing to meet the goals of courses, participate in institutional mandates, and demonstrate rigorous researched points of view (Casanave, 2002). Regrettably, although writing is a professional expectation in the field of education, often as elusive for credentialed writers (Casanave, 2002) as it for undergraduates, it is rarely taught explicitly in teacher education programs (or other disciplines, for that matter). Through varied case studies, Casanave argues that, even when the guidelines and rules have been seemingly spelled out in assignment instructions, students can still struggle to grasp the nuances of the rules, which leads most students to engage in “the uncomfortable process of actual trial and error practice and of gradually garnering awareness of patterns across conflicting behaviors and practice from more expert participants, whose own knowledge may remain largely tacit” (p. 24). Furthermore, Casanave, relying on Ivanič (1998), asserts that this negotiation between student and student-as-writer, which is influenced by the interpretation a student makes about who she should be as writer and how she—as a writer—should engage with the
available discourses, illustrates the very idea that taking up a particular type of writing is to commit to taking up a particular type of identity:

Learning the game rules and constructing identities as participants in the game seem to involve the uncomfortable process of actual trial and error practice and of gradually garnering awareness of patterns across conflicting behaviors and practices from more expert participants, whose own knowledge may remain largely tacit. (p. 24)

This process of appropriation or enculturation influenced the structure of the writing group as well as the writing and response activities of both the teacher-writers and me.

**Local Context and Participants**

The writing group included four teacher-writers, a fellow doctoral student, and me. We met in a variety of spaces over the life of the writing group—city libraries, an apartment complex’s front office, a university seminar space, and diners/restaurants. Where we met was much less important than why we met. Ultimately, we had one goal at each meeting: to workshop one of the teacher-writer’s manuscripts for two hours. We did not accomplish this fundamental practice until our fourth meeting. Our first three meetings were centered on establishing collective goals, sharing our personal goals and reasons for joining the group, co-authoring a conference proposal, designing routines we would follow, and defining what it meant “to workshop” a piece. Using my knowledge of traditional fiction and poetry workshops in Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs (Grimes, 2001), guerilla workshops formed by MFA students outside the classroom space, and the teacher-writers’ participation in research communities from the Teacher as Researcher course I taught, we established a pre-workshop protocol for the teacher-writer
whose manuscript was up for critique in the workshop: email her manuscript to each writing group member two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting and submit a brief description of her authorial concerns and issues (Appendix F). Like the writer, the other members also had pre-workshop obligations. They had to complete their reading of the manuscript while making extensive notes/revisions/suggestions. On the day of the workshop meeting, the group would spend almost two hours discussing the manuscript, the author’s concerns, and the readers’ suggestions/revisions. The readers would then give the annotated manuscript to the writer.

**The Participants: Mary, Jennifer, Paloma, Christy, Fina, and Angela**

Jennifer, Paloma, and Christy had completed the Teacher as Researcher course with me the spring before the writing group was formed. Mary was taking the course with me while she was participating in the group; she had also taken a writing course from me the summer prior to the formation of the writing group. All of us were women, mothers (or soon-to-be expectant mothers), and married. Our cultural experiences were widely different, from living in Brazil and Mexico, to being born and raised in the American South. Three of the teacher-writers were multilingual. Our professional lives were marked by various teaching experiences in K-16 settings, administrative positions, and political perspectives. Our similarities and differences ebbed and flowed throughout the life of the group, influencing what tools we relied to critique, what discourses we used to participate, and what goals we aspired to obtain.

**Mary.** I met Mary in a writing course I co-taught with Fina, a fellow doctoral student in the summer prior to organizing the writing group. In the fall of that same year,  

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3 All names have been changed for the protection of the participants.
during the first four months she participated in the writing group, Mary was also completing her master’s program at the large university where we had met. She had come to the university to pursue her degree, leaving three children behind in Mexico to be cared for by her mother, which meant she spent every other weekend traveling home on a bus to visit her family. She joined the writing group as a way to meet her short-term ambitions of getting published in a scholarly journal, an accomplishment she felt would increase her job prospects. But as she had voiced in the summer course, Mary considered herself a writer. She wasn’t shy or humble about her aspirations to publish fiction, poetry, and children’s literature. Not only was she dedicated to the writing group and the weekend trips back to Mexico, she was also committed to her fall 2008 courses—the teacher research course I taught, along with a poetry writing course in the English department—and writing her comprehensive exams. Mary was also a teaching assistant for an undergraduate Structured English Immersion (SEI) course.

During the second meeting of the writing group, she expressed her desire to be a part of a group that “would foster [her] already established identity as a writer.” She also believed that the writing group would “allow her to promote this identity, or bring it out, in her students,” which, pedagogically, meant that she saw an inextricable link between teaching writing and being a writer. Prior to joining the group, Mary had submitted a manuscript to Children’s Book Press and was awaiting a reply, describing the story as a narrative of others: “Traveling back and forth from Mexico allowed me to write the others’ stories because as I sat on the bus I realized that these people’s stories were my own.”
For her teacher research project, she collected data on interventions she was implementing in her Structured English Immersion course, hoping to produce a more culturally and linguistically sensitive teacher. First, she incorporated a writer’s notebooks (Buckner, 2005; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001) into the clinical setting, asking the pre-service teachers to “believe that they could write powerful lines as they got to interact with their English language learner.” She also arranged for every class meeting to begin with learning communities, a space for the pre-service teachers to share their observations. Finally, she incorporated multi-cultural literature into a pedagogically-focused curriculum in order to build empathy in her pre-service teachers, giving the opportunities to practice through fiction what she wanted them to achieve in their interactions with English Language Learners. Mary believed that multi-cultural literature in an education classroom served a “dual role . . . either serving as a mirror where a child may see his/her own life reflected in the story, or a window where the reader can see into someone else’s life.” She wrote, “I believe that Latino/a literature can inspire readers, validate language minority students, mirror their worlds, or create opportunities for others to see diverse ways of being.”

As a writer and reader of a variety of creative genres and a teacher educator, Mary merged her identities in her curriculum. She wrote, “As teachers, we have the responsibility to serve and provide opportunities for all. There is no one magic formula to generate sensitivity. However, I think that there are a series of powerful and magical elements that exist, like the writer’s notebook, Multicultural literature, and by creating solid communities of practice that are open to diverse ways of thinking and knowing.”
Mary graduated four months after we had begun to meet, taking a position at a community college in southern Arizona, but she still attended all of our workshops for three months via teleconference.

**Jennifer.** Jennifer was one of the most accomplished students in the Teacher Researcher course I had taught. She was organized and methodical in her approach to learning, writing, and researching, but in the same breath could live in the messiness of journal writing and memo writing. Jennifer was as attracted to the uncertainty that accompanied discovery as she was to presenting those tensions in a coherent way to her audience. Jennifer was revered by her research community, mentoring many of her peers through the process of research and writing, building an especially close relationship with Paloma, another teacher-writer in the group. On Paloma’s first night in the writing group, she relied heavily on Jennifer to validate her contributions. In describing her project to the group, Paloma kept turning to Jennifer, asking “Is that good? That make sense?” Paloma’s discoursal move was similar to ones I had seen many of Jennifer’s research community members make in my teacher research course. Jennifer was drawn to the communal act of sharing ideas, supporting colleagues in writing and revision. One night she told Mary: “The research community was my favorite part [of the teacher as researcher course], and it took a lot of stress off.”

Jennifer was a bilingual ELL specialist for K-6. Initially, when describing her purpose for joining the writing group, she spoke of her fear of “encountering an absence of scholarly interaction” now that her graduate degree was finished. Because she was back in the classroom without the intellectual structures that accompanied most graduate endeavors, Jennifer wanted to push herself to grow, maintain the writing life in which she
had engaged as a graduate student, and expose herself to publications and scholarly conversations in her field.

Like Mary, Jennifer was a mother. Because her husband had a second job as a musician, she frequently brought her sons to the writing group meetings. On the nights she brought them, she allowed them to play video games, a privilege her boys did not take for granted. Similar to Mary and Paloma, Jennifer was bilingual. Her husband was from Columbia, and they both spoke Spanish and English in their home.

**Paloma.** Paloma had a great sense of humor, one that emerged from her astute and self-deprecating observations about herself and the world. She was irreverent but spiritual, scattered but hyper-organized, laid-back but highly structured. Paloma spoke off the cuff with honesty and with manic attention to detail. When introducing herself and her project to the writing group she commanded herself to remember: “Okay. Okay. All right. Remember. What did I do?” Although the writing group had begun meeting in August, Paloma did not join until September. She had given birth to a baby boy three months prior to her first visit to the group meeting, but had still diligently corresponded via email until she could attend. This first night she came alone, one of the first times she had been away from her son.

Like Jennifer, Paloma was a leader, who spent a lot of time in the writing group meetings keeping us on track: “Should we get started?” “Getting back to it!” “Just anxious to get started, so I thought I would send out an email.” She also sent emails clarifying times and dates of meetings, asking follow-up questions about procedures and responsibilities, making sure that everyone was included. Although I was the organizer of the group in theory, Paloma was the organizer in practice.
Prior to joining the writing group, Paloma was a secondary English teacher who had taught a Structured English Immersion course, but the spring before the arrival of her son, she had quit her secondary position and was hired to teach first-year composition at a community college.

Paloma is multilingual, speaking English, Spanish and Portuguese. She grew up between the United State and Brazil, traveling and living between these two countries for the majority of her life.

Christy. Christy taught first grade at an elementary school. Prior to joining the group, as a student in my teacher research course, I had not gotten to know her beyond her coursework and class participation. She wasn’t outspoken and maintained a professional manner when conducting herself in the class. In reality, she blended in. I’m not sure I would have even known she was interested in publishing had it not been for one detailed conversation I had had with her close to the end of the semester. In the writing group, the Christy’s attitude echoed the memory I had of her from my classroom, what I believed to be indifference. She participated almost from a distance. She was the most practical, the least likely one to romanticize her reason for joining the group. She responded to my writing group invitation with a deliberate commitment minus the exclamation marks of enthusiasm. When I asked why she had joined, Christy responded that she had a desire to leave the classroom. She would teach one more year; revise, write and try to publish her research; and use that publication as a stepping-stone out of the classroom.

If others in the group aspired to be writers, be a part of a writing community—things that Christy said were important—but for different reasons, Christy’s was inspired
to write because of the gratification she felt after receiving an A on a paper. She was much more concerned with the product, less concerned about the process. And this emphasis of product was reflective of Christy’s hyper-individualism. She was willing to participate in the writing group because there would be individual benefits for her commitment to the group. Independence was highly valued by Christy; this was something that also influenced much her teaching, too.

Of all of the teacher-writers, I was probably the least familiar with Christy beyond her identity as student and teacher-writer. Months into the writing group I had one personal conversation with her, where I learned that we shared a geographical past: Texas. In sharing our common knowledge of places in Texas, I finally felt a connection with her beyond school. This one moment lessened the distance between us, but over the lifetime of her participation in the writing group, I was rarely able to move beyond the practical reasons for our relationship.

Christy left the writing group after six months, weeks after the teacher-writers had presented at a local conference. The night she told us of her decision to leave the group, she revealed that she had recently found out that she was pregnant, which had influenced her decision to leave the group. She felt it would be too much to handle the pregnancy, the writing group, her teaching, and her other commitments. We were so happy for Christy, but we were also sad to see her leave the group. We had all started this journey together and constructed roles of participation during the workshops. Much like when Mary moved to another town to pursue her career—when her physical absence had impacted how we functioned as a writing group—Paloma, Jennifer, and I were once again challenged to reconfigure what it meant to participate.
**Fina.** Fina was a fellow doctoral student in my program, but more than that she was my friend. We had very similar research interests: writing as identity work, practitioner research, and definitions and practices of agency. And although she studied these issues in elementary schools and I studied them in college classrooms, we often shared ideas, sources, and research experiences to support one another in our individual contexts. We read each other’s seminar papers, comprehensive exams, and dissertation chapters. In addition, we constructed an independent study with our doctoral advisor/mentor, whom we shared, and we even co-taught a course the summer before I formed the writing group. The course was designed to introduce K-12 teachers to a writing workshop model of teaching writing in school.

Initially, Fina joined the writing group because we had submitted a proposal for a national conference, and we hoped to use some data from the writing group for our presentation. And although she participated for only a short time, she was influential in how we constructed our practice of revision.

**Angela/Researcher.** During the first seven months of the study, I was finishing up coursework for a Ph.D in Curriculum and Instruction, with an emphasis on literacy, composition studies, and critical theory. I was also teaching two classes for the university.

Prior to entering a doctoral program, I had taught high school English for almost three years, and then had spent the next five years in an English department at a four-year university, the first two pursuing an M.A. in literature and the next three teaching and supervising secondary English pre-service and student teachers. It was during this time
that I had begun to notice a sort of ubiquitous anxiety about teaching writing among many cohorts of pre-service teachers.

Like Christy, I was from Texas. I was raised in both rural communities and large urban areas. I was also monolingual with very little experience working with English Language Learners (ELL). Most of my research up to that point had revolved around understanding how students learned and practiced writing in schools and how teachers mediated this learning.

Like Mary, Jennifer, and Paloma, I was a mother. My son was eighteen month old at the time the writing group had started, and because many of us were mothers, motherhood became a significant bond that dominated many of our informal conversations before and after the writing group meetings. It was also a factor that very much determined where and when the writing group was able to meet.

As a doctoral student, former instructor of the participants, and organizer of the writing group, I was hyper-aware of the power and status of my position. Moreover, because my educational background stemmed from a discipline—English—that had traditionally participated in defining literacy and being literate from a very Western, canonical, and scholarly position, I recognized my status as a former English teacher conferred on me an authority of which the participants were acutely aware.

Confirming this, I wrote in a reflection from our fourth meeting: “I’m worried because since I was their instructor I don’t want to be seen as trying to maintain control or that what I have to say is more valid especially when I disagree” (A. Clark-Oates, personal communication, October 18, 2007). Unfortunately, my intention to defer or to remain silent did not address how the participants’ attitudes, beliefs, and actions
positioned me as the leader, the instructor, and more importantly, as the final decision maker.

**The Writing Community.** As evidenced by the description of the participants, the writing community started when I mentored all the participants in varying ways across various courses into the practice of researching and writing.

I sent an email to former students, asking who was interested in forming a writing group to aid in the publication of their studies. Seven students initially agreed to attend our second meeting, but ultimately four students participated in the seven-month study. Two others expressed a desire but scheduling conflicts interfered with their ability to participate. Each participant from the seven-month study was given an IRB-approved information letter (Appendix A) and then signed a letter of consent (Appendix B). IRB approval is included in Appendix C.

Although this group was formed with the intention of creating a support context for teachers who wanted to write and publish, the group evolved into a support network for presenting at conferences, for teaching ideas, and for sharing experiences of motherhood. The group meetings and talk about writing also inspired the teacher-writers to begin another writing group for their creative pieces, which, in contrast, says something significant about how the teacher-writers constructed the group and its purpose, but even more importantly how their participation re-enforced the idea that narrative prose and academic scholarship are mutually exclusive, which is ironic based on their rationales for joining the writing group and their advocacy of teacher research. Moreover, it allowed me to also understand more intimately how my authority and expertise were being positioned. First, I was never asked to join the creative writing
group; our current writing group was never seen as a place that might discuss creative text; and I wasn’t even told the teacher-writers had formed another group. I stumbled on to this realization by participating in an email exchange that was an off-shoot of the teacher-writers’ participation in that other writing group.

**Data Collection**

To understand how the everyday practices of teachers in a writing group outside of the institution revise their own identities as teachers and writers, I used pre-existing data I had collected during a pilot study. For the pilot study, I captured the talk of the writing group while I fully participated in this local, human social activity by using an audio and video recorder. Approaching the writing group practice using a disciplined, systematic process of inquiry, while also participating, allowed me to engage in action research. In this way, I could capture data that would allow me to understand how a community of practice might shape the teacher-writers as pedagogues and authors. Fortunately, by capturing the discourse of the writing group for this study, I was able to return to the transcribed data to further analyze the discourse for how the teacher-writers’ identities were impacted through their participation in the writing group.

Another reason I chose to analyze my pre-existing data was because I thought it would give me the best opportunity—with my intimate knowledge of the participants and the writing group practice—to theorize how the practice of revision shapes not only texts but also the identities of writers, especially when this practice of revision is situated within a writing group. Moreover, by focusing on the discourses of the writing group, I wanted to better understand how the practice of revision constructs and eliminates agentic
moments for the teacher-writers and how the teacher-writers negotiates the fleeting agentic space between self and other.

**Writing Group Discussions**

To capture the discourse of the writing group, I audio-recorded the meetings. Early in the data collection process, I also video-recorded the official writing group meetings. And because I was particularly interested in what it meant for these teacher-writers to write and revise for audiences beyond their local school communities and even the writing group, I also video-recorded their preparation for and presentation at a local conference. For this study, I examined the transcriptions from the writing group meetings (Appendix D) to examine the teacher-writers’ discourses for an understanding of how “talk and text interact in situated practice” (Leander & Prior, 2004). In this way, I could also search for an understanding about how the identity of the teacher-writers was “inscribed in the communicative resources” upon which they had relied (Ivanic, 2005, p. 391), which would allow me to examine the discoursal construction of identities in the writing group, ones that shift, contest, and assimilate. In short, this pre-existing data gave me access to the writing group’s actions and emotions, its discoursal and textual revisions, thus giving me the means to make assertions about identity and agency.

**Document Submissions**

To understand how the discourse of the teacher-writers was influencing the revision choices of the teacher-writers, I collected the artifacts—drafts of writing, track changes and edits from respective group members, email exchanges, final drafts of submissions, and editorial committee comments. By collecting both the discourse of the writing group and the documents of the writing group, I could problematize issues of
authorship and ownership (Spigelman, 2000) by situating my interpretive lens on the discourse of the group through the manuscript revisions, while simultaneously interpreting the revisionist moves against the discourse in the group. In this way, I also had the potential to discuss the agency of the author as shared (Dixon & Green, 2005).

**Fieldnotes and Email Exchanges**

I took fieldnotes—what I consider reflections (Appendix E) from the writing group meetings—sporadically throughout the process in order to gain insight into the “movement to analysis and theory building” (Leander & Prior, 2004). I tried to capture routines and procedures of the writing group, the ones that were established to bring coherence to its practice. I also collected all the email exchanges between the teacher-writers because these artifacts, maybe even more so than the fieldnotes, illuminated what we were doing, why we were doing it, and what we hoped to accomplish. These data were collected to uncover the processes one is asked to undertake in order to be published in a scholarly journal. I wanted to construct an understanding of the tacit moment-to-moment practices in which aspiring writers engage.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis allowed me to do the following: use the text—the transcripts and the manuscript-in-progress—as the object of study (Dixon & Green, 2005; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007), understand the discoursal construction of identity (Gee, 2011a, 2011b; Ivanic, 1998, 2005; Lewis Enciso & Moje, 2007), and explore how talk and text interact in situated practices (Leander & Prior, 2004).

To meet these analytic goals, I first organized a notebook for each of the teacher-writers that included research plans (from the Teacher as Researcher course), initial final
drafts of the manuscripts submitted to the writing group, relevant email exchanges, and transcripts from their initial writing group meeting. I arranged the notebooks in chronological order to trace the revisions of the manuscript over time and how the talk from the writing workshops influenced these revisions.

**Writing Workshop Talk and Text**

After creating the case study notebooks, I chose to analyze the transcript from the first writing workshop for each teacher-writer. Using an inductive analytic approach, I read and re-read the transcript to identify themes of participation emerging among the teacher-writers during the one to two-hour workshops. I asked the following questions as I read the transcripts: How is the writer responding to her peers’ suggestions? Who makes the most revisions suggestions? How do the teacher-writers frame their revision suggestions? I then pursued the second question in more detail by dividing the transcript into episodes of revision, meaning that I highlighted each time a peer would raise a new topic of revision. By dividing the transcripts into episodes of revision, I could analyze the origin of the topic to understand how it was initially presented, identify how many times it was re-voiced by the other group members, and study how the writer responded and reacted not only to the topic itself, but also to the other members of the group. For example, in Paloma’s workshop, I made the first revision suggestion, directing the group to the structure of the vignette. Over the course of her workshop, the following topics emerged: the necessity of an aside, the purpose of the vignette in relation to the study, the effectiveness of the metaphor used to frame the study, strategies for authorizing Paloma’s voice, while simultaneously alluding to the theory, and the detriment of using labels like “intermediate ELL.” I then compared the major topics of revision that emerged from the
writing workshop to the email sent by the teacher-writer (Appendix F) to the writing group prior to the writing workshop date. In this email, the teacher-writer would attach her manuscript and in the body of the email outline tasks for the group to attend to while reading and critiquing. For example, when Paloma sent her manuscript to the group, she wrote:

Okay, I’m soooo nervous about sending my work out to such intelligent people! But I guess it’s better to do this now than make a fool of myself later in the published writing. Here are my main questions: How are my verb tense . . . How is the incorporation of my theory . . . Writers’ voice is an important issue for me. I would really like to have a scholarly and intelligent voice, but I also want to maintain my personality (which is usually playful in the classroom) . . . Coming from an English teacher perspective, don’t worry about sugar-coating your ‘needs improvement’ comments. It takes more time and writing to do so. I’m happy to hear it! Oh, but don’t be afraid to tell me what you liked too! (personal communication, October 11, 2007)

This comparison allowed me to begin to conceptualize the writer’s intent before, during, and after the group.

In addition to the steps above, I applied other forms of analysis to flesh out deeper understandings of emerging assertions. For example, I also categorized data using a binary from writing center scholarship that guides revision pedagogy: Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) versus Lower Order Concerns (LOCs). By coding the topics of revision using this binary, I had further evidence for supporting my interpretation that the revisions suggestions of the teacher-writers were closely aligned with one of Ivanič,
discourses of writing and learning to writer. For example, if a topic of revision was focused on a lower order concern—a grammar or punctuation issue—then I interpreted the revision suggestion as being more closely related to a skills discourse than a process discourse. Put simply, the HOCs and LOCs binary was the first layer of analysis that allowed me to begin addressing the differences between the topics of revision. In this way, I could move their practices of revision from a conceptual perspective to a pedagogical and practical perspective by determining for whom they were reading (Huckin, 2004). Were their revisions suggestions focused on sentence-level issues, grammar, and syntax? Were the teacher-writers more inclined to read on a more macro level, focusing on organization and ideas, fluidity and coherency, style and voice? I used the HOCs and LOCs categories as a way to begin defining similarities and differences among the participants in their approach to feedback. For example, although in her email Paloma asked the writing group to focus on topics that would be considered lower order concerns like verb tense, the group topics of revision were more focused on more global concerns like the narrative effectiveness of her metaphorical frame and the sociopolitical implication of her use of the label. In this way, the group was less concerned with sentence level issues and more concerned how her ideas, content, and organization might impact her ethos with the audience.

Other times, I analyzed the topics based on whom first voiced them and how many times the topics were re-voiced by the various group members. In addition, by categorizing the topics and analyzing the relational pattern, I was able to focus on the relationships that formed during the writing workshops. For example, in Christy’s session, three topics emerged from her workshop: (1) appropriacy of a honey-bee analogy
as structuring tool; (2) balancing author’s voice and ideas with other scholarly voices and ideas; and (3) pedagogical tensions that influenced the design of the research. At first, the emergence of these topics was relevant only in how they helped me to organize the transcripts into episodes. Later, these topics had more relevance when I discovered their correspondence with the concerns Christy had raised in her email and reiterated to the group the night of her writing workshop. The presence of these topics in the talk of the writing group confirmed their potentiality in the life of Christy’s revision, not only in her text, but in her identity, too. Moreover, Christy’s revision was contingent upon how her fellow teacher-writers discussed these topics from particular ideological positions, either opening up space for Christy to act/revise or closing-off her attempts at revision.

In addition, discourse analysis was used when I recognized that I needed deeper understand of how the teacher-writers’ discourse-in-use (Bloome & Clark, 2006) illuminated patterns of participation by the teacher-writers. For example, in analyzing each revision topic, I also marked specific lines in the transcripts where the writing group members were explicitly giving a revision suggestion. And then I analyzed the revision suggestion for its dis/alignment with the topic of revision being discussed at the time, for its ability to change the topic of revision, and whether it was re-voiced, extended, or ignored by others in the group. I also analyzed the revision topics with the deixis tool (Gee, 2011)—focusing on the personal pronouns and articles used. This helped me to understand under what context the revision suggestion was being made and at whom it was being directed. It also helped me determine to whom the revisions suggestions was being attributed.
In some instances, I used a pre-existing framework called the Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write Framework (Ivanič, 2004) to uncover the ideologies underlying the teacher-writers’ revision suggestions, moving from an inductive analysis to a more deductive approach. Ivanič (2004) developed this framework—comprised of “six discourses of writing and learning to writing” (p. 220)—to aid in the analyses of a variety of data types produced around issues of writing, including policy briefs, curricula, interviews and surveys with teachers and apprentice writers, and recordings of pedagogic approaches to teaching writing. I also used this framework for understanding the inextricable link between writing and identity construction. In short, this framework allowed me to use the data to understand how a text is a projection of the writer’s identity (Ivanič, 1998, 2004).

**Six discourses of writing.** I first identified the writers talk for its resemblance to one or many of six discourses: skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices, or sociopolitical. In this way, I was able to name each participant’s type of discourse being employed in the group, and in doing so, dig into how this discourse-in-use illuminated the teacher-writers’ ideological positions about writing and learning to write, which I could then discuss in relation to identity construction. This frame illuminated the tensions and competing discourses of the teacher-writers as being affiliated with a variety of identities emerging from the teacher-writers’ history, intention for writing, projection of self through writing, and interpretation of self by a reader (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010; Ivanič, 1998).

**Skills discourse.** For Ivanič (2004), a skills discourse is based on the premise that writing can be taught by focusing on “linguistic patterns and rules for sound-symbol
relationships and sentence construction” (p. 227). This means that writers would be evaluated on how they combined words and phrases to express ideas. In this way, correctness would be the focus of teachers’ formative and summative comments.

Grammar would also be explicitly taught. Much like the phonics approach to reading, a skills discourse would promote getting the smallest unit correct before moving to the next level, promoting the idea that learning to write is about hierarchal and linear knowledge acquisition. In short, a skills discourse for Ivanič (2004) orders literacy learning as “learning of decontextualized linguistic rules and patterns” (p. 228).

Creativity discourse. When using a creative discourse to discuss their projects, writers (or teachers) are focused on the content and style (p. 229) of the piece. This discourse moves our attention away from the smallest linguistic unit to a more intangible element wielded by the innate creativity of an individual. In this discourse, the teacher is less concerned with correctness and more concerned with providing ample time to write because the more “interesting, inspiring, and personally relevant topics” writers have access to, the more stimulated they will be to write (p. 229, para. 2). In this discourse, the author’s voice is honored regardless of intellectual or economic pedigree (para. 3). The pedagogical purpose of this discourse is to support the writer in entertaining the reader by “arousing the interest, imagination or emotions of the reader (p. 230). Finally, unlike the skills discourse, the creativity discourse recognizes the inextricable link between reading and writing. Unfortunately, for Ivanič (2004), a creativity discourse is not always aligned with a process discourse, meaning that even with a more democratic approach to teaching writing, where individual voice is privileged over the minutiae of grammar and linguistics, there is still a heavy emphasis on the product. Moreover, for many who rely
on a creativity discourse, the ideal product is attributed to a particularized (and literary) notion of writing.

**Process discourse.** For Ivanič (2004), the process discourse of writing encompasses two aspects of writing: the cognitive processes of the writer and the practiced processes of the writer. Citing Flower and Hayes (1980), she describes the model of composing processes with its “three central elements: planning, translating and reviewing” (p. 231). This cognitive research, she argues, leads teachers to be more aware of how writers engage with planning, drafting, and revising. As a result, teachers or writers who rely on a process discourse could either be focused on the mental processes of the writer or the processes in which the writer is engaged to compose a piece (p. 231, para. 1). She goes on to claim that the latter definition of a process discourse of writing—the focus on the practical processes—has dominated writing pedagogy for more than two decades because it is easy to systematize the elements and to teach explicitly, but in the last few years, the process approach has been critiqued for its seeming lack of attention to audience, time and space, genre and subject.

**Genre discourse.** Unlike the process discourse, the genre discourse is focused on the product, but not from the perspective that the product is solely shaped by the creative or mental processes of the writer or by the particularized steps of composition. Instead, a genre discourse focuses on writing “as a set of text-types shaped by social context” (p. 232). Therefore, teachers who rely on this discourse are concerned with how the “social factors” of the literacy event influences the processes of the writer, whether creative or practical (p. 233). In this way, the teacher would be transparent about the social expectations of the audience, which is ultimately influenced by the most appropriate text
type to convey the subject. Therefore, in this discourse of writing, appropriacy is the leading criterion for evaluation. For some, Ivanič argues that a genre discourse can seem too “prescriptive and simplistic, based on a false view of text-types as unitary, static and amenable to specification” (p. 234).

*A social practices discourse.* Out of all the discourses of writing, Ivanič (2004) presents the social practice discourse as the most holistic approach: “The text and the processes of composing it are inextricable from the whole complex social interaction which makes up the communicative event in which they are situated, and meaning is bound up with the social purpose for writing” (p. 234). By using this discourse in teaching writing, faculty would recognize that crafting a particular text would be influenced by the sociocultural context as well as the “social meanings and values of writing” (para. 3). Faculty would also provide authentic opportunities to write for an existing audience in a particular setting for a real purpose instead of constructing school-writing activities whose sole audience is the teacher. Unfortunately, this discourse does not translate into a clear assessment approach, which makes it less popular than the process or genre approach.

*A sociopolitical discourse.* Teachers who rely on a sociopolitical discourse usually do so in conjunction with a social practice discourse (p. 237). This discourse positions the writer as having less autonomy over her craft than the previous discourses described above. Instead, Ivanič (2004) describes this discourse as promoting the idea that “writers are not entirely free to choose how to represent the world, how to represent themselves, what social role to take, and how to address their readers when they write” (p. 238).
Trustworthiness

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, my study was developed from my deep reflections about the teaching and mentoring in which I was engaged with teacher researchers over many semesters. Consequently, my study emerged from a gap in my pedagogy, from a lack of follow through on one of my pedagogical promises. Teachers were eager to research and eager to write, but they needed a space to continue research and writing long after their degree programs ended. To address this problem, I structured a writing group—sans institution—to support the teachers who wanted to capitalize on the professional promises inherent in the teacher research movement. My study was not designed for the sake of conducting a study. I designed this study for and with the participants.

In a chapter in the Complementary Methods in Education, Cochran-Smith and Donnell (2006) assert that practitioner inquiry studies cannot be evaluated by traditional notions of validity and generalizability (p. 510). Moreover, for Cochran-Smith and Donnell, when evaluating the trustworthiness of a practitioner inquiry study, one should look for evidence of a systematic, intentional, and public approach to the research and analysis. From a design perspective, I was intentional and systematic about how I collected data, but equally important to the trustworthiness of this action research study was my decision to initially co-analyze the data with my participants, which led to us to make assertions for a presentation at a national conference on the idea of going public. For this dissertation, I re-analyzed and publicized my individual assertions at a variety of national conferences. In this way, I allowed the data to confirm and disconfirm my initial assertions (p. 510).
Moreover, to ensure the reliability of my process, I used multiple data sources, including audio transcripts, fieldnotes, email exchanges, drafts of manuscripts, editorial board letters, and video transcripts. During the data analysis process, I also wrote research memos, shared data sets and analysis with my mentors, and finally shared a complete manuscript of the dissertation with the participants. In addition, I presented aspects of my study at multiple national conferences—with the participants and by myself, which allowed for rich dialogue with colleagues and mentors in a variety of fields, including the field of literacy, English education, and rhetoric and composition, as well as the research participants.

Still, the trustworthiness of an action research study for this particular genre of dissertation might be weighted differently than an action research study in a school or community because the stakes are different. Herr and Anderson (2005) argue, “Given that universities are concerned with knowledge generation, the dissertation will necessarily place this knowledge-oriented aspect of action research at its center” (p. 58). But I would argue that my intention was less about generating knowledge and more about what Greene (1992) calls “‘making it meaningful’” (as cited in Herr & Anderson, p. 59).

Conclusion

I began this chapter with the idea that I consider myself a storyteller. To claim this in a dissertation, especially in a methodology chapter, is potentially risky, but I find it necessary. All good storytellers engage with the world around them, study \textit{that} world intensely (using multiple methods), analyze \textit{that} world through a frame (or perspective), and craft a believable tale about \textit{that} world. Greene (1995) writers, “Learning to write is a matter of learning to shatter the silences, of making meaning, of learning to learn” (p.
108). I would argue that you could replace *to write* with *to research* and her claim would resonate with many qualitative researchers. Accordingly, Merriam (1998) defines qualitative inquiry as being focused on meaning in context. My methods, my analysis, and my research study in general were all chosen so that I could craft a believable story about how teachers attempt to have their voices heard through revision by engaging and resisting a variety of learning-to-write discourses that impact their writing identities. In short, this story was about how in the midst of making our voices heard our voices changed.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Identity, Agency, and the Practice of Revision

Every discourse presupposes a special conception of the listener, of his apperceptive background and the degree of his responsiveness; it presupposes a specific distance . . . the distance between that point where the context begins to prepare for the introduction of another’s word and the point where the word is actually introduced (its ‘theme’ may sound in the text long before the appearance of the actual word) (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 346)

In this chapter, I discuss the findings that emerged during the data analysis process. I organized the findings by dividing the chapter into two sections. Each section corresponds to one of the following research questions:

• How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with others in a peer-writing group?

• How are teacher-writers’ identities constructed as they participate in the practice of revision with the journal editors?

I present the findings for each of these questions in one chapter to juxtapose the contexts in which the findings emerged. This juxtaposition also allowed me to echo my belief that identity and agency are influenced by the context in which writers reside. As a result, I first make claims about how participation in the writing group influenced the identity construction of the teacher-writers, and then I make claims about how the revise-and-resubmit process influenced the identity construction of one teacher-writer.

Within the writing group section of the chapter, I present two assertions that describe how the teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in the writing group during
our practice of revision. The first assertion is focused on the contested spaces that emerged during our practice of revision. To support this assertion, I highlight two issues that emerged in the data as having the greatest impact on generating contested spaces in our practice of revision. For each of these contested issues, I provide two episodes that best illustrate the negotiation of identity and agency. These episodes are comprised of transcript data, descriptions and interpretations of the contact zone, and reflective commentary. The second assertion from the writing group is focused on the how the shifting roles of reader/writer decenter writing identities in our practice of revision. To provide evidence for assertion two, I tease out issues that instigated the decentering of the reader/writer positions. I first focus on the writer’s position by discussing how the teacher-writers negotiate issues of authority and ownership. For each, I provide two episodes and reflective commentary. To further support the second assertion, I look specifically at a variety of reader positions that emerge in the data. In this section, I rely on a collage of episodes to show how these shifting reader positions, much like the issue of authority and ownership, decenter both the reader and the writer.

After discussing the two assertions that emerged from the writing group data, I then extend my analysis beyond the writing group. In the second section, I present an assertion that emerged from data I collected from one teacher-writer as she negotiated the revise-and-resubmit process of a landmark journal in the field of literacy.

**The Practice of Revision in the Writing Group**

The teacher-writers’ identities were constructed by experiences inside and outside the writing group. In this chapter, I focus on how the teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in the contested space of revision and through the shifting roles of
reader/writer. And although the semi-structured writing group meetings were framed by our shared histories as students and teachers, our practice of revision generated contested spaces and shifted our reader/writer positions—what I call contact zones—around a variety of issues. And by illuminating these issues and their subsequent contact zones, I illustrate the discoursal (Ivanič, 1998, 2004, 2005) and ideological fissures that occurred among the participants who perform as writers, as readers, and as writing group members. In doing so, I illuminate participation in the writing group as relational, contested, and unstable, all of which served to impact the identities of the teacher-writers.

In the sections below, I present two assertions in response to my research about how teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in the writing group.

**Assertion One: The Practice of Revision and Contested Spaces**

Although issues of syntax, semantics, and word choice contributed to the contested spaces in the practice of revision, it was issues of ideological perspective and negotiation of voice that generated contested spaces that most influenced the construction of the teacher-writers’ identities and allowed for agency.

**Discourses of writing.** The contested space in the practice of revision emerged around topics of syntax, semantics, and word choice, all of which influenced the identity construction of the teacher-writers. For example, Paloma grappled with verb tense, an issue that I argued was “not overtly addressable,” even though others in the group, in re-voicing her concern, validated Paloma and her ability to read like a journal editor. We also—without invitation—revised sentences for the teacher-writer being workshopped, using issues of clarity and meaning to justify our heavy editorial hand, which disrupted the idea of a single author by blurring the lines of authorship and identity. Although
these issues of micro-revision illuminated the identities of the teacher-writers, I discuss below two of the most substantive issues from the practice of revision in the writing group that best illustrate how the teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in contested spaces. By teasing out the various ideological perspectives that inform the teacher-writers’ discourses of participation, I was able to focus on how what I call contact zones influenced movement, or agency, for the teacher-writers. Another significant issue that illuminated identity construction through agency was what I call voice. Although I understand this term to be slippery, it allowed me to describe simply how the teacher-writers negotiated the balancing of their research and expertise with the research and expertise of published scholars, which invariably was a negotiation of identities.

Although I identified many moments from the writing group where various ideological perspectives influenced the teacher-writers and me, to effectively illustrate how these contested spaces helped to construct our identities, I provide two episodes from two different writing group meetings. In the first episode, I illustrate Paloma’s negotiation and ultimate shift in revision discourse. Across many of the writing workshops, Paloma relied heavily on “a process discourse,” which Ivanič (2004) defines as a belief that writing is the practical realization of the composing that occurs in the mind of the writer. But across the seven months we met as a group, Paloma began to rely more on a sociopolitical discourse to discuss her writing and revisions. The example below illustrates a key moment when this shift, which took months to happen, was initiated. In this moment, Paloma’s process discourse collided with my discourse that had a more sociopolitical tone to it. Ivanič describes as sociopolitical discourse as being reliant upon a belief that “writing, like all language, is shaped by social forces and
relations of power” (p. 237). Therefore, the contested space between Paloma’s discourse and mine constructed a moment for Paloma to re-voice, extend, or ignore my discourse and my ideological position. In short, I asked her to use her agency to either move or remain static.

The second episode examines how the teacher-writers circumvented Christy’s genre discourse—her worry about the appropriacy (Ivanič) of a metaphorical frame—to illuminate what they considered a more relevant issue in Christy’s piece: the idea that a writer’s ethos is dependent upon her ability to decenter the authoritative voice of the Other. Their elusive engagement with her concern generated a contact zone between Christy’s discourse and the collective discoursal voice of the group, which relied heavily on what Ivanič describes as a social practice discourse. The group’s collective discourse intended to expand Christy’s interpretation of what it meant to write for publication by implying through their revision suggestions that “writing encompasses writing in all social and cultural contexts, rather than privileging the types of writing associated with education and other formal context” (p. 234). As a result, the other teacher-writers believed that Christy’s notion of the published article was too influenced by her need to fit the text type to the context alone. For the group, the metaphor would not belie Christy’s ethos if she revised it, extended it, and addressed other issues in the manuscript.

In addition, they introduced a discourse that showed how the social practices of the context were also partially determined by the subject and audience.

**Episode one: Process discourse and Paloma’s intent.** In Paloma’s teacher research study, Paloma designed a curriculum that had the potential to disrupt the transmission model of education (Freire, 1971), a model she and her school had
privileged, especially in her classroom with English Language Learners (ELLs). To do this, Paloma used book clubs to build a more dialogic space between herself and her students by using literature, allowing student choice, and encouraging rich talk. In describing what she hoped to achieve, Paloma writes in her introduction:

The environment should be authentic, it should flow naturally, students should feel comfortable voicing opinions, they should connect the text to their personal lives, each is excited, and somewhere in this educational utopian mess, I see myself as a thriving, shining teacher. But therein lays the problem. The spotlight should not be on me but on my students. This research project helped me begin to understand what my teaching desperately lacked, and I found that book clubs, due to its inherent nature, structure, and process, curbs my tendency to dominate important discussions.

Although her students came with rich literacy experiences in their home language, Paloma was interested in enriching her students’ school experiences as they learned English. To do this, she introduced book clubs into her reading course for English Language Learners. As her former instructor who had mentored her through the process of choosing a research topic, I understood her curriculum choice as an attempt to disrupt the normative pedagogical practices that she employed and that had defined learning as a unidirectional process from teacher to student, especially for students who were ELL.

She wrote in her research plan:

As an English teacher, literacy is very important to me. Naturally, it encompasses reading and comprehension, but I have realized through my many studies and teaching experiences, that if the students find ways to connect to the
text personally, and if they are able to express these personal connections in an authentic way, their literacy skills can be heightened as well as their motivation and interest in literacy. I wanted reading to become an authentic, student centered and student led process.

Although aware of the politics of educating English Language Learners, Paloma’s intent seemed to be more benign, more confined to articulating the pedagogical contradiction between her practice and her worldview. And in sharing her research in writing, Paloma wanted the manuscript to be the “practical realization” of how she had addressed this contradiction (Ivanič, 2004, p. 225).

_The zone of contact._ Paloma was the second teacher-writer to offer her paper for critique. We were almost thirty minutes into the workshop when there was a ten-second pause following her explanation as to why Nancy Atwell (1998) was easier to integrate into Paloma’s manuscript than other scholars when the following discussion occurred:

Paloma: Well, definitely I think Atwell was more conversational, so her quotes were a little bit more – at least, I think in line with my voice a little bit, so maybe that's why it helped flow. (Ten-second pause)

Angela: I think I just also had a problem that so much of the time in the paper, you're just using this label of like the intermediate ELL (my emphasis). You know, as if it's a real existing thing outside of the classroom.

In this moment, by narrowing the group’s attention to this textual detail—in particular, the sociopolitical weightiness of Paloma’s word choice—I moved our attention away from the craft of her manuscript, away from what Ivanič (2004) calls “the
practical processes involved in composing a text” (p. 225). Instead, I decentered the words, sentences, and paragraphs of the manuscript, ignoring Paloma’s intent, to discuss the critical impact of her labeling of an English Language Learner as intermediate. I believed that since Paloma hadn’t been critical in her use of the term, she was giving her audience permission to consume the text uncritically.

Jennifer: (Over me) Existing thing.

Paloma: Right.

Angela: And I just thought this was a real opportunity for you to kind of disrupt—

Paloma: Okay.

Angela: —you know, by acknowledging things like—“in my intermediate ELL class there exists a wide disparity of English skills level ranging from what has been traditionally labeled in school as low and high.”

Paloma: Love it.

In this exchange, I wanted Paloma to understand that students have varying abilities, but those abilities get erased when teachers and schools label students through the language of tracking: low, intermediate, and high. The discussion then continued.

Paloma: See, when I was typing that, I was like, "Oh! like but this is not the argument I’m trying to attack, so I better not worry about it. But that's a really good way of just subtly just—

Angela: And then so what I—
Paloma: (interrupts) and also, you know, we tested them and those tests suck. And as—

Angela: All right.

Paloma: And aside from that (chuckling), um, we, we would just, like, ignore the tests even just being like: “I think this person should be in,” you know what I mean?

Paloma: It's not even—

Angela: (interrupts) That's why—

Paloma: —I need to give merit.

Angela: And everything you're saying in here, it feels the contradiction every time that I read—

Mary: A label

Angela: Yes, because it feels like you're trying to get beyond that, so I put another unique—“not a unique element of the ELL class, but a unique element of creating a community and classroom is that I had to acknowledge and privilege difference.”

Paloma: I like that.

In this way, Paloma acknowledged that she had at least considered addressing the sociopolitical consequences of her word choice, but thought it would distract from the original intent of the manuscript. It is also important to note that by using the word “attack” and by claiming that it would be better not to worry about this argument, Paloma was hinting at some understanding of the political tension that undergirds public discussion about education and English Language Learners. This awareness is further
evidenced by her discussion of how she and her colleagues handled the testing of students. In sharing this anecdote, Paloma wanted the group to understand that she didn’t support the testing or the tracking of her English Language Learners. Furthermore, by sharing this subversive practice and explaining the intent behind it, she showed an understanding that education has sociopolitical consequences. From my ideological position, I interpreted her dismissive testing practice as evidence of Paloma’s commitment to disrupt the normative practices of testing that seemingly erase difference by using generic labels that limit difference to a few supposedly knowable categories, but although I was intentionally being political in my choice of the word labeling, Paloma’s quick acquiescence to the revision showed she interpreted my suggestion in a fairly innocuous manner, almost as if it was more of a textual revision than an ideological one.

The discussion between Paloma and me continued for another few minutes and followed a similar pattern. After I finally read aloud my suggested textual revisions to the group, Paloma interjected with phrase that implied she agreed: “I like that.” In a classroom, our discussion would have probably ended within minutes of it starting, and based on Paloma’s acknowledgment that she agreed with me, we would have ended our exchange with an understanding that Paloma would revise her text in a way that would allow the text to carry the sociopolitical sentiment I felt it needed. Instead, both Mary and Christy re-voiced my suggestion, pushing Paloma a little further in her understanding of how detrimental the label could be to her piece. Moreover, they too felt the label was not reflective of Paloma’s practice. Mary directly questioned her about the use of the label.

Mary asked, “Why do you use the label here?”
And Christy said, “One of the first things you do is label them . . . And I know that’s probably not you, you know?”

In re-voicing my suggestion about the implication of labeling students, Mary and Christy constructed a more contested space, and in doing so, pushed Paloma to reveal that although she agreed with our revision suggestion, she didn’t know how to “express that.”

Paloma continued, “Because like it or not Raquel read a fifth grade book.” After pointing out this “fact,” she further explained that she found it difficult to produce a curriculum that valued the differences in experiences, practices, and abilities of her students in the classroom.

“But you know, if I could teach a room full of Lins,” she continued, “it would have been easier as opposed to a room full of Raquels, but that they would read the same book and that would’ve been fine.”

Paloma’s reaction here, maybe more than at any other point, illuminated the contact zone of revision. Her statement directly contradicted what she had said earlier in the conversation about wanting to ignore the practice of testing and tracking, which showed she was grappling with the space between her beliefs and the beliefs of the others in the group. The conversation was no longer just a one-on-one negotiation about her text or tone or syntax. The conversational turn revealed the ideologies undergirding our discourses of writing and revision. Therefore, in re-voicing my suggestion, Mary and Christy held Paloma accountable for her choice, especially by re-voicing my concern in the form of a question. And by using an interrogative, unlike me, they invited Paloma to grapple with the ideological distance between herself, the text, and the group. They constructed a space for a shift—a moment for her to be agentic. In this way, Paloma had
to answer; she had to justify the use of the label, and in doing so, her response revealed an internal tension. In this sense, Paloma extrapolated the criticism of her manuscript to her practice as a teacher, the confluence of text and self. The text was an object, but it was not autonomous from the practices from which it was birthed. Therefore, if the other group members were implying that the use of the label in the manuscript was uncritical, then they were also implying that Paloma was uncritical. This conversation reached its peak when Paloma finally admitted some frustration, an emotion we had not seen up to this point.

“I’m having a hard time with this,” she said in response to Jennifer. Jennifer was Paloma’s confidant and best friend, the one who had worked alongside Paloma in our teacher research course, the one who had struggled with Paloma as they learned to collect data, analyze it, and present it to an audience. When Jennifer finally agreed with the rest of us, Paloma admitted, more openly than she had, that although she understood her labeling to be “ick” she couldn’t imagine how to describe the students without it.

In the end, I advised her to use the label “intermediate” in a critical way, one that would show how inadequate it was for capturing the character and abilities of her students. A suggestion she “loved” in its ability to “totally devalue the school system like they’re total idiots.”

Reflective commentary. Our revision practice generated a contested space, a space that illuminated the intimate connection between text and self; a space that challenged Paloma to question the ideological distance between herself and her text as it was interpreted by others; and a space that revealed the contact zone between self and other. Without the writing group, without four readers explaining their rationale for
revision through their interpretations of Paloma’s text, and without Mary and Christy’s rhetorical invitation, Paloma likely would not have reflected as deeply as she did in that moment. She would have been less agentic because she would have lacked the ability to appropriate the meaning of our sociopolitical discourse (Ivanič, 2004) revision from her already established process discourse. As her former instructor, I am assured that Paloma would have made the revision suggestion textually, but I don’t think she would have been persuaded to incorporate the suggestion into her thinking, her practice, and her shifting identity. This shift in Paloma’s epistemological position—from a position where the writer’s intent is more influential than the reader’s interpretation is (even more important than the unintended sociopolitical consequences of a text)—points to a shift in her identity as a writer. Through their commentary, the writing group constructed an audience Paloma had yet to imagine (and thus had yet to encounter). By challenging her to revise her manuscript to account for a different set of discourses and social relationships (Burgess and Ivanič, 2010), and to imagine a different reader whose perception of the piece and its author might not align with her own authorial intention, we showed Paloma different ways that she might revise her discoursal and authorial selves (p. 247). This shift in identity was predicated on her ability to expand the profile of her audience. Furthermore, this expanded profile was only possible if Paloma had access to others’ experiences. After all, a writer’s perception of audience is closely tied to experience (and possibilities of experience) and to her ability to assess “the social situation in which she is writing, and on the basis of her experience, anticipate who will read her writing” (Burgess and Ivanič, 2010, p. 247). Put simply, Paloma shifted her identity as a writer through the practice of revision by incorporating the possibility of a
new audience with different values and beliefs. To communicate with this audience, Paloma would have to revise her manuscript in a way that incorporated these new values and beliefs into her already established epistemological position.

**Episode two: Genre discourse and Christy’s intent.** Christy’s teacher research project was a case study of Nina, an English Language Learner whom Christy labeled as “low-performing” and “at-risk.” Christy wanted to understand more deeply how Nina negotiated the reading workshop, a pedagogical approach constructed by Christy to foster independence in her six-year-old students. In her manuscript, Christy wrote, “Though I am a constant fixture in the classroom and ultimately the one in charge, the children understand that they are responsible for themselves and their reading progress during readers’ workshop.” She reiterated this during her writing workshop:

Christy: Well, the tension for me wasn't—it really wasn't just Nina. It was the idea that there are kids that fall behind and originally, the tension was: is that something I'm doing wrong? So I started it with my hive, because I'm like, "Here's where I'm going. I want independence." I want you to know what I want, and this kid isn't, doesn't fall into that. She's not independent. She's not confident. She doesn't have self-efficacy so where does she—so do I need to adapt to her or does she need to get with the program in my room, you know?

To reveal this tension to the reader using narrative structures and literary language, Christy chose to frame the beginning of her manuscript with a metaphor: honeybee as teacher:
The honeybee is an overworked and under-recognized creature. She spends her days lapping nectar and collecting pollen. Upon returning to the hive, she performs a ritualistic waggle dance to alert the other workers where she has been and proceeds to feed the grubs, clean the cells, and protect the home. In her short lifetime, she will produce only enough honey to fill a tablespoon. In the event that she might have to defend the hive, she will gladly give her life by thrusting her stinger into the enemy, leaving her insides behind. She does all of this out of instinct, never complaining. It is her calling, what she was created to do. Yet, by all accounts the honeybee is an overworked and under-recognized creature. As a teacher, I can relate to the plight of the honeybee.

In short, she storied her teaching and research experiences. Still, throughout her workshop, Christy articulated insecurity about her decision to use this metaphor as a frame for the manuscript. From the beginning of the workshop, she expressed self-doubt:

Christy: I did have – yeah, I did have a couple of questions . . . that were because I had separated myself from it. And I got to a point where I was very happy with it and then as I read it again, I was like, "Oh, I don't know if that flows. I don't know if my analogy is appropriate." You know, like if it—since it doesn't really carry out all—it's very strong in the beginning and strong in the end and yet you kind of lose it in the middle. You know, like is someone going to think was it too narrative, is it too – so there were a lot of things where I was second-guessing myself –

Angela: Okay.
Christy: —the further away from it I got.

Her claim about second-guessing herself was reiterated even after she made the following statement: “Like, I like it, that's why I kept it in there, so far.” And although she claimed to believe that the metaphor worked well, she continued to ask if a reader would have a different opinion about it. She said, “Because I don't want it to—I don't want people to think, oh I'm being unrealistic and simple.” She was unsure if this reliance on a creative frame was reflective of the genre of the published article. She also voiced this concern by relying on the adverb too: asking if her manuscript was too narrative, too loose in the middle, too cute, too simple, or too unrealistic. The issues Christy raised at the beginning of the writing workshop reflected her preoccupation with appropriacy.

Although her questions addressed the suitability of her style, the appropriacy of the honeybee analogy, and the readability of her organization, she might as well have been asking if her current manuscript would pass. She wanted to know: Had she played by the rules of scholarly writing/journal submissions (Casanave, 2002)? Would other players at the scholarly table, especially the editorial board of Literacy Journal4, view her performance as fluid, believable, understated? Christy’s concerns about how she would be perceived as a writer, expressed in what Ivanić (2004) calls a genre discourse, showed that Christy’s practice of revision was reliant on her desire to identify with others people who write these types of manuscripts using similar “discoursal and generic features” (Ivanić, 2004). The questions posed by Christy also demonstrated an acute awareness of

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4 A pseudonym has been used for the journal to protect the identity of the participants.
audience expectations and an understanding that these expectations were constrained by a disciplinary frame (Haar & Horning, 2006).

**The zone of contact.** We spent almost twenty minutes discussing the analogy with Christy, giving her many different revisions that would allow her to keep the analogy but make it a more integrated part of her manuscript. This was especially important since after three different revision suggestions she professed: “Yeah, I think so. I think it is a matter of opinion, though. Like, I like it. That’s why I kept it in there so far.”

In the beginning, I even tried to get Christy to understand the sociopolitical impact of her frame from a feminist perspective, as I had done during Paloma’s workshop.

Angela: The only dep- the only issue I have with that and I wanted to hear what you guys thought about this is more of like a critical – like did you feel that because the honeybee is female that you're pandering to this kind of like feminization of the teaching field that's so prevalent in what a lot of people think keeps it at a professional level that's lower than everything else?

Christy: It didn’t even occur to me.

Jennifer: I, I had a problem with the little footnote about the male honeybee.

Christy: Aha (mocking laugh) – I didn’t, that was something I wrote, cutesie . . .

Jennifer: (Talks over) From the critical
Christy: at the beginning and then I was like is that even, that's not necessary in a scholar like—

Christy: —because my little note, like—

Jennifer: It’s a bit distracting

Mary: Yeah, I think that I wrote that too here. I just marked it the footnote—

Angela: The footnote is—

Mary: —yeah the footnote is—

Christy: Uh-huh, no that's fine.

Christy: I’ve been going back and forth with it.

Angela: In my opinion, that's your right in terms of I think it works so well to gel everything together so I just wrote in my comment, I wonder if you can problematize that a bit at the beginning. Like you're going with this metaphor but be transparent about the political or social implications that it could have with someone reading it.

Jennifer: Uh-huh.

Angela: Like you're saying I picked this and I choose this metaphor because even with the understanding that you know, I don't want to propagate these kind of like feminist notions of teaching or—

Christy: Okay.

Angela: —you know, I don't know, do you guys think that's—

Paloma: No, well—
Angela: —appropriate to be transparent like that?

I discussed how I believed that teaching was devalued somewhat because of the feminization of the profession and that she needed to be careful that her depiction of teaching did not unintentionally reinforce this. Furthermore, if Christy chose to construct the lives of teachers as analogous to the lives of worker bees, then I advised her to be more transparent about the choice, addressing it from a critical perspective. Her response: “It didn’t even occur to me,” and with that said, the contact zone was quickly diffused, and we moved on to another suggestion. Fina tried to stress issues of effectiveness: if the reader had to work hard to understand the purpose of the metaphor then it was detracting from Christy’s purpose for writing and needed to be reconsidered.

Reflective commentary. This self-doubt, not unique to Christy but voiced so clearly by her, was representative of the kind of talk used by the other teacher-writers, especially during their respective writing workshops. Christy expressed her anxiety about choosing a narrative style and a metaphorical frame because she didn’t want the audience to read this as soft, not rigorous, or unscholarly. Even as a writer who valued aesthetics in writing, she worried that this style would be less credible or reliable. In short, she didn’t trust herself or the wily reader enough even though she had plugged her manuscript into an organizational structure of another teacher scholar who had been published in the journal Christy was targeting, what Burgess and Ivanič (2010) call modeling or constructing rather than composing (p. 233). In this contact zone between a genre discourse—focused on the text type and the organization—and a social practices discourse—focused on how the context and purpose for writing influences the text and the processes more than an arbitrary set of features—we wanted Christy to understand
that the text is never free from the social interaction it fosters between reader and writers (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010, p. 234). Therefore, Christy used her agency to disregard the writing group’s suggestions, closing the contested space between Christy’s concern about the appropriacy of her metaphor and the revision suggestion she was given to address her concern. Even though we were seemingly discussing the same topic—the metaphor—we all had our own ideological rationales for the revision ideas we offered, and none of these varying perspectives resonated with Christy. Therefore, she did not feel inclined to move.

Voice. Issues of whose voice should be privileged in the manuscripts of the teacher-writers also generated contested space in the practice of revision, where identities had to be negotiated. I am using the word voice to describe this issue because this was the word the teacher-writers used when explaining the importance of the teacher-writer being as present in her manuscript as the published research and scholarship. Below, I present two episodes that best illustrate the negotiation of identities in the contested space of voice.

Episode one: Plugging in and Christy’s intent. Unlike for Christy, it was not the metaphor of the worker bee that had given the group so much angst. Instead, the contested space around the metaphor generated a path that allowed the other writing group members to voice what their concerns were—most of which had nothing to do with the effectiveness or appropriateness of the metaphorical frame. Although my attempts to politicize the metaphor, which I discussed earlier, had gone un-voiced by any of the other group members besides Christy when she had said, “I didn’t even occur to me,” it was my re-assertion that Christy rethink the political implication of equating the waggle dance with theory and practice that allowed the conversation to be picked up by Mary.
Mary: Another thing that I found in the waggle dance that you are putting research—you're pulling in research and your beliefs and your theoretical framework, but it's too quoted. I think that if you put in more of what you think and your beliefs and just—

Christy: Okay.

Mary: —like, so-and-so, but not a lot—

Mary: —yes, but your own interpretation of what you of what these people believe.

Christy: Uh-huh.

Mary: —and what you believe, but together, not make it just a quote from somebody else.


Mary: Uh-huh. It sounds like just like Vygotsky and Lemke—but 100 percent what they say.

Christy: Okay.

Mary: Not your point.

Paloma: And maybe that would solve it because that—I put under that paragraph second paragraph waggle dance evidence. I felt like, you know, that quote and condense it but maybe if you put your own words it will be condensed, you know?

Christy: Okay.
Paloma: But I guess we'll just try and red flag and I'm like reading, and I'm like, “Okay, I'm a little confused.” Or you know what I mean and then I, I red flagged, okay. So—

Angela: And I think you've done—I mean, just the conversation I had with you last fall or last spring and the things that I think you've made really present here in this group is that you have thought about this stuff.

Christy: Yeah.

Angela: A lot. You know, you're not just—you weren't just going to a book and pulling out a quote from Vygotsky I mean, you have been spending years trying to refine really theoretically what you believe about teaching. And so to not have your voice present, and what that meant for you to grapple with those issues, I think, is really important to remember, too.

Christy: Okay.

Christy: Right.

The zone of contact. Throughout the writing workshop, Christy engaged with the group’s suggestions using non-committal responses—what I describe as conversational placeholders that don’t impact the direction of the talk or the ideas. And she initiated this pattern the first time the other teacher-writers raised the issue of Christy’s voice being sidelined for a theorist’s voice. Similarly, as this conversation continued, I re-voiced Mary’s concern that Christy’s voice was drowning in all of those direct quotations from theorists and other scholars.
Angela: Before we move on too, I just wrote—and you can look at my comments—and this might contradict what you just said, too, about condensing that section. So let me just say what I have to say here, and then everyone kind of jump in. I thought these things that you list, where you say, “At those overwhelming,” and I'm in the right-hand column, kind of down at the bottom—“At those overwhelming and intimidating times I can take solace in a few things I know to be true,” so there it's like, oh, you've done the thinking. You—

Christy: Uh-huh.

Angela: “Wherever we are, that's where we start, number one. We have to notice language before we can talk about it, and we have to do a lot of good readings before we get good at it.” And those three things are huge, and I feel like you just say them, and then we move on.

S: Yeah.

Angela: And I'm saying this is what I wrote—“These are important. I wonder if you should address them individually”—

Christy: Uh-huh.

Angela: —and then by doing so, you really start to situate where you stand, theoretically, and you were not just quoting.

Christy: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: And you have a place to do that already. And one of the things I was—when I was reading through this section, I thought, “Okay,
okay, this is what she believes.” Vygotsky, Lemke and then I thought, “Wait, I'm rushing through this. I'm forcing myself to read this.” And as a reader, I don't want to have to force myself to read it. So I'm wondering if you take this frame that you have that you've espoused and you open up your, you know, here we are on page six, “Wherever we are, that's where we start.” And you open that section up with the frame that fits that. The theory that you—that—the theory that communicates.

As the third writing group member to infuse her revision suggestion with the idea that Christy was privileging outside research over her own voice and ideas, Jennifer strengthened the viability of this revision strategy. And much like Paloma did in the episode I described earlier, it took Christy several minutes and several more conversational threads before she engaged in the contact zone we had constructed around the idea of writer’s voice.

In a seemingly unrelated conversation about Christy’s organization, we learned that much like her over-reliance on the language and style of her secondary sources, Christy had also found an article she could plug into when organizing the content. By using the word plug, Christy revealed how influenced she was by other scholars, other published writers, and others who she believed had more experience and authority. Consequently, every revision suggestion made or concern raised seemed to circle back to the idea that Christy was not producing knowledge. She was plugging herself into a generic form, where outsiders were still more of an expert than she. Even when I brought
up the discordance in her theoretical frame, Mary maneuvered the conversation back to Christy’s lack of presence in her own manuscript.

Mary: I think that once she rephrases that and explains what you're explaining right now, it will come in easily and then you can make the connections because here, we don't understand your point of view just yet—

Christy: Uh-huh.

Mary: —because you're putting someone else's words. But once you start explaining it, you start bringing in, okay, this ties with this belief. My belief with this theoretical framework, so then I can tie it together and make it more of your own writing.

Finally, the central tension of Christy’s writer’s workshop is revealed when Fina questions Christy, asking her to justify her depiction of Nina.

Fina: Cause it does get at my question when you said all those things about her. She was this, this, and this. How did you know that?

Christy: How did I know that she wanted that? From or how did I know she was choosing her words?

Fina: No.

Angela: Yeah

Christy: Demands a second look? (Fina and Christy talking over each other)

Angela: Yeah. (And then reading) “She approaches nearly every task with caution and apprehension. She waited for help, rarely started any
assignment unless someone, usually me, was willing to guide her through it” Oh, wait. And then the first one was, uh-huh!

Christy: It came from, this class was in the spring, so it came from what I knew about her from October and the fact that I had been tutoring her in. Watching her, trying to figure her out because I thought of my class as something that was very inviting and very social. And they certainly, I thought, were inviting her into this club, and here she was, for some reason, you know, wouldn’t take risks and wouldn’t . . . did not feel comfortable and wasn’t . . . Yeah . . . so I was like: what is with this kid. And I’m like, you know what, she, she, she honestly reminded me a lot of me because I was very much a perfectionist. I wasn’t talkative in class. My classroom isn’t necessarily the classroom I would have thrived in because I was so fearful. So I saw that in her very quickly. And then I saw that she, um, made big leaps in the beginning. I mean she went from a non . . . didn’t know her name in October to a beginning, an emergent reader by December. She wanted it so badly. And that was different from what, like I mentioned before, I had some kids that I, that were in the original group. I was going to, you know, clump them together like “these are my low kids and I don’t know what to do with them.” They’re not . . . whatever I’m doing is not working. And then it turned into, well, no, that one doesn’t . . . that one’s kind of lazy, and that one doesn’t come to school, and this
one doesn’t, you know, all of these reasons, this one has a learning
disability. But her, she really wants, yet something is keeping her
from feeling comfortable in my classroom. So that’s what I was
thinking. Do I need to own that . . . something . . . that she’s a
student of mine and she’s uncomfortable in my classroom or do I
need to say: this is your classroom get comfortable? Yeah
(Chuckles). Yeah. (Pause). So it seems like, um, there were times
when I was trying to put in someone else’s word to say kind of
what I’m saying right now It seems like, um, there were times
when I was trying to put in someone else’s words to say I know
what I’m saying right now or I need to. In fact, even be more
narrative? Is that . . . I keep taking that, Mary, as what you’re
saying is that you need more of my voice in it. And I’m looking

Angela: (Interrupting) Because the parts where are . . . good. You know,
like, I get to the end and I’m like, uh-huh! Or, you know, I feel
something. I actually feel something moved or . . . .

Christy: (Interrupting) There are times where I wrote that paragraph, and
there are times where I started with a quote and I wrapped my
words around it, and so I need to go back too . . . .

Jennifer: (Interrupting) I’m also thinking about something you said earlier
when you were talking about the proposal and saying how when
you were going to the writing, how you were being validated and
how you felt like you were the peer of the person who was writing
. . . treat yourself that way (Christy: yeah) allow you to be
Vygotsky’s peer because that is who you are. (Everyone: hmmm.
that’s true). Let your words be beside his and his and yours
together.

Christy: I do think when you read something by . . . anyone in print I do
take that as “this is . . . this is gold,” and I couldn’t write it better,
and so sometimes you see their words, and then you see my words
and I . . . I can add more of me in it, but that’s my struggle right
now, like, how do I get the confidence to do it? You know.

Through Fina’s invitation to explain her claims about Nina, Christy finally talked herself
toward the contact zone that emerged throughout her workshop. Much like Paloma,
Christy admitted that she struggled to understand how to revise her piece; she understood
why, but she didn’t know how, and this lack of knowledge had almost deterred Christy
from engaging in the contact zone of revision; it almost kept her from using her rhetorical
agency to entertain a move in a new direction.

Reflective commentary. Similar to her insecurity of about appropriacy (Ivanič,
2004), Christy’s admission that “there were a lot of things where [she] was second
guessing [her]self” revealed that she read her discoursal decisions in the manuscripts as
disclosing an identity that would be doubted when her manuscript encountered the
perceived audience to whom she was writing. In the same manner, the other teacher-
writers in the group had similar concerns about how the manuscript privileged the voice
of other theorists and scholars over the expert voice of Christy. By voicing and re-voicing
this concern, the teacher-writers and I repositioned the tension between novice and
expert. We didn’t believe this tension was grounded in craft. We believed this contact zone was predicated on Christy’s inability to represent her own voice over that of the theorist or scholar. Consequently, unlike Christy, we believed her heavy reliance on another’s voice belied her credibility and authorship. In addressing the issue of the author’s voice as expert, especially in a teacher research study, we wanted her to reflect on the socio-historic position of teacher writing and teacher scholars, to think about the consequences of *plugging* herself in or “trying to put in someone else’s words to say” what she knew about her classroom, what she had observed about her classroom, and what she had systematically and intentionally researched about her classroom.

At the urging of her peers, Christy moved toward a deeper understanding of an ideological position she had not considered (or at the very least, could not have articulated) before she participated in the writer’s workshop: Writing is more than finding a textual formula and plugging yourself in, meaning that genre is not a static formula. Genre conventions are dynamic and respond to the rhetorical intentions of the writer and the rhetorical interpretations of the audience. Earlier in the evening, when discussing a conference proposal (before her workshop began), Christy had hinted at this ideological understanding when she argued that our proposal should be targeted at current teachers only. She said, “*Current* because that was my voice, and my knowledge that I put in my paper came from experience and what I had to contribute. What I . . . what was I seeing and how was I interpreting that as a teacher.” Later, she even said that her “strong point” in conducting her research, analyzing it, and writing about it up in “tying the research into [her] own observation . . . tying theories into what [she] was seeing.” Unfortunately,
when discussing her manuscript during the writing workshop, Christy was solely focused on the appropriate craft and textual features.

In the end, much like Paloma’s recognition of the distance that existed between what she had intended and how her intention was being interpreted, Christy, too, recognized the ideological distance between herself and the reader. And then she asked for help. She committed to revise her discoursal (Ivanič, 1998, 2004, 2005) and authorial selves—the identity she intended and the identity that would be interpreted—when she asked, “I can add more of me in it, but that’s my struggle right now. Like, how do I get the confidence to do it, you know?” And by posing this question, Christy showed agency. She wanted the group to help her as she incorporated their revision suggestions into her repertoire of practices: “to assimilate others’ discourse” into her ideological becoming (Bakhtin, 1982, p. 342). In this asking, Christy showed her willingness to expand her possibilities of selfhood, one where, as a teacher, she could exert her knowledge of her classroom through an organizational style and craft that complemented her subject, purpose, and audience, one where her expertise did not have to take a back seat to other scholars and theorists, but instead could find equal weight.

*Episode two: The themed issue and Paloma’s intent.* Six months after we formed the writing group, Paloma re-submitted her manuscripts. The new draft had been influenced by the writing group’s revision suggestions from the first workshop. For example, she incorporated suggestions about how to better integrate her theoretical frame and how to critically discuss the use of labels in the school. Originally, when she had introduced her theoretical frame, Paloma wrote, “As a piece of the sociocultural model, the theory of Second Language Participation (SLP) claims that learning is a process of
“becoming a member of a certain community and acquiring the ability to communicate [and act] in the language of [that] community” (Block, 2003, p. 104).” (P.B., personal communication, October 9, 2007). In the revision, she wrote,

Although this was my reality, I still wanted to conduct literature projects where students interacted with each other because at the heart of my practice is the understanding that learning is social. Fostering a rich social environment indicates that I have embraced the sociocultural model of teaching, where learning is a process of “becoming a member of a certain community and acquiring the ability to communicate [and act] in the language of [that] community” (Block 104). (P.B., personal communication, March 19, 2008).

Paloma was also more critical of her use of the word intermediate in her second draft, which was a suggestion I made in her first workshop. In the first draft, she wrote,

Another unique element in my intermediate ELL class is that there exists a wide disparity of English skill levels ranging from low to high. I did not want to select a work of literature that could be overwhelming to a low-intermediate student, and I also did not want to select a book that would bore a high-intermediate student. (P.B. personal communication, October 9, 2007).

In the revision, she had incorporated my suggestion from the her writing workshop in October: “In my intermediate ELL class, there exists a colorful variety of English skill levels ranging from what has been traditionally labeled in schools as low to advanced (my emphasis). When reading, I did not want to select a work of literature that could overwhelm some students while boring others” (P.B., personal communication, March 19, 2008). Although there was significant evidence in the second draft that some of her
revisions had been influenced by her first writing workshop, Paloma had let the call for proposal determine most of the substantial revisions she had made.

Paloma: So, it’s really different, I think.

Angela: Really different.

Paloma: Yeah. I don’t think I would be able to recognize this piece that I wrote, and you guys saw that the biggest problem is the word count right now, cause I’m really teetering on the edge of that. So I was really nervous that you guys would tell me to add this, oh, add this but not take anything out, and you’re not allowed to do that (laughing).

**Zone of contact.** In her admission that her piece was almost unrecognizable even to her—the author—Paloma was admitting, like Christy, that she had plugged her piece into the theme. But just as the group had encouraged Christy to practice a rhetorical move that would allow for construction of a hybrid identity between her intent and the audience’s—a move that had the potential to decenter the Other—Mary and I used the same rhetorical logic to open a space for Paloma to take a authorial risk: to (re) revise her manuscript in a way that would allow her and the journal to recognize it.

Mary: Well, I, uh, I *(drawn out)*, I think right now Paloma, you’re, you’re more, um, concerned with the, the amount of words.

Paloma: *(overlap)* Very true.

Mary: *(overlap)* Don’t worry about that right now.

Paloma: I was really stressed by it.
Mary: Uh, don’t worry, just let the ideas flow, and try to connect them in some way.

Mary: Then, later on, when you have all these big ideas, even though you end up with 4000 words. Then, I think it would be easier (one-second pause) once you have the flow and the transition between paragraphs, and, and, sub-topics. Then I think it would be easier.

Paloma: Okay.

Mary: But don’t worry. I don’t think it’s a moment to worry about the words and how it’s going to be if it’s, if, if, if, you’re trying to condense or make it bigger or smaller. I don’t think that should be a problem right now.

Paloma: Okay.

Mary: Because if not, you’re going to be limiting yourself to much more.

Paloma: Right.

Mary: Because I know, you can transition into the paragraph pretty smoothly.

Paloma: Right.

Mary: At least that’s what I got from the first reading, the one that you originally had

Paloma: (overlap) Hmm. Right.

Mary: The sequence was much smoother than today.

Paloma: (overlap) Hmm. Hmm.

Paloma: I agree.
The word count dominated our workshop talk because Paloma was worried about making her manuscript fit the call in both content and form. And although, in Mary’s comments, she tried to decenter the authority of the journal, Paloma struggled to re-imagine a practice of revision that would allow for a hybrid construction between her research and the call from the journal.

Paloma: My only, yeah, well, I just don’t have that space to talk about it

Paloma: (overlaps) That’s right.

Paloma: (overlaps) I’m so worried that I’m (two-second pause) you know, that I’m going to, uh, have to sacrifice.

Angela: (interrupts) Cause if you do not adhere that, to these words, I don’t even think they’ll consider your piece.

Paloma: Right.

Paloma: That’s not good.

Mary: No (three-second pause)

Paloma: It’s hard, huh?

Mary: It is hard, yes.

Paloma: It’s very hard. (three-second pause)

At this point, like in other moments within the writing group, Paloma articulates a resignation that illuminates the practice of revision as a contested space.

**Reflective commentary.** Through the practice of revision, like many writers, Paloma entertained seemingly contradictory desires as a teacher-writer: to exert her professional voice and to be accepted by a professional community. In this case, the
professional community was represented through the journal she was writing toward. Whitney (2008) argues,

> We tend to talk about the teacher as writer without clarity about what kind of writing we think teachers should do . . . or how the writing will happen. When a teacher is a writer, what is he or she authorized to write about? What audience awaits the writing? Colleagues? The research community? Or is it just good for teachers to write, period, regardless of audience? (p. 105).

In this episode from the writing group, Paloma revealed that she had authorized the journal to dominate her practice of revision, and in doing so, had moved her manuscript—and her writing identity—farther away from her original intent. Therefore, through our practice of revision, we challenged Paloma to re-authorize her intent—to shift her identity as a teacher-writer, a shift that would empower her to write without being tied down to the theme of the journal.

**Discussion: The Practice of Revision and Contested Spaces**

Our practice of revision illuminated contested spaces around issues of discourse and voice. Both these issues of contestation illustrated the ideological distance between the teacher-writer being workshopped and the teacher-writers who were reading her, because in these episodes the teacher-writers were asked to confront all of their unique and shared personal, social, and intellectual histories.

After presenting their manuscripts to the writing group, Paloma and Christy, much like the others in the group, were evaluated for their ability to convey a unitary identity in their text, even though they were using discourses from varied ideological positions, positions predicated upon the identities and discourses to which they had
access, the experiences and practices they had brought with them, the self projected through their style, the self they wanted to project, the audience to whom they perceived they were writing, the actual audience, the context where the manuscript was written, and the context to where it would travel (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). The ideological positions in their discourses and their habit of privileging others’ voice-constructed contested spaces, what I called contact zones—between self and other—was where the teacher-writers identities constructed and were constructed by. Therefore, to negotiate these spaces with their own varied ideological positions (Bakhtin, 1981), to choose language and syntax that could both represent their own needs as a writer and the needs of the audiences, the teacher-writers shifted their reliance on particular discourses and considered re-writing their texts in ways that privileged their voices over the voices of published scholars, all of which was more likely to happen because the writing group would not only help them in making these revisions, but would hold them accountable for doing so. Therefore, these episodes showed that shifts in identity in the writing group were influenced more by the other than by the self. Additionally, these shifts I described above—in these zones where identities were being constructed—were only possible when the comments and revision suggestions of others could be incorporated with the already emerging intention and identities of the author and her manuscript. In this way, for a writer to engage in opportunities to flex her rhetorical agency, a practice of revision should strive to be dialogical if it is expected to help the writer practice differently by allowing them to selectively appropriate the myriad ideological positions of readers and writers (Bakhtin, 1982, p. 341).
And although our writing group’s practice of revision did not always engage the teacher-writer in a dialogic process, by accepting my invitation to participate in the writing group the teacher-writers committed to revising with others. In the moments where the practice of revision seemed anything but dialogic, the group was grappling with how to understand the revision topics articulated by the teacher-writer without appropriating it into their own ideological positions. When the discourse of each participant was less swayed by the teacher-writers’ articulated needs as a writer and more authorized by their own desires for a manuscript, the group experienced what Bakhtin (1981) calls a “series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances” (p. 282). But even when the practice of revision appeared less reciprocal and more unidirectional, the practice of revision eventually culminated dialogically around a central tension, a tension voiced by both writers as being insurmountable without help. And by supporting the teacher-writer through this contested space, the writing group was giving these teacher-writers the opportunity to see differently, to press the image of herself as a writer or her text against the ideological positions of her peers. This opportunity presented itself when the writing group members offered up their discourse of writing in a low-stakes environment, giving a teacher-writer the confidence to try on different discourses, to ask for help in assimilating those discourses, to momentarily revise their subjectivity, and to judge and evaluate its contextual viability as a legitimized participant from within instead of as an objectified participant on the outside.

Therefore, our shared histories in the classroom, our united motivation to publish, and our intertwined beliefs in teacher-writers gave way to our subtle differences. As readers of one another’s manuscripts, in those stolen moments immersed in the teacher-
writer’s manuscript—our worldviews influenced when and where our eyes stopped reading, drawing our attention to manuscript details that we would later articulate in critical ways, calling a sentence or phrase or a detail “a problem,” “a bit distracting,” or in need of “tightening up.” On the other hand, with declarations of our love for phrases and ideas, we used phrases to affirm the teacher-writers. We marked the text as a reminder of what we had read, of what we had felt when we read, of what we had wanted the writer to make us feel or see or believe, and in doing so, we had recorded our differences. Our practice of revision foregrounded our worldviews, our personal intentions for writing, and in some way our own insecurities about how we were failing through writing. And in doing so, our practice of revision began to weave a story about the ideological distances among the teacher-writers and more importantly began to reveal how the teacher-writers used agency to traverse their own ideological position in relation to the writing group, constructing identities that had the potential to resist and incorporate others’ spheres of human activity, others’ discourses (Bakhtin). Although the contested spaces that emerged during the practice of revision illuminated varied ways that the identities of the teacher-writers were constructed, equally important to the practice of revision in the writing group was the shifting roles the teacher-writers experienced as they engaged as both readers and writers.

Below, I present my second assertion from the practice of revision in the writing group. To support this assertion, I illustrate how the writers engaged with issues of authority and ownership, which were endemic to the reader/writer binary in the writing group. I then focus on the shifting reader positions in the writing group. In doing so, I show how the negotiation of these sometimes contentious positions constructed moments
to alter both discourses and self: to revise. And by committing to revision, the teacher-writers generated a rhetorical potential to construct a hybrid identity between reader and writer, a negotiation between who was authorized to speak, who owned the hybrid ideas that emerged, and who was willing to listen for what was being said and for what was trying to be said. But I would also be remiss if I did not argue that the reader/writer binary was anything but static. As my data showed, these positions were as dialogical as they were oppositional, and the teacher-writers moved in and out of these two roles fluidly, which ultimately added to the contested spaces the teacher-writers had to navigate.

Assertion Two: The Practice of Revision and Shifting Roles

Shifting roles in the practice of revision emerged within the dynamic construction of a reader/writer binary, and these shifting roles decentered the teacher-writers and the local reader.

Writing positions and authority. In the writing group, the issue of authority emerged as we negotiated our practice of revision. In this way, the contested spaces of revision occurred both on and off the page. As we articulated different methods for discussing our revisions suggestions, we relied on our goals for the writing group as well as our individual experiences in classrooms—as teachers and students. This past experience was evidenced by the email that I had the teacher-writers submit that explained how they wanted the group to read their manuscript. Even though I tried to confer authority on the teacher-writers, the contested space that emerged revealed that authority could not be conferred, especially in a practice of revision with others. In trying to construct a practice of revision that was democratic, where the writer was as
authorized as much as the reader to guide the practice of revision, I was still forced to contribute to the contested space between the reader/writer binary. The episodes below illustrate how issues of authority were contingent upon who occupied the shifting positions of a reader/writer binary.

**Episode one: Christy and authority deferred.** To begin this negotiation, I questioned the group about how they wanted to proceed:

Angela: How do you guys see this going in terms of giving feedback?

Paloma: Page by page?

Angela: You want to go page by page?

Christy: Sure.

Fina: What about the specific questions that we—

Christy: Um—

Fina: —let me pull that up with just some—

Christy: I did have—yeah, I did have a couple of questions . . . that were because I had separated myself from it. And I got to a point where I was very happy with it, and then as I read it again, I was like, "Oh, I don't know if that flows. I don't know if my analogy is appropriate." You know, like if it—since it doesn't really carry out all—it's very strong in the beginning and strong in the end and yet you kind of lose it in the middle. You know, like is someone going to think was it too narrative, is it too—so there were a lot of things where I was second guessing myself—

Angela: Okay.
Christy: —the further away from it I got.

Angela: Okay, so why don't we just start with the writer, then? And you start asking questions that you feel, instead of us just telling you here's what we think.

Christy: Okay.

Angela: Let's have you start and generate the conversation, and then we'll kind of all jump in, and if we don't get to all of our comments and we were here, all—you're going to get these pages and then you can look through all of them and then maybe email us—

Christy: Okay.

Angela: —and ask us questions, too.

Christy: Okay.

Angela: And if we feel like you need to spend a little bit more time the next time on your piece, because it is 6:20—

Christy: Yeah.

Angela: —you know, we can always revisit it.

Christy: Uh-huh. Sure.

Angela: So, okay.

By all accounts, Paloma’s suggestion might appear innocuous, but from my ideologically informed position, page-by-page meant imposing a practice of revision that would allow the reader to go page-by-page until she had given all of her critiques to the writer. And based upon Fina’s ideologically position, which was rooted in authorizing the writer to discuss her concerns with others, I knew that she, too, believed that Paloma
meant to authorize the reader’s critique, which is why she responded with another
suggestion. In short, Paloma wanted each teacher-writer to have an opportunity to tell
Christy what she had understood the text to mean (Elbow, 2000, p. 282). Therefore,
Paloma was positioning the readers’ suggestions at the center of our practice of revision.
By interpreting her words from this perspective, I believed that she was defining the
practice of revision as emerging from the reader, driven by the critic who illuminates
failures and successes in the text explicitly through persuasive critique. This
interpretation of Paloma’s suggestion was echoed in an email she sent the group members
when submitting her own manuscript. She wrote, “Coming from an English teacher’s
perspective, don’t worry about sugar-coating your ‘needs improvement’ comments”
(P.B., personal communication, October 11, 2007). Moreover, when I compared her
page-by-page suggestion to the other discourses she had used when articulating her other
revision suggestions in different workshops, discourses that echoed the importance of the
writer’s voice, the appeal of the content, and the accuracy of the diction, I believed that
for Paloma learning to write well meant understanding how interesting or entertaining the
text was for the reader (Ivanič, 2004, p. 229). And a writer could only understand how
interesting her text was if she privileged the interpretation of the reader over the writer’s
own intent.

Consequently, based on my history—a history similar to Paloma’s—as a former
writing group member, an undergraduate and a graduate student in an English
department, and a former secondary English teacher who taught and studied literature, I
was inclined to believe (although I worked hard to practice the opposite in my teaching
with novice writers in the writing center or in first-year composition courses) that writers
were supposed to sit tight-lipped during their workshop, not explain away the criticism. I understood the imposed silence of the writer as crucial to revision because once a writer submits her piece to be interpreted (or perceived) by an audience it is consumed and digested in ways from which the author cannot rescue it. In short, I believed that the feedback/revision process of the writing group should mirror the objectification of writing that happens as a manuscript travels away from its author(s). Furthermore, in my master’s program in an English department, I had been introduced to a writing workshop model—mostly as a spectator—where the floor belonged to the reader (or more aptly put, the critic). Oddly enough, I did not articulate any of this after Paloma made her suggestion. I knew that a practice of privileging the critic would be detrimental to our practice of revision in the writing group, especially given that all of these writers were teachers who had been told, for too long, how to teach and write. The writing group was supposed to be a place that empowered the teacher-writer. So I sat and listened to the other group members in all my contradictory silence.

Fortunately, Fina, who had spent her doctoral career teaching and researching the best practices of Writer’s Workshop (Calkins, 1997; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Ray, 1999), hinted that we should begin with the questions Christy had posed to us in her email, and although my interpretation of Paloma’s suggestion and Fina’s actual suggestions, in their semantic likeness, only differed on subject position, one empowered the reader, while one empowered the writer. Christy, interrupting Fina, revoiced her suggestion: “I did have, yeah, I did have a couple of questions.” In short, unlike me, Fina placed the writer’s needs and concerns at the heart of the practice of revision because she believed that the writer could help us all understand how the processes of composing and
the manuscript itself were “inextricable from the whole complex social interaction which makes up the communicative event in which [we were] situated” (Ivanič, 2004, p. 234). Like my interpretation of Paloma’s suggestion, Fina’s suggestion revealed her own ideologically informed position about the practice of revision.

Ultimately, I legitimated Fina’s suggestion by re-voicing it: “Okay, so why don’t we just start with the writer then? And you start asking questions that you feel, instead of us just telling you: ‘here’s what we think.’” And it is the intonation of my clarifying statement—how I stressed the personal pronouns you, we, us that implied a figurative divide between Christy’s concerns about her piece and the other members’ concerns. It also revealed my interpretation of Paloma’s “page-by-page” suggestion. Consequently, Fina’s suggestion was intended to shift the locus of control to the writer, but I would argue that this control couldn’t be solely defined by whom we believed we were authorizing—either the writer or the reader—through our articulated (or unarticulated) suggestions. Both these approaches, whether reader-centered or writer-centered implied an expectation about the authority of the reader and the writer, an expectation that generated another layer in the contested space of the reader/writer binary, another space for identities to be constructed.

Although we all wanted to believe that revision was a habit of mind, one that allowed a writer the opportunity to “confront, intervene in, redirect, and change not just a particular piece of writing, but our sense of ourselves and our roles in the world” (Welch, 1997, p. 35),” Christy’s engagement had to be negotiated in the contested space of revision between reader and writer. To begin with, even though Christy sent parameters via email to all the group members for reading her manuscript, I couldn’t trace many of
the actual revision threads from the writer’s workshop back to Christy’s email. The three topics that dominated our conversations were the honeybee metaphor, the privileging of outside research, and the organization of the manuscript. On the other hand, in her email to the group, Christy wrote the following:

Hello Everyone,

Attached is my paper that I'm revising to send off to the reading teacher. Thanks for taking the time to read it and give me feedback. As you read, would you keep these questions in mind: 1. Is it too narrative? Should I put in more hard data? 2. Does the reader know what to expect from this paper from the beginning? Should I include one of those: ‘In this paper I will ____?’ 3. Are my assertions clear? Do I provide enough detail? 4. Are you left wanting or wishing something was taken out? (C.B., personal communication, September 19, 2007).

Even if I account for the time lapse between when the email was sent and when the group met to discuss Christy’s manuscript, there is still evidence of the teacher-writers dismissing Christy’s concerns through revision.

Although Christy accepted Fina’s invitation of responsibility to direct the practice of revision, over the course of an hour—across all ten topic changes that occurred—Christy only attempted to direct the topic of conversation three times, and on one of those occasions, her concern was invalidated by the readers’ response:

Christy: What about I guess page, where it starts with the hive? Is that—does that feel out of place in the beginning?

Paloma: No.

Angela: It didn't—I would—no.
Christy: Okay.

This exchange followed a lengthy revision suggestion by Jennifer, and before Christy made this topic change, there was a seven second pause. On the video-recording of the workshop, Christy is flipping the pages during the seven second pause, looking for a topic to address. She is also repeating a conversational placeholder: “um.” When she finally raises a topic of revision, she uses a closed-ended question, and in this way doesn’t invite a response beyond a simple yes or no. As a result, much like how this topic was initially raised—with a long pause and a few conversational placeholders from Christy—the conversation ended with a quick, one-word response. In the hour we workshopped Christy’s piece, only twice did the group authorize her topic, albeit by re-voicing the topic in a way that structured an opening for articulating their own concerns. For example, Jennifer uses the topic of revision that Christy raises at the very beginning—concerns about the appropriacy of the metaphor—to open a space for Jennifer to address her own central concern, a concern she re-voices throughout the entire workshop: Christy’s lack of focus on the case-study—Nina.

Christy: So, um, is the—I guess the first one is the honeybee analogy, metaphor, for that appropriate, is it too much? Is it detract? Is it—
(uncomfortable chuckle)

Paloma: I think, I think it's going to just end up being a matter of opinion. I love the honeybee theme, and I missed it when it kind of—

Christy: Went away.

Paloma: —yeah, went away and so, like, I changed one of your titles from data collection analysis to, um, collecting honey, (Christy laughs),
you know, or just you know, because I liked it and personally, when I'm reading research papers, I need that little extra there to in reading cute little, like, themes or whatever, you know, but personally, I'm very comfortable with that, and I don't think it takes away from that, like that academic tone or whatever. I think it's very appropriate, but I think not everyone may agree with me on that, though.

Jennifer: I, if I could—I like the metaphor. It's so well-written. I—there was, there was a disconnect with me, though, with the metaphor because the first message of the metaphor is kind of like teaching is intrinsic, and we're really protective of our hives.

Christy: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: And I would like to see the metaphor—I would like to see it address Nina in the beginning.

Christy: Okay.

Jennifer: Because I feel like the strength of the paper is Nina and the case study. And so, um, when you go back to Nina and at the end, and she's doing the waggle dance, so she's in the literacy club now, um, it makes that complete circle. But the metaphor in the beginning doesn't, um—

Jennifer doesn’t address the appropriacy of the metaphor, which is what Christy is the most concerned about. Instead, she uses this topic to engage Christy in a tangentially
related topic, one that is central to Jennifer’s tension with the manuscript, an issue she re-
voices no less than five times during the workshop.

As such, the other teacher-writers marginalized Christy’s authority, while
privileging their own positions as readers—readers of Christy’s text and readers of the
journal for which Christy was writing. In the end, Christy’s participation waned
considerably as the other teacher-writers, the visiting doctoral students, and I began to
offer suggestions. She lacked the ability to negotiate the contested space, ask clarifying
questions, revise on the spot to demonstrate understanding. In this way, by encountering
the notion of authority in a contested space between reader and writer, Christy’s identity
shifted to a more passive position, one that contradicted a writerly self who could wield
language and discourses to convince readers. Even when failing to communicate intent
and meaning, her “authorial meanings and intentions [could] be found” (p. 282).

**Episode two: Paloma and authority shared.** Two weeks later, during Paloma’s
first workshop, the group again discussed how to proceed with the writer’s manuscript:

Paloma: Okay, so maybe we can vote—what do you want do it—page by

Everyone: Yeah. . .

Christy: I think that would be better.

Jennifer: Uh-huh.

Paloma: Okay. All right. Let's go for it.

Jennifer: All right.

And, unlike our consensus a few weeks prior when negotiating how to proceed with
Christy’s manuscript, the teacher-writers agreed that page-by-page was the best approach.
Coincidentally, Fina was absent from the writing workshop, and unlike during this exact moment in Christy’s workshop—when Christy advocated for herself by agreeing the group should begin with her questions and—at this moment in Paloma’s workshop, Christy agreed that page-by-page would be better. And, like in the previous section when I argued that page-by-page implied a more reader-centered approach to giving feedback, it is important to note that in the reader positions, Christy shifted in her approach and participation. Throughout Paloma’s workshop, Christy was engaged in almost every revision suggestion, either by making the initial suggestion, revoicing it, or posing a solution to a critique.

As the writing group conversation progressed, Paloma allowed the teacher-writers to act as readers when they shared their concerns: the crafting of vignettes, the use of labels, and the use of narrative element. And although like Christy, she had moments in the workshop where she either used conversational placeholders—“okay,” “I see,” “hmm”—Paloma asked more questions, engaged in more collaborative writing, and articulated on the spot ways that she could revise the text to address the readers concerns. Through these methods, Paloma’s participation as writer disrupted the reader/writer binary. By dialoguing with the other teacher-writers, she constructed opportunities for the contact zone to be less about difference and more about negotiation. In this way, she simultaneously authorized herself to speak on behalf of the manuscript while also authorizing the reader.

Angela: (nine-second pause) And when you say the “déjà vu” there, but they have a déjà vu back here. Because you were like, “I
experienced a sort of déjà vu,” and I was like, “In what way?”

About the conversation?

Paloma: Maybe it should say, “And there's sort of a déjà vu where I made a link between my teaching and this dating.”

Angela: What do you guys think about that? Too straightforward or—

Christy: Déjà—

Christy: Is “déjà vu” the right word, or is it: I made a connection? I made a realization?

Jennifer: I think a “connection” or a “realization” might work better.

Paloma: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: One thing that I played around with, um, um, (4 second pause during these ums) so if you—it says, “I experienced a sort of déjà vu,” which we might consider (Paloma: uh hmm) changing. Considered it sort of connection. I went and then I jumped all the way down to, “I wondered what if my students really feel like they are temporarily trapped with someone who talks incessantly or talks too much.”

Paloma: That's a good idea

Jennifer: Because then you bring us right to that tension that you're feeling.

Paloma: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: Like right to that—Hmm.
Jennifer: And so then, you know, you don't—then this kind of like, I soon realized—you've already realized it. You can just kind of say—I thought per- I wondered—

Paloma: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: —could being a student in my classroom feel—

Paloma: So you're saying don't throw this other part out but—

Jennifer: No, not necessarily, but bring this—

Paloma: —but to introduce this first.

Jennifer: —bring this right up here.

Paloma: That's a really good idea.

Paloma: I like that a lot.

Jennifer: Bring that right up there so they'll see like—

Paloma: I really like that.

Paloma: So will that figure it out, Angela?

In the example above, Paloma does not hesitate to respond to my question about her use of the concept *déjà vu*. Upon listening to my question, she is able to improvise with a revision suggestion on the spot. By addressing my confusion with an improvised revision to her syntax, Paloma authorized my interpretation, but she also demonstrated her own authority over the text. When I deferred judgment of Paloma’s revision to the other readers, my concern was re-stated by both Christy and Jennifer, with Jennifer giving Paloma an alternative revision suggestion, a move that implied that Paloma’s impromptu revision did not satisfy her critique. Paloma affirmed Jennifer’s revision, but she does not ignore the fact that I was the one who initially raised the issue. And in a conversational
move that once again demonstrated the importance of negotiation—of dialogue—for Paloma in her role as writer, Paloma shifted the authority to me: “So will that figure that out, Angela?”

As the teacher-writers moved in and out of their roles as writers, their identities shifted. In some instances, they deferred their authority as the author of the manuscript, as we saw Christy do in the example above. In some instances, they wielded authority. In Paloma’s example, she shared authority with the readers, and in doing so, authorized herself and her manuscript.

**Reflective Commentary.** As shown in the illustrations above, others cannot grant authority. Early in the process, as the group leader, I believed I had the ability to defer to the others by posing a question that I hoped would elicit suggestions. I knew I had been given ample opportunity to put forth my vision indirectly to the group through emails and discussions prior to this evening. Moreover, since the teacher-writers’ had been enrolled in at least one of my courses before we formed the writing group, they were aware of the processes I privileged when giving and receiving feedback. All of them had also participated in writing communities that I had facilitated. And in reality, I wanted to lessen the power differential that had existed in our prior relationship as instructor and student. During the month we had been meeting, I had made it a habit to defer, eliciting suggestions from the group before I put forth my opinion. I believed that this was a more democratic approach. I wrote in a reflection after Paloma’s writing group: “I felt at times that I really had to focus on limiting how much I talked or disagreed with the other group members. I’m worried because since I was their instructor, I don’t want to be seen as

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trying to maintain control or that what I have to say is more valid, especially when I disagree” (A. Clark-Oates, personal communication, October 25, 2007).

What I didn’t understand at the time was that there was no discoursal move—as reader or writer—that could erase our prior selves or relationships, lessening the zone of contact between our differing ideological positions. Instead, over time, our identities organically shifted based on the change in context, positions within the writing group, the ideas being discussed, and our ability to engage with a revision suggestion through our limited repertoire of writing for publication. Consequently, the binary of reader/writer was not monolithic. It was situated. Therefore, the contact zone that invariably exists between reader/writer was constructed within the writing group—with the inflection of the local, personal, and historical. And this is important, because all of these factors contributed to shifts in the contested space, allowing for and ameliorating power differentials in one moment or across time and influencing the construction of writing identities. Consequently, in the writing group, it was the context and the syntax and the participants’ own ideologies that absorbed our past relationships, and in doing so, constructed different nexuses of power among our various identities and the various identities of others in the contest space between reader and writer. Our identities were always absorbing and emerging (with or without our conscious acknowledgement). Furthermore, these examples, although focused on Christy and Paloma, illustrated how all the teacher-writers at some point in their workshops were de-authorized to speak, even when the group had made verbal commitments to participate differently. Like Christy and Paloma, the other teacher-writers constructed a variety of legitimate ways of being a
writer and/or being a reader. For the teacher-writers, authority was as wily as the binary itself.

**Writing positions and ownership.** In their shifting roles in the reader/writer binary, the teacher-writers also constructed and negotiated the contact zone of textual ownership. Spigelman (2000) writes, “The notion of textual ownership is complex, involving the concept of intellectual ‘matter’ or meaning as property, the possession and dissemination of that property, and the writer’s and reader’s roles in the production (and evaluation) of textual meaning” (p. 5). And for the teacher-writers, much like writers in other spaces—schools and workplaces—textual ownership was another issue that they had to negotiate in the contested spaces of revision, which influenced their identities. The idea of ownership connotes investment and property, private versus public, and mine versus yours, but unlike material capital, intellectual capital is harder to prove ownership of (Ede and Lunsford, 2001), especially the intellectual capital that undergirds a text, a text generated with others. I first present a very explicit address of ownership in episode one followed by snapshots of more subtle moments across the writing group, where our writing identities were being constructed around the issue of ownership.

**Episode one: Jennifer and co-authorship.** Weeks before Jennifer submitted her manuscript, I had a conversation with one of my mentors from my doctoral program. This mentor had encouraged me to ask Jennifer to list me as second author on her submission. The mentor explained that I should not see this request as imposing on Jennifer’s authorship, but should, instead, see it as an opportunity for me to benefit from the publication since I had invested so much time in Jennifer’s research project and revision process, mentoring her through the process. In this way, our practice of revision
illuminated the economy of writing with others, an issue that impacted how our writing identities were constructed around issues of ownership.

When Jennifer sent one of her last query emails before submitting the manuscript, she was seeking advice on the last-minute details of manuscript submission:

Hey guys! How are you all doing? Angela, I hope you are enjoying California! I wanted to run two questions by all of you... get your thoughts.

1. *Literacy for All* asks for the following info:

*What information should I include in my submission?*

Each manuscript should include: a cover sheet containing the author's name, affiliation, position, preferred mailing address, telephone number(s), fax number, e-mail address, running head, and abstract. Identifying information should not appear elsewhere in the manuscript in order to ensure an impartial review.

Earlier in the directions, *Literacy for All* asks for strict adherence to APA style and format. What do you think (and maybe it's not all that important...) but should I create what the *Literacy for All* is calling a “cover sheet” and then follow with APA style title page (minus the identifying information) and a following page with the abstract? OR do you think the “cover sheet” is a substitution for the title page and following abstract page? hmm...

2. Do I enclose a cover letter? How do I let *Literacy for All* know that I want to submit this piece for the issue?

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5 Name of the professional organization has been changed to protect the anonymity of the teacher-writers.
Eekkkk – it’s funny how these questions come into my mind just as I am hitting the deadline (March 15th).

I appreciate your insights and/or hunches 😊 (J.S., personal communication, March 9, 2008).

I responded by answering a few of the questions, asking her to wait for more thorough answers, which I would send as soon as I could speak to someone with more knowledge of the manuscript-submission protocols for *Literacy for All*. When I finally sent a more detailed response to her question, I also used it as an opportunity to ask for the position as second author:

Jennifer,

I just got off the phone with Debby. She said that you should include everything in the cover sheet—abstract, title, the issue, the journal, etc.

Also, she suggested that I ask you if you would consider including me as a second author. Its [sic] awkward for me to ask this, but she said this happens all the time with projects like this (think about the Heffernen and Lewison piece). Of course, you would be lead author, meaning your name would go first (and everyone in the field knows this means you are the primary writer, researcher, etc.). Take a couple of days. Talk to Paloma and Christy and Mary and decide what you want to do. I totally understand if this makes you feel uncomfortable or comprises [sic] the essence of your work.

Call me on my cell if you have more questions.

Thanks, Jennifer. I am so proud of your work.
The email above illustrated my apprehension in asking Jennifer to negotiate the issue of ownership, an apprehension that stemmed from the fact that I believed the question itself belied my intent for asking the teacher-writers to participate in the writing group. Throughout the data analysis, there were many moments where the teacher-writers were navigating the contested space in the practice of revision, but very few of these moments felt, for me, like this one. In asking this question, I was risking my integrity as a reader, asking Jennifer to privilege my position as reader over the other teacher-writers. Moreover, I was risking the integrity of the entire project because I had articulated many times to the teacher-writers that the purpose of the writing group was to subvert the notion that teachers’ voices were not as privileged as educational researchers; thus, everyone had committed her own time to the group with the intention of disrupting this belief. Forming the writing group had always elicited a sense of pride because I felt as if it represented in practice what I believed theoretically about teachers as intellectuals and writers as constructing the world. We had never explicitly discussed issues of plagiarism or ownership, and we had never explicitly discussed my role as the researcher, how my voice would change our story as I retold it in professional spaces, or more importantly, how I had a different stake in the writing group, one intimately tied to my career and my professional goals. Of course, those issues were always a specter in our writing group, but by asking Jennifer to add me as an author, I had ceased to blend into the writing group as just another teacher seeking support for publication. The blurred line between research and participant looked clearly demarcated after I posed the question.
On the other hand, I had invested the time, ideas, and textual revisions into her manuscript. And although I would not have discussed my investment in Jennifer’s manuscript in terms of ownership or property, Spigelman (2002) argues, “[O]wnership is a function of time, talk, and authority” (p. 5). With this kind of investment and with my deep understanding as an aspiring scholar about the importance of publishing, I posed the question, albeit laying the burden of responsibility on Debby and positioning myself as timid. My embarrassment did not keep me from attempting to build ethos by citing research to validate my request, yet the other evidence—a common practice fallacy—revealed how little support I had to justify it.

She wrote me back almost twelve hours later:

Angela,

How are you? I hope you're enjoying California...

Thanks for your response to my submission questions. I appreciate that you called Debby. I have included the information on the cover page. The final copy is printed and I send it out tomorrow...

After a lot of thought and discussion with Paloma and other colleagues I decided that I would not list a second author. Everyone in our writing group made substantial contributions to the revisions of my piece and I feel like all contributions were equally valuable. By choosing one of the group to be a second author, I would be placing more value on that individual's voice and I know we had wanted to avoid that as a group.

I am however, grateful for the opportunity to reflect as a result of Debby's suggestion. I included an author's note expressing my gratitude to the writing
group members (which I list by name).

It's printed off and ready to go, but what do you think about my final decision?

I really appreciate your frankness, as I know that this was not easy for you to bring up. Please know that I greatly appreciate and value you as a colleague and friend and hope you feel that appreciation.

Sincerely,

jennifer [sic] (J.S., personal communication, March 11, 2011)

This negotiation between Jennifer and me illuminated the issue of ownership, one of many issues that emerged in the contact zone between reader/writer, but it also illuminated a more elusive binary: researcher/participant, and in doing so, forced me to shift in my role from just another teacher-writer occupying the position of reader to occupying the position of invested researcher, one who staked a claim on the story being written within the group. In this moment, there was fissure in my own identity within the group, one that eliminated—even for a moment—my ability to “pass” as just another teacher-writer.

As Jennifer and I negotiated this contact zone, her identity also shifted. Jennifer’s initial query email revealed an informality and playfulness, noted by her use of “eekkkkk” and her use of the smiley face. She also used incomplete sentences. All of these textual features implied a more conversational tone. On the other hand, in her follow up email, she used a much more formal tone as she conformed to the conventions of letter writing. The only hint of similarity between her initial email and her response email was the use of ellipsis, but they implied very different intentions. The ellipsis in the first email indicated an unconscious decision to reveal her thought processes, but
Jennifer’s use of ellipsis in the second email connoted an anxiety rather than a playfulness, a hesitation about how to proceed.

Although this episode occurred outside of our traditional writing group meeting/writing workshops, it contributed to the understanding that writing identities are often constructed in moments of discord.

*Episode two: Paloma and shared ownership.* Issues of ownership did not always construct moments where the author was staking a claim on her manuscript. As with the other contact zones that emerged within the reader/writer binary, negotiating this contested space didn’t always mean a movement away or toward the “reader” from the writing group. In this episode, the reader/writer binary was reconfigured. The reader was constructed as the journal with its themed call, while our participation in the practice of revision in the writing group constructed a collective writer, one who shared ownership over the text. Initially, at the beginning of the workshop, Paloma constructed more traditional positions, aligning herself as writer with the journal, and positioning Mary and me as readers:

- Paloma: Okay. Are you guys ready? Do you want to do this? (laughing).
- Mary: Yeah.
- Paloma: Okay.
- Paloma: So, it’s really different, I think.
- Angela: Really different.
- Paloma: Yeah. I don’t think I would be able to recognize this piece that I wrote, and you guys saw that the biggest problem is the word count right now, cause I’m really tittering on the edge of that. So I
was really nervous that you guys would tell me to add this, oh, add this but not take anything out and you’re not allowed to do that (laughing).

The opening line about the piece being “really different” from the manuscript we had read a few months prior to this workshop pointed to the reader for whom Paloma wrote. In this way, the contested space of the reader/writer binary generated issues of authority and ownership, much as the practice of revision had done throughout the life of the writing group. The reader now, however, was not local. The reader was the journal and its readership. Therefore, Paloma was forced to make different rhetorical choices based on this new audience, and in doing so she privileged the journal and its themed-call over the teacher-writers in the group. Furthermore, her performance of what we as local readers usually do, which is to tell a writer “add this, oh, add this,” revealed the tension Paloma felt writing for two readers, especially when she told Mary and me that we were not allowed to do that (my emphasis), meaning we were not allowed to add things that would force her to ignore the strict word count of the journal call.

As the workshop progressed and it was evident to Paloma that Mary and I had not aligned our comments or ourselves with the journal as reader, Paloma used the personal pronoun we to discuss how to solve the word count issue. In doing so, she positioned Mary and me as writers of the manuscript. As such, the three of us were constructed into a collective writer.

Angela: I think I did a little bit of both.

Paloma: Okay, good.
Angela: I mean, I knew I kept in mind. I tried to cut some things. Like a couple of times when you’re like, “they said in the book club” or “during the book club,” I think it’s clear that they’re in the book club, so I tried to cut some of those prep phrases out.

Paloma: (overlaps) That’s good. That’s good.

Angela: To make up for some of the thing I added.

Paloma: And I love that because it’s really tightening the writing, and I think the tighter it gets the—

Angela: (interrupts) I was going to see how long it was now with what I added. How long can it be?

Paloma: 3750.

Mary: Oh, my gosh.

Paloma: That’s how much it can be.

Mary: Uh-huh.

Paloma: And I’m at. The last time, you know, when I emailed it to you guys 3748.

Angela: (whispers) I’m scared.

Paloma: What is it?

Angela: How much is it?

Paloma: Um, it can only be 3750.

Angela: Okay. I’ve added too much

Paloma: Okay.

Angela: 200 words.
Paloma: oh, yeah.

Angela: So—

Paloma: That’s okay. We’ll just have to make decisions.

In this way, Paloma acknowledged that her manuscript would be a product of we instead of I, which was the unspoken practice of revision. Many times across various writing workshop meetings, I would begin my revision suggestion with the phrases: I wrote, I changed it to, I added, Let me read you how I revised it. And although in the exchange above, Paloma had given us permission to own the text with her, to help her write for the journal as reader, I had already—in the privacy of my own office as I read and critiqued Paloma’s piece—taken liberty to own it with her. This was evident in many topics we discussed across Paloma’s workshop, especially topics that were directly tied to the authority of the journal. Paloma admitted to “cutting and cutting her prose,” a revision practice that authorized the reader over the writer.

Angela: Um, so then when you start the second section.

Paloma: (clearing throat, coughing).

Angela: Again, I just, I, there was a little bit of, like, like, tightening of the prose for me.

Paloma: Okay.

Angela: Like, it felt a little bit like looser, and I don’t really even know what I meant by that.

Paloma: (overlap) okay.

Angela: (overlap) like you almost struggled to get started there.

Angela: A little bit. Like how do I jump from this beginning.
Paloma: (overlap) right.

Angela: (overlap) into what I’m talking about, and do it because I ha, it felt like I knew you had this limit.

Paloma: yeah.

Angela: Like this limitation of words.

Paloma: Well, I think I just cut and cut and this sounds like a good place. I didn’t really try to transition it too much.

Angela: So I just wrote, and I’ll send you this.

Paloma: (overlap) Okay.

Angela: “Concurrent with this realization, I began working on an ethnographic research project to study my ELL reading classroom. This research helped me to understand part of my students’ struggles: the over-asserted hand of their teachers.”

Paloma: Oh, I see.

Angela: “This wasn’t the environment I had intentionally fostered.”

In my comments above, I expressed my concern for Paloma’s practice of revision, a practice that detracted from Paloma’s meaning and intent. Unlike Paloma, who was stifled in her revision by the word count, I had rewritten the transition for her, and in this way had written against the reader. This revision stayed in the final version of the manuscript, as did many of the revision suggestions made by Mary and me during this writing workshop. Paloma needed to share ownership of her manuscript with us because she felt disempowered by the authority of the journal. At one point, Mary candidly
revoiced my concern that the manuscript, in its then current form, was not reflective of Paloma’s strengths as a writer:

Mary: Well, I, uh, I (drawn out), I think right now Paloma, you’re, you’re more, um, concerned with the, the amount of words.

Paloma: (overlap) Very true.

Mary: (overlap) Don’t worry about that right now.

Paloma: I was really stressed by it.

Mary: Uh, don’t worry, just let the ideas flow and try to connect them in some way.

Mary: Then, later on when you have all these big ideas, even though you end up with 4000 words. Then I think it would be easier (one-second pause) once you have the flow and the transition between paragraphs, and, and, sub-topics. Then I think it would be easier.

Paloma: Okay.

Mary: But don’t worry. I don’t think it’s a moment to worry about the words and how it’s going to be if it’s, if, if, if, you’re trying to condense or make it bigger or smaller. I don’t think that should be a problem right now.

Paloma: Okay.

Mary: Because if not, you’re going to be limiting yourself to much more.

Paloma: Right.

Mary: Because I know, you can transition into the paragraph pretty smoothly.
Paloma: Right.

Mary: At least that’s what I got from the first reading, the one that you original had.

Paloma: (overlap) Hmm. Right.

Mary: The sequence much smoother than today.

Paloma: (overlap) Hmm. Hmm.

Paloma: I agree.

With Paloma’s acknowledgment that she had sacrificed her prose, at one point during the workshop, I even excluded Paloma from the practice of revision, which illustrated the extent to which ownership was shared (or co-opted).

Angela: Mary, can we go back to that one, where you’re a little unsure about the tense? You know, because she does switch there. How would you rewrite it?

Mary: Um, let me see, “I teach in an intermediate language learning reading classroom. Because of the migrant nature of the lives of many of the ELLs, I struggled”, um, okay, “to develop a flexible reading approach that would accommodate my fluctuating class size. I frequently found myself scrambling to help a new move-in catch up.” Okay, here, er, just before we go to tenses, I had a problem with all of these hyphenated “move-in”, “catch-up.”

Paloma: Okay, I see.

Mary: Is that correct?

Paloma: I, I, thought they, I mean obviously I thought they were.
Paloma: (whispering) I shouldn’t give any input here (chuckling).

With this admission by Paloma, the conversation turned. She did give input, suggesting a revision that I affirmed with “yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!” We had influenced Paloma to refocus her practice of revision back on the text, to join us in the contested space of revision, and to join us as the collective writer.

**Reflective commentary.** Ownership was a complex issue that emerged through the life of the writing group. It contributed to the shifting roles in the reader/writer binary, roles that were also linked to issues of authority, knowledge, and language (Elbow, 2000). As a writer, Spigelman (2000) argues that there are intrinsic rewards of proprietorship: “authorial ownership underscores a writers’ commitment to his or her work; it suggests an investment of time and effort, sometimes at great emotional cost” (p. 5). The two episodes I discussed illustrate the emotional investment of writers, but also reveal the emotional investment of readers. In the writing group, as a reader, ownership of another’s text began with what Day and Eodice (2004) call a willingness “to listen, think, and accept the words of the speaker or writer” (p. 122). And it was the identities of the writer and the reader, which emerged in the contested space of the reader/writer binary, was influenced by this negotiation of ownership.

**Reader positions.** Therefore, as the teacher-writers articulated their revisions suggestions for their peers’ manuscripts, their textual suggestions for collaboratively written conference proposals, and their understanding of journal calls and subsequently the journal’s audience, the syntax of their suggestions implied what role they assumed as the reader, meaning the structure of their comment or critique implied a rationale for it. In this way, the teacher-writers’ revision echoed a particular audience position, persona, or
role (Elbow, 2000; Smidt, 2002, 2009) and sometimes positioned the revision suggestion outside the situated context of the writing group to a more generic sphere of commentary about writing (Bakhtin, 1986).

Although the teacher-writers were drafting their manuscript for a seemingly static audience that was articulated through the call for proposals, when submitting their manuscript to the writing group, they confronted not only the local reader as represented by the other teacher-writers, but also a symbolic reader, one who did not physically reside in our writing group, but was evoked by the local reader. In the data, two symbolic readers emerged: the universal reader and the skeptical reader. Both of these symbolic readers impacted the construction of the teacher-writers’ identities because when evoked, the teacher-writers ceased to be writing toward one singular, static reader (or audience).

Elbow (2000) argues that there are four kinds of audiences for which a writer writes: (1) Audience with authority over the writer; (2) Audience of peers; (3) Audience of allies—readers who care about the writer; and (4) Audience of self—private writing (p. 29). And although by relying on Elbow’s categories of audience it might appear I am arguing that a writer must negotiate either this audience or that one, in the writing group, it was evident that teacher-writer whose manuscript was being workshopped was writing for more than one of these audiences at any given moment. And although Elbow uses the word audience to describe whom the writer is addressing, in the section below, I use the word reader. This meant that given the culture and history of our writing group the reader of the manuscript was positioned as an ally and peer. In addition, but it meant that the reader had to assume the role of the journal editors and the journal’s audience, an audience who would have authority over the teacher-writer.
**Episodic collage one: Universal reader.** Throughout the life of the writing group when discussing another’s manuscript, the teacher-writers would preface their comment/feedback with phrases that would acknowledge their position as *reader* or point to some *universal reader* that was representative of a static identity that was not situated or dynamic. This resulted in the teacher-writers attributing many of their critiques from the perspective of an objective reader through phrases like “part of that comes from me as a reader” or “and I think that’s good because I think as readers, we need to read that, too.” In doing so, they discounted ownership of the critique. Instead, they constructed a universal reader, and this reader generated such a broad context between self and other that there were fewer opportunities for agency.

This universal reader also denied the shared histories of the writing group because a universal reader only existed in an objectified landscape, an apriori landscape of meaning. During Paloma’s first workshop, Jennifer evoked the universal reader to explain why Paloma should make my revision suggestion

Jennifer: And I think that's good because I think readers, we need to read that, too.

Paloma: We do.

Jennifer: We need to read it. We need to be like, "You're right. This is right. This is like something that they want us to squeeze these kids into, and it's not good."

By evoking this universal reader, Jennifer tied our practice of revision to morality. The writer was ethically obligated to do right by the reader by taking a political stand, but Jennifer’s use of the personal pronoun *we* was also reflective of her own identification
with this universal reader. But ironically, even when evoking the universal reader to justify her suggestion, Jennifer’s worldview influenced the constructions. For Jennifer, the universal reader was a teacher in a politicized position who put the learning needs of students ahead of the normative structures of schools and curriculum.

Later, when discussing whether Paloma should include the natural language samples of her participants, Mary advocated for Paloma to show less of her interpretation and more of the actual dialogue. In this moment, unlike the moment with Jennifer, the reader/writer binary was constructed between Paloma and Mary. Mary owned her critique by not referencing some universal reader. She said, “Or, or, yes, just like a couple of lines where you put in the voices exactly how they were because sometimes it got very confusing for me.” But when revoicing this suggestion, Christy placed the onus on a more universal reader.

Christy: But is there a way to type out what they say as, like, you were saying, as it's a dialogue, and then like we did in the beginning, and then you interpret it. So there's not the—because I'm like here, you're paraphrasing so much with the brackets. I'm almost wondering if you should just paraphrase or if you should just include their—because it's an ELL class, we're like to—the reader will appreciate that this is—

Jennifer: Their words—

Christy: —this is their way, yeah.

Jennifer: to stand alone.

Christy: Uh-huh.
Angela: Yeah, I think Christy’s right.

Paloma: Okay.

Jennifer: I think that putting them out there for us to read on our own and to see them—

Again, like in the previous example, Jennifer gave credibility to this faceless reader by using the plural form of the personal pronoun. In this way, she actually implicated all the group members. By attributing their critique to either a universal reader or the whole group, the teacher-writers were creating a collective critic, a rhetorical move that may have been used to diffuse the contact zone between reader and writer, but in reality, actually impeded the writer’s ability to shift within the ideological distance between self and other. In constructing this sort of every reader, the teacher-writers were widening the contested space between reader and writer, and in doing so, constructing less space for the writer to use her agency to negotiate and shift in relation to the audience.

Episodic collage two: Skeptical reader. In our second group meeting, weeks before we workshopped a teacher-writer’s manuscript, the idea of a skeptical audience was introduced by Jennifer into a conversation we were having about the possibility of presenting at a local conference.

Jennifer: This is my question.

Angela: Okay.

Jennifer: Are there, are there teachers attending the Language and Literacy conference interested in pursuing teacher research or . . . This is just something that, something that I had heard, when I, last semester when I was in the class, and I would say, “Oh, I’m taking
this research class.” “Oh, man, I can’t believe that class was so much.” So I have this impression that other colleagues in the field that I met have a negative opinion of teacher research.

Angela: Oh, in what kind of way?

Jennifer: Oh, that’s it’s, that it’s extra work, and it’s something they would never do again, and that it—

Angela: Okay, will I will tell you that Jayne said that she thought it would be important to have a research strand at the Language and Literacy Conference this year, so as a group if you wanted to do that you could apply to to that little, um, say we want to be a part of whatever that research, those presentation that a part of the research.

Jennifer: My question is: Would teachers look through that menu, and would they say, “Oh, yeah, I really want to do that.” Or would they just be like, “Ugh?”

After Jennifer posed this possible scenario, confirmed by sounds of agreement from other teacher-writers in the group, the teacher-writers commiserated on how to address this perceived skeptic. They decided that they would trick the conference attendees by playing with the language of the abstract. As writers, they would use the language of teacher research to entice attendees to attend their session, but they would not explicitly use the word *teacher researcher* in the conference program blurb. We laughed as we came up with different ways to manipulate the language in a way that the skeptical audience would still attend. We wouldn’t claim that the session was about teacher
research. Instead, we would use phrases like *learning from the field, becoming a reflective practitioner*, or *enhancing the day-to-day teaching practice*. In this way, we believed that as teacher-readers and teacher-writers we were beginning our journey as published writers and conference presenters from a space of conflict. We would be writing and presenting for readers who were not our intellectual or pedagogical allies. A few weeks later, this idea of a perceived audience as skeptic was brought up again as we collaborated to write our conference proposal. I prompted the discussion after reading aloud a list of potential topics that we had brainstormed, topics that we thought could potentially guide our conference presentation.

Angela: Okay, so here are the things we have. Value of keeping a reflective journal; value of a research community; producer, not a consumer of knowledge, maybe the photography interview piece—we'll have to see but I went ahead and put it in there. Professionalism back in the hands of teachers; holistically thinking about what that means. The person who's going to take that up as the teacher and then the person who's going to be viewing that teacher and her research, too, I think is—the other thing I remember that I thought your point was so poignant the last time, and most of you guys agreed was, you know, that you didn't want to frame it just as kind of a teacher research presentation.

Jennifer: Uh-huh.

Angela: That that, in itself, might scare off some teachers.

Jennifer: Yeah, that's what—yeah, was my—yeah.
Angela: Like based on your experience that you had.

Jennifer: Based on my experience with colleagues. “Oh, yeah, I took the course,” or, “Oh, we didn't have to do that at NAU, thank God.”

Christy: Yeah.

Jennifer: You know?

Angela: Yeah.

Jennifer: So—

Christy: That's true.

Jennifer: Yeah, we just—I think we just need you to wrap it around—

Mary: Yes.

Jennifer: —where to put our enticing.

Mary: Commercial and more just—

Paloma: Yeah, just like um—

Jennifer: —than teacher research—

Christy: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: —because somehow it's got a bad rap out there.

Paloma: It just seems like teachers, um, um, I, I just wouldn’t go to the lunchroom lounge or whatever because teachers spend so much time so frustrated with our plight, you know, and, and, um, but I think this is our opportunity to be—to put our voices out and to not just sit around and be frustrated, but here's, this is an (beating on the table to emphasize next three words) active, real, concrete way of going through with it, you know?
Jennifer: Uh-huh, Uh-huh.

Paloma: Like putting forth our thoughts, our ideas in a professional way.

So—

Jennifer: Right.

Paloma: —maybe that's what—that’s a good approach.

Angela: Oh, that is.

Paloma: (Whispers) Stop bitching. (Everyone laughs).

Angela: There’s our title.

Paloma: Or “How to.” (Everyone laughs)

Mary: That would pull in a whole lot. (Everyone laughing and agreeing).

Angela: We’d have to do it like three times.

In this episode, we are again using humor to navigate this contested space, conceptualizing how we can we can disguise our identities as teacher-writers and researchers to *commercialize* our purpose for presenting. In doing so, we can be *more than teacher research*. As we passed the conference proposal back and forth via email for final revisions, Mary once again addressed this idea of audience; this time perceiving our need to also address the non-responsive audience (Elbow, 2000, p. 32), but based on our prior conversations, I think we perceived a lack of engagement on the part of the audience as constructing a contentious space. Mary writes,

This morning I sat down and made a couple of changes to the proposal. This is only an idea but I think that we have to consider that in our audience there will be teachers who take our advice and feel excited to begin their own research, and there will be teachers who will only go and hear what we have to say, and that is
OK too. So, the restructuring of our purpose has the twist that teachers can come and take a look at what worked for us—and not necessarily providing other teachers with structure, etc. (M.R.L., personal communication, October 10, 2007).

Originally, the purpose had read: “The goal of this presentation is to provide other teachers with structure, protocol, and reference when conducting their own reflective literacy practices so that they may come in touch with another approach for growing as professionals” (P. B., personal communication, October 10, 2007). But to address this other audience, Mary had revised it to read: “The goal of this presentation is to provide other teachers with the opportunity to look inside our way of combining structure, protocol, and reference as we carried out research in the classroom. We hope that our experience will be a helpful guide to other teachers as they conduct their own reflective literacy practices and come in touch with another approach for growing as professionals” (Mary’s emphasis) (M. R. L., personal communication, October 10, 2007).

And although in the moments described above, we worked together to address this skeptical reader, commiserating when imagining us against them, once the teacher-writers turned their manuscripts over to the other writing group members to be workshopped, they would be in a position to be writing against the skeptics among us. You see, we could recognize this skepticism because, as Jennifer admits in a later meeting, we had all been guilty of criticizing and demeaning the teacher research articles we read as students.

Jennifer: Yeah, but I was just telling Fina how much more I appreciate Bond looking at it than the first time I looked at it.

Angela: That's really interesting.
Jennifer: I was critical of it.
Paloma: Yeah, we were. Yeah we were.
Jennifer: But I think it was because we were so steeped in reading, like—
Paloma: Who’d we have for that course? Faltis?
Jennifer: Yeah, we were reading, yeah, Faltis. So we were like—
Paloma: We were like—
Jennifer: We were reading Gee and we were reading—um—we weren't

*Literacy in the Primary Grades* research articles.

Angela: Right.
Jennifer: Because we never read any teacher research articles before your class.

In revealing her own skepticism of the teacher research articles she had read, Jennifer validated the fact that the skeptical reader was a very legitimate audience we would have to contend with as we wrote for spaces beyond our local writing group. And within this skeptical reader position existed an implied binary: Teachers teach. Scholars research. Like in other binaries, this one’s—teacher/researcher—power relation was predicated on teachers residing in the position of the other. Therefore, if the practice of revision inherently provided a space for contestation in the form of a skeptical reader, then these teacher-writers’ discoursal identities were shaped and challenged not only by the skeptical reader out there somewhere, but also by a less allegorical form of this type of reader that existed in the other teacher-writers. If these teacher-writers—whose participation in a writing group was evidence of their advocacy for teacher-writers and
teacher researchers—could have doubted the credibility of the teacher researchers they encountered, then the skeptical reader was no longer an allegorical adversary; the skeptical reader was us.

It is important to note that like all the positions inhabited in the writing group, the position of skeptical reader was not static, meaning it was constantly shifting from skeptic out there to skeptic across the table. And much of this shifting was influenced by how well the teacher-writer being workshopped and the other teacher-writers understood the journal to which the manuscript would be submitted. In the example below, we were six months into the life of the writing group. Jennifer was being workshopped; she had decided to send her piece to *Literacy in Primary Grades*. In supplying the group with a concrete journal, Jennifer gave shape and form to a more abstract reader the teacher-writers had invoked in other writing workshops, especially since all the teacher-writers in the group had read articles from *Literacy in Primary Grades*.

In describing a revision suggestion to Jennifer about the data collection section in the manuscript, Paloma implied that she understood why Jennifer had included a comprehensive list of data collection: “I think for the reader, for the skeptical reader, it will be valuable to that . . . kind of a reader.” Paradoxically, Paloma, as a reader of Jennifer’s manuscript, positioned herself as a non-skeptical reader when she suggested that although she understood Jennifer’s rationale, she still wanted the section softened and weaved in there.

Jennifer confirmed Paloma’s articulation of this skeptical reader when she said, “And that’s who I was trying to address with this paragraph because I was one of those skeptical readers when I first started reading those teacher research articles.” Like
Paloma, by using the pronoun *those*, Jennifer acknowledged that she had since distanced herself from the position of *skeptical reader*.

**Episodic collage three: Writer as reader.** Even when preparing their manuscript for the group, the teacher-writer had to become a reader of her own work, meaning she too needed to show up as a reader of her own text in a position that would allow her to critically view the prose, the style, and the value of the rhetorical decisions in the manuscript.

Christy: I did have—yeah, I did have a couple of questions . . . that were because I had separated myself from it. And I got to a point where I was very happy with it, and then as I read it again, I was like, “Oh, I don’t know if that flows. I don’t know if my analogy is appropriate.” You know, like if it—since it doesn’t really carry out all—it’s very strong in the beginning and strong in the end and yet you kind of lose it in the middle. You know, like is someone going to think was it too narrative, is it too—so there were a lot of things where I was second guessing myself—

Angela: Okay.

Christy: —the further away from it I got.

Angela: Okay, so why don’t we just start with the writer then? And you start asking questions that you feel, instead of us just telling you here’s what we think.

Christy: Okay.
In describing her experience, Christy showed that even within herself there was tension between what she wrote and what she read. She took up two subject positions: as a writer, she was happy when she completed the project, and as a reader, she was unsure of her achievements as a writer. This is a very common construction for writers to use when discussing their own work; it is a way for them to objectify, detach from it, and in this way, have the potential to evaluate it from different ideological positions. In some ways, it was for the writer what the universal reader position was to the critic. It provided the teacher-writer with an *out* for her rhetorical decision, a way to align herself with the reader. Other teacher-writers echoed this duality during their writing workshops. Paloma, during her first workshop, realized that she had convinced herself that as writer of the manuscript, she did not need a copy for the workshop meeting.

Paloma: Okay. So that—I'm so dumb. I didn't print this out. I'm like, “I don't need that. I read my, I wrote my essay. I don't need it.” But now I realize I need to get one.

When describing why she didn’t need a hard copy of her manuscript, she first slipped and said, “I read,” but she quickly revised her phrase to indicate that she believed as the writer she would have no need to *read* her piece. Ironically, she learned that having a manuscript workshopped meant re-reading *with* the writing group. It meant re-seeing her own manuscript through the eyes of the reader. And at one point, she even tried to look onto my version of her manuscript, but I said, “It may be easier to look at hers, because I've track changes in the notes.”

**Reflective Commentary.** The reading positions of the teacher-writers shifted continuously during the life of the writing group. Depending on the topic, the critique,
and the suggested revisions, the teacher-writers either implicated themselves or deferred responsibility. And although at times this made it difficult for the writer to exert her rhetorical agency to shift closer toward her audience, these moveable reader positions gave the writer access to a variety of ideological perspectives. In doing so, whether it was the universal reader or the skeptical one, the writers had the opportunities to confront, navigate, or ignore these ideologies.

And even when it appeared as if the local readers—the other teacher-writers in the writing group—were the target audience, their discourses allowed for moment-to-moment shifts, meaning their revision suggestions could construct them as the authority, the peer, the ally, or the author herself (Elbow, 2000, p. 29).

The teacher-writers’ shifts in their positions as readers were also illuminated by conversational moves that allowed them to defer responsibility for the revision suggestion they voiced. So although it might be Paloma or Mary or Jennifer voicing a revision suggestion, they shifted the identity of the I position by attributing their revision suggestions to other ideological positions. In doing so, they either deferred responsibility for their suggestion to a reader beyond the local context writing group, or they conferred authority on their suggestion by evoking support beyond the local context of writing group. Therefore, in deferring the responsibility of their critiques to reader identities that existed outside themselves and beyond the local scene of the writing group, the teacher-writers showcased how, much like the construction of writer identities, the identities of readers—symbolic or not—were influenced by ideological positions constructed between the reader, writer, and text.
Discussion: Shifting Roles and Agency

To actively engage in the writing group, the teacher-writers typically occupied one of only two obvious positions of participation: reader or writer. This meant that they were either the writer whose knowledge was being read, critiqued, and evaluated, or they were the reader who was reading, critiquing, or evaluating this demonstration of knowledge. Like Moss, & Nicolas (2004), I believe that the experiences of the teacher-writers in the writing group enabled them “to make decisions about their personal texts with the supportive influence of readers/writers who [were] like-minded in their views of what it means to belong to and participate in a community of writers but who represent a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and opinions as readers and writers” (p. 3). The diversity, what I call the ideological distance, was illuminated in the shifting roles of the reader/writer binary, which influenced how the identities of the teacher-writers were constructed. Moreover, the fertile ground that exists in the distance between self and other constructs opportunities for rhetorical agency.

Conclusion

In my exploration of how writing identities were constructed during the practice of revision in a writing group, I discovered that teacher-writers’ writing identities were influenced by the ideological distance between the discourse of writing they were using to discuss their manuscript and the discourse of writing that influenced the revision suggestions articulated by the other teacher-writers. Moreover, teacher-writers’ shifts in identities occurred in the contested spaces that emerged between these contact zones between self and other.
By negotiating the shifting roles in the practice of revisions, roles, which like the discourses of writing, constructed contested spaces, the teacher-writers encountered emergent opportunities to be agentic because opportunities for agency (or the lack of opportunities) resided in moments of tensions. By analyzing the tensions that arose between the discourses of writing and the shifting roles in the practice of revision, I argue that the how and why of revisions to text, talk and, identity are predicated upon the alignment or disconnect between readers and writers, the local readers and writers in the writing group, the universal construction of readers and writers, and authoritative readers and writers from the journal. In short, teacher-writers’ agency is invited (subtly) by the structure of the revision suggestion.

In addition, if the distance between self and others ultimately influenced both who the teacher-writer was constructing through her rhetorical choices in the text and her rhetorical choices in the writing group, then I would argue too that the teacher-writer and her text can be read as a text, “composed, written, fabricated out what is always already there, awash in history and culture” (Willinsky, 2001, pg. 18). The implication of this theoretical position is a commitment to a contextualized truth about writing: a submission of self by the teacher-writer through her text is simultaneously a representation of reality and a construction of it. The teacher-writer and her text were bound to a web of discursive practices constructed from her own history, the group, and the scholarly journal, but she was also able to challenge these practices because fissures within bounded practices emerged in the contested spaces in our practice of revision with others. And as we revised our words and ourselves, moving closer or farther away from others’ ideological position, we constructed identities that could never have been imagined
outside these contested spaces. Through these revisionary acts, we were able to recognize and construct access to our agentic potential.

Consequently, revision implied our potentiality to see again, to see differently, to see anew, and if others mediated our agency in the contested spaces in our practice of revision, then I argue that the writing group, through its construction of contested spaces, allowed for an examination of revision as agency. In short, revision was an embodied practice of agency. Moreover, to be asked to write for this reader and that audience using this discourse or that discourse implied the need for the teacher-writer to write toward or away from different ideological positions, which meant that changes or proposed changes to her text generated a need for her to revise her own identity, an identity that contained the potential to incorporate others spheres of human activity, others’ discourses (Bakhtin, 1986). The very essence of our writing group, where we agreed to submit manuscripts for revision, presupposed that the first iteration was produced from a position of lack. Therefore, by joining the group, the teacher-writers agreed to modify their identities, to re-see their experiential and theoretical knowledge, and in doing so, to re-present an iteration of their initial discoursal identities. The teacher-writers, through this agreement, constructed a space to enact agency.

The Practice of Revision in a Revise and Resubmit Process

Revising sentences is an act of hope (Grimes, 2010, p. 132).

And as I write, I revise these sentences. I will revise them again and again, hearing them differently, satisfied with them one moment, frustrated the next, even though I’m sure they’re the best sentences I can make. But one day, I’ll reread them and want to change them again. They’ll no longer be the sentences I trusted (Grimes, 2010, p. 144).
In this opening quote, Grimes (2010) constructs revision as an agentic act that remains solely in the creative hands of the author. On the contrary, as shown in the previous section, agency was employed in the distance between self and other, as the writer shifted her text and talk to lessen the ideological distance among the various discourses of writing, while she navigated the shifting role of the reader/writer binary. Therefore, since the writing group was a space for the teacher-writers to negotiate discoursal construction of writing identities in particular ways, exerting agency through micro-revision on the page and occupying shifting roles in the reader/writer binary off the page to develop a practice of revision with others, in this section I present a rich description of one teacher-writer’s negotiation of the revise and resubmit process with editors from *Literacy in the Primary Grades*. My purpose here is to illustrate how a teacher-writer, who has developed a practice of revision with one group, must revise *that* practice as she carries herself and her manuscript into a new context and interacts with readers who are always, already positioned as having more influence and expertise than she. And although *Literacy in the Primary Grades* had a rich history of publishing teacher-writers, the journal, like all institutional spaces, constructed a practice of revision that explicitly and implicitly bounded its accepted discourses in normative literacy practices and privileged knowledge structures. Therefore, by receiving a revise and resubmit answer to her manuscript submission, Jennifer—through months of revision with the teachers and me—had constructed a manuscript that, at the very least, was deemed by the editors as having potential to perform within this bounded space. At this point, however, she had to once again revise her practice of revision to negotiate the contested spaces of the revise and resubmit process. Furthermore, because Jennifer, who
like many graduate students and junior faculty (Casanave, 2002), had little to no experience publishing, it was important to understand how this process influenced her identity and agency. Below, I explore the following assertions:

**Assertion One: An Off-Stage Practice of Revision**

To negotiate the contested spaces of the revise and resubmit process with a journal, Jennifer constructed an off-stage practice of revision. An off-stage practice of revision provided a rehearsal for another shift in the construction of Jennifer’s writing identities.

**Revisiting Jennifer’s Profile.** Jennifer is a bilingual ELL specialist for K-6. Initially, when describing her purpose for joining the writing group, she spoke of her fear of “encountering an absence of scholarly interaction” that she had enjoyed so much in graduate school. Because she was back in the classroom and without the intellectual structures that accompanied most graduate endeavors, Jennifer wanted to maintain the writing life she had participated as a graduate student and expose herself to publications and scholarly conversations in her field.

In the writing group, Jennifer was a leader, keeping the group on task and organized, ensuring that all the other teacher-writers understood meeting times and locations, and taking notes and sending out updates about protocol decisions that we had made as a group. Moreover, when studying the transcripts from the writing group meeting, I noticed that Jennifer had the second highest number of topic changes and revision suggestions behind me—the organizer of the group and the teacher-writers’ former instructor. She read deeply, giving thoughtful but complex feedback that was, early on at least, solely influenced by her own vision of how she wanted the writer’s piece to read. As the writing group’s practice of revision evolved, Jennifer became more
sensitive to the what she called “the tone of my comments in the group.” She wrote a reflection four months into the group:

I have evolved . . . When we were working on Christy’s piece I think I was in teacher-correcting mode. I had a vision of what I wanted her piece to read like, after all, I was the target audience, right? Yet, how audacious of me! I noted that while working with Mary’s, I not only lessened the teacher-mode of my comments, but also my desire to read her piece, or anyone else’s for that matter, my way greatly decreased. I was sensitive to her piece, her voice. And that is one of our goals in this group – to get our own voices heard. Kinda cool, eh? (J.S., personal communication, December 27, 2007)

Jennifer defined ideal participation in the writing group as being less teacherly with the understanding that by leaving that teacher identity outside of the writing group one would be more likely to honor the writer’s intention and voice. She also claims that feedback should be about creating a space for learning to occur, a theme that emerged in her writing workshops. In an email preparing us for receiving the second draft of her manuscript, she wrote:

Hi girls!

I just wanted to thank you.... I have spent the last 6 hours working on my dialogue journal piece. I am exhausted, yet exhilarated, and most certainly appreciative.

I thank you for encouraging me to keep working towards publication.

I thank you for all your suggestions and edits on my piece.

I thank you for affirming that my research is worth putting out there.
I thank you in advance for being willing to take another look at my piece.

I thank you for your honesty. I thank you for your professionalism. I thank you for your friendship.

I'm going to be sending my piece tomorrow (I want to take one last look tomorrow morning.)

love,

Jennifer (J. S., personal communication, February 23, 2008)

She expressed a similar sentiment at the beginning of her second writing workshop, Jennifer begins, “I just really appreciate everyone helping each other . . . and we’re lear–I feel like I’m learning so much from hearing everyone’s input and reading all comments and stuff” (writing group transcript, February 27, 2008).

Finally, as an aspiring teacher-writer and aspiring published author, Jennifer was deeply committed to sharing her story of becoming a teacher researcher and advocating for the need for more teachers to contribute their voice of expertise to the public conversation on education. Before presenting with Paloma and me at a national conference, she wrote this reflection for our presentation:

After finishing my Master’s degree, when Angela invited me to join a writer’s group, with the aim of publishing my teacher research findings, I knew it was a challenge I needed to accept. I had spent so many hours playing in the muck and mire of my beautiful data; unearthing research findings. After all the rigor and revelation of my teacher research it seemed like a waste to close the notebook and put in on the shelf. I wanted to share those findings. And, on a personal level, I
wanted to see if I could craft a piece that had the integrity, voice, and heart that a publisher would find appealing. (Clark-Oates, Smith, & Bean, 2008)

Again, in this reflection, Jennifer articulates very clearly what her needs are as a writer: to have her voice, heart, and integrity honored (and respected). And although this may seem to be a somewhat romanticized notion of writing with others and for others—this idea came from her participation in the writing group—Jennifer was also very realistic and intentional in her process, and fully understood how demanding the revise and resubmit process was going to be, because she had already practiced negotiating the contested spaces of the practice of revision in the writing group.

**Practice of Revision: A Comparative Look.** During both the writing group workshops and the revise and resubmit process, Jennifer participated in contested spaces generated by the ideological distance between self and other and the shifting roles in the reader/writer binary. And although participating in the practice of revision in both spaces caused a restlessness in Jennifer as she, in both contexts, revised the “meaning and representations . . . seeking alternatives” (Welch, 1997, p. 163), there were differences in the two practices of revision, differences related to use of time and space, of methods for engaging the writer in the practice of revision, and in the structures of the revision suggestions.

In the writing group, the teacher-writers emailed their manuscripts to the other group members as much as two weeks in advance, or as little as a few days before. The teacher-writers read the manuscript while writing notes or using track changes to make their revision suggestions. They did not send these revision suggestions to the writer until after the writing workshop, which gave them an opportunity to explain their suggestions,
offer the writer an opportunity to ask clarifying questions, and provide a space for the readers and the writers to navigate the contested spaces of interpretation and intent together. In short, the writing group used time and space in ways that would provide opportunities for dialogue and negotiation in the contested spaces of revision. Then the teacher-writer carried the talk from the writing workshop—some of which was residual, and some of which was recorded in the form of notes or bullet points—and all the revised manuscripts from her fellow teacher-writers to a private space to engage in drafting another version of the manuscript. And as was the case with Jennifer, she had three months to revise her manuscript before re-submitting it to the group. She also had the opportunity to participate in three other writing workshops before submitting her revised draft, so in this way, she had many opportunities to learn what was important to the other teacher-writers as readers and more time to observe how the other teacher-writers navigated the contested spaces in the practice of revision.

On the other hand, as is standard practice with journals, it took nine months for Jennifer to engage in the practice of revision with the editors of the journal. By the time she had received the response, Jennifer had spent months honing her practice of revision through curriculum building, co-writing a conference presentation with Paloma and me, and participating in creative writing workshops with some of the other teacher-writers. In short, the morning she received the journal’s offer to revise and resubmit she arrived at her inbox as a different writer. Moreover, the distance—both literal and figurative—between Jennifer and the editors and the reviewers generated contested spaces, but spaces that Jennifer knew she would have to navigate alone. So regardless of the editors’ offer to be available for any questions or “help in any way,” Jennifer recognized the offer as more
of a formality. The editors also asked Jennifer to revise and resubmit her manuscript in less than a month’s time. Given issues of space and time, Jennifer was less than enthusiastic when she shared the news with Paloma and me:

Well, I got my decision from *Literacy in the Primary Grades*. It's a revise and resubmit. I've attached their comments... I am disappointed because I just don't know if I'm mentally up for all the revisions they've requested.... the new transcript would need to be submitted by Dec 1. maybe I'm just too tired after a crappy day with my second graders.

j (J. S., personal communication, November 7, 2008)

Her tone in the email implies an understanding that the revision suggestions were non-negotiable, and with the small window of time, Jennifer was unable to view the revise and submit offer as an indication that editors found “her integrity, voice, and heart appealing” (Clark-Oates, Smith, and Bean, 2008).

Two weeks later, her apathy was replaced by anger. Unlike in the writing group, where she had built personal connections with the other teacher-writers—what Elbow (2000), she positioned the editors and the reviewers—at least initially—as anything but allies:

Subject Line: SUPER MAD!!!REALY, REALLY, REALLY MAD!

Sorry I am shouting . . .

I just now took the time to really read what the reviewers had to say about my piece. Excuse my French, but it is bullshit (sorry, sorry, sorry, Paloma, I had to write that.)

I am completely and utterly flabbergasted. And totally perplexed . . .
Just for your humor, I’ve attached the doc with their comments. (which when examined closely make little sense) – I added my comments to it (I only swear once and I added a random character, so it softens it a bit.)

Right now, I’m thinking, “Screw it” – It might not be worth the revisions….They will compromise my research so drastically–going to be with my kids. Who just got back from camping?

So glad I have you both to vent. (J. S., personal communication, November 25, 2008)

Although this email was very emotional, emotion that probably stemmed as much from fear as anything else, it was the turning away from the editors and the turning toward Paloma and me that is significant. By acknowledging this safe space—a place to vent—Jennifer had invited us to co-construct a practice of revision for the revise and resubmit process. This practice of revision was predicated on a need to negotiate the contested spaces of the revise and resubmit process in the margins of the context. As a result, the revise and resubmit process persuaded Jennifer to co-construct her writing identities off-stage with familiar readers, where together we could generate moments for her to exert and refine her rhetorical agency off-stage. In this way, she convinced herself to participate in the etiquette of the revise and resubmit process.

**A Revised Practice of Revision: Constructing a Space Off-Stage.** To vent her frustration about the letter the editors had sent with revision suggestions, Jennifer inserted comments of frustration and incredulity. And by using comment bubbles in the margins of the formal letter to insert humor and crass language, she was exerting agency—figuratively and literally—off-stage (Bakhtin, 1984). As a way to show our willingness to
reside in the margins with Jennifer, Paloma and I also responded to both Jennifer’s comments and the editorial board using the comment feature in the word document (Figure 1). I wrote my comments next to Jennifer’s—a kind of call-and-response structure—with the hope of unpacking the editors’ comments in a way that seemed less critical than how Jennifer was reading them. In the body of the email, to which I attached the revised version of the editors’ letter, I also wrote, “Let me know what I can do. I will be around all weekend. I can read drafts, meet with you, listen to you” (personal communication, November 26, 2008). Paloma followed with a similar email, attaching her comments embedded in the letter:

Ok I want in on the rant! Fun fun. I was laughing too. No apologies needed for the profanity! I would have felt the SAME WAY! Attached are MY thoughts.

Me too me too. I’m here and available all weekend! :)

Paloma (P.B., personal communication, November 26, 2008)

In our comments, we used discourses of writing that had been a common refrain in the writing group, assigning responsibility for the editors’ comments to conventions of genre, to the authority of a themed of the issue, and to normative social practices of publishing.
data allowed you to “see your practice and the students up close, and thus you grew as a teacher.” For example, what happens as the teacher is writing her responses in the dialogue journal?

**Delete information about the writers’ identities**

Both reviewers think that you don’t have enough information to support your claims about the students’ identities. Instead of providing more of this information in the literature review, it would be best to delete any reference to the writers’ identities.

**Highlight the contribution the author will be making on dialogue journals.**

Describe the professional growth of the author by working on dialogue journals.

These are two separate suggestions from Reviewer 1 but they are connected. Reviewer 1 notes that on p.4 you write about ‘rich professional growth’ but then never really show that explicitly. Reviewer 1 also would like you to highlight the contributions you’ll be making to work on dialogue journals such as what you did and the impact it had on you.

**Revise the sections called ‘invitations’ and re-work those sections to highlight what you are doing during those invitations.**

Reviewer 1 also suggests that you revise these sections to foreground the teacher’s work, learning, etc and not emphasize the kids’ unique responses.

**Remove the paragraph about the dialogue journals ‘building a strong community of writers...’**

Reviewer 1 notes that on p.16, under the section “An Invitation to Reflect, Ponder and Contemplate...”

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**Figure 1. Screenshot of marginal comments.**

In my comment [8], I wrote, “It seems to me that they keep making this suggestion—focus more on what ‘you’ are doing—since the issue is about making connections, like what did you the teacher do to make connections and why. For a different issue or theme, I think you would be getting very different feedback” (personal communication, November 26, 2008). This comment is reminiscent of the genre discourse used by Christy in our first writing workshop, so Jennifer did have experience negotiating this discourse.

It is also reflective of a conversation that Jennifer had had with Paloma and Mary in a workshop session just before she had sent her manuscript to the journal. She had opened that particular writing workshop by reading the theme of the journal’s special issue. In this way, she had shown an anxiety about revising her manuscript to fit the theme:

Jennifer: I wanted to, um—I have, um, the call for manuscripts in front of me, from *Literacy in the Primary Grades.*
Paloma: Yeah, I wanted to hear that.

Jennifer: So, I thought I would—I might not read the whole thing, but I would read the piece that I’m kind of driving towards, so—are you there?

Mary: Yes, I’m here.

Jennifer: Okay. So, um it’s called “X” so it says: “in this unthemed issue we feature your current questions and transformations as educators, community members, students and researchers. Many directions are possible in this issue. What tensions do you see.” Okay, I’m not going to read all these possibilities, but I’m going to read the possibility I think I hit. Here it is: “What connections are adults and children making as they engage in art of language?” and then it says, “join us in making a collection of X.”

Paloma: Oh, yeah.

Jennifer: So, I’ve been trying, in this revision, I’ve been trying to key into this fact, you know, here I am, I’m an adult, and there are the children, who are my learners, and we are connecting through a language art, and we are connecting through writing. So that’s, that’s the TUNE that I’m trying to play.

Paloma: I think that fits perfectly.

Jennifer: Oh good.

Paloma: I really do.

Mary: I think that that is great. That topic fits perfectly with your paper.
Jennifer: Okay, um, do you think it is—um what’s the word? Do you think it is visible enough, or do you think I should change the title even? To make it more—I added something to my title—So I added that “to connect phrase” I didn’t have that before. But then I’m like, okay this is like another really long title—dit-dit-dit-dit-dit.” I don’t know.

Paloma: I don’t know, I think that when you submit it, um Editors, if they don’t like that, they can condense it, but I think that sending it out there with, you know, allowing access to the fullness of the piece, I think—I don’t think it’s too long for me.

In this conversation at the beginning of Jennifer’s last writing workshop, she demonstrated a deep understanding about the importance of crafting her manuscript in a manner that would make it acceptable to the editors. In addition, Paloma helped to confirm that any practice of revision for a journal would include editors condensing things they don’t like about the text. But ten months after this conversation in the writing workshop, Jennifer was struggling to negotiate the editors’ condensing of her manuscript. It was my hope, however, that the group’s off-stage revision could help Jennifer as she negotiated the contested spaces of the revise and resubmit process.

By writing our comments in the margins—next to the editors’ and next to Jennifer’s—we were asking Jennifer to re-see the editors/reviewers’ suggestions. Consequently, through our explanations, we also tried to soften the tone implied by the imperative sentence structure of the editors’ revision suggestion, which could be characterized as explicit teaching, the kind of pedagogical approach associated with a process discourse or a
functional approach using a social practice discourse (Ivanič, 2004). For each imperative, the editors wrote a few sentences in an attempt to clarify meaning; however, Jennifer’s responses implied that the structure of the revision did not invite her participation. To fully understand the contrast between the editors’ feedback style and the writing group’s (evolved) feedback style, it is important to remember how Jennifer characterized her evolution through the practice of revision. Jennifer was proudest when she was finally able to leave her “teacherly voice” behind and listen to the intent of the author. Paloma confirmed Jennifer’s interpretation of tone when she wrote a response to the following comment made by one of the editors: “Omit the word ‘equal’ on p. 9 last line – Reviewer 1 doubts that Carol and the author are really’ equal’ when thinking of student/teacher relationships” (B. K., personal communication, November 7, 2008). In response, Paloma writes, “Did Reviewer 1 really have to say it like that? It just sounded rude. MAN! When I’m tired I can even say it nicer than that” (personal communication, November 26, 2008). Many of Paloma’s comments echoed the sentiment of Jennifer’s comments. In this way, Paloma was validating Jennifer, whereas my comments were crafted to give Jennifer access to tools that would allow her to wield some rhetorical agency in the manuscript. In response to Paloma’s comment, I wrote, “This is a hilarious comment. I want to make sure we put it in the article we are going to write. What she means is that there is always a power differential between student and teacher. Maybe you could say leveled or lessened or maybe it actually made you more aware of the constant power relations teachers and students are negotiating.”

Even if Jennifer and Paloma had read the tone differently, Jennifer did not interpret the letter—the initial space constructed by the editors to develop a practice of
revision—as a dialogical space, as a space for rectifying the distance between the authoritative word of the editors and her internally persuasive discourse. On the other hand, in the off-stage practice of revision, she posed questions, and we answered. For example, the editors wrote, “Highlight the contribution the author will be making to work on dialogue journals” (personal communication, November 7, 2008), and Jennifer asked if Paloma and I could give her any insight to what the editors meant. I responded, “One example that pops in my head is the one you used during the presentation when you discuss how long dialogue journals have been around, but you realize that this discussion means something new in the context of NCLB. So even thought [sic] you [sic] using a method that seems ‘old,’ it is allowing you to shed new light on your current situation” (personal communication, November 26, 2008).

Constructing this practice of revision off stage by turning away from the editors and toward the writing group helped ease Jennifer into a practice of revision with the editors that would ultimately impact her writing identities. This off-stage practice of revision was imperative to Jennifer’s ability to complete the revision and to resubmit it as the editors had asked, because in the beginning of the interaction between Jennifer and the editorial board, Jennifer had not perceived the editors’ revision suggestions as allowing for a co-construction of her authorial identity. The ideological distance between their discourse of revision and Jennifer’s discourse of writing was too great. Therefore, to have agency, Jennifer sought out the safety of the writing group. We supported and mentored her to understand how she could make the editors’ revision suggestions more aligned with her intention for the final product. We wanted to give her an opportunity to
make their revision discourse less authoritative, to get to a place where it eventually performed as both authoritative and internally persuasive (Bakhtin, 1981).

**An Evolving Practice of Revision: Publishing and an Absence of Self.** Jennifer used her agency to turn toward the writing group and co-construct opportunities for her to revise *toward* the editors. In this way, she lessened the distance between self and other. After Jennifer read our comments in the editors’ letter, she made a decision to move forward with revising her manuscript. Once each section was revised, she sent us a draft attached to an email and included the editors’ revision suggestion, so we could assess whether we thought her revision had addressed the reviewers’ concerns. We addressed issues around methods, literature review, and word choice. Paloma and I read. Jennifer wrote.

We spent Thanksgiving corresponding and revising. Using humor to lessen the stress Jennifer was under, she wrote:

Hi girls! I'm at it - I'm digging in (haven't made my apple pie yet, nor mashed my potatoes....)

I hope you are enjoying your family today.

Quick question:

Reviewer 2 wants to know what "what types of fieldnotes did you take? Why was it important to take fieldnotes?"

To my piece I've added: I took over a dozen *ethnographic* field notes *while I was teaching to see how dialogue journals impacted our interactions*. I guess I don't know what other *types of field notes* there are - so I'm not sure how to distinguish the ones I took....
What do you think? -have I addressed what type of field notes and why I took them? (personal communication, November 27, 2008)

I responded:

Look back in your Hubbard and Power too where they talk about fieldnotes. Did you use a two column system, where you had observations on one side and your commentary on another, did you use a grid to describe your students work? See where I am going with this? Instead of thinking about naming them, think about describing them.

ang (personal communication, November, 27, 2008)

Just as time and space had generated a greater ideological distance between Jennifer and the editors, the quick turnaround time, even during a holiday, validated Jennifer and motivated her to keep working. In short, Jennifer was using her network as a safe place to try on these revisions even as the revise and resubmit practice of revision forced her to experience shifts in her writing identity. At one point, she even echoed a sentiment that had been voiced by both Christy and Paloma during their first writing workshops, a sentiment that she had never voiced to the writing group. When grappling with revision to the literature review, she wrote:

I am really trying to get this done - but it is hard for me... don't know why. Maybe because I have not tackled these issues in my writing before (NCLB) If you have time, can you read through this? . . . Actually, I know it does not do this.... writing is HARD work..... Any insights? Anybody want to write this part for me and be my co-author? anyone? too tired - and I have a date to
watch Kung Fu Panda with my boys. (personal communication, November 29, 2008)

The weariness she conveyed in her observations about writing demonstrates the difficulty in writing toward another’s interpretation of your words. And at this point, she also began to show the limitations of any off-stage practice of revision. When navigating the contested spaces of revision, at some point, a writer must be empowered enough to turn toward the readers who reside within the context to which she is writing. Two hours later, she responded with an apology about her discouraged state in the previous email, chalking it up to “the writing process.”

A month later, Jennifer received another letter from the editors informing her that she had been “conditionally accepted.” (B. K., personal communication, January 15, 2009). In this email, Jennifer was less apathetic or angry. She wrote to us, “got some more work to do, but I’ve been ‘conditionally accepted!’ Wow” (J. Smith, personal communication, January 15, 2009). By being accepted, Jennifer shifted—even slightly—toward the editors and away from her off-stage practice of revision. We did not receive any emails asking for our support during the second round of revisions with the editor. In March, she forwarded me some of the email exchanges between the editors and her, letting me know she was still working toward publication.

I don’t have data from the on-stage practice of revision, which supports my claim that by moving toward something one is always moving away from something else. The day she received proofs for her soon-to-be published article, she wrote to me:
wow – here it is – back from the typesetter. It was a really great moment, perhaps one of my best, to open the pdf file and see my work in this format (J. Smith, personal communication, April 9, 2009).

As she wrote and rewrote Jennifer had shifted her discourses and her identity toward the journal, but three weeks later, she wrote to me again:

It’s strange to pick up the piece that will have my name on the byline and read words that I did not put there. I understand the job of an editor – to clean up and increase the fluidity in the work – and I do not deny the importance of that – it just seems weird to read And when sentences are ripped out of paragraphs – there’s a hole – I had written that sentence to say something to my reader; part of me wants it back in there; I was intentional with each word, phrase, and now it’s not there. There’s a void. It’s a definite feeling of loss and slight sadness. I don’t think the integrity of the piece has been compromised. AND I am making this review to write in any changes that I may want to make. But I feel, if the editors made a change – they want it that way – not the way it was. So, as my voice goes into publication is it really truly what I had said? (J. Smith, personal communication, April 20, 2009)

I wrote back:

How can something that is seemingly less “Jennifer” still feel like agency and empowerment, not just from the perspective of the editors but even from the influence of the group. (A. Clark-Oates, personal communication, April 20, 2009)

The purpose of this study was to co-construct spaces where teacher researchers could generate a practice of revision with others to support their desire to research, write,
and share their expertise. But all spaces are fraught with contestations that must be negotiated in ways that significantly alter identities, opening spaces for agency while closing others. Through both the on-stage and off-stage practice of revision, Jennifer’s identities shifted through the moments she employed rhetorical agency to negotiate the contested spaces. Jennifer’s process supports the idea that publishing—sharing your work publicly—denies and grants, opens and closes, co-constructs and demands. Bob Fecho (2003), who reflects about his own experiences publishing as a teacher research, borrows an Iranian phrase to describe the process: *Yeki Bood. Yeki Na Bood.* This is how it is. This is not how it is. There was one. There was no one.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I illustrated how the identities of teacher-writers are constructed in two different contexts: (1) the writing group; and (2) the revise and resubmit process. By claiming that their identities are constructed in the contested spaces of revision—in the ideological distance between readers and writers—I identified what the teacher-writer’s relinquished to participate in this process toward publication, while also highlighting what they acquired. In doing so, I framed this disposal and appropriation as movement to a more middle ground, an in-between of who they thought they were and who they were attempting to be. Therefore, this chapter rethinks issues of empowerment in the teacher research movement and the limitations of academic writing as a teacher’s ally. The invitation to research, write, and publish must be presented in a critical way, one that is transparent about the consequences of asking teachers to assert themselves publicly (White, 2011). Any practice of revision—but especially one that will ultimately confer opportunities of access—must include support for teacher-writers who face the violence
of conformity and the loss of self, which are consequences of moving one’s practice from private, local spaces to more critical, public spaces. Toward this purpose, I argue for increased opportunities for teachers to engage in writing and publishing in their schools, where they can construct their off-stage spaces. Moreover, in advocating for these opportunities, I further theorize discoursal revisions as being informed by both an authoritative and internally persuasive sound, one that does not wholly belong to the writer or the audience, one that is unstable and wily, but knowable nonetheless.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATION

This dissertation explored how teacher-writers’ identities were constructed in the contested spaces of revision with other teacher-writers as they wrote toward publication. By focusing my analysis on the practice of revision, I sought to contribute to an understanding of revision as a re-imagining of self, one that determines and is determined by contexts, discourses, and opportunities for rhetorical agency. In this way, my study focused on the off-stage practice of teacher-writers with the intent of illuminating the identity work involved in writing and revising. In the process of revising toward a published self, the teacher-writers had to negotiate issues of authority, ownership, and voice to construct a hybrid identity that might be more reflective of self and other.

In this chapter, I will give a brief review of my discussion from Chapter 4, and then I will extend this discussion by describing the implications of my study. For each section, I have categorized the implications either as pedagogical, methodological, or theoretical. Then, I share the limitation of my study. Finally, I describe how this study opened up new questions to pursue in future research.

Discourses of Writing

To seek a deeper understanding of the teacher-writer’s ideological positions during the practice of revision—positions that influenced opportunities for imagining new identities and flexing rhetorical agency—I used Ivanič’s (2004) discourses of writing and learning to write framework—skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices, and sociopolitical discourses. These pre-determined categories illuminated the ideological perspectives informing the teacher-writers’ revision suggestions, and these ideological
positions invariably revealed fissures in our practice of revision, defining our practice of revision as conflicted and contested. By focusing on discord in various contact zones, I explored issues of authority and ownership inherent in the reader/writer binary to understand revision as a relinquishing and acquisition of self. These binary positions, as experienced by the teacher-writers, were dynamic and characterized by a literal and figurative occupation that shifted moment-to-moment and across time and space. The teacher-writers’ participation—in the writing group and through the revised and resubmit process—illustrated a lesson about writing that Maxine Greene (1995) articulates as having learned “presently and retrospectively”: “writing has to do with that recognition of an ‘I,’ who is also (as the poet goes on to say) ‘one of them’” (p. 106) (original emphasis). And for Bakhtin (1981), it is the reconciliation between the “I” (internally persuasive discourse) and “them” (authoritative discourse) that signals a moment of agency.

**Pedagogical implication**

Although this study focused on an extra-curriculum writing group that existed outside, it has implication for the classroom. First, it is important for teachers to develop literacy practices that prepare students to navigate the contested spaces during a practice of revision. In particular, teachers can modify the six discourses from Ivanič’s framework. Designing a curriculum for writing that illuminates the ideological underpinnings of revision commentary—whether from a teacher or from peers—would allow for a more comprehensive writing pedagogy (Ivanič, 2004), generating opportunities for students to develop a practice of revision based on dialogical negotiations of syntax and semantics instead of passive textual edits. Moreover, by asking
writer and reader to critically reflect on the *why* of any rhetorical decision, the curriculum could make transparent the sociopolitical consequences of words, sentences, and paragraphs. In this way, a student’s revision practice has the potential to disrupt the myth that there some ideal text (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982) that is *better or stronger or less awkward*.

And although my study focused mostly on the teacher-writers, this comprehensive pedagogy that I am suggesting also has implication for how we engage anyone in the process of reading another’s texts. Beginning with the idea that all revision commentary is value-laden and introducing readers to the six discourse of writing and learning to write, this type of curriculum could ask the reader to give a rationale for her revision suggestion, a statement that could be articulated by the reader through critically reflection using the language from the framework to express a rationale for her topic of revision. In this way, writers and readers have a means of acknowledging how their discourses are imbued with ideologies and how these ideologies have consequences for how a writer’s identities are constructed through her text.

Unlike many classrooms, a writing group—especially extracurriculum groups—could also be used as a dialogic space for developing a practice of revision because a group has the potential to provide a writer access to a seemingly array of ideological perspectives. This means that the authority of the local reader is diffused across many readers unlike in a traditional classroom. In this study, the writing group exposed the teacher-writer to a comprehensive view of writing (p. 241) by giving her opportunities to negotiate a myriad of discourses undergirded by ideological influences. Moreover, during the revise and resubmit process, Jennifer used the writing group for her off-stage practice
of revision, which allowed her a safe place to try on the revision suggestions of the editors/reviewers, to negotiate what Thelin (2013) calls “an authoritative overview of the strengths and weakness . . . with the goal of improving the paper” from a space that fosters learning for both the reader and writer (personal communication, March 29, 2013).

Moreover, the teacher-writers had opportunities to be rhetorical agents in their negotiation of these six discourses, and if Ivanič (2004) is correct when she argues that to build a comprehensive pedagogy of writing a teacher needs to construct opportunities for student-writers to encounter all six discourses, then I would argue, based on my study, that these opportunities must also allow for the student to reflect on how the ideological underpinnings of the discourses can influence or already have influenced her text, depending on her position in the practice of revision.

Therefore, as I suggested earlier, a comprehensive writing pedagogy could account for a student’s deep reflection not only on her authorial intention, but also on the revision suggestions from peers or teachers. In this way, the student might have more opportunities to engage in dialogue with others about revision suggestions, negotiating the contested spaces of revision with a group of peers instead of the authority of one reader. And even when encountering the authority of the teacher, the student-writer could be empowered to return to her peers, much like Jennifer used the writing group in the study, to negotiate the teacher’s with others.

**Methodological implication**

I used Ivanič’s framework to analyze the emergent identities of the teacher-writers because I believed it was a sound methodological tool for understanding the
ideological influences of discourses used in the pedagogical space of our writing group. As is the nature of any typology, while Ivanič’s framework illuminated methods and discourses for explaining participation in learning processes of writing, there was little evidence to show how this participation was relational. In my study, I showed how the teacher-writers constructed a hybrid discourse that emerged as they enacted their rhetorical agency to negotiate the contested spaces of revision. This hybrid discourse—the way in which the teacher-writer engaged with the discourses of the reader—illuminates the need for another category to be added to Ivanič’s model. In this way, the framework would account for the reader and writer, making it more robust as a research and pedagogical tool. The category I propose would be “approaches to the practice of revision.” By adding this category, I am proposing that in a comprehensive writing pedagogy there needs to be a more explicit discussion about how a writer can engage with these various discourses of writing and learning to write. By accounting for the practice of revision, a researcher might be able to develop a framework for discourses of revision, one that could be used to inform preparing teachers to teach writing, to support student-writers to understand the language of their teachers revision, and support all writers (students, teachers, and professionals) as they develop writing habits.

**Revision as Agency**

When writers engage in literacy practices in particular contexts, those literacy practices are imbued with values and beliefs regarding the acquisition, dissemination, and sustainability of knowledge. Ivanič (2004) argues, like others (Bakhtin, 1982; Berlin, 1987; Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2000), that these myriad ways people practice literacy are represented through their discourse:
These different ways of conceptualizing literacy lie at the heart of ‘discourses’ in the broadest sense: recongisable [sic] associations among values, beliefs and practices which lead to particular forms of situated action, to particular decisions, choices and omissions, as well as to particular wordings. (p. 220)

In my study, I used Ivanič’s (2004) framework to understand how the teacher-writers used rhetorical agency in their practice of revision to experiment with forms and structures, ideas and worldviews. The writing group provided a space to act through discord because ultimately the experimentation toward others’ had to culminate in decisions about the syntax, semantics, and voice of the manuscript. In short, the teacher-writers were afforded opportunities to negotiate their identities by participating in dialogic encounters with readers, an encounter that constructed a practice of revision that was as much about disposal as it was about appropriation. Without this writing group space—a space to encounter rich conversations about the consequences of choosing this over that—the exigency for rhetorical agency would have been minimized, meaning the teacher-writers would have had fewer opportunities to construct and negotiate contested spaces. In both the writing group and during the revise and resubmit process, these contested spaces emerged between self and other. Therefore, like others (Haar, 2006), I conceptualize revision as “an assertion of identity” (Haar, 2006), where opportunities for rhetorical agency are reliant upon this distance.

And although my study is focused on scholarly writing, theoretically I am discussing writing as a dialogized utterance that must speak to an audience in the absence of the speaker. This type of writing from Bakhtin’s perspective was exemplified in the
novel, but I am arguing—whether creative or scholarly, informative or persuasive, rhetorical or novelized—that writing, like speaking, constructs an opportunity for agency.

Theoretical implications

If writing is always unfinished, then it is a recursive opportunity to revise continuously who we are, who we want to be, and how we want to be read in and beyond the text; it’s a way to rectify the authority of the word with the interpreted meaning of it (Bakhtin, 1981). In this way, revision is an embodiment of agency. As the teacher-writers encountered various discourses in the writing group, relying on the discourses to navigate issues that emerged within the reader/writer binary, they used the following strategies to enact their rhetorical agency: explanations to address readers’ questions, rationalizations to justify ideas or structures that conflicted with the readers’ interpretation, questions to clarify their understanding readers’ revision suggestions, and conversational placeholders to neutralize the revision suggestion. But constructing revision as an embodiment of rhetorical agency cannot be fully theorized until more research can be done to reimagine revision as more than mere changes to discourses or shifts in identities. For revision to be fully theorized as an embodiment of agency, more research is needed to understand how the act of listening is articulated in a practice of revision.

Empowerment Narrative

I designed a study that would illuminate the hard work of crafting words for the academy and for its scholarly communities, spaces where legitimated content and forms have a history of gatekeeping and the lack of rich representations of teacher as writers, researchers, and scholars exist—even 25 years after the teacher-as-researcher movement emerged in the country and National Writing Project sites have multiple locations in
every state. Therefore, I sought to understand the socially situated practice of writing and publishing through the vantage point of K-12 teacher-writers, all of whom where female and many of whom were bilingual because I understood writing “as a historically realized, social, epistemological activity . . . carried on through people. People write. People read. What a text is must take into account how people create it and how people use it” (Bazerman, 1988, p. 5). This making of text—the process—was something I believed I had accounted for in my pedagogy, but through reflection, I recognized a gap in the ideas I expressed and the pedagogy I employed. What the writing group provided, that my pedagogy lacked, was the time and space to practice writing with others, to grapple with understanding this practice of writing, and to understand the conditions in which a teacher-writer might feel empowered to research and write.

**Theoretical implications**

Any expectation, no matter how intentionally benevolent, without a pedagogical address is likely to manifest as an emotional weight: as reluctance, failure, guilt, and disappointment in both the one who expects and the one who is expected to deliver. In this way, my study has implication for rethinking the empowerment myth that is pervasive in the professional development literature about writing.

And although I agree that opportunities to write are important for teachers because these opportunities have the potential to re-position teaching as a professional space that fosters knowledge-producing subjects, my study reveals that to re-imagine teacher as subject—to embody this subjectivity—teachers must recognize that the processes of producing knowledge are less about changing other spaces and more about changing oneself. And this commitment—to shift and change—is how the empowerment
narrative gets re-imagined. Writing and research can be empowering to teacher-writers because it can help reposition the personal and professional goals for writing and research. To construct writing as empowering we must discuss how the processes influences a writer’s ideological becoming through its potential to shift the gaze of the writer away from a teleological narrative.

**Limitations**

Because all research is inevitably influenced by perspective, then it is important to address the limitations of perspective in my study. The first limitation in this study emerged from the pool of teachers I targeted for participation. Instead of extending the invitation to join the writing group to all my former students, I targeted teacher-writers who had expressed interest in writing and publishing, who had echoed my sentiments about the benefits of expanding teacher professional development to include researching and writing, and who had expressed gratitude and benefit from the writing communities in which they had participated during my course. In this way, I stacked the writing group with teacher-writers who saw themselves as writers, understood the benefits of writing, and could fully participate in a writing group. And because researching and writing is not a standard practice of K-12 teachers, the participants in this study could be labeled as atypical. Another limitation for this dissertation was the disconnect between the design of the study and the analytic method used to meet the requirements of a dissertation. As I discussed in Chapter 3, the study was designed to be action research with a democratic intention of co-constructing knowledge with the participants. And although I co-analyzed and co-presented one iteration of analysis with two of the participants from the study, this dissertation—the assertions I presented in Chapter 4—emerged from the singular
perspective of the researcher. But this supposed singularity also generated another limitation of the study. The authority of the research and writer, which I crafted into a singular voice, was also compromised. My articulation of the writing group, description of the teacher-writers, and staging of the scenes will always be influenced by my full immersion in the writing group (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003). And finally, by using pre-existing data, time and space was a limitation to the study. I wrote this dissertation years after collecting the data, meaning although my interpretive lens was influenced by my full immersion in the writing group, this first hand account had been muted, tempered, and diffused by this time lapse.

**Future Research**

As I finish this dissertation about how writing identities are constructed in the physical space of a writing group and how participating in these physical spaces with others can afford writers opportunities to flex their rhetorical agency, there are many opportunities to extend my research questions to a variety of different contexts. With the growing support for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and open access journals, old questions about writing and identity, the practice of revision, the shifting roles of reader/writer binaries, and rhetorical agency take on new meaning.

First, if teacher-writers begin to write for open access journals and blogs, how does this impact their writing identities since the ideological distance between self and other would almost be indefinable? Next, how do teachers of writing continue to foster rhetorical agency in online spaces? Will ideas of rhetorical listening have to be conflated with a practice of critical reading? Finally, how will a practice of revision in these
massive online courses construct opportunities for what Thelin (2013) argues are the benefits of peer review:

Peer response is for both the reader and the writer. Novices . . . are trying to incorporate that knowledge as they read the work of other novices . . . They can see how others are handling the assignment and perhaps draw some insights into their own process. They can also start discerning the difference in quality . . . They can develop confidence in themselves as writers by making astute comments as readers. The writers, of course, receive feedback from a real audience, someone other than their teacher, and have to make decisions on where to go from there. (personal communication, March 29, 2013)

All of these new questions about writing, identity, and agency must be pursued not only by scholars in the field of literacy and composition, but also by teachers.

Closing Remarks

I recognized the need for the writing group months after I sat with Jessica, encouraging her to write what she knew, write as the expert, and write to be empowered. But teacher-writers need more than words of encouragement. They need a space to construct a practice of writing that includes techniques for navigating its contested spaces.

By participating with a group of teacher-writers, writing and presenting with them, and conducting a study about how their identities emerged in the contested spaces of revision, I am longer naïve enough to romanticize my own position as a teacher educator. I am only an advocate—a teacher-writer ally—if I am willing to acknowledge the realities of researching and writing. I can only support their desire to write their own
voices into the world if I am willing to talk candidly with them about how their voices are similar and different to other voices in the world. I can only apprentice them if I am willing to co-construct both an on-stage and off-stage practice of writing, where teacher-writers take risks, but not without acknowledging the consequences. I can only foster transformation if I am willing to be honest about how change is simultaneously about acquisition and disposal. I am only an ally of teacher-writers if I share with them that in the midst of making their voices heard, their voices change.
REFERENCES


INFORMATION LETTER

Towards a Community of Writers: Occupying the Space In-Between

Date

Dear ______________________:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Karen Smith in the Language and Literacy/Curriculum Instruction in the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to examine the practices of teachers in a writing group, who are working toward moving their professional expertise to a public space by publishing teacher research.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve participating in a writing group, supporting your peers through writing workshop in reaching their goal of publication. These sessions will meet bi-monthly from December through May. Each working session will be both videotaped and audiotaped.

I will also interview you about your beliefs and attitudes about the practices of the writing workshop, your experience in taking up this goal of publication, and your understanding of the culture of scholarly publication. These one-on-one interviews will be audiotaped only. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time. Some of the interviews may be group interviews, and I cannot guarantee the confidentiality of any information shared in a group interview setting. If I conduct group interviews, I will audiotape them only.

I may ask the participants to view the video of the working sessions and participate in a group discussion about their understanding of what is occurring. This group discussion will be audiotaped only.

Lastly, I will use samples of subjects' work—track changes made to peers’ articles, multiple revisions of each participants’ article—as part of my data analysis. By analyzing the aforementioned pieces, I hope to track how participants are learning and making meaning of what it means to be a scholarly writer. I will also code the writing of the participants to understand the culture and practices of the writing group.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. Your responses will be confidential. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be known/used.

Neither the individual interviews, the writing sessions, the group interviews, nor the group viewing will be recorded—either through video or audio respectively—without
your permission. If you give permission for these interviews and writing sessions to be taped (audio and/or video), you have the right to ask for the recording to be stopped at any time.

Please indicate whether you give permission for the interview—individual and group—the writing sessions, or the group viewing to be audio/video taped. Angela Clark-Oates, the co-investigator, will be responsible for keeping the tapes at her house. She will store the all the digital files of the audio and video on her laptop. Angela will also transcribe the video and audiotapes in hopes of having a better understanding of the evolution of the writing group over time. She will keep the digital files, the tapes, and the transcripts for three years. After this time, she will erase the digital recordings from her computer, destroy the tapes, and use a paper shredder to discard of the transcriptions.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Karen Smith, [email protected] or Angela Clark-Oates at [email protected]. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Research Compliance Office, at (480) 965-6788.
APPENDIX B

TEACHER-WRITERS LETTER OF CONSENT
CONSENT FORM
Towards a Writing Community: Occupying the Space In-Between

INTRODUCTION
The purposes of this form is to provide you as a prospective research study participant information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research and to record the consent of those who agree to be involved in the study.

RESEARCHERS
Karen Smith, professor in the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education, along with co-researcher Angela Clark-Oates, has invited your participation in a research study.

STUDY PURPOSE
The purpose of the research is to examine the practices of teachers who are engaging in a writing group in hopes of moving their professional expertise to a more public space.

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY
If you decide to participate, then you will join a study involving research that spotlights how teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and practices about teaching and learning are mediated by artifacts embedded in a larger social and cultural setting. Furthermore, this study will explore how the participants work toward claiming membership in a scholarly community by engaging in academic writing with others.

If you say YES, then your participation will last for December 2007-May 2008 at various locations off-campus. You will be asked to continue participating in the writing group, read and edit peers’ work, support peers as they work toward publication. These practices will be videotaped and audio recorded. You will also agree to be interviewed about your attitudes and beliefs.

Approximately five subjects will be participating in this study.

RISKS
There are no known risks from taking part in this study, but in any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

BENEFITS
The possible/main benefits of your participation in the research are professional growth as a scholar and a teacher.

CONFIDENTIALITY
All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. The results of this research study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. In order to maintain confidentiality of your records, Karen Smith and co-investigator Angela
Clark-Oates will use pseudonyms for the subjects and subject codes to maintain confidentiality. The researcher will keep all audio or videotapes.

WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. It is ok for you to say no. Even if you say yes now, you are free to say no later, and withdraw from the study at any time.

Your decision will not affect your relationship with Arizona State University or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

As a student and/or a member of the writing group, your participation in the study is voluntary and that nonparticipation or withdrawal from the study will not affect your continued participation in the writing group or affect your grade.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS
There is no payment for your participation in the study.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT
Any questions you have concerning the research study or your participation in the study, before or after your consent, will be answered by Angela Clark-Oates. You can reach her at 6445 S. Maple Ave. #2089 Tempe, AZ 85283 or call at 512.585.3245 or email at angela.clark-oates@asu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk; you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Research Compliance Office, at 480-965 6788.

This form explains the nature, demands, benefits and any risk of the project. By signing this form you agree knowingly to assume any risks involved. Remember, your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefit. In signing this consent form, you are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this consent form will be given (offered) to you.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in the above study. By signing below, you are granting to the researchers the right to use your likeness, image, appearance and performance - whether recorded on or transferred to videotape, film, slides, and photographs - for presenting or publishing this research (or for whatever use). This can be done as part of the signature line or as a separate signature if there are options for videotaping, photography, use of records, etc)

___________________________  ____________________________  __________
Subject's Signature  Printed Name  Date
INVESTIGATOR’S STATEMENT
"I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits and possible risks associated with participation in this research study, have answered any questions that have been raised, and have witnessed the above signature. These elements of Informed Consent conform to the Assurance given by Arizona State University to the Office for Human Research Protections to protect the rights of human subjects. I have provided (offered) the subject/participant a copy of this signed consent document."

Signature of Investigator _______________     Date __________
To: Karen Smith  
   ED
From: Mark Roosa, Chair  
   Soc Beh IRB
Date: 04/13/2009
Committee Action: Exemption Granted
IRB Action Date: 12/06/2007
IRB Protocol #: 071102343
Study Title: Toward a Writing Community: Occupying the Space In-Between

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46 101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.
APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIBED RECORDING
Christy’s writing workshop—September 26, 2007

Routine of Giving Feedback

Underline indicates a double-voicedness—Christy’s critic

Angela: How do you guys see this going in terms of giving feedback?

Paloma: Page by page?

Angela: You want to go page by page?

Christy: Sure.

Fina: What about the specific questions that we –

Christy: Um –

Fina: - let me pull that up with just some –

Christy: I did have – yeah, I did have a couple of questions . . . that were because I had separated myself from it. And I got to a point where I was very happy with it and then as I read it again, I was like, "Oh, I don't know if that flows. I don't know if my analogy is appropriate." You know, like if it – since it doesn't really carry out all – it's very strong in the beginning and strong in the end and yet you kind of lose it in the middle. You know, like is someone going to think was it too narrative, is it too – so there were a lot of things where I was second guessing myself –

Angela: Okay.

Christy: - the further away from it I got.

Angela: Okay, so why don't we just start with the writer, then? And you start asking questions that you feel, instead of us just telling you here's what we think.

Christy: Okay.

Angela: Let's have you start and generate the conversation and then we'll kind of all jump in and if we don't get to all of our comments and we were here, all – you're going to get these pages and then you can look through all of them and then maybe email us –

Christy: Okay.
Angela: - and ask us questions, too.

Christy: Okay.

Angela: And if we feel like you need to spend a little bit more time the next time on your piece, because it is 6:20 –

Christy: Yeah.

Angela: - you know, we can always revisit it.

S: Uh-huh. Sure.

Angela: So, okay.

**Appropriacy of Honeybee Analogy**

Christy: So, um, is the – I guess the first one is the honeybee analogy, metaphor, for that appropriate, is it too much? Is it detract? Is it – *(uncomfortable chuckle)*

Paloma: I think, I think it's going to just end up being a matter of opinion. I love the honeybee theme and I missed it when it kind of –

Christy: Went away.

Paloma: - yeah, went away and so like, I changed one of your titles from data collection analysis to, um, collecting honey, *(Christy laughs)* you know, or just you know, because I liked it and personally, when I'm reading research papers, I need that little extra there to in reading cute little, like themes or whatever, you know, but personally, I'm very comfortable with that and I don't think it takes away from that, like that academic tone or whatever. I think it's very appropriate, but I think not everyone may agree with me on that, though.

Jennifer: I, if I could – I like the metaphor. It's so well-written. I – there was, there was a disconnect with me, though, with the metaphor because the first message of the metaphor is kind of like teaching is intrinsic and we're really protective of our hives.

Christy: Uh-huh.

Jennifer: And I would like to see the metaphor – I would like to see it address Nina in the beginning.
Christy: Okay.

Jennifer: Because I feel like the strength of the paper is Nina and the case study. And so, um, when you go back to Nina and at the end, and she's doing the waggle dance, so she's in the literacy club now, um, it makes that complete circle. But the metaphor in the beginning doesn't, um— [JENNIFER’S REVISION SUGGESTION]

Christy: See because I'm the honeybee in the beginning, or the teacher is, and then she becomes it at the end when I read it the second time. Oh, it, you know, came back to it and I thought, "Well, is that appropriate because she's in the literacy club now or is it confusing because who's the honeybee?" It's are you learning from the teacher or are you learning from the student, so—

Angela: Well, I think you point is both. It feels like in the article. [ANGELA’s REVISION SUGGESTION]

Christy: I don't know if it's— if someone's going to see it as I don't know which one you – which one it's supposed to be. So I don't know.

Angela: The only dep- the only issue I have with that and I wanted to hear what you guys thought about this is more o
Sunday—August 19, 2007—Wildflower 2:00

Angela
Fina
Jennifer
Christy
Mary
Molly
Charley
Flora (committed but absent)
Sarah (committed but out of town)
Paloma (just had baby)
Jessica (pregnant)
Katherine (never answered)

Thoughts prior to meeting: Cult of the Amateur? How does this apply to teachers, in particular the notion of diverse literacies? Teachers are never allowed to become experts or scholars because they are always being asked to take up something else—policy restricts their expertise; it creates the perpetual amateur, yet there are privileged notions of literacy, those that are traditional and respected like academic writing, scholarly journals, etc, which teachers are never encouraged to take up. And now we are back to the theory/practice binary.

Meeting Notes:

The meeting began with introductions. As most of the students had been in my teacher research class in spring 07, I wanted mostly to give Fina and Mary a chance to introduce themselves. Then, I spoke a bit about the NCTE presentation and why we wanted to work with teachers who were trying to get their voices heard in their profession. I made a point to stress that although the conference title—Mapping Diverse Literacies—seem to imply the technological fervor that is sweeping through education that Fina and I had interpreted a bit different. OR at the very least wanted to emphasize the multiple subjectivity that is a literate being, especially as a teacher, researcher, graduate student, etc. Then, Fina spoke briefly about her New Literacy study, which was appropriate in terms of giving a justification that we would be focusing on writing at a diverse literacy conference.

After Fina and I spoke, I wanted the teachers to be able to give their reasons for wanting to form this group:

Jennifer—white female, ELL specialist K-6, bilingual, graduated with MA: She spoke of her fear of encountering an absence of scholarly interaction now that her graduate degree was finished. She was back in the classroom without the intellectual structure that accompanies most graduate endeavors. She wanted to push herself to grow, maintain the writing life she had created while a graduate student, and be exposed to publications and scholarly conversations in her field.
Mary—international student from Mexico, last semester for Master’s, teaching SEI and implementing writer’s workshop to aid in case study, also trying to get manuscript for children’s book published—she wants to be a part of a group that will foster her already established identity as a writer. She believes that this will also allow her to promote this identity, or bring it out, in her students. She has submitted a manuscript to Children’s Book press and is awaiting a reply. She said that traveling back and forth from Mexico allowed her to write the Others story because as she set on the bus she realized that these people’s stories were her own.

Christy—white female—teaches 1st grade at Adam’s elementary—using this writing group as a stepping-stone. Thinks this might be her last year in the classroom. She never really thought of herself as a writer until she started grad school—“I received an A on a paper and thought, wow, this feels really good”. Before that, she saw herself as a consumer of professional literature, but once she started seeing herself as a writer, she began reading the professional reader as a writer. “The Reading Teacher” spoke to her. She started writing but felt she had no one to share it with. Finally, she decided to share it with her principal, which was intimidating for her. She wanted to use this group to sustain the community of writers she found in graduate school. She also aspires to be a writer of books. She wants to live a more “writerly life.”

Molly—teaches all day kindergarten with Carolyn—she hopes to keep research up that she started in my teacher research class, she wants to delve deeper.

Charley—white female, kindergarten teacher, Kyrene, graduated with MA: She emphasized the “now what” syndrome iterated by Julie. She is also interested in mentoring other teachers, and because she feels this is her duty (“now that she is in the know”—my words) she wants to push herself to publish something

After everyone had discussed their reasons for being in the group, we focused on the logistics.

In terms of writing, we agreed that two people would be up during our time together and we would have all devoted time to reading their manuscript before arriving.

Fina made the point that we really needed to focus on a mini-genre study to define what a publishable article is. So for week two we decided to do the following:

1. Write a 500 word abstract
2. Find at least three journals that we think would be appropriate for our article
3. Bring in the class for submission/submission guidelines
4. And at least one article from each journal that could be used as a mentor text

Jennifer was concerned that she only try to find journals that catered to teacher research articles, but Fina reassured her that TR is just one type of qualitative research and that her data and analysis is not less valid or important because she chose this type of research to conduct.
Theoretical: Fina suggested she and I should look as community of practice as a frame for this study

Methodological: I didn’t have a recorder for our first meeting. I will purchase one before our next meeting on Aug. 29.

Concerns: I spoke to Flora, who will be attending the conference with us in November, and she has yet grasped that this is a bit different research study than we originally planned (based on the fact that she is not teaching full-time). She said that she might not be able to attend the meetings on Wednesday and she wasn’t present for our first meeting.
APPENDIX F

TEACHER-WRITER’S EMAIL
Hello Everyone,

Attached is my paper that I'm revising to send off to the reading teacher. Thanks for taking the time to read it and give me feedback. As you read, would you keep these questions in mind: 1. Is it too narrative? Should I put in more hard data? 2. Does the reader know what to expect from this paper from the beginning? Should I include one of those "In this paper I will _____"? 3. Are my assertions clear? Do I provide enough detail? 4. Are you left wanting or wanting something was taken out?

Thanks again. See you this Wednesday or next - Did we decide?

Love,