

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL PRACTICES ON STUDENT DECISION-MAKING  
AND IDENTITY DURING WRITING

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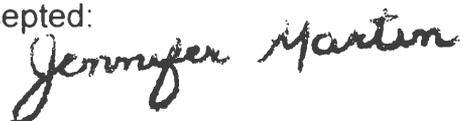
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## DEDICATION

To my children, Ben and Laura, thank you for your inspiration and love.

To my husband, Tom, thank you for your unconditional love, support, and patience.

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## ABSTRACT

SARA PHILIPS

### THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL PRACTICES ON STUDENT DECISION-MAKING AND IDENTITY DURING WRITING

MAY 2011

The purpose of this study was to understand how children construct identity and made decisions during the writing time (writer's workshop) in our first-grade classroom. The theoretical framework for the study was literacy learning as a social practice where children and teachers form Discourse communities. Within those communities children enact identities related to literacy.

Through working with children for a year with the goal of creating a writing community, the teacher/researcher conducted a three strand approach for analysis addressing the following research question during her final three months of the school year: How do different social practices influence children's decision-making and identity construction related to writing? Data included transcripts of audio tapes, field notes, student interviews, writing artifacts, and a reflexive research journal. After identifying the shared and relevant social practices, a constant comparative analysis revealed patterns in decision-making.

Finally, a micro-ethnographic approach to discourse analysis was used to examine specific events related to decision-making and identity.

Outcomes indicate the social practices were defined by the type of writing (free-writing or non-fiction) and teacher presence within the social context of the event. Within the social practices, when and what to share and how to construct a text comprised student decisions. The students constructed identities related to the type of writing and whether or not the teacher was a participant in the social practice. Free writing generated a sense of power and an identity as a “storyteller”. Children asserted power by resisting when writing related to non-fiction and enacted the identity of “teacher” when sharing non-fiction topics. Finally, the teacher’s identity related to power and the purpose of the social practices influenced how children constructed their identity as a writer.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As students enter the classroom, they begin chanting, “Free write! Free write! Free write!” In a kind voice, I reply “I’m sorry boys and girls, but today we have to get our thinking maps out and do some pre-writing exercises.” Teachers make decisions every day about how to teach writing. The decisions influence much more than a student’s ability to record words on the page. What students write, how they write it, and who they are as writers reflect the complex social relations in a classroom, and thus directly influences academic outcomes in school. Students in the above scenario assert a love for writing; however, due to curricular constraints, I decide the opportunity to free write has to be withdrawn at this time.

This research is a study of my teaching in an elementary classroom, driven by questions about best practices in writing within a high-stakes elementary curriculum environment. After nine years of teaching at the elementary level, I had an eight- year absence from the classroom that included child-rearing responsibilities and doctoral studies. With this background in the educational field, I consider my theoretical understanding of effective teaching strategies to be well rooted.

For example, my classroom represents a socio-cultural perspective of literacy learning. Literacy is a social practice in which students and teachers form discourse communities. Within those communities, students enact identities related to literacy. Students and teachers make decisions about how to participate, based on their situated identity within the social context of learning events. Additionally, students and teachers enact their identity based on the location of power, personal self-efficacy, and their own feelings about their potential to successfully participate in learning events. Thus, the preceding example illustrates how the identity of the students is framed around their power to assert themselves as writers, selecting “free write” topics and expressing individual ideas and individual identities. However, curricular demands necessitated that my identity as teacher usurp classroom power and trump their request to write on self-selected topics.

Success in writing at an early age is critical since early writing experiences relate to the development of language as a reflective and transformative act of socialization and of language cognition rooted in everyday experiences. Early writing experiences offer an opportunity for students to use resources from the system of language (syntax, semantics, etc.) and from their personal backgrounds (social and cultural experiences) to negotiate meaning (2001; Gee, 2001). Thus, I want to enact in my elementary classroom a socio-cultural approach to early writing development.

Unfortunately, re-entry into the elementary classroom often comes with tension between personal theoretical beliefs and high-stakes curriculum demands. Through discourse analysis, specifically micro-ethnography, I examine how the students in my classroom make decisions about what processes are necessary to become an effective writer.

### **Problem**

Successful writing is a complex process that involves more than just writing words on a page. "It is not simply a list of written conventions that provides a foundation for becoming a writer, but the landscape of communicative practices that comprise young children's lives," (Dyson, 2006, p. 35).

Additionally, writing is an extension of language development. Written language acts as a scaffold to either perform an action or to attain affiliation in a social, cultural or institutional group (Cazden, 2001; Gee, 2001). Therefore, when students write, individual, social and cultural processes interact to negotiate meaning. The landscape of communicative voices that includes family relationships, individual experiences and the media, provides the words, visual images and forms through which written text is constructed (Dyson, 2003).

From a socio-cultural perspective, literacy is defined as a social practice (Cazden, 2001; Dyson, 2005a; Gee, 2001; Vygotsky, 1994). Therefore, the focus of literacy is on participation, rather than on individual processes, within a given social context. Learning is viewed as changes in ways people "participate

in the specific practices of their discourse communities,” (Rowe, 2008, p. 69). Participation in the social practices of literacy reveals the decision-making used by students in classroom discourse communities in early reading (Snow & Ninio, 1986) and early writing (Dyson, 2003).

Decision making is complex to observe. Discourse (with a capital “D”) analysis is a way of studying decision- making. Discourse is a “map” or “identity tool kit” for language use associated with how to look, act and speak in a social context in order to gain access to a social or cultural group (Gee, 2001). Big “D” Discourses, as opposed to little “d” discourses (language in use), are specialized kinds of languages that one learns which give access to social and cultural groups. Participants in literacy events think with and through the Discourse in order to make decisions on how to participate (what to say and how to act) within the given social context. As a result, Discourse is language-in-use and can describe how children negotiate social relationships, or make decisions during classroom writing activities (Dyson, 1999; Rowe, 2008).

Identity provides one lens through which one can examine decision-making in Discourse communities. Identities form as a result of the decision-making processes employed in Discourse communities. As students interact to construct meaning through a reflexive process within a socially situated context, they enact their own situated identities (Vygotsky, 1994). Students make decisions in a Discourse community while they develop situated identities for

participation within the community (Dyson, 1995; Gee, 2001). The student's situated identity is defined by the relationship of student agency and the location of power (Bloome, 2005; Bruner, 1962; Gee, 2001; Street, 1984). In summary, students construct identity through making decisions in Discourse communities.

Unfortunately, empirical data focusing on a student's textual and conceptual knowledge of literacy, based on their own lived-through experiences, is limited. Studies positioning the unit of analysis away from the individual student's cognitive writing processes in isolation and toward an emphasis on student interaction are even more limited. More research is needed.

This research focuses on student decision-making during classroom writing events. Rather than focusing on individual writer's craft, this study will describe how students make decisions about identity and about power relations while participating in the Discourse community of school writing events.

### **Research Question**

How do different social practices influence children's decision-making and identity formation related to classroom writing events?

### **Purpose of Study**

This naturalistic, qualitative inquiry explores how different social practices during writing events in the classroom impact student decision-making, power and identity. The purpose of the proposed research is to describe the way the

teacher and the students participate in classroom literacy events and to describe the way in which they jointly construct knowledge about writing.

### **Significance**

This study helps build theory as it challenges and expands upon existing views of classroom writing as primarily an individual process. In an era of strong emphasis on standardized test achievement, defining effective writing development as socially situated, rather than as related only to individual progress, is significant for educators. This study has the potential to better inform educational administrators and educational policy makers, as well as elementary school teachers, about a broader range of possibilities for classroom writing instruction. Today, students attend school during a time of nationally standardized measures of achievement, enacted through a discourse of the “basics,” yet they also grow and learn—and are expected to negotiate effectively—in a world that is not standardized (Dyson, 2004). The significance for this research is to influence curriculum policy makers to embrace cultural and linguistic diversity in classroom writing events during a time of rapidly changing communicative practices.

Many classroom teachers implementing writer’s workshop can utilize this research to inform and improve decision-making and to use best practices in their own classrooms. Research which focuses on social and cultural views of writing informs teachers of the multiple influences on student processes during

classroom writing. When teachers consider the multiple influences on identity and power relationships during student writing events, they can participate in new ways with their students during classroom writer's workshop.

As the teacher participant in this study, I believe the personal significance for this research is unique in that it is an examination and reflection of my own teaching. This study gives me the distinct opportunity to examine my views of classroom writing processes related to theory and practice, as well as to reflect on the views of other professionals in the field of education.

Finally, this research informs qualitative methodology by using micro-ethnographic discourse analysis to consider student identity and power relations. Micro-analysis offers a deep understanding at the micro-level of how students in classroom interactions use language as a tool to construct social identity, cultural actions and power relations. Furthermore, developing the tools for qualitative analysis contributes to rigorous methodology employed in the field of education, and particularly to that methodology used in elementary classrooms.

### **Definitions of Key Terms**

Literacy - A socio-cultural practice based on participation as it relates to student decision-making, identity and power connected to one's lived-through experiences (Bruner, 1962; Cazden, 2001; Dyson, 2003; Gee, 2001; Street, 1984; Vygotsky, 1994).

Social practices – Shared understandings among participants about the goals for different kinds of writing events or social practices during writing (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

Decision-making – Choices about how to participate, resulting in actions or words during a writing event.

Situated Identity – Constructed, negotiated and implied person-hood formed through social interactions (Bloome, 2005; Gee, 2001).

Big “D” Discourse - A “map” or “identity tool kit” for language use associated with how to look, act and speak in a social context in order to gain access to a social or cultural group (Gee, 2001).

### **Summary**

The introduction begins with a definition of writing from a socio-cultural perspective. From a socio-cultural view, writing processes are socially and culturally situated within a community of practice. In order to consider student writing processes, research must shift from a focus on the student in isolation to a focus on student participation in classroom interactions. Students make decisions about how to participate by thinking with and through the big “D” Discourse of the learning community. As students make decisions related to participation, they enact situated identities guided by agency, by the location of power, by self-efficacy and by their own feelings for the potential to participate.

To study identity and power relations within social interactions that occur during classroom writing, it is necessary to employ research methodology that allows for the analysis of communications and interactions. Discourse analysis is both a theory and a method for studying how humans interact in a reflective way to create meaning in a social context. Therefore, the focus of this study is on the way in which language is used as a tool during classroom writing to establish social identity, cultural actions and power relations during teacher and peer interactions in the classroom.

This research will add to the current body of knowledge about classroom writing development which informs both theory and practice by expanding definitions of writing development beyond existing views that the process is solely an individual process. It is expected that the proposed study will make a research contribution that will guide policy and practice related to classroom writing instruction so that more consideration will be given to writing as an act of both cognitive (in the head thinking) and social processes.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### **Overview**

The purpose of this qualitative study is to observe and describe how early writers construct identity and make decisions during writer's workshop. The guiding question for this research considers both: How do different social practices influence children's decision-making and identity formation related to classroom writing events?

The review of literature in Chapter II presents background information and theoretical perspectives that frame this study of student identity and power relations during writing in the classroom. Specific topics include research and theory describing: 1) writing as an individual process including, 2) creation of sign symbol relationships or, 3) problem-solving speech print relationships, and 4) writing as a social practice through processes such as 5) re-contextualization and 6) big "D" Discourses, 7) identity formation and power relations related to writing as well as 8) a summary of the literature review.

Writing development, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a transformative act between cognition (in-the-head thinking) and socialization rooted in the cultural and social practices of everyday life (Bruner, 1962; Cazden, 2001; Dyson, 2003; Gee, 2001; Street, 1984; Vygotsky, 1994). Social practices

are shared understandings among participants about the goals for different activities during writing (Scribner & Cole, 1981). From this perspective, learning is co-constructed in interactions with others during the day-to-day events in classrooms, as well as in other lived-through activities.

From a socio-cultural stance, learning is measured through changes in the way individuals participate. Students negotiate their participation by making decisions about how to participate through a process called “re-contextualization” and through the big “D” Discourses of their homes, schools and community (Dyson, 1999; Gee, 2001). Re-contextualization takes place when students borrow, translate and reframe Discourse in their everyday lives into a new context or Discourse community. Big “D” Discourses are specialized kinds of languages which inform how students should act, speak and look in order to gain access to a social or cultural group. As students participate in the Discourse communities, they enact situated identities related to power and identity. Situated identities define one’s sense of agency and the opportunity to participate in classroom experiences.

Much of what is known about early writing focuses on research related to individual student processes, such as understanding of writing forms and speech-print relationships. Limited research emphasizing the social processes of writing describes the development discourse genres through social interaction

and of writing related to participation in communities of practice, such as science inquiry.

Drawing upon the insights of socio-cultural theory and limited research related to early writing, identity, and power, I am examining the relationship of classroom social practices and student decision-making as an act of give-and-take between the writer and the social context.

### **Early Writing Processes**

The importance of early writing for students is directly connected to their own development of language as a reflective and transformative act of socialization and cognition, grounded in the everyday experiences of their lives. Much of what scholars know about emergent writers and their decision-making focuses on individual student processes, not on student processes in interaction with others (Harste, Short, & Burke, 1988). The focus on individual processes reveals student decision-making, such as creating sign-symbols with regard to writing form and problem solving speech-print relationships. Research emphasizing writing development as a social process focuses on understanding the discourse of written language genres and student participation in discourse communities of practice.

## **Writing as an Individual Process**

Writing development is an extension of language development (Clay, 2001; Hayes, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1994). Both processes are driven by cognitive (in the head processes, such as inventive spelling) and affective processes (emotional, lived-through experiences) (Rosenblatt, 1994). Considering individual processes during early writing development is part of how educators understand writing development. Individual processes act as a window for viewing students' use of what they know about language, while they use the system of language to negotiate meaning.

**Creating sign-symbols.** Writing occurs just as other sign-symbol relationships occur (Clay, 1979). During reading, students create internal sign-symbols and during writing, students create external sign-symbols of meaning. Emergent writers are constantly re-making sign-symbols when decisions are made about motivation and purposes for writing. Hildreth's (1936) groundbreaking research examining 3-to-6-year-olds first "name writing" exercises, describes the scribbles that begin the first stages of writing. As children re-make sign-symbols over time, they form more complex systems, which exhibit more alphabetic qualities.

Current research and theory continues to emphasize how writing does not develop in a sequential fashion, but develops in more complex ways over time (Clay, 2001; Hayes, 1996). Children experiment with writing forms as they

develop principles of writing development. By observing children read and write, Clay (1979) describes patterns of progress among successful writers. Clay's principles describe the changes in children's "working systems of competency" over time. Some of these principles include: 1) flexibility principle (exploration with the limits of letter identity through repositioning of letters in different ways), 2) recurring principle (repeated writing of a given set of written signs as a pattern of response), and 3) generating principle (applying rules to create text such as inventive spelling).

At an early age, children discriminate sign-symbol relationships. From the analysis of pre-school writing samples, research describes how children as young as three-years-old can differentiate writing from drawing (Rowe, 2008). Consequently, for emergent writers, meaning resides in both the word and visual sign-symbols. Using ethnographic methods of observation at a pre-school writing table, Rowe (2008) describes how preschoolers create representational systems of art and writing. Through social negotiation between the teacher and students, children come to understand and enact forms of writing and drawing based on their varying meanings. Children understand how writing and drawing are both a form of writing, but the two convey meaning in different ways. Meaning related to writing emphasizes what is told or said and meaning related to drawing emphasizes more visual aspects of expression, such as color and shape.

**Problem-solving speech-print relationships.** Along with understanding writing forms, emergent writers come to understand and apply orthographic principles (letter-sound relationships) with more complexity over time.

Researchers document the progression of children's hypotheses about letter-sound relationships through invented spelling (Bear & Templeton, 1998; Clay, 1979; Gentry, 2000).

Children's hypotheses about the orthographic system begin with the idea that there is correspondence between the size of a word and its referent. Kamii (2001) and her colleagues conduct individual interviews with twenty-six kindergarten students once a month over a period of eight months. During the interviews, students are asked to write words in isolation and record dictated sentences. Student decisions about word construction are based on the hypothesis that words are written with a minimum or maximum number of letters and not based on sounds in the word.

Clay (2001) explains her theory of written language acquisition by suggesting a focus on construction, not instruction. Teaching students to write is about teaching problem-solving. As writers develop, they acquire--with increased complexity--principles for writing. Writers use their understanding of the principles of language as a lens through which to problem-solve and make decisions about word construction. Shifts in processing as a problem-solver are

seen as students access and integrate multiple sources from the system of language to make decisions about word construction.

Bear and Templeton (1998) explore spelling development as it fits into the broader model of literacy learning. They report that student understandings about spelling are developmental and relate to three areas of spelling:

1) alphabetic, 2) patterns and 3) meaning. Their research suggests student writers should first be matched to study word patterns that fit their developmental levels of understanding of spelling. Then students should study known words related to developmental patterns and should be guided to discover new and related word patterns. As a result, students develop hypotheses about orthography which they can apply when writing.

### **Writing as a Social Practice**

Becoming literate involves more than learning a set of codes or technical skills for decoding. It is accomplished in a social context in which participants interact in a reflective natural setting and, by doing so, position themselves and are positioned by one another through verbal, nonverbal and textual interactions (Larson, 1999). Unlike the reader, who has the text on the page with which to reflect, the writer has a blank page. Therefore, the writer must utilize social and cultural resources to create external sign-symbols of language. As a result, students act as meaning-negotiators, instead of as meaning-makers (Dyson, 1999; Gee, 2001). What educators do glean from the limited research focused

on writing as a social practice is knowledge of the process of meaning negotiation that takes place within a community of practice. Research describes the way in which negotiations take place through the process of re-contextualization, gaining access to big “D” Discourses, and formation of cultural models.

**Re-contextualization.** The study of early writing characterizes writing as an individual and social process. Early writers direct attention toward sign-symbol creation involving letters (both visual and formation), fine motor control, and appropriation of behaviors in the correct sequence. Reading follows to check the sequence of words. Additionally, early writers are actively engaged in the re-contextualization of the socially and culturally situated discourse communities of their lives. In this way early writing is a multi-dimensional process through which children explore perspectives and positions toward others and toward meanings derived on their own.

Through Dyson’s research, educators learn how students negotiate meaning-making through “re-contextualization” of sign-symbols for language by using symbolic textual tools such as movie theme songs (Dyson, 1999, 2003). Re-contextualization is the way emergent writers make use of familiar media-influenced practices (movies, music) and symbolic materials (drawings, storybooks). Children listen, appropriate (reframe) and then re-voice these

materials in cognitive and social ways to make decisions about how to participate in official and unofficial school literacy practices.

For example, after her teacher responds to her journal writing by writing a note in her journal entry as an encouragement to write more about one topic, Vanessa reframes dialogue writing as a guessing game in a later writing with her friend, Denise. On a later occasion, Vanessa and Denise re-contextualize dialogue writing as written radio play. They enact the identity as artists, giving themselves new names, and later continue their writing in unofficial play acted out on the playground (Dyson, 2003).

**Big “D” discourses.** As a part of the re-contextualization process, literacy learning is also socially negotiated when students and teachers form big “D” Discourse communities, as opposed to little “d” discourse, which is language in use (Gee, 2001). Big “D” Discourse communities are “maps” or “identity tool kits” of how participants are to look, act and speak in order to participate in the social event. Big “D” Discourses are specialized kinds of languages guiding and directing students’ words and actions in a social setting.

Research has specifically considered how this happens as students re-contextualize Discourse genres when writing. There is significant evidence that emergent writers make decisions about text construction, which reflects syntactic and semantic features of different genres such as stories, lists, and labels (Harste, et al., 1988; Hayes, 1996; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999; Olinghouse &

Graham, 2009). Through the knowledge of Discourse patterns related to genres, students obtain transparency in their meaning in order to convey the message to the reader.

Students acquire genre knowledge through social interactions. During the re-contextualization process, students actively make use of the “landscape of communicative voices” from the lived-through experiences of their lives (Dyson, 2003). Early writers re-contextualize genres to adjust meaning and to accommodate a task or an audience. In Dyson’s (2003) ethnographic study, Noah re-contextualizes characters from a popular movie, “*Space Jam*,” in his own cartoon drawings of a basketball, super-hero story.

In a quantitative and descriptive analysis of kindergarten, first and second-grade writing across genres, Kamberelis and Bovino (1999) consider students’ developing understandings and re-contextualization of genre conventions. Eighty-eight students across nine classrooms, ranging from kindergarten to second-grade, participated in writing appropriations for three genres (narrative, scientific report, poem). By analyzing textual features, Kamberelis and Bovino conclude that early writers develop genre knowledge over time through play with increased complexity and flexibility. Also, emergent writers possess a working knowledge in the discourse of narrative genres, but possess much less knowledge in relation to information genres.

In their quantitative study examining the relationship of discourse knowledge about writing development, Olinghouse and Graham (2009) found that discourse knowledge is an important component of early writing development. In the study, second and fourth-grade students write stories and respond to survey questions about qualities of good writing. Older students possess more knowledge in all five aspects of discourse knowledge, including substantive (characteristics of good writing), production (characteristics of good writing), and motivation (carrying out the writing process).

Much less attention has been devoted to the relationship between writing processes and the influence of a child's landscape of communicative voices from varying Discourse communities. Heath (1983) describes the types of Discourse communities (home and school) and their influence on students' literacy development. Her ethnographic study of two culturally diverse communities, Trackton and Roadville, describes the varying, and sometimes conflicting, nature of home and school Discourse. In her study, she finds that the way students negotiate various Discourse communities influences participation in the social practices of the classroom, and therefore, influences decision-making during classroom writing events.

***Participation and big "D" discourses.*** Big "D" Discourses cannot be learned through direct instruction, but can only be acquired through meaningful participation in a social context. If literacy learning is located in the reflective

nature of people in interaction with one another (between people, within groups, communities), rather than residing in individuals, it becomes possible to study writing development in students before they can independently write in conventional form (Miller & Goodnow, 1995). The focus for analysis shifts from the individual student to the student in interaction with other people and to writing as an expression of a student's experiences.

The social context of writing in the classroom is a function of the participation framework, organized around language in use. Using discourse analysis from a year-long ethnographic study of journal writing in one kindergarten classroom, Larson (1999) describes how literacy knowledge is shared through talk and interaction. Larson focuses on the role of over-hearer in the social construction of knowledge, since students spend a significant portion of writing time in this role as they listen in on surrounding interactions. She identifies five key roles that contribute to the social construction of knowledge during the Discourse of journal writing: 1) teacher/scribe (teacher writes story to match student drawings for them to copy in their journal), 2) primary author (student whose dictation teacher takes), 3) over-hearer (students seated at the table listen to talk between teacher and primary author), 4) peripheral respondent (student outside teacher/author dyad, but who responds to questions teacher poses to primary author) and 5) pivot (students who take information they overhear to conversations with other students or to construction of their own

writing). Over time, these roles are played out in daily interactions, thereby forming the cultural practice for participation in writing events.

***Cultural models and big “D” discourses.*** Through participation in Discourse communities, students develop cultural models (Rowe, 2008). “Cultural models are socially shared understandings that a Discourse community uses to give meaning to literacy objects and actions,” (Rowe, 2008, p. 70). A cultural model is a shared “abstraction” or belief related to how writer’s workshop should be enacted in the classroom (Bloome, 2005). For example, a cultural model many teachers use with students learning to write is the process writing approach (drafting, revising and editing work). When teachers enact process writing as the cultural model for classroom writer’s workshop, students create their cultural model for writing based on processes related to drafting, revising and correct spelling in their writing. In this way, the teacher acts as a cultural broker for writing development in the classroom (Cazden, 2001).

As emergent writers begin engaging in the many and varied local Discourse communities of their lives (home, school, community), they immediately begin to create cultural models for accepted and valued ways of participating (Dyson, 2005a; Heath, 1983; Kress, 1997). In her study of emergent writers, Rowe (2008) describes how pre-school students establish cultural models she calls “social contracts” that affect student writing. The social contracts established are socially negotiated within the local Discourse

community of the writing table in the preschool classroom. Rowe's study emphasizes how a child's knowledge about the writing process in the classroom is shaped through interactional patterns between adults and children. For example, the acknowledgment or the lack of acknowledgement of a student's participation, by either building on the student's idea or by verbally rejecting the student's idea, leads the student to establish an understanding of what is valued during writing in the classroom.

Based on the identification of nine socially negotiated contracts, Rowe notes changes in the way students learn by their participation at the writing table. Rowe found children established a social contract called the "distinctive-meanings contract." The "distinctive-meanings contract" describes the way in which students come to understand that writing and drawing are both a form of writing, but the two forms convey meaning in different ways. Meaning related to writing emphasizes what is told or said and the meaning related to drawing emphasizes more visual aspects of writing, such as color and shape.

### **Identity Formation and Power Relations**

At the same time students are creating cultural models and participating in the classroom Discourse community, they are also developing their "situated identity" for participation within the community (Dyson, 1995; Gee, 2001). Situated identity is the way students make decisions about how to participate in relation to agency and power (Bloome, 2005; Bruner, 1962; Gee, 2001; Street,

1984). A part of identity formation is the way in which students exert agency to shape writing events in relation to their personal interests (Corsaro, 2005; Rowe, 2010). Additionally, the location of power during writing events impacts identity formation as it relates to cultural interpretations and one's own potential to participate.

**Personal interest and identity.** Individual aspects of learning, including personal interest, are rooted in social and cultural experiences of one's life (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Rowsell & Pahl, 2007). Because identities are situated within the practices of literacy learning, written texts are essentially the artifacts of identity making (Rowsell & Pahl, 2007). As students develop new tools and ways of acting during writing, they are also expanding and transforming their identities (Kress, 1997). In this way, writing mediates identity formation. From a year-long ethnographic study of Fatih at home and at school, his interest in bird-drawing was shaped by his acquired identity over time (Pahl, 2006). As Fatih drew upon his childhood living in Turkey around his grandparent's chickens, his identity as a writer developed in his new interactions with tools such as the story *The Ugly Duckling*. He drew pictures of his family as birds, and after hearing the new story, began to show an interest in swans.

As described in Fatih's story, students form identities over time through making decisions based on personal interest and decide how to participate in Discourse communities. Students exert agency to configure writing events as

these events relate to their personal interests (Corsaro, 2005; Rowe, 2010).

Rowe (2010) describes ways preschool students participate and make decisions at the writing table, followed by a reflection of students' personal interest profiles. She names four personal interest identity profiles: 1) conceptual, 2) procedural, 3) creative, and 4) social. Students with conceptual interests use writing to focus on ideas by exploring and recording new learning. Students with procedural interests make decisions about writing based on how the systems of language work, with a focus on conventional literacy. Student identity profiles with creative interests explore writing materials and generate new processes for literacy and for materials. Students with social orientations to writing use writing to mediate social interactions and make decisions to align their writing with those with whom they seek group membership.

**Power and identity.** Personal interest, as well as the location of power within the Discourse community, impacts identity formation among participants. Within any big "D" Discourse, the location of power determines who participates and how students establish situated identities during a literacy event (Bloome, 2005; Gee, 2001).

The location of power is defined in three ways (Bloome, 2005)). 1) Power as product involves power as a fixed entity that one either has or does not have. Thus, the notion of the "haves and the have nots" is a familiar expression. 2) Power as caring relations is power with others that brings people together, such

as the relationships between a teacher and students which make up a classroom community. 3) Power as process is power as an interpretive framework. "Power as process," when defined as an interpretive framework, is unique to the culture of the Discourse community. For example, power is defined as process during writing when student competency is based on the "naturalization" of specialized discourse, such that associated with process writing. The discourse of using process writing as the approach to writer's workshop becomes a culture or a systematic way of "doing writer's workshop" integral to the culture of the classroom. Furthermore, this systematic process of "doing writers' workshop" is naturalized as a common understanding or "way of participating" by all members of the culture.

Changes in participant structures (how learning happens in the classroom) transform power and authority (Cornelius & Herrenkohl, 2004; Guthrie, 2004; Wertsch, 1998). When new participant structures are introduced, such as science inquiry, these structures create the potential for transforming relationships of power between student and teacher and among students. Using studies from classrooms engaging in a science inquiry, Guthrie (2004), Cornelius and Herrenkohl (2004), and Tabak and Baumgartner (2004) describe these transformations of power.

Interpretations of power as seen through the lens of participant structures such as science inquiry reveal the importance of student ownership in the writing

process that is made possible through student-initiated motives and ideas related to their intentions for writing. Social practices during science inquiry establish dialogic symmetry between teachers and students, which achieves a balance between authoritative and persuasive discourse during science inquiry learning (Tabak & Baumgartner, 2004). Authoritative discourse is knowledge which cannot be altered by students in a way to form personal meaning. Internally, persuasive discourse offers an opportunity for students to explore science from their own perspectives.

In their micro-linguistic study of science inquiry, Tabak and Baumgartner (2004) observe students working at computers in groups of three as they investigate evolution in a high school biology course. The teacher engages with students through discussion of their process and progress during the inquiry. This social practice of inquiry creates a space in which traditional authority structures (power) and knowledge are challenged. The use of such practices also introduces opportunities for students to engage with the cultural tools and in the Discourse of science. Students develop an understanding of the what (inquiry), why (generate and defend claims) and how (through observations) within the academic Discourse of science (Tabak & Baumgartner, 2004).

Studies of writing among elementary students also explore how students re-contextualize voices during play to contest power relations. Dyson's (2003) two-year, ethnographic study of second and third-grade students describes how

writers negotiate meaning, and in doing so, contest power relations in relation to social and ideological values. For example, Dyson chronicles the changes of power through social and ideological values during Author's Theatre, when students write scripts and act them out under the author's direction. Construction of Author's Theatre scripts draw upon the multiple media influences for characters and plots. Tina re-voices traditional male superheroes (based on white gods and goddesses) to include her, an African American girl, as a new superhero named Venus. As Venus, Tina flies through the sky on a mystical horse, rescuing children and turning villains into nice people. For Tina, writing becomes a way of participating in the discourse communities of peer groups at school.

**Power and cultural perspectives.** Interpretations of power are culturally situated (Delpit, 2006). Writer's workshop is a classroom activity used to guide student writing development through self-directed writing time. Students from varying cultural views related to power might interpret differently the location of shared power during this time of self-directed learning. For example, cultural dispositions, such as those of the African American culture, find human connectedness to be a vital part of learning (Delpit, 2006). However, African American culture might see the role of teacher and the shared power of students as weak within the writer's workshop structure for learning. African American culture places power only with the person in authority. Direct commands and

clear expectations are also valued. For example, an African American mother will say to her child, "Get in the bathtub," while a Caucasian American mother would say, "Don't you think it's time to take a bath?"

As the teacher, I make decisions about teaching writing by interpreting and negotiating my own cultural beliefs, as well as by understanding how these beliefs relate to the cultural and social landscape of my students and my school. In this way, teachers act as the cultural broker when making decisions about classroom learning in three ways: 1) participation structures for learning, 2) location of power, and 3) explicitness of instruction in the curriculum-driven power codes of language development (Delpit, 2006; Gee, 2001; Kress, 1997).

***Power and academic discourse.*** Explicit teaching of the curriculum-driven power codes (big "D" Discourses) of academic language allows access to all learners during classroom writing events. Students of varying cultures, who are not within the dominant academic discourse, do not have access to the big "D" Discourse of school. For example, children of the African American community of Trackton define purposes for reading as primarily "information getting," such as reading food labels(Heath, 1983). To ask a child of Trackton to read for the purpose of summarizing a story would be viewed as de-contextualized (Delpit, 2006). However, the dominant big "D" Discourse for comprehension in school is defined by behaviors such as summarizing, inferring and determining important facts. Explicitness in teaching these power codes or

academic discourse for comprehension is vital to assure access for students within Discourse communities of literacy at school.

The academic discourse of language in school is the language of standardized tests and the most valued form of speech is writing (Kress, 1997). Participation structures (classroom learning activities) which allow for free-writing (writing about topics of student's choice), as well as academic writing (contextualized talk, framed by expectations of vocabulary use and specific answers), allow for language learning that is both qualitative and quantitative. When allowing for such participation, teachers position writing development, not as a way for getting and giving information, but as a way of sharing perspectives. Communication with teachers and academically-advanced peers across genres on sustained topics allows students to understand how different perspectives can be expressed in their writing.

For example, the participation structure and culture for writing on self-selected topics exemplifies the shared power and opportunity for exploratory writing for students. Contrary to that approach, the participation structure for writing related to research is a structure in which explicit instruction of the power codes for science inquiry writing are taught in a systematic way, practicing the big "D" Discourse of content writing (Tabak & Baumgartner, 2004). Accountable talk defines the language used in this participation structure. Identity and power

is directly connected to the ability to use the systematic process for inquiry to write about a non-fiction topic.

Identity formation and power relations during writing are synergistic in nature. As students develop “situated identity” for participation within the classroom Discourse community, constructs of personal interest are guided by the location of power and individual agency. Students exert agency to shape writing events in relation to their personal interests and relate power to social and cultural perspectives, while developing their own potential to participate.

### **Summary**

As revealed in the review of research and theory, early writing helps inform practice about writing development defined as an extension of language development, grounded in both individual and social processes. Understanding the multiple influences on student writing processes informs this research in an effort to understand how student decision-making forms identity and power relations during writing in the classroom.

This study draws on a socio-cultural perspective of writing development and seeks to consider how different social practices influence student decision-making, identity and power relations. Therefore, the overall focus is on the way students participate in classroom writing events, rather than on individual writing processes. Students make decisions about how to participate through re-contextualization of big “D” Discourses (specialized languages) of their home,

school and community (Gee, 2001). Students enact identities as they participate in the Discourse communities of their social and cultural experiences. The location of power, interest and agency impacts the way students form identity as literacy learners.

Early writing research concentrates on writing as an individual process, including how children create sign-symbols for language. Research that focuses on writing as a social process influencing power and identity formation, is limited. However, researchers of this content area describe the social process of writing as related to the development of discourse genres and to power relations in participation structures such as science inquiry.

In order to understand the importance of early writing development, my research considers students' meaning-making process during writing as it relates to identity and power relations. Thus, this research intends to expand existing definitions of writing development and of effective writing processes used in the classroom beyond existing beliefs that it is solely an individual process.

## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will be 1) presenting the logic-of-inquiry to explain how the research is designed and data collection is conducted, 2) explaining my role as the teacher and researcher, 3) describing the context and participants in the study, 4) outlining the research design and 5) outlining data analysis procedures. One specific question guides this study: How do different social practices influence children's decision-making and identity formation related to classroom writing events?

### **Logic of Inquiry**

I base this qualitative study on methods of micro-ethnographic discourse analysis in which field-based research becomes the basis of the design, and for which the emphasis of the study emerges from the data. Data collection involves: 1) the examination of conversations that teachers and students have during writer's workshop and 2) on the relationship of social practice on student decision-making during writing, with the goal of gaining insight into how social practices influence student decision-making and identity as a writer.

## **Discourse Analysis**

This study focuses on the way in which language is used as a tool during writing to establish social identity, cultural actions and power relations during teacher and peer interactions in the classroom. To study the social interactions that occur and which impact a student's decision-making processes, I must employ research methodology that allows for the analysis of communications and interactions. I develop discourse analysis as a way to describe how people construct and negotiate social relations, and how they may come to discriminate themselves and others differentially based on their interactions.

Gee (1999) describes discourse analysis as a theory and method for studying how humans interact in a reflective way to create meaning in a social context. Gee defines language as a scaffold for human interaction to either perform an action or attain group membership such as enacting specific social activities and social identities. Discourse analysis is a systematic way to look at language-in-use to describe how participants are using language to make meaning of an interaction. The particular focus of the discourse analysis for this research is the way that language during interactions around writing impact student decision-making and identity formation.

"Classrooms are the ultimate site for learning, and classroom talk constitutes a critical part, and the most exposed edge, of the enacted curriculum," (Cazden, 2001). Because language is at the center of what happens

in classrooms, it reflects the layered and complex interactions which take place during learning. Considering how language is used to enact the curriculum or establish situated identity offers an analytical perspective which describes how students construct and maintain social interactions during learning. Discourse analysis illuminates the social aspects of literacy learning, and therefore confirms how students establish social relations in a classroom, as well as the effect of those relations on student processes. For this study, a look at classroom interactions during writer's workshop through the form of language will examine how social practices impact student decision-making during writing.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is another perspective that guides this research. This methodology considers how students use language to establish power in social relationships. Cazden (2001) and Friere (1994) suggest that patterns of language in the classroom support or impede student equality, and access to what is defined as knowledge in the classroom. For this study, critical discourse analysis considers how patterns of language reveal the way students position certain ways of participating during writing as valued over others (Rogers, 2004).

An analysis of multiple discourses becomes important to understand the many and varied influences on student decision-making during writing. Discourse patterns at many levels (culture of the classroom community,

institution, and anthropological) influence how students and teachers use language to establish social relationships and possibilities for participation.

Institutional discourse patterns are significant for any consideration of student decision-making within the wider context of the institutional, educational assumptions and ideological beliefs that members of society hold (Gee, 2001). Discourse analysis from this perspective allows for the connection of policy and institutional process with the more specific events of daily educational practice.

Anthropological discourse patterns describe the social organization of specific students. Student decision-making related to beliefs about gender or religion act as points of reference for decision-making. Agha (2007) studies the relationship between language and social models of conduct. Learning how people accept or reject ways of interacting gives insight into student and teacher beliefs about culture and society. Agha's (2007) work emphasizes the importance of language as a material object through which people negotiate social relations.

Discourse analysis may also serve to analyze the culture of the classroom through language and thus reveal how students position themselves in relation to other students during classroom literacy events. The close analysis of language-in-use during real time interactions demonstrates how students position themselves and make decisions to take up or reject imposed identities during social interactions as part of the construction of their school identities. During a

study of fifth-graders' interactions around multicultural literature, Zacher (2008b) describes 60 ways student-to-student interactions serve as social spaces in which children negotiate social positions such as group membership.

My study considers discourse related to writing events in the classroom as negotiation opportunities. Therefore, students who are interacting engage in a process of on-going negotiation of meaning-making with one another. Using discourse analysis as the method for analyzing the interactions of students and teachers in the classroom sets the foundation for the study of students' language use to make decisions when writing and in turn to negotiate their own meaning-making of the social world in which they are a part.

### **Micro-ethnographic Discourse Analysis**

Bloome (2005) describes micro-ethnographic discourse analysis as an examination of the use of written and spoken language during literacy events and of ways that this use impacts the people in the event, as well as its relation to the interpretation of other events. My analysis is conducted using micro-ethnographic discourse analysis as a type of discourse analysis which considers how people use language as a tool to construct social identity, cultural actions and power relations (Bloome, 2005). Micro-ethnography links the micro-level interactions in the classroom to the macro-level interactions of the institutions and communities in which the students and teachers participate. The methodology allows me to look at student participation in interaction with others

as the focus of study, rather than as individual student processes in isolation. However, recognition of my belief system as the teacher which informs writing instruction and the values of the school as an institution inform the study. During classroom writing events, I examine from multiple perspectives (culture of the classroom community, institution, and anthropological) the language that is used by students.

My study emphasizes making connections between the literacy events and the social practices that frame the events. Participant's social interactions are observed, including both interactions that are cultural practices of writer's workshop such as mini-lessons and conferences, and those that are spontaneous, informal interchanges between the students and me.

Because micro-ethnographic discourse analysis focuses on language interactions, it requires a comprehensive description of the social context and participants in which to position the data analysis. The micro-analyzed events also allow me to relate the moment-by-moment micro-level interactions of students to the larger corpus of data. Micro-analysis of classroom language-in-use offers specific evidence for the analysis of interactions. Through micro-analysis and associated semiotic symbols such verbal and nonverbal contextual cues and the use of boundary making as a tool to establish power roles, a complete perspective of the situated experiences of the students can be described.

## **Teacher as Researcher**

During this research, I take on the dual roles of teacher and researcher.

These roles offer me the ability to have unique insights into the behavior and activities of those I observe, because I have spent the entire year developing relationships with these students and their families. Planning and participating in the research activities, I become absorbed into the culture of this classroom. At the same time, because of my dual role and my emotional connection to the participants, I sacrifice certain abilities to be completely objective in my observations.

### **Role of Teacher**

My own teaching is examined in this research. My increased interest in this topic emerged following my participation in a pilot study that considered student motivation within a science inquiry framework. That pilot study triggers questions about the ways students participate during writing social practices of science inquiry. My interest in writing also connects with personal theories as an educator. Teaching writing has always been challenging for me, as well as for many other teachers with whom I have worked during my eleven years of classroom experience at the elementary level.

At the time of this research, I have just returned to the classroom after eight years absence. The data collection took place during the last three months of the school year at which point I have been back in the classroom almost two

years. Because my theoretical understandings about writing are so well rooted through my doctoral studies program during my time away from teaching, re-entry into the elementary classroom often comes with tension between my personal theoretical beliefs and current high-stakes curriculum demands. At this time, I am the only teacher in my grade level implementing a daily writer's workshop model.

The other teachers in my grade level are implementing writing in a different way in their classrooms. They seem to value school writing in a different way which reflects the high-stakes curriculum expectations. For example, students might free-write in their journals and then make corrections based primarily on conventions. As a group we do not have many discussions about our varied approaches to writing. Toward the end of the year, one teacher began to work in small groups with students during writing time. She discussed her new approach with our team and how she was enjoying the small group interactions. However, we did not discuss the instructional content of her teaching in that framework. Unfortunately, for the purpose of this study, I would primarily work in isolation to negotiate the tension between my theoretical beliefs and the expectations/values of the curriculum.

One of the biggest challenges I face is balancing my own cultural beliefs for instruction with explicit curriculum driven content. I view writing time as the most valued part of the day because it allows me a window into the souls of my

students. Writing is a time and a place which offers the opportunity to get to know students in a way that no other part of the school day allows. During open composing time, I learn about what students love, what students are doing in their own lives, and what students value.

Also, I feel the responsibility to explicitly teach the “power codes” of language and the big “D” Discourse of writing that gives students the opportunity to develop as strategic writers in the high-stakes testing culture of school. The “power codes” and big “D” Discourse of writing include using the process writing approach, thinking maps as a tool to organize ideas for writing, teaching writing strategies such as the use of “voice” through the use of onomatopoeia or strong verbs, and writing related to research. As a result, discourse patterns during formal literacy events are very teacher controlled and related to explicit strategies for writing.

### **Role of Researcher**

Tacit and overt theories of literacy learning are the lens through which I participate, reflect and analyze information. My tacit beliefs consist of habits and cultural practices that I do not recognize in the moment and are difficult to explain by writing them down. The tacit beliefs that are most visible to me are the ones that conflict with my overt behaviors. For example, when analyzing some transcripts, my unconscious beliefs about power do not coincide with my overt behaviors. I set up writer’s workshop based on theories which allow all students

to participate. However, implementing the writing process approach as the only way to reflect and revise writing limits some student participation. Students are motivated to share their writing and give feedback to others. However, as the writing process approach requires students to rewrite or revisit the same text multiple times, student interest and agency waver significantly. Although my behaviors do not emphasize conventions over content, my unconscious beliefs seem to value writing as a product rather than as a tool for story telling as students seem to value writing.

Daily reflections in a reflexive journal help me understand both the tacit and overt theories which guide my own decision-making. However, these reflections do not substitute for observations as the researcher in the moment of events each day. In order for my analysis to make visible what might have been invisible to me due to my dual role, I need to understand how my own tacit and overt theories for learning to write influence my decision-making as the researcher and as the teacher.

When trying to capture peer-to-peer interactions, one of the biggest challenges I face while collecting data is to unobtrusively record student-to-student interactions. I have to do this in such a way that can assure satisfactory audio coverage of the event while simultaneously not changing the nature of the conversation by intruding on the interaction in a manner that my teacher presence changes the dynamics of the event. In some instances, simultaneous

responses and small group interactions compromise the quality, since I cannot intensively monitor the recording. For example, students talk directly into the recorder and demonstrate its presence as a distraction or students move around the room noisily during classroom interactions.

### **Context and Participants**

Data from this qualitative study, related to classroom writing events, is collected in my first-grade public school classroom. Participants include me, twenty first-grade students, and one faculty advisor. The rationale for choosing student participants from my own first-grade classroom is to insure that student participants engage in classroom instruction grounded in the belief that literacy learning is an act of both social and cognitive (in the head) processes. I make observations during regularly occurring class events that are part of the ongoing, teacher-planned instruction for the classroom.

#### **Context**

This study takes place in a suburban town in Texas close to major metropolitan cities. The study of my own teaching takes place in my first grade elementary classroom during the daily one hour writer's workshop time.

**The town.** The students in my class are from a suburban town in Texas, only a thirty-minute drive from two major metropolitan cities. With approximately one-hundred thousand residents, two four-year universities and one community

college, students and teachers have access to diverse cultural, historical, political and academic resources.

**The school.** The elementary school has 730 students and a teaching staff of 35 that includes students from both culturally and economically diverse backgrounds. In an article published in the local newspaper listing all schools in the district and the percent of students on free and reduced lunches, approximately 30% of my school's student population is identified as low-income.

The school is one of the home schools in the district for elementary students placed in inclusion classes because of physical, mental and behavioral concerns. The year of data collection for this study is the first year the school is transitioning inclusion students from a self-contained classroom to full-time inclusion in the regular classroom with an aide. In my classroom, I have two students who are assigned one full-time aide to support their learning in the classroom. The aide is not present in the classroom during data collection, and therefore I am managing all students independently during writer's workshop. My classroom management skills are not effectively adapted to manage some students, including the two inclusion students who struggle to work independently. Therefore, I am constantly challenged to negotiate teaching and behavior management on many occasions.

**The classroom.** I set up writing in our classroom based on the belief that all students must have an opportunity to participate (Cazden, 2001; Dyson, 2003;

Gee, 2001). All students participate in the normal classroom curriculum of writer's workshop each day during data collection. Writer's workshop starts each day with a whole group, teacher-led mini-lesson, followed by independent writing time on either teacher or student determined topics, and ends with students sharing written work.

During whole group mini-lessons, the collaborative nature and explicit teaching of the power codes related to our language system (syntax, semantics, orthographic principles) and genre types (narrative and writing related to research) allow access to all writers to the curriculum expectations (Kress, 1997). Choice and autonomy during independent work time allow for students to engage in writing on the basis of their own initiative. Depending on the type of writing we are doing, student choice is open-ended or somewhat limited to my teacher decisions. For example, during free-writing students choose their own topics, but during writing related to research, students chose animals related to the ocean research theme. During process writing, students chose the idea for their story, but then are limited during independent writing time to stay with that story through the phases of the process writing approach. Every day during writer's workshop, sharing with others allows all students to participate in the dialogic process of using writing as a tool to mediate their participation in our community of practice.

Drawing upon my socio-cultural view of literacy, which defines writing as a social practice with a focus on participation, I set up writer's workshop with an emphasis on process rather than product. Teaching writing is not solely about teaching the cognitive processes of writing, but is about writing as a multi-dimensional relationship rooted in the transactions of linguistic (letter/sound) , cognitive (in the head, organized structures), cultural (personal experiences and relationships) and social structures (Hayes, 1996; Rosenblatt, 1994). Writer's workshop is designed for me to develop relationships with students as a co-writer by focusing on the ways students participate through problem-solving and decision-making.

**Mini-lessons.** My role as the teacher during mini-lessons is to teach writing, not based on word-level accuracy, but to teach toward problem-solving and decision-making. To help students problem-solve and to make decisions as they write, I help them learn to use information from themselves (social and cultural experiences) and from the systems of language (semantics, syntax, etc.) to construct meaning. I believe that growth in writing can be seen as students extend their own "working systems of competency" by learning to access, integrate, and use resources (from themselves and the system of language) in a variety ways when writing (Clay, 2001). Whole class mini-lessons involve explicit, teacher modeling of strategies (organization of ideas, word construction,

using descriptive language, use of conventions) through participation structures such as interactive and shared writing.

***Independent work time.*** Writing development is individualized, as well as culturally and socially situated. Therefore, during independent work time, students work at their own pace and always make choices about their topics. I deeply value student choice and autonomy during independent writing time because I believe human psychological processes mediate the purposes for which we write and determine how we transact with the text as we create it (Rosenblatt, 1994). Processes which drive our decision-making during writing come from an efferent and/or aesthetic stance. An efferent stance is guided by meaning-making based on publicly shared understandings such as writing a summary for a story. An aesthetic stance is guided by personal, private meaning making based on one's lived-through experiences (Rosenblatt, 1994). Because social affiliations and divisions are both constructed and revealed through differentiated stories, social practices (how writing happens through both free writing and writing related to research) in our classroom allows for students to access both efferent (writing related to ocean research) and aesthetic (free choice topics) purposes for writing and in-turn opens up dialogic space for both myself and students.

Well-established classroom routines during writer's workshop allow most students autonomy during self-directed, independent writing time while I work

with students individually and in small groups. If one walks into the classroom during independent work time, students will be working on various tasks at tables, on the floor with a friend or at the conference table with the teacher. The lights will be off with classical music playing quietly in the background and the sunlight from the wall of windows illuminates the room. Although peer talk is ongoing and not discouraged, at times the noise level of group work or the interruptions from students interfere with teacher-student conferences.

Student conferences during independent work time are either teacher initiated or student initiated. For example, if a student chooses to publish a story, the student will initiate a conference with me when he/she is ready to share and make revisions. Many students initiate conferences with me to record the correct spelling of a word on their individual word cards to use in their writing. I initiate conferences as I roam the room and check-in on students.

**Sharing.** Each day at the end of independent writing time, students share with their peers and with me. For writing to be purposeful and motivated, I believe an audience is often beneficial. When given the choice to share in a small group or with the whole class, students always choose sharing with the entire class. To scaffold student sharing time with the whole class, I implement a sharing protocol. The protocol starts with one child reading or telling about his/her writing, then asking the group for questions or comments. When finished, that student then chooses the next person to share. This protocol allows for a

student directed format and allows me to be a participant in the group and not a facilitator.

### **The Students**

All parents readily agree to let their child participate in the study. Even though there are significant behavior challenges in our classroom, I feel there is a strong sense of trust among the students, the parents and myself. I maintain an open line of communication with parents through weekly newsletters, daily behavior contracts for five children and on-going parent conferences to address both behavior and academic concerns.

I describe this class as diverse, complex, and energetic. There are nine girls and eleven boys in the classroom. Three of my students are twins. From my perspective, the girls have very strong, out-going personalities and the boys seem to have on-going personality conflicts with one another. Small groups of boys tend to be exclusive of other boys seeking group membership. As the teacher, I sometimes feel frustrated because I do not have the ability to support development of social skills that can enable students to relate in positive ways with their peers and, in turn, I struggle to create a sense of community among students in the classroom.

Because of the self-direction required during independent writing time, I find classroom management the most demanding part of writer's workshop. However, when everyone is doing the same thing, such as during large group

mini-lessons and sharing, and there is a systematic way of interacting, students seem to work more successfully as a community of learners.

Therefore, interaction among all students during classroom writing events, not individual student scenarios, is the focus of this study. Thus in Chapter IV, when I present the results, the interactions described will encompass descriptions of identity and power relations among all students and their behavior as group members during writing events in the classroom.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

This research is a study of my own teaching, culminating in a three-month period of data collection in my classroom. The three month period of data collection took place during the last three months of the school year. Data collected includes classroom observations, audio tapes of writing events during writer's workshop in the classroom, student writing samples, archival data, a teacher reflexive journal and individual student interviews.

### **Observation**

Each day during the one hour writer's workshop, I collect classroom observations and audio recordings. Student and teacher language during whole class and individual instructional contexts includes discourse related to instructional goals, teacher scaffolds, and associated tasks taking place during writer's workshop.

## **Audio Recordings**

Audio recordings include events such as teacher-led mini-lessons, teacher/student conferences and peer conferencing. Because the primary research questions relate to the relationship of social practices and student decision-making during writing, I collect data which describes social practices in the classroom, the language and interactions of me and my students, peer interactions related to written text, the power structures and culture of the learning community and student use of time and space during writer's workshop. The initial analysis suggests that a focus on student decision-making during writing strongly connects to student identity formation and, therefore it is important to focus on student decision-making as part of identity formation during each event. The initial analysis also suggests that discourse patterns during writing are crucial social spaces used to position one another and establish social identity, cultural action and power relations. From the corpus of audio-tapes, I select events for transcription based on how students utilize the social practices during writing to negotiate their identity, perform cultural actions or establish power relations. I use multiple levels of discourse analysis to determine language patterns illuminating the relationship between social practices during writing with student decision-making and identity formation.

### **Student Writing Samples**

I collect and index student writing samples on an on-going basis during the entire study as they relate to student decision-making. I convert student writing samples to electronic documents through scanning and archive these for data analysis.

### **Archival Data**

Across the first-grade year, students participate in writer's workshop as a part of the normal curriculum. I document student growth and keep a collection of student writing. Although the study took place during the last three months of the school year, I collect students' writing exercises across the entire year and use this writing in the analysis to provide background on individual student writing decisions.

### **Post-hoc Field Notes**

As the classroom teacher, I must regularly engage in the normal classroom curriculum, while simultaneously engaging in rigorous qualitative data gathering. Every night during the study, I record post-hoc field notes. I listen to the audio tapes (prior to transcription, which take place during data analysis) and look at the writing samples, taking detailed field notes of each event. This process allows me to "bracket" my preconceived ideas as a classroom teacher and to take on the role as researcher, recording notes on the event, without bias or pre-conceived notions about possible outcomes. Essentially, during the day I

focus on the classroom teaching activities and during the evening I reconstruct the events for research purposes.

### **Teacher Reflexive Journal**

To include me, the teacher, as part of the research instrument, I record immediately after each daily observation my reflections in a reflexive journal. The journal helps me examine ways my position as the primary researcher and teacher shapes and/or changes the social and cultural constructs of the classroom discourse community. In the reflexive journal I am able to record insights and shifts in my thinking related to methodology and rationale. During analysis, this journal helps me to reflect on how my own beliefs and decisions during writer's workshop impacted my identity, cultural actions and power relations as the teacher.

### **Student Interviews**

Since qualitative interviews allow for better understanding one's experience through narrative construction of meaning (Hatch, 2007), I conduct individual student interviews. My faculty advisor and I develop a lightly-structured interview protocol to facilitate the individual interviews. Lightly-structured interview protocols give maximum flexibility during the interview and reveal implicit theories demonstrating student's beliefs and actions. The interview protocol also serves to appropriately organize information into the study's specific areas during the analysis (Creswell, 2007). The open-ended questions used relate to typical

writing events and processes of a normal day during writer's workshop in the classroom.

The goal for the interview is not only to discuss student experiences with writing, but also to help describe, from the student's perspective, how writer's workshop instruction impacts student decision-making processes. To capture authentic student responses, my advising professor conducts interviews with students and makes audio recordings of each interview. During these interviews, my advisor questions students about their writing habits and attitudes. I transcribe each interview and analyze it for common themes and patterns related to student decision-making. During the analysis, student work samples from writing activities that are audio-recorded are compared to oral statements during interviews. These questions guide the interview:

- Tell me about your writing.
- How do you decide what to write about?
- What kind of writing do you like to do best (fiction/non-fiction)?
- How does your teacher help you with your writing?
- What advice would you give to a kindergartener coming to first-grade about what good writers do?

## **Data Analysis Procedures**

I conduct, in four strands, an analysis of student participation during classroom writer's workshop. The four strands of analysis act as a funnel in that the analysis starts with the larger corpus of data in Strand 1 and can be connected to specific writing events analyzed with greater depth, through micro-ethnography, in Strand 3. When applicable, a sample transcript illustrates each stage.

The purpose for the first strand of analysis is to identify relevant social practices (shared understandings among participants about how writing happens) within the classroom community related to student decision-making about writing. The purpose for analysis in Strand 2 is to describe the decisions students make during the writing events. Strand 3 takes a piece of the larger corpus of data and analyzes discourse related to identity and decision-making through a micro-ethnographic analysis. The micro-ethnographic analysis in Strand 3 allows for a deeper understanding of social, cultural and power relations which are connected to the larger corpus of data. Thus, the micro-analysis in Strand 3 precipitates a Strand 4 analysis that focuses on a review and modification of initial codes established in Strand 1 for social practice and in Strand 2 for codes related to student decision-making. (See Figure 1 on the following page.)

Data Sources: Post-hoc Field-notes, Student Writing Samples,  
Teacher/Researcher Reflexive Journal, Audio tapes, Transcripts

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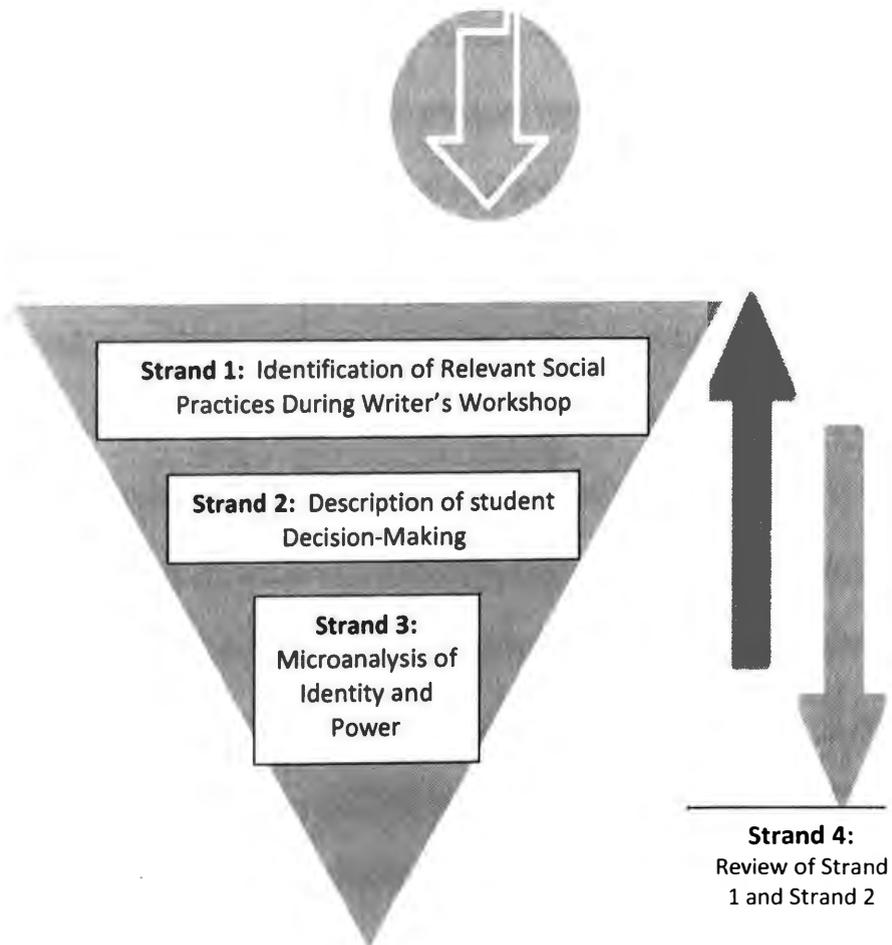


Figure 1: Recursive and reflexive analysis of student decision-making

## Strand 1

The purpose of the first strand is to identify relevant social practices related to writing for analysis. For Strand 1 analysis I review all field notes, writing samples, archival data and my reflexive journal entries to determine relevant social practices in relation to student decision-making and to determine specific writing events to transcribe in detail for Strand 2. Although writing occurs throughout the day during content related activities, writer's workshop is the only time during the day which focuses on writing as part of a student's lived-through experiences. Since my study seeks to understand the various influences on student decision-making, the study only collects data during writer's workshop. apply analysis across all three strands through the lens of the multiple influences on student and teacher discourses (institutional, anthropological and classroom culture).

Constant comparative analysis allows for a type of open coding during the initial review of all data with no pre-conceived theoretical perspective or model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Constant comparative analysis involves an ongoing, context sensitive analysis of the social practices during writing and of student decision-making in relationship to theoretical constructs and previous research on writing. After on-going reviews with my supervising professor and repeated reviews of the data, I modify and condense initial codes identifying relevant social practices during writer's workshop.

The codes related to social practices during writer's workshop can be associated with either the type of writing taking place, such as writing related to ocean animal research or free-choice writing, or the codes related to the social practice (social structure for how writing was happening) such as a mini-lesson or conference in which students participate. To further consider how student decision-making relates to the type of writing and social practice in which it occurred, all data in Strand 1 is then coded according to type of writing and social practice.

During this initial analysis, I base codes for social practices on my cultural model (my belief for how writer's workshop should be enacted). I base my cultural model for writer's workshop on the work of Donald Graves (2008), and Kathy Short (1999). This model includes social practices such as teacher-led, whole class mini-lessons, independent writing time, teacher or peer-led conferences and sharing. During initial coding, I code social practices (how writing happens) as whole class min-lessons, independent work time, teacher or peer-led conferences and sharing. Table 1 and Table 2 show descriptions of the initial coding for types of writing and social practices, as well as examples from the data.

Table 1:  
*Initial Coding for Types of Writing*

<b>Type of Writing</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript Number</b>	<b>Example from Data</b>
Process Writing	<p>Students go through phases of the writing process. Students write a draft, revise (add or take out ideas) and then edit work (check for conventions) for publication. For example, the use of thinking maps was used during the planning stage of process writing. Thinking maps are like graphic organizers that can be used to organize ideas for writing. A circle map can be used to brainstorm ideas that relate to a certain topic.</p>	20052	<p>Two small group conferences where students share stories and got response from peers to make revisions.</p>
		20019 and 20068	<p>I model using thinking map to gather or organize ideas during whole group shared writing.</p> <p>The whole class meets for independent writing time. After I model whole group, a group of three girls share how they work in small group to categorize facts about dolphins on a thinking map with the class. This chart was later used to write an informational text about dolphins.</p>
Free Writing	<p>Students write in their journals about any topic they choose.</p>	20041	<p>Two boys talk informally about the video games they are writing about in journals.</p>
	<p>During free writing students often request help with the spelling of an unknown word. In response to this request the child and I have a short conference to focus on the meaning or the word construction depending on the need of the student.</p>	20020,	<p>Students request help to spell a word by bringing me a yellow card with sections for each letter of the alphabet. While we talk I write the word or the student and I co-construct the word on the card for future reference.</p>
		20081,	
20083,	20084		

(Continued)



Table 2 cont'd

<b>Social Practice/Teacher</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript Number</b>	<b>Examples From Data</b>
<p>Conferencing (small group, or individual with teacher) and Sharing (whole group)</p>	<p>Students met in small groups or one-on-one with me, or with the whole class to share their writing. Students and I respond to writing.</p>	<p>20072</p>	<p>Whole class meets on carpet area after independent writing time. A group of three girls share how they organized ideas on a thinking map with the class.</p>
		<p>20075</p>	<p>Small group and I meet. As part of the process writing, students share their draft of a story on a self-selected topic. The group responds by giving suggestions for revisions.</p>
		<p>20027 and 20028</p>	<p>I have roaming conferences around the room and have a conference with one child. The student and I discuss ways to use a mentor text to get ideas when writing.</p>
		<p>20065</p>	<p>Two girls read and discuss what they have written about sharks. They each make suggestions for the other about their writing</p>

(Continued)

Table 2 cont'd

<b>Social Practice/Teacher</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Transcript Number</b>	<b>Examples From Data</b>
Independent Writing Time	Students write about self-selected or teacher directed topics on their own or with a peer group. (Harste, et al., 1988).	20020	Two girls share the topic they are publishing. They help each other with spelling.

When all data codes for type of writing and social practice is complete, one event from each social practice (whole class mini-lesson, independent work time, conferencing/sharing small group, whole class, or individual one-on-one with teacher) is chosen, based on how it relates to student decision-making, for transcription in Strand 2.

## Strand 2

The purpose for Strand 2 is to describe the decisions students make during the writing events or social practices. Before choosing the events to be transcribed in Strand 2, I review all field notes, student artifacts, and interviews to analyze for themes and patterns across events. The review serves as the basis for constant comparative analysis of student decision-making. Constant comparative analyses provide continuous, context sensitive analysis of the social practices during writing and student decision-making. I conduct a constant comparative analysis of all data from each social practice named in Strand 1. Next, I follow by recording detailed memos that relate to each social practice. The first set of memos lists the social practice, such as a whole class mini-lessons, and describes who did what, when and how during each event in this

category as well as lists transcript examples for the social practice. Key words are bolded for consideration in later analysis. A separate memo for each subsequent social practice is made (whole class mini-lesson, conferencing, sharing, independent writing time). (See Appendix A, Chart 1 for an excerpt of memo one on whole group mini-lessons.) After each social practice memo, I make a final memo recording themes across all social practices to guide further analysis.

Next, I do a constant comparative analysis with all memos to look for any themes related to student decision-making and to identity formation across all social practices. I record a second memo to further consider themes from the data and the connection of these themes to the research question related to social practices during writing, student decision-making and identity formation. (See Appendix B: Chart 2 for Memo 2.)

After multiple reviews of the data and the memos, with the assistance of my advising professor, I condense themes and codes, based on my teacher perspective, and modify these to more accurately reflect the nature of the research question.

To continue Strand 2' analysis, I select one event from each social practice (whole class mini-lesson, conferencing, sharing, independent writing time) for transcription. Before transcription, I chart each event to identify the social practice, type of writing, description of event and student decision-making as well

as a rationale for choosing the event based on student decision-making. (See Table 3 for an example of the charting for selection of each event prior to transcription.) The construction of these charts and a review of all field notes provide a more detailed account of students' decision-making during writer's workshop and allow for on-going comparative analysis to ensure that literacy events chosen for transcription are reflective of the larger corpus of data. Strand 2 charts outlining events to be transcribed are reviewed with my advising professor to confirm selection, based on the research questions.

Table 3:

*Example of Charting for Selection of Transcribed Events*

Social Practice	Writing Context	Data File (length)	Description
Sharing (small group)	Sharing research writing about ocean animals.	DS_20078 (2:51)	A group of four boys are sharing their individual writing about sharks. Andrew, Peter, Luke and Colby have a heated discussion about whose turn it is to share. There is an on-going struggle for power among Andrew and Colby. Luke and Peter's participation shows identity construction.
<p><b>RATIONALE</b></p> <p>In this event the group includes Andrew's close friends Luke and Peter. Colby has sought to be included in this "group" on an on-going basis. One day Colby made topic choices during free writing after asking Andrew what he would be writing about for that day.</p> <p>Andrew's participation and identity in this event can be contrasted to his sense of power and identity in another small group conference (transcript 20075) including Colby and two other girls.</p> <p>However, it is important to consider Colby's refusal to be marginalized in this group of close knit friends who have marginalized him in different ways at school.</p> <p>It is interesting to see how participation or nonparticipation of Andrew's friends puts Andrew in a position of power. Peter seems to make decisions which move him in and out of different roles showing allegiance to Andrew and also to Colby.</p>			

At this point, I have only conducted analysis of data based on my teacher perspective. To understand student decision-making, power and identity, it is necessary to understand the student perspective. To do so, student decision-making is described in Strand 2 in a separate constant comparative analysis of individual student interview transcripts. After a review of all interview transcripts, a memo is recorded to note related themes across individual student interviews.

The memo lists headings based on the interview questions and a summary of common themes in student responses to each question. The third memo helps consider multiple perspectives to describe similarities and differences of student decision-making from the student's perspective (interview themes) and teacher's perspective (themes from transcripts). (See Appendix C: Chart 3 for Memo 3.)

### **Strand 3**

The purpose of Strand 3 is to use a micro-ethnographic approach of discourse analysis to describe student decision-making and identity formation with more specificity, using the events transcribed in Strand 2. A micro-ethnographic approach allows for an in-depth, multi-dimensional examination of language patterns. Rather than examine longer stretches of conversation, I analyze in great depth shorter conversations occurring during writing events. This allows me to establish social identity, cultural actions, and power relations related to writing (Bloome, 2005). The micro-analyzed events also allow me to relate examples to the larger corpus of data. I micro-analyze one event from each social practice, a total of six events, based on how students are using language to make decisions. I choose these six events as exemplars across social practices based on varying student decision-making processes, such as how to share writing. During the micro-analysis process, I transcribe additional events as needed to understand and compare changes in the participation

across events of specific students. A total of ten writing events are micro-analyzed and the data is interpreted Strand 3.

For the micro-analysis, I divide talk from the transcripts into message units using procedures described by Bloome (2005) and his colleagues. Message units are the smallest units of conversational meaning, and their boundaries are signaled by participants' use of contextual cues (Bloome, 2005). These cues include verbal (e.g., syntactical shifts), nonverbal (e.g., non-response, use of artifacts), and prosodic (e.g., volume, stress, tone) signals. Table 4 shows a portion of a coded transcript. As seen in column two, message units are not the equivalent of turns at talk. Conversational units are made up of several turns at talk. In the examples of this study, message units are numbered sequentially and gaps in the sequence indicate segments of the event that are omitted. (See Appendix D for a list of transcript symbols.)

Table 4:  
*Transcript 20078 - Small Group Ocean Animal Research  
 (Group of Four Boys Sharing Writing About Sharks.)*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit
50	Colby	*What is this word?*
51	Luke	*I don't know.*
52		* You wrote that. *
53		*I don't know.*
54	Colby	S-h-a -r-
55	Peter	r -a-s.
56		It suppose to be sharks.
57		You just forgot uh s.

The next step involves coding each message unit for decision-making, non-verbal behavior, identity signaled in message unit, linguistic evidence for description of identity and uptake of identity by participants. Categories are established as they relate to the research question constructs of student decision-making, power relations, and identity formation. (See Table 5 for an example of the micro-analysis categories.)

Table 5:  
*Micro-analysis Example of Transcript 20078*  
*(Colby Shares About Sharks with Andrew, Luke and Peter.)*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
50	Colby	*What is this word?*	Asks in a segmented voice. Uses language that is meant to seem comical.	Colby points to paper.	Colby as learner needs help.	Comical way of requesting support from the group reveals his attempt to fit in with the tone of the conversation the other boys in the group are already having. Tone infers less confidence than Colby was showing in his assertive voice earlier when demanding the group's attention.	Uptake of Colby as vulnerable learner.
51	Luke	*I don't know.*	Luke responds in degrading fashion and as an unwilling helper.		Luke as unwilling helper and assignment of Colby as non-person.	Sarcastic tone implies unwillingness to help, not necessarily that Luke does not understand.	
52		* You wrote that. *	Tone of voice is stern.		Assignment by Luke to Colby as incompetent.	Luke implies that Colby was the writer and he should know what he wrote.	

(Continued)

Table 5 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
53		*I don't know.*					
54	Colby	S-h-a -r-	Colby spells out word as a strategy to solve the word.		Colby as word solver.	Colby says letters in word as they are written on the page.	Uptake of Colby as word solver.
55	Peter	r -a-s.	Peter joins Colby in word solving.		Peter as helper and co-word solver.	Peter says letters on page as written.	Uptake of Peter as co-word solver.
56		It suppose to be sharks.					
57		You just forgot uh s.	Peter notices and names error.		Peter as teacher and helper. Colby as student/learner.	"Just" indicates Colby's error does not mean he is incompetent.	Peter as teacher.

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## **Strand 4**

The purpose for Strand 4 analysis is to relate information revealed in the Strand 3 micro-ethnographic analysis to the larger corpus of data. Because the initial coding for relevant social practices in Strand 1 is based on my theoretical beliefs, I use Strand 4 analyses to reconsider how my own beliefs possibly may have interfered with my initial coding for relevant social practices during writer's workshop. These practices most influenced student decision-making. The focus for this study is on student decision-making as it relates to participation in the classroom, not on my cultural model for writer's workshop (Gee, 2001). After revisiting Strand 1, analysis codes for social practices in Strand 1 are modified. I also need Strand 4 to reconsider Strand 2 analysis and the decisions students make related to identity formation. After revisiting information in Strand 2, I condense and solidify Strand 2 analysis themes related to student decision-making.

Table 6 and 7 show modified codes, definitions as they relate to decision-making and examples from data for the social practice codes. (See Table 6 and 7 on following pages.)

Table 6:  
*Modified Codes for Social Practices*

<b>Social Practice</b>	<b>Description as Relates to Student Decision-making</b>	<b>Transcript Number</b>	<b>Examples from Data</b>
Whole Class	<p>Decision-making during whole group events relates to a shared purpose for writing such as the construction of the text during an interactive writing event.</p> <p>Teacher decision-making during whole class events is based on big "D" academic Discourse. Academic discourse of the curriculum includes teaching strategies for writing such as use of thinking maps and process writing.</p>	<p>20055</p> <p>20012, 20026, 20037</p>	<p>Through interactive writing teacher models conventions of writing and collaborates with students to write "get well" card for another teacher.</p> <p>Teacher models stages of writing process choosing an idea, planning and drafting.</p>
Small Group or Individual Conference with Teacher	<p>Student decision-making related to teacher direction to give a response to others' writing, make a revision to their own writing. The source of knowledge is with the teacher and her deciding how the group will interact through whose turn it is to speak or what the boundaries are for the conversation.</p>	20052	<p>Students complete first drafts for process writing stories. I instruct them when finish to come and conference to get feedback for revisions. Two different groups initiate a teacher-led conference. Students share their writing and then give responses related to revisions.</p>

(Continued)

Table 6 cont'd

Social Practice	Description as Relates to Student Decision-making	Transcript Number	Examples from Data
Small Group or Individual Conference with Teacher (continued)		20027 and 20042	I am roaming the room and notice Peter is not writing about his self-selected topic on his brainstorming thinking map. I initiate a conference with Peter. Peter shared what he had written and I suggest he use the <i>Magic School Bus</i> as a mentor text to get an idea of how to tell his story about a rocket ship house adventure.
		20091 and 20092	Students approach me and ask for a word to be spelled that they need for their writing. I write the word on the student yellow card where they keep other words listed in alphabetical order. This card serves as an individual word wall of words the student might need to reference during writing.

(Continued)

Table 6 cont'd

<b>Social Practice</b>	<b>Description as Relates to Student Decision-making</b>	<b>Transcript Number</b>	<b>Examples from Data</b>
<p>Small Group Sharing Non-Teacher</p>	<p>Student decision-making related to power relations among participants in the group. Power as process defined by naturalization of doing “sharing” time during, and the contested and fluctuating location of power through language in use. For example, how students value and respond to one another as a group member or non-group member or as a source of knowledge.</p>	20078	<p>Four boys share their writing about sharks. The primary boy who is reading his writing stops often while reading his own writing to figure out the words he has written. Decisions relate to who is valued as a participant in the group. Turn-taking and boundary making as tools reveal abstraction of power.</p>
		20075	<p>Two girls and one boy are sharing their writing about ocean animals. One girl directs the group to gather and sit in a circle of chairs. She picks whose turn it is to share. Decisions relate to this one student’s decisions about flow of turn-taking in the group.</p>
		20077	<p>Three girls are sharing their writing about interesting facts they are collecting about dolphins in their ocean animal research group. One participant shares that baby dolphins have hair and others in the group disagree. Decisions related to whose knowledge is accurate and how participants will contest location of knowledge.</p>

Table 7:  
*Themes Related to Student Decision-Making*

Theme	Description	Transcript Number	Examples from Data
Type of writing.	<p>Type of writing was either topic of student choice related to the child's own lived through experiences of the student, publishing through process writing steps or writing related to research in the content area of science.</p> <p>Changes in the way students participate with one another when sharing writing related to the type of writing. For example patterns in how students made decisions about how to share their writing related to research verses writing related to a free-writing topic of their choosing were different.</p>	20078 and 20052	Events reflect changes in the way Colby participated in reading his writing related to research and sharing a story he had written about his dirt bike.
Teacher presence.	Student power and identity as it relates to teacher participation or non-participation in the social context of the writing event.	20052 and 20075 and 20078	Changes in the way Andrew participate as the power figure changed across events which included the teacher or did not include the teacher.

### Summary

Using micro-ethnographic methods, this study explores the question: How do different social practices influence student decision-making and identity during

writing events? To investigate this question, I use micro-ethnographic discourse analysis. I select micro-ethnographic discourse analysis as a research methodology to understand how the language used in interactions during writer's workshop on the micro-level connects with the decisions students make and the identities they form as writers. Employing detailed analysis of the language used during everyday literacy events, I describe how students position themselves with one another and ways in which this positioning influences how students participate in classroom writing events.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### **Overview**

The research for this qualitative study addresses how different social practices influence students' decision-making and identity formation as it relates to classroom writing exercises with both teacher-selected and student-selected topics. This study examines classroom interactions of first-grade students during a classroom writer's workshop. The purpose of the analysis is to provide descriptions of the participants' decision-making processes and the resulting identity formation during the writing events taking place in the classroom during the study.

I analyze student decision-making by considering language-in-use during social interactions to describe how social relations are constructed and negotiated. I observe and document how students make decisions and how they form identity and power relations based on their interactions. The analysis is based on the entire corpus of data (described in Chapter III). The data includes classroom observations, audio tapes of writing events, student writing samples, archival data, a teacher reflexive journal and individual student interviews. From the corpus of data, ten audio segments are selected for detailed analysis, based on the relationship of student decision-making, identity formation and power

relations. In this chapter, transcripts are presented as exemplars for the analysis. In order to consider literacy as a social process, the transcripts are selected to exemplify student changes in participation across writing events and to reflect observations from the larger corpus of data.

The research questions specifically address social practices and their influence on identity. A description of the existing structures in the classroom and a brief overview of the students, from the researcher's perspective, are found in Chapter III. As the results are reported, the individual students involved in the analyzed writing events are described in more detail in relation to identity and individual writing practices. Thus, each student's identity is connected to the research question through social practice.

### **Strand 1 Analysis: Social Practices**

The purpose for Strand 1 analysis is to identify relevant social practices--how writing happens--related to student decision-making. Strand 1 analysis, which reveals social practices related to student decision-making or how students participate during classroom writing activities, is based on the type of writing and on teacher or non-teacher participation in the social context of the event.

All data is initially coded for social practices according to my cultural model--my belief for how writer's workshop should be enacted. My cultural model for writer's workshop is based on the work of Clay (2001), Dyson (1999),

Graves (2008), and Short (1999). This model includes practices such as teacher-led whole class mini-lessons, independent writing time, teacher or peer-led conferences and sharing of writing products. Thus, during initial coding, social practices--how writing happens--are coded as whole class mini-lessons, independent work time, teacher or peer-led conferences and sharing of written text.

For this study, I define literacy as a social practice. Therefore, the focus of this study is on student decision-making as it relates to classroom participation during writing events, not on my cultural model for writer's workshop. The micro-analysis in Strand 3 reveals distinct evidence which defines social practices in my classroom from a socio-cultural perspective based on participation. Hence, codes for social practices are modified. Social practices--how writing happens--related to student decision-making during writing events are not defined by my personal, teacher-driven, cultural labels used to describe the activity, such as conferencing or sharing, but rather are defined by the type of writing and by my participation or lack of participation during the writing event.

### **Types of Writing as a Social Practice**

At the time of this study, student and teacher decision-making during writing relates to three overall types of writing. These include: 1) free-writing in which students choose their own writing topics; 2) process writing which includes writing with the goal of publishing; or 3) writing related to research, such as the

ocean animal research writing exercise in this study. Tools used to support each type of writing include use of thinking maps (a type of graphic organizer used to plan for writing), spelling or word construction, interactive writing exercises or shared writing.

**Free writing.** During free writing, students write in personal journals about topics they choose. As noted from the student interview responses, decisions on topics about which to write during free-writing exercises connect to students' own lived-through experiences. In transcript 20022, Paige writes about a sport in which she participates, softball. Colby writes about biking after school with his family in transcript 20041. Colby, Bill and Cade describe video games they enjoy playing in transcripts 20042 and 20033. Teacher interaction can sometimes become a component of free-writing activities. Students often initiate a conference with me to get help to spell a word or to share what they write. In transcript 20059 Grace asks me to spell the word "happily" and in transcript 20082 Terry asks for help spelling "watched." In transcript 20021, Candace reads her story about Webkinz and I ask questions for clarification.

**Process writing.** During process writing, students go through the phases of the writing process. The phases of the writing process are 1) students choose a topic from journals and brainstorm ideas related to the topic; 2) students write a rough draft; 3) students make revisions by adding or taking out content, based on teacher and peer responses; and 4) students edit the story by checking spelling

and conventions. Through teacher modeling, as well as through individual and small group conferences, I guide students through the process writing phases. In field notes from transcript 20019 during a whole group interactive writing mini-lesson, I model using a thinking map to brainstorm ideas. To generate ideas with students' assistance, I use a personal story about an embarrassing moment at a high school choir concert during which my very prominent voice cracked, resulting in a terrible screeching sound heard by all in attendance.

Additional work related to process writing is conducted during small group conferences. In post-hoc field notes from transcripts 20048, 20049, 20051 and 20052, students share drafts of their own stories and get responses from peers to make revisions.

**Writing related to research.** When students write on topics related to research, they are writing about non-fiction topics. One non-fiction writing topic selected by me involved writing about an ocean animal. For this project, students utilize resources such as the internet and a variety of reference books to gather facts or research questions of interest about an ocean animal. Students choose an animal for the writing project following a group trip to a local movie theater to watch a movie about ocean animals.

In the classroom, writing related to research on ocean animals is very systematic. For example, in post-hoc field notes from transcript 20064, I model gathering interesting facts and writing them on index cards to be used later in my

writing. Then in post-hoc field notes from transcripts 20065, 20066 and 20067, students choose an ocean animal to research and work in small groups to gather information on index cards. After teacher modeling in transcript 20068, students use facts written on cards and sort them into categories, using a thinking map in transcripts 20069, 20070, and 20071. The purpose is to organize facts for writing an information book. For example, index card facts and questions are sorted in categories such as habitat or body parts related to that ocean animal being studied. After students sort facts, they share with the class how they organize what they have found. In transcript 20072, a group of three girls share how they organize facts about dolphins on a thinking map to help organize the information they have gathered.

The next step in the systematic approach to writing related to non-fiction topics is to use the categories to then write an informational book, using the categories as subheadings for each page in the book. However, after some teacher reflection about the systematic process and the impact of this system on student motivation, I decide to modify my instructional approach. Instead, I have students use the organized information as a guide instead of as “the” resource for free writing about an ocean animal. I will discuss my decision further in a future section describing student decision-making related to the type of writing and the construction of text.

## **Teacher Presence as a Social Practice**

Student decisions about how to participate in classroom writing events and how to construct written text, related to the location of power within the social event, are strongly influenced by my participation or lack of participation in the writing event. Whole class mini-lessons, sharing and conferencing events include me as a participant. However, some small group conferences are strictly peer interactions. My participation in relation to power and student identity will be discussed in more depth within the context of the micro-analysis in Strand 3.

**Whole class mini-lesson or sharing.** Whole class practices include teacher-led mini-lessons and student sharing. Teacher modeling is a common cultural practice during mini-lesson events. For example, in post-hoc field notes from transcribed event 20019, I model using a thinking map to gather ideas for my story about an embarrassing moment during a high school choir concert. During this shared writing event, students participate in naturalistic ways based on the shared purpose for writing about the event. In post-hoc field notes, the students and I collaborate to find the right word to describe the sound of my voice when it cracked during the choir song that caused my embarrassment. Students act out the event by singing and making noises. I ask for help to construct a “simile” to compare the sound to another word. Overlapping suggestions immediately follow. I suggest the phrase “screech like a” and Terry responds “screech of a duck.”

Another whole group, teacher participant practice involves sharing. Sharing time is a process through which students read or tell about their writing with the teacher and with their peers. The naturalization of the process for sharing becomes a cultural practice embedded in the common language and actions of teachers and students during writer's workshop. Earlier in the year, I had taught an explicit protocol for sharing in large group, which enables students to share writing with minimal teacher direction. Therefore, student decisions about how to participate during this social practice are based on the big "D" Discourse of sharing time. Students will share a written text, will ask for two or three questions or comments if they want a response from peers about their writing and then will pick the next volunteer to share with the group. In post-hoc field notes from transcript 20017, students share ideas chosen from their journals to develop into a published story through process writing. In transcript 20063, students share interesting ideas about which they will write based on ideas from the ocean movie fieldtrip. The sharing protocol is not applied when students share during small group practices.

**Teacher-led small group conference.** Small group practices including me as a participant are conferences focused on organizing ideas for writing, spelling, sharing of student writing, responding to student writing and making revisions. Conferences with me are teacher initiated, as well as student initiated, events. I initiate conferences as I roam the class during independent writing time

and engage in individual informal conferences to check in with students and assist them when needed.

After modeling, a part of the planning phase for process writing, students work independently, brainstorming ideas about self-selected story topics on a thinking map. These ideas will later be developed into a published story through the process writing approach. In post-hoc field notes from transcript 20027 and 20028, I notice Peter is not writing ideas for his self-titled “rocket ship house” story. From my perspective, Peter seems to be having trouble coming up with ideas and I initiate a conference with him. I suggest he use the *Magic School Bus* stories in our classroom library as a mentor text to get ideas about how to tell his story about a “rocket ship house” adventure.

Student initiated conferences occur in small groups that include me as a participant. Students initiate a conference with the teacher for the purpose of sharing their writing or to get help with spelling. For example, as a part of the process writing approach, students choose a topic, brainstorm ideas related to the topic on a thinking map and write a draft of their story. Once the students write their draft, I ask them to share their work and to get a response from others as they consider making revisions. In post-hoc field notes from transcript 20052, my participation as the teacher in the group impacts the way Andrew and Luke make decisions about how to participate in this event. I make decisions about

turn-taking and about boundaries for participation, such as suggesting that Andrew respond to Luke's story when he finishes reading it.

Andrew and Luke approach me to conduct their revision conference. Luke shares his story about his dog, Cocoa. In the story he tells that his dog licked his dad and that the incident was funny. After Luke finishes reading his story aloud, I wait to determine if the boys will naturally start discussing the story. However, they do not and I prompt by asking Andrew if he has any feedback. Andrew suggests that Luke should tell how his dog is funny. Luke is confused with Andrew's suggestion to alter his story when he has already explained that it is funny when his dog licks his dad on the face. I wonder if Andrew's suggestion for revision is based on my prompting instead of an authentic interest in the story.

At this point I begin asking a few questions to get more information about Luke's dog story. Then I make a suggestion to change the organization of ideas so they connect and flow in a more logical order for the reader to follow. Luke responds by saying he would rather not make changes because he did not want to erase. Andrew never enters the conversation from the point that I began participating in the conference, except when the conference ends and Andrew says he wants to free-write.

**Independent small group conference.** Events not including me as a participant act as a social practice, because it changes the way students make decisions about how to participate. The way students participate when I am not

present seems to be related to the fluid nature and process by which members of the group constructed, reconstructed and contested who establishes power in the group. When I participate in small group sharing, the cultural expectation for the location of power is with me or is shared among the group. However, when I am not a participant, power is “up for grabs” and students enact their identity accordingly. For example, in post-hoc field notes from transcript 20078, Luke and Andrew participate with two other boys, Colby and Peter, in a small group non-teacher event. The four boys share their writing related to research about sharks. During the event, there is a constant challenge for power in the group between Colby, who was sharing his writing, and Andrew. While Colby is sharing, he is continually marginalized by Andrew and Luke through language such as “you’re done,” or interruptions to Colby’s request for their attention as he shares.

As the analysis continues to develop by considering how the social practices during writing influence student identity and power relations, I will present the transcript of the above described event in more detail in the micro-analysis. Continued analysis will describe, from my perspective, student decision-making by Andrew, Luke, Colby and Peter during the non-teacher social practice that can be related to the larger corpus of data.

## **Strand 2: Student Decision-Making**

Strand 2 analysis provides multiple perspectives in relation to student decision-making. Data from post-hoc field notes and transcripts of the teacher's reflexive journal inform my perspective of student decision-making. Data from interview transcripts guide an analysis of decision-making from the student perspective. In Strand 2 results from both perspectives are presented and are followed by a description of how the perspectives compare.

### **Student Decision-making: Teacher Perspective**

The social practices which most impact student decision-making are the types of writing in which students will engage and the presence or absence of teacher participation in the social context of the event. Student decision-making during classroom writer's workshop, based on the type of writing and the teacher's participation, primarily relate to how students share and respond, as well as how they decide to construct text.

**Sharing and responding: Type of writing and agency.** The process through which students make decisions about how to share their writing is distinctly different and is related to the type of writing being shared. The two distinctions are observed by the decisions students make about sharing free-writing narratives from lived-through experiences as opposed to writing related to non-fiction research topics. When students make decisions about sharing personal narratives, they enact agency by reading the story or telling the story

using a storytelling structure. Students share writing related to non-fiction topics by making decisions based on word level accuracy with a focus on the “truth” related to the information.

***Non-fiction: Surface features and conventions.*** In transcript 20063, when returning to school after a fieldtrip to watch an ocean movie at a local theater, students share writing ideas related to the movie and to animals living in the ocean. Participation varies in the sharing of the event among the students. As noted in the reflective journal, those students seeking greater access to the big “D” Discourse of science make an explicit effort to “get it right” in response to the non-fiction topic. Those students seek non-fiction text pictures with which to refer as they talk about the ocean animals.

Also noted in the reflexive journal is the way in which students tend to focus on like topics when sharing related to non-fiction. The conversation around non-fiction topics becomes focused almost as if boundaries have been set for the topic of discussion. As each student takes his/her turn at speaking in the group discussion, decisions about what to share are based on a like topic boundary. For example, during the ocean animal discussion, sharing focuses on the ways ocean animals sometimes ate one another and on the different behaviors of the ocean animals. The discussion even changes into a debate when students pose their opinions related to whether or not sharks are harmful to humans.

When students share non-fiction text, they not only make decisions based on getting the facts right, but also make decisions based on word-level accuracy, as evidenced in decisions to share by reading non-fiction writing word-for-word from their text. Student agency is located in the “truth” through sharing accurate information connected to the meaning of the non-fiction topic.

When reading word-for-word, some students struggle to get the words correct. Power is located in word level accuracy and, as a writer, there is little ownership or connection to the content. In transcript 20078 (See Table 8 on the following page.) Colby shares his writing about sharks in small group. His decision to focus on word-level accuracy is evidenced as most of his turns at talk during the event are spent struggling to read the word “sharks” written on his paper or to request help from the group to problem-solve. Later, I will discuss how Colby’s decisions to focus on word-level accuracy and not on content impact the identity he enacted and the identity others impose on him.

Table 8:  
*Transcript 20078 - Non-fiction: Surface Features and Conventions*  
*(Colby Sharing About Sharks.)*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
50	Colby	*What is this word?*	Asks in a segmented voice. Uses language that is meant to seem comical.
51	Luke	*I don't know*	
52 53 54	Colby	* You wrote that * *I don't know* S-h-a -r-	Colby spells out word as a strategy to solve the word.
55	Peter	r -a-s	Peter joins Colby in word solving.
56		It's suppose to be sharks	
57		You just forgot uh s	Peter notices and names error.
58 59	Colby Peter	Oh Or shot	Peter and Colby discuss unknown Word.
60	Colby	Hot shot	
61	All boys	XXXX	
62	Colby	O.K.	
63		It's suppose to be s	Colby disagrees with Peter.
64		Wait	
65		s-h-* o*-g ll	

**Narrative: Strong agency.** From my perspective, when students, including Colby, share writing related to their own lived-through experiences, student agency and identity is much different. As a result, decisions about how to share change. Writing about one's own lived-through experiences connotes power for the writer. When Colby shares about his dirt bike in transcript 20052

(See Table 9 on the following page), the way he participates is guided by his access to the discourse of the event he writes about and by his ability to personally connect to the words he writes on the page. As he continues to share, Colby becomes a storyteller by adding to the written story by verbally describing additional details indicated in lines 131–137. Changes in the way Colby participates, based on the type of writing as it relates to his identity and power, will be described in more detail in findings from the micro-analysis.

Table 9:  
*Transcript 20052 - Narrative: Strong Agency*  
*(Colby Sharing Free-writing Narrative About Dirt Bike.)*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	
130	Colby	I like my dirt bike and my dirt bike goes fast	Colby reads words on page to share his work. Talks about rest of story.	
131		It does		
132		Sometimes my brother and sister		
133		Sometime they go and they will fall down		
134		Off of it		
135		But my dad gets on his dirt bike and goes. And gets on it		
136		My dad his dirt bike goes faster than mine		
137		So he can catch my brother or sister		
138	Teacher	O.K. So do you want some feedback?		Teacher marks the end of Colby's storytelling and asks him if he wants a response.
139	Alice	You should write down like what your XXX and how you ride it and what it looks like		Alice responds by suggesting that Colby give more details about what his bike looks like.
140	Teacher	What it looks like it I love the way you put it	Affirms Alice in her response.	
141	Alice	Yeah XXX		
142	Teacher	And she said maybe a map of where you ride it	Reminds Colby of Alice's feedback.	
143	Colby	This weekend my dad's He's gonna take my dirt bike apart and get new parts for it	Continues to add to his bike story.	
144		So it's a dirt bike		
145		It's just a bike but it looks like a dirt bike		
146	Alice	Maybe you should write that down	Connects what he is saying to what his story is about.	

**Teacher presence.** As evidenced in the previous transcripts, students make decisions about sharing and responding based whether or not I am a participant in the writing event. The difference in student responses are noted in the dialogue of student participation in reviewing writing and making changes, both when I participate and when I do not participate.

**Teacher power.** During a small group conference with Luke and Andrew, (See Table 10 on the following pages.) student decision-making relates to location of the teacher as the power figure. Luke and Andrew participate with one another as they revise Luke's story about his dog Cocoa. Luke and Andrew's decisions about participation are guided by the source of knowledge and power in the group. The location of knowledge and power is uncontested and assigned to me, the teacher, and recognized in the way I decide how the group will interact by setting boundaries for the conversation, as well as whose turn it is to talk. In line 14 my role as leader in the group is asserted by asking students to discontinue adding additional information, to stop and share, then later to make their revisions. As the conference continues in lines 19-23, I continue to control turns at talk between Andrew and Luke, as well as to set the boundaries for the conversation related to feedback on their writing topics. In line 26, I asserted power by forcing Andrew to respond to Luke's story. Andrew responds by saying, "Uhh, you could have wrote how it was funny." Luke already has mentioned in line 25 that Cocoa licks his dad. After non-responsiveness by

Luke to Andrew's suggestion, I initiate an explanation to clarify. As the conference continues, the dialogue is dominated by my providing Luke unsolicited suggestions about how to better organize the ideas in his story. He responds by saying in line 47, "I don't want to erase it." Andrew does not enter the conversation again until the conference ends on line 55 and he says, "XXX need to free write."

Table 10  
*Transcript 20052: Teacher Power*  
*(Luke and Andrew Engage in Peer Review and Editing.)*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
11	Teacher	O.K. Who's ready?	Begin discussion.
12	Male student	XXX	
13	Teacher	Oh you are still writing?	Acknowledgement that one student is not ready to start.
14		Why don't we stop and just let	Teacher wants students to stop doing revisions on the spot and wait until end of conference.
15		Listen Andrew	
16		Instead of taking time to write, let's just get feedback and go back to our seats and decide what we are going to add	
17		That way we can go ahead and get the discussion moving	
18	Andrew	I've already read	Interrupts teacher to tell her what he has already done.
19	Teacher	OK. You read yours	Teacher restates Andrew's comment.
20		Do you want anymore feedback?	Teacher asks Andrew to decide if he needs to continue his turn to share.
21		No more or do you want some more?	Andrew does not respond so Teacher asks again.
22	Andrew	I have it already XXXX	Andrew responds.
23	Teacher	Luke, are you ready to read?	Teacher calls on other person in group to share.
24	Luke	Yes	Wants to share his writing.

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(Continued)

Table 10 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
25		My dad was holding Cocoa I was glad that Cocoa slept in the backyard in the kennel and Cocoa licked my dad.....it was funny	Decides to read words on page instead of share by telling about his story.
26	Teacher	Do you have feedback for him?	Teacher initiates discussion for feedback.
27	Andrew	Uhh You could have wrote how it was funny	Andrew gives feedback about content of Luke's writing.
28	Teacher	Well	Teacher comments to initiate more discussion.
29	Luke	I don't know	Luke is confused about response from Andrew
30	Teacher	I think he meant it was funny when he licked him	Clarifies comment.
31		Right?	Asks Luke for confirmation.
32		Tell me why you like it when she sleeps in the backyard	Questions about more specifics needed in story to understand.
33	Luke	Because umm... When she sleeps on me and stuff she always licks my face and stuff	Answers with specific example.
34		Because XXX me	
35	Teacher	So you prefer her?	Clarifies comment question.
36	Luke	Um... if she sleeps with me she licks XXXX	Continues explanation.
37	Teacher	Yeah I would add that for sure	Focuses on process of revisions as goal of conference.
38		So I am trying to figure out what the big idea of your story is	Connects conversation to "language" teacher has taught for process writing.
39		You said that...	Thinks aloud about content of Luke's story.

(Continued)

Table 10 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
40	Teacher	First you talk about how your dad holds her. Then you talk about how Cocoa slept in the back yard Then you go back to your dad and how Cocoa licked your dad on the face	
41	Luke		Giggles.
42	Teacher	So what I would do I would switch that around I would put all the stuff about your dad together and then the stuff about him sleeping in the backyard together Do you see how?	Teacher gives opinion.
43	Luke	You mean her	Luke displays a giggly disposition.
44	Teacher	I mean her	Clarifies statement.
45		You see what I am saying You see how you kinda have it all mixed up and you need the things that go together in order?	
46		So if I were you I would fix that up a little bit	
47	Luke	I don't want to erase it	Any change to his writing means erasing.
48	Teacher	Well do you want to get a new piece of yellow paper and just rewrite it?	Alternate suggestions.
49	Luke	O.K.	Agrees to revise.
50	Teacher	I mean that will be fine if that's what you want to do Or you can write it on the bottom You have space at the bottom to write it the way that you want it to be	Gives permission to Luke.

Table 10 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
51		Do ya'll want anymore feedback?	Questions to see if boys want to continue with response to Luke's writing.
52		Now you can take the feedback or you don't have to O.K.	Repositions power so Luke has power over his own writing.
53		Is there anything else we need to talk about?	Questions about what to discuss next.
54		O.K. Go make your revisions if you want and then	Instructions on what to do.
55	Andrew	I XXX need to free write	Not wanting to make revisions but to free write.

**Fluid power.** I find that when I am not a participant, the location of power continues to guide student participation. Power is defined as a product to be established and exerted over others. During peer conferencing, power is fluid and changing. Depending on the enacted and assigned identities of the participants, power is contested, destabilized and reconstructed throughout peer conferencing events. Through contextual cues of voice and boundary evidenced by interruptions and through students initiating turns at talk, the process of power and agency is made visible among student participants.

The writer's enacted identity, and resulting power relations, connects to the type of writing being shared. For example, when Colby is sharing about sharks with Andrew, Peter and Luke, the way he participates is based on how the members of his group assign value to him and respond to him. Initially Colby's power and participation is based on his own enacted identity as speaker. However, his recognition by others as a less skilled learner and Colby's desire to be a group member among the other boys changes power relations throughout the event.

**Construction of text and big "D" Discourse.** Students make decisions about constructing text related to the type of writing they are sharing. When students write about personal lived-through experiences, decisions about how to construct text are based on their own affective driven knowledge about the event and their word choices are based on their own unique discourse patterns.

However, when students write related to research about non-fiction topics, decisions about how to construct text are driven by cognitive--in the head--knowledge based on truth from places they value as reliable resources outside themselves, such as books.

Word choice is based on the content discourse of science and limited by student access to the academic discourse of the non-fiction topic about which they are writing. When students are asked to read through the various facts they have collected about ocean animals in event 20068 and then to classify them into like categories, I limit their participation in the process. I move the students from writing exercises related to narratives to writing exercises related to non-fiction without taking into consideration the processes involved in negotiating the academic big "D" Discourse of science. After reflecting on the writing event, I realize the students need concrete ways of thinking within an academic discourse before they can move to abstract thinking exercises such as categorizing ideas for writing about non-fiction topics (Gee, 2001).

***Teacher presence and use of academic discourse.*** Patterns associated with student decision-making and with the construction of written text relate more to socio-cultural factors such as student/teacher power relations than to cognitive processes. For example, during whole group mini-lessons that includes me as a participant, student decisions about word choice during

sentence construction or about organizing ideas during shared writing are guided by a shared sense of purpose among the participants.

In transcript 20019 (Table 11), I model the process of gathering ideas before writing, using a thinking map as part of a process writing approach. The topic I use as an illustration is an embarrassing moment for me during a high school choir concert. During whole group construction of text, above the surface, power is shared among all participants, as evidenced by the way students readily engage in the writing process. Power is also noticeable in the process as evidenced by the use of academic Discourse related to the use of figurative language writing strategies, such as use of similes.

In transcript 20019 of the writing event, I begin by using the academic big “D” Discourse of writing in line 81 and direct students to share descriptions using onomatopoeia (series of words using repetition of identical sounds). As the dialogue continues, students begin to engage in the pre-writing process by reading as I write the words “voice” and “crack” on the thinking map. Next, in lines 95 and 96, I return to the academic Discourse of writing by indicating my plan to describe the “voice crack” using a simile because, “ I want to make a comparison of the way that my voice sounded when it cracked to something with which you can relate.” After I model the sound in line 100 by saying, “Ah, ah, ah,” and simulating my cracking voice, the students begin to do the same. From lines 101 -112, a collaboration begins and students begin to mimic the cracking

voice sound along with me as they decide what words to choose in describing the “voice crack.” In line 112 Terry concludes it should be written, “like the screech of a duck.” However, in line 115, I change her words slightly and write “the quack of a duck.” (Table 11 begins on the following page.)

In this whole group shared writing even, the construction of the text was a collaboration among all participants. The natural flow of the conversation and high level of engagement among student participants reveals power as shared among all participants above the surface. However, power below the surface locates power in the use of the big “D” academic discourse of writing using figurative language as a strategy for constructing text. I use academic language, such as simile, to help students understanding how to use figurative language as a tool. My intention was to explicitly use the big “D” academic discourse of writing in a way that models what students might use in their own future writing. However, the way in which I only accept suggestions for text construction based on the use of simile asserted power over student processes.

Table 11

*Transcript 20019 - Teacher Presence and Use of Academic Discourse*

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
77	Teacher	Are you in the auditorium right now and can you see all the students in the whole school sitting there?	Teacher asks students to pretend they are in the auditorium.
78		Right?	
79		Then, I'm gonna think about something –	Teacher uses academic Discourse.
80		and I want to use ll a good ll onomatopoeia word ll	
81		I want to use an onomatopoeia word to describe something	
82	Students	XXXXX	
83	Teacher	I want I need a, OOOOoo Somebody's really	Teacher hears students making noises indicating they understand the concept of onomatopoeia.
84		And I'm gonna use the word –	Teacher is thinking aloud for a word.
85	Alice	XXXX	Alice contributes idea.
86	Teacher	Voice	Teacher finishes thought and does not acknowledge Alice's comment as co-writer.
87	Boy	Oh, like this	Not directly engaged in shared writing.
90		I'm gonna write, "Voice"	Teacher restates what will be written.
91	Teacher and students	Crack	Teacher writes as she talks so students become engaged and learn about her embarrassing moment.
92		Now, you know the word "cracked" is like a sound, right?	Teacher connects what happened to the idea of using words to represent sounds (onomatopoeia).
93		But I want to describe how that crack sounds	

(Continued)

Table 11 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
94		so I'm gonna use another strategy that writers use	Teacher begins and then pauses for students to fill in the rest of her sentence.
95	Students	XXXX onomatopoeia	Several students finish the teacher's thought.
96	Teacher	called a simile	Teacher uses academic Discourse.
97	Teacher	I want to make a comparison of the way my voice sounded when it cracked, to something you can relate	Teacher defines simile.
98		So, I'm gonna say, when my voice cracked	Teacher thinks aloud of a simile to describe the way her voice sounded when it cracked.
99		it sounded like this, It went	
100		Aah, Aah, Aah	Teacher starts singing and then makes a sound similar to what her voice sounded like when it cracked.
101		Like that	
102		So, how can I say that?	Asks students for help with writing.
103	Peter	No, it was just XXXX	
104	Students	Ah, Ah, Ah	Students respond with screeching sounds like the teacher made.
105	Teacher	How can I--what word can I use? It sounded like a	Teacher asks for help with writing.
106	Terry	Ah, oh, ah	Continues to make noises overlapping with teacher talk.
107	Students	XXXX	Lots of students respond with sounds.
108	Teacher	A screech	Teacher thinking aloud.
109	Students	XXXXX	Continued student responses.
110	Teacher	The screech, a screech or like the screech of a	Teacher starts the simile sentence, "like the screech of a".
111	Students	XXXXX	Student offer suggestions.
112	Terry	A duck	Suggests students write "like the screech of a duck".
113	Teacher	the screech of a duck –	Teacher confirms suggestion.

(Continued)

Table 11 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making
114		Ooo That's a good one Ooo.	
115		Oh, the quack of a duck	Teacher changes what Terry says from "the screech of a duck" to "the quack of a duck."
116		That's a good one	
117		It sounded like a duck quack	

To further examine student decision-making, I shift perspectives. I describe student decision-making from the student's perspective, rooted in the analysis of individual interview data.

**Student Decision-making: Student Perspective**

Common themes in student language during individual student interviews describe student decision-making. The themes in student responses connect to: 1) how students define writing; 2) how students decide what to write; and 3) how students describe the ways I help them during writing.

**Writing defined by conventions and big "D" academic discourse.**

Students define writing based on conventions such as spelling words correctly and as expressing feelings in written text. Jacob says, "Writing is the words. Checking the words if it's wrong or if you need help with the words." Alice defines good writers by saying they, "express their feelings on paper." She continues, adding that writing helps because "you can share it (your ideas and feelings) with the world." Ella states that writing "lets you talk with other people."

Students use the academic discourse of writing per the teacher's modeling during large group lessons, while exploring their definitions of writing. Candace says, "Good writers know how to use capitals and periods. They use onomatopoeia and I have one here." Alice continues, "You should think about your writing. You should dig deep for ideas." "Digging deep for ideas" is a phrase I use often in modeling the development of an idea by brainstorming or "digging deeper" for details of a story.

When discussing students' difficulties in the writing process, the most common responses relates to word construction. Ally, a student referred to special programs for dyslexia at the time, states, "It can be challenging about the words. The words are real challenging. I write my own stuff and, when I look back at it, I forget my writing. I think this is someone else's."

Really surprising to me is the language students use to describe their processes for problem-solving an unknown word. Time and time again, students report they "sound it out." This is a phrase I purposely never use when working with students during writing or reading. I associate that phrase with a way of thinking that defines writing--and reading for that matter--solely based on word level knowledge. I believe "sounding out" is a handicapping approach that keeps students from understanding or exploring multiple ways of approaching an unknown word other than just by the sounds. Hearing students use that phrase repeatedly in describing strategies in writing exercises leads me to decide: 1)

“sound it out” is part of a cultural way of talking about any process related to word reading or writing, and 2) during mini-lesson instruction, I am focusing too much on correct spelling.

**Topics related to lived-through experiences.** Students report that ideas for writing topics are primarily connected to their own lived-through experiences, how they want to relate to others or how they are feeling. Students say they decide on topics related to what they do, think, feel or like. Luke adds, “I just think about stuff that’s funny to me or not.” He continues by sharing how he likes to play baseball and how he can hit a homerun. Paige explains, “Usually, I get it from what I am going to do. So when you write you think about things that are gonna happen or about your background knowledge.” Lucy says she writes about what she does and tells how she thinks about her activities during the summer, horseback riding or going on a trip. Andrew says, “I think of what I have already seen and write about it.” Jay connects his latest writing by saying, “I really like dogs and the fire house (people) by my house takes care of our black lab.”

Other students choose topics based on what their friends write about or on what they think will be of interest to others. Lucy states, “I like to write things that are interesting... things that people will be interested in.” Candace tells that she likes to “write with her friend and write about the same topics.” Candace

continues to explain that she uses her writing to form a club and the club writes about how she and her club members pretend to be dogs at recess.

Some students discuss how their writing is connected to the way they feel at particular times. Ella said, "I write about something I did or something I'm feeling about." Grace suggests students should write about "what you feel or what you've learned and you can share." Ally shares that her ideas "just came to me" and some ideas are things that upset her.

**Teacher's role related to content and conventions.** Students indicate they feel my role as the teacher during writing exercises is either as a resource for helping spell words correctly or as a resource for helping with the content by assisting with the generation of ideas or by asking questions. For example, Luke and Ally explain how they get words they need on their orange word cards. Luke states "If I needed help with a word, the teacher wrote the word I need on my card." Multiple students add additional comments related to my support of their writing in helping spell words. When asked what they do to figure out a tricky word or how I assist them with spelling words correctly, many students respond, "she helps us sound the words out."

At the same time that students identify me as a resource for spelling, they also identify me as a resource for assistance in developing content for their writing. Candace states that I help her by "giving me words and the lessons on the carpet." She states that the lessons help her "organize my thinking." Paige

adds that the lessons, such as those teaching how to organize a narrative story in sequential order using the “five finger story” method, help her write stories with a beginning, a middle and an end. Grace and Alice both explain how I help them with story ideas and “how to do it.” Grace goes on to explain that to her personally the “how to do it” means assisting with expressing “how it feels or how it makes you think.” Kristi simply states, “She helps me think about the writing and she fixes it to make it more true.”

Students repeatedly mention my teacher role as one who asks questions about the writing process. Paige tells about my wandering around the classroom and having “(students) read to you and you asked questions.” When asked how the questions help, Paige explains that questions help her understand her ideas as being generated from her background knowledge.

### **Parallelisms and Differences Between Teacher and Students**

Describing similarities and differences of student decision-making processes from the students’ perspectives (interview themes) and from my perspective (themes from transcripts) offers me the opportunity to understand how institutional and theoretical models for writing relate to my tacit and overt theories for teaching writing and thus impact student decision-making, agency and identity. My overt theories for teaching writing relate to ideals and theories about culture and power adopted during my involvement in graduate school programs. As a writing teacher, I value the ability to help students express

personal voices in writing. However, as evidenced in the data, I see that my tacit theories, driven by the high-stakes curriculum-driven model for writing, have power over my ideology and over my theories that emphasize the value of culture and the power for writers. As a result, my students' perceptions about what is valued in writing reflect my tacit theories--those that are curriculum-driven--not my overt theories of power and identity, which I had thought mattered most in teaching writing.

There appears to be a constant disparity between my overt theories of culture and power and my tacit theories driven by the school's perception of effective teaching strategies for writing. One of the disparities for the students and me relates to the type of writing in which we engage during classroom writer's workshop (information writing, process writing or free-writing). My overt theories of how students should write and the students' own personal interests are both involved in free-writing exercises. Although I had thought there was topic choice by students, and therefore power for students within process and research writing, my tacit theories connect to beliefs about the power of the curriculum model. The curriculum model dominates my instructional decisions in ways which give power to the curriculum requirements and not to the students. Additionally, during process writing students choose their own story topics, but do not control participation in the on-going revision and editing process, leaving them feeling disempowered and disconnected from their own writing processes.

Students develop agency when they get to decide on their topics in free-writing. They know if they are free-writing they have choice and power as a writer. Over and over again, students talk about deciding on topics as they relate to lived-through experiences in their lives. That power is stripped from them when they write purely information text. However, in free-writing exercises, student agency and identity more closely match my ideals. Additionally, when writing relates to research, feelings of empowerment in the writing processes is removed because of the systematic approach (using thinking maps and categorizing content related discourse) required of this kind of information writing. During the ocean animal research, students choose an animal to research. However, my decisions about how to teach writing related to this research exercise is driven by the curriculum model for writing instruction.

The tension between my overt and tacit theories impacts my teaching and impacts student processes. The tension can best be described metaphorically as we consider the ocean activity. Above the surface is my ideology of culture and power. Below the surface lie all the requirements of the school and district curriculum model. The school and district curriculum invokes power and creates a title-wave that rises above the surface over my ideal of what I feel students need in writing instruction.

### **Strand 3 Analysis: Identity and Power Relations**

In Strand 3 a micro-ethnographic approach to discourse analysis allows a more in-depth description of student identity formation and power relations. In Strand 3 the relationship between identity formation, power relations and student decision-making across social practices (types of writing and teacher participation) is revealed through changes in participation for both teacher and students.

Bloome (2005) and his colleagues define three models of power: 1) power as product; 2) power as process; and 3) power as caring relations. Power as product defines power as a quantifiable commodity that can be given or taken away. Power as process is viewed as an interpretive framework. For example, there is power in knowing the process for sharing work during writer's workshop or power in the application in the steps of process writing. "Power as process is the naturalization of a discourse and a culture," (Bloome, 2005). Power as caring relations involves power with others that brings people together, such as the relationships between a teacher and students which make up a classroom community. Power as caring relations is viewed as the pervading atmosphere within the classroom community. That commodity and the pervading atmosphere therein must be one which supports mutual trust and generates questions which help students better understand themselves, others and their community.

Exemplars of one specific student's change in participation across social practices is presented in this research to describe identity formation and power relations related to the larger cultural practices in the classroom. Two of the ten micro-analyzed transcripts are presented for the analysis of identity formation and power relations.

This micro-analysis focuses primarily on the interactions between Colby, me and his peers (Andrew, Luke, Peter, and Alice) in relation to the social practices of the classroom. The events presented occur at two separate times during classroom writer's workshop. In one event Colby is sharing what he wrote about sharks with Andrew, Luke and Peter, as part of his ocean animal research project. In another event that is part of process writing activities, Colby shares his dirt bike story and gets responses from me and from Alice for making revisions. Strand 3 analyses reveal identity and power relations related to decision-making as defined through the influence of teacher participation on the location of power and the type of writing shared.

### **Teacher as Non-participant: Power as Fluid**

When I am not a group participant, power transforms naturally. Depending on the identity of participants, power is contested, reconstructed and destabilized. Through contextual cues of voice and boundary-making evidenced by interruptions and through identity of students initiating topics of talk, the process of power and agency is made visible among student participants.

The writer's identity formation, and resulting power relations, connects to the type of writing being shared. When Colby is sharing about sharks in transcript 20078 (Table 12) with Andrew, Peter and Luke, his changing identity is based on how the members of his group assign value to him and respond to him. Initially Colby's power and participation is established as he enacts the identity of speaker. However, his positioning by others as a less skilled learner and Colby's desire to be a group member among the other boys changes power relations throughout the event.

Colby shares his writing about sharks in small group. During this small group interaction in which I am not a participant, student participation is related to the fluid nature of who establishes power in the group. Power is defined as a product to be established and exerted over others. Students enact their individual identities accordingly.

Transcript 20078 consists of four boys (Colby, Andrew, Luke and Peter) sharing writing related to research about sharks as they enact both individual and group identities related to power in the group. There are some "givens" when it comes to identity and power within this group. Three of the boys (Andrew, Peter and Luke) have previously established group membership on the playground and outside of the school setting. Throughout the year Colby seeks to establish himself as a group member with Alexander, Luke and Peter on the playground and in the classroom. For example, on one occasion during classroom writer's

workshop Colby asks Andrew what he is going to write about and then makes his topic choice similar to Andrew's response. The other boys, Luke and Peter, seek the attention and friendship of Andrew throughout the year and, therefore, place Andrew in a position of power among group members. At times Peter is not included by Alexander and Luke as part of their group, either on the playground or in the classroom. Peter is so upset at times about the changing dynamics of the friendship that his mother approaches me about the friendship issue and, ultimately, the three boys meet with the school counselor to address these issues and attempt to resolve the problems.

In transcript 20078 (Table 12) Colby's decision to focus on word-level accuracy is evidenced by observations of his turns at talk during the event that are spent struggling to read the word "sharks" written on his paper. Colby's decisions to focus on word-level accuracy and not on content impact the identity he exhibits and the identity imposed on him by others.

Colby's identity changes during the course of the interaction, from assertive speaker to struggling reader to one seeking group membership. Initially, Colby enacts the identity as the speaker and begins trying to read his writing about sharks. In line 25 and 26 Andrew asserts his power by trying to control Colby's turn at talk and says for a second time "O.K. You're done." At this point Colby resists being positioned as a non-participant and verbally addresses all three boys. In lines 27-33 he pleads for the boys to stop and listen to him.

None of the boys respond to Colby's pleas. As the three boys participate in a game-like dialogue, they add, "I hate this group." Colby continues to try to read the word "shark." However, his identity begins to shift when he shows some vulnerability or feelings of defeat in line 49. He says, "O.K." as if admitting defeat and takes up the identity as non-speaker (non-person) imposed on him by the boys through their lack of attention to him as the reader. Colby's enacted identity continues to evolve. In line 50 Colby attempts to gain access to the group--all of whom are acting silly and giggling--by requesting help in a comical, segmented voice. In line 50 Colby asks, "What- is- this- word?" However, his attempts to gain access to the group are rejected when Luke responds immediately in a sarcastic tone by saying, "I don't know. You wrote that." By line 66 Colby takes up the identity imposed on him by saying, "O.K." as if to imply "O.K., you win." After this statement, he quickly shows the photograph he printed off the internet of a shark, acknowledging his turn to talk is over.

The situated identity of Peter is transforming throughout the writing event. He vacillates as "teacher of Colby" and "group member with Andrew and Luke." In line 6 Peter acknowledges Colby's participation and enacts the identity as Colby's helper or teacher, helping Colby reclaim his turn to speak and recognize the words he has written about sharks. Peter acknowledges Colby when he says in line 13, "I don't know where I'm at." Peter says, "I got it. Right here." Peter and Colby continue to interact in the same teacher/student roles until line 23.

Peter begins to take more interest in the parallel game-like, giggling conversation of Andrew and Luke. Andrew starts a game-like interaction pattern in lines 34 during which Luke and Peter repeat, "I hate this group, etc." In line 40 Peter ends the interactional pattern by agreeing that he, too, hates the group by saying, "I do a hundred." By line 55 Peter enacts the teacher identity again. Colby requests help from Luke and the request is rejected. At this point Peter shifts his allegiance. He takes on the role of word-solver, along with Colby, and they read together. Peter follows Colby's lead in line 54 by saying the letters in the word on the paper in the same pattern of speech that Colby uses. Then Peter continues to position Colby as a credible writer in line 57 by saying, "You just forgot an 's'." Use of "you just" implies that Colby is a person who simply made a mistake and not an incompetent writer. Colby and Peter continue to problem-solve the word to line 60. Peter then starts talking with Andrew and Luke again. Colby quickly says, "O.K." and ends his turn.

Andrew repeatedly attempts to exercise power and control over the group. In line 5, Andrew begins to enact his identity as the power figure by setting boundaries for participation. Andrew says, "He's done," implying that Colby's turn is over and imposing marginalization of Colby's participation within the group. When Andrew sees that Peter is helping Colby, in line 11, Andrew makes a comment about Peter, "He doesn't get anything." The use of the word "get"

means Peter doesn't "get" that Colby is not worth helping and Peter doesn't seem to "get" that Colby is not part of their group.

Luke and Andrew establish a group membership throughout the event. They decide who participates in the group and allow Peter to come in and out of group membership during the event. It appears Andrew gains momentum by line 23, when Peter joins in their group dialogue. With everyone apparently under Andrew's control, he then tells Colby for a second time in line 25-26, "O.K., you're done." This response seems to imply, "I have everyone on my team now and you can stop." Colby continues to reject being positioned as a non-person. He responds, "No! Gee. Can ya'll hurry up?" Colby continues in line 32, "I can't start because ya'll were talking!" The boys position Colby as a non-person by not responding to his plea for recognition. Next, Andrew's final attempt to exercise power and control immediately follows Colby's plea. Andrew begins the "I hate this group game" response in line 34.

Luke enacts his identity as a group member with Andrew throughout the entire event. Luke first shows his allegiance to Andrew in line 12 by responding "Wo ho!" as a way of participating with Andrew in the parallel conversation they are having while Colby and Peter work together. Then in line 46 Luke shows his continued alignment with Andrew by repeating the same statement Andrew made earlier, saying, "You're done." Luke finally solidifies his positioning of Colby as a non-group member and a non-person by his immediate and sarcastic response

to Colby's attempt for help in line 51-53 stating, "I don't know. You wrote that."

(Table 12 starts on the following page.)

Table 12

*Transcript 20078 – Teacher as Non-participant: Power as Fluid  
(Colby, Andrew, Luke & Peter – power within group.)*

121

<b>Line No.</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Message Unit</b>	<b>Decision-making</b>	<b>Nonverbal Behavior</b>	<b>Identity Signaled in Message Units</b>	<b>Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity</b>	<b>Uptake Across IU's</b>
03	Colby	*Guys!*	Colby wants to take a turn to share with the group. He is trying to get the group's attention.		Colby claims identity as speaker and other persons in group as the audience.	Notes Intonation of voice and naming of boys.	
04		*Where are you?*	Colby accepts Peter's offer for help.	Peter helps Colby find his place on his paper.	Peter as co-reader with Colby.	Questions Peter about where to start reading text on page.	
05	Andrew	*He's done*	Colby needs to stop trying to share.	Andrew makes statement to Luke while Peter and Colby continue to look at Colby's writing.	Colby reacts as non-participant in group share.	Andrew makes bold statement that Colby's turn is finished.	No uptake from others in the group that Colby's turn is over.

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
06	Peter	Wait Wait			Peter acknowledges Colby as participant and identifies himself as Colby's helper.	Uses questioning and turn-taking between Peter and Colby while problem-solving text.	
07		Where are you?			Peter acknowledges Colby as speaker. He is teacher.	Peter asks Colby where he is trying to read from in his text.	Peter uptake of role as teacher.
08		Um You gotta XXX that word			Peter as teacher.	Uses imperative statement.	Peter uptake of role as teacher.
09	Colby	Sharks	Colby reads aloud from paper.		Colby as speaker.		
10		*Peter *	Colby stops reading aloud.		Peter as teacher.	Colby boldly requests Peter's help.	

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
11	Andrew	He doesn't get anything	Colby needs to stop trying to share.	Peter interacts with Colby. Andrew directs comment to Luke as they carry on separate conversations , while Peter and Colby work together.	Colby viewed person not worthy of help.	Sarcastic statement infers Colby is not smart.	No uptake by Colby or others of unworthy participant.
12	Luke	Woo ho!					
13	Colby	I don't know where I'm at			Colby reacts as speaker struggling to participate.	Admits failure in attempt to read writing.	
14	Peter	I got it			Peter continues role as helper and willing teacher.	Statement of assurance to Colby that he will help.	Uptake of Peter as teacher.

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
16	Andrew	I'll start	Colby needs to stop sharing. Andrew asserts his desire to take a turn.		Andrew identifies himself as person of power in the group.	Andrew asserts his power by deciding to take his turn to share, knowing that Colby is not finished sharing.	Uptake by Andrew as source of power.  No others in the group confirm his position.
17	Colby	Sharks IIII	Colby continues sharing even though he is having difficulty.		Colby reacts as speaker and struggles to participate.	Pauses in speech indicate sharing personal writing about Discourse of sharks, topic choice driven by teacher -chosen ocean animal research project, has limited Colby's ability to participate.	
18		*Please don't do that *			Colby reacts as speaker.	Colby asserts his identity as speaker by assertive comment to Andrew, tries to overtly interrupt his participation in the group.	Uptake of Colby as speaker

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
23	Luke, Peter, Andrew	XXXXXXXXXX XX ( <i>Three boys giggling, talking, making noises.</i> )	Peter, Andrew, Luke participate in a discussion that does not include Colby as a participant.		Group identifies Peter, Andrew, and Luke as a social group of which Colby is not a member.	Talk and giggling does not relate in any way to Colby's writing or topic.	Uptake of Peter, Luke and Andrew as group members.
24	Colby	*Come on already here*	Colby asserts identity as speaker.		Colby becomes speaker and as such is in power position. Strong voice tone and demand for attention from boys.	Frames message as a directive to get other's attention.	Continues uptake of Colby as speaker and in power position.
25	Andrew	O.K.			Boys stop giggling.		
26		You're done	Colby's turn ends.		Andrew attains position of power over group members.	Andrew attempts to end Colby's turn to speak, using sarcastic tone of voice.	Uptake of Andrew as power figure in group.

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
27	Colby	*No* II	Colby protests and continues to try sharing with the group.		Colby resists being positioned as non-participant.	Colby speaks in a strong tone saying "no" as a way to protest the imposed identity of non-participant.	
28		*Gee* II			Colby is viewed as non-person in the group.		
29		Can ya'll hurry up and XXX	Colby seeks group membership.		Colby is viewed as non-member of the group, but who is seeking membership.	Colby's asks a question, but really means it as a demand, revealing his attempt to avoid conflict and to obtain membership with the boys.	Colby continues as non-group member.
30	Luke Andrew Peter	No. XXXX <i>(overlapping inaudible response)</i>					
31	Colby	*Yes*	Colby seeks his turn to speak.		Colby becomes speaker.		

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
33		*O.K. Stop it Ya'll*	Colby continues to seek his turn to share.	Boys do not respond and are mumbling.	Colby viewed as non-member of group.	Lack of response to Colby's request for a turn is noted.	Continues uptake with Colby as speaker
34	Andrew	I hate this group ( <i>giggles</i> )			Andrew as power figure in group allows him to make bold judgments.	Notes sarcastic statement about shark ocean group.	Continues uptake of Andrew as leader of group.
35	Colby	XXX on	Colby responds to Andrew's bold statement.		Colby's threat to Andrew's attempts for power over others is noted.	Colby is the only one in the group who has an immediate response to Andrew's statement.	Colby rejects Andrew as power figure.
36	Andrew	I hate this group	Repeats his statement.		Andrew as power seeker over others.	Attempt by Andrew to gain power and alliance from other boys to follow his lead.	

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
37	Luke	I do too.	Mimics statement and shows agreement.		Luke is viewed as follower and Andrew as leader.	Repeating Andrew's statement is a way of saying , " I agree with you and I am in alliance with you, and not with Colby."	
38	Peter	I do two	Mimics statement and shows his agreement.		Peter as follower.	Peter seeks group membership with Andrew and Luke.	Uptake of Peter as group member.
39	Andrew	*I do three*	Restates previous statements, adding his agreement.		Andrew takes up power role among group of boys.	Andrew repeats statement, using game-like tone, to imply he is the leader of the "game" being played.	Uptake of Andrew as power figure over others.
40	Peter	I do a hundred	Responds even more profoundly in same game-like comment.		Peter confirms group identity and cohesiveness.	Establishes group cohesiveness through game-like response to repetitive statements.	Group membership

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
46	Luke	You're done	Repeats statement made by Andrew in line 26.		Luke becomes a follower.	Acknowledges Andrew as power figure by repeating sarcastic statement by Andrew in line 26.	Continues uptake of Luke as follower
47	Colby	Sharks II	Continues attempt to share with group.	Reads from paper.	Colby is speaker, but others are not audience.	Colby reads with the understanding that he may not have an audience.	Uptake of Colby as speaker
48		The shark. III			Colby is struggling speaker.	Pauses and repeated tries at word indicate content related big "D" Discourse about sharks is not a type of language of which Colby has ownership and, therefore he is struggles to read even his own writing about this content related topic.	Colby continues as struggling speaker.

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
49	Colby	*O.K.*	Initiates need of support from group.		Colby becomes vulnerable learner.	"O.K.:" acknowledges self-doubt about ability to share or participate.	
50		*What is this word?*	Asks in a segmented voice; uses language that is meant to appear comical.	Colby points to paper.	Colby viewed as learner needing help.	Comical way of requesting support from the group reveals his trying to fit in with the tone of the conversation the boys are having. Tone infers less confidence than Colby was showing in his assertive voice early when demanding the groups' attention.	Uptake of Colby as vulnerable learner.
51	Luke	*I don't know*	Responding in degrading fashion implies he is an unwilling helper.		Luke viewed as unwilling helper.	Sarcastic tone implies unwillingness to help and not necessarily misunderstanding by Luke.	

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
52		* You wrote that*			Colby viewed as incompetent.	Colby is writer and should know what he has written.	
53		*I don't know*					
54	Colby	S-h-a -r-	Colby spells out word as a strategy to solve word recognition problem.		Colby becomes word solver.	Colby calls out letters in word as they are written on the page.	Uptake of Colby as word solver.
55	Peter	r -a-s	Peter joins Colby in word solving.		Peter as helper and co-word solver.	Peter calls out letters on page as co-written.	Uptake of Peter as co-writer.
56		It's supposed to be sharks					
57		You just forgot uh s	Peter notices and names error.		Peter now seems as teacher and helper; Colby as student/ learner.	"Just" indicates Colby makes a minor mistake, but does not mean he is incompetent.	Peter as teacher.
58	Colby	Oh			Colby positions Peter as teacher and himself as student.	"Oh" confirms that Colby agrees with the error that Peter points out.	

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
59	Peter	Or shot	Peter and Colby continue discussion of unknown word.		Peter acknowledges Colby. Colby and Peter share power as learners.	Turn -taking exchange indicates shared power between Peter and Colby.	Uptake of shared power between Peter and Colby as word solvers.
60	Colby	Hot shot					
61	All boys	XXXX					
62	Colby	O.K.			Colby as empowered learner.	O.K.as a statement of understanding.	
63	Colby	It's supposed to be "s"	Colby disagrees with Peter.		Colby acts as teacher, not Peter.	"It's supposed to be," shows Colby has ownership over his own writing.	Uptake of Colby as knower.
64		Wait					
65		s-h-* o*-g ll					
66	Colby	O.K.				"O.K" meaning I am finished. I am defeated.	

(Continued)

Table 12 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal Behavior	Identity Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Descriptions of Identity	Uptake Across IU's
67		* Here's the picture *	Showing the picture to one's story is equivalent to reading the written words.		Colby viewed as speaker and others as unwilling audience.	Quickness in which Colby speaks indicates he still feels he is speaker, but not for long, and that his audience is quickly losing interest. Colby never finishes reading his writing, but quickly shows his picture as a conclusion to his turn.	Uptake of Colby as speaker.

Name C

Date 5-6-10



I saw a helicopter and  
The man in helicopter  
shot the sharks tooth.

Figure 2: Colby's writing related to non-fiction writing (ocean animal research). "I saw a helicopter and The man in helicopter shot the sharks tooth."

### **Teacher as Participant: Power Over or Shared**

Power and identity are enacted much differently when I am a participant in the social context of a writing event. The cultural expectation for the location of power is with me or is shared among the group. For example, when the entire class participates in making a get well card through interactive writing, I lead the pace and focus of the lesson, but the shared purpose for the construction of text brings the classroom community together.

### **Type of Writing: Power and Identity Formation**

Power and identity is established and enacted in different ways related to the type of writing. When writing about non-fiction topics, students enact the identity as “teacher” with a focus on word level accuracy and getting the information “right.” When writing about topics related to lived-through experiences, students enact agency and power as the “storyteller.”

**Non-fiction identity as “teacher.”** When sharing about topics of their own choosing, students seem to construct an identity as a “storyteller” rather than as a writer. When sharing about topics related to non-fiction research, students construct an identity as a “teacher.” The “storyteller” and “teacher” identities determine the way in which students share their writing.

For example, when sharing about a topic of their own choosing, students may not even read the text they have written, but instead decide to share the story with more detail and complexity through an oral story-telling of their own

lived-through experience (Dyson, 2005b). When sharing ocean animal research, students seek to share in concrete and factual ways. There is a sense of feeling they should “get it right” or get the facts straight and deliver the facts to their audience accurately.

Truth is key to non-fiction writing and as a result many conversations around non-fiction spark student debates about truth. For example, when students are sharing writing topics in whole group after seeing the ocean movie, students debate whether or not sharks are harmful to humans. In another small group, the students studying dolphins debate information written by one group member about dolphins having hair on their skin.

**Fiction identity as “storyteller.”** As evidenced in transcript 20078 (Table 12), within the context of sharing non-fiction informational writing, students asserted some agency. However, when sharing about topics related to their own lived-through experiences, students enact an entirely different sense of power, agency and identity. Students read from their written text and then continue talking to add additional content, not actually a part of the written document, to the narrative story. Also, students often choose not to read from their own writing at all, but to verbally present the story. Student ownership of the content is valued, as evidenced by their eagerness to share with others, as well as by students’ rejections of any suggestions for revision.

During the small group conference in transcript 20052 (Table 13), Colby and Alice have differing purposes for their participation. For Colby it is about telling his story. For Alice it is about participating in the steps of process writing by telling her story and by engaging in revisions of her writing, as well as by responding to Colby's writing. In line 88 Alice is already noticing and naming things she wants to change. However, Colby makes no revisions to his story either during or after the conference.

Because Alice's purpose for participation is driven by her participation in process writing, her situated identity relates to her processes as a writer and as a teacher of Colby. In line 90 Alice explains why she used dots in her writing instead of words. In lines 111-113 Alice talks about how she needs to clarify her story by changing some of the content. After Colby shares his story, Alice repeatedly attempts to give him ideas for adding more details in line 139 and again in line 146.

In transcript 20052 (Table 13), Colby exhibits a very different type of participation when sharing a story about his dirt bike than is evidenced in transcript 20078 (Table 12) when he shares non-fiction writing. Colby shows his sense of agency by proceeding to talk with Alice about his story as they wait to conference with me. In line 130, when Colby reads he has already talked with Alice about his story.

After Colby reads the words on the page, he continues as the storyteller. He extends his story beyond what he has written by talking about ways his dad, brother and sister have fun on his dirt bike. In line 143 Colby continues to enact the identity of storyteller by continuing to tell his bike story while rejecting participation in the process of making revisions. He does not respond in any way to Alice's or my suggestions for revision. Next in line 146 Alice continues to give Colby suggestions for revision. She suggests in line 146 that Colby should add the parts he has verbally added to his written story. I confirm her idea in line 148.

Even though Colby's sense of agency as a storyteller is strong, he is not acknowledged by Alice or me as the storyteller. When Colby stops telling his story in line 138, I say nothing to acknowledge the content of his story, but instead enact the curriculum-driven practice of process writing--my purpose for participation—and continue making suggestions for revision. In line 138 I ask Colby if he wants feedback from Alice and me. Colby does not respond. However, the next several message units that follow are between Alice and me, discussing how we feel Colby can change his story and make it better from our perspective. Colby is not participating in this dialogue.

When Colby is unable or unwilling to participate in the curriculum-driven process of making revisions--my purpose for participation--I position Colby as a non-participant throughout the event. When Alice finishes reading, I ask Colby if he has a response. In lines 104-108 Colby suggests that Alice add content about

cleaning her house. After he shares, Alice gives him a strange look and does not respond. I try to start a dialogue between Alice and Colby, but instead Alice begins talking with me about her own reflections to revise her story. Again, Colby is marginalized as a participant. I feel somewhat uncertain about how to connect Colby's comment to Alice's story. In line 115 the use of "O.K." and "So...um" in lines 115 and 116 is my way of thinking aloud about how to move the conversation forward with Colby as a participant. Ultimately, I engage with Alice by commenting on a positive aspect of her story. The two of us talk from lines 117-127 without any acknowledgement of Colby's presence.

Throughout the conference, teacher power is ever-present at the macro (curriculum-driven process writing) and micro (who speaks, how students sit to interact) levels. In line 89 the teacher stops the conference to have both students go get pencils in order to participate in the curriculum-driven process writing revision event. Also, the teacher controls whose turn it is to share and, each time a new speaker talks, she reminds the students to sit eye-to-eye and knee-to-knee in an effort to focus students as listeners. (Table 13 starts on the following page.)

Table 13:  
*Transcript 20052 - Fiction Identity as "storyteller"*  
*(Colby and Alice Engage in Writing Revisions)*

140

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
68	Colby	And I ride it	Telling Alice about his story. Not reading the words, but telling about it.		Colby is already sharing with Alice, even though teacher is talking with another student.	Without prompting, Colby started sharing his story with Alice. He is not reading it but telling about it.	Uptake of Colby as speaker.
69	Colby	I like to ride on my dirt bike with my brother and sister					
70		XXX my um On their heads They have a little XXX and we XXX					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
71	Teacher	You've got a picture with your story there O.K. O.K. Do you guys	Notices and names aspects of Colby's writing.		Teacher as participant.	As a participant of the group the teacher notices and names aspects of Colby's writing.	Uptake of teacher as participant.
73	Teacher	O.K. Are ya'll ready to share or do you want to share in large group?	Facilitates more formal protocol with students to share.		Teacher as teacher.	Even though Colby and Alice started sharing. Teacher takes on teacher role and begins a more formal participation structure.	Uptake of teacher as teacher.
74	Colby	I want to share right now	Share in small group, not large.		Colby as decision-maker.	Colby makes the immediate decision to share in small group and not with the whole class.	Uptake of Colby as decision-maker.
75	Teacher	Do you want to share right now?	Clarifying statement.		Teacher as inquirer.	Teacher asks clarifying statement that Colby wants to share now.	Uptake of teacher as inquirer.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
83		Who's gonna go first?	Teacher as facilitator.		Teacher as facilitator.	Teacher is trying to focus on Colby and Alice, but struggling with interrupt--ions. She attempts to continue to facilitate the revisions conference with them.	Uptake of teacher as facilitator.
84	Alice	Chapter one	Alice shares by reading the words she has written.		Alice as speaker.	Alice shares by reading the words she has written.	Uptake of Alice as speaker.
85		Things you need					
86	Alice	Things you need					
87		Things you need in					
88	Alice	I forgot XXX	Notices and names a mistake she made while reading aloud.		Alice as speaker.	Alice stops reading and notices and names a mistake she made while reading aloud.	Continued uptake of Alice as speaker.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
89	Teacher	O.K. That reminds me, you need to go get a pencil and a board because you may need to make some revisions while we are sitting here talking	Expresses need for tools to revise work.	Colby and Alice go get pencil and board and return.	Teacher as obstacle to group share.	Alice has not finished reading her story. Teacher tells students they need boards and pencils to make revisions as we share. Teacher is attempting to facilitate the group sharing but with this many stops and starts Teacher is really more of a obstacle. Colby and Alice were sharing before Teacher even entered the conversation.	
90	Alice	I wrote these dots because I XXXX	Shares why she wrote dots on the paper instead of words.	Alice and teacher are waiting on Colby to return to group.	Alice as writer.	Alice shows ownership as a writer and shares why she wrote dots on the paper instead of words.	Uptake of Alice as writer.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

<b>Line No.</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Message Unit</b>	<b>Decision-making</b>	<b>Nonverbal behavior</b>	<b>Identities Signaled in Message Units</b>	<b>Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity</b>	<b>Uptake of Identity</b>
91	Teacher	Sure III	Response and extension of meaning.		Teacher as teacher.	Teacher responds and the shows teaching role by extending meaning of what the dots could stand for in Alice stories.	Uptake of Teacher as teacher.
92		Sometimes dots mean you are thinking					
93	Alice	But that means to be continued	Clarifies what her dots mean.		Alice as power figure.	Alice shows ownership of her writing by sharing her meaning for the dots and it is not what the teacher suggested.	Uptake of Alice as power figure.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
94	Teacher	Turn knee to knee and so you are listening	Teacher facilitates physical aspects of sharing.	Colby returns to group.	Teacher as power figure.	When both students are back to the group, Teacher shows power by telling them how to physically situate themselves for listening and sharing.	Uptake of Teacher as power figure.
95	Alice	Chapter one	Alice reads aloud for the second time the story she has written.	Reads words from page.	Alice as speaker.	Alice reads aloud for the second time the story she has written.	Uptake of Alice as speaker.
96		Things you need in softball					
97		You need a glove, bat and jersey					
98		Chapter two					
99		Things you need to do					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
100		When the coach calls you, you get your bat and helmet					
101		If the coach calls you, you go where he tells you					
102	Teacher	Colby, do you have feed-back for Alice? about her chapters What she ll	Asks for Colby to respond to Alice's writing.		Teacher as facilitator.	Teacher facilitates a response from Colby by asking him what he has to say.	Uptake of Teacher as facilitator.
103	Colby	Umm					
104		You should write down "clean your house"	Responds with content that is not related to the subject Alice wrote about.		Colby as speaker.	Colby takes his turn to speak. However, he responds with content that is not related to the subject Alice wrote about.	Uptake of Colby as speaker.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
105	Colby	Because you should always clean your house before you go somewhere.					
106		So when you get back, it can be clean					
107		Because when you get back, it could be all dirty					
108		Then, your mom or dad asks you to clean it up					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
109	Teacher	Alice is giving you a funny look	Teacher recognizes disconnect in topics Alice has written about and Colby's response.		Teacher as teacher.	Teacher acts as the teacher by noticing and naming the body language Alice is giving Colby. This will maybe start either of them explaining and talking about their disconnect without the teacher having to do it.	Uptake of Teacher as teacher.
110		Do you want to explain yourself?					
111	Alice	Uh I need to explain myself	Does not acknowledge the response from Colby or explain her giving him a funny look.		Colby as non-participant.	Alice does not acknowledge response from Colby. This implies he is a non-participant by not valuing or trying to make sense of his response.	

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
112	Alice	Not what I did before softball and stuff	Continues along her train of thought and the topic of her book, softball.		Alice as speaker.	Alice continues along her train of thought and the topic of her book, softball.	
113		Oh and in chapter XXX I need to say get ready for softball	Alice essentially reflects on her own work and gives herself feedback.				
114		Like what you need to put on					
115	Teacher	O.K.	Responds to Alice's discussion and tries to figure out where to lead conversation from that point.		Teacher as facilitator.	Teacher acts as facilitator by saying "O.K." as if to bring closure to Alice's response and "umm" as a thinking word to figure out where to lead conversation next. To go back to Colby or to go another direction.	Uptake of Teacher as facilitator.
116	Teacher	So um					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
117		It's neat the way you have it in chapters	Responds to Alice's writing as a participant in the conversation.		Teacher as participant.	Teacher responds to Alice's writing as a participant in the conversation. Teacher gives specific feedback about content of Alice's writing.	
118		You have it for each activity like building, batting What was the other one?	Asks for clarification on content.		Teacher as inquirer.	By asking for clarification Teacher acts as inquirer.	Uptake of Teacher as inquirer.
119	Alice	Uh. Building, batting and then what you need	Responds to Teacher question and clarifies.		Alice as source of knowledge.	Alice is source of knowledge to clarify her meaning and content of her writing.	Uptake of Alice as source of knowledge.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
120	Teacher	O.K. So you need the equipment and then the batting	Comments that Alice seems to have all the information he needs.		Teacher as power figure.	Teacher shows power in the way teacher seems to give permission for Alice to be done by saying "that's every-thing".	Uptake of Teacher as power figure.
121		Really that's all That's every-thing included					
122		Umm...ll					
123	Alice	I was just gonna XXX four XXX	Comments on idea for next chapter.		Alice as writer.	Alice adds to what she has mentioned and what she wants to add next. She shows ownership as the writer and decision-maker.	Uptake of Alice as writer.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
124	Teacher	Oh so you already have it XX for the next one	T clarifies meaning of what Alice plans to do next.	Alice nods yes.	Colby as non-participant.	Teacher and Alice are talking and discussing her writing. Even though Colby had a response long ago in the dialogue and no one has included him in the continued discussion of Alice's writing.	
125		That's good That's good					
126		Colby do you want to share yours with Alice?	Teacher addresses Colby to see if he wants to share.		Colby as participant.	Teacher acknowledges Colby as participant by asking him the question, but then goes back to make sure Alice is done with her turn.	

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
127		Alice do you want any-more feed-back?	Clarifies that Alice is finished with her turn.				
128		Colby, turn around and turn knee to knee with Alice and tell her about yours	Teacher gives instructions for how to physically move to share writing.		Teacher as power figure.	Power is expressed by teacher telling students how to sit.	Uptake of Teacher as power figure.
129		You already told her about it didn't you?	Reminds Colby that he has already told Alice about his writing in his own words.		Teacher as facilitator to Colby.	By reminding Colby of what he has already done to share his work Teacher scaffolds Colby to share his writing.	Uptake of Teacher as facilitator to Colby's participation.
130	Colby	I like my dirt bike and my dirt bike goes fast	Colby reads words on page to share his work.	Reads from page.	Colby as speaker.	By reading the words he has written to Alice, Colby takes ownership of his turn as speaker.	Uptake of Colby as speaker.

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
131	Colby	It does	Talks about rest of story.		Colby as story teller.	Colby continues to share, but tells instead of reading the additional content.	Uptake of Colby as story-teller.
132		Sometimes my brother and sister			Colby as storyteller.	Colby continues with lots of detail about his dirt bike story. These parts he does not have written, but is telling.	Continued uptake of Colby as story-teller.
133		Some-time they go and they will fall down					
134		Off of it					
135		But my dad gets on his dirt bike and goes and gets on it					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
136		My dad his dirt bike goes faster than mine					
137	Colby	So he can catch my brother or sister					
138	Teacher	O.K. So do you want some feedback?	Teacher marks the end of Colby's storytelling and asks him if he wants a response.		Teacher as facilitator.	Teacher marks the end of Colby's storytelling and asks him if he wants a response.	Uptake of Teacher as facilitator.
139	Alice	You should write down like what your XXX and how you ride it and what it looks like	Alice responds by suggesting that Colby more details about what his bike looks like.		Alice as responder.	Alice responds by suggesting that Colby give more details about what his bike looks like.	Uptake of Alice as responder to Colby's writing.

155

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
140	Teacher	What it looks like it I love the way you put it	Affirms Alice in her response.		Teacher as power figure.	By re-voicing and complementing Alice on her response Teacher is acting as the Teacher and power figure.	
141	Alice	Yeah XXX ll					
142	Teacher	And she said maybe a map of where you ride it	Reminds Colby of another part of Alice's feedback.		Teacher as power figure.	Teacher reminds Colby of Alice's feedback. Gives value to Alice	
143	Colby	This weekend my dad's He's gonna take my dirt bike apart and get new parts for it	Continues to add to his bike story.		Colby as storyteller.	Colby resumes role as storyteller by continuing to tell about his bike.	Uptake of Colby as storyteller.
144		So it's a dirt bike.					
145	Colby	It's just a bike but it looks like a dirt bike					

(Continued)

Table 13 cont'd

Line No.	Speaker	Message Unit	Decision-making	Nonverbal behavior	Identities Signaled in Message Units	Linguistic Evidence for Description of Identity	Uptake of Identity
146	Alice	Maybe you should write that down	Connects what he is saying to what his story is about.		Alice as teacher.	Alice acts as teacher by telling Colby he should write down what he is saying and add those details to his story.	Uptake of Alice as teacher.
147		Really that is a XXX					
148	Teacher	Yeah because that makes it more personal doesn't it?	Confirms Alice suggestions and tells why.		Teacher as co-teacher.	Teacher as co-teacher by confirming why Colby should add to his story.	Uptake of Teacher as co-teacher with Alice.
149	Alice	Yeah it makes it more interesting					
150	Teacher	Thank you guys					
151		Go add You can go add your revisions or add	Instructs Colby and Alice on what to do next.	Colby does not add to his story. Alice does.	Teacher as teacher.	Instructs Colby and Alice on what to do next.	Teacher as teacher.

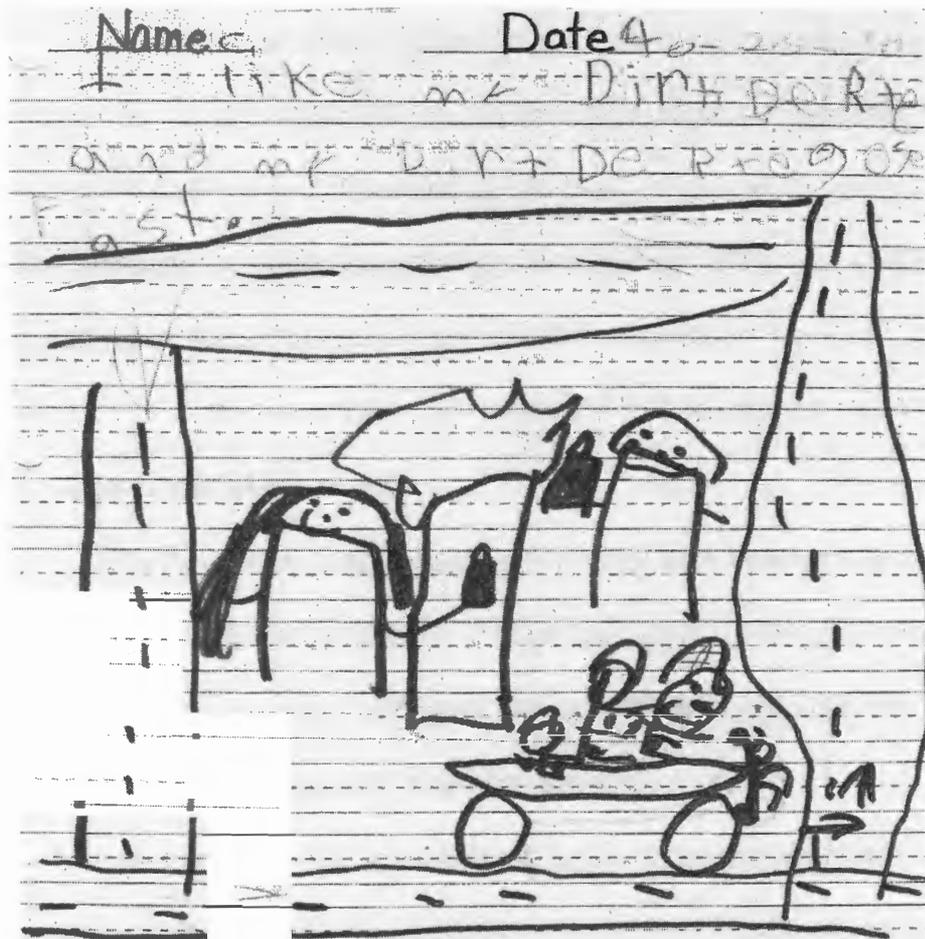


Figure 3: Colby's example of free writing personal narrative  
"I like my Dirt Derte and my Drt DeRte gose Fast."

## Summary

Discourse analysis of peer-to-peer interactions around writing during regular occurring classroom events provides evidence for social practices that influence student decision-making, identity and power relations. Social practices during classroom writer's workshop, which most influences student decision-making, are connected to socio-cultural constructs of the learning context. Both the type of writing and a teacher presence guides student decision-making, power and identity formation.

Students associate agency and power with free-writing as it relates to their own lived-through experiences. Power and agency connected to free-writing narratives is associated with personal self-efficacy and with one's own potential for participation in classroom writing activities.

However, the highly structured and systematic approach to writing related to research is a key feature of writing non-fiction, which influences identity and power. When writing non-fiction, student power and agency is connected to the enacted identity of being the "teacher" of the factual information and the big "D" academic Discourse of the writing topic. If students struggle with the big "D" academic Discourse of writing related to non-fiction topics, the students are positioned as weaker than their classmates. Student decision-making as the "teacher," when sharing and responding to non-fiction, reveals power in word level accuracy and agency in "truth" through sharing accurate information.

Teacher presence is a factor which also impacts student decision-making and thus, impacts identity and power formation as well. Peer interchanges not including the teacher tend to take on a highly competitive tone, and students negotiate to enact identity as superior among others. Practices with the purpose of establishing power in a non-teacher-directed group take the form of boundary-making by establishing who does what, when and how. It may also involve vying for authority and manipulating the activity to get more turns. Teacher presence during large and small group interactions impacts student agency and power through the expectation to use big “D” academic Discourse of writing, which includes participation in the dialogue of giving and getting feedback for making revisions.

My own decision-making and resulting identity and power formation is revealed through the tension between my overt theories rooted in socio-cultural views of writing and my tacit theories driven by a high-stakes school and district mandated curriculum. Even though I make decisions with the intention for all students to participate, many decisions appear to take away student power and agency, as evidenced in the analysis of student dialogues presented. For example, engaging all students in process writing limits the participation of those writers who do not value the process of revisiting one text multiple times to revise and edit. As a result, student perspectives about what is valued in writing do not

represent what I perceive to matter most in teaching writing. What I thought mattered most was content over conventions and process over product.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

A review of the methods used and a summary of results with possible implications to theory and practice in the field of education are the focus of this chapter. First, the purpose for the research and the methods used in the study are reviewed. Next, a summary of the results for the study is provided. Finally, a discussion of the implications for the study is presented as they relate to the research question: How do different social practices influence student decision-making and identity related to classroom writing events?

#### **Purpose**

This naturalistic qualitative inquiry explores how different social practices during writing events in the classroom impact student decision-making, power and identity. The research focuses on ways the teacher and students participate in literacy events and on ways they jointly construct knowledge about writing processes.

#### **Review of Methodology**

This study involves a micro-ethnographic analysis of classroom writing events during elementary classroom writer's workshop in one school. Micro-ethnographic discourse analysis is a type of discourse analysis that considers the

use of language as a tool to construct social identity, cultural actions and power relations (Bloome, 2005). Micro-ethnography links the micro-level interactions in the classroom to the macro-level interactions of the institutions and communities in which both students and teachers participate. The methodology used allows the researcher to examine student participation in interaction with others, rather than as individual student processes in isolation.

This study focuses on the ways in which language is used as a tool during writing events to establish social identity, cultural actions and power relations during teacher and peer interactions in the classroom. To study the social interactions that occur and that impact a student's decision-making processes, I employ research methodology allowing analysis of both individual and group communications and interactions in the classroom during elementary classroom writer's workshop. I use discourse analysis as a method for describing ways people construct and negotiate social relations, as well as ways they come to discriminate among themselves and others differentially, based on classroom interactions (Bloome, 2005; Rogers, 2004).

This research examines my own teaching, culminating in a three-month period of data collection in my elementary school classroom. Data collected includes classroom observations, audio tapes of writing events during writer's workshop in the classroom, student writing samples, archival data, a teacher reflexive journal and individual student interviews.

I conduct, in four strands, an analysis of student participation during classroom writer's workshop. The four strands of analysis act as a funnel, in that the analysis begins with the larger corpus of data in strand one and is connected to specific writing events analyzed in greater depth, through micro-ethnography in the ensuing strands.

Identification of relevant social practices (shared understandings among participants about how writing happens) within the classroom community that relate to student decision-making during classroom writing events is the purpose of Strand 1 analysis. The analysis in Strand 2 describes the decisions students make during the writing events. Strand 3 takes a piece of the larger corpus of data and analyzes discourse related to identity, power and decision-making through a micro-ethnographic analysis. The micro-ethnographic analysis in Strand 3 allows for a deeper understanding of social, cultural and power relations connected to the larger corpus of data. Thus, the micro-analysis in Strand 3 precipitates a Strand 4 analyses focusing on a review and modification of initial codes established in Strand 1 for social practice and in Strand 2 for codes related to student decision-making.

### **Summary of Results**

Discourse analysis of peer-to-peer interactions centered on writing during regular occurring classroom events provides evidence of social practices that influence student decision-making, identity and power relations. Social practices

during classroom writer's workshop, which most influence student decision-making, are connected to socio-cultural constructs of the learning context.

General findings include:

- Social practices which guide student decision-making, power and identity relations include the type of writing and teacher presence in the social context of the writing event.
- Strong agency, empowerment and identity formation as a "storyteller" is associated with writing about topics students choose.
- Attention to surface features, disempowerment, and identity formation as the "teacher" is associated with writing events related to teacher assigned writing for the purpose of researching non-fiction topics.
- Teacher presence during small group interaction influences the location of power and thus identity among participants.

### **Social Practices: Type of Writing and Teacher Presence**

Social practices which guide student decision-making, power and identity relations include the type of writing and teacher presence. Student decision-making associated with the type of writing or with my participation or lack of participation in the social context of the event seems to establish social practices

based on the varying location of power and resulting identity formation of participants.

**Types of writing and location of power.** Student and teacher decision-making during writing are associated with three types of writing. These include: 1) free-writing in which students write about self-selected topics; 2) process writing which includes writing with the goal of publishing; or 3) writing related to research and non-fiction topics, such as the ocean animal research writing exercise in this study.

Observations indicate that the type of writing relates to student identity formation based on the constructs of power and agency enacted with each type of writing. When writing on self-selected topics, students exert strong agency and identity. When Colby shares his dirt bike story, he not only reads the written text on his paper, but also continues to extend the story, with increased complexity in his language, through oral telling.

Process writing and writing related to non-fiction research position power as an interpretive framework in which successful participation in the process of publication or in the systematic process of research is valued. After Colby shares his dirt bike story during our small group revision conference, Alice and I do not comment on the content of Colby's story. Rather, our interaction with Colby after he shares establishes power in the process of making revisions to his story.

### **Self-selected Topics: Strong Agency and Identity**

Strong agency, empowerment and identity formation as a “storyteller” is associated with writing about topics of student choice. When writing on self-selected topics (free-writing), student power and agency connect to the enacted identity of being a “storyteller.” Writing topics are connected to students’ individual lived-through experiences. For example, when Colby shares his dirt bike story, the way he participates is guided by his access to the discourse of the event and by his ability to personally connect to the words he writes on the page. Therefore, power and agency observable in free-writing narratives is associated with personal self-efficacy and with one’s own potential for participation in classroom writing activities.

### **Non-fiction Topics and Power**

Attention to surface features, identity formation as the “teacher” and power in “truth” information is associated with writing about teacher assigned research of non-fiction topics. The highly structured and systematic approach to writing related to research is a key feature of writing non-fiction, which influences identity and power. When writing non-fiction, student power and agency is connected to the enacted identity of being the “teacher” of the factual information and to the big “D” academic Discourse of the writing topic. Student decision-making as the “teacher,” when sharing and responding to non-fiction writing reveals power in word- level accuracy and agency in “truth” through sharing accurate information.

As noted in the reflective journal, those students seeking greater access to the big “D” Discourse of science and to accurately share information about non-fiction topics, seek non-fiction text and pictures for referral as they talk about ocean animal information. Additionally, when sharing non-fiction, students tend to focus on surface features, such as word-level accuracy, rather than focusing on meaning.

### **Teacher Presence and Power Relations**

Teacher participation or lack of teacher participation during small group interactions influences the location of power and influences identity among participants. For example, student participation and decisions related to text construction during whole class mini-lessons is based on my use of the big “D” Discourse of writing. When students write as a class about my embarrassing moment at a high school choir concert, I ask students to help construct text based on academic language, such as the use of similes and onomatopoeia. Teacher presence and power interactions impact agency and power through the expectation to use the big “D” academic Discourse of writing. The expectations include--in subsequent events--participation in the dialogue of giving and getting feedback for making revisions during process writing.

Student perspectives associated with the value of teacher presence/participation during writing is connected to enacting the conventions of writing, such as spelling, and to supporting the development of content and

ideas. As evidenced in individual interviews, students define my role or identity as the teacher during writing as one that helps them spell words. Students respond to questions about how I help them during writing by saying, “If I need help with a word, the teacher wrote the word on my (word) card,” or “she helps us sound the words out.” Others describe my role as a resource for developing content through questions asked about their writing, through “the lessons on the carpet” or through help given for “organizing my (student) thinking.”

During small group conferences without teacher presence, student decisions and identity formation is based on the transforming nature of power relations. Power is constructed, reconstructed and contested during independent, small group, peer interactions. Peer interchanges not including the teacher tend to take on a highly competitive tone, and students negotiate to enact identity as one of superiority among the group members. Classroom practices with the purpose of establishing power in a non-teacher-directed group take the form of boundary-making, by establishing who does what, when and how. As is the case when Colby, Andrew, Luke and Peter share writing related to shark research, the transformation of power involves vying for authority and manipulating the activity to get more turns.

### **Discussion of Results**

By utilizing observations in the school context of classroom events during writer’s workshop, I generate a set of understandings and contributions to

qualitative research that addresses the research question: How do different social practices influence student decision-making and identity construction related to writing events? This discussion section offers insights into student behaviors, connections to prior research and theory, potential implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

### **Researcher Insights**

New understandings about location of power and its influence on so many aspects of student processes during writing is the most personally significant result of this study. The data reveals my own conflicting perspectives of writing instruction and the power relations among them. Realizing the conflicting nature of my own tacit and overt theories helps me understand the findings related to power, teacher presence and student decision-making. The importance of power relationships are also seen through the kinds of identities associated with varying types of writing.

**Power and conflicting instructional perspectives.** My personal decision-making process and identity and power formation is revealed through the tension between my overt theories, rooted in socio-cultural views of writing, and my tacit theories, driven by a high-stakes school and district curriculum. Even though I make overt decisions about how writing should happen during writer's workshop, based the intention for all students to participate, I find that many of my decisions appear to take away student power and agency. For

example, engaging all students in process writing limits the participation of those writers who do not value the process of revisiting one text multiple times to revise and edit. As a result, student perspectives about what is valued in writing do not represent what I perceive to be most important. What I believe to be most important is meaning and power as a writer over conventions and writing as a product.

**Power and types of writing.** The type of writing in which students participate positions power as one's ability to participate in the process (research writing or process writing) or power as connected to one's lived-through experiences (free-writing). Students make decisions about what is valued or powerful in relation to these types of writing.

Students assert personal agency depending on the type of writing. For example, Colby's sense of agency when writing about self-selected topics allows him to use writing as a social vehicle. Colby's sense of agency and resulting participation during writer's workshop is different than during any other time of the academic day. As a struggling learner, Colby finds the ability to assert himself socially more readily during writing. I believe, Colby's feelings of self-efficacy, connect to his own lived-through experiences, and the open-ended nature of writing practices allows him feel comfortable with his potential as a writer. Therefore, Colby's identity during writing is that of feeling empowered as opposed to his identity of feeling disempowered during more closed types of

academic activities during math. I will continue to discuss insights related to how students understand what is valued in writing and how that impacts agency and identity in the following section which connects to past research.

### **Expanding Perspectives of Writing**

Findings from this study relate to current research and expand understandings of early literacy learning. Students in this study engage in writing processes that go beyond traditional institutional literacy concerns, such as concepts about print, and expand socio-cultural views of writing development as they relate to explicit classroom practices. This research expands perspectives of writing by: 1) considering identity formation as it relates to types of writing and teacher presence, and 2) considering how students learn based on what they perceive as valued during writing time.

**Identity, power and types of writing.** This study describes students' participation in the complex classroom culture of school writing as a measure of how they make decisions and form identity (Dyson, 2003). Past research related to identity formation specifically focuses on identity formation as connected to the social and cultural experiences of a writer's life, such as family relationships and media symbols (Dyson, 1999, 2003). However, the unique findings of this research reveal the relationship of identity and power formation as it connects to the types of writing and teacher presence. This finding is unique in that this research considers power relationships at the macro (curriculum-driven) and

micro-levels (teacher presence) in the classroom. For example, insights revealed in this study show the power of the curriculum, at the macro-level, over student processes and show the expectation to engage in the big “D” Discourse of process writing, as well as the systematic approach to writing related to research. Teacher identity, both constructed and revealed at the micro-level, enact this relationship of power in the curriculum as the valued way of participating.

**Student learning and power.** Examining literacy as a social practice involves approaching literacy learning with a focus on how students learn as they participate in a community of practice. Rowe’s (2008) research suggests ways to understand how students learn in a community of practice by making decisions about what is valued in writing through establishing “social contracts.” This research expands Rowe’s establishment of “social contracts” as a way to understand how students decide what is valued in writing (Rowe, 2008). This study examines not only how student writers consider what is valued, but also how students enact individual identities within specific social practices. For example, results for the current study suggest students determine what they see as valued in writing based on the type of writing and enact identities accordingly. Because students understand the value of their own lived-through experiences related to writing, they enact the identity as “storyteller” when sharing writing related to self-selected topics. Because students perceive the value of “truth”

and of teaching important information when writing about non-fiction topics, students enact the identity as “teacher” when sharing related to non-fiction writing.

### **Theoretical Implications of the Study**

Gee (1999) describes discourse analysis as a theory and as a method for studying how humans interact in a reflective way to create meaning in a social context. Through the application of micro-ethnographic discourse analysis (Bloome, 2005), this study reveals how participation within big “D” Discourses of writing positions language as a scaffold for human interaction to either perform an action or attain group membership. For example, through participation in the big “D” Discourses of process writing and writing related to research, students enact writing social practices and associated social identities (Gee, 2001).

**Participation and big “D” Discourse of types of writing.** The current study presents a perspective on Gee’s (2001) theory for how students use the big “D” Discourse of the classroom writing community as a lens through which to make decisions about their participation. The current research relates to Gee’s theory by positioning it within the context of writing. This research considers student participation based on an examination of how students decide what is valued through the Discourses of self-selected writing (free-writing), process writing and non-fiction writing (Gee, 2001). Students participate in the social functions and purposes for these types of text as the lens through which to view

their participation. Furthermore, students participate in the Discourse community of free-writing, process writing and non-fiction writing, and enact diverse identities based on what they decide is valued (or powerful) through the type of writing being shared.

**Contribution to qualitative research methodology.** Micro-ethnographic discourse analysis is a theory and a method for studying how humans interact in a reflective way to create meaning in a social context. The use of micro-ethnographic methods for analysis in this study offers a deeper understanding of the way in which students use language as a tool to construct social identity, cultural actions and power relations during writing (Bloome, 2005). This study views students and teachers as architects of the classroom discourse who construct individual identities and cultural worlds through interaction with one another during classroom writing events (Bloome, 2005). It is through the use of micro-ethnographic methods and with a focus on language-in-use (actions and reactions) that the research can reveal the way students enact or impose identities.

This study contributes to the methodology and potential insights of micro-ethnography because it links the micro-level interactions in the classroom to the macro-level interactions of the institutions and communities in which the students and teacher participate. Micro-analysis accommodates an examination of data from multiple perspectives (culture of the classroom community, institution, and

anthropological) (Bloome, 2005). In this research a specific focus on student participation in interaction with others is the unit of analysis, rather than a focus on the individual student processes in isolation. The focus on students in interaction reveals identity and power relations: 1) between the teacher and students, 2) between student to student and 3) between the teacher and institutional beliefs about writing. As a result, the micro-analyzed events allow the research to relate the moment-by-moment micro-level interactions of students to the larger corpus of data and broader social context.

Emphasis is placed on making connections between the literacy events and the social practices that frame the events. Semiotic symbols associated with micro-ethnography, such verbal and nonverbal contextual cues and the use of boundary making, are used as tools to establish identity and power roles during the social practices of writing. Through the use of these tools associated with micro-ethnographic analysis, a complete perspective of the situated experiences of teacher and students is described (Bloome, 2005).

### **Implications for Practice**

Encouraging a broader range of possibilities for classroom writing events in relation to power is made possible as a result of this study. In this section a discussion of current power relations and curriculum driven models is discussed in relation to the results of this study. Then specific recommendations for the implementation of writer's workshop in an elementary classroom are described.

These recommendations include: 1) the purposeful use of big “D” Discourses associated with content and conventions during writing, 2) making decisions about the types of writing that will take place during writer’s workshop, 3) making decisions about what to teach, when to teach and when to listen, and 4) the sharing of student writing on a daily basis with teacher and peers.

**Curriculum and power relations.** Curriculum permeable to a student’s landscape of communicative voices, through which text is constructed, has not been a dominant element of school writing curriculum. As a result, elementary students’ manipulation of writing through a variety of textual media materials involving their own identity has been limited (Rowe, 2003). The traditional organization of reading instruction reflects the institutional ideology and sets the stage for students to structure and maintain social hierarchies related to writing ability. This in-turn leads students to take on certain identities and roles, positioning the location of power in knowing how to participate, as valued in the academic discourse of school writing.

The most powerful form of speech in school is writing because “what is recordable can be stored and analyzed,” (Kress, 1997, p. 147). As noted in the study, as a teacher, I am very much aware that written language within the institution of schooling is powerful. However, as a result of this study, many ideas and theories about culture and power in the elementary classroom while teaching writing are called into question. For example, student identity in relation

to the types of writing and teacher presence calls into question what is really being taught during classroom writer's workshop. If writing is defined through the use of conventions and "getting it right" through a formula approach, then teaching students about writing during writer's workshop is in a sense a "one stop shop," teaching writing according to standardized test measures.

This research implies that educators need to shift the instructional approach previously used during classroom writer's workshop. The shift needs to be toward teaching students about writing as a process for problem-solving and about perspective-giving and perspective-getting. Then the purpose for learning to write and the value of writing is taught in a way that is intrinsically valuable and can be applicable across context.

**Big "D" Discourses: Types of writing and conventions.** Being a teacher of writing in today's classroom means being able to negotiate curriculum and formula-driven instructional frameworks and instruction driven by theoretical understandings about how students enact identity and power related to writing. The curriculum that is privileged in school includes both the Discourse of writing in science, process writing and writing using thinking maps. These types of classroom writing events presently are viewed as valuable and therefore receive power status in the school where the research is conducted. Obviously, high-stakes are attached to students writing non-fiction in the content areas such as science and to student engagement in process writing. This writing includes the

use of conventions that allow others to read the writing. One is perceived as being a better teacher when possessing the ability to effectively enact that curriculum. Additionally, the new initiative for writer's workshop in my school is a very formulaic approach to writing called *Write from the Beginning*.

**What to write about during writer's workshop.** Implications for teaching writing as a result of this study focus on types of writing which negotiate power and identity relationships (at the macro and micro-levels) within a workshop model. From the results of this study, power and identity relations associated with systematic approaches to writing (research writing, process writing) impact student power and identity based on what is valued. The results of this study suggest strong power and agency during social practices which value student engagement in writing as a result of their own intentions and not as a result of a formula. Therefore, my recommendations for writer's workshop and the types of writing that should occur relate to the types of writing which allow ownership and agency over topic choice, as well as decisions to revise and publish as a result of student intentions.

Furthermore, curriculum-driven science inquiry units should not be taught during writer's workshop, but rather during the content time of study. Types of writing during writer's workshop should be journal writing on self-selected topics and process writing as initiated by student interest. Findings from this research

suggest process writing is best taught on an individual basis and with student initiation.

**What to teach during writer's workshop.** The current study implies explicit teaching should be directly connected to student needs, not curriculum mandates. For example, teachers can introduce, model and discuss the use of conventions and writing strategies suggested by the curriculum model to support student growth on an individualistic basis, rather than teaching the curriculum in a systematic way. Furthermore, aspects of process writing, such as ways to organize ideas, can be explicitly taught based on student needs, either in whole group or small group interactions. In order to support student writers, explicit teaching should be sensitive to student ownership of content with a focus on shared collaboration (teacher and student as co-authors). Additionally, process writing that occurs in a timely manner for emergent writers is important to student development of agency within the Discourse. Therefore, student and teacher selections for revision and editing should be minimal, but based on student need and building in complexity over time.

Additionally, teaching of the academic Discourses, such as types of writing or conventions to students, can be treated as a way to use the curriculum expectations as a mediator by creating a common language in a community of practice and not as a way to exert power. Discourses become a common language and can be used as it is appropriate during individual and small group

interactions. In this way the Discourse of spelling, punctuation, use of voice, or strong verbs is explicitly taught (based on student need) at the macro-level as a tool, but implicitly used during micro-level interactions as it relates to student needs.

This study suggests that the teaching of spelling as a problem-solving process might best support student identity as a writer, based on meaning and not word-level accuracy. During writer's workshop, spelling could be explicitly taught during authentic writing experiences in a variety of contexts. When spelling is explicitly taught, it should be approached in a way that demonstrates a variety of problem-solving approaches to constructing an unknown word, such as using inventive spelling, making comparisons to other known words or breaking the word into sound parts.

**When to teach during writer's workshop.** Although whole-group mini-lessons on teacher determined topics is a common practice during writer's workshop, I feel the results of this study suggest more authentic teaching takes place when it occurs within the context of a student's own writing. Therefore, individual and small group conferences during writer's workshop become a powerful opportunity to engage in the dialogic process of learning to write.

However, the position of power during these interactions becomes a very important aspect through which students must negotiate. "There is no research support for the notion that correction is effective in eliminating features from

children's repertoire," (Dyson, 2004). Based on Dyson's suggestion, the emphasis during conferencing would be on student ownership, and not on teacher correction. Student ownership and agency can be established during conferences by practices including: 1) students determining the goals for revision and 2) authentic teacher questioning.

**When to listen during writer's workshop.** There is a time to teach and a time to listen during writer's workshop. Daily sharing time at the end of independent writing time is a common practice. However, just as important are the times student share during informal interactions. As revealed in this study, student identity and agency is strong when students share topics about their own experiences. Therefore, decisions about when to teach and when to listen are critical as they relate to student power and identity. When Colby shares his dirt bike story with Alice and me, we miss the opportunity to engage with him as listeners and, instead, respond in ways that value suggestions for the revision of his story. In so doing, we marginalize Colby as a writer.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Additional research which considers writing as a social practice influencing student identity and power relations is needed. The unit on which research can substantially impact practice will focus on power relations during small group interactions among teachers and students during writing. Specifically, I am interested in further research focused on teacher/student interaction protocols

that consider identity and power relations and teacher presence during classroom writing events.

In closing, these findings assist me in expanding literacy teaching in the elementary classroom beyond my own intensions for specific literacy practices such as process writing, toward the diverse intentions established by my students (Dyson, 1995). My goal as a literacy teacher is to focus learning on giving and getting perspectives as part of the process toward each student's own "reading of the world," (Friere, 1994; Gee, 2001). Therefore, further research describing the relationship between teacher presence, power relations and student identity can further reveal how language acts as a tool during literacy learning to establish power, cultural and social affiliations.

"They understood you, they need you to understand them. By grasping this we can move from our discourse and our reading of the world, to them, challenging them to speak of their own reading of the world," (Friere, 1994).

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## APPENDIX A

### Chart 1: Memo 1 for Whole Class Mini Lessons

## Chart 1: Memo 1 for Whole Class Mini Lessons

### Overall Themes from the three lessons:

- Focus on process writing steps
- Focus on using thinking maps to organize ideas for writing
- Use of interactive writing as a tool for teaching (focus on conventions and spelling)
- Emphasis on making choices about text structure when writing informational or narrative
- Interactive writing during whole group get well card for teacher aide.

### Memo's from Process Writing Mini- lessons:

I model using a thinking map to gather ideas for writing a story about an embarrassing event in her life as a child. Student engagement is high.

I write ideas and solicit **feedback** on word choice and word order.

During **interactive writing**, my students and I verbally discuss and **organize words** before writing them down.

Students discuss **spelling and conventions** as I write. Students tell and/or correct me about when to put a period or if there was a word missing in the sentence that was needed.

Students engage during the whole group writing, have **opinions** on and are very interested in what teacher is writing about.

### Memo's for Get Well Card Mini- Lesson:

First I show “mentor text” (examples of commercially made cards) to discuss **purpose and text structure** of card writing.

Next we start **interactively writing** the card for Mrs. S. The interactive writing process focuses on **word choice, word order and spelling**.

During the lesson I notice children don't seem to be **applying** what I talked about with the mentor text. I have to guide and almost put words in their mouths to get the card done.

### Memo for Writing Related to Research Mini-Lesson:

Concepts of **continuity and change** brought out during writing related to research on several occasions. For example, students discuss differing opinions about whether or not sharks pose as a threat to people.

Using thinking map to organize ideas for writing: Change in big “D” Discourse related to writing. I shift from narrative oral language discourse to using academic/scientific language discourse to categorize. Students need concrete ways of thinking before abstract thinking is possible. I move to content before teaching discourse for science.

Students enter room from lunch recess knowing it is writing time. They say, “Can we please free-write today?” I have to talk them into a more structured activity so we can continue our writing related to ocean animal research. They will take written ocean animal facts and categorize them for writing.

Teacher questions are authentic.

Teacher has most power in this lesson. Teacher chose topic and framework for writing (categorizing). Students read facts collected and chose categories for sorting.

### Mini – Lesson Key Transcripts for Reference:

20074 – Shark discussion related to continuity and change. Are sharks a threat to humans?

20068 – Use of thinking map related to research. Teacher shifted from narrative oral language Discourse to using academic/scientific language Discourse to categorize.

20055 –Use of shared writing as a tool to write thank you note.

20012 –Teacher **modeling** of choosing an idea and brainstorming ideas using a thinking map of an embarrassing moment as part of process writing.

20026 –**Teacher modeling** by “digging deeper” for ideas by drawing a picture as part of process writing.

## APPENDIX B

Chart 2: Memo 2: Theme of Feedback and How the Idea of Feedback Relates to Student Decision-making and Identity Formation

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Over time and with an explicit protocol for sharing time in place, giving and getting feedback becomes a cultural practice during writer's workshop. Getting and giving feedback is an on-going, authentic and naturally occurred in all writing events.

### **Decision-making** related to feedback:

- To give it.
- To ask for it after sharing.
- How to give it. (question, comment –opinion or connection, suggestion word choice word order, spelling)
- To acknowledge it.
- To accept or decline by choosing to make or not make changes to one's writing.

### **Power and identity** related to feedback:

- Teacher and students jointly construct meaning.
- Whose feedback is valued or acknowledged by the teacher and by students.
- Spelling equals power.
- Ways of participating changes among some students according to social context. (Consider presence of the teacher or size of group.)

## APPENDIX C

### Chart 3: Memo 3 Themes from Student Interviews

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Interview Question: What is writing?

Themes in student responses: (\*notes multiple responses)

- \*\*\*\*\*conventions, the words, spelling
- \*\*\*expression, feelings
- \*\*thinking
- truth (fiction/non-fiction)
- for the teacher

APPENDIX D  
Transcription Symbols

## Transcription Symbols

XXXXX	= undecipherable
	= short pause
	= long pause
*	= voice, pitch, or style change
*words*	= boundaries of a voice, pitch or style change

APPENDIX E  
IRB



**Institutional Review Board**

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs  
P.O. Box 425619, Denton, TX 76204-5619  
940-898-3378 Fax 940-898-3416  
e-mail: IRB@twu.edu

April 12, 2010

Ms. Sara Philips  
9024 Cypress Creek  
Lantana, TX 76226

Dear Ms. Philips:

*Re: Young Children's Writing Development: Discourse Identity and Social Practice*

The above referenced study has been reviewed by the TWU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements for the protection of individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters must be submitted to the IRB upon receipt **PRIOR** to any data collection at that agency. A copy of the approved consent form with the IRB approval stamp and a copy of the annual/final report are enclosed. Please use the consent form with the most recent approval date stamp when obtaining consent from your participants. The signed consent forms and final report must be filed with the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This approval is valid one year from March 5, 2010. According to regulations from the Department of Health and Human Services, another review by the IRB is required if your project changes in any way, and the IRB must be notified immediately regarding any adverse events. If you have any questions, feel free to call the TWU Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kath DeOrnellas, PhD'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kath DeOrnellas, Chair  
Institutional Review Board - Denton

enc.

cc. Dr. Margaret Compton Department of Reading  
Dr. Nancy Anderson Department of Reading  
Graduate School