WRITING LESSONS: CASE STUDIES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

AND THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE STUDIES

OF STANFORD UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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August 2010

ABSTRACT

Seventy-two percent of fourth-graders in the United States cannot write proficiently, according to the 2002 NAEP data (National Center for Education Sciences, 2002). And high school students aren't doing much better, with only 76% reaching proficiency by the twelfth grade (National Center for Education Sciences, 2007). Achievement rates are even lower for minority students. My study addressed the problem of low writing achievement by looking at teachers' preparation and practices in writing instruction. The dissertation was guided by the question: *How are teachers prepared to teach writing, and what supports or hinders their effective practice in the preservice year and first year of teaching?*

In their review of the literature on teacher education, Clift and Brady (2006) note the multiple and complex learning experiences that are part of becoming a teacher. They challenge researchers to develop and utilize theoretical frameworks that capture this complexity. The theoretical framework employed for this study, cultural-historical activity theory, meets this challenge, providing a lens for examining teacher learning across contexts and how these varied experiences mediate teacher learning.

One aspect of this framework, mediating artifacts, is central to the proposed study. Artifacts play an important role in an activity setting, mediating individuals' interactions with the environment and shaping their thought. The term *mediating artifacts,* or tools, includes concrete items, such as curriculum, as well as concepts or ways of thinking (Cole, 1996). Within the domain of mediating artifacts, researchers have delineated two types of artifacts that are of particular interest for research on teacher learning: *conceptual tools* and *pedagogical* (Grossman et al., 1999). Conceptual tools are ideas, such as constructivism or student ownership, that can be applied to a number of teaching situations. Pedagogical tools, such as conducting a writing conference, are situation-specific. A sociocultural view describes learning as a process of appropriation mediated by experiences across multiple settings. This qualitative study examines the features of settings that provide opportunities to learn about writing

instruction in the preservice and first years of teaching. I aimed to illuminate the complex process of learning to teach writing and the factors within and across settings that affect teachers' appropriation of research-based conceptual and pedagogical tools for the teaching of writing.

This dissertation is a comparative case study of two large, public teacher education programs and their graduates across the preservice year and first year of teaching. I followed teachers as they moved through teacher education and began their teaching careers. The research was conducted in two phases. In phase one, I observed literacy methods courses, collected course artifacts, and interviewed course instructors in two teacher education programs, Northern University and Southern University. (All names in the study are synonyms.) In addition, I conducted focus groups with teacher candidates enrolled in these literacy courses and observed all the field placement classrooms to which I could gain access. This gave me a good sense of candidates' experiences and learning in the program. During phase one, I invited preservice teachers to become case study participants through their first year of teaching. Phase two focused on nine case study teachers—four from one program and five from another—as they taught writing in their first teaching year. During this phase, I conducted classroom observations, interviewed teachers, and collected artifacts from teacher planning and instruction. This 18-month, multi-site design allowed factors that influence appropriation of tools to be traced over time and across settings. I used a number of tools to analyze my data, including: coding using qualitative analysis software; writing descriptive, analytic, and theoretical memos; creating data displays; and mapping activity settings.

The analysis of the preservice data yielded a number of interesting findings. There is clear evidence that candidates in both cohorts appropriated conceptual and pedagogical tools from their methods courses. At Northern University, candidates were happy to have acquired some tools for teaching writing. They added these tools, along with others from their placements and other experiences, to their existing frameworks for writing instruction. These frameworks were broad, centering on fun and engaging

writing activities, and contained only a few pedagogical tools, if any. Candidates at Southern University gained a new framework for thinking about writing instruction, which they contrasted with their prior experiences in school and their experiences in the placement classrooms.

This cross-case comparison shows that the methods course can play a role in candidates' learning. Although it is clear that Southern University candidates had the advantage of models in the field placement, there is strong evidence that much of what they learned and how they thought about writing instruction came from the methods classroom. The course instructor, Cindy, used several pedagogical approaches. She would: engage candidates with the conceptual and pedagogical tools through reading and discussion, regularly assess candidate learning and respond to their needs, and engage candidates with pedagogical tools in roles of both student and teacher. Also of importance was her co-teacher, Christina, who served as a model and provided valuable insights as a first-year teacher. Cindy's pedagogical approach seemed to help candidates appropriate a framework for teaching, critique their apprenticeships of observation, evaluate their student teaching placement, and build a vision of the kind of teacher they hoped to become.

Both cases also demonstrate the importance of the placement setting in teacher learning. Regardless of the contradiction or continuity between the settings, the learning in the placement was salient. Candidates at Northern University experienced complete contradiction between the methods course and the placement, and they appropriated many tools from their placements that were of varying educational soundness. The only tools that the candidates rejected were those they deemed boring for students. Candidates at Southern University enjoyed more continuity between the placement and the methods course. Cindy's approach to teaching shows that, with the right support, candidates can learn from cooperating teachers that may not precisely model the course instructor's image of good writing instruction.

I extend these initial findings from preservice education through a study of participants' *conceptual frameworks* for the teaching of writing through the first year. In using the term conceptual framework to discuss teacher knowledge for writing

instruction, I aim to highlight the importance of understanding the relationships between conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching and content knowledge. I explored several dimensions of the conceptual framework, including the content of teachers' conceptual frameworks and the settings that mediated this content. I also studied the nature of these frameworks, including their degree of cohesion and their stability over time.

Five themes emerged related to participants' conceptual frameworks. First, preservice differences in appropriation by cohort continued into the first year, with Southern University graduates far more informed by their methods course than their Northern University colleagues. Graduates from Southern University appropriated more conceptual and pedagogical tools, and they were better able to articulate how those tools might create a cohesive program of instruction. Second, all teachers developed grade-level specific understandings of the tools they appropriated, and they were less confident about teaching grades very different from those in which they had experience. Third, most teachers did not have much knowledge about writing as a subject, both in terms of their knowledge as adult writers and in terms of writing knowledge pertinent to teaching elementary students. Fourth, teachers' conceptual frameworks remained relatively stable throughout the first year, though most teachers added or deepened their appropriation of content knowledge and tools. Finally, regardless of their quality or origins, conceptual frameworks guided teachers' decision-making throughout the first year.

In this study, I use the notion of a conceptual framework for teaching writing as a way to understand what study participants had learned and what that learning might afford them in their first year of teaching. The more robust frameworks of Southern University graduates indicate that characteristics of the preservice program (i.e., instructor pedagogy, alignment in approaches advocated in the placement and the methods course) yielded stronger appropriation for its graduates. Moreover, given that these frameworks tend to remain stable and inform decision-making, they may play an important role in teacher appropriation over time. But these frameworks are only one

influence in the complex interplay of settings in which first year teachers participate. I also explored the settings of the first teaching job and their impact on teacher learning.

Keeping teachers' preservice training and conceptual frameworks in mind, I analyzed the features of first-year settings that mediated teachers' appropriation of tools for teaching writing. I found that teachers came to their first jobs with the conceptual frameworks that they had appropriated during the preservice year. Most applied these frameworks to the new contexts in which they were to teach, and the frameworks of Southern University graduates were more adaptable and robust than those of Northern University. Regardless of preparation, differences between the preservice and first-year grade-levels posed significant challenges for teachers. Overall, the participants in this study did not have a strong grasp of the content of writing instruction, though graduates of Southern University at least had a sense of the kinds of things they might teach. As these new teachers entered the field, it was clear that they would need support in order to provide quality writing instruction to students. Unfortunately, most teachers in the study did not receive support that was sufficient to deepen or expand their appropriation of tools for writing instruction or increase their content knowledge. Carol and Natalie were exceptions, enjoying support from their grade-level teams, professional development, and curriculum, all of which aligned with their conceptual frameworks. They were the two strongest teachers in the study, providing the most consistent, well-designed instruction, and their experiences can serve as a model for supporting new teachers.

Curricular resources were also a powerful mediating force for study participants' learning. My study shows that for both highly supported and unsupported teachers, curricular materials can mediate teacher learning. It also shows that curricular artifacts designed to create coherence across schools, districts and states, such as standards and assessments, are too broad to create meaningful consistency. In looking at the nature of artifacts for lesson planning and their affordances, I found that teachers readily appropriated tools that were highly adaptable in terms of their applicability across grades and genres. However, these tools did not provide much opportunity for learning

about writing content or tools for teaching. In addition, these artifacts were flexible in part because they were not very detailed, and they did not offer much in terms of developing high-quality lessons. The teaching quality for teachers using these tools depended on the strength of their conceptual frameworks and the support in the settings in which they were learning to teach. Case study teachers also sought out lesson plans that provided more detail than the templates described above. Lessons that were situated in a unit were more likely to be appropriated than stand-alone lessons found in supplemental curricular books and binders.

Finally, I found wide variation in curricular resources—even among those lesson plans that were organized in units and provided some detail. In an examination of lesson plans from three sample curricula, I show that the representations of practice are often compressed, minimizing the aspects, or *faces*, of practice that are visible to teachers and the degree to which those aspects are unpacked, or *transparent*, to novices (Little, 2002).

There are a number of implications for this study. Methods course instructors may want to consider the notion of a conceptual framework for the teaching of writing and how they might foster the appropriation of such a framework. Two indications from this study are the need for content knowledge and a robust set of tools that can be adapted to a number of settings (e.g., not just other schools that use the same approach to teaching writing). Differences in teacher learning across the two cohorts suggest that pedagogical differences in methods courses matter for teacher appropriation. Teacher educators might consider the ways in which they can design the most optimal learning experiences for their students, which may include features of Cindy's approach. In a related point, teacher education programs could better serve their instructors and students through support for teacher educators—especially those instructors who have been hired from the field without training or experience in professional education.

Teachers' difficulties with curriculum suggest a number of implications, including the integration of state-adopted curriculum into the methods course and ongoing support in the teaching setting. Policy-makers and curriculum writers should both take note that many curricula do not provide the support that new teachers need. I

suggest that stake-holders in writing instruction collaborate to create materials that will share our collective professional knowledge with novice teachers.

Directions for future research include defining the professional knowledge for the teaching of elementary writing, exploring what a strong beginning conceptual framework might include. A related question concerns how we might support the appropriation of such frameworks so that teachers are better prepared. Finally, I suggest we study the features of curricular tools, which can have such a powerful influence on teacher learning, to create representations of practice from which new teachers can learn.

For Holly, Deb, and Sarah.

Thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As my graduate years draw to a close, I have been reflecting on the many people and opportunities that have led me to this particular point in my career. Early in my teaching career, Sara Garcia, Jonathan Lovell, Andrea Butler, and Suzanne Boxer-Gasman encouraged me to pursue leadership roles and engage in scholarship and research. That mentoring set me on a path toward graduate study. Throughout my work on this dissertation, I have continued to benefit from the generous support of mentors, colleagues, and friends.

This study would not have been possible without the consistent participation of the case study teachers. Like most new teachers, they were extremely busy and at times overwhelmed. When the going got tough, the teachers still continued to participate. They opened their classrooms to me even when they were unsure of their teaching, and they candidly shared their experiences, thoughts, and emotions. The two teacher educators, John and Cindy, were incredibly helpful. Observing their courses and talking with them was a critical part of the study, and these observations and conversations also inspired me to think about my practice as a teacher educator.

I would like to thank the Spencer Foundation for their financial support. The Spencer Dissertation Fellowship for Research Related to Education allowed me to spend more time on analysis and writing. Without this fellowship, I would not have been able to finish the dissertation this year. The Spencer Foundation Research Training Grant and the Stanford School of Education Research Support Grant provided much-needed funds for dissertation expenses such as transcription and transportation. I am grateful for the support that these programs offered in helping me to hone my grant-writing skills. Specifically, I would like to thank Ann Porteus for her careful reading and response to my proposal.

Each member of my dissertation committee provided support for this project. I would like to thank Connie Juel for inspiring me to think deeply about teacher education and for encouraging me in everything I have undertaken at Stanford. The five

years that I have worked with Connie on the literacy course series for the Stanford Teacher Education Program have been invaluable for me as a teacher educator and as a researcher of teacher education. Aki Murata has been a wonderful mentor over the years. She has always shown an interest in my ideas, and her belief in me has given me strength in times when my confidence has wavered. Hilda Borko's incisive questions and detailed feedback on both my proposal and dissertation manuscript helped me with the analysis and writing. I cannot imagine doing this study without Pam Grossman's guidance. As my advisor and dissertation chair, Pam spent countless hours advising me on this project. She always made time to meet despite a very full schedule. Her dedication and enthusiasm are truly inspiring. Whether reading the ninth draft of a grant proposal or early analysis memos, Pam responded to my writing with thoughtful consideration. This feedback helped me to improve my study while developing valuable research skills.

Writing a dissertation has the potential to be an isolating experience, but I was lucky to have several friends and colleagues with whom I could work. Chandra Alston, Nikole Richardson, and Sandy Philipose urged me to create writing deadlines and to meet them; those deadlines kept my work moving forward. They also provided thoughtful feedback on my work. Our discussions helped me to articulate my ideas more clearly and to stretch my thinking, and I often left our meetings feeling invigorated and ready to begin the next task. Lauren Stevenson was an incredible help throughout the writing process. I knew I could count on our work marathons at Café Trieste and our discussions on analysis, writing, and life to sustain me in this work, especially when times were challenging. Without Lauren and lunch dessert, the writing of this dissertation might have taken longer and would certainly not have been as enjoyable.

I am thankful for all the people who have cheered me on—the five cohorts of STEPpies, my friends, and my sisters, Kaitlin and Sarah. Finally, I would like to thank Holly Johnston, whose love, patience, kindness, wisdom, and understanding have helped me through many challenges, including the writing of this dissertation. Holly,

you are a truly outstanding dissertation cheerleader. Thank you, thank you for all the ways—large and small—that you supported me.

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From No Child Left Behind to Reading First, all eyes have been on the improvement of reading among elementary children. In the rush to improve reading scores, writing has been all but ignored. Yet nearly three-fourths of elementary, middle, and high school students score "below proficient" on our national writing assessment (National Center for Education Sciences, 2002, 2007).[1] The statistics for minority groups are even more disheartening. A closer look at the 72% of below-proficient fourth-graders reveals troubling gaps; sixty-six percent of Whites are below proficient, while a staggering 86% of African-Americans and 83% of Hispanics score below the proficient level (National Center for Education Sciences, 2002).

Efforts to improve writing have approached the problem from a number of angles. Accountability measures by many states have led to statewide assessments, some of which are high-stakes for students and teachers (Callahan & Spalding, 2006; Hillocks, 2002). The National Writing Project continues to support teachers in writing instruction through a variety of efforts. The National Commission on Writing (2003) has called for improved teacher preparation in writing and a greater emphasis on writing in school. The National Center on Education and the Economy published several New Standards documents for literacy, which were created by a cadre of nationally recognized scholars (see, for example, *New Standards: Primary Literacy Standards*, 2004). Through a standards-based program including rigorous curriculum and teacher professional development, districts adopting the program have shown positive results for teaching quality and student achievement (Supowitz & May, 2003).

Despite these efforts, most students are not receiving much writing instruction at the elementary or secondary level (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdéz, & Garnier, 2002; National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, 2003).

[1] The NAEP was not administered to fourth graders in 2007.

Moreover, many teachers do not have the knowledge and teaching strategies needed to promote student achievement in writing (Kennedy, 1998). This may be due to their training, since "composition pedagogy remains a neglected area at most of the nation's thirteen hundred schools of education, where future public school teachers are trained" (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2006, pp. 5-6). Due to this neglect of composition pedagogy, K-12 students are missing out on opportunities to learn to write, opportunities that would refine their thinking, support critical reading skills, and help them communicate effectively. These missed opportunities result in fewer options for college, employment, and civic engagement. In order to better understand the problem of teacher training and implementation of effective writing instruction in schools, this dissertation is situated at the intersection of teacher training and practice. I investigate the question: *How are teachers prepared to teach writing, and what supports or hinders their effective practice in the preservice year and first year of teaching?*

This chapter provides a review of the literature for elementary writing instruction, learning to teach in a subject matter, and learning to teach writing in particular. I then turn to a description of my theoretical framework and research questions. The chapter concludes with an overview of the dissertation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I review the literature related to preparing elementary writing teachers, which includes research on elementary writing instruction and studies of subject-matter teacher preparation. I begin with a review of the literature on elementary writing instruction, and I make the case that we have a robust knowledge to of effective methods. As in other disciplines, such as mathematics and science, this research-based instruction requires that teachers have content knowledge in writing as well as pedagogical knowledge, an understanding of broader concepts of teaching and learning, knowledge of student development, and the like. Teacher educators are charged with preparing prospective teachers with this knowledge, and their effectiveness in doing so

has been debated. I continue the review with a discussion of the longitudinal research that examines teacher learning in the preservice year and beyond.

TEACHING WRITING IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Whether applying for a job or college, students need writing skills. There is widespread public agreement that these skills need to be taught throughout a child's schooling (National Writing Project, 2006). Lisa Delpit (1988) has called on educators to explicitly teach writing skills that students need for success in academics and work. Writing ability has been used as a gate-keeping device for college entrance and employment; to deny students resources and support in writing is to promote current inequities.

In addition, writing proficiency is essential for living in the modern world and participating in our democracy. Technological innovations, such as Internet access on cellular phones and social networking sites, provide ready access to information more than ever before. Unlike older technologies for information-sharing, (e.g., television and radio), these new technologies provide opportunities for dialogue. Everyday people from a variety of backgrounds are sharing information and discussing issues online. Citizens can more easily voice their views, organize, and participate in civic activity. As these technologies become more pervasive, literacy provides a powerful tool for promoting equality and democracy in the United States. If teachers encourage high levels of ownership, agency, and skill in writing, students may become citizens with the ability, confidence, and sense of responsibility to become agents for change.

There are many reasons why our students are not learning to write in school. Teachers in underperforming schools are often required to follow a scripted, test-driven curriculum that emphasizes basic drill and practice over opportunities for composing text. There is also the challenge of elementary school culture. Historically, elementary school writing instruction has focused on grammar and handwriting practice (Chapman, 2006). Compositions were generally assigned to assess subject area knowledge and were accompanied by little or no instruction in composition. Because of this history, teachers may lack the content or pedagogical knowledge to teach writing, or they may

imitate the familiar practices that they remember from their years as students, years Lortie (1975) refers to as an "apprenticeship of observation."

Since the 1980s, more attention has been paid to elementary composition as a subject in its own right (Sperling & Freedman, 2001). There has been emphasis on both a disciplinary approach to writing and writing across subject areas (New Standards Primary Literacy Standards Committee, 2004; Writing Study Group of the NCTE Executive Committee, 2004). A disciplinary approach to subject matter engages students in the specialized knowledge and ways of thinking within a content area (Ball, 1988; Dewey, 1964; Wineburg, 2001). The curriculum of specialized knowledge and ways of thinking in writing might be defined as 1) learning about writing through study of genres, craft (i.e., writing techniques), and conventions 2) learning how to write for specific purposes and audiences, and 3) learning about the process of writing and developing one's processes through frequent opportunities to write.

There is a growing body of research on writing instruction that reflects an emphasis on these aspects of writing content. Taken together, these studies provide an indication of the pedagogical practices most likely to support student learning:

- opportunities to write for an audience and with a purpose (Alber, 1999; Andrews, Torgerson, Low, & McGuinn, 2009; Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Dyson, 1984; Flower, Stein, Ackerman, Kantz, McCormick, & Peck, 1990; Gradwohl & Schumacher, 1993; Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007; Scardemalia & Bereiter, 1986; Turner, 1993).
- opportunities to develop writing process skills (Andrews, Torgerson, Low, & McGuinn, 2009; Bereiter & Scardemalia, 1987; Bui, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2006; Chapman, 2006; Flood & Lapp, 2000; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Goldstein & Carr, 1996; Graves, 1983)
- modeling and explicit instruction in writing process strategies, text structure, and craft techniques (Andrews, Torgerson, Low, & McGuinn, 2009; Bui, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2006; Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, & Stevens, 1991; De La Paz, 2007; Fidalgo, Torrance, & García, 2008; Fitzgerald, 1987; Fitzgerald & Teasley, 1986; Graham & Harris, 1993; Graham, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1995; Saddler, Behforooz, & Asaro, 2008; Tracy, Reid, & Graham, 2009; Wollman-Bonilla & Werchaldo, 1999)
- using model texts to teach genre and craft techniques (Chapman, 1995; Corden, 2007; Hillocks, 1984; Kamberelis & Bovino, 1999)
- inquiry activities (Dressel, 1990; Hillocks, 1984; Sadoski, Wilson, & Norton, 1997; Supovitz & May, 2003)

- peer and teacher feedback (Andrews, Torgerson, Low, & McGuinn, 2009; Corden, 2007; De La Paz, 2007; Fitzgerald & Stamm, 1992; Gere & Abbott, 1985; McCarthy, 1994)
- evaluative criteria for student and teacher use, such as rubrics (Andrews, Torgerson, Low, & McGuinn, 2009; Hillocks, 1984; Sadoski et al., 1997; Spandel & Stiggins, 1990; Supovitz & May, 2003)

The type of writing instruction described above requires that teachers have a deep understanding of the subject matter. This includes knowledge of genre, craft, conventions, and writing process. It also demands that teachers see and teach writing as a fundamentally communicative endeavor rather than as a school exercise. One might assume that teachers would have a strong understanding of writing after four years of college. However, it appears that most incoming preservice teachers see writing as a rule-governed skill set rather than as a complex endeavor that involves specific knowledge and processes (Kennedy, 1998).

In addition to understanding writing, teachers must be capable of making this knowledge accessible to students. Unlike writers, who need only understand writing for their work, teachers are charged with making this complex practice clear to children. This requires combined knowledge of content, pedagogical techniques, and student development (among multiple factors) to provide educative experiences for students. Preservice teachers are not likely to have this ability to transform disciplinary knowledge into lessons; therefore, appropriating a repertoire of instructional strategies is essential for beginning teachers.

Many teacher preparation programs aim to support teacher learning of knowledge and skills for subject-matter teaching. Subject-specific methods courses are often the space in which this is addressed. However, there is considerable debate about the impact of these courses on teacher practice. In the next section, I present this debate and provide a review of longitudinal studies that examine the relationships between methods courses, new teachers, and their early-career practice.

THE IMPACT OF METHODS COURSES ON KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE IN THE FIRST YEARS OF TEACHING

The efficacy of teacher education programs to prepare quality teachers has long been debated. Many programs promote a reform agenda, encouraging their graduates to employ new teaching practices in the classroom (Borko & Eisenhart, 1992; Kennedy, 1998). However, schools and teacher practices have been slow to change (Cuban, 1984). Various theories have been offered to explain the glacial change in schools. Lortie (1975) accounts for the stability by proposing that all teachers have experienced an "apprenticeship of observation" through their own schooling, which shapes their beliefs about teaching and, consequently, their behavior in the classroom. These views, constructed over a lifetime, are difficult to change. Some assert that teacher education experiences are too brief to have an impact on these long-held beliefs (e.g., Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). Others maintain that teachers do change in preservice education but experience "praxis shock" when they enter the profession; the demands of the job are overwhelming, and lack of support for reform teaching leads to more traditional modes of practice (Veenman, 1984). Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) argue that occupational socialization plays a significant role in steering new teachers' practice toward traditional models of teaching that comply with the school culture. While Zeichner and Tabachnik (1981) claim that any effects of teacher education would be "washed out" by this occupational socialization, Brouwer and Korthagen (2005) suggest that teachers take some of what they learn into their practice.

There are many longitudinal case studies that appear to support the notion that teacher education does not have a lasting impact (Artiles, Barreto, McClafferty, & Pena, 1998; Guzetti, 1989; Hollenbeck, 2006; Harris & Sass, 2007; McGinnis, Parker, & Graeber, 2004; Sturtevant, 1996; Wilcox, Lanier, Schram, and Lappan, 1992). For example, Van Hover and Yeager (2004) examined the practices of three beginning history teachers in three very different teaching contexts. They found that none of the teachers used the pedagogical approaches (e.g., primary documents, historical inquiry) learned in their preservice program as their primary teaching mode. The teachers cited concerns about covering all the material, departmental pressure, state tests, and Advanced Placement exams as reasons why they could not use progressive approaches.

Moreover, concerns about maintaining classroom order and assumptions about the abilities of their students kept them from engaging in open-ended discussion.

New methods of statistical analyses have allowed for an examination of large data sets to see if there is a relationship between a teacher's training and her students' achievement scores in mathematics and reading. In a study of New York teachers, Boyd and colleagues found a positive relationship between teachers from strong teacher preparation programs and their students' achievement in language arts, but this effect was only evident in the first year of teaching; after the first year, there was no difference between teachers entering the profession from multiple pathways. Conversely, they found positive relationships between student achievement in mathematics and teacher preparation in the second year of teaching, but not in the first (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008). Similarly, in a study of North Carolina's teachers and student achievement, Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2007) found positive relationships between teachers' preservice preparation and student achievement in math but not in reading.

However, many researchers claim that teacher education can make a difference, and there is evidence that powerful teacher education is having an impact on some teachers' practice. Darling-Hammond (2006) found that graduates of strong teacher education programs are able to employ the methods promoted by these programs, citing their preservice education as the foundation for their success. Other researchers have found that the effects are not "washed out" but take several years to appear (Cady, Meier, & Lubinski, 2006). For example, Grossman and colleagues (2000) found that teachers need time to take on the complex challenge of their new profession. In many cases, putting reform ideals into place on day one is often not practical or possible. Teachers in their first year often rely on the curriculum provided by the school. In the second year, teachers are more able to make changes to curriculum and draw upon practices learned in preservice education for support.

The efficacy of the methods course, in particular, has received much attention in the literature on teacher education. Methods courses play a critical role in preparing teachers for the classroom, providing preservice teachers with a repertoire of teaching

strategies for a particular subject. In addition to this, some programs incorporate content knowledge into their methods courses. As with teacher education in general, the efficacy of the methods course to support effective teaching is debated. However, there is growing evidence that these courses provide valuable support for beginning teachers. The current literature on methods courses suggests that they can play a role in supporting teachers' subject-matter teaching.

In a review of the research on methods courses, Clift and Brady (2006) suggest that most of the studies in this area are designed in ways that make it difficult to draw inferences about the lasting impact of such courses. Much of the current research is limited in scale, both in terms of the number of subjects and the study length. Case studies spanning the length of a course or program year are common, with data collected at the time of program completion serving as an indicator of future classroom practice. Moreover, a considerable number of studies are conducted by teacher educators examining their own students; in these cases, "it is impossible to know how much data generated from the case study was an artifact of the prospective teachers' desires to please the instructor" (p. 330).

My study seeks to understand how teachers are prepared to teach writing and what supports or hinders their learning of effective practice in the preservice year and first year of teaching. Therefore, I do not review the myriad studies that focus solely on the preservice year. Rather, I focus this review on studies that continue to gather data on teacher learning within and beyond the preservice year. In the next section, I discuss the key findings across subject areas and then discuss studies related specifically to writing instruction in more detail.

LEARNING FROM THE METHODS COURSE: SUPPORTS AND OBSTACLES

Findings from studies across subject areas converge on several ways in which methods courses support new teacher learning. Many studies have noted positive teaching outcomes when methods courses focus on building content knowledge and providing a repertoire of subject-specific teaching strategies. Teachers who appropriate content knowledge and teaching strategies from their courses are better able to implement reform practices advocated by teacher educators (Cunliffe, 1994; McDevitt,

Gardner, Shaklee, Bertholf, & Troyer, 1999). Adamson and colleagues also found this to be true. In addition, they found that teachers with stronger content knowledge had higher student achievement (Adamson et al., 2003). In mathematics and science, two studies showed a relationship between teachers' uptake of new pedagogical practices and the pedagogy of the methods courses. Those teachers who had taken reformed science and mathematics courses (i.e., course instructors modeled the pedagogies that they promoted) taught in a significantly more reformed manner and their development significantly outpaced their counterparts (Adamson et al., 2003; Judson & Sawada, 2001).

The studies above demonstrate how methods course instruction in content knowledge and teaching strategies can support better teaching. But training teachers in both content and pedagogies is an arduous task, and some programs do not adequately prepare teachers despite their best efforts. For example, new teachers may lack the content knowledge required to enact reform-oriented practices (Ensor, 2001; Hart, 2004) or they may not receive adequate training for enacting these practices in typical classrooms (Bickmore, Smagorinsky, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2005; Yon & Passe, 1994).

A number of features of teacher preparation may also contribute to their relative impact on students; these features include the number of methods courses taken and the overall coherence of the program. According to two large-scale studies, preservice teachers are supported by receiving a healthy dose of methods courses during their training. The first study, a survey of 3,305 kindergarten teachers, found that the number of methods courses taken in reading and mathematics was positively correlated with teachers' use of effective instructional practices in each subject, practices that were significantly correlated with student achievement (Guarino, Hamilton, Lockwood, & Rathbun, 2006). The second, a study of 86 mathematics and science teachers, found a threshold for effects on teaching practices; teachers who took only one course in mathematics or science methods did not teach in a more reformed manner than a control group, while those who had taken two or more courses scored significantly better on observational measures of reform pedagogy (Judson & Sawada, 2001). While more than one methods course in a subject area appears to yield better-prepared teachers,

programs are constrained by timelines as short as ten months, making extensive methods preparation difficult to accommodate.

Another finding across subjects is the importance of providing a conceptually coherent program for students, including continuity within and between courses and between the program and the student teaching classrooms. Programs with strong conceptual coherence support preservice teachers to develop clear conceptual understandings and goals, while programs in which the actors have multiple or conflicting goals do not provide adequate support for teacher learning (Allen, 2009; Bickmore et al., 2005; Cook, Smagorinsky, Fry, Konopak, & Moore, 2002; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). Meyer and colleagues examined the teaching of two groups of first year teachers during their first months of teaching; six teachers were graduates of a coherent program built around the theme of culturally relevant pedagogy, while the second group (4 teachers) did not have a strong connection to field placements, and messages about good teaching varied between the field and university. Teachers in the first program used culturally relevant pedagogy in their classrooms during their first year of teaching. In contrast, the researchers found three of the four teachers in the latter group valued what they learned from their cooperating teachers far more than anything learned in their literacy methods course (Meyer, Flores-Duenas, & Rossi, 2000).

The notion of coherence also applies to graduates in their first teaching positions. The school goals, curriculum, mentoring, professional learning opportunities, and parent community may all affect teachers' use of the teaching approaches that were advocated in their programs (Arzi & White, 2007; Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Newell, Tallman, & Letcher, 2009; Steele, 2001). For example, Allen (2009) found that first year teachers stated that they valued learning in their preservice courses. However, in their first year of teaching, they strove to emulate their cooperating teachers from the preservice year and veteran teachers at their school, teachers whose practices did not reflect the approaches promoted in the preservice program. In a study of elementary science teaching, Forbes and Davis (2009) followed four graduates through their first three years of teaching. They found that graduates took up the central ideas of driving

questions and investigation from their preservice program. However, their curriculum was not organized around these ideas, and the teachers struggled to make modifications to better fit their ideas of good teaching.

Together these studies begin to illustrate the ways in which learning from methods courses might be supported or hindered. They show that opportunities to learn content knowledge and teaching strategies in more than one methods course can lead to better-prepared teachers; in contrast, teachers with hazy content knowledge or a weak repertoire of strategies are likely to struggle and may rely on more traditional modes of teaching. These studies also provide an important lesson regarding the need for program coherence. Those teachers who experience continuity between courses and their placements are more likely to instantiate reform pedagogies than those receiving mixed messages from program staff and cooperating teachers. Finally, they show that teachers are influenced by the contexts in which they begin their careers. The degree to which these contexts are supportive of the practices promoted in teacher education seems to play a role in whether or not teachers instantiate what they learned in the preservice year. The longitudinal research on learning to teach writing, which I address below, echoes many of the findings here.

LEARNING TO TEACH WRITING

In writing, too, the literature shows the importance of opportunities to learn content knowledge and pedagogical strategies in a program that is coherent across courses and the student teaching placement. In addition, some of these studies provide a nuanced understanding of how preservice teachers transition into their first jobs, exploring the mechanisms by which learning from methods courses might be eroded or fostered.

Two studies compared new teachers from different preservice programs without observing classroom instruction. Though the conclusions one may draw from such studies are limited, the findings contribute to our overall understanding of supporting teacher growth. Daves' (1990) survey study followed beginning elementary teachers into their first teaching year. She found that perceptions of principals' expectations had a strong influence on teacher decision-making. Teachers reported that 1) administrators

expected them to teach from the basal series, which did not align with the approach promoted in their program and 2) they did not use the instructional strategies promoted in their preservice reading methods courses (e.g., language experience, writing activities, children's literature, and learning centers).

Kennedy (1998) followed teachers from eight teacher education programs, which she labeled “reform” or “traditional.” The reform programs discussed writing instruction using a subject-specific instructional approach, while traditional programs focused on general management, planning, and teaching strategies. The participants were interviewed at the beginning of their programs and again after they had been teaching for several months. They were asked to explain their beliefs about writing instruction and to respond to a series of hypothetical student situations. Kennedy found that teachers who had attended programs with reform-oriented writing agendas moved from highly prescriptive responses to more knowledgeable and nuanced responses that took strategies and purposes into account. In contrast, graduates of the traditional programs became increasingly focused on prescriptions, classroom control, and student compliance.

Though their study is much smaller than the studies above, Whittaker and colleagues (2000) used classroom observations to provide a more detailed picture of how teachers used their learning from methods courses. The researchers compared graduates of two programs, following four teachers from each program. The first, a two-year internship program, included a year of coursework followed by an internship year in which teachers taught full time while finishing the program. The comparison program was a post-graduate, year-long preservice program. Teachers’ practice was determined through interviews and observations using a developmental scale. The internship students had higher observational ratings for learning environments and literacy practices in their first year of teaching. The authors attribute this success to program coherence; there were strong connections between the field placements and the program. In addition, they cite strong teaching examples in the preservice year and on-site mentoring support through the first year of teaching as reasons for the success of these teachers. (Whittaker, Markowitz, & Latter, 2000).

Ball (2006) also evaluated her preservice training course. In her book *Multicultural Strategies for Education and Social Change: Carriers of the Torch in the US and South Africa*, she explains the international need to prepare teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners and provides detailed portraits of preservice and first-year teacher learning. She describes a course that she taught to more than 100 preservice and practicing teachers in the United States and South Africa. The program focused on critical literacy through writing, and the pedagogy of the course mirrored the kinds of pedagogies that Ball advocates for classroom use. Through analysis of teachers' writing, she identified four stages of teacher change: metacognitive awareness, ideological becoming, internalization, and active agency guided by personal voice. She found that teachers who were more advanced in this developmental model were better able to learn from her course and subsequently made changes in their teaching. Ball followed some of these teachers in case studies and found that they were using the strategies taught in the program.

The most extensive work on learning to teach writing comes from the Teacher Education and Professional Development (TEPD) project at the National Research Center for English Learning and Achievement. These case studies provide detailed accounts of English/language arts teachers' learning and practice as they transition from their preservice programs into the first three years of teaching. Based on the premise that all learning is situated in particular contexts, the studies investigate how multiple settings (e.g., university courses, placement classrooms, grade level meetings, classroom teaching) shape teachers' pedagogical decision-making. They also explore how teachers' practice changes through their understanding and use of conceptual and pedagogical tools. *Conceptual tools* refer to ideas about teaching that support understanding or frame a teacher's thinking. They may be general, such as scaffolding and student ownership, or subject-specific, such as the writing process. *Pedagogical tools* are defined as specific teaching practices, strategies, or resources. Teachers can use conceptual tools to help them think about the ways in which they might teach. Pedagogical tools can then be used to transform these general ideas into action (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999). This program of research has generated

many cases, some of which are cited in the sections above. Here I highlight those that focus on writing.

Grossman and colleagues (2000) studied ten English/language arts teachers from their last year of teacher education and into their second year of teaching. Data collection included interviews and observations of the teachers and those who worked with them. The researchers wanted to know if teachers were using the conceptual and pedagogical tools taught in teacher education. In both the secondary and elementary methods courses, teachers were introduced to a variety of conceptual and pedagogical tools. Both types of tools were found to support new teacher learning. The conceptual tools helped teachers think critically about their goals, their teaching, and their schools' curricular materials. Moreover, the conceptual tools of scaffolding, process writing, and student ownership helped teachers create a vision of their teaching ideal. This served as a lens through which they could evaluate their practice. Pedagogical tools provided a concrete support for instantiating reform ideals. Teachers without sufficient training and practice with pedagogical tools struggled to put their conceptual ideals into practice.

The researchers also found that appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools depended on both context and time. The degree to which teachers could instantiate their vision was in part a product of their teacher education training but was also dependent upon the teaching context (e.g., students, curriculum, and support). Finally, teachers needed time to sort through the myriad challenges of a first teaching job. Teachers often adhered tightly to the curricular materials their first year. In the second year, teachers felt more able to make changes to curriculum and drew upon practices learned in preservice education for support. The use of curricular materials as a means of new teacher support was a strong finding in this study. The materials helped teachers plan and influenced the way they thought about the subject matter.

Grossman and Thompson (2008) followed up on the theme of curricular materials in their study of three high school English teachers. The researchers examined how: 1) teachers perceived and used the materials 2) teachers' backgrounds in English and teacher education informed their perception and use of materials, and 3) the

curriculum afforded opportunities for new teacher learning. The researchers conducted individual and group interviews, observed classroom instruction, and collected curricular materials for analysis. They found that, at first, teachers adhered closely to the curriculum, which served as a source for learning and often shaped their thinking. Over time the teachers began to adapt the curriculum to more closely match their teaching goals. However, the materials continued to have a profound effect in shaping teachers' views and teaching into the second and third years.

A final case from the TEPD study follows a beginning teacher, Leigh, through her first three years as an eighth grade English teacher (Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, & Fry, 2003). Leigh's preservice preparation was described as "fragmented." The preservice teachers did not move through the program as a cohort, and there did not appear to be a unifying theory or message. Furthermore, the one methods course in the program did not address how to teach writing. During student teaching, Leigh was "immersed . . . in a setting that stressed conformity to established rules," (p. 156). This left her with her subject-matter knowledge, apprenticeship of observation, and student teaching experiences as the primary guides in making instructional decisions for writing.

As an eighth grade English teacher in an affluent school, Leigh experienced enormous pressure for her students to perform well on the state writing exam. The more experienced teachers encouraged her to teach to the test. Leigh lacked the conceptual tools to critique this test-driven approach to instruction; limited subject-specific preparation and high-pressure testing contributed to her adoption of traditional methods. Had Leigh participated in a program with a strong preparation in conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing, the authors speculate that she may have been able to navigate the high-pressure environment of her middle school while staying committed to reform ideals.

Taken together, these studies in writing preparation reinforce the findings from the research in other subject areas. The research of Ball (2006) and Kennedy (1998) lend support to the efficacy of the methods course to build preservice teachers' content knowledge and provide skills for subject-specific teaching strategies. The contrasting

cases of Whittaker and colleagues (2000) demonstrate the power of program continuity and continued support in the first year of teaching. Daves' (1990) work illustrates the impact of principals' expectations in new teachers' decision-making. Using a conceptual framework grounded in the appropriation of tools in various settings, studies from the Center for English Learning and Achievement contribute a more nuanced explanation of how tools from methods courses are taken up and what aspects of the initial teaching job support or constrain their use.

Clearly, there is scant research on the preparation of elementary teachers to teach writing. More research is needed to understand how to provide the best preparation and support. However, the extant research does provide some indications for avenues of research. Many studies and theories of learning to teach converge on the notion that teachers' practice is informed by multiple experiences as students, preservice teachers, and practicing teachers. In my study, I draw upon a theoretical framework that acknowledges the complexities of learning to teach (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Newell, Gingrich, & Johnson, 2001). I discuss this framework in the next section.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning to teach is a complex endeavor. Preservice teachers are influenced by many factors, including teacher education and their experiences as students. When teachers begin their careers, the norms, tools, and actors in the setting will likely shape their decision-making. In their review of the literature on teacher education, Clift and Brady (2006) note the multiple and complex learning experiences that are part of becoming a teacher. They challenge researchers to develop and utilize theoretical frameworks that capture this complexity. The theoretical framework employed for this study, cultural-historical activity theory, meets this challenge, providing a lens for examining teacher learning across contexts and how these varied experiences affect teacher learning. In this section, I provide an overview of the theory and describe the main features of an activity setting. I then go into some detail on two concepts central

to the theory and important to the proposed study: mediating artifacts and appropriation. I close with some examples of how I use the theory to analyze settings for teacher learning.

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL ACTIVITY THEORY

Teachers learn to teach from participation in multiple settings, such as preservice classes, student teaching, supervisory groups, and even their own schooling. This complex journey of experiences and learning can be studied using a cultural-historical activity theory framework. Cultural-historical activity theorists view learning as embedded in and mediated by goal-oriented activity (Cole, 1981; Leont'ev, 1979). In this paradigm, "intellectual activity is not isolated from practical activity. . . . Internal activity, which has arisen out of external, practical activity, is not separate from it and does not rise above it; rather, it retains its fundamental and two-way connection with it" (Leont'ev, 1979, p. 58). Learning of higher psychological functions is defined as a process of appropriation that begins at the interpersonal level with participation in culturally mediated experiences. Gradually, what takes place between people becomes appropriated by the individual with increasing understanding and flexibility (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the activities in which preservice teachers participate provide an opportunity to appropriate knowledge and practices of teaching. Studying these activities can help us identify and describe factors that shape teacher learning.

In order to better understand how activities mediate learning, Engström and Meittinen (1999) propose an analysis of the settings in which activities take place. Framing activity within a setting draws attention to how the actors, objects, and norms interact and mediate movement toward a goal (in this case, the goal of teacher learning). They define the following components of an activity setting: the *subject*, who is motivated toward a goal; the *object* or goal of the activity; the *mediating artifacts*—both cognitive and concrete—used to achieve the goal; the *community* in which the activity takes place; the *division of labor*, or roles, of the various actors; and the *rules* that guide the activity in the setting (see Figure 1). These activity settings exist within systems of activity, or a group of activity settings related by their part in some type of joint work.

For example, the activity settings of a methods course, supervisory meeting, and field placement are all part of an activity system for preservice teacher education.

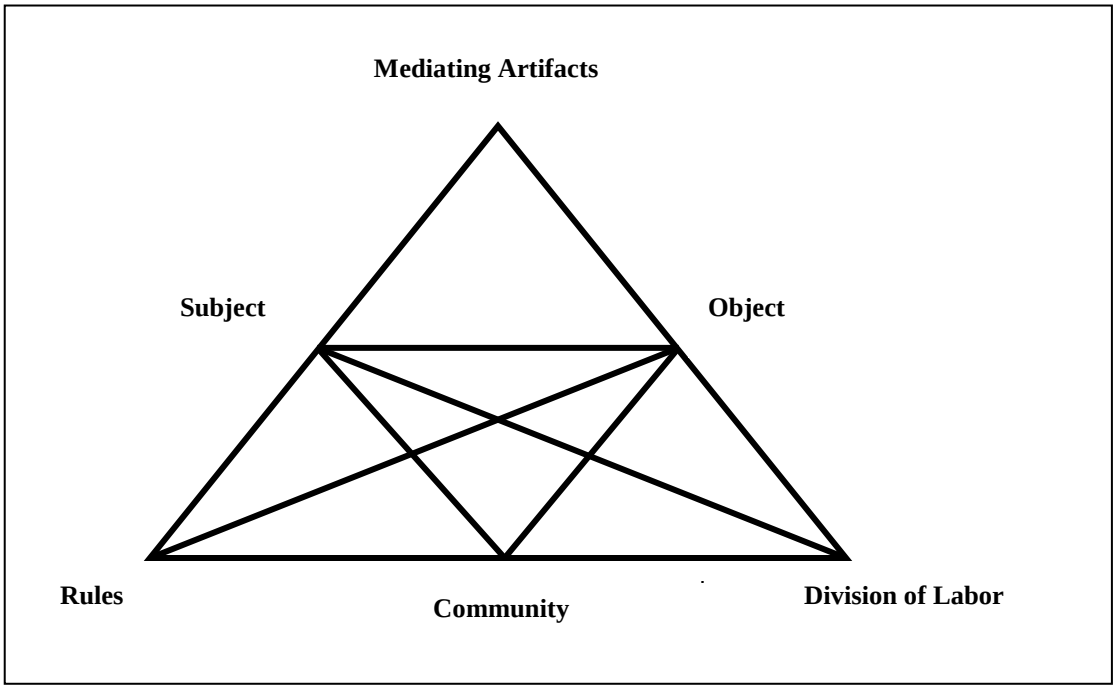

Figure 1. Map of an activity setting. From Cole, M. and Engeström, Y. (1993). A cultural-historical approach to situated cognition. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations* (pp. 1-46). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Preservice teachers participate in a number of settings that inform their learning. Some are explicitly designed for teacher learning, such as methods courses, supervisory meetings, and field placements. Other experiences mediate teacher candidates' learning even though that is not the object or desired outcome of the activity. For example, while the goal of teacher candidates' elementary schooling experiences was not to train them to be teachers, an unintended outcome of this experience is often deep-seated—and even subconscious—notions about teaching and learning.

In understanding any activity setting, historicity is a key concept. Activity systems "take shape and are transformed over lengthy periods of time" (Engeström, 2001, p. 136). The practices, mediating artifacts, rules, and division of labor have been honed throughout the history of the activity to serve a goal. As participants enter an activity setting, they both appropriate the practices of the activity and modify them based on the ideas and information they may bring from other settings. Like sociologists

before them (e.g., Lortie, 1975; Cuban, 1984), Cole and Engström (1993) have found that institutional activity systems such as hospitals and schools are very slow to change.

This institutional stability poses a challenge for teacher educators, who often train prospective teachers in hopes they will affect change in the setting in which they will teach. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe this tension for newcomers: "On the one hand, they need to engage in the existing practice, which has developed over time: to understand it, to participate in it, and to become full members of the community in which it exists. On the other hand, they have a stake in its development as they begin to establish their own identity in its future" (p. 115).

THE ROLE OF MEDIATING ARTIFACTS IN THE ACTIVITY SETTING

One aspect of this framework, mediating artifacts, is central to the proposed study. Artifacts play an important role in an activity setting, mediating individuals' interactions with the environment and shaping their thought. The term *mediating artifacts,* or tools, includes concrete items, such as curriculum, as well as concepts or ways of thinking (Cole, 1996). Tools embody the history of an activity in that they reflect refinement of practices, practices enacted in service of a goal. In his study of archeologists and lawyers, Goodwin (1994) demonstrates how mediating artifacts are used in professions to support continuity, understanding, and problem-solving among people. For example, archeologists categorize the color of dirt using specific procedures for sampling and a Munsell color chart, which is used as a standard measure all over the world.

Teaching seems comparatively less standardized; there are a wide variety of artifacts, and the underlying assumptions of particular artifacts—often hidden to their users—may lead to very different practices. In writing instruction, too, there are a variety of tools available and not much agreement on which should be used. Therefore teachers may encounter different types of artifacts for the teaching of writing and these are likely to have implications for their practice. For example, a writing assessment that uses a five-point, genre-specific rubric will yield a different portrait of student strengths

and needs than an evaluation based solely on English language conventions. In this case the artifact, a measurement tool, directs the teacher's attention to student work in different ways, leading to different perspectives about features of good writing and to different instructional implications.

This lack of agreement in the field leads to some interesting learning situations for new teachers. In some school settings, teachers are required to use mediating artifacts, such as curriculum or grading procedures, which work at cross purposes to their teaching goals. For example, a teacher may be required to use a curriculum that promotes an assembly-line notion of the writing process. This may contradict the notion of the writing process as recursive, a concept learned in preservice education. In this case, activity theory provides a way to analyze how teachers navigate the tensions between their goals and the required tools. In other settings, teachers might encounter the opposite problem, with access to numerous and possibly contradicting choices. Here the new teacher must have enough knowledge to critique the options available and make informed curricular choices and modifications. Activity theory provides a way to analyze how well the teacher's selections and modifications meet their stated goals.

Within the domain of mediating artifacts, researchers have delineated two types of artifacts that are of particular interest for research on teacher learning: *conceptual tools* and *pedagogical tools.* In their study of teacher learning, Grossman et al. (1999) use the idea of conceptual and pedagogical tools. Conceptual tools are ideas, such as constructivism or student ownership, that can be applied to a number of teaching situations. Pedagogical tools, such as conducting a writing conference, are situation-specific. Tracking teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools in various contexts can help explain teacher learning and needs. For example, a teacher may misuse an effective pedagogical tool. Here the teacher may require a better understanding of the tool's conceptual underpinnings in order to use the tool effectively. Or a teacher may have a strong conceptual understanding of an approach to teaching but be unable to enact it. Here the problem might be contextual factors, (e.g., absence of new teacher support) or insufficient knowledge of pedagogical strategies.

Given that so much of teaching is done in isolation, physical artifacts of teaching, such as lesson plans, curriculum, and standards, may play an important role in teacher learning. In a study of new teachers' use of curricular materials, Grossman and colleagues found that preservice and new teachers tended to follow their curriculum with little or no modification. Curriculum served an important role as a scaffold for planning; as teachers gained competence and confidence, they were able to make modifications and use the materials more judiciously (Grossman & Thompson, 2008; Grossman et al., 2000). In a study of science teachers, Arzi and White (2008) found that "the required curriculum is the single-most powerful determinant of teacher knowledge, serving as both its organizer and source" (p. 221). In this study, I extend this line of inquiry through an analysis of physical representations of teaching practice, such as shared lesson plans and curricular materials, and how teachers interact with these tools. I use Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of *transparency* to analyze these artifacts in use. Transparency, as it is used by Lave and Wenger, is a broad term used to describe the "cultural organization of access." Here I use the notion of transparency to study the aspects of practice and teacher knowledge that are visible in curricular materials and how the nature of that representation mediates teachers' practice and learning.

In this section, I have discussed the role of mediating artifacts in a cultural-historical activity theory framework. I presented pedagogical tools and conceptual tools as a heuristic for thinking about the dimensions of pedagogical knowledge. Finally, I discussed the possible roles of concrete artifacts for teaching, such as curricular materials, in teacher learning. Next I return to teacher learning, which was addressed briefly at the beginning of the section, in order to elaborate upon the concept of appropriation in more detail.

TEACHER LEARNING: CHARACTERIZING APPROPRIATION

For most teachers, the first years of teaching are overwhelming. Longitudinal research has shown that those teachers who practice teaching approaches advocated by their teacher education programs often take several years to do so successfully (see, for example, Grossman et al., 2000). Because teachers in most public elementary schools are immediately responsible for instruction in every subject, they are often forced to

prioritize which subjects to work hard at teaching well. Even in those subjects that are a focus for improvement, the teacher will need time and practice to become skilled at the craft. With many factors impacting what a new teacher does in daily teaching, how might researchers understand the process of appropriation, especially in its nascent stages?

In their study of teacher learning, Grossman and colleagues (1999) defined appropriation in terms of five levels: 1) lack of appropriation, 2) appropriating a label, 3) appropriating surface features, 4) appropriating conceptual underpinnings, and 5) achieving mastery. At level one, lack of appropriation, a tool may be too difficult for a teacher to understand or a teacher may choose not to appropriate a tool. At level two, teachers may have heard of a tool, such as using inquiry exercises to support student writing, but have no idea of what this actually looks like and no understanding of the concepts that support it. Level three describes teachers who might know a little about a tool but don't yet grasp the larger concepts that undergird its use. For example, a teacher may know that a writing workshop approach to teaching includes a minilesson, conferring, time for students to write, and sharing during each workshop session. However, the reason for each piece of the routine is unclear. The fourth level of appropriation includes conceptual understanding. For example, a teacher may understand conferring procedurally as well as conceptually, citing social interaction in the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) as central to students' appropriation of writing habits and processes. In the final level, mastery, the teacher is able to use the tool effectively.

Teachers may move through the levels of appropriation in order, but the authors also point out that this is not always the case. For example, a teacher may want her students to think of themselves as writers; this is a guiding concept as she begins her career (level 4). After reading about Ray's (2001) concept of "writing identities," she appropriates this label to describe her concept (level 2). Further reading and professional development help her understand some of the surface features associated with developing writing identities, such as opportunities for student choice and student articulation of their writing process (level 3).

Current research has illuminated the need for both conceptual and pedagogical tools in learning to teach. As the discussion of levels of appropriation illustrates above, researchers have highlighted the relationships between conceptual and pedagogical tools. However, McDonald (2003) points out that "we have not yet developed a precise understanding or language for describing the relationship between practical and conceptual tools." Moreover, little is known about how teachers make sense of the conceptual and pedagogical tools they appropriate. For example, do they make conscious connections among and between the conceptual and pedagogical tools they have appropriated? And, if so, does that have some bearing on their continued appropriation? Through this study, I explore the quality of the relationships between conceptual and pedagogical tools for novice teachers. I also investigate how the quality of these relationships relates to novice teachers' practice. As discussed earlier in this chapter, teachers also need to have strong subject matter knowledge if they are to teach well. Therefore, I also investigate teachers' appropriation of content knowledge, its relationship to appropriation of tools, and its role in learning to teach.

Analysis of Activity Settings and Appropriation Using an Activity Theory Framework

Activity theory provides a lens for investigating continuity and contradiction within and between settings and how this affects teacher learning. Engström and Meittinen's (1999) model of an activity system provides a heuristic for thinking about the components of a setting and how these components interact in relation to the achievement of a goal. Imagine, as an example, the following fictional methods course scenario:

According to the course syllabus and the instructor interview, the goal of the observed activity is to learn some instructional moves central to conferring with students about their writing. The instructor plans to achieve this by showing two videos of exemplary conferring, one with a first grade student and the other with a fifth grade student. The teacher candidates will then analyze these videos to construct a generalized understanding of the important features of writing conferences.

The activity begins. Students receive transcripts of the conferences along with written directions that ask them to note: how each teacher begins the conference, what the teacher teaches about writing, how the teaching occurs, and how the conference ends. The instructor distributes the sheet without reference to its contents. Prior to the first video, the instructor tells students to "look closely at what the teacher and student are doing." Afterwards, the instructor asks students to "talk about how the conference went." Teacher candidates discuss in small groups and then share out. They have many things to say, but none of the comments are related to the course instructor's learning goal. The same thing occurs with the second video.

In this case, the instructor (the *subject*), who is teaching about conferring (the *object*) selects a video and creates a viewing guide for the class (the *mediating artifacts*), with the intent that teacher candidates will identify features of effective writing conferences. However, in his directions to the teacher candidates (*division of labor*), he does not highlight the proper use of the artifacts, and instead directs their attention toward general impressions. Therefore, what teacher candidates learn about writing conferences may not match the instructor's intentions. This contradiction within the activity setting of the lesson is demonstrated in Figure 2. Through analysis of activity in the methods course over time, the researcher can identify patterns of contradiction and continuity that characterize a particular setting.

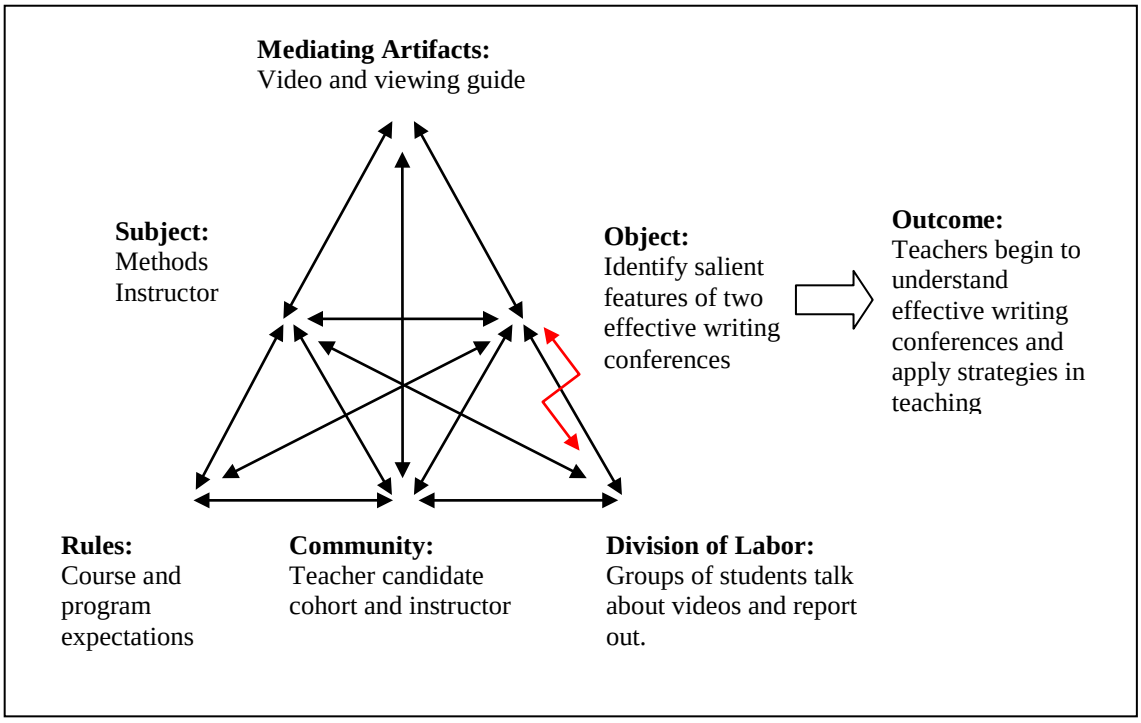

Figure 2. Activity system in which the division of labor does not serve the object. Contradiction between system components is noted by a jagged arrow. Diagram modeled after those in Engeström and Meittinen (1999).

In addition to examining components within a setting, activity theory provides a way to compare across settings. One can analyze the components of various settings and compare what each communicates to prospective and practicing teachers. Consider the following scenarios, which demonstrate the role of conceptual and pedagogical tools as teachers move across settings:

Teacher education programs A and B use the 6+1 Traits model of writing instruction and assessment as a framework for their literacy methods courses. In program A, teachers briefly learn about each trait, how to use rubrics to score student writing, and some methods for teaching the traits. In program B, students do everything from program A, but they also build a conceptual understanding of how these traits look across genres and grades. Upon graduating, a teacher from each program is hired in a school that does not use the 6+1 Traits; instead, units and rubrics are framed around genre attributes. A teacher from program A may feel frustrated, believing that it is necessary to start over in thinking about writing instruction in order to adapt to the school's curriculum. The teacher from program B, however, may use a more developed

understanding of the 6+1 Traits teaching tools—and of writing in general—to make connections between the two approaches.

In this case, the teacher from program A is limited by a cursory understanding of the pedagogical tools promoted in preservice education. This limited understanding leads to a perception that the tools learned in teacher education are not of value in the current job. Conversely, the teacher from program B has enough knowledge to conceptually situate both instructional approaches in a way that expands understanding of writing instruction.

Teacher learning takes place in multiple settings. The framework described here is useful for understanding each of these settings on its own and in interaction with other settings. I will use the theoretical framework outlined above to address this overarching question: ***How are teachers prepared to teach writing, and what supports or hinders effective practice in the preservice year and first year of teaching?*** The following specific questions will guide the data collection and analysis:

1) How are preservice elementary teachers prepared to teach writing in methods courses and in the various settings of the teacher preparation program (e.g., student teaching)?
2) Which conceptual and pedagogical tools do elementary teachers appropriate in the preservice and first years? What factors influence this?
3) How do the activity settings of the first job support or hinder teacher appropriation in writing instruction?
4) How does contradiction and continuity within and across activity settings mediate elementary teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools for writing instruction?

ORGANIZATION OF THE REST OF THE DISSERTATION

In the next chapter, I outline the research design and the analysis process that yielded my findings. I also briefly describe the backgrounds, teaching contexts, and conceptual and pedagogical tools of the two methods instructors and nine program graduates. In the remaining chapters, I describe the study participants and provide an analysis of teacher learning along several themes. In Chapter Three, I analyze the opportunities for learning in the two university programs, Southern University and Northern University, exploring two themes in depth: 1) methods course instructor knowledge and pedagogy and 2) contradiction and continuity between the tools

advocated in the methods course and those used in the field placement classroom. Teacher candidates' learning varied according to the pedagogical approach used in the course. Field placement experiences also played a significant role in teacher learning, but appropriation of tools in the placement was mediated by instruction in the methods course. Chapter Four explores teachers' content knowledge, conceptual tools, and pedagogical tools for teaching writing and the relationship between these tools, or what I am calling their *conceptual frameworks* for writing instruction. These frameworks were consistent from graduation through the first year of teaching. And guided their decision-making. While graduates of Southern University began their careers with a cohesive conceptual framework for teaching writing that supported their teaching, this knowledge was insufficient on its own to support good teaching. In Chapter Five, I present three patterns of contradiction and continuity across settings that had implications for teacher learning: grade-level change from the preservice year to the first year of teaching, the content and degree of grade-level team support, and school organization as it pertains to language arts in general and writing in particular. Chapter Six explores the characteristics of a variety of curricular artifacts and discusses their role in mediating teacher learning in writing instruction. The final chapter presents implications of the study's findings.

CHAPTER TWO: STUDY DESIGN, ANALYSIS PROCEDURES, AND PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

This study sought to contribute to the knowledge base for teacher learning in general and for learning to teach writing in particular. As discussed in the previous chapter, I view learning as a process of appropriation mediated by experiences across multiple settings. Therefore, I designed a qualitative study that examined the features of settings that provide opportunities to learn about writing instruction in the preservice and first years of teaching. I aimed to illuminate the complex process of learning to teach writing and the factors within and across settings that affect teachers' appropriation of sound conceptual and pedagogical tools for the teaching of writing.

In the previous chapter, I noted that the teaching of writing is a challenge for many elementary teachers, but there is very little longitudinal, comparative case research that explores how teachers are best supported in learning to teach writing. My study addresses this need. In this chapter, I describe the study design, data collection and corpus, and analysis procedures. I also address the limitations of the study. I conclude with a description of study participants.

STUDY DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

This is a comparative case study of two large, public teacher education programs and their graduates across the preservice year and the first year of teaching. I followed teachers as they moved through teacher education and began their teaching careers. The research was conducted in two phases. In phase one, I observed literacy methods courses, collected course artifacts, and interviewed course instructors in two teacher education programs. In addition, I conducted focus groups with teacher candidates enrolled in these literacy courses and observed all the field placement classrooms to which I could gain access to get a general sense of candidates' experiences and learning

in the program. During phase one, I invited preservice teachers to become case study participants through their first year of teaching.

Phase two focused on the case study teachers—four from Southern University and five from Northern University—as they taught writing in their first teaching year. During this phase, I conducted classroom observations, interviewed teachers, and collected artifacts from teacher planning, and instruction. This 18-month, multi-site design allows factors that influence appropriation of tools to be traced over time and across settings. Table 1 summarizes the study design.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants included course instructors from Northern University and Southern University, teacher candidates enrolled in these courses, cooperating teachers, and graduates from each program. The university system from which I drew my sample prepares about 10,000 California teachers annually. Moreover, its graduates are demographically representative of many teachers currently entering California's schools. The literacy methods courses at these institutions, therefore, serve as examples of California teacher preparation in writing. Thus, the cases represent typical teacher preparation in California and how the average graduate might fare in the context of a public school.

Program selection criteria included: a cohort model of teacher preparation, the degree to which writing was addressed in the methods course, and course instructor experience and/or reputation. Choosing a cohort model program ensured that the candidates would have had the same teacher preparation courses throughout the year, which would allow me to investigate other programmatic settings for learning to teach writing (e.g., other methods courses). This choice also insured that candidates within each program had the same amount of experience in their field placements. Choosing a cohort model was also important for practical reasons; the teachers would graduate at the same time, allowing me to follow them in their first year of teaching. At Northern University, the language arts course was taught simultaneously by several instructors to

different cohorts. John Carter was one of the instructors recommended by the Graduate Coordinator, and the only one of three recommended instructors who agreed to

Table 1. Study Design

	Purpose	Data Collection	Data Sources
Phase One: Preservice Education January 2008 to June 2008	To identify/understand: • methods course preparation in writing instruction • methods instructor's teaching goals • opportunities to learn about writing instruction in the field placement • teacher candidates' learning from preservice contexts • continuity/contradiction messages within the methods course • continuity/contradiction within the placement setting • continuity/contradiction between tools for writing instruction between the placement and methods course • other sources for learning about writing instruction	• Observations of literacy methods courses when writing instruction is addressed • Collection of artifacts from the writing portion of the literacy methods course • One interview with each course instructor • Focus groups with teacher candidates in April and June. (NU = 8 participants in April and 6 in June; SU = 6 in April and 5 in June) • Observations of the field placement classrooms during writing instruction • Collection of artifacts from the field placement • Artifacts from other courses that address writing instruction	• Field notes of literacy methods course observations • Literacy course artifacts • Transcriptions of audio-recorded course instructor interviews • Transcriptions of audio-recorded focus group meetings with teacher candidates • Field notes of field placement observations • Artifacts from other courses that address writing instruction
Phase Two: Cases of First Year Teachers June 2008 to June 2009	To identify/understand: • which conceptual and pedagogical tools the teachers appropriate • factors influencing tool appropriation • settings in which the teachers participate and the opportunities to learn about writing instruction in those settings • continuity/contradiction between tools for writing instruction within these settings • continuity/contradiction between tools for writing instruction in the current settings and from the preservice year	• Semi-structured interviews of first year teachers in the fall, winter, and spring. • Observation of writing lessons (three consecutive lessons per quarter, for a total of nine observations). These are accompanied by semi-structured pre-lesson and post-lesson interviews • Collection of student work samples and artifacts from instruction and planning	• Transcriptions of interviews with first year teachers • Field notes of observations • Transcripts of semi-structured pre-lesson and post-lesson interviews • Artifacts from teaching, such as lesson plans, unit plans, curricular resources, charts, and books • Student work

participate. At Southern University, there was only one cohort, the Residency Program, who received significant instructional time on writing methods. Other literacy courses catered to students in non-cohort tracks, so they did not qualify under my criteria. Students in the social justice masters program also had a literacy course, but they did not spend as much time on writing. I met with the course instructor for the Residency Program literacy course, Cindy, and found that she was quite experienced and articulate about her practice. I asked for her participation in the study and she agreed.

Before the writing portion of the courses began, I visited each methods course to introduce myself to the teacher candidates and recruit focus group participants. Toward the end of the term, I addressed the cohort again, asking them to consider participation in the study during their first teaching year. I also asked focus group participants individually. There were nine case study teachers in all—five from Northern University and four from Southern University—and there was no attrition during the study. All but two of these teachers participated in the focus groups during phase one. Several aspects of the new teachers' work settings were considered for participant selection. First, I sought to include schools with a range of standardized achievement scores. In California, higher-achieving schools tend to be better resourced, and they may offer more flexibility for teachers in terms of their writing instruction. Lower-achieving schools, on the other hand, tend to have fewer resources; in addition, policies around lower achieving schools may require fidelity to state-adopted curricular materials. These differences will likely lead to very different opportunities for participants' teaching and learning. Second, because different student populations bring different resources and challenges, I selected schools with a variety of demographics. I chose school demographics that were representative of California's ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse population. Finally, I looked for teachers working in a variety of grade levels in each group. Elementary writing instruction varies widely between kindergarten and sixth grade, and I aimed to capture differences in teacher preparedness, first-year support, and teaching across the grades. In an effort to include similar grade levels, comparable demographics, and comparable achievement ranking

within and between groups, all teachers who agreed to participate were included in the study. Table 2 summarizes the cases. I describe the study participants later in this chapter.

DATA COLLECTION AND CORPUS

In each phase of the research, data were gathered from multiple sources in order to triangulate the findings. Research questions and their corresponding data points are presented in Table 3. In the table, rows contain the four main research questions that together address the question: How are teachers prepared to teach writing, and what supports or hinders their learning and effective practice in the preservice year and first year of teaching? Data sources in the study are listed across the top. Shaded boxes denote which questions each data source will help to answer.

Table 2. Demographics of Case Study Teachers' Schools

	Case Teacher(s)	CA Test Score & Ranking[2]	Grade	Free/ Reduced Lunch	English Learner	Ethnic makeup of school (groups over 10%)
Northern University	Abby	738 6-1	6	22%	7%	White 59% Hispanic 23%
	Kim	636 1-1	2	88%	42%	Hispanic 45% African American 34% Asian 17%
	Beth	926 10-8	1	7%	32%	Asian 55% White 28%
	Natalie	961 10-8	3	1%	9%	Asian 51% White 29% Filipino 13%
	Eva	833 8-9	4	34%	25%	Hispanic 32% White 29% Asian 23% Filipino 10%
Southern University	Sheri	885 9-5	K	11%	9%	White 68% Hispanic 15% Asian 12%
	Carol	789 6-5	1	41%	17%	Hispanic 42% White 38% African American 13%
	Kendra and Mari	754 5-1	2, 3*	39%	34%	Hispanic 47%, White 20% Asian 19%

[2] These are the test scores reported for each school in 2008. The top number is the school's API, or Academic Performance Index. This number is based on the results of the California STAR test from 2007. The numbers below the score denote two decile rankings. The first (to the left of the dash) indicates the school's API compared to all other schools of that type (e.g., elementary, middle, or high school) in the state. The second score (to the right of the dash) ranks schools based on how they compare to 100 other schools with similar demographics. More information can be found at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/documents/infoguide09.pdf (California Department of Education, 2010).

Table 3. Research Questions and Corresponding Data Sources.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	DATA SOURCES									
	Field notes of literacy course observations	Literacy course artifacts from focal universities	Transcriptions of audio-recorded course instructor interviews	Transcriptions of audio-recorded focus group meetings	Field notes of student teaching placement observations	Transcriptions of interviews with first year teachers	Field notes of classroom observations	Transcriptions of semi-structured pre-lesson and post-lesson interviews	Artifacts from teaching, such as lesson plans, unit plans, curricular resources, charts, books, teacher response to student work	Teacher learning artifacts, such as professional books and materials from professional development seminars
How are teachers prepared to teach writing in methods courses and in the various settings of the teacher preparation program (e.g., student teaching)?	■	■	■	■	■					
Which conceptual and pedagogical tools do teachers appropriate in the preservice and first years? What factors influence this?	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
How do the activity settings of the first job support or hinder teacher appropriation in writing instruction?						■	■	■	■	■
How does contradiction and continuity within and across activity settings affect elementary teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools for writing instruction?	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Phase one

The focal activity settings for phase one were the teacher education methods courses and the field placements. Several data points were used to understand the setting of the methods courses. These included: observations of the literacy methods courses when writing instruction was addressed, collection of literacy course artifacts, interviews with literacy course instructors, observations of field placement classrooms,

and focus groups with teacher candidates. The triangulation of interview, focus group, observation, and artifact data illuminated patterns of continuity and contradiction between 1) instructors' course goals, course planning, and pedagogy, 2) instructor goals and candidates' experience of the methods course, 3) methods course and field placement experiences, 4) teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools and their relationships to settings and setting features.. Secondary settings in teacher education, such as supervisory support and other courses, were explored through interviews.

At the beginning of phase two, case study teachers were interviewed about their preservice courses and field placement experiences. Data from focus groups, interviews, observations, and artifacts were triangulated to create a detailed picture of these teachers' opportunities for learning to teach writing. This picture provided the foundation for phase two, in which I investigated teachers' tool appropriation in the first year of practice. Below I describe the phase one data points in greater detail.

Observations of literacy methods courses and artifact collection

I observed all course meetings that focused on the teaching of writing—six meetings at Northern University and five meeting at Southern University. Both methods courses also addressed orthographic development, but I did not attend these classes since I focus on composition. During each course meeting, I sat in the back of the room and recorded field notes on my laptop, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible. Though note-taking during the observations might affect the teaching setting (i.e., it is distracting and may make teachers nervous), I decided that the ability to collect data in much greater detail outweighed possible costs. The instructor and teacher candidates in both classes were so busy that they conducted their business as though I wasn't there. They rarely spoke to me, unless they were responding to a focus group request. I collected a number of course artifacts during my observations, including syllabi, digital copies of lecture slides, assignments, handouts, and photographs of charts. This review of course materials enriched my understanding of what I observed during my visits.

Interviews with literacy course instructors

At the end of the term, I conducted a one-hour, semi-structured interview with each course instructor. Interviews explored the instructor's goals for preparing teachers to teach writing, explanation of course assignments and lectures, and reflections on the effectiveness of the writing portion of the course in relation to the goals. An interview protocol is located in Appendix A.

Focus groups with teacher candidates

In both programs, the writing portion of the course took place in the final weeks of the program. Coursework deadlines, student teaching, and job searches made it difficult to gain participation and to schedule meeting times. Therefore, I held several pre-focus groups in April and several post-focus groups June. All groups had at least two participants, except for one pre-interview at Southern University and one post-interview at Northern University. The total participants for Northern University pre- and post-focus groups was eight and six, respectively. There were 27 candidates in the cohort. Pre-focus groups at Southern University had six participants and post-focus groups had five, and there were a total of 17 candidates in the cohort.

At the beginning of each focus group, I asked participants to fill out a form, listing what they had learned about writing instruction in their methods courses and at their field placement as well as in other courses. Figure 3 is an example from a pre-focus group. After filling out the form individually, we discussed each setting as a group. Candidates talked about what they had learned, and I would check in with each group member before moving on to the next setting. As they talked about conceptual and pedagogical tools, I would ask for clarification. For example, if a candidate said, "We do Open Court" or "We do writing workshop," I would ask him or her to describe it. In the post focus groups, I began with the same chart. I also asked candidates to talk about what course activities were helpful, how their instructor would describe an ideal writing program, what reading they found helpful, and what tools they planned to use next year. The focus group protocol is located in Appendix B.

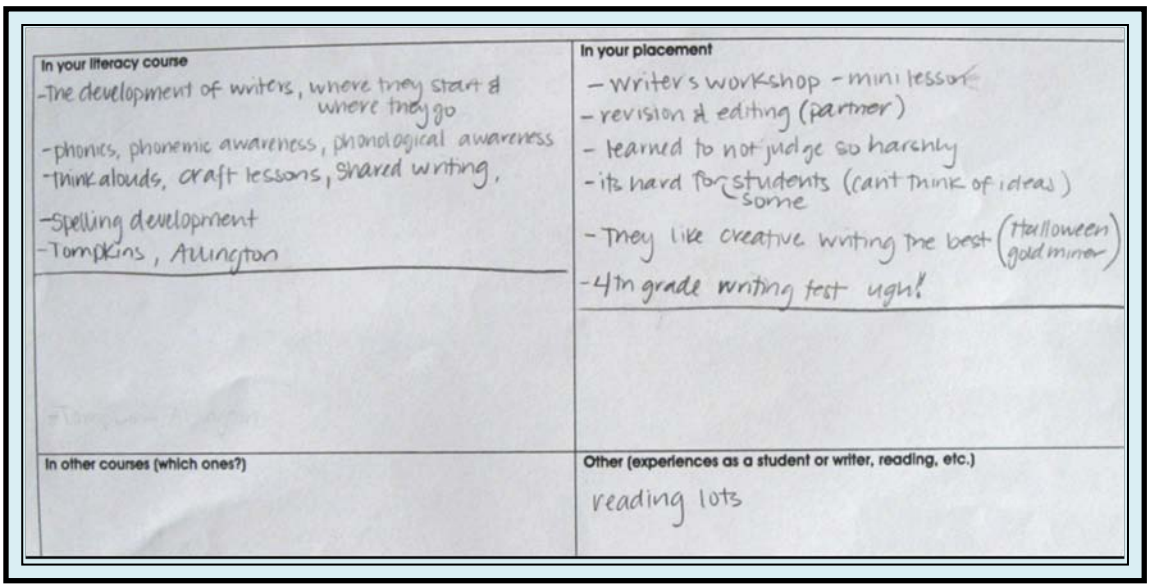

Figure 3. Sample focus group form.

Observations of placement classrooms

It was difficult to gain access to cooperating teachers' classrooms. It was the end of the year, and some teachers saw the observation as an additional stressor. I was able to observe in four out of twenty-seven Northern University placement classrooms. In two of these classrooms, the candidate was an intern and the teacher of record; the other two classrooms had cooperating teachers, but the candidates were teaching when I observed. At Southern University, I observed in six of the seventeen placement classrooms. In four of these, I observed the cooperating teacher's instruction, and in two I observed the candidate's instruction. For all observations, I sat at the back of the room and recorded field notes during and shortly after the visit using a laptop computer. If the teacher granted permission, I walked around the room to observe students while they wrote. I did not engage with the students unless they addressed me, in which case I redirected them to their teacher. Though taking notes on a computer might be distracting for some teachers and students, I believed that the benefits of more rapid, accurate note-taking outweighed any inconvenience. The computer seemed commonplace and did not cause a distraction. I also photographed writing-related artifacts found in the classroom.

Artifacts from other preservice experiences that address writing instruction

I had initially planned to gather information about additional settings that supported candidates' learning to teach writing. Findings from focus groups and methods instructor interviews did not indicate other settings in which writing instruction was addressed. Therefore, all of my data collection in phase one focused on the methods course and the field placement.

Phase two

Phase two focused on the case study teachers—five from Northern University and four from Southern University—as they taught writing in their first teaching year. The focal activity setting was the teacher's classroom during writing instruction. Phase two included: 1) observations of first year teachers' writing instruction with pre- and post- semi-structured interviews, 2) semi-structured interviews with first year teachers, and 3) collection of teaching artifacts and student work. Secondary settings, such as grade-level planning meetings, new teacher support, and in-service training will be explored through teacher interviews and collection of artifacts.

Observations of writing instruction with pre- and post-interviews

Observations included three consecutive writing lessons and occurred at three time points across the year. There were several reasons for observing consecutive lessons. First, it allowed me to observe continuity and contradiction across lessons. Second, I could track the teacher's response to student needs over time—both in modifying lesson plans and providing additional support for target students. Finally, this configuration provided more contextual information with which to analyze each successive lesson.

During the observations, I took notes as unobtrusively as possible. I would typically sit at the back or side of the classroom and take notes on my laptop during the lesson. Lessons were usually followed by a period of time in which students wrote at their desks, and I would often walk around the room during this time, looking over students' shoulders and listening in on student-teacher and student-student interactions. These observations were recorded shortly after leaving the observation site. I also wanted to capture as much discourse as possible, in order to see how the teacher framed

writing as a subject and the tasks she asked students to do. Immediately following each visit, I added additional observations and thoughts to my field notes.

Semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews preceded and followed each set of lessons (see Appendix C for interview protocol). The pre-lesson interview was designed to gather information regarding previous lessons, unit trajectory, and lesson plans. I also explored factors that had influenced the content and pedagogy of the lessons. Following the final lesson, I asked teachers to reflect on their teaching, student learning, and what their next lessons might be. I also conducted informal interviews, when possible, after the first and second lessons to obtain the teacher's initial reflections on the lesson and her plans for the next day.

Background and follow-up interviews

Three semi-structured, audio-taped interviews were conducted at three time points: early fall, winter, and late spring. The purpose of the first interview was to: 1) gather background information regarding each teacher's schooling experiences (including K-12, college, and teacher preparation), knowledge for teaching writing, ideals for writing instruction, and year plans and 2) trace the settings that influenced teachers' knowledge, ideals, and year plans. Winter and spring interviews revisited these topics and investigated teachers' current practice. Sample questions for each interview are located in Appendix D.

Teaching artifacts and student work

During each school visit, I collected all available artifacts related to the observed instruction. This included lesson plans, handouts, photographs of charts and visuals, relevant portions of curricular materials, and student work. In order to provide a broader picture of instruction, artifacts from past lessons were also collected. This included charts in the room, lesson and unit plans, curricular resources, and completed student work with teacher comments.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study spans quite a bit of time and space, and there are many data sources. In the table below, I show the main research questions, their corresponding data points, and sample analysis questions.

Table 4. Matrix of Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analysis Questions.

Overarching question: ***How are preservice elementary teachers prepared to teach writing, and what supports or hinders their effective practice in the preservice and first years of teaching?***		
Research Questions	**Data Source**	**Analysis Questions**
How are preservice elementary teachers prepared to teach writing in methods courses and in the various settings of the teacher preparation program (e.g., student teaching)?	• Field notes of literacy course observations • Literacy course artifacts from two universities • Transcriptions of audio-recorded course instructor interviews • Transcriptions of audio-recorded focus group meetings • Field notes of field placement observations	• What conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching elementary writing are promoted by the methods courses in the programs? • What pedagogies of teacher education are used? • What are teacher candidates' perceptions of the field placement and how it aligns (or does not align) with the university training in writing instruction? • What opportunities exist in the field placement to learn about writing?
Which conceptual and pedagogical tools do teachers appropriate in the preservice and first years? What factors influence this?	• Transcriptions of audio-recorded focus group meetings • Field notes of field placement observations (when candidate is teaching) • Transcriptions of interviews with first year teachers • Artifacts from teaching, such as lesson plans, unit plans, curricular resources, charts, books, teacher response to student work • Teacher learning artifacts, such as professional books and materials from professional development seminars • Field notes of classroom observations	• What factors influence whether or not a conceptual or pedagogical tool is appropriated (e.g., setting in which it was learned, pedagogy of methods course)? • What conceptual and pedagogical tools do teachers appropriate, and what is their level of appropriation at various time points? • What are the characteristics of curricular artifacts, and what differentiates those that were used from those that were not?
How do the activity settings of the first job support or hinder teacher appropriation in writing instruction?	• Transcriptions of interviews with first year teachers • Artifacts from teaching, such as lesson plans, unit plans, curricular resources, charts, books, teacher response to student work • Teacher learning artifacts, such as professional books and materials	• What are the activity settings in which the teacher participates (e.g., new teacher support, grade level meetings)? • How is the teacher's ability to enact tools appropriated in the preservice year mediated by settings of the first job?

	from professional development seminars • Field notes of classroom observations	• What tools are available or required for planning and teaching? • What are the affordances and constraints of these tools in relation to the teacher's conceptual framework for teaching writing? • Do the resources in the settings support effective practices for teaching writing?
How does contradiction and continuity within and across activity settings mediate elementary teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools for writing instruction?	• All data sources	• What instances of contradiction and continuity exist within each of the settings in which the teacher participates? • What instances of contradiction and continuity exist between each of the settings in which the teacher participates?

Field notes

Shortly after each methods course and classroom observation, I added to my field notes. Key areas that I attended to were: 1) conceptual tools, such as student ownership, that are explicit or implicit in the teaching, 2) pedagogical tools, such as a graphic organizer or minilesson architecture, 3) content of the lessons, and 4) student behaviors.

Coding

I developed a coding scheme for data analysis derived from the conceptual framework and the professional literature on teacher learning and writing instruction (Miles & Huberman, 1994). These codes supported the analysis of the data by: 1) illuminating the features of particular settings that support or impede learning, 2) tracing learning of individual teachers over time, and 3) identifying differences in preparedness of graduates across institutions, which may be connected to aspects of the university program. For example, I used the code family "conceptual tool" for concepts promoted in the teacher education program or used by teachers. Codes for the types of conceptual tool were generated from the literature on teacher education and elementary writing instruction.

Open coding allowed for new ideas and themes to be noted (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006). For example, John relied on lecture as his primary mode of teaching, but the nature of the lecturing seemed to vary. In order to better capture his lecture style, I conducted iterative open coding. Sometimes John's lecture style was characterized by detailed explanation. For example, in a lecture on minilessons, he provided information on the lesson design and types of minilessons and showed a video. Often, though, John wouldn't explain much. He would name practices such as peer conferring or list practical tips without elaboration. Rather than using a single code for lecture, then, I used two: "explanation" and "naming and listing."

Several iterations of coding, supported by analytic and theoretical memos, produced a refined list of codes. These refined codes facilitated analysis of appropriation within and between cases. Once a final coding scheme was established, I used focused coding to code the data set using Atlas.ti (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). The design of the coding scheme was in service of finding the intersections of teacher education and teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools, which could be revealed in teaching or interviews. In addition to tracing tools from teacher education, the coding served to reveal patterns of teacher appropriation from a number of settings. For example, a search for a particular tool within a case study teacher reveals 1) how often the tool was used in practice and 2) the settings in which this tool was reinforced. Through a systematic exploration of tools by case, I was able to identify teacher appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools and the related mediating settings. The coded interview excerpt in Figure 4 demonstrates how the codes were used. You can see that both the methods course and the field placement settings are coded, since Mari addresses both in her interview. The code "contradiction" denotes the contradiction between tools used in the two settings. The pedagogical tools of writing workshop, conferring, and minilessons are also coded.

Table 5. Sample Codes.

Activity Setting (AS)	Conceptual Tools (CT)	Pedagogical Tools (PT)	Supports for Learning to Teach Writing (STW)
• Methods course • Field placement • Other university course • Teacher's classroom • Grade level meeting • Professional development • Mentor meeting • Informal teacher talk	• Feedback • Constructivism • Assessment-driven instruction • Student choice • Cooperative learning • Writing process • Ownership • Scaffolding • Genre • Writing craft • Writing development • Writing workshop	FOR TEACHING WRITING: • Rubric • Graphic organizer • Minilesson architecture • Conferring architecture • State-adopted curriculum • Children's literature • Writer's notebook • Writing workshop FOR TEACHER EDUCATION: • Modeling • Lecture • Artifacts • Verbal examples • Discussion	• Curriculum o Open Court o Houghton Mifflin o District binder o Other teacher's plans • Mentoring • Professional Development • Grade-level team • Professional books • Classroom practice • Student work • Colleagues (not grade-level or mentor)

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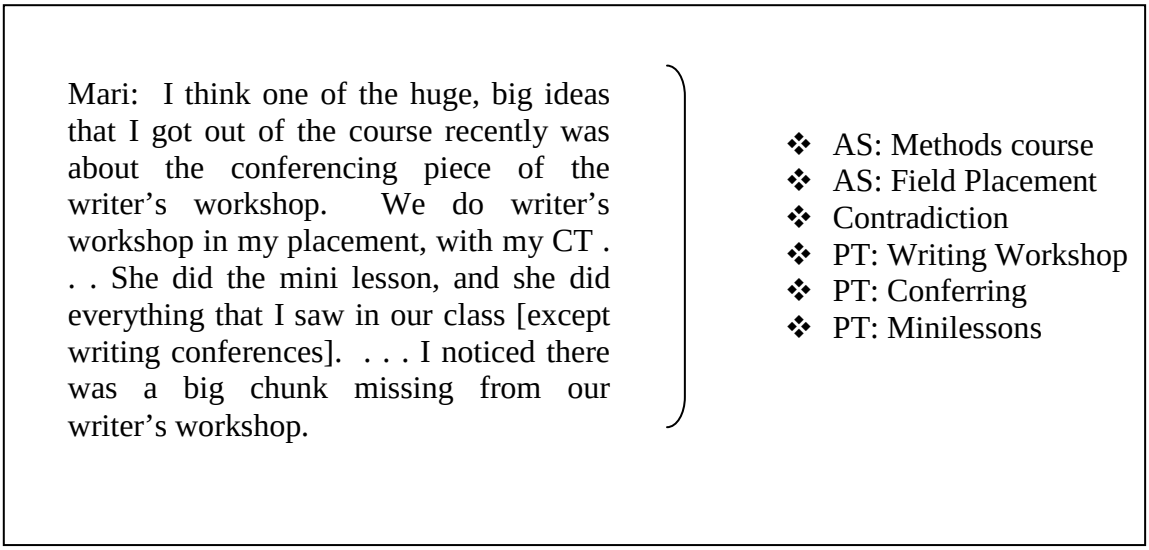

Figure 4. Sample coding.

Writing memos

Throughout the data collection process, I recorded descriptive memos on the course instructors and case teachers. These included detailed descriptions of their practice as well as emerging analytic and theoretical patterns to explore later. Because I was observing nine teachers working in a wide geographic range, I did not have much time to analyze the data as I collected it. When time did not allow for written memos, I recorded my thoughts on a digital recorder, which I later transcribed. After the data collection period, I continued with analytic and theoretical memos to explore patterns and questions that I had noted during the data collection process. For example, I wrote several memos exploring the patterns of contradiction in the methods courses and a memo on the theme of content knowledge of writing across the nine teacher cases. These memos informed my final list of codes (see above). Another round of memos followed the creation of data displays (see below). The memos generated through the data displays served to draw out the themes within and across university cases. Finally, I completed a detailed memo for each of the eleven cases (two course instructors and nine teachers) as well as cross-case memos that highlighted particular themes. This final

set of memos served as the initial drafts for the description and analysis in the chapters that follow.

Data displays

Phase one included a significant amount of data that, even in coded form, was too much to analyze. I used data displays to distil the information into a more usable form and to triangulate data sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I created one data display for each program, which included:

- Instructor's description of course emphasis and pedagogies (from interviews).
- Course content and pedagogy, documented by course meeting number (from field notes).
- Candidates' learning and their attributions of that learning by setting and pedagogy, if applicable, differentiated by pre- and post- focus groups and by individual. Negative examples and needs were also noted.
- Conceptual and pedagogical tools seen in field placements (field notes).

These data displays helped me investigate questions such as: What are the areas of contradiction and continuity between the placement and methods course settings? Does reinforcement across settings promote the appropriation of tools? Do teachers appropriate tools to a different extent when they are learned one way as opposed to another? The patterns in these data sent me back to transcripts and field notes for further analysis; from this analysis, I generated the memos described above.

Mapping activity settings

Through the process of coding, memoing, and creating data displays, I identified possible areas of contradiction within and across settings. I mapped these settings using an activity theory framework, drawing on triangulated data from observations, focus groups, interviews, and artifacts. For example, Figure 5 shows a map of a course activity I observed at Northern University. The instructor's primary goal in the lesson was to help teachers think about how to respond to student work. He also believed that teachers learn about the writing process by writing themselves. His activity was designed to combine these two objectives. Candidates were given student work samples and asked to think about how they might be improved, and to revise the students' work accordingly. This contradicted later lectures in which the instructor emphasized the

importance of student control over his or her writing. Not only might the activity have led to misunderstandings about appropriate ways to support young writers, but the "practice" of revision was inauthentic and unlikely to help teachers develop their own process as writers. Therefore, while the work samples were useful artifacts for thinking about responses to student work, the task assignment or "division of labor" did not serve the instructor's goal or desired outcomes. A closer approximation of teaching practice might, for example, ask candidates to role-play using a student work sample, with one playing the role of student and the other the role of teacher. Helping teachers internalize the writing process might better be fostered using their own writing rather than the writing of young children.

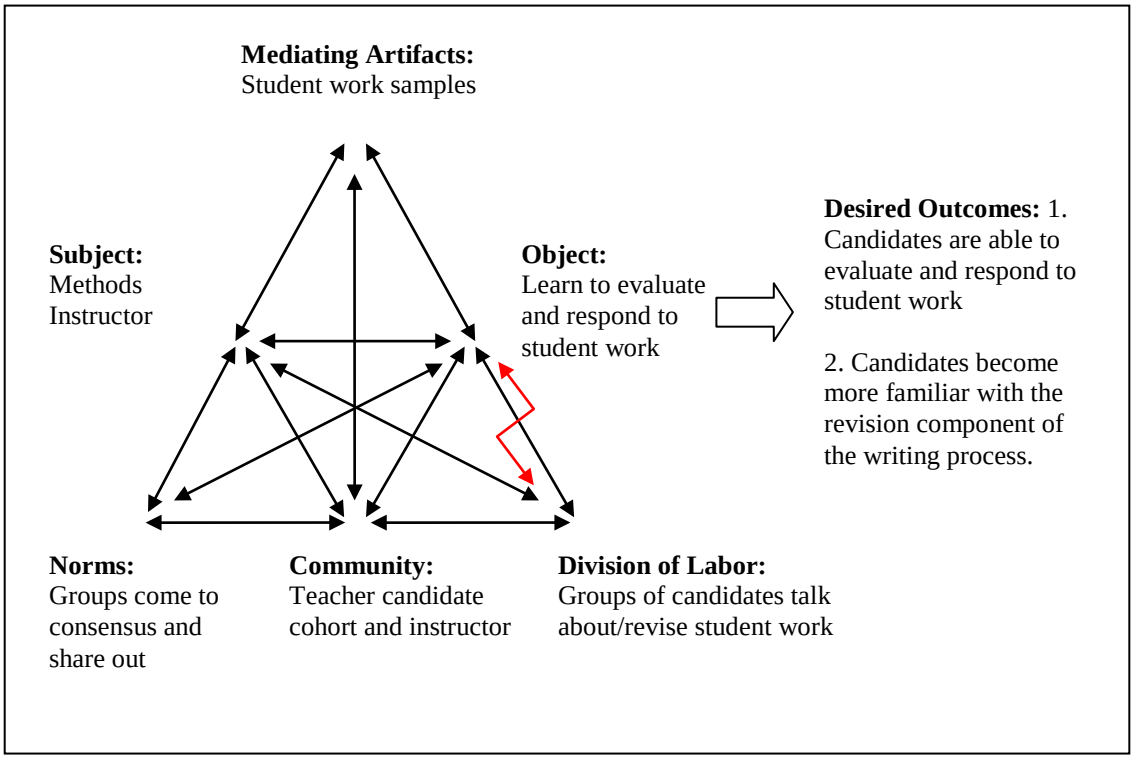

Figure 5. Map of a methods course activity to learn to evaluate and respond to student work.

These diagrams assisted my analysis of the nature of the patterns of contradiction and continuity within the methods courses and within the case study teachers' practice.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

As is true of any study, there are some limitations to the study methodology. I was able to find two programs in the same university system that offered a cohort model program and provided about the same emphasis on writing. However, after choosing these programs, participants self-selected into the study. One might contend that the participants represented a certain type of methods instructor or teacher candidate, perhaps those who are more confident or those seeking assistance. I looked for trends among the teacher candidate participants, who were a very diverse group—different ages, different levels of commitment to the course, different levels of self-efficacy. I could not detect any ways in which they represented a particular type of teacher, except that they were all sympathetic to my needs as a student and researcher and were willing to help with the study.

The second limitation applies to phase one of the study. The preservice data relies primarily on self-report as data to understand candidates' tool appropriation. While this is a limited measure, it can provide information about what candidates are attending to, what they can say about the tools, and how they see the relationships between tools. Placement observation field notes were also triangulated with the focus group data, though the observations are limited to four Northern University candidates and two Southern University candidates. I addressed the problem of self-report in phase two, when I observed graduates in practice and conduct extensive interviews.

The study was also limited by time. Longitudinal studies of teacher learning have shown that teachers are overwhelmed in the first year. Although they may hold on to their ideals from preservice education, these may not surface in their teaching until the second or third year of teaching, when teachers have a better grasp on the basics of classroom management, are familiar with curricular resources, and have classroom experiences upon which to reflect (Grossman et al., 2000). Ideally, I would have liked to follow teachers for the first two years of their practice. However, a study of such length was not financially feasible. And, sadly, five of the case study teachers were not rehired at the end of their first years due to massive budget cuts at the state level.

Finally, though I analyze the teaching in phase two for evidence of research-based practices, which should presumably support student achievement, there is no student achievement data included in the study. For this reason, I am unable to make the link between teachers' appropriation of tools for the teaching of writing and student learning.

CONCLUSION

This study was designed to illuminate the features of settings in the preservice and first years of teaching that mediate teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing. Although the study is limited by the constraints discussed above, the study design best suits the research questions. The comparative cases, focus on representative institutions, and longitudinal design distinguish this study from many shorter, single-program studies. Moreover, as a researcher unaffiliated with either program, I bring an outside perspective that is uncommon in the teacher education literature.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS: AN OVERVIEW

In this section, I provide a descriptive backdrop for Chapter Three through Chapter Six, which focus on the cross-case analysis. Here I describe the methods course instructors' backgrounds and their goals and rationale for the writing portion of the literacy methods course. I also provide a summary of case study teachers' approaches to teaching writing. The analysis chapters present the patterns of appropriation within and across cohorts and the features within and across settings that mediated teacher learning in writing instruction.

NORTHERN UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS AND GRADUATES

The course instructor for Northern University, John, had a strong background in reading and classroom coaching. He was teaching the literacy course I observed for the third time, and as such was still experimenting with various pedagogical approaches. Case study teachers ranged in age from 25 to 36, and all but one attended Northern

University for undergraduate education. All seemed to be strong students, with GPAs ranging from 3.2 to 3.45—except Kim, who earned a 3.0 from a more competitive institution. Eva also had a master's degree in Public Administration from Northern University. Case study teachers began their teaching careers in a variety of schools and in a variety of grades, ranging from first to sixth. Below I describe each of the study participants from Northern University.

Methods instructor background

Northern University's course instructor, John, was hired as an adjunct lecturer. He was an experienced classroom teacher and literacy coach and had also published a children's book. Throughout the 1990s, he worked as a literacy coach. His district sent him to trainings at two universities with large literacy initiatives. After a sustained focus on primary students, his district expanded its focus to intermediate students, working with a prominent, published scholar in reading comprehension to implement strategy instruction. He also worked with a school reform coalition to promote school reform. "Their focus was on literacy," he said, "but really about how to impact reform in education using different practices like cycles of inquiry, teacher action research, a lot of things that have been effective in businesses. And so, my role as a literacy coordinator at that time kind of changed to more of a reform coordinator." Throughout this decade, John modeled lessons in classrooms, supported grade-level planning, and coached individual teachers. The funding for coaches was cut in 2000, and he returned to the classroom. During the year of my observation, John was teaching second grade.

Methods course content

The three course literacy series was designed to prepare candidates to pass the state exam, the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment, and to teach methods for language arts K-8. It was the third time John had taught the final course in the three quarter literacy series, which was the course that addressed writing. During the year of the study, John also taught the first and second quarter courses to this cohort of students. Just over half the class was devoted to writing instruction—about 5.5 class sessions or 14.5 hours.

John had considerable flexibility in the design of the course, and he said he chose the course foci because they were "closest to my heart" and "because I had the most to offer in those areas as an instructor." He also felt strongly that he should make sure that candidates had "a method of how . . . content standards can be taught." Many of the teacher candidates, John found, thought about writing and writing instruction in terms of English language conventions. He attributed this limited understanding of writing to their apprenticeship of observation. He believed it was important to counteract this apprenticeship through an emphasis on traits of writing such as ideas, voice, and word choice. He also wanted candidates to think about writing as communication and to understand that written communication looks different across developmental levels:

> I also want the teachers that I work with to understand that there is a developmental process in writing that starts before children get to kindergarten and that the children in kindergarten are capable of having some form of written communication; they are just at an earlier stage of development. So, it doesn't have to be this perfectly readable print when we are talking about kindergarteners.

John also hoped candidates would "get to a point where they're kind-of automatically using prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing students' writing." He believed that the best way to focus on communication, honor developmental differences, and teach writing traits and the writing process was though a writing workshop approach to teaching writing. If he had more time, he would have included a course meeting focusing on different genres of writing, but he said that he did not have time to include it the year I observed.

Observations of the course triangulate with John's articulation of course emphases. The most heavily-emphasized conceptual tools were: writing process, writing development, writing craft, and conventions. The most heavily-emphasized pedagogical tools were: writing workshop (including minilessons, time for writing, conferring, and sharing), and rubrics. Next, I provide a brief description of the graduates of Northern University. I summarize the conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching as evidenced by their practice and interviews.

Beth

Beth taught first grade at a high-achieving school and enjoyed resources and parent support. She had worked at Green Gardens K-2 Primary School as a teacher's aide for 10 years and then went on to student teach and teach at the same school. Beth wanted to be a well-loved and fun teacher. "I want to be the fun one who the kids look up to, and want to work well and want to work hard, and want to go further in life." She believed that making learning fun and getting students to want to work hard for her because they liked her would inspire them to "want to be learners forever, like I want to be a learner forever. I want them to just appreciate who I am and what I have to give and have fun doing it." Beth's brother and son had learning disabilities, and this had a strong influence on the kind of teacher she hoped to become:

> It just hurts to see them struggle, because you want them to succeed, and to be happy with themselves. They're just not happy with themselves, and I see teachers who are… they're not attuned to that, and it makes those kids miserable. I think the teacher's job there is to make that child want to come to school and be happy. If you can't do that, then you shouldn't be teaching. I just want to say that's why it was my mission to come in and change all that.

Beth provided her students with daily opportunities to write, and she reported teaching writing about 6-7 times per month. This estimate may be high, however, based on my observations and other interview data. Beth focused on making writing "fun" through the use of art projects and writing prompts such as "If I found a planet, what would the name be and why?" or "If I found a leprechaun. . . ." This type of writing could be found in class books and on the walls. Typically, these lessons did not include instruction to improve writing. Rather, the students used their current writing ability to express an idea or create a story. Beth believed that these activities supported students' confidence as writers, made writing fun, and reinforced basic skills such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. "So that was my whole goal, was to make it fun," she said, "That's why I did some of the things that I did; that's why I let them draw as much as they did, and then write about it. I think that's what motivated them." She particularly liked group projects, such as posters and class books because students "weren't solely responsible for something, and it wasn't really stressful" and because it provided social

opportunities for students to write and read together. As Beth neared each district assessment, Beth's goals for writing shifted.

At four time points in the year, students were accountable for a new type of writing, which was based on their units in Open Court. The types were descriptive, procedural, and narrative. I was always invited to observe during test preparation, which was intensive. For several mornings in a row, the entire language arts period would be set aside for writing. A recess break interrupted the 2-2 ½ hour block. The students also had writing homework geared toward the assessment, usually assigned the week before. Students engaged in a variety of activities that Beth hoped would boost their scores on this assessment. They included what she called "dry runs" in which the students engaged in prewriting, drafting, revising, and recopying all in one block—something even the two-day assessment did not require. The preparation also included a number of lessons geared toward the assessment. For example, prior to a narrative assessment, Beth taught a lesson on "fancy words," which she had gotten from her 6 +1 Traits binder. Using the book *Fancy Nancy* (O'Connor, 2005), Beth drew students' attention to "fancy" words and encouraged them to use them in their writing. Her primary pedagogies were to 1) generate ideas with students through discussion that was related (sometimes very loosely) to the prompt, 2) guide students in filling out their graphic organizer through partial modeling on the board, and 3) tell students what should be in their writing, both before they started and with increasing specificity as they produced written products. During these writing-intensive weeks, the students often grew fatigued, frustrated, and restless. While some of these assessment-driven lessons related to clear objectives, other lessons lacked a clear focus. Sometimes Beth was not clear about what she wanted students to do (e.g., she would give instructions but not model or provide examples). At other times, Beth provided directives, tips, and examples that contradicted the genre or writing prompt. In sum, Beth's students had a lot of opportunities to write and—for the most part—they performed satisfactorily on the assessments for which they practiced so intensively.

Kim

Kim taught at a high-needs school in an urban school district where she had done her student teaching. She was late to join the study because she was unsure about whether she wanted a visitor given her significant classroom management challenges. Kim had a classroom management coach and was working hard to hold students to consistent expectations for basic respect to her and each other. The management challenges affected what students were learning in her class:

> Right now I'm struggling so much with teaching procedures and classroom management and behaviors, so I'm finding that I'm trying to hit the most important thing throughout the day, and sometimes that [writing] gets pushed a little bit to the side, and we don't get to have as much time or their focus when I'm doing that writing lesson.

When I observed in the fall, I found Kim's depiction of the situation to be accurate. There was a significant amount of disruption and distraction, and it was a very difficult environment in which to learn. Kim employed a number of classroom management strategies. She provided positive reinforcement, reminded students of the class norms, and ignored students who consistently tried to gain attention through inappropriate behavior. When these methods failed, she used a card-turning system for behavioral infractions. Kim was surprisingly level-headed as she responded to students' inappropriate behavior, such as shouting, knocking over desks, talking across the room to friends during the lesson, and playing with trinkets from home. In most cases, these disciplinary interactions did not escalate. However, they were so frequent that they constituted about one third of the instructional minutes.

And writing brought its own specific challenges in terms of student behavior. Kim's classroom included a significant span of student proficiency in writing. She had difficulty creating writing activities that supported all students and made them feel successful:

> . . . one of the things I'm a little wary about is I have students in my classroom that can't write, that can't hardly read. So in second grade, when I'm asking them to do these things, the only thing they're able to

> do… some of them are barely able to write a word. When they can't do something they blow up, they throw papers, they throw tantrums, and so I'm kind of like, "I need to figure out what else they can do, and how to teach them that it's okay when everybody else…" It's been kind of a headache for me, trying to do writing, because I'm having a hard time with those behavior problems associated with those students.

There was some improvement in student behavior from fall to winter. Students were still restless and not particularly engaged in the bulk of classroom activity, but for the most part they were at least following along. Still, though, disruptions from several students consistently interrupted the teaching, and frequent bathroom trips (about half the class each hour that I observed) created discontinuity for students as well.

I observed for three lesson cycles, but only two of those included writing because Kim often did not know when she would fit writing into the day's schedule. The writing lessons I observed included an explanation of the task and some modeling. Group brainstorming was also included in both lessons that I observed. Through interviews and observations, I concluded that the instruction in writing was fairly minimal. Kim valued writing, but she struggled to find time and to differentiate instruction. She also expressed uncertainty about teaching the writing process in second grade; she wasn't sure what that should look like, or if she should even focus on it at all.

Natalie

Natalie liked to write. She had explored journalism, creative writing, and writing copy in her high school and undergraduate education. She believed that she was a capable writer and that her knowledge and confidence helped her in the classroom:

> The comfort level, and being able to write in front of twenty other people and go, "Oh, I don't like that," and cross it out in front of them and not feel like they're going, "Oh, she doesn't know what she's doing." I think last year with the sixth graders, when we did some of our newspaper reading and writing stuff it came in really helpful for me to have that background. Being able to explain what a lead was, and all those sorts of things. Just comfort level, more than anything, with the kids.

After graduating, Natalie had difficulty finding employment. She accepted a long-term substitute position in third grade in late summer, with hopes that it would eventually become a permanent position. She taught every day through November 1,

when the regular teacher came back. For the remainder of the year, Natalie shared a contract with her co-teacher, teaching only on Fridays.

Natalie taught using a writing workshop approach, organizing her units of study by genre. She taught a minilesson each day, usually modeling what she wanted students to try out. This was followed by a work time in which students worked on an ongoing writing project while Natalie conferred with them. Natalie and her co-teacher negotiated the writing workshop curriculum; Natalie took on "extra" writing units to teach on Fridays, while the co-teacher taught the "regular" units of study Monday through Friday. For example, in January, students worked on reading "short text" and writing personal essays Monday through Thursday. Natalie explained this third grade staple: "they write a five-paragraph essay and the middle three evidentiary paragraphs are actually small moments, so mini personal narratives that support their thesis paragraph." On Fridays, the students read and wrote tall tales. Natalie reported that they seemed to be able to switch between the two units of study without confusion—perhaps because the genres were so different and they were taught by different teachers.

Natalie's genres were based on the standards but were in addition to the regular curriculum. For example, Natalie extended the reading standard for tall tales to writing. She enjoyed the opportunity create her own units and found teaching them fun. She began planning by researching the genre—usually on the Internet—and then created her teaching points. Teaching on Fridays meant that her units were abbreviated and she often tried to teach two or three things in a lesson, rather than the typical one-point focus that characterizes workshop minilessons. The brisk pace posed challenges for students who struggled with writing, but Natalie reported that her struggling writers were much more engaged in these "extra" units than they had been with other core curricular units. I observed that students were able to apply much of what they learned in the lessons. For example, students were able to create comic books with many of the elements discussed in the lessons—humor, speech bubbles, special powers of the protagonist, problem and solution—into their stories. Overall, students in Natalie's class

were very engaged with writing and were able to appropriate many of the tools that she and her co-teacher taught.

Eva

Eva was the first person in her family to graduate from high school. She recalled that no one talked to her about college. As a teacher, she wanted to hold her students to high standards and to start talking about college in elementary school so that students would begin to be aware of their possibilities in the future. Eva believed that learning to write was an important part of becoming successful; she had failed college-level exams that served as gate keeping for the next level of education and had only been able to move to upper division courses and graduate work through what she described as "loopholes," opportunities to take multiple choice tests on grammar and mechanics in lieu of an essay examination. Eva did not consider herself a strong writer, which she framed mainly in terms of conventions, ideas, and organization. This affected her confidence as a writing teacher.

> I'm least confident that I am clear on explaining. "What is an adverb? When do you use semi-colons?" I'm always afraid I'm explaining it wrong, or not explaining it enough because half the time I don't know when to use it. 'Receive,' is it 'e before i or i before e' because there's that 'c' in there? . . . I'm not confident that I'm teaching them, I'm more afraid that I'm confusing them. I'm not confident in my skills in writing, so I think that's my least confident area.

Eva also thought that writing was a somewhat boring and often difficult task for students, and she strove to make writing fun by choosing topics of interest as prompts and by integrating the writing with an art project or some sort of polished presentation of the work, such as decorative paper.

Eva taught fourth grade. For most of the year, students had opportunities to write three days per week (except for English learners, who were required to receive small group support using the Open Court curriculum during writing time). Eva found time for whole-class instruction about every third week. There were a range of needs in Eva's classroom, and she tried her best to provide the structure and support that all students needed to succeed:

> I have one [student] that has resource eight times [per week] and he's still failing everything, I have two others that have resource four times [per week] and are failing everything. I have three that have speech, I have five that are in the counselor for behavior, so they talk with the one-on-one counselor. . . . Even the principal said, "I can't believe what you have this year."

Students would complete a writing assignment every week or two. Sometimes Eva would lead the students in brainstorming and outlining, especially if she was teaching a new genre. If she thought students could produce the product without support, she would provide the prompt, explain any assignment parameters, and send them off to write. Eva did not teach much beyond strategies for generating and organizing ideas. Overall, students' opportunities to learn about writing during the year were fairly minimal.

Abby

Abby taught sixth grade in a self-contained middle school classroom. The sixth grade classes were organized, in part, by student classifications. Abby taught the "Transitional Mainstream" class, which consisted of students who were designated as ELLs at some point and non-ELL students who were designated as "independent workers." The 33 students in her class ranged considerably in their needs and abilities. They were all extremely well-behaved, though not always very engaged.

Abby was the only teacher who taught in a self-contained classroom at the school. The other sixth grades were organized in pairs for History/English core and Science/Math core. However, she organized her classroom by periods, switching subject matter with the bells. They had a daily 50 minute period for English, except on early-release Wednesdays when all periods were shorter. When teaching writing, she organized each day's work by a step in the writing process. She believed that this was important for her struggling writers:

> Each day I kind of tried to have a goal: "Today we're going to have a pre-write," then next day, "We'll look back on the pre-write, and now we'll start rough draft," whatever. . . . With that group I really felt like they needed more scaffolding. Some, yes, there were probably about a

> third of them that didn't, and thought, "I'm bored." It was a huge difference.

All of the writing lessons I observed had similar characteristics. Students were assigned to write to a prompt. Abby would typically spend two to three days supporting students in thinking about the ideas for their pieces. She would model collecting and organizing ideas on an overhead transparency and then ask students to complete their graphic organizers. The guidance for the graphic organizer was very formulaic and correlated closely with what students were directed to write in their drafts. Sentence stems (and at times full sentences) were provided to copy. Peer feedback forms focused attention on the degree to which the students followed the format outlined in the lesson. Abby struggled to make time for writing instruction during the English period, and her students had few opportunities to learn about writing during the year.

In summary, John was a novice teacher educator and full-time teacher. As an expert elementary practitioner, he had knowledge and experience to offer the teacher candidates. However, he did not have many pedagogical strategies for teaching in teacher education. The graduates of Northern University represent a range of backgrounds, teaching contexts, and teaching practices. In the analysis chapters, I explore their appropriation in more depth, examining the ways in which their pre-service and first-year settings mediated how they learned to teach writing.

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTOR AND GRADUATES

Cindy, the course instructor for Southern University, had a strong background in reading and classroom coaching. When the study began, she had been teaching literacy courses for five years. Southern University case study teachers ranged in age from 25 to 47. Two participants completed their undergraduate education at Southern University and two completed theirs elsewhere. All seemed to be strong students, with undergraduate GPAs ranging from 3.7 to 3.9 Their first teaching positions were in a variety of schools, with Kendra and Mari teaching in the same school. They were placed in kindergarten through third grade.

Methods instructor background

After ten years as a classroom teacher and a music teacher, Cindy returned to school for her master's degree in literacy at the Southern University. She became a reading specialist and Reading Recovery teacher. She found her training in Reading Recovery to be very powerful because "it fuses theory with practice, which I don't think credential programs really . . . It's really hard to do." After six years of working as a Reading Recovery teacher and special programs coordinator, Cindy left her school district and returned to Southern University, this time as a field placement coordinator. In her second year, she began teaching literacy courses for the teacher preparation programs. Cindy hoped that she could bring the "fusion of theory and practice," which she had found helpful, to the literacy program.

During the year I observed, Cindy was in her sixth year of teaching literacy and her seventh year as a placement coordinator. Though Cindy believed writing was an important subject, she emphasized reading in her courses, spending about one sixth of the year's course time on writing (about 12.5 course hours). She noted that each instructor brought his or her strengths to the course, and meeting the needs of struggling readers was hers.

The year I observed, Cindy added a new component to her teaching; she invited a Southern University graduate from the previous year, Christina, to co-teach the writing portion of the class. Christina came to the class for the four of the five days that addressed writing instruction. Cindy asked Christina to teach with her:

> So that they would have a connection, a real world connection. Because what I found out is that I could say, "You should do so and so and so," but it was like a mom talking to a teenager. Because I'm old, but with her they really listen. . . . And we really worked in a spirit of collegiality. . . . I want them to see teaching as a profession. And I want them to see that we were working together and this isn't me talking down to you.

Methods course content

Above all else, Cindy wanted candidates to frame their thinking about the subject and teaching of writing with the idea of writing as "authentic communication." She wanted candidates to understand the power of putting one's experience and views

into print, and she believed that good writing instruction was designed with a focus on audience, purpose, and student ownership. For Cindy, the practical way to instantiate these ideals was through a writing workshop approach:

> I think that the key is that writing is inside out. Most of us experienced it as being assigned to us, and you just write this because the teacher wants you to write this. People don't write for that reason in the real world—you write to tell somebody something that *you* think is important, that you want to say. It's the same reason we talk. . . . I want them to understand that teaching writing is not editing and that is a major thing. . . . So we need to make that connection for people. I want them to feel that. . . . That's why workshop is so important that it be from the inside out, it is their voice.

In describing the focus of her course, Cindy emphasized broader ideas of workshop teaching—community, choice, the study of genre and craft. Cindy believed this orientation to writing was critical for student engagement and to support students' development of identities as writers. She also saw writing workshop as social justice pedagogy:

> Schooling is seen as a way to homogenize, so children, as a part of their resistance to the dominant paradigm, will choose not to be good students. Will choose not to invest, because they see it as an oppression of who they really are, and I believe that writing taught really, truly the way it ought to be, it's emancipatory. I don't believe we empower children. They have their own power. But I think writing workshop allows it, affirms that, and says, "You have this power, you are the writer of your lives, you are the expressers of who you are, you define yourselves by your words.

In the Social Justice Academy master's program, Cindy worked with candidates who read authors such as Habermas and Friere, and she tied these readings to her work in literacy instruction. While her language about writing was clearly informed by these views, candidates in the Residency Program did not read these authors and they did not discuss writing workshop as social justice pedagogy as part of the course.

In addition to the broader conceptual tools for teaching writing, Cindy described her course as an introduction to: 1) writing workshop methods (minilessons, work time, conferring, sharing), 2) steps for getting workshop structures and a writing community

established in the classroom, and 3) the architecture of a genre study. At the end of this short introduction, Cindy did not expect the students to have a firm grasp on workshop teaching: "The preparation sets a foundation, and that foundation is still not completely set when they walk into their first classroom placement. . . . they are in a liminal state." Knowing this, she provided the students with resources to further their learning and support their planning in the first year, such as professional books, teachers' booklists and unit plans, and website addresses.

Overall, Cindy's descriptions of the course content and goals match what I observed in the class. However, her emphasis in the interview was very conceptual; she only briefly mentioned the pedagogical tools for teaching writing. All the conceptual and pedagogical tools that she named were emphasized in the course. Next, I present the graduates of Southern University and describe the conceptual and pedagogical tools they appropriated as evidenced by interviews and observations.

Sheri

Sheri was not a confident writer. In several interviews, she said she had difficulty with writing because it was not "black and white" like math, science, and history. She saw writing as a gray area, and she was unsure how to judge the quality of writing or how to improve it.

There were months during the year in which Sheri did not teach writing. When Sheri's attention turned to writing, she taught a whole-class lesson about twice per month and provided a guided journal center once or twice per week. Sheri's instruction was of three types: 1) fill-in-the-blank sentences, 2) high frequency word sentences, and 3) free writing sentences. Fill-in-the-blank sentences were designed by the teacher. A sentence would be written on chart paper and students would contribute possible words to fill in the blank, which were added to the chart paper. Depending on the time of year, students would either fill in the blank of this same sentence on a worksheet, or they would copy the sentence and fill in the blank. Several of her students found this task prohibitively difficult. The high frequency word sentences and free writing sentences were done in ability groups during centers. Students were asked to think of a sentence

(sometimes including a high frequency word, sometimes not) and write it in their journals.

The goal of the writing activities, in all cases, was to have students copy/write a sentence or phrase and draw a picture to accompany the text. Upon completion of their writing, students brought their work to Sheri, who reviewed it and provided some feedback in terms of a complement or a directive to change or add something. Students casually talked among themselves while drawing and writing, often sharing what they were doing, but they did not have any formal time in which they discussed their work or shared. Toward the end of the year, Sheri encouraged her students to write more than one sentence by adding on another thought. Throughout the year, Sheri maintained that she was unsure about what and how to teach writing in kindergarten. However, she was reassured that her students continued to improve on district assessments.

Carol

Before earning her credential, Carol worked as a science resource teacher and outdoor educator. She hoped to work as a curriculum developer in science someday, but realized she needed credentials and experience in education to get such as position. Carol was hired as a first grade teacher at the school where she had done her student teaching. The school served a diverse community of students. Forty-one percent of the students received free or reduced price lunch, and half of Carol's class were designated as English learners. She had fifteen boys and four girls in her class.

Carol ran a writing workshop four days per week for about 45 minutes. Her first graders were accustomed to the rituals and routines for writing. Each day, they gathered on the carpet for the minilesson. Most students worked independently, and they shared with and helped the other students at their table. Carol conferred with students during the work time, listening to their ideas and providing suggestions to improve their writing. Each workshop ended with some sort of sharing activity. A few children might read from the author's chair, receiving feedback about their work, or students might share in dyads.

Carol wanted to help students see that they could use writing to tell about themselves and their experiences. She said:

> I asked them one time, "Do you guys know why we write?" And most of them came up with the fact that we're writing so other people can read it. . . . And sometimes the audience is just going to be you, like your own personal rereading what you wrote, but expressing ideas, putting your thoughts down. . . . I'm helping them figure out that they can take what's in their head and put it down into words and stuff. Express their ideas in there.

Most of Carol's units were organized by genre, and they were well-planned and at an appropriate level for her students. During her lessons, Carol employed a variety of strategies for teaching writing, including modeling, writing with students, and using mentor texts as examples of good writing. Overall, she was a highly organized teacher who provided her students with daily supported opportunities for learning to write.

Mari

Becoming a teacher was Mari's lifelong dream. She left a successful first career in technology to finish her bachelor's degree, earn a teaching credential, and become a teacher. Mari began her career in second grade in a small school district serving a diverse population of students. Thirty-nine percent of students received free or reduced priced lunch, and 34% of students spoke English as a second language.

Mari worked hard to build a safe and supportive classroom community with her students, and she wanted to give them opportunities to share and discuss their writing with one another. However, she faced significant classroom management challenges. This was due to some students with challenging behavior as well as Mari's inexperience with classroom management in general and this age group in particular.

Mari held a writing workshop three days per week for about 40 minutes. She reported teaching lessons "more than fifty percent of the time," but sometimes her lessons were short reminders of things she had already taught. This brings the lessons for the year, including reminder lessons, to about 55 or 60. In her minilessons and in her interviews, Mari emphasized modeling and using mentor texts as her primary means of instruction. Mari modeled good writing for students and showed them examples of good

writing in texts, but her teaching itself was often unclear; at times she provided too much information in one lesson, and at times her teaching language was vague. Mari also used the Structured ELD approach for many of her lessons, which required students to complete a fill-in-the-blank paragraph template. This teaching focused on modeling the procedures for the completion of a narrowly defined writing task.

During writing time, Mari conferred with students, though there were times when she just roamed the room and redirected students who had not settled into their writing. She mostly encouraged the students during this time. Mari made time for sharing at the end of each writing workshop. This was a five-minute activity in which students would stand up at their seats and read what they had been working on. Usually about five students would share. Students rarely listened to each other and feedback was not part of the classroom norms—they just read and sat down. With desks spread across 20 feet of classroom space, it was not uncommon for students to read their pieces without being heard by most of their classmates. Mari consistently made time for writing in her schedule, but she struggled to identify the content that she should teach. This struggle continued throughout her first year.

Kendra

Kendra's field placement and first job were at the same school as Mari. Kendra taught writing four days per week for 40 minutes, and the writing time typically included a minilesson at the carpet, writing time, and a sharing activity to close. Kendra's units of instruction were well-planned; she knew what her teaching points were for the unit and she knew what products she wanted students to produce within the unit. Her minilessons typically focused on one teaching point, which she clearly articulated through a combination of explaining, modeling through thinking aloud and writing on chart paper, and student involvement (e.g., partner sharing, inviting student input during her modeling). Kendra often provided students with rationale for her teaching points, connecting them to the purpose for writing or the intended audience. However, audience and purpose were emphasized inconsistently in the writing work students were asked to do. For example, students spent several days drafting personal letters to people that were never sent.

There were also ways in which Kendra's classroom was unlike a typical writing workshop. While there were short bursts of student interaction during the minilesson and closing, Kendra required that the writing time be silent. She wanted students to write continuously, since there wasn't much time for writing workshop in the school day, and only about 25 minutes of the workshop time allocated for independent work. This is a different approach from the descriptions of more social environments in the writing workshop literature (Ray, 2001). Another difference was that Kendra did not confer with her students during the writing time. She would walk around the room, reading over students' shoulders. If students had questions, they could raise their hands and Kendra would help them. Her lessons were very explicit, however, so most students were able to get right to work without any additional help. Occasionally students would ask to share their writing with her; she would always listen and would usually respond by making a suggestion or comment about the subject of their writing. Although Kendra expressed some uncertainty about her teaching, her unit design, lesson plans, and teaching seemed remarkably clear and appropriate to her students' needs.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined my study and provided brief descriptions of the study participants as a backdrop to the cross-case analysis chapters. The cases of beginning teachers presented in this chapter illustrate a range of teaching competency in writing. Although each teacher had a unique set of challenges and supports for learning to teach writing, there were several themes across cases that accounted for differences among participants. These include: features of preservice preparation, the degree of continuity between the preservice to first-year contexts, grade-level support, school organization, and curricula. Cross-case comparisons explore these themes in Chapter Three through Chapter Six.

CHAPTER THREE: LEARNING TO TEACH WRITING IN THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

This chapter analyses the opportunities for learning in the teacher education programs at Northern University and Southern University. Chapter Two describes the course instructors' backgrounds and instructional goals and rationale. In this chapter, I review program features and instructor goals and provide a comparison of course content based on course observations. I then compare the pedagogical tools the instructors used to teach their courses and provide an analysis of the primary contradictions in these settings. Next, I zoom out to candidates' broader preservice experiences. In both universities, the field placement was the only other setting in which candidates learned about writing instruction. I therefore describe the conceptual and pedagogical tools in the field placement and how these align with or contradict those promoted in the methods courses. I conclude with a summary of candidates' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools in the preservice year and discuss features within and across the program settings as they relate to candidates' learning.

COMPARING THE SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS OF THE METHODS COURSE SETTINGS: METHODS COURSE INSTRUCTORS AND THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL EMPHASES

There were several structural similarities between the two literacy methods courses. Both literacy course series spanned the academic school year, and all courses were taught by the same instructor throughout the year. Both courses were in cohort models (26 students at NU; 17 students at SU), and the cohorts enrolled in the literacy courses and most other courses together. Instructors dedicated a similar amount of course time to writing, about 12.5 and 14.5 hours in Northern University and Southern University, respectively. Both instructors chose to address writing in the final classes of the year; reading took precedence because the courses prepared teachers to pass the

Reading Instruction Competency Assessment, or RICA, California's credentialing exam for reading instruction. Reading also took precedence because it was the area of expertise for both instructors.

Both instructors had many years of experience in the elementary classroom as literacy coaches and specialists, primarily in the area of reading. At the time of the study, Cindy was in her sixth year of teaching literacy methods at Southern University. John was in his third year and concurrently taught second grade. Cindy had not worked in schools for seven years. She invited Southern University graduate and first-year teacher, Christina, to co-teach the writing portion of the course with her.

While there were differences in the rationale for course content, the course instructors articulated their learning goals in similar ways. During interviews, both instructors discussed the importance of understanding that writing is communication. They aimed to emphasize audience, purpose, and writing craft while acknowledging the importance of conventions. They also hoped to overcome teachers' apprenticeships of observation, which likely equated good composition with correct conventions. In both courses, there was an emphasis on writing workshop. At Northern University, writing workshop was framed as a way to organize instruction. John recognized that there were other programs for teaching writing, which he mentioned in class on occasion, and he did not critique these approaches. Cindy presented writing workshop as an approach to teaching that included pedagogical tools as well as conceptual tools such as student ownership, audience, and purpose. She took an advocacy stance to this approach to teaching.

In order to triangulate data sources, I checked the instructors' stated goals against my course observation field notes. I created a data display to show the relative emphasis of the various conceptual and pedagogical tools in the course. I rated the level of emphasis as strong, moderate, low, or absent based on the rubric below:

- Strong. These tools were a focus of the writing portion of the course. An hour or more of course time was dedicated to their study. The tools were also referred to throughout the course.
- Moderate. These tools were highlighted as important by the instructor. They received less focused course time, but they were explained or

explored in some way. The tools were referred to throughout the course.

- Low. These tools were mentioned but not explored.
- Absent. There were no instances of the teaching of the tool in the methods course.

The table reveals many parallels between the two courses. Most of the conceptual and pedagogical tools were addressed in the courses to an equal or nearly-equal extent. Moreover, oftentimes tools that were the focus of one course (categorized as strong) were also the focus in the other. These included the conceptual tools of writing craft and writing process and the pedagogical tools of writing workshop—including conferring and minilessons—and using mentor texts to teach writing. The parallels between these two courses make them ideal as comparative cases. The similarities allowed me to trace teacher learning of a similar set of conceptual and pedagogical tools in two different teacher education contexts. In the next two sections, I compare the pedagogical tools for teacher education used by each instructor and provide an analysis of the continuity and contradiction within the methods courses.

Table 6. Relative Emphasis of Conceptual Tools Promoted in the Courses Based on Field Notes.

CONCEPTUAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING WRITING					
	Methods course	Absent	Low	Moderate	Strong
Audience	NU		X		
	SU		X		
Community	NU	X			
	SU		X		
Conventions	NU				X
	SU			X	
Responsive Teaching	NU			X	
	SU			X	
Genre Study	NU		X		
	SU			X	
Importance of Talk	NU	X			
	SU			X	
Student Ownership	NU	X			
	SU		X		
Purpose	NU		X		
	SU		X		
Writing Craft	NU				X
	SU				X
Writing Development	NU				X
	SU	X			
Writing Process	NU				X
	SU				X
Writing Workshop as a teaching approach	NU		X		
	SU				X

Table 7. Relative Emphasis of Pedagogical Tools Promoted in the Courses Based on Field Notes.

PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING WRITING					
	Methods course	Absent	Low	Moderate	Strong
Conferring	NU				X
	SU				X
Using Mentor Texts	NU				X
	SU				X
Minilessons	NU				X
	SU				X
Modeling	NU		X		
	SU				X
Peer conferring	NU		X		
	SU	X			
Rubrics	NU			X	
	SU	X			
Sharing	NU			X	
	SU			X	
Writer's notebook	NU		X		
	SU			X	
Writing workshop as a way to organize for writing instruction	NU				X
	SU				X

COMPARING INSTRUCTORS' PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

As we see in the first section of this chapter, John and Cindy emphasized a number of the same conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing. However, their pedagogical tools for teacher education were markedly different. In this section, I describe these differences.

JOHN'S PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

John described himself as a novice teacher educator, though he had extensive experience as a teacher and literacy coach. Most of his work as a literacy coach involved modeling for and coaching experienced teachers, which are very different tasks from teaching a preservice course. John named lecture as his primary pedagogical

tool. However, he believed that students' active engagement with the course content led to greater learning, a conceptual tool that contradicted his primary tool for teaching. John was aware of the contradiction and intended to improve his practice over time. He was committed to supporting candidates' learning, but he did not have many conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching a methods course. "I am trying to refine it," he told me. "Good teaching takes time." John's description of his approach to teaching matched my course field notes. He spent most of the course time on lecture, but he also engaged candidates in a number of activities.

I characterize John's lecture style in terms of two modes: "explanation" and "naming and listing." For example, in a lecture on minilessons, John's lecture had a considerable amount of explanation. He provided information about minilesson "architecture" and outlined three categories of minilessons, providing several examples of each type. He also showed a video of a minilesson. More often, though, John would not provide such extended explanations. He would name practices such as peer conferring or list practical tips without elaboration. Here is an example of his "naming and listing" lecture style from a presentation on the 6 +1 Traits of writing. John read the slide below without elaboration:

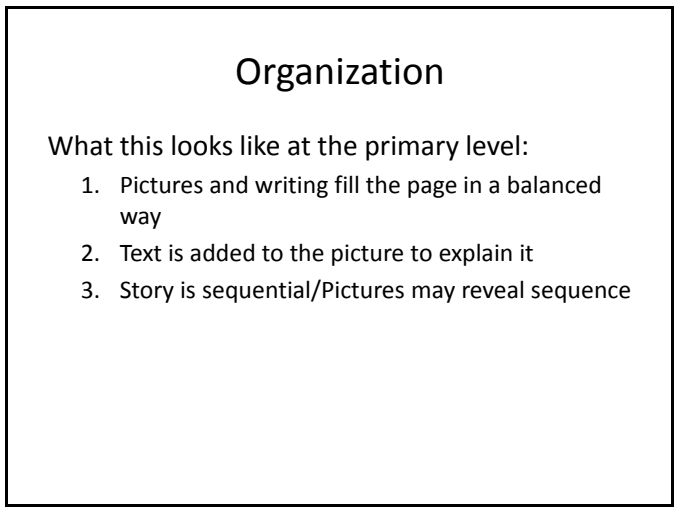

Figure 6: John's lecture slide for organization in primary writing

John then proceeded to the next slide, which was an example of early organization that he had scanned from a 6 +1 Traits resource:

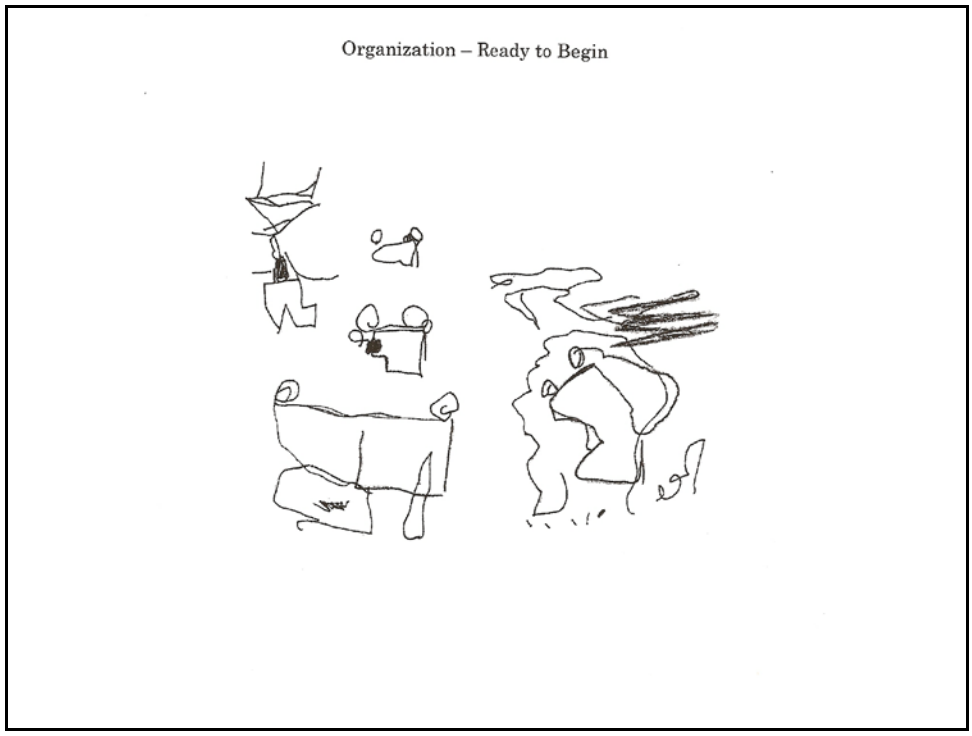

Figure 7: John's lecture slide with an example of organization in primary writing.

He described the picture for Lucinda, a blind student, but he did not explain how this writing sample shows something about developing organization in young children's composing; he simply proceeded to the next slide. And we see the same brief treatment of the topic of word choice. John read the slide below, which defines the writing trait of word choice at the intermediate level. His only commentary was to add that some teachers make posters with alternatives for "worn out words" so that students have a resource for alternative words.

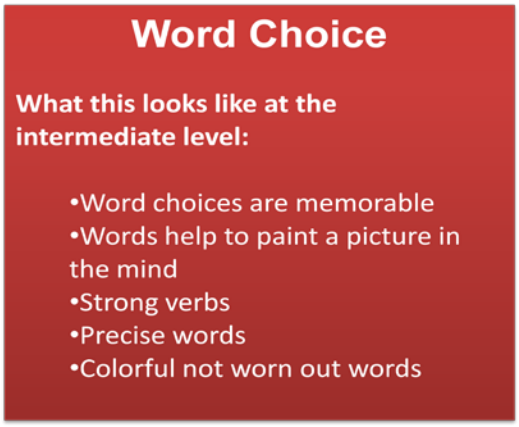

Figure 8: Word choice lecture slide

John then moved to an example on the next slide, telling the students that the writing is from one of his former students:

Lizard in the Sky

It looked like a
Lizard in the sky
Burning with fire in the sky
It flies and flies
On and on until it
Stops in the sky.

Figure 9: Child's poem as an example of word choice.

After reading the poem, he commented, "So there are some nouns and some verbs and some adjectives here," then moved on to the next topic. Much of the course content was touched on in this fashion, or it was briefly explained, usually falling short of a full explanation.

Though explanations were often unelaborated, lecture was supported by verbal and visual examples. Artifacts for teaching included: videos of conferring and minilessons, a minilesson template, sample minilessons, transcripts of writing conferences, student work (used to teach writing craft, student development, revision, and rubric assessments), writing process and editing posters, visual aids for lessons, classroom management posters, rubrics, and editing checklists. Brief verbal examples,

mostly anecdotes from his teaching or lists of examples for how one might support a particular skill or habit (e.g., ways to share), were also provided.

In addition to lecture, John used several other methods, including: modeling, engaging with writing, and approximations of practice. Students worked collaboratively on several occasions. For example, students conducted an inquiry into the writing process. Each group researched a stage in the process of writing, created a poster, and shared out to the whole group. Students also engaged in a revision activity in which they revised a piece of student writing, a minilesson-writing activity using children's literature, and an assessment activity in which they rated student writing using a rubric. These activities were followed by whole-group sharing.

John saw the interactive activities as representative of where he was heading as a methods course instructor. In his interview, he also provided examples of activities he hoped to include in the future—some of which he had tried in previous years but did not include the year I observed. For example, John said he would provide structured opportunities for students to view and discuss video of teaching. He would also emphasize the "teacher as a writer" component of the course, which he began and later abandoned during the year I observed. John had started the quarter with a writing assignment that asked students to write a description of a place. In a subsequent course meeting, students brought this piece to class for revision. In the past, John had continued using the students' writing to teach about providing feedback. By watching a model of feedback and engaging in feedback themselves, John believed that candidates would better understand the purposes of conferring:

> I think within that [activity] there is that picture of the conference not being about editing but really being about revising and being about, "I like what you said here," "this part was really good," "if you continue--." It's more on the overall whatever could be said with that piece of writing—more enjoyable as opposed to more readable. Again, letting students see that in a real world. That conference is a conversation where two people show an appreciation about writing. And [this year's teacher candidates] are able to reiterate those words to me even though we didn't see it, but it think it would have been more powerful if they had seen it.

John had curtailed the "teacher as a writer" strand for two reasons. First, he felt pressure to move through the curriculum. "I think I just got caught up in the next topic as far as

instead of following that piece out to completion, all of a sudden it was time to start the next" thing. This may have been due in part to his responsibility to prepare students for the RICA. Second, he could not get a pulse on how well students were responding to this segment of the course, and he felt unsure about pursuing it. His trepidation may be due to the fact that many candidates had expressed considerable apprehension about written assignments throughout the fall and winter. He commented:

> Yeah, it was kind of a mistake to leave it out. In a way, I didn't quite know where I was going with this group as far as how they were embracing that part of the course even. . . . Sometimes I can tell that there are a few that are really into it, whereas this group, it might have been more like, "I am doing this because he wants me to." This group, I don't think this group was as comfortable with their own writing ability compared to cohorts I've had in the past.

Several focus group participants expressed disappointment that this strand of the course did not continue. Lisa said:

> I almost, I felt like he wanted us to keep the journal. We got it out and I was kind-of excited about it. And then we didn't have to do any more with it. I got all excited and then we didn't-- I mean there wasn't the time to do anything with it.

In sum, John was a novice teacher educator who was dedicated to improving his course. His primary pedagogy was lecture, but he was working to create a more interactive course.

CINDY'S PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Cindy wanted candidates to be responsive teachers, and she aimed to model responsiveness in her own teaching. "If we are going to be good teacher educators," she said, "then we can't ask students to do things that we ourselves don't do. If we don't believe in laminated lesson plans, then we have to model that. Otherwise we're hypocrites." In service of that goal, Cindy used approaches that allowed her to assess student understanding and respond to their questions and needs. Cindy relied on four main pedagogical tools: 1) reading discussions in conjunction with instructor elaboration or explanation, 2) a writing workshop with co-teacher Christina in which

candidates were "students" and subsequent debriefing, 3) sharing (and sometimes explaining) artifacts of practice and 4) a short writing assignment and instructor response called the "reflection/connection." In this section, I describe these four mainstays of her practice.

Discussion of reading in conjunction with instructor elaboration or explanation

Each course meeting, Cindy planned a discussion of the assigned reading using cooperative learning strategies that candidates could use with their students. In this way, they were both discussing course content and learning about a pedagogical tool through participation. Cindy included discussion of the reading for two reasons: 1) it helped to ensure that candidates made time to do the reading and, 2) she believed that discussion supported active engagement and that this is critical to understanding. "I want everybody with me," she said in an interview. "I want everyone wrapped up in what we are doing." Discussion began in small groups and then moved to whole-group sharing and discussion.

During the whole-group discussion, Cindy and her co-teacher, Christina, responded to candidates highlighted in the reading. They clarified concepts, offered examples, made connections, gave advice, or provided additional information. Cindy had a strong presence during these discussions, and she shared her views with conviction. For example, she told them, "Conferencing is one of the most difficult things to do but it is also the most rewarding. . . . That's why people do Step Up to Writing because they don't have to think. This is better. It's better, but it's harder."

Modeling a writing workshop

Cindy said that modeling a writing workshop was the most important pedagogical tool in her teaching repertoire for writing instruction. She believed that experiencing a workshop first-hand was the best way to overcome candidates' apprenticeship of observation:

> I want them to be able to walk away with some knowledge around it [writing workshop], to understand the power of it, and I think the way you do that is it's caught. It isn't taught, it's caught. We have to make sure that they experience the joy of expressing themselves authentically about their lives, that they see how writing makes a deeper community, even when they've been with these people all year. . . . So it addicts

> them. You want to infect them, so that they walk out at the end of the year with this *desire* to do writer's workshop. This hunger to do it.

In the modeled writing workshop, Cindy and Christina taught lessons for narrative that candidates could use in their classrooms. The lessons represented different parts of a narrative unit. Before each lesson, they would explain where students would be in a "real" unit so candidates had some idea about the contexts in which the lesson might take place. The level of the lessons would be appropriate for about second through fourth grade, but they chose lessons with which adults could authentically engage. Due to time constraints, the lessons were sometimes partially demonstrated. Other times, they modeled the full lesson, provided time for candidates to write, and modeled a way to bring closure to the workshop period. After the conclusion of the lesson, they debriefed the lesson.

Cindy's favorite model lesson was the heart map because it modeled the importance of community and of writing as "inside out," two conceptual tools that underscored much of what she taught:

> It's really very simple, but it - like anything really good, it's so deep… you just take a heart, and you do a mini-lesson around what sorts of things matter to you, and you're modeling openness about yourself, so it helps build community. You're also modeling that it's okay that you're not an artist, and you're still going to draw stuff up here. You start talking about, "When I write - when writers write - they write about what matters to them, what's in their hearts." We start there because writing comes from our heart, it comes from the inside out. So you start by modeling some of it. . . . so it's very magical. Many writing lessons are, actually. When you do them with them, they just: "Ah!" They realize then what writing ought to be.

Figure 10. Artifact from modeled lesson on creating a heart map

Sharing (and sometimes explaining) artifacts of practice

Both Cindy and Christina brought in a number of artifacts to share. Some of these were explained, especially those that related directly to the modeled writing workshop or to the topics of the day. For example, the chart in Figure 11 (left) was used while Christina described how she organized a unit of study. Other artifacts were only briefly introduced before they were posted, passed out, or e-mailed. Items included more of Christina's charts, book lists by genre, unit sketches for genre study, photographs of charts from a unit on starting writing workshop, and typed texts of picture books for students to highlight when studying writing craft.

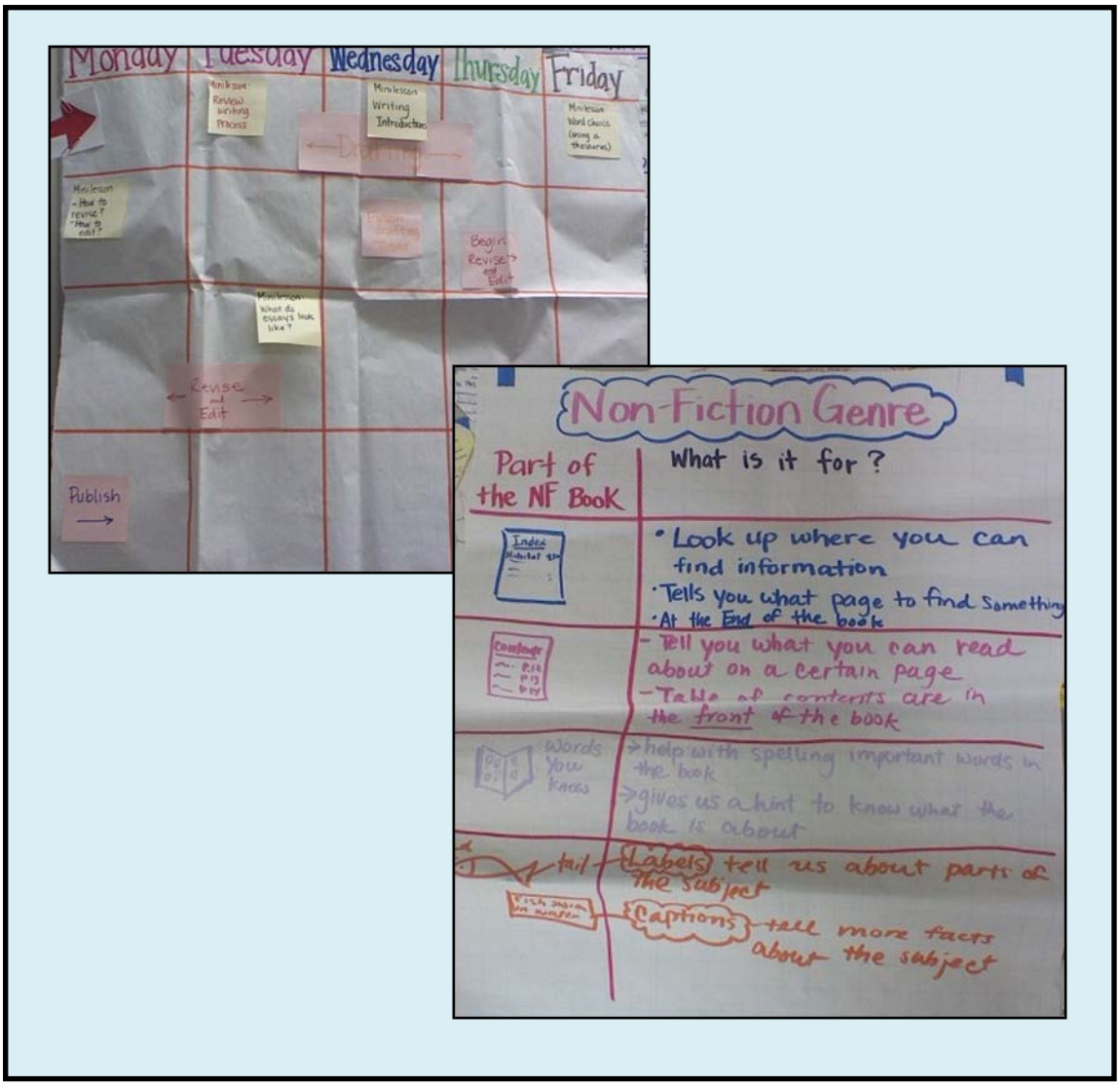

Figure 11: Examples of course artifacts. Left: Outline for a unit plan. Right: Attribute chart from a study of nonfiction texts.

Reflection/Connection

Each class began and ended with the reflection/connection. At the end of each class, students wrote a short reflection on what they learned during class. Cindy explained this routine to me in an e-mail. Students were to:

> Choose one activity or discussion point that connected to them as a student, a reader/writer, or a teacher candidate (coursework) and to share on one side the activity and on the other side their connection. I ask for

> one good connection so they can write "long" about it rather than three superficial ones (otherwise you get bumper sticker level thinking).

Candidates were also to write down any questions they had at the bottom of the page. Cindy said that the reflection/connections help her “learn so much about the students right away” and “develop relationships with them.” Each class began with Cindy’s response to the previous week’s reflection/connection. She used this time to address themes in the writing and provide additional information or advice. She also followed up with individual students as needed.

A typical class

The following sequence describes a typical mix of pedagogies in Cindy’s class. Cindy began the class with responses to students’ reflection/connections and set the agenda for the day. Next, two candidates taught a lesson featuring a think-aloud component to their classmates. (This was assigned early in the semester, and most candidates had chosen to demonstrate a reading lesson, so this pedagogical feature is not highlighted as a main feature of the writing segment of the course.) After the lesson demonstrations, they began work on the topic for that day: writing workshop, with a focus on conferring. The candidates had read Chapters Five through Nine in *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide* (Fletcher & Portaluppi, 2001) for homework. Their discussion activity, “carousel”, required candidates to work in rotating groups. Each group began at a different station with a chapter heading written at the top. Candidates were to revisit the ideas from each chapter and add them to the charts. Figure 12 shows the text from the chart on Chapter Five: Conferring with Writers:

During the final rotation, candidates returned to their original poster and highlighted the point they found most salient. These were then shared with the whole group, and Cindy added examples and points of clarification throughout the discussion.

CHAPTER 5: Conferring with Writers

Enjoy the students' reading and show them you enjoy it (laugh, cry, etc.)
You should talk with the student get dialogue going, make a suggestion, and exit, p. 48 (make it short)
Understand the writer. Help make suggestions individualized to each student
Make sure student is writing in a variety of genres
Observe body language
Listen!! Students should take initiative
Try to understand the student's message
Let students decide whether or not to use your suggestions

Figure 12: Chart made by Southern University students.

After they went through all the chapters, they returned to the topic of conferring. Christina shared her learning about conferring as a first year teacher:

> It's my favorite part of workshop because that's where I do a lot of my teaching. You can connect with your students. Kids love to share with you, and they learn that having a voice [through writing] is a very powerful experience. While I love it, it is also really hard. One thing that is hard for me about it is note taking. You have to think of a way to keep students accountable.

Christina and Cindy then presented several ways to take notes and keep track of student progress. This was followed by a short lecture on the overhead that showed the architecture of a writing conference per Carl Anderson's (2000) book on conferring, *How's it Going?* Finally, they engaged candidates in an approximation of practice: They read a piece of student writing and asked candidates to think about something they could teach the writer in a conference. Next, Cindy and Christina modeled a conference using that piece of writing. The class debriefed the modeled conference, comparing the candidates' teaching points (mostly conventions) to the teaching point that was modeled, which focused on story arc. The class closed with the modeled writing workshop. They modeled two lessons; the first was an inquiry into attributes of narrative writing and the second was a lesson on getting writing ideas from authors.

Students wrote and shared after the second lesson. After debriefing the lessons, Cindy distributed a book list and unit sketch for teaching personal narrative. The students wrote their reflection/connections and class concluded.

For the most part, Cindy's description of her teaching matched what I observed, with one exception. Both in describing the course content and the pedagogy, she placed a lot of importance on the modeled writing workshop as a way to reframe how candidates thought about writing and writing instruction and inspire them to try something new. Her hope was that the experience of writing and sharing in a community of writers would transform their thinking and inspire their teaching. Given the importance Cindy placed on this course component, it felt surprisingly rushed. Lessons were at times only modeled in part due to time constraints, and her students had very little time to write or share their work with each other.

In this section, I have described each methods instructor's primary pedagogical tools. John relied primarily on lecture, and he was branching out to new, interactive activities. Cindy relied primarily on discussion, modeling, co-teaching with a novice teacher, and a weekly feedback loop between her and each of the candidates. The next section takes a closer look at the course settings. I use an activity theory framework to analyze patterns of contradiction and continuity within each course.

CONTINUITY AND CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE ACTIVITY SETTINGS OF THE METHODS COURSES

There were instances of continuity within activities that supported student learning in both methods courses. John had created a syllabus with a set of conceptual and pedagogical tools that he hoped would lay the foundation for the teacher candidates' writing practice. John began the writing segment of the course with an overview of writing workshop. He taught about different components of the workshop in subsequent sessions, relating each segment to the others. For example, though he taught about minilessons, conferring, and assessment on different days, he emphasized their relationship to each other, as shown in the PowerPoint slide below.

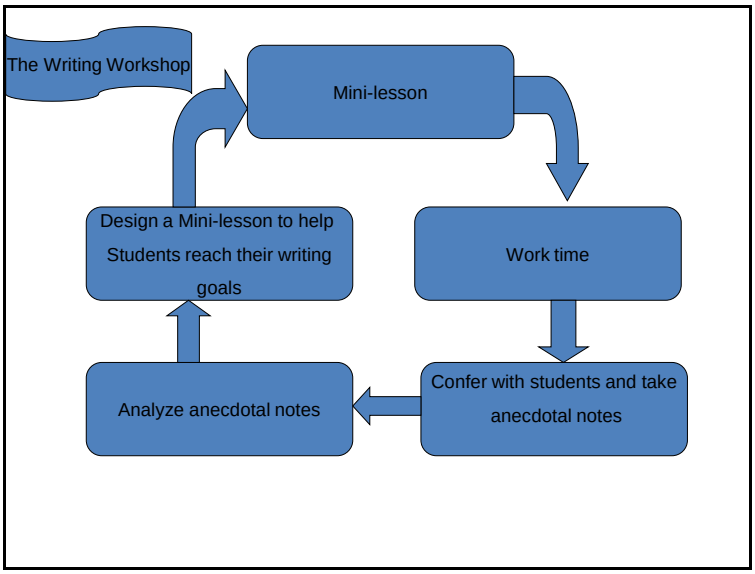

Figure 13. Writing workshop lecture slide.

John also created continuity through course activities that explored conceptual and pedagogical tools using more than one activity. For example, John lectured about minilessons, describing the underlying structure of these short lessons and providing a heuristic for lesson types along with some concrete examples. Following the lecture, John had the students work in groups to generate minilesson ideas using children's literature. Similarly, after a lecture on conferring, John showed a video of a conference and asked students to discuss what they noticed. Activities for learning about the writing process included a lecture followed by group work. Each group was responsible for researching a part of the writing process, creating an informative poster, and sharing out to the class. The posters below are examples of two group products.

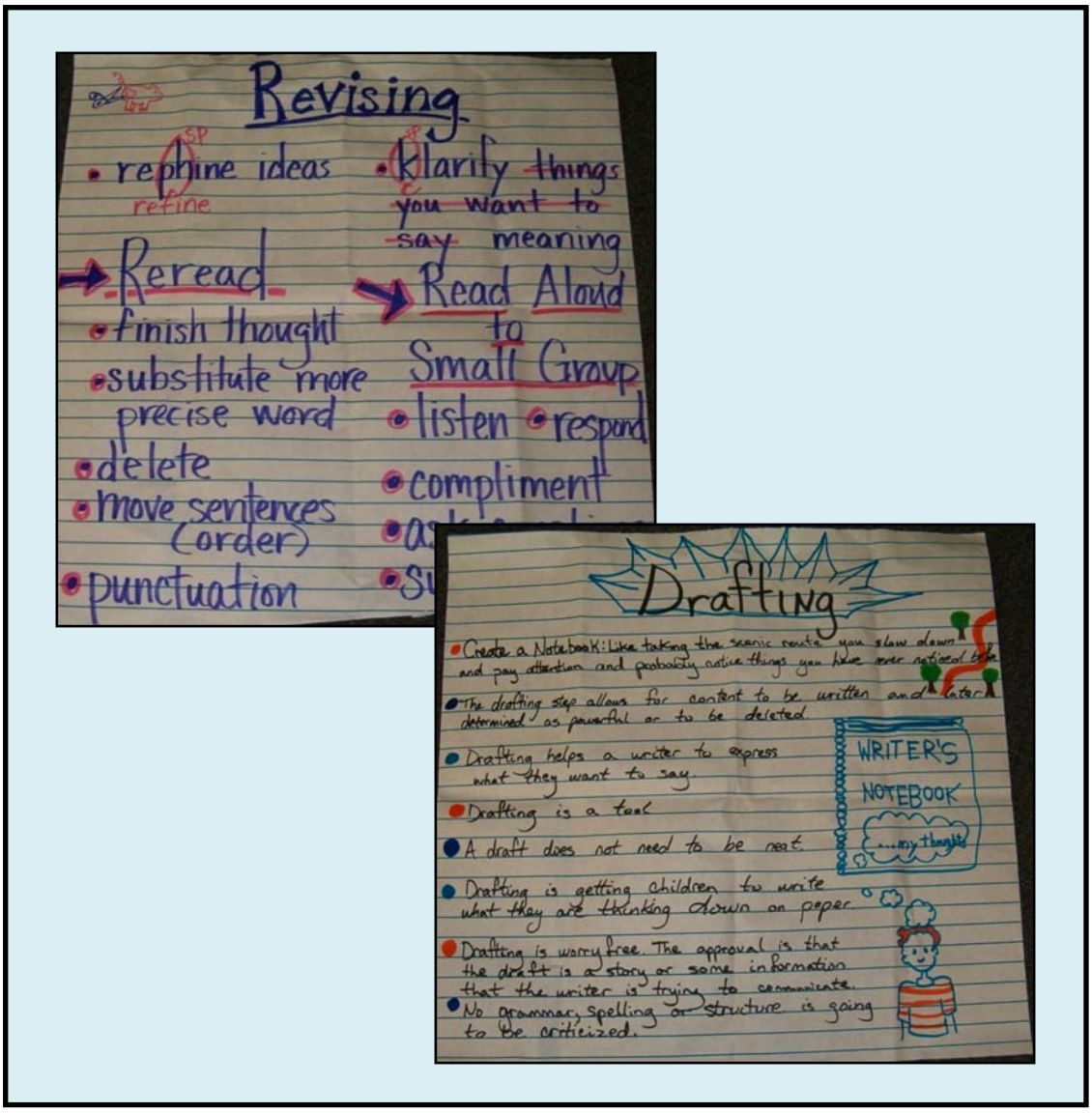

Figure 14: Posters from group activities.

There was much continuity in Cindy's teaching. Like John, she focused on a set of interrelated conceptual and pedagogical tools that would provide a foundation for writing instruction. Cindy co-planned with Christina, and the two modeled and presented a cohesive vision for writing instruction. As the section, "A typical class," indicates, Cindy engaged her students in a variety of activities to support their learning, including discussion, modeling, and participation in a workshop. In addition, Cindy created continuity through her weekly reflection/connection assignments. Her individual responses, whole-group responses, and course planning in response to learning trends created continuity between the course content and candidates' level of

appropriation. While instances of continuity could be seen in both courses, they also contained contradictions that had significant implications for student learning.

CONTRADICTION IN THE NORTHERN UNIVERSITY METHODS COURSE

Although John worked to create continuity in the course, there was considerable contradiction in the pedagogical details of his teaching. Many of the course activities I observed were characterized by two types of contradiction. The first was between John and the artifacts for teaching. He would create lecture slides based on the books about writing instruction that he most admired, but he was not always able to explain these tools or provide conceptually coherent examples. Therefore, some of the artifacts John used to support appropriation provided contradictory messages to candidates about the conceptual and pedagogical tools. For example, John had the candidates work in groups to practice revision; he wanted them to actually do what writers do so they would internalize the writing process. However, the artifacts for this activity were student writing samples, which made the revision activity inauthentic. How would they, for example, revise a kindergartner's sentence and drawing of a bat? Moreover, the activity may have been miseducative in that, according to the model the instructor promoted, one would not want to revise for a student or tell a student how he or she should revise.

The second type of contradiction occurred between John and the rules, or expectations of the setting. As students, the candidates expected expertise and guidance for strong practice, but John did not position himself as expert. During lecture, he provided examples based on his experiences as a teacher and coach. He almost never discussed the rationale for these examples, and at times seemed to view teaching practices with some relativism. For example, he told students that teachers used to support prewriting with lists, but now they do webs. He did not provide a rationale for this change. In another instance, John suggested cloze (i.e. fill-in-the-blank) activities to support the teaching of grammar. "That's funny," a candidate remarked, "because in our ELL book they recommend that we don't use cloze." John simply shrugged in response. When he talked about his classroom practices, John referred to programs that his school had adopted over the years. The practices in these programs did not always match up with workshop teaching—especially in terms of student choice and genre study. For

example, one program was designed around “neat activities” in which the students wrote to a prompt and created a project. He talked about his teaching in these programs, at times saying that perhaps he did too much of the program, and at times saying that perhaps he did not do as much of the program as his administrator would like. Though he seemed mildly disgruntled, he did not articulate a principled opposition to these programs, point out the differences between these programs and the approach to teaching he was advocating, or provide an argument for his approach that would explain why it was more desirable than the other curricula. Although he described particular conceptual and pedagogical tools as “close to his heart” and privileged these by featuring them in the course, he did not appear to instantiate these practices in his second grade classroom. In the examples that follow, I illustrate the contradictions between John and the artifacts and rules.

Contradiction example 1: Conferring lecture

In this first example, I show contradictions in John’s teaching during a lecture on conferring. In the midst of his lecture, John showed the slide below, which outlines steps to take in a writing conference. He told the candidates, “To help me do a good conference, I look to the architecture. This is straight out of Lucy Calkins’ books.” He provided a brief explanation of each step. He then moved to the next two slides, which provide reflection questions for thinking about conferring. I recognized the questions from *How’s it Going?* (Anderson, 2000). John read through the questions on each slide, providing a comment or two on each one. After reading the reflection questions for part three, “Decide and Teach,” he said, “Hmm. Sounds like direct instruction right in the middle of your conference. I forget that, too. It’s good for me to look at this every once in a while.” Here the contradiction lies between the tools that John is proposing as represented by these slides and the instructor’s own appropriation of that tool.

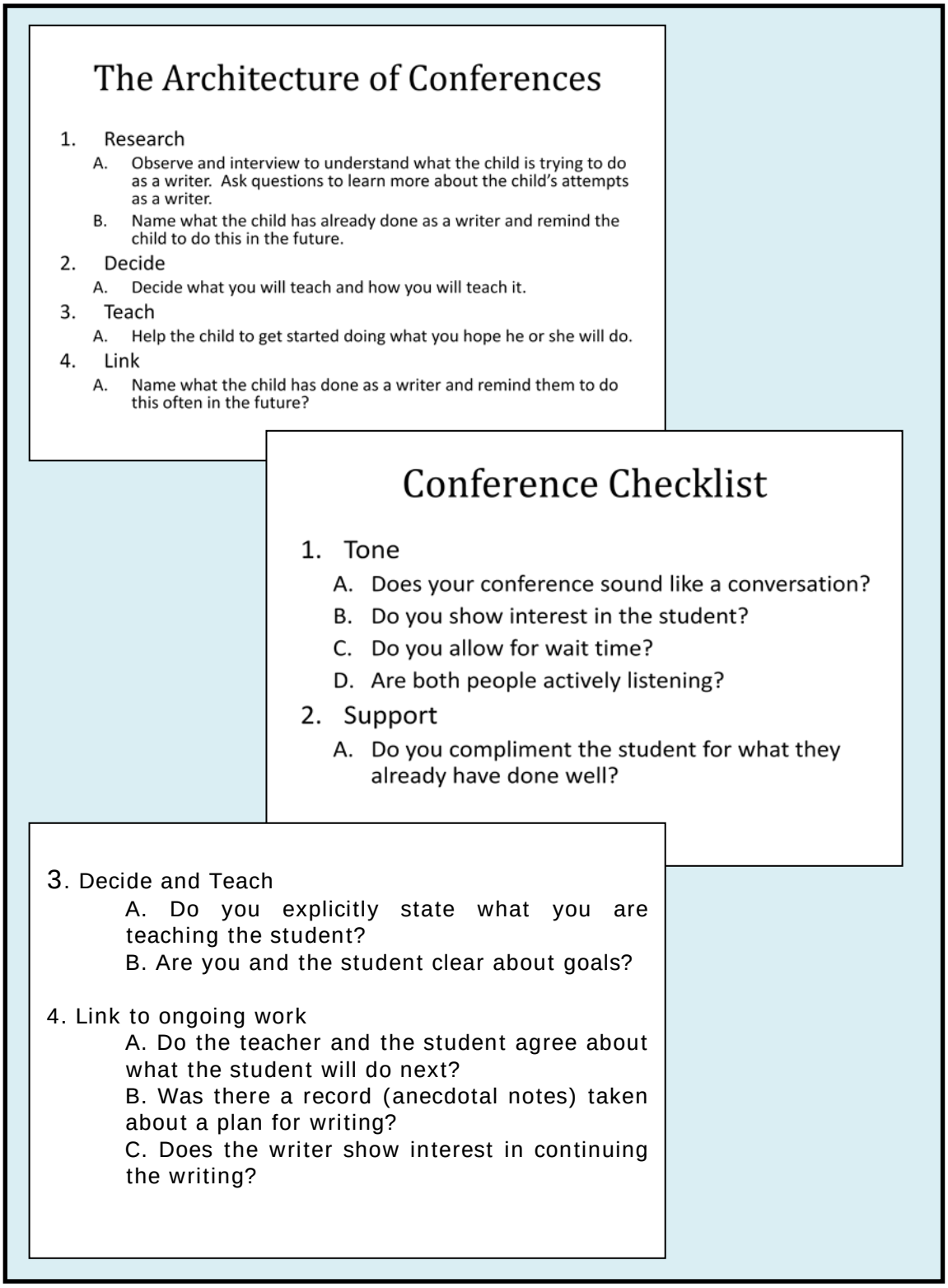

Figure 15. Conferring lecture slides.

After explaining the architecture of a conference and providing questions for how to evaluate a conference, John provided some models. Earlier in the lecture, he had presented a slide that advised candidates to "Do editing conferences separately" and "keep writers focused on ideas and voice for as long as you can." However, the two models of a conference that he shared on this day focused on conventions. For the first model, he showed a second-grade writing sample on the overhead projector and read it aloud. "Here is an example of a conference," he told the candidates. "I'm not sure it follows the architecture, but I think it's a good conversation and I think it went somewhere." Next he read the conference transcript. In the conference, he began by complimenting the student on her use of voice, especially the "boo-ya!" which she used to express delight. After the compliment, he moved to a teaching point about apostrophes. Candidates could see in the draft that the student was using apostrophes for plurals as well as possessives and contractions. "She was using them all over," John told the class, "So it wasn't even my decision to teach it, really. I just noticed. I guess I could have talked more about what was positive, but then it came down to: maybe she needs a little guidance on this." Indeed, this student may have needed some instruction on apostrophe use, but the example contradicted two earlier lecture points: 1) focus on ideas and voice unless the student is about to publish the work and 2) decisions for teaching points should be deliberate, not necessarily the first thing one notices upon reading the draft.

For the second model, John did not show the student writing, but part of the conference was transcribed on the lecture slide. John introduced the conference by saying, "and here's another one that didn't go as I thought it would." Then he read the transcript below.

T: What did you do when you saw these words weren't right?
S: I underlined them.
T: After you underlined them what did you do?
S: I re-read it to see if it was right.
T: What if it wasn't right?
S: I underlined it?
T: But what did you do then? Did you just underline it and forget it?
S: No, I thought to see if I knew it or checked the dictionary.

Figure 16. Conference transcript from lecture.

After reading this to the class, John commented:

> Again, you know kids, like a back and forth conversation that goes nowhere. Maybe if I had stuck to the architecture of a conference we wouldn't have been spinning our wheels. So my thing is, what am I going to do next time, how could I make it better?

John never articulated what "better" might look like. Again there is a contradiction between the artifacts that presented the guidelines for conferring and the artifacts John provided as an example. All of these lecture examples also represent the second type of contradiction, which is between John and the setting norms. As a university instructor, the candidates viewed John as an expert teacher. In their focus groups they shared their expectation that they would learn from his expertise, an expectation typical of students in any university course. But there were times in which John provided examples that were flawed in ways that made them less than optimal tools for learning.

Contradiction example 2: Modeling the minilesson

Similar contradictions can be seen in John's instruction for minilessons. As part of his teaching on minilessons, candidates were required to teach at least one minilesson and to "take their students through the writing process." They were to use a minilesson template from Lucy Calkins' (2001) *The Art of Teaching Reading.* John saw this template as a way to help students identify their objective and streamline their teaching. To support his student's learning of the architecture of a minilesson, he twice "modeled" minilesson architecture, using the format to provide directions for activities. The contradiction here is that minilessons always have a "teach" portion; this is where

the teacher models, explains, provides examples, or engages students in inquiry that will improve their writing. Because John was giving directions for an activity, he didn't teach anything. This may have led to the candidates' surface-level appropriation of minilessons that I observed in focus groups. Though the instructor recognized the value of modeling good practices, he was not able to integrate this pedagogical tool into the course in a way that modeled good teaching.

As novice teachers, the candidates expected to learn from John's expertise, but he talked about his practice in ways that showed that he was not expert and perhaps ambivalent about his practice. For example, John discussed the relationship between conferring and minilessons.

> The anecdotal notes you take in conferring will give you information about what to do in your minilesson. Then I design a new minilesson to help students reach their writing goals. Think of this as a cycle of inquiry and improvement that is driving your instruction. It is your knowledge of what students are doing that drives your instruction. When we do this we also include some of our assessments in writing.

Then a candidate asked, "So you would design the minilesson on just the students you met with that day?" John replied:

> Not really. You take a concept that the kids need to work on. Break it up over several lessons so you are actually conferring with many students before the end of those lessons. That's how I did it before I started following the book a little too much—well not too much. Not as much as the superintendent wants me too, I guess.

Though John advocated a model of responsive teaching, he did not serve as a model for that practice in his elementary teaching. Moreover, his teaching approach with the candidates did not include a responsive element; instead of "following the book," he followed the lecture slides without response to candidates' field placement experiences or assessment of their understanding.

CONTRADICTION IN THE SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY METHODS COURSE

At Southern University, the points of contradiction were not as frequent. All took place during the modeled writing workshop, Cindy's primary pedagogy for inspiring candidates and reframing their ideas about writing instruction. These

contradictions occurred at two points: between the *artifacts* and the *object*, or goal and between the *division of labor* and the *object*. Each example, both in the context of the modeled writing workshop, illustrates these contradictions.

Contradiction example 1: A revision lesson

Prior to the modeled writing workshop lesson discussed here, candidates had seen three modeled (or partially modeled) lessons on gathering "seed ideas" in their notebooks. In their notebooks, candidates had recorded lists and drawings representing possible ideas for writing a personal narrative. They had done one free-write on a memory of their choosing. Cindy's next lesson skipped to a focus on revision.

In the lesson, Cindy explained that writers can revise by deleting portions of a narrative that distract from the main plot or theme. Then she modeled this using a narrative written by someone else. Instead of talking through her purpose for writing as the author, she talked about what she thought the main point might be and what she thought should be revised. While she modeled the think-aloud for this revising technique well, she missed an opportunity to model and thereby emphasize the importance of writing for a real purpose and audience.

After the lesson, Cindy said, "So, we wanted you to see a revision lesson but we realized that you are still developing your ideas."

> A student asked, "What are we doing?"
> Cindy replied, "Take the seeds from last week, and start writing off of them."
> "So we just start?" another student asked.
> "Yes," said Cindy, "Unless you think you need more time to develop ideas."

The students wrote in their notebooks for about 10 or 15 minutes, and then Christina led them in a structured sharing activity to close the workshop. This was the only opportunity students had to draft their narratives in class, which they would share as final drafts during the next and final class meeting. Here there is a contradiction between the division of labor and the object; Cindy wanted her students to experience workshop, to feel a sense of community and ownership so that they would want to recreate that in their classrooms. But the workshop was so compressed that students felt confused and rushed, unable to fully engage with their writing. While the nature of

these contradictions is less fundamental than those of John's instruction, they nevertheless had implications for candidates' learning, which I discuss later in this chapter.

Contradiction example 2: Teaching the pacing and architecture of a unit

As described in the previous example, candidates only had one 15-minute session to draft a narrative, and many students were still thinking of ideas at that point. On the last day, Cindy asked students to raise their hands if they had a complete draft ready to share for their author's celebration; only two candidates raised their hands. They were then given 20 minutes to finish their drafts before writing a reflection letter answering the following questions:

1. What are you most proud of in this piece?
2. What did you do as an author to help your readers understand your story?
3. What was the trickiest part for you?

Ironically, the candidates' quick writing work resembled a typical classroom where students have limited time—if any—to think or revise. While debriefing the writing workshop, Cindy provided a number of artifacts, mostly unit sketches and book lists developed by teachers. She hoped that these would give candidates a start in planning their units. However, the artifacts did not provide enough detail to be understandable to a novice. For example, consider the photograph of a teacher's unit plan for personal narrative, below. Cindy alluded to this unit plan in class, telling the candidates that it was a great resource from a practicing teacher and was soon to be published in that teacher's forthcoming book. While a seasoned writing teacher might guess that the clock might represent a lesson on compressing time and the bomb might represent a lesson on "exploding a moment," novices would be at a loss to understand this unit sketch. This is an example of the second type of contradiction; the artifacts used for teaching do not serve to achieve the goal.

Figure 17. Unit plan for personal narrative.

In summary, both course instructors had a clear idea of related conceptual and pedagogical tools that they intended to teach in their courses. Both instructors achieved some degree of continuity within and across courses by teaching through multiple activities and by drawing connections between tools. John's teaching was characterized by a fair amount of contradiction, which is likely attributable to his apparently limited expertise in writing instruction and his limited experience as a teacher educator. Cindy was able to achieve more continuity in her course, but the seemingly minor contradictions in her modeled writing workshop had unfortunate ramifications for candidates' learning. I discuss the candidates' learning in relation to continuity and contradiction on the courses later in this chapter. Next, I examine the contradiction and continuity between the tools promoted in the methods course and those employed in the field placements.

CONTINUITY AND CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE PLACEMENT AND METHODS COURSE SETTINGS

In previous sections of this chapter, I have focused on the content and pedagogy of the two methods courses, which candidates in both programs reported as the primary setting for learning to teach writing. (I discuss this further in the next section.) Field placements were the only other settings in which candidates reported learning about writing instruction, and they contributed to candidates' learning in different ways and to different degrees. Here, too, there were differences by program in the opportunities for learning in the field placements. In this section, I discuss the opportunities for learning to teach writing in the field placement as they relate to the conceptual and pedagogical tools promoted in the methods courses. I draw on data from interviews, focus groups, and observations.

FIELD PLACEMENTS AT NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

There were very few instances of continuity between the methods course and the field placement classrooms; most candidates did not cite the placement as a context for learning about the conceptual and pedagogical tools from the course. None of the study participants observed master teachers or used curricula that modeled the conceptual and pedagogical tools John emphasized. Moreover, many participants said that they didn't see much writing instruction in their placements at all. Candidates frequently described journal writing and prompt writing activities. Other descriptions of instruction included: paragraph frames (i.e., fill-in-the-blank paragraphs), grammar worksheets, and evaluating student writing as a class. This last idea seems to be the only one—seen by one candidate—that addressed *how* to write rather than simply *what* to write. I attempted to visit as many classrooms as possible. While many of the teacher candidates asked their cooperating teachers, only four out of 27 agreed.

In each of the classrooms I observed, the teacher candidate was providing the instruction at the time I visited. From watching the teacher candidates, gathering information from the setting, and talking with the cooperating teachers, I was able to get a sense of the kind of conceptual and pedagogical tools used for writing in each setting.

In all cases, the object in these settings seemed to be around completion of a particular task, such as writing to a prompt, and there was very little teaching. Teachers delineated requirements and procedures for completing the assignment, and then students set to work. At times there was a brief demonstration for how to complete a task (e.g., how to fill in blanks with an appropriate word) or some support for generating ideas. What follows is an example from a fifth grade classroom that serves as a representative example of the duration and depth of the instruction I observed.

The teacher candidate, Eva, read *Bullfrog Pops* by Rick Walton (1999). When the book was finished, she had the following conversation with her students:

> T: So what was the story trying to tell us about?
> S: Frogs get fat.
> S: You should never let a bullfrog . . .
> S: Bullfrogs are hungry.
> T: What about our writing?
> S: To keep us reading, keep us wondering what will be next.
> T: That's what you are going to do. You are going to write a story about a frog, only it has to be different. But you are going to focus on the same things—trying to trick your reader.

At this point, Eva took a moment to revisit a few pages from the book. She showed them that the "trick" occurs at the end of each two-page spread, which ends with a verb that could have multiple meanings. On the following page, the reader learns the meaning of the verb through context, and it's not the meaning most readers would expect. For example, one page reads "Bullfrog dashed-," and readers might expect that he was running away, but Walton completes the sentence on the next page with "-the watermelon to the ground." The lesson continued:

> S: Is it due Thursday?
> T: Yes
> S: Does it have to be hungry and stuff, like the same as the book?
> T: No, it can be different. It could be about different games in the park, or getting in trouble at Great America.
> S: When is the final draft due?
> T: Friday during the spelling test. Think about five minutes for different scenarios you could use, different settings that you can think of. The more you think of here the less you have to think of at home. I am saving

> you homework time. In about 2 minutes we will get with a partner so you can share ideas.
> S: Will this be a children's book?
> T: No, just the two pages.
> S: Does it have to be front and back?
> T: No, just the front.
> S: That's easy
> S: Can we write more if we want?
> T: Yes, of course. Okay, find a partner or trio and share your ideas. Remember we are whispering when we share. [after a few minutes] How many of you need a few more minutes for brainstorming? About half the class. Okay, about 3 more minutes. You have 20-25 minutes to get a start on your rough draft. It should be quiet.
> S: Can we do other homework?
> T: Yes, you can do other homework.
> Ss: Yessss. [hissed enthusiastically from several students]

The students worked silently, for the most part, until it was time to go home. The rest of the assignment was completed as Wednesday night's homework. Students drafted their two-page bullfrog story, which was due the next day. For the following night's homework, students were to make revisions and corrections, with the final draft due on Friday.

Other observations revealed similar task-focused dialogue, with little or no attention to the qualities of good writing or the process of writing. Focus group participants also indicated that they did not have many opportunities to see or practice writing instruction. The lack of examples in the placement appeared to pose learning difficulties for the candidates. Since they saw none of what John was teaching, it was sometimes hard for them to grasp what he meant. For example, John lectured extensively about minilessons, providing numerous examples. He then launched an activity in which candidates looked at children's literature for opportunities to teach about writing. Note one candidate's confusion as the activity was introduced:

> John: Today you will create your own lessons. You will research children's literature and try to find a springboard for writing. Don't read the whole book, but see if you could find a passage that you could teach some writing from.
> Candidate: The passage is the point you want us to teach?

> John: Yes, so if you are working on leads you might use *Belle Prater's Boy*.
> Candidate: So it's not necessarily out of a textbook?
> John: No, I have some books here, chapter books and shorter picture books . . .

The idea of teaching language arts from a trade book rather than a state-adopted textbook seemed to be novel for this candidate. Toward the end of the same lecture, another candidate asked if a minilesson was the same as Daily Oral Language, a very common review activity for English language conventions. When John replied that they were not the same thing, the candidate was able to surmise that her cooperating teacher did not teach minilessons. However, it's doubtful that she had a clear grasp of this pedagogical tool.

Similar misunderstandings occurred as candidates learned about conferring. During a course meeting that followed a lecture on conferring, John showed a professionally produced video of a conference. Afterward, he asked candidates to comment on what they noticed. Comments focused on the conference tone and the relationship between the teacher and student. When no one brought up the content of the conference, John highlighted the teacher's work with the student on writing process. There wasn't any uptake of this comment, and the conversation moved to candidates' experiences with conferring in the classroom—part of their required writing process assignment (see Appendix E). The following comment represents the notion of conferring as one-on-one editing that was prevalent in course conversations and focus groups:

> I made a mistake today with a kid. We had talked about not putting too much red pen; I did what you said. I wrote it [the misspelled words] on a post-it. But there were 20 words and she cried. And I told her that she did perfectly well, but she still cried. So then I read it in front of the class and she sat up and wiped her tears away.

Brief question-and-answer exchanges (like those above) were the only opportunities for candidates to think about the methods course content in light of their placement. During class, John invited candidates to ask questions, but he did not encourage them to make connections or think about differences between the course and

placement settings. One connection between the course and the placement was through course assignments, and most focus group participants named their writing process assignment as a helpful learning tool. The assignment was relatively loose, but it did require candidates to teach at least one writing lesson, confer with a student, think about assessment, and engage students in the writing process (see Appendix E). John recognized that the placement opportunities may not support what he was teaching in writing. "It varies," he said. "I think the student teaching experiences have prepared them in different ways. And you know, some of them will even admit to me . . . that's just not the way my teacher does it." In designing the assignment, he tried to ensure that candidates would try some of what they were learning in class rather than simply emulate their cooperating teacher's methods or follow a textbook:

> I think I have been explicit about what I don't want see, so I don't always see what is the daily practice because I don't necessarily want to see what's happening on a daily basis. I want to see something . . . that requires a little bit more of them. But when I wasn't explicit like that, I got students who were handing me—the student evidence was a practice book page out of Houghton Mifflin[3]. You know . . . "I am designing . . . my lesson curriculum based on what I read in the teacher's manual and now we are teaching this page." And they were doing it that way because that's what happened in their classrooms on a daily basis. And I think that when it comes to writing instruction, some of them, that's what they are getting; they are getting the writing curriculum that comes out of the adopted programs, which isn't necessarily the strongest, when it comes to teaching writing—and it's definitely not the strongest from my experience in teaching reading comprehension either. I don't tell my students not to use adopted text, because there is a purpose for them. But I think they need to find a way to go beyond what's in the teacher's manual and rely a little bit more on their own skills and knowledge when turning in an assignment to me. So I don't always see it [what's happening in classrooms] anymore because I let them know that is not what I want to see. . . . [But then] sometimes they make their own workbook page.

[3] At the time of this study, Houghton Mifflin was one of two adopted language arts programs in California. The other was Open Court Reading.

On one hand, John seemed to be successful in setting assignment parameters that kept candidates from turning in writing worksheets from the language arts curriculum. On the other hand, there were no structured opportunities for coaching or feedback in preparation for these lessons, and the quality of instruction seemed to have varied widely. For example, I observed one of the candidates, Beth, "fulfilling" the entire assignment in 40 minutes. The second graders were to write letters to the Governor asking that he not cut funds for schools. She provided a greeting and a first sentence. Then she asked students to think of reasons that the school needed money: paper, pencils, copies, physical education equipment, etc. Once the list was made, students were required to write a letter, have the letter checked by a teacher for errors, and recopy the letter. The frenetic pace and focus on correctness did not afford students much time to think; most just produced the required number of sentences as quickly as possible.

Two of the candidates in the study were hired as interns, and they were particularly eager to make connections between their teaching contexts and their classrooms. Carla, a kindergarten intern, appropriated the pedagogical tool of interactive writing from her course textbook, but she did not attempt the workshop model advocated in the course. She could not envision how these methods might work in an urban kindergarten classroom with mandated use of *Open Court* curriculum. Cecelia taught in a bilingual second grade. She had support from a writing coach who modeled pedagogical tools from Step Up to Writing. Cecelia found the support helpful, and she created lessons that closely mirrored that of her coach. She also used the minilesson template from the methods course to help her plan. She said she liked "the first assignment" because he "posted online that schedule of a minilesson. . . . I've been using it. I used it because it's the assignment and then I was using it for my own lesson planning because I found it considerably helpful." When I observed in Cecelia's class, she provided her students with a paragraph frame, demonstrated how to fill it out, and then directed students to fill out their own. When I asked Cecelia about the lesson, she explained that it was modeled after a lesson demonstrated by her writing coach. Unfortunately, that model did not map onto the tool of the minilesson. For example, the

lesson was an isolated event rather than a lesson that was connected to the ongoing work of students. In addition, there was no "teach" portion of the lesson in which Cecelia taught the students how to write; she just showed them what types of words should be placed in each blank. While Cecelia had appropriated a useful pedagogical tool for teaching—modeling—she had only learned to show her students what to write; she did not seem to have the writing content knowledge that she needed to teach her students *how* to write.

In sum, contradictions between the placement and methods course settings posed significant challenges for learning. Candidates recognized that there were differences between what they learned in the methods course and what they observed in their placement classrooms. However, they were generally not clear about what a writing workshop would look like, and they sometimes mistakenly believed that they were observing or instantiating tools of workshop teaching, such as conferring and minilessons. John recognized that many cooperating teachers were not using the tools promoted in the course. During class, he did not ask candidates to share what they were learning in the placement setting. He also created assignments with parameters that he hoped would support students in appropriating tools from the course. However, observations and accounts of the writing process assignment indicated that the level of appropriation varied significantly among candidates.

FIELD PLACEMENTS AT SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

The Southern University residency program was a unique partnership between the university and neighboring districts. Candidates were placed in one classroom for the entire school year. Every Friday, the candidates taught the class on their own, while the mentor teacher was released to provide support to other teachers in the district. Cindy hoped that her candidates were paired with strong mentor teacher because she knew that would affect what they learned from the class and what they would be able to do in their first year of teaching:

> I think it's partly, also, how well we synced with the mentor teacher. I think to say everything happens "because I taught it in my class" is simplistic. If they've been in a classroom where they've had writer's

> workshop all year, and we are doing it, it helps fuse it for them, they get some more pieces of the puzzle from our class, and they get some more resources, and they have some next-steps, and they've got the infrastructure that only the mentor teacher can really get across to them. We can talk about it, but seeing it day in and day out, watching how the teacher negotiates with behavioral issues, with new students coming in who don't' know what to do. Or, alright, we're teaching from our mini-lesson, where do we get those, how does that all come together? That is a part of the gift that a mentor teacher brings to this. If you've got a mentor teacher who's there with that, they do very well their first year, they understand what they're doing. If they don't, and they're putting it together on their own. . . . It depends on the teacher, whether they push and make themselves go on.

Cindy reported that many of the mentor teachers in the program taught writing workshop, but they had difficulty finding enough teachers who modeled strong practices in writing. Cindy said that many districts in the area did not have a writing program, relying solely on the language arts program manual and supplemental materials such as Step Up to Writing. Moreover, in schools in Program Improvement (or at risk for PI) a focus on reading and testing took most of the literacy block, leaving little—if any—time for writing.

The candidates in the Residency Program all held their mentor teachers in high esteem. They seemed to have collegial relationships with their cooperating teachers, and they learned a lot about writing from their experiences in the classroom. My observations and focus group transcripts indicate that six out of the seven focus group participants were placed with a mentor teacher who taught some form of writing workshop, though there was variation from classroom to classroom. Candidates were quick to point out the differences: Sheri did not see units of study; Kendra's cooperating teacher did not focus on reading like a writer; Carol did not see mentor texts used; Mari and Kendra's cooperating teachers did not confer.

Considering the possibilities for contradiction between the methods course goals and those of placement classrooms, many of the study participants were fortunate to have continuity between these two settings. I observed in six field placement classrooms, all of which used a writing workshop approach. In all of these classrooms, the session began with a lesson that taught students something about how to write. For

example, in a fourth grade classroom, a candidate taught a lesson on composing from notes and including transitions between paragraphs. She stood at the overhead with her state report notes. Using a combination of modeling and student input, she composed a paragraph with the students. A cooperating teacher in a first/second grade combination class modeled how to take notes from informational picture books, notes that would later be the material for their reports. In another fourth grade classroom, the cooperating teacher modeled how to look through her writing notebook to collect ideas for a found poem (see Figure 18).

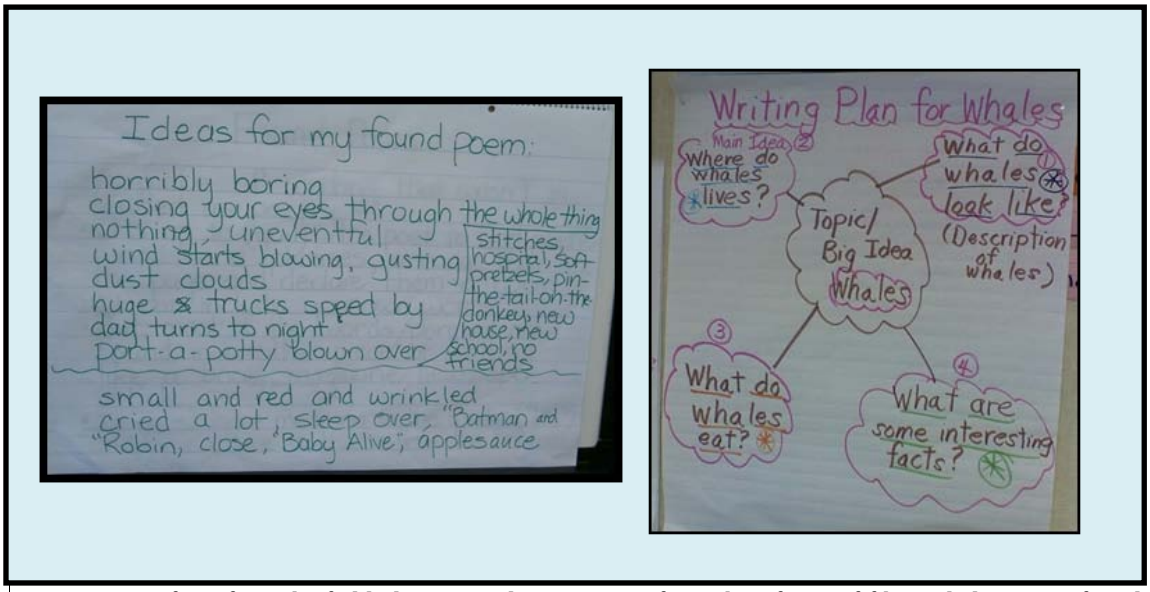

Figure 18. Artifacts from the field placement classrooms. Left: A chart from a fifth-grade lesson on found poems . Right: A first/second-grade lesson on nonfiction writing.

Though the degree of workshop components such as conferring, genre study, sharing, and student choice varied, all the classes had the common focus on teaching writing and giving students extended opportunities to write.

Cindy knew that not all the candidates had supportive environments for learning to teach writing. Therefore, she provided opportunities for them to talk about their placements in hopes that they could learn from one another. She thought that this dialogue was especially important for those candidates in classrooms that did not have a writing workshop in place. As placement coordinator, Cindy knew several of the cooperating teachers, and she would share their practices as practical tips throughout the quarter, referring to some of them as “goddesses” of writing workshop. She strongly

advocated a workshop approach from student achievement and social justice perspectives. Cindy was also sharply critical of other approaches to teaching writing. She openly critiqued mandated, scripted programs for taking the professional judgment away from teachers and for depersonalizing the learning experiences of students.

In their focus groups, candidates favored what they learned in the methods course over what they observed in their placement classrooms. For example, Mari commented:

> I think one of the huge big ideas that I got out of the course recently was about the conferencing piece of the writer's workshop. We do writer's workshop in my placement. . . . She did the mini lesson, and she did everything that I saw in our class - and I think once she mentioned that I should be conferencing with them. I didn't know what that meant, so I just sort of - I never thought about it again. When it came up in Judy's class, and conferencing was such a huge piece of writer's workshop, I could then see how important it was, and how it really needed to be there to close that loop and to come full circle, so that was really good to see. I noticed there was a big chunk missing from our writer's workshop right now.

The placement, then, served two functions for the candidates: 1) when there was continuity between the placement and the methods course, the placement served as reinforcement 2) when there was contradiction between the placement and the methods course, the placement served as a negative example, and candidates respectfully critiqued what they observed. The placement settings and methods course seemed to align in ways that helped candidates understand conceptual and pedagogical tools related to writing workshop and differ in ways that helped them reflect on the importance of particular practices.

In summary, most candidates at Northern University did not cite the placement as a context for learning about the conceptual and pedagogical tools from the course. None of the participants were placed in a writing workshop classroom, and many of the cooperating teachers did not focus on writing instruction. Candidates' questions and comments often revealed contradictions between the placement classrooms and methods course. Candidates said that course assignments that required a teaching component in the placement supported their learning. As discussed previously, John did not take steps to learn about candidates' placement experiences, and he did not

articulate a position for or against different approaches; he simply offered one approach to teaching writing, an approach that he had not entirely appropriated in his own practice. In talking about their learning in the placement, most candidates appropriated a variety of conceptual and pedagogical tools that contradicted those promoted in the class. However, candidates did not seem aware of this contradiction.

Of the seven focus group members at Southern University, six named writing workshop as their cooperating teacher's approach. Only one candidate reported that her cooperating teacher taught the whole literacy block using state-adopted curricular materials; most instructional time was spent on decoding and other reading and writing sub-skills. Field observations confirmed this trend. While there were differences in the elements of workshop used in each classroom, there was clearly attention to writing in the six classrooms in which I observed. Cindy was aware of the varied opportunities for learning across the placement settings, and she did her best to support candidates' learning through discussion and by addressing their questions. Candidates who were not placed in writing workshop classrooms were encouraged to visit exemplary writing teachers. Focus group participants seemed able to bring their field experiences into dialogue with what they were learning in the methods course. Judging by their pre- and post- focus group data, the course provided candidates with a language for talking about writing instruction and helped to clarify their understanding of conceptual and pedagogical tools.

CANDIDATES' APPROPRIATION OF CONCEPTUAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS DURING THE PRESERVICE YEAR

In this section, I use focus group and observational data to summarize what participants learned in their preservice year. Although there are of course differences by individual, there are characteristic trends for each group that likely resemble the learning trends of each cohort as a whole.

CANDIDATE APPROPRIATION AT NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

Based on pre- post- focus group data, candidates appropriated a number of conceptual and pedagogical tools during the preservice year: the teaching of writing process and conventions, using rubrics, and tools for writing workshop (minilessons, time to write, conferring, and sharing). Not all the tools from the course were appropriated, including the teaching of writing craft, knowledge of writing development, responsive teaching, and using model texts. When discussing conventions in the post-focus groups, several participants said that they did not feel prepared to teach conventions, hence there is a shift from five in the pre- column to zero in the post- column.

The table below highlights the main tools that John hoped students would appropriate through the course. For each tool, I document the number of students appropriating that tool in April (before the writing methods coursework began) and in June (at the end of the writing methods coursework). I also designate the setting to which the candidates attributed their learning. Settings named as negative examples are not counted here.

Table 8. Tools Appropriated in the Preservice Year: Pre- and Post- Focus Group Data.

	TOOL	Methods Course (attribution= all or most)		Placement Classroom (attribution= all or most)		Both (about equal attribution, or no distinction made)		Total	
		Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
Conceptual Tools	Teaching Conventions	1		3		1		5	0
	Teaching Writing Craft		1	1		1		2	1
	Teaching Writing Process		6	1				3	6
	Writing Development		2					0	2
	Responsive Teaching							0	0
Pedagogical Tools	Writing Workshop		5					0	5
	Minilessons		6					0	6
	Conferring		5					0	5
	Time for Writing		4					0	4
	Sharing		4				1	0	5
	Using Model Texts		2					0	2
	Rubrics		6					0	6

Note: Total pre-focus group participants = 8; total post-focus group participants = 6

The table shows that candidates had almost no field placement support for learning about the course conceptual and pedagogical tools for the teaching of writing. In probing further about how candidates understood these tools, it seemed that most candidates held a nascent level of appropriation. For example, several candidates talked about the writing process as a step-by-step path that students would follow to produce a final draft. They did not see it as recursive or as something that their students might explore in order to find process strategies that work for them. For example, Abby said:

> Now I know that there is actually a plan, and I don't think I learned that when I was a student . . . There is a plan you can follow step by step. That's what I like about it [the writing process].

A similar low-level appropriation is apparent for minilessons and conferences. Most candidates understood that minilessons: 1) have an "architecture" that can help the teacher plan targeted lessons, 2) are short and therefore allow sufficient time for students to write. However, candidates were unclear about the "teach" in a minilesson; it may have been synonymous in their minds with assigning a prompt or giving directions. They were also less able to talk about the types of things one might teach in writing, with the exception of the writing process. For example, when I asked what might be taught in a minilesson, Lisa said that you would teach writing thematically and "design a unit around an award-winning book." Abby remarked that "they would be standards-based, of course," and Beth said that "you really need to take the time to go through the . . . real basic structures of writing and then they can start to get creative." None of these captured what had John had intended to communicate, which was that aspects of writing content such as genre, process, and craft are at the center of instruction. Conferring continued to be described by most candidates as editing, or correcting a draft for publication. It may be that the candidates confounded one-on-one editing with writing conferences, or it may be that the candidates did not have the real-world examples or the content knowledge to provide examples of teaching about the writing process or writing techniques. While candidates seemed eager to use the tools from the methods course, most held an understanding that was tenuous at best.

Candidates also appropriated tools from the course that were not as overarching. John's instruction focused on a few key tools for writing, but he offered many more tools throughout the quarter—from rules for writing workshop to peer conferences to crafting techniques to making books to journaling. Most of these tools were briefly mentioned during lecture, so it isn't surprising that focus group participants did not consistently name these ideas as part of the learning from the course. A few tools were mentioned in focus groups, however. For example, a few candidates remarked that they planned to use the posters that they made on a make-and-take day (see Figure 19). Arlene used her sentence caterpillar for a sentence expansion lesson in her student teaching placement, and Lisa remarked in her final interview, "We had our make and take day. That was so much fun, and at some point I'll have a classroom where I can use those. I mean the hamburger I've seen in classrooms hundreds of times." A few candidates also mentioned a particular approach to using editing checklists that John had advocated. He had explained that teachers need not hold their students accountable for every English language convention. Instead, he recommended creating editing checklists that focus only on what the teacher has taught and would be reasonable to expect students to do. Finally, most of the candidates named keeping a writing notebook or journal as an idea they took away from the course.

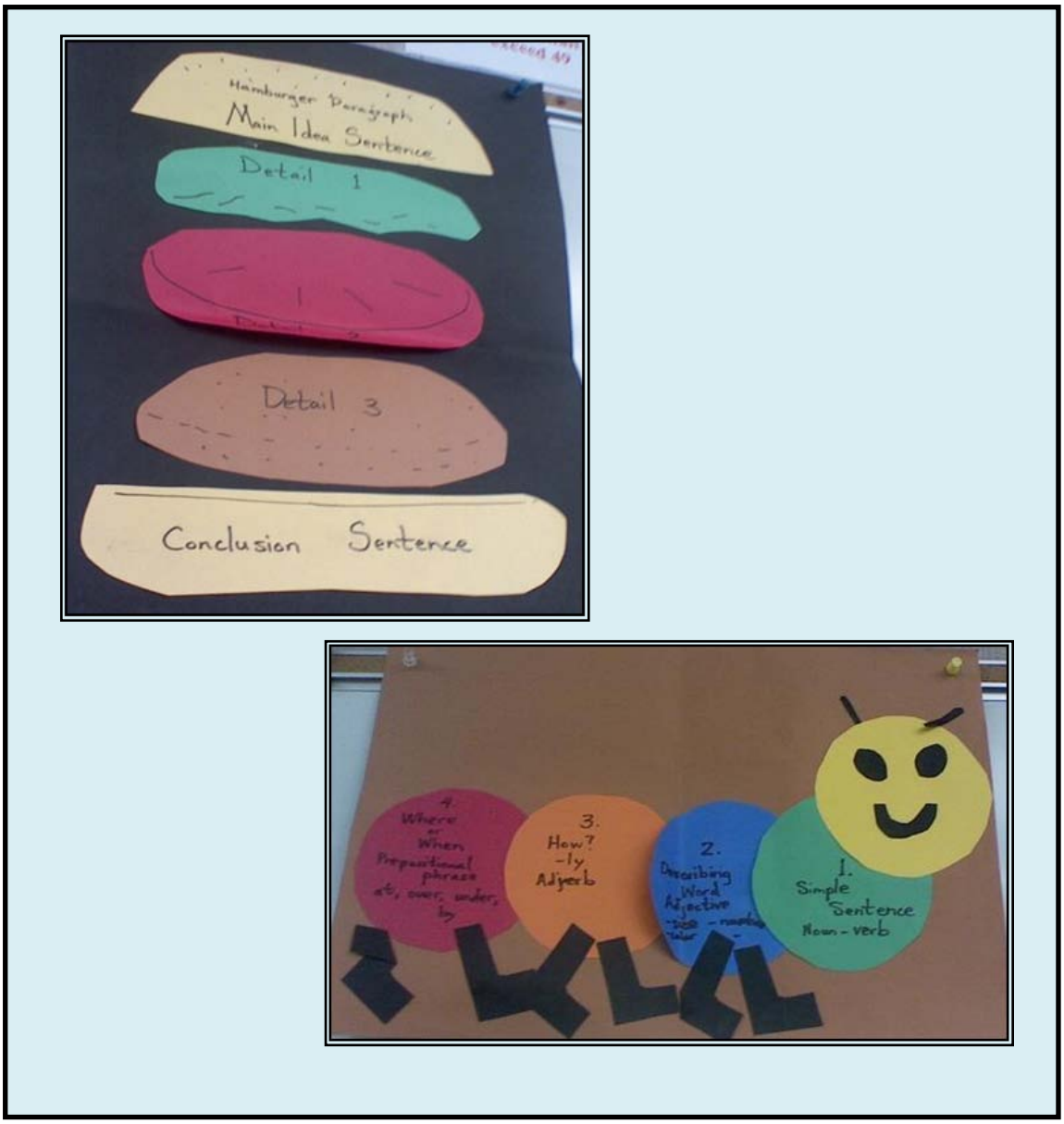

Figure 19. Paragraph and sentence expansion posters from the make and take day.

Most focus group participants seemed equally enthusiastic about using tools learned in their methods course and placement classrooms. Candidates seemed to learn through both positive and negative field placement examples. They evaluated the usefulness of a tool based on their experiences with that tool as it related to student engagement and self-esteem. These conceptual tools seemed to be derived from their personal experiences with writing and their experiences in school. With student engagement and self-esteem as two guiding conceptual tools, candidates talked about the importance of providing prompts that related to students' lives, journaling, and

crafty ways to present writing in a way that would make students proud. They also critiqued writing assignments that were repetitive, such as the weekly letter-writing to "special person of the week" that quickly became a boring routine in their placement classrooms. Since candidates' frameworks for evaluating good teaching rested on students' engagement and self-esteem, pedagogical tools that did not support student growth as writers (e.g., giving prompts, free writing with no feedback) were held in equal esteem with those that might support student growth. The field experiences also taught many of the candidates about the importance of giving students enough time to write. For example, Beth had observed a lot of tight deadlines in her second grade placement, and she believed this made the writing experience stressful and unpleasant for students. She also noted that her observations were in contrast to John's classroom examples in which students would have a substantial amount of time to write.

As the candidates talked about what they learned in the course and the placement, they presented ideas as unrelated to one another, a bag of tricks. They did not discuss their approaches to teaching in a way that separated the main ideas from those that were less important. Most participants held a framework for evaluating writing tools that came from a concern with making writing fun, keeping students engaged, and fostering self-esteem in writing. This emphasis stemmed from their beliefs about writing as a challenging subject for many students. For the most part, candidates came away with a basic understanding of the conceptual and pedagogical tools that the instructor deemed most important.

Clearly, the course had an impact on how the candidates thought about writing instruction. Initial focus groups yielded very few ideas about the teaching of writing, while final focus group members named many of the conceptual and pedagogical tools presented in the course. Candidates appropriated a range of conceptual and pedagogical tools, and appropriation seemed partly contingent on two factors: 1) the degree to which the tool was self-explanatory and 2) the way in which the tool was taught. Those tools that were familiar and did not require a lot of knowledge to understand were more readily picked up by candidates. For example, candidates appropriated the tools of sharing and giving students time to write (tools that were named as important but not

discussed much in class), but they did not appropriate the conceptual tool of teaching writing craft, though John highlighted this concept through numerous examples in his lectures on 6 +1 Traits and minilessons.

Tools that were not so self-explanatory seemed to require more instruction for candidate appropriation. John employed a few pedagogical practices that, as a set, seemed to support appropriation. The set included: 1) the conceptual or pedagogical tool was explained, which included a decomposition of practice (e.g., architecture of a minilesson); 2) the conceptual or pedagogical tool was repeatedly connected to other conceptual and pedagogical tools (e.g., *conferring* and *rubric* assessments provide information for planning *minilessons*; minilessons provide support for skills students use during the *writing time*; the *writing process* is used to help students produce written products; written products are celebrated and *shared*); 3) artifacts of practice were shared (e.g., rubrics); and 4) candidates had opportunities for enactment through approximations of practice (e.g., teaching in the placement classroom, simulations in class). While candidates did not have deep appropriation of the tools presented in the course, this combination of approaches ensured that the tools were at least memorable, and many candidates said that they planned to use them in their practice.

In the year-long literacy course at Northern University, candidates learned about writing instruction from 5.5 class meetings, one course assignment, and whatever writing instruction they observed in their placement settings. While John worked hard to create a cohesive course design, his knowledge of writing pedagogy was not sufficiently strong and he was relatively inexperienced as a teacher educator. Most of the course time was devoted to lecture, and many of the examples and course activities were characterized by contradictions that could be miseducative. There were also contradictions between the placement settings and the course goals. Though there was no conceptual or pedagogical overlap between the course and placement settings, the placement provided a context for the candidates to enact some of the practices promoted in the course.

Most candidates valued what they learned in the methods course, but they also valued much of what they learned in the placement. They readily appropriated many of

the tools they observed in the placement classrooms. They saw these tools as different from—but not in contradiction to—the tools presented in the course. At the end of the preservice year, each candidate had appropriated a number of tools that he or she might use during the first year.

CANDIDATE APPROPRIATION AT SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Candidates at Southern University had a lot of support from their placement, and they brought those observations into dialogue with their course learning. Sheri said, "in my own internship class . . . I wasn't really trained in it so I felt like this was more like the formal training into writers' workshop. . . . It was really helpful to get more ideas on how to structure it and [the course] kind of [provided] a clearer picture for me." Kendra agreed,

> [Now] I think [my understanding of writing instruction is] more detailed. It's more kind of like, I had the structure but it put more meat on the bones of everything. . . . how you are going to do the conferencing, because we didn't do that much conferencing with it [in my placement]. And just kind seeing the structure of things.

Overall, students appropriated most of the conceptual and pedagogical tools presented in the methods course, and they did not appropriate conceptual and pedagogical tools from the placement that were in conflict with the methods course. The guiding conceptual tool for the candidates was "writing workshop," which served as a broad term that encompassed all of the other conceptual and pedagogical terms about which they learned. They used this conceptual frame to articulate the kind of teacher they hoped to be. They also compared the model to their experiences as students and their observations in their placement classrooms. Sara commented, "Growing up I had never heard of anything like that [writing workshop]." And Carol commented on her continuing struggle to overcome her apprenticeship of observation. She had a simple view of writing that focused on structure and conventions, and she was striving to attend to other qualities of the writing, such as ideas and voice:

> [I'm working on] getting over what I know, what I was taught; that's still my fear. I remember seeing for the first time, in the fourth grade class, the papers they produced, and I was like, "Oh my gosh, they're bad

> writers!" And having to get over that, like these really are good writers in their own way, and then helping them. . . . I learned the hamburger: the top bun and the bottom bun and all the stuff in the middle. [I'm working on] getting past that, and I know in my head that's not how it is anymore.

Mari talked about how the tools she was learning about fit together:

> What we addressed was what would real writers do, like how does a writer approach this? So spending time with books was really important, before they started writing, so we could . . . look at the writer's craft. See how writers . . . use describing words. . . . . Whatever the mini-lesson happens to be, you're going to provide some examples of that in literature, that they can then use as a model that they'll write. That was really important.

During the preservice year, candidates appropriated a number of tools for the teaching of writing. Candidates described learning about genre study, minilessons, and the writing workshop structure about equally in their placements and course settings. The rest of the tools, however, were mostly supported through the methods course.

The table below highlights the main tools that Cindy hoped students would appropriate through the course. For each tool, I document the number of students appropriating that tool in April (before the writing methods coursework began) and in June (at the end of the writing methods coursework). I also designate the setting to which the candidates attributed their learning.

The table shows that many of the candidates had seen writing workshop in their placements prior to their coursework in writing. My observations of field placement classrooms indicate that the numbers here are conservative; it is possible that candidates did not think to mention a particular aspect of writing instruction during focus groups. Or it may be that candidates simply did not have the vocabulary to name what they had been observing all year. Whatever the reason, candidates' emphasis on their learning in the methods course shows that they valued what they learned in this setting.

Table 9. Tools Appropriated in the Preservice Year Pre- and Post- Focus Group Data.

	TOOL	Methods Course (attribution= all or most)		Placement Classroom (attribution= all or most)		Both (about equal attribution, or no distinction made)		Total	
		Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-	Pre-	Post-
CONCEPTUAL TOOLS	Conventions		2	2	1	2	2	4	5
	Writing Craft	1	5	2				3	5
	Writing Process	2	3	2		1	2	5	5
	Engaging Writer's Work		5					0	5
	Genre Study		4	3		1	1	4	5
	Audience/Purpose		1		1			0	2
	Student Ownership	1		1	1		1	2	2
	Student Choice		5	1				1	5
	Responsive Teaching	2	4	1			1	3	5
	Importance of Talk		4					0	4
BOTH	Writing Workshop	2	2	3		1	3	6	5
PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS	Minilessons	1	4	1		2	1	4	5
	Conferring		5	3				3	5
	Time for Writing		4	1				1	4
	Sharing		4	1		1	1	2	5
	Using Model Texts		4					0	4
	Modeling		5	2				2	5

Note: Total pre-focus group participants = 6; total post-focus group participants = 5

As discussed above, Cindy employed several pedagogies. She would: 1) unpack the conceptual and pedagogical tools in the course reading through explanation and discussion, 2) monitor and respond to student understanding through discussion and the "reflection/connection", 3) co-teach the conceptual and pedagogical tools of the course with a novice teacher using a modeled writing workshop All but two of the appropriated conceptual and pedagogical tools were taught through a combination of the modeled writing workshop, discussion, and explanation. As mentioned above, candidates seem to appropriate the "writing workshop" approach as a whole—the conceptual and pedagogical tools are all part of a way of teaching. This framing is likely due to the fact that they read *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide* (Fletcher & Portaluppi, 2001), which presents writing workshop as a way of teaching. This was reinforced in the methods course in the way that Cindy and Christina related conceptual and pedagogical tools to each other.

The conceptual tools audience, ownership, and purpose were not appropriated by focus group participants (except one, who emerged as the most competent beginning teacher). In her interviews, Cindy had stressed these three tools as most important. There are two possible reasons for this lack of appropriation. First, it is possible that these concepts were not privileged in the placement settings. However, evidence suggests that candidates appropriated many tools that were not represented in their placements, which seems to rule out this explanation. The second possibility lies in the pedagogy of the course. Candidates attributed their learning to the modeled writing workshop and the debriefing that followed. This combination of discussion, explanation, and modeling seemed powerful for candidates. Cindy talked about audience, ownership, and purpose and intended to model these conceptual tools through the writing workshop. However, the workshop, in its rushed form, did not embody these concepts. Candidates chose their own topics within the genre of personal narrative, but there really wasn't much time to peruse ideas and think about one's purpose and audience for writing, spend time with drafting, or revise. Moreover, the instructors missed opportunities within the minilessons to model writing for real purposes. Candidates came away from the experience thinking about students' experiences as writers and the practices of writing workshop. They did not talk much, if at all, about audience, purpose, and ownership.

At Southern University, many of the candidates were in field settings that placed a focus on writing. They therefore had opportunities to learn about writing instruction before the writing portion of the methods course began. Though the course time dedicated to writing was very short—about 4.5 classes—candidates appropriated a number of tools from the course, too. Cindy was a very knowledgeable instructor, and her pedagogical approach seemed to help candidates appropriate tools for teaching writing. In fact, this instruction was so useful for candidates that it helped them to develop a framework for thinking about writing instruction against which they judged others' teaching as well as their own.

CONCLUSION

In summary, candidates in both cohorts appropriated conceptual and pedagogical tools from the methods courses. However, the nature of this knowledge differed by cohort. At Northern University, candidates appropriated many of the conceptual and pedagogical tools that the instructor deemed most important. However, candidates' appropriation was limited to a surface-level understanding. For example, they seemed to understand the writing process as a sequence of activities that would yield a finished product; they did not treat it as a recursive process. This is not surprising, given the brief explanations and the contradictions that characterized John's teaching. As the candidates talked about what they learned in the course and the placement, they presented ideas as a potpourri of possibilities; they did not articulate a framework for thinking about writing instruction or hold a set of criteria upon which they could judge writing content or pedagogy. This mirrors John's apparently ambivalent stance toward various approaches and tools for teaching writing. In sum, while they appropriated some tools from their course and placement, the knowledge was tenuous and did not always represent strong teaching practice.

Overall, Southern University candidates appropriated most of the conceptual and pedagogical tools presented in the methods course. The guiding conceptual tool for the candidates was "writing workshop", which served as a broad term that encompassed all of the other conceptual and pedagogical tools about which they had learned. They used this conceptual frame to articulate the kind of teacher they hoped to become and to critique the current settings in which they were placed. Candidates described learning about genre study, minilessons, and the writing workshop structure about equally in their placements and course settings. The rest of the tools, however, were mostly supported through modeling and responsive teaching in the methods course that built off what students knew. Overall, candidates' tool appropriation in this cohort was characterized by more depth than candidates' appropriation at Northern University. Moreover, candidates did not appropriate conceptual and pedagogical tools from the placement that were in conflict with the methods course.

The conceptual tools that Cindy deemed most important—audience, ownership, and purpose—were not appropriated by most focus group participants. This lack of appropriation may be attributable to the contradictions within the activities related to the modeled writing workshop. Cindy talked about these conceptual tools during most classes, and her intention was to model audience, ownership, and purpose through the process of the writing workshop. However, contradictions in the modeled workshop undermined this goal. Though candidates found the modeled workshop invaluable, they did not talk about the experience as reinforcing the larger concept of writing as communication. Rather, candidates characterized the modeled workshop as a way to understand students' experiences and a way to make the practices concrete.

CONCLUSION

There is clear evidence that candidates in both cohorts appropriated conceptual and pedagogical tools from their methods courses. At Northern University, candidates were happy to have acquired some tools for teaching writing. They added these tools, along with others from their placements and other experiences, to their existing frameworks for writing instruction. These frameworks were broad and somewhat indiscriminate, centering on fun and engaging writing activities. Candidates at Southern University gained a new framework for thinking about writing instruction, which they contrasted with their prior experiences in school and their experiences in the placement classrooms.

This cross-case comparison shows that the methods course can play a role in candidates' learning. Although it is clear that Southern University candidates had the advantage of models in the field placement, there is strong evidence that much of what they learned and how they thought about writing instruction came from the methods classroom. There were several distinguishing features of Cindy's teaching. She would: 1) engage candidates with the conceptual and pedagogical tools through reading and discussion, 2) regularly assess candidate learning and respond to their needs, 3) model and explain pedagogical tools, and 4) engage candidates with the tools in roles of both

student and teacher. By co-teaching with a recent graduate, she provided candidates with both expert and novice perspectives. Cindy's pedagogical approach seemed to help candidates appropriate a framework for teaching, critique their apprenticeships of observation, evaluate their student teaching placement, and build a vision of the kind of teacher they hoped to become. Many studies have found that candidates privilege tools learned in the placement setting (see, for example, Van Hover & Yeager, 2004); the case of Southern University provides evidence that methods courses can take a more prominent role candidates' learning.

However, the cases also show that instances of contradiction within the methods course activities have consequences for candidates' learning. While John was a novice teacher educator, Cindy was in her sixth year of teaching. Many aspects of her teaching were expert, but the design of a major course activity (modeled writing workshop) had significant consequences for her students' learning. The contradictions in both courses point to the need for clear guidance and support for teacher educators, the kind of support we aim to provide our candidates.

Both cases also demonstrate the importance of the placement setting in teacher learning. Regardless of the contradiction or continuity between the settings, the learning in the placement was salient. Candidates at Northern University experienced complete contradiction between the methods course and the placement, and they appropriated many tools from their placements that were of varying educational soundness. The only tools that the candidates rejected were those they deemed boring for students. Candidates at Southern University enjoyed more continuity between the placement and the methods course. In addition, Cindy's approach to teaching shows that, with the right support, candidates can learn from cooperating teachers that may not precisely model the course instructor's image of good writing instruction.

Although there is limited data on phase one, focus groups and observations indicate substantial differences in the level of tool appropriation between the two cohorts. In the next chapter, I provide a description of graduates' conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing from the end of the preservice year through the end of the first year of teaching and analyze patterns of appropriation by cohort.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE TEACHING OF WRITING

In Chapter Three, I show significant differences by cohort in the patterns of appropriation of tools for teaching writing. Graduates from Northern University drew upon the methods course and placement settings equally, and there were a number of tools offered in the methods course that were not mentioned in the final focus groups. There were few trends in appropriation across focus group participants; individuals' tool appropriation seemed somewhat idiosyncratic. Moreover, some of the tools they appropriated did not represent effective writing practices. Southern University graduates were more selective in their appropriation, privileging tools learned in the methods course over those in other settings. For these graduates, the tools for writing instruction were interrelated and, as a set, they served as a cohesive framework for thinking about their teaching.

In this chapter, I extend these initial findings through an examination of participants' *conceptual frameworks* for the teaching of writing through the first year. In using the term conceptual framework to discuss teacher knowledge for writing instruction, I aim to highlight the importance of understanding the relationships between conceptual tools and pedagogical tools, relationships I noticed in Southern University graduates' appropriation. Recent research has pointed to the importance of understanding such relationships in order to teach well (Smagorinsky, 2004). For example, a teacher who has appropriated the conceptual tools of student-centered learning requires knowledge of the pedagogical tools that will help her to instantiate that approach. In defining the conceptual framework, I also include subject-matter knowledge of writing. I propose that understanding the relationships between subject-specific tools and content knowledge are also necessary for effective teaching. For example, teachers who appropriate a pedagogical tool (e.g., a graphic organizer) may struggle to implement it without understanding writing content (e.g., the nature of the

writing process). We know very little about how (or if) teachers of writing understand their tools for teaching as a set and how they relate this to their content knowledge. And we do not know how the ability to articulate such a constellation of content and tools might correspond to the quality of teachers' practice, though we might guess that the effects would be positive. In this study, I explored several dimensions of the conceptual framework. I sought to uncover the content of teachers' conceptual frameworks and the settings that mediated this content. I also studied the nature of these frameworks, including their degree of cohesion and their stability over time.

The longitudinal data for teachers' conceptual frameworks for teaching writing show differences between cohorts. The graduates from Southern University continued to have more robust frameworks than their Northern University colleagues. In fact, most graduates of Northern University appropriated even fewer tools from the methods course than they had named in focus groups. The two cohorts attributed the bulk of their learning to different sources, with Southern University graduates attributing more learning to their preservice program. The longitudinal data also show trends across cohorts. Teachers had broad tools for teaching, but specific examples of these tools were rooted in the particular grade-levels in which they apprenticed. Regardless of grade level, however, teachers' writing knowledge for teaching was minimally developed. Throughout the first year, most teachers in both cohorts used their conceptual frameworks—no matter how limited or misinformed—as the basis for their instructional decisions. In this chapter, I draw on the case participant data to discuss these themes. When necessary, I touch on mediating factors from teachers' first-year settings. Chapters Five and Six explore these setting features and their implications for teacher appropriation in more depth.

COHESION AND FRAGMENTATION IN THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter showed that graduates from the two programs differed in the number of tools they appropriated. Graduates also differed in the degree to which they saw relationships between tools; Southern University graduates more clearly

identified the ways in which the tools they appropriated worked in concert with one another. In most cases, these differences by cohort continued into the first year of teaching. Next I provide examples from each cohort that illustrate these trends.

FRAGMENTATION AT NORTHERN UNIVERSITY

Most graduates of Northern University had a limited set of tools for the teaching of writing as well as limited content knowledge for teaching. Of the five participants graduating from Northern University, only Natalie appropriated a conceptual framework consistent with her preservice methods course training. Moreover, teachers in this group did not articulate many relationships between the tools that they appropriated. At times, they were missing the tools they would need to be the kind of teacher they had envisioned.

For example, Beth expressed a strong commitment to providing a fun, safe, and supportive climate for students. She had seen the frustrations of learning-disabled students through the experiences of her brother and her son. Beth wanted to be the teacher that would inspire students to work hard and help them become confident writers. Unfortunately, Beth did not have the pedagogical tools or the writing knowledge to help students become proficient writers. She talked about writing instruction in terms of creating engaging prompts. These prompts were a mirror of her second grade placement, while her focus on engaging topics and choice was a reaction to the often banal prompts that she had observed in classrooms more generally. When asked what her writing instruction would look like, she said:

> I think doing fun topics. Who wants to talk about stupid, boring topics? Nobody wants to do that. I think something that they are interested in is more important than me giving them the topic and saying, "Here, write about it" [rather than] "Write about something that you want to write about. Here are some general ideas, go with it."

Beth associated engagement with pedagogical choices like motivating topics and providing choice. But she was missing the essential idea that students gain confidence in writing as they gain control of various aspects of the task, control that can be fostered through instruction (Chapman, 2006).

Eva also hoped to help her students feel confident with writing. As a first-generation high school graduate, she recognized writing as an important skill for the workforce and a gate-keeping mechanism for educational opportunity. She taught in the community in which she grew up, and it was her mission to imbue her students with confidence and a college-going spirit. In reflecting on her preservice experiences, Eva stated that the methods course was not valuable: "I think I blocked out the ideas that were given [in the methods course] because I liked the ideas my master teacher was using better. I don't even remember hardly talking about writing, to be honest. Did we really have a quarter on writing? Technically?" Eva explained that she was often bored in class and would use the time to catch up on other tasks, such as e-mail and grading, and that the lecture went "in one ear and out the other." She contrasted this experience to her experiences in other classes, such as mathematics and science, in which she and her colleagues were highly engaged:

> I just thought if you were in a different class, other than writing, to see my cohort in math or science, you would see completely different animals. In math and in science we were always doing something hands-on. In science we were playing with magnets, or we were trying to figure out which egg was hard-boiled and which egg was not hard-boiled without him telling us. Or in math we were given tangrams and trying to figure out how many shapes we were supposed to make. We were just so engaged, we were actually the kids, and it gave me the perspective of, "Okay, this is how I engage my students in math, because if I'm enjoying playing with tangrams and learning, they're going to enjoy it. If I'm enjoying spinning an egg around trying to figure out which one is hard-boiled, then they're going to like it." So it just made me much more confident in teaching math and science because I knew how to make it fun and engaging. Where, writing I always sat in the back bored, so that's what my kids are doing, sitting in the back bored. I think that was a big part of it. Social studies, very lecture-based, I was bored, and the kids were bored. . . . Maybe if he would have had us do one writing piece: "Pretend you're a sixth grader, and you're writing about the day in the life of a shoe." Maybe he should have had us draw our shoe, first, or listen to different stories. It was just so, "Theory, theory, theory." I think that class was to get us to learn how to pass the RICA, not how to teach writing.

Although she had a low opinion of the course, Eva did appropriate two conceptual tools that were not modeled in her placement: 1) the value of feedback and 2) the notion that writing should be taught, not just assigned. Though she knew she would need to teach writing, she commented that she did not have the pedagogical tools to do so. Eva explained that she did not see instruction in her field placement:

> [My CT] didn't really teach writing lessons, she gave a topic and had them go for it. The only thing she guided them through was editing, really. There was no teaching of writing. That's where I was kind of lost: "How do I teach this? I've never seen it taught before." I struggled with that.

The cases of Beth and Eva are typical of Northern University graduates. For example, in the spring of her first year of teaching, I asked Kim what her vision of ideal writing instruction looked like. Her vision was as fragmented as it had been at the beginning of the year: "I have all these ideas floating in my mind about what to do for next year, but I'm not quite sure. It's not been quite set, yet. Like, my vision is all over the place." Abby had a framework for instruction much like Eva's in that it focused on a notion of the writing process as step-by-step procedures that would yield a desired written product. Only Natalie had a more cohesive sense of what she would teach and how she would teach it. She attributed her understanding largely to her prior experience with writing.

COHESION AT SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Southern University graduates had a broader set of tools for teaching writing and a stronger conception of how these tools fit together to create a framework for writing instruction. All of the graduates finished the program with the intention to use a writing workshop approach. Participants' clusters of tools were remarkably similar and mirrored the approach to teaching that Cindy had promoted. For example, Kendra described how she imagined her writing workshop:

> I see me modeling for them, and also doing the stuff with them so that they see that I'm a writer too, everybody is a writer. Giving them a lot of time to practice, which is where—a beginning writer's workshop, giving them the strategies that they're doing, show them plenty of examples,

> modeling it, then having them go back and practice, and work on it. . . . I think giving them plenty of practice to be able to develop the craft of writing. . . . I'm trying to think of Cindy's class… Like bringing in books of authors that are good writers, and showing different ways. Even having chart papers where we're pointing out things; this is a good piece, or this is how you should be doing it, so that they're visual and not just me modeling. I guess that would be modeling, but you know, like being able to point out, "This is good, this is an author who really is using this certain technique really well."

And Mari's description of her writing workshop is similar:

> I think the most important thing in teaching writing is to give them time to write. I'm hoping that a writing lesson is going to look something like… A small mini-lesson, no more than ten minutes, maybe modeling something, or reading them something so that they get an idea of how a writer is using a specific craft. Or my own writing, so they can get an idea that anybody can do this. But to get them thinking like a writer, what would a writer do? Mini-lessons to have them approach it that way. And help them understand that it doesn't just flow out of your pen. Writers don't just write and then publish, a lot of the time they have many, many drafts. Talking about the different books, like *Charlotte's Web*, and how many different drafts that the writer went through to get that final version. Helping them see the reality of writing. And just giving them time to write every day.

Like Mari and Kendra, Carol and Sheri also appropriated the tools of writing workshop; they saw the importance of a regular time to write, rituals and routines, and an approach to teaching that provided explicit teaching of writing techniques through teacher modeling and examples. As was true of their Northern University colleagues, these graduates wanted students to become confident, competent writers who enjoyed writing. They strove to make their teaching engaging and fun. They saw these goals in alignment with a writing workshop approach and this bolstered their commitment to using it in their classrooms.

Given the similarities between conceptual frameworks of Southern University graduates—and the differences between Northern University graduates—patterns of learning attribution are not surprising. (Tables 10 and 11 show the main settings to which participants attributed their learning, which were triangulated by observations.)

Only two of the five graduates of Northern University attributed a significant portion of their learning to the methods course. For Northern University graduates, prior experiences and the field placement played a stronger role in determining how teachers thought about writing instruction. In the case of Natalie, who had a background in writing, prior experience was helpful. Eva and Beth's experiences provided strong motivation to teach writing well, but they did not offer knowledge of writing or writing instruction. Southern University graduates, on the other hand, claimed that they appropriated the pieces of their conceptual frameworks primarily through a combination of their methods course and field placements.

Table 10. Northern University Graduates' Primary Attributions for Learning to Teach Writing.

Teacher	Primary Settings for Learning	Supporting Quotes from Interviews
Abby	Field placement	I think I tried to look back on what had worked when I was doing student teaching, and what I knew I could do comfortably without feeling like, "I'm lost, we're just going to make it up as we go."
Beth	Prior Experience	It just hurts to see [learning-disabled students] struggle, because you want them to succeed, and to be happy with themselves. They're just not happy with themselves, and I see teachers who are… they're not attuned to that, and it makes those kids miserable. I think the teacher's job there is to make that child want to come to school and be happy.
Eva	Field Placement	I think I blocked out the ideas that were given [in the methods course] because I liked the ideas my master teacher was using better. . . . [But my CT] didn't really teach writing lessons, she gave a topic and had them go for it. The only thing she guided them through was editing, really. There was no teaching of writing. That's where I was kind of lost: "How do I teach this? I've never seen it taught before." I struggled with that.
Kim	Methods Course	As far as my writing instruction, I think all the stuff I'm going to use is all from my credential program. . . . I didn't know anything about teaching writing before. Some of those things might seem really basic, but it's all new to me.
Natalie	Prior Experience	I like to write. . . . I think I'm pretty good at it, yeah. {<y experience has helped] I think quite a bit. The comfort level, and being able to write in front of twenty other people and go, "Oh, I don't like that," and cross it out in front of them and not feel like they're going, "Oh, she doesn't know what she's doing." . . . It came in really helpful for me to have that background. Being able to explain what a lead was, and all those sorts of things.
	Methods Course	A lot of that came from John, the last quarter, when we finally got to writing. It was the model he preferred, I seem to remember. I used it with my sixth graders when I had my student teaching, we did a fictional narrative. I found it worked really well with them. . . . I liked that style.

Table 11. Southern University Graduates' Primary Attributions for Learning to Teach Writing.

Teacher	Primary Settings for Learning	Supporting Quotes from Interviews
Carol	Methods Course	I knew the whole writer's workshop thing from Cindy last year, so I knew what it was. Some people, like talking to Tina, she didn't learn some of the stuff I did. So I feel blessed a lot of the time. I am thankful for the program I have, So, when I went to the meeting [professional development for writing], a lot of it was teaching us what writer's workshop was, and I was like, "I already knew!" . . . No problem!
Kendra	Methods Course	Everything [from the placement] overlapped in Cindy's class, because we didn't have as much interaction, Sheryl [my CT] and I. But Cindy's class kind of supplemented that and gave me new ideas. You know, where it kind of explained things a little bit more than what I was getting [in the placement].I had the structure but it put more meat on the bones of everything
	Field Placement	Interviewer: What about the way you teach, like the workshop setting . . . where does that come from? Kendra: Sheryl. Watching Sheryl do it. Everything is watching somebody else.
Mari	Methods Course	What we addressed was what would real writers do, like how does a writer approach this? So spending time with books was really important, before they started writing, so we could . . . look at the writer's craft. See how writers . . . use describing words. . . . . Whatever the mini-lesson happens to be, you're going to provide some examples of that in literature that they can then use as a model that they'll write. That was really important.
	Field Placement	Last year at [my placement] they gave us training - they brought in writing workshop coaches. They were giving us lesson plan ideas, and book ideas, and it was a major, major focus for the school. . . . The students were given time to write, that they had a substantial amount of time to write each day, that was key. She was really good about reading from her own personal journal. In fact, she even sometimes thought, "I don't have an entry that directly relates to what I'm going to be teaching, so I'm going to write in my journal tonight so that I can read it to them tomorrow." So, I think I picked that up from her.
Sheri	Methods Course	I felt like this [the placement] was more like informal training into writers workshop and [in the course they] really train you to do it. So I felt like it was really helpful to get more ideas on how to structure it and [the course gave] kind-of a clearer picture for me.
	Field Placement	[I learned about writing workshop] in [my] 4th and 5th grade [placement], and Cindy models some of that with like first person narrative. . . . We did that at the beginning of the year with our student in writer's workshop

BROAD PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS, GRADE-SPECIFIC UNDERSTANDINGS

The methods course instructors promoted pedagogical tools for teaching that they thought would apply to the full spectrum of elementary and middle school grades. But they did little to provide teachers with a vision for how these pedagogical tools would look at a variety of grade levels. For the most part, teacher educators in both programs provided examples aimed toward a second to fourth grade level. Across all cases, teachers' understandings of pedagogical tools were mediated by their grade-level experiences and the specific examples provided in the methods courses. Northern University graduates had up to two grade-level examples upon which to draw—though some of the participants did not see much writing instruction in either placement. As participants in a residency program, Southern University graduates had only one grade-level model. Teachers talked about the tools they planned to use in the context of the grade-levels in which they apprenticed, but were often unsure of how that would translate to other grade levels. Focus group participant, Cecelia, commented, "I feel like I know what I'm doing now for second grade, but if I would go into the sixth grade I would have to learn what they do."

Sheri is the most notable case of the limitations of a grade-specific conceptual framework. In the final focus group, she shared how uncertain she had felt about teaching writing at the beginning of the preservice year. Through the methods course and her apprenticeship with a fourth grade teacher, Sheri believed she had the tools and the confidence to instantiate a writing workshop in her classroom. But her understanding of writing instruction was limited to the intermediate grades. When she accepted a position teaching kindergarten, she wondered if any of the tools she had learned would be of use.

Teachers in the study expressed their confidence to teach relative to the grade-level proximity to their apprenticeship grades. For example, Eva wondered what kind of support fourth graders might need, since the students in her fifth/sixth grade field placement "didn't need" any instruction. And Kim, whose apprenticeships had been in kindergarten and fifth grade, was unsure how to target lessons for second graders. In the

next chapter, I discuss in greater depth how teachers' grade-specific understandings mediated their teaching in the first year.

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE FOR TEACHING: THE MISSING PIECE

Another theme across the cases was teachers' minimal content knowledge for teaching. Recall that in both methods courses the content of writing instruction was not addressed directly. Both instructors discussed the writing process, but teachers understood that idea in a variety of ways. If there had been more time allocated to writing in the two courses, both instructors said that genre would have been the topic that they would teach.

Overall, graduates from Southern University had a sense of the content in broad terms. They considered the content to include the writing process, genres, writing techniques, and conventions. While the teachers in this group named aspects of writing content in the abstract, they were less clear about what, exactly, these broader ideas meant for the actual lessons they would teach. And their grasp of these broader components of writing instruction seemed tentative and less cohesive than the conceptual and pedagogical tools they appropriated. While the ideas of genre, craft, process, and conventions came up throughout my conversations with teachers, they did not draw these ideas together when asked to define writing as a subject. For example, I asked Kendra, "What is writing as a subject? What are the pieces?" I asked her to draw a graphic representation of the subject of writing and to describe it to me. She focused on the writing process, even though she had previously discussed (and taught!) other components of writing:

> So you start with an idea, or ideas, that you are thinking about, and then you're going to choose one, because this is like, a little kid doing it. I can see an author doing it, too, when you're writing a book… Choosing your idea, then you kind of take it and you start writing, and developing it until you have what you think is the first draft, I guess. Yeah, and then you edit and revise, those are kind of together. You can make it for spelling, and all that fun grammar stuff. And then you have your complete piece, and then you're going to share it with whoever you're

> going to be showing your work to, and then start again. . . . That seems like writing to me.

We see above that Kendra talks about editing and revision together and in connection with spelling and grammar. Understanding revision was a challenge for all of the teachers in the study but Natalie. Conceptually, teachers understood that revision should include more than just correcting one's work, but they were at a loss for identifying strategies for improving the quality of their students' writing. For example, Eva also rolled editing and revision together, and her focus was on conventions and form (e.g., having an appropriate number of sentences for each paragraph). The only strategic crafting choice she taught was description; she encouraged her students to use adjectives each time they wrote. The following is Eva's fall description of a peer editing/revision activity using her routine guidelines:

> Eva: But we peer-edited more this time, we had three different people read our papers and part of those people's jobs were to check, "How many details do they have for this sentence? How many details do they have for that topic sentence?" And I think that helped them reinforce it a little bit more this time.
>
> Interviewer: What did that look like, the peer editing?
>
> Eva: First we edited ourselves, so we had three different colored highlighters, and first we just looked for adjectives. We talked about what an adjective was again, because I always need to reinforce that, and then they highlighted the adjectives, and if you didn't have—if you didn't see very many pink highlights on your page, then you could add more detail. That's one thing the peer editing was for. Then we went back and looked for complete sentences, spelling, and punctuation. They highlighted spelling in one color, then they could go back to the dictionary and look. That helped the peer editors too, because they could look for the pink, yellow, and green highlights to see if there was enough. I asked them to look at their main topic. So, the main topic was Thanksgiving, and I said, "Okay, how many topics do you have?" Most of them had two, a lot of them had three, then for the sub-topics, I went back and asked, "How many details do you have? Number them." Then they had to highlight their sub-topic. Then they had to number their details, whether there were one, two, or three details. Some of them realized, "I'm only thankful for turkey with food, so I have to go back and add more to it." When the peer editors went back, they could look

> and see there was one detail or two details or seven details—well, maybe that's too many. I kind of made a guide for the peer editors so they would know what they were looking for, more. . . . I kind of go over the same things every time.

As we can see in her description, Eva saw peer revision and editing as a time to "reinforce" grammatical forms and pre-established essay parameters. Even her treatment of adjectives focuses on quantity rather than effective communication. Teachers were also unclear about basic characteristics of genres typical in school writing. For example, in the fall I asked Eva what she would be teaching in her fourth grade position. She responded:

> Once I figure out what the genres of writing I need to do [for example] persuasive essay, I have no idea [what the parameters are] for a persuasive essay, I'm going to have to look all that up. I think since I'm going to have to learn it myself, I'm going to understand what my questions were, and then I'll be able to present it to them. . . . But I think if I get an understanding of what they need to know, then that will help me teach them. Right now I'm in a fog . . . with regard to writing. I have the genre names, but I don't know what to do within that. Once I learn it, then I'll be able to answer that question.

Eva recognized that she needed more genre knowledge in order to teach. But other teachers were not as aware of this need. For example, consider Beth's response when I asked her about the teaching points for her first grade unit on personal narrative:

> I think it [narrative] was new in the beginning, I think it [the objective] was to understand the structure, the four sentences, the topic. . . . I think it was just understanding that you can write more than two sentences to explain something. And that they can be just as descriptive—that was before our [lesson on] fancy words—so they can be just as descriptive. So, to use more words in your sentence, instead of, "I like bears." Well, what kind of bears? Kind of get them thinking to make longer, more complex sentences, I think was the goal.

Here Beth combines a formula for paragraph writing ("the four sentences, the topic"), expository, non-narrative writing ("I like bears"), and adding detail and description to teach her personal narrative unit. Grade-appropriate genre characteristics are absent from her outline; "fancy words" and adding details are her only references to crafting.

However, Beth never expressed any concern that she needed more content knowledge for teaching.

Abby's difficulties stemmed both from a limited understanding of the writing process and a minimal knowledge of genre and writing techniques. She understood the subject of writing in terms of conventions, writing process, and "format," which was her term for describing the characteristics of a particular type of writing. This term reveals how Abby thought about genre, which was primarily as a form that could be followed. She had never heard of the writing process before her methods course, and it helped her think about how to approach her teaching. Her understanding of the process was linear, though, and she felt more comfortable with the initial stages of the process that focused on gathering and organizing ideas. Her instructional model focused on generating or collecting ideas, transferring those to graphic organizers, and then transferring again to a draft, this time creating sentences from the notes. She talked about revision in much the same terms as Eva, focusing students' attention on the form—and, at times, formula—they were to follow.

Natalie's case was much different from all the others. As a communications major, Natalie had been interested in writing since high school. She had experience with journalism, creative writing, and other writing types. The experience helped her think about writing as a content area. While other teachers talked about writing craft more generally, Natalie could name examples. In addition, she was able to think about new genres in terms of their characteristics and in terms of crafting strategies that would be appropriate for the genre. For example, in a unit on comic books, Natalie taught her students about the importance of action, dialogue, and picture-text relationships. This is in contrast with teachers such as Beth, Eva, and Sheri who, without a strong understanding of genre or writing techniques more generally, continued to emphasize description—and only description—as a technique for making writing better.

Natalie was also the only Northern University graduate to appropriate the workshop approach advocated in her methods course. As discussed in Chapter Three, most of the focus group participants from Northern University thought about writing

instruction in terms of a bag of tricks; practices like making books, reading a particular book, or using fun prompts were given equal weight with broader tools for instruction, such as conferring and minilessons. My preservice interview with Natalie did not reflect this pattern. In response to open-ended questions about her learning in the methods course and field placements, her responses remained focused on core conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing. Natalie believed that her prior experience with writing combined with the coursework facilitated her learning:

> I would say just because of all the background I had [the course was] review, you know kind of getting back in touch with the steps that it takes to get there, because I had been out of working through those steps for so long and [the course] was helpful. . . . I certainly didn't know how to teach the writing process to students because I didn't have any background with that. And it was helpful to review and kind-of look at it from a teacher's perspective rather than, you know, as an adult.

Despite the brisk pace of the preservice course and John's reliance on lecture, Natalie was able to make sense of the course content in a way that was meaningful to her.

None of the teachers in the study were prepared for the writing content they would soon teach. With the exception of Natalie, teachers from Northern University had a procedural understanding of writing process and very little knowledge of writing techniques and genre. In focus groups, several teachers also complained that they felt ill-prepared to teach grammar. Teachers from Southern University had a sense of what kinds of things they might teach as part of a writing curriculum (i.e., conventions, techniques, genre, and process), but they did not have much specific understanding beyond these broad categories.

THE STABILITY OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK THROUGH THE FIRST YEAR

As discussed in Chapter Three, teachers from Northern University had conceptual frameworks that were influenced primarily from their personal experiences

and field placement experiences. Southern University graduates privileged what they learned in the methods course, but appropriated many tools from their field placements—especially those reinforced in the methods course. Regardless of the primary influences on teachers' conceptual frameworks, the tools with which teachers entered the field remained relatively stable over the first year.

For example, Beth's teaching centered on the conceptual tool of making writing as fun as possible. She believed that enjoyment of writing tasks would lead to higher engagement and motivation. This tool remained stable as the controlling idea for her teaching throughout the first year. In her focus group interview before the writing portion of the course, she commented, "I think you learn more when you are having fun." In the final focus group, she reiterated this focus. When I asked participants to name what they were going to take with them into their first teaching jobs, Beth said, "I am going to do free and fun writing." And, in the fall, Beth again used fun to frame her teaching approach, saying "I think making it free and fun for them is important." At the end of her first year of teaching, Beth maintained this goal. "Like I said at the beginning," she said, "Writing, to me, is not fun. I don't like it. So that was my whole goal, was to make it fun." She also articulated her goals for the future as "doing more fun things."

Natalie, too, wanted her students to enjoy writing, but she appropriated several other tools that organized her conceptual framework. Her teaching approach was based on conceptual tools that centered on all students as capable. She wanted to provide an environment in which students could learn to write through opportunities to write about things that mattered to them. She believed that explicit instruction and "recognizing the efforts of all the students" were important ingredients in such an environment. Natalie appropriated the writing workshop approach learned in her methods course, though she never saw this in practice in her placement classrooms. She particularly liked the idea of using minilessons because they left time for students to write independently:

> The mini lesson is basically really a condensed . . . I guess it allows for the students to have more opportunity to own their learning, that they do more of the work of it and [there's] less [time] instruction wise.

At the end of her first year of teaching, I asked Natalie to reflect on the teaching methods she had used to teach writing. I asked, "How did you learn to do all that kind of teaching?" She replied:

> A lot of that came from John, the last quarter, when we finally got to writing. It was the model he preferred, I seem to remember. I used it with my sixth graders when I had my student teaching, we did a fictional narrative. I found it worked really well with them. . . . I liked that style then, and then that's what the basic model is for the New York Readers and Writers Project [we use at my school now].

The content of Natalie's conceptual framework did not change much through the first year. She remained focused on the notion that students are capable writers who, with instruction, can appropriate the habits, processes, and strategies of more accomplished writers. With this focus in mind, she continued to deepen her appropriation of content knowledge and the tools for writing workshop through help from district coaches, co-planning with her grade-level team and other new teachers at the school, research, and classroom experience.

Sheri's case demonstrates how a conceptual framework from the preservice year may stay intact, even when teachers do not have the opportunities to use the tools they learned. A Southern University graduate, Sheri believed that her preservice training had prepared her for teaching writing. She had appropriated some broad notions of the content of writing instruction, including genre, writing process, conventions, and writing craft. She had also appropriated conceptual tools for the teaching of writing, including the importance of talk, student ownership, teaching students to read like writers, giving students choice, and designing instruction in response to students' needs. She held onto the phrase, "teach the writer, not the writing," as a conceptual tool for thinking through what to teach. Before she received her grade-level assignment in kindergarten, Sheri planned to implement a writing workshop.

In the kindergarten setting, however, few conceptual and pedagogical tools Sheri learned in her preservice year seemed to have relevance for her. Moreover, she did not see how writing content such as genre and process related to young children. Throughout the first year of teaching, Sheri did not mention many of the tools that she

had articulated at the end of her preservice year. While her understanding of fourth grade writing content had been driven by genre, her first-year kindergarten framework focused on conventions. She still talked about writing conferences, but most of her discussion of this tool focused on conventions, too. Sheri emphasized that she wanted students to be independent, not reliant on her for spelling and ideas. A guiding conceptual tool for Sheri was the idea that writing "is not black and white." She wanted her students to feel good about their writing, regardless of their ability level, and she wanted them to enjoy writing and understand "that it's okay if it's different from the person next to you, or your story might be different, it doesn't have to be the same."

At the end of the first year of teaching, as Sheri reflected back on her teaching and thought about how she would really like her instruction to look, she revisited many of the tools that she seemed to have abandoned:

> Sheri: I think it would be really nice to have them be able to write independently. Again, I keep having to remind myself it's kindergarten, they need to be modeled for, they need to have some structure, they need to have ideas given. But I would love it if I gave them a topic like, "Go write about what you like to do with your friend," and they wrote me as much as they could without getting stuck on the sounds and those things… I know some of them are like, "I don't know how to do it, it's not right." "Just put down on paper what you think, how you think." That would be really nice.
>
> Interviewer: So [in your ideal classroom], the kids are all at their seats, phonetically spelling, writing what they want?
>
> Sheri: Yeah. It would be really nice that they felt comfortable enough and confident enough that they could write about what they wanted to write about. . . I'm picturing them sitting in their seats right now. I would be going around checking on them, maybe pulling the students when I want if they needed some help. "Oh, the student's lacking a lot of this, let's go to the back and let's look at this again, and let me show you some ways to do it." Having the ability to kind-of not be pulled from everyone: "I need you, I need you, I need you." I would rather go and say, "Oh, look, you have good writing here, but I noticed that you forgot periods in your sentences. Let's go in the back and look at…" Whatever. Or, "That's a really great sentence, but maybe you need some more details. What kind of details, let's go talk about what kind of details you could add to your dog," or whatever it might be. I would also like the

> flexibility to be able to conference more. What's it called… "Writing…" "Writers…" Where you do mini-lessons, then you go and conference, then you send them off… what's that called?
>
> Interviewer: Writer's workshop?
>
> Sheri: Yeah, thank you. Writer's workshop, exactly.

Though most of the tools learned in preservice education remained unseen in her teaching, Sheri still regarded these tools as the best way to teach writing. While the writing workshop remained her teaching ideal, she did not know how to use this approach in a kindergarten setting.

Conceptual frameworks remained stable during the first year, but teachers were also receptive to new ideas. For example, Eva's conceptual framework did not change much during her first year of teaching, but she realized that she did not have all the tools she needed. She said, "I think I put a lot into my teaching, and I just think, 'I don't know what else I could have done.' A lot of times I just think that." Just before the end of her first year of teaching, Eva had an opportunity to learn about Guided Language Acquisition and Development methods, or GLAD, which she said was "amazing" and the best training she had had all year. The training was not specific to teaching writing, but Eva saw ways in which she could use it to inform her instruction, saying that she wanted to "GLAD-ify" her writing instruction, which would include teaching vocabulary, teaching in themed units, and modeling writing for students. In summary, teachers in the study held onto their conceptual frameworks throughout their first year of teaching. Though the framework remained relatively stable, some teachers deepened their appropriation of tools, appropriated new tools, and appropriated content knowledge for teaching.

THE ROLE OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK IN TEACHER DECISION-MAKING

Teachers' conceptual frameworks played a significant role in teacher decision-making—from where and with whom they chose to work, to the curricular materials

they chose, to everyday teaching practices. For example, Carol used her conceptual framework appropriated in the preservice year to choose her first teaching position and to guide her teaching. Carol planned to teach using writing workshop in the way it had been taught in her methods course. She had hoped to find an intermediate-grade position at a school where writing workshop was part of the school culture. She received a job offer close to home in the fifth grade, "but they were very much like, 'Houghton Mifflin all the way,' and math was very much out of the textbook." So she accepted a first grade position at the school in which she did her student teaching. The school was further from home and the grade was not within the range she had hoped to teach, but a writing workshop approach was supported, which was of paramount importance to Carol.

Carol placed a high value on what she learned in the literacy methods course, and she felt well-prepared to teach writing. "I feel blessed a lot of the time," she said in reference to her preparation. She was glad that she was able to dive into workshop teaching right away, whereas her colleagues from other preparation programs struggled to implement writing workshop. Carol thought of her methods instructor often, imagining the advice she might give for a particular lesson or student. She explained:

> I hear Cindy's voice in my head all the time, like 'Don't do that' or 'do this!' Right now they're doing guided reading and I'm like, "What would Cindy do right now? She would tell me that this needs to be different, or this child's struggling here but I'm not seeing it.

Carol's teaching reflected her conceptual framework. For example, she had internalized the "architecture" of a minilesson that she had learned in her methods course, and all of her lessons had this structure. When Carol faced teaching dilemmas, she used her conceptual framework to help her decide what to do. For example, as a first grade teacher Carol had several students who needed daily support with their writing, and she conferred with them daily. This kept her from conferring with the other students as frequently as she thought she should. Therefore, her desire to support all students in writing conflicted with her commitment to helping students who needed extra support. To resolve this tension, Carol created an innovation on her workshop

approach; she took students' writing folders home and wrote simple, easy-to-read comments and suggestions on Post-its. She explained:

> I couldn't think of a way to meet with enough of my kids every day, so I started reading their papers at night and leaving notes for them. It also helped me figure out who I really needed to meet with the next day.

Though she had fewer conceptual and pedagogical tools, Eva also used her conceptual framework to design her instruction. For example, Eva saw the writing process as a conceptual tool for organizing her instruction, with students engaging in a different step of the writing process each day. This approach was based loosely on her placement observations, in which students were to complete a step in the writing process each night for homework. In the fall, she outlined what this approach might look like:

> In my perfect world, I see introducing a topic and brainstorming about it one day, hopefully on the board together. The next day . . . I'd like to share what we did in class and go over it, or work with other students, or have them bring something from home, they can look on the internet, they can look in the classroom library. Then by Wednesday I'm hoping that we can have done their rough outline, whether it's a graphic organizer or a brainstorm sheet or basically what they know they're going to do, they just have to turn it into sentences. We can have their rough draft due on Thursday and we can peer edit in class. I like having the rough draft all done on yellow paper, so I know their rough draft is different than their final draft. I have them use highlighters to find what they think is spelled wrong, where a comma might be wrong. We use different colors for different things. We might have all the adjectives the same color. Make sure all your spelling errors are in a different color, so it keeps you knowing the different grammar-related things, but it also makes sure they include it in their writing. So if they see there's no pink adjectives in there, they better add some pink adjectives. Then they could either do another read Thursday night, or Friday in class we'll do the final draft, so they don't have to do it at home. It's not like homework punishment, but hopefully we'll have classroom time where I'll give them the final draft blank template. Which isn't just a piece of binder paper, but separated, or something that looks a little more appealing than most writing, and then they can transfer their rough draft to their final draft.

We can see that Eva's approach emphasized procedures, ideas, form, and grammar. This is consistent with her tools for teaching as well as her understanding of the subject

of writing. Eva consistently used this approach all year. Another strong conceptual tool in Eva's teaching was the desire to make writing fun, which she saw as linked to boosting student confidence. Eva always assigned writing in conjunction with an art project or had students copy their writing onto decorative paper. She explained:

> Personally, I hate writing, I don't have confidence in my writing, so it's a fear of mine of teaching my… I don't want them to have no confidence going into writing because I have no confidence in my writing. That was one of my biggest fears, so one of my biggest components was trying to make it fun. A lot of times, having it fun is to create a fun topic. Or to create it as an art project combined, so they never do writing on a piece of binder paper, it's always some sort of decorative paper, where they have to color it, or we do an art project with it, so it's side-by-side. I really focused on fun in writing because I personally despise it.

Eva also tried to make writing more fun by listening to students' interests and creating writing prompts that connected to those interests.

Beth's strong desire to make writing fun permeated her decision-making as a teacher. For example, she did not use the state-adopted curriculum, Open Court, because she did not think it was engaging for students. When I asked her about this resource, she said:

> Beth: They have writing, but again, it's not fun. I keep thinking to myself, "If I was like this in school, and I didn't have fun, what's the point in going to school?" Fun. It's not only a job. . . .
>
> Interviewer: Have you ever used anything in here for writing, ever?
>
> Beth: Uh-uh [negative]. Just because I can do other things that are like…way more fun.

And, at the end of the year, Beth confirmed that making writing fun was at the heart of everything she did. I asked her to name the greatest influences on her teaching:

> I think - besides district [assessments]- I would have to say probably just me trying to make it fun. . . . I think getting ideas from other teachers, seeing them and going, "Oh, that's a really cute idea."

The cases of Carol, Eva, and Beth are representative of all the cases in this study. Teachers consistently chose to work with people and curricula that aligned with their conceptual frameworks, and they consistently planned and taught in ways that reflected their understanding of writing content and the best way to teach it.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed five themes related to participants' conceptual frameworks. First, preservice differences in appropriation by cohort continued into the first year, with Southern University graduates far more informed by their methods course than their Northern University colleagues. Graduates from Southern University appropriated more conceptual and pedagogical tools, and they were better able to articulate how those tools might create a cohesive program of instruction. Second, all teachers developed grade-level specific understandings of the tools they appropriated, creating lower confidence levels for teaching grades very different from those in which they had experience. Third, most teachers did not have much knowledge about writing as a subject, both in terms of their knowledge as adult writers and in terms of writing knowledge pertinent to teaching elementary students. Fourth, teachers' conceptual frameworks remained relatively stable throughout the first year, though most teachers added or deepened their appropriation of content knowledge and tools. Finally, regardless of their quality or origins, conceptual frameworks guided teachers' decision-making throughout the first year.

In this chapter, I use the notion of a conceptual framework for teaching writing as a way to characterize teacher appropriation and what that learning might afford them in their first year of teaching. The more robust frameworks of Southern University graduates indicate that characteristics of the preservice program (e.g., instructor pedagogy, alignment in approaches advocated in the field placement and the methods course) yielded stronger appropriation for its graduates. Moreover, given that these frameworks tend to remain stable and inform decision-making, they may play an important role in teacher appropriation over time. But these frameworks are only one

influence in the complex interplay of settings in which first year teachers participate. The next two chapters explore these settings and how their features mediate teachers' practices.

CHAPTER FIVE: PATTERNS OF CONTRADICTION AND CONTINUITY WITHIN AND ACROSS SETTINGS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER APPROPRIATION

In Chapter Three, I discuss teacher learning in the preservice year, linking appropriation to the instances of contradiction and continuity within and across the methods course and field placement settings. There were clear differences in appropriation by cohort, with Southern University graduates entering the field with a stronger conceptual framework for the teaching of writing. In Chapter Four I show that teachers held onto the conceptual frameworks they brought to the first teaching job. These frameworks remained stable throughout the first year and played a significant role in teachers' practice. Though there were differences in tools for teaching by cohort, a theme across eight of the nine teachers was a lack of content knowledge. The need for content knowledge support continues as a theme in this chapter as I analyze the learning opportunities that the first-year settings afforded.

In the previous chapter, I touched on some of the features of the first-year settings that mediated changes in teacher appropriation during the first year. In this chapter, I further address the settings in the first year of teaching. Keeping teachers' preservice training and conceptual frameworks in mind, I analyze the features of first-year settings that mediated teachers' appropriation of tools for teaching writing. Across the nine cases, three themes surfaced as particularly salient for teacher learning: 1) teachers' application of their conceptual framework to a new grade-level, 2) support from grade-level colleagues, and 3) school organization and focus.

I begin by discussing how teachers' conceptual frameworks left them unprepared for the demands of a different grade. Some teachers were lucky, transitioning into a grade similar to the ones in which they had apprenticed. Others struggled to adjust their pedagogies, content, and expectations to a markedly different level. I then address two themes that supported or hindered teachers in the teaching setting: grade-level support and the organization and focus of the school and district. In

the section on grade-level support, I present evidence that whether and how teachers appropriated particular tools was due, in part, to the degree of grade-level support they received. Finally, I discuss the impact of school organization more broadly. Schools differed widely in their treatment of writing. At some schools, writing was a focus. The school or district leadership articulated guidelines for methods and content, and teachers were expected to make writing a part of their daily instruction. Other schools did not focus on writing, and whether or how teachers addressed the subject was left to individuals. Oftentimes, these schools had another focus in language arts, such as mandated grade-level regrouping for English instruction. I present evidence that, without shared goals and approaches in writing, new teachers were left to make sense of writing instruction on their own or—if they were lucky—with their grade-level colleagues. And, without a dedicated time in the school day, writing was often crowded out by other demands. I conclude this chapter with the comparative cases of Carol, Sheri, and Natalie to illustrate these themes. Carol and Sheri had similar training and levels of preparedness. They both exited the preservice program with a fairly cohesive set of conceptual and pedagogical tools for the teaching of writing and fairly limited content knowledge. They both started their careers in grades different from those in which they apprenticed, yet they had very different trajectories of appropriation in the first year of teaching. These differences were due, in large part, to the degree of continuity between the preservice and first-year settings and the quality of support in the first year. Upon entering her first job, Natalie's strengths and needs were the opposite of those of Carol and Sheri; she had strong content knowledge but a tenuous grasp of conceptual and pedagogical tools for instruction. Like Carol's case, Natalie's case shows how the settings of the first teaching job can play an important, positive role in learning to teach.

Grade-level Transitions: Applying the Preservice Conceptual Framework to a New Grade

There are substantial differences in content and pedagogical tools across the elementary grades, and these differences can pose challenges for the novice teacher. In the writing workshop approach advocated in both preservice programs, the content of writing instruction would contain the same bins across grades (e.g., conventions, genre, writing craft, and writing process). The pedagogical tools, too, would be similar across grades (e.g., modeling, minilessons, conferring). Novices, though, may not have a depth of knowledge about writing content, and they may not have exposure to what instruction looks like at different grades. For example, Kim wondered how much she should focus on the writing process with second graders—if at all. And Carol wondered how to focus on communication of ideas in a first grade writing conference, when her students really wanted help with their spelling. In the participants' preservice education, these questions and others like them were scarcely addressed. Therefore, even those teachers with a fairly robust conceptual framework for writing instruction were not prepared for writing instruction for kindergarten through eighth grade.

As discussed in Chapter Four, teachers appropriated grade-level specific ways of thinking about writing content and pedagogical tools. For example, Carol had an understanding of what conferring might look like in a fourth grade classroom, but she was unsure about how that conversation would go with a first grader. Only one teacher in the study began her career in the grade-level in which she student taught; the rest had to adjust to a new grade. This section describes how (or if) teachers applied their conceptual frameworks to their first job, what the conceptual framework afforded, and where their conceptual frameworks fell short. On the whole, teachers who graduated from Southern University had a stronger sense of how they would teach writing than their Northern University peers. And, in all cases, teachers did not have the requisite content knowledge for their grade.

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES: FOR MOST, FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORKS HELP THE GRADE-LEVEL TRANSITION

For Southern University graduates, the primary concern in changing grade-levels was the content of writing instruction. Carol and Sheri also wondered how they would use their pedagogical tools with a new grade. This cohort articulated the writing content in terms of genre, writing craft, writing process, and conventions, but none could articulate what they would be teaching in grade-level specific terms. Sheri wasn't sure if her framework was appropriate for thinking about writing in her new grade: kindergarten. All but Sheri planned to use writing workshop in their first year, believing that the tools they had learned were equally effective across grades. Carol was also unsure about the pedagogical tools she had appropriated; she simply had no experience in her preservice training to help her translate these tools for use with younger students.

Kendra had apprenticed in a first-second grade classroom and was hired to teach third grade. While most of the content for writing was new to her, she was still able to draw on what she learned during the preservice year and was able to use many of the writing workshop tools with the third graders. She also used some of the lessons she had taught during her student teaching. For example, she taught a minilesson series on taking notes from nonfiction text, modifying her modeling, pacing, and expectations for third grade. Before the school year began, Mari wasn't sure if her school would support a writing workshop approach, but she saw the writing workshop tools as flexible and useful in a number of settings:

> Even if there isn't time set aside for specific writing workshop, you can't just expect them to write without giving them some idea of how to approach it. You know, even if it isn't a specific 'writing workshop' block, there could still be a mini-lesson, and then have them write about something else. They're going to have to write. No matter where the focus is, they're going to do writing this year.

Mari learned to teach writing workshop in a fourth grade setting, and she transferred many of the conceptual and pedagogical tools to her job in second grade. Though she had a strong framework for how to teach, she struggled considerably with what to teach. She was unable to draw upon the content she had learned through apprenticeship in a

fourth grade. Carol planned to use the workshop model, but with a jump from fourth grade to first grade, she wasn't sure how the pedagogical tools might be used. She was also unsure about the content for first grade. Carol chose to work in a school that would support her in learning about writing workshop at a new grade-level. Through this support, she was able to recontextualize all of the tools about which she had learned to the new setting.

Sheri was the only participant in this group who did not make connections between what she had learned and where she was headed. Even before beginning her kindergarten position, Sheri intimated that she had no idea how writing should be taught in kindergarten; she had apprenticed in a fourth-fifth grade class, and she seemed to doubt that anything she had learned in the preservice year would serve her in such a different grade. At the end of this chapter, I present the cases of Carol and Sheri in more detail.

In sum, most Southern University graduates began their careers with conceptual frameworks for teaching writing that could be applied across the grades. Only Sheri was unable to see how her framework might be applied in the new setting. As these teachers embarked on their first year, they needed support in making pedagogical adjustments for the new grade-level and in learning the content for the grade in more specific terms than genre, craft, process, and conventions.

NORTHERN UNIVERSITY: WEAK FRAMEWORKS HAVE A STRONG INFLUENCE

Like their Southern University colleagues, Northern University graduates entered their new grades without much content knowledge. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, this cohort differed from their Southern University colleagues in that most did not have a broad framework for thinking about the content of writing instruction. Most described the writing process and genre in rigid terms, and only Natalie mentioned crafting techniques and making choices as a writer as part of what she planned to teach. This cohort also drew upon the tools they had appropriated in the preservice year, though their conceptual frameworks for writing instruction were rather thin.

Abby, Eva, and Beth were hired in grades close to those in which they apprenticed. None had strong conceptual frameworks for teaching writing. While their transition into teaching was supported by a position in a similar grade, the tools they transferred to these new positions were not particularly effective. For example, Abby student taught in sixth grade, the grade she then taught in her first year. She recalled:

> I think I tried to look back on what had worked when I was doing student teaching, and what I knew I could do comfortably without feeling like, "I'm lost, we're just going to make it up as we go." [I tried to do things with which] I'd had some practice. . . . But just really the step-by-step, taking them through the process . . . That's what I had seen, and it seemed to work.

Abby's limited notion of the writing process and writing curriculum as formulaic dominated her practice throughout the first year. Unfortunately, the one aspect of writing content she had studied in her preservice year, persuasive essays, was not a genre she taught in her first year.

Kim and Natalie had greater grade-level transitions. Kim had field placements in kindergarten and fifth grade, and had only seen writing instruction in kindergarten. She used shared writing and modeling, two pedagogical tools from her framework, in her teaching. But she had difficulty finding the appropriate level of instruction for her second graders.

> I'm finding that second grade, I'm also trying to find out what levels… I want to be able to challenge them, but also make it so it's accessible for them. I'm used to working with fifth grade and kindergarten, those were my two student teaching placements. So right now I'm trying to feel out where second grade is. Sometimes it's way over their heads, and other times it was like, "This is too easy for us, we did this in kindergarten!" They would tell me that.

Natalie's field placements had been in kindergarten and sixth grade, and her first position was in third grade. She had not seen writing instruction in kindergarten, and she rejected the step-by-step approach modeled by her sixth grade cooperating teacher (and appropriated by Abby and Eva). Instead, she had appropriated the writing

workshop tools from the methods course. She had a tenuous grasp of these tools, but she could imagine how she might use them for third grade writing instruction. In the next sections, I describe the support that allowed her to do so.

Overall, the Northern University cohort used what they knew in their new settings. However, they entered their jobs with a less powerful, less cohesive set of tools than their Southern University peers. They also had limited content knowledge for writing, which was an area of difficulty regardless of grade.

In summary, almost all teachers faced the challenge of teaching a grade other than the grade in which they apprenticed. Content knowledge was a need for all participants. While most participants had some sense of how they would teach, Southern University graduates had a more flexible and robust set of practices to begin. One important exception is Sheri, whose assignment to kindergarten left her so unsure of herself that she abandoned the tools she had appropriated in the preservice year. Perhaps if she had seen writing workshop in kindergarten, or if her methods courses had addressed writing workshop for emergent writers, she would have been better able to make the transition.

In the next two sections, I show that the content, frequency, and approach to teaching writing were mediated by features in the teaching setting. I explore the degree to which tools in the first job matched or complemented those teachers had learned in their preservice education. I also studied settings in the first year such as grade-level team meetings, mentoring, and professional development for their degree and congruence of support. The degree of continuity between settings supported teacher appropriation, while contradictions often confused or halted teacher learning. First I discuss the role of grade-level support, a setting feature that had implications for all participants.

GRADE-LEVEL SUPPORT

Grade-level support varied widely in degree, quality, and alignment with teachers' conceptual frameworks. These three factors influenced the degree to which teachers appropriated the tools of their grade-level colleagues. For some participants, grade-level meetings played a crucial role in supporting writing instruction, particularly in terms of planning and learning writing content for the grade. Others planned mostly on their own, and this, too, had consequences for their teaching. In this section, I address the grade-level team as a feature of the setting that mediated the tools teachers appropriated.

EXPERIENCED SUPPORT

Carol, Natalie, and Kendra all had strong grade-level support. In these three cases, teachers' conceptual frameworks aligned with their grade-level colleagues' approach to teaching writing. The teachers believed that their colleagues had expertise in the subject matter and pedagogical tools for the grade. The support was consistent, with meetings every week that addressed writing instruction in specific terms. In the cases of Natalie and Kendra, planning included the articulation of teaching points day by day as well as discussion of how the lesson would be taught. Carol's support was more loosely structured. The team agreed on what units to teach and shared ideas and materials. However, she was also supported by a detailed curriculum, which I discuss more in Chapter Six. As these teachers taught the units, their grade-level partner(s) were also teaching those units, and they were able to talk about their successes and struggles on a frequent basis. Carol preferred to trail behind her grade-level mentor by a week or more, which allowed her to see classroom artifacts and student work before she taught the lessons.

The grade-level teams supported Kendra, Carol, and Natalie in three areas: 1) learning content and expectations for the grade-level, 2) unit planning, and 3) specific lesson ideas. Each of these teachers named their grade-level planning as the primary influence on their writing instruction in the first year. These teachers taught writing with more regularity than other study participants, and they also appropriated more

conceptual and pedagogical tools than other teachers in the study. This data suggests the importance of grade-level support for new teachers.

Kendra's case is particularly interesting because her grade-level partner was her only support for writing instruction. Her case shows how crucial her grade-level partner was to her implementation of writing workshop, but it also shows the limitations of this support. Kendra had appropriated a writing workshop approach in the preservice year, but she was not very confident in writing instruction. Even with the highly supportive setting of grade-level planning, she was unsure of herself. When I asked Kendra what I would see if I visited her classroom and her ideal writing instruction were in place, she said:

> Kendra: Their teacher, who knows what she's talking about.
>
> Interviewer: Did you really feel that way?
>
> Kendra: Sometimes. I didn't feel it [with] reading, I feel much more comfortable teaching it than writing. I wasn't very *un*comfortable, but sometimes those lessons, I'd be like, "Ooh, I hope that this is going to go off in the right way." I think it's just a matter of actually doing it, getting comfortable with teaching it. I didn't teach too much writing last year with Sheryl. I did more of the reading stuff.

Kendra's tenuous grasp on writing content and pedagogical tools made instruction somewhat stressful for her. This is one reason why she chose not to confer with students, a key pedagogical tool of writing workshop. During the writing period, which was typically about 25 minutes, Kendra facilitated students in getting started and then monitored students' progress by roaming around the room, looking over their shoulders. She helped students who were stuck, but she did not approach students to provide feedback. I e-mailed Kendra during her second year to ask her about her decision not to confer. She replied:

> I am not really conferencing again this year either. I guess it is because I don't feel as strong in writing and also because we usually don't have as much time for writing as other activities. I walk around the room while they are working. I will talk to them, but it isn't a formal conference.

In sum, while Kendra's conceptual framework held all the components of writing workshop, she did not feel confident in the use of these tools. As a result, she instantiated only those pieces of the framework for which she had grade-level support. This contrasts with the cases of Natalie and Carol. Both of these teachers were supported through a number of settings and, consequently, implemented the full range of tools associated with a writing workshop approach.

PAIRED NOVICES

Both Mari and Sheri did most of their planning in pairs with a fellow novice teacher, though both were part of larger grade-level teams with experienced teachers. In the case of Mari, all the experienced teachers at her grade-level had an approach to writing that contradicted her conceptual framework. She chose to collaborate with a second-year teacher, whose conceptual framework was aligned with her own. They planned weekly throughout the year, except while her partner was on maternity leave. Despite this co-planning, Mari typically could not articulate clear objectives when talking about her writing instruction. For example, I talked to her on a Sunday evening before a Tuesday observation. Her comments exemplify the lack of trajectory across lessons and her struggles with thinking about genre study at this grade level:

> You know, I am not sure [about what I'm teaching] yet because I want them to finish up their personal narrative, but I also want to move into poetry, so I'm not sure if I'm going to go ahead and move into poetry, or have them finish that. I can combine them and they could write a poem about themselves, and that would sort of be personal narrative, so that's kind of what I'm thinking. . . . What I really need to do is grab my standards and have a look at that, and decide what they need to practice. You know, what kinds of things they need to get a little bit more practice on.

Later in the conversation, after glancing over the standards, Mari said that the two standards for second grade are writing letters and brief narratives based on personal experiences, and she explained:

> [Personal narratives and letters are] kind-of what I think we keep coming back to. There aren't really that many writing standards for second

> graders, that's pretty much it. A narrative—a personal narrative—and then a letter. So I think that's why we keep coming back to it. So I'm sure I could combi—I'm sure I could put poetry in there and work it into a personal narrative. I would love to do that.

In the quotes above, we see that Mari has some difficulty thinking about the attributes of genre and how she might break those down for students; she focuses on the aspect of personal experience across poetry and personal narrative rather than thinking about the textual features and their purposes. Mari revisited the genres throughout the year, but she didn't have specific teaching points that helped students develop their genre knowledge, writing craft, or writing process as they wrote in those genres. For example, she could have taught lessons on narrative structures, how and when to add dialogue, or how to gather and choose ideas for narratives. Without a firm grasp on content, Mari's lessons vacillated between a lack of clarity and highly prescriptive tasks. Mari continued to use the pedagogical tools for writing workshop she had appropriated in the preservice year. Without a clear understanding of what to teach, however, her appropriation did not become more expert over time.

Sheri admired the teaching approach of the experienced teachers in her grade-level team, but she did not know how she might appropriate their practices, which to her seemed complex and difficult to master. Another stumbling block for appropriation was Sheri's concern that she would not be meeting the standards. Sheri loosely followed the state-adopted curriculum in order to make sure she was teaching appropriate material, and she could not get that kind of reassurance from the thematic and literature-based units of her more experienced colleagues. With minimal content knowledge for writing in kindergarten, she worried about how she would justify a thematic or literature-based lesson and how she would know she was addressing the standards. For Sheri, then, it was more manageable to plan with the other first-year teacher with whom she shared a classroom. She enjoyed their partnership for a number of reasons:

> We can get so much together from everyone else, and she has a lot of other stuff because she did have student teaching in kindergarten. So she has a lot of good ideas, too, and we're both new teachers, which is kind of nice that they did put the two new teachers together, because we don't feel like we have to do things a certain way. There's not someone there

> saying, "That's not how I said you should do it" or whatever else. Having a veteran teacher—although it's really nice to have that influence… Our principal was like—she made this decision, and everyone kind of questioned it, she just said, "Trust me, I think this is the best decision for everyone." It turned out great. I love working with Nancy, she understands a lot of first-year teacher things. She has been in kindergarten before. She's a mom, so sometimes where I'm like, "Is this normal for a five-year-old?" she can help there. Then we kind of weed out everything that gets thrown on us, figure out what we're supposed to… And we do a lot of the same stuff. Some things we do differently, but the majority we do—we share most of the stuff.

Unfortunately, neither teacher had much content knowledge or tools for the teaching of writing, and this limited Sheri's opportunities to appropriate effective teaching practices and content knowledge. I describe her pedagogy in more detail at the end of this chapter.

MINIMAL, ABSENT, OR UNHELPFUL SUPPORT

Beth, Abby, Eva, and Kim taught writing with little or no support from their colleagues. Beth was part of a large, supportive grade-level team who planned together. Beth explained:

> [the principal says] "I never have to worry about new teachers, because they take care of their own." It's true, I think all the first grade teachers take care of their own, all the second grade take care. When you come in, you always have that support, so I've had great support here. . . . which is another reason why I love it here.

The team used Open Court to organize their instruction, and Beth believed that this curriculum contradicted her guiding principle that writing should be fun. She also believed the curriculum was too easy for her students, who she described as more advanced as a class than students in the other eight first grades. As a result of these differences, Beth planned her writing instruction without much guidance from her grade-level colleagues. She explained:

> I think in writing, I haven't gotten a lot from other people. I think their ideas of where their kids are at and mine are totally different. I see my

> kids doing more than what their kids are doing. I typically expect more out of them, so when I look at things, I'm always thinking, "This is what passing is? Are you sure?" I question that, because I think I am a little tougher. So, I haven't been getting a whole lot from other teachers about that. . . . I do ask my BTSA[4] mentor what she thinks because her ideas are similar to mine. She doesn't spend a lot of time in Open Court. She just gives me kind of, "This is what we expect at this time." Which is what I need to know, because my expectations are a little bit greater than what they're doing at this time. That's why I need to gauge: "Am I too high? Too low?"

Planning on her own meant that Beth had few opportunities to appropriate tools for the teaching of writing. These opportunities were critically needed, since she exited her preservice year without any pedagogical tools. Throughout the year, Beth's writing activities relied on prompts, and there was very little instruction. The instruction I observed was often confusing, either because Beth did not have the pedagogical tools to effectively teach the lesson or because her content knowledge was not well-developed. For example, in preparation for an assessment of procedural writing, students were asked to describe how to play a game. Beth instructed them to pretend that she was a Martian and she didn't know anything about the game; they were to describe the objects used in the game so she could imagine them. She provided examples, such as describing the green grass or the colors and shape of a soccer ball. Confused, many students wrote descriptive texts rather than procedural texts or a strange medley of description and procedure that was difficult to follow.

The sixth grade teachers at Abby's school "had been teaching for years, and . . . [were] not necessarily stuck in their ways, but comfortable with what they do and they do every year." They would occasionally leave samples of projects in Abby's mailbox, but there was no regular planning. She described her relationship with her English/Language Arts colleagues:

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[4] BTSA, or Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment, is California's mandatory induction program designed to support beginning teachers and fulfill the requirements for the California Clear Multiple Subjects Credentials

> I feel like I have to kind of beg sometimes for some things. . . . "Hey, what are you doing for this?" or "Where are you guys at, at this point?" They help when they can, but it's sporadic. . . . I really didn't feel supported, unfortunately.

There were no structured opportunities to learn through grade-level collaboration, and Abby felt uncomfortable asking for help. She believed that asking for help was a sign of weakness. "As a professional, you hate to ask, 'What are you doing? Can I borrow that?' So I just do my own thing, cross my fingers, and so far everyone says I'm doing okay." Planning alone did not afford Abby many opportunities to appropriate conceptual or pedagogical tools or improve her content knowledge. Her teaching, therefore, looked like the formulaic, step-by-step instruction of her conceptual framework.

Eva experienced a similar grade-level climate. She reported that the staff was friendly, collaborative, and supportive. She loved being a part of the school community and felt supported by her principal. However, the only other fourth grade teacher showed no interest in planning together. In fact, he didn't even offer to share materials. In the spring, when Eva was really struggling, she appealed to him for advice. This helped, but she recognized that she would have been a much better teacher if she had had consistent support. She recalled:

> I was really struggling on what to do, how to teach a research paper. So I went to the other fourth grade teacher and said, "I really don't know what to do." Usually I'm okay kind of scraping up things by myself and getting by, but I really wanted some guidance on this. So he has given me some tips on what he's done in the past, and how he's changing things in the future, and what we're doing. So I've got a little more guidance there but still, it's kind of treading water. . . . So I still feel like I'm really struggling because . . . people forget you're new, you don't know. It's just like any other new job, the support's just not there like I thought it would be. . . . I think I put a lot into my teaching, and I just think, "I don't know what else I could have done." A lot of times I just think that. But if I had someone else to talk to that was in the same position, maybe I could get ideas.

Eva managed to get by, but her instruction did not move beyond the limited tools of her conceptual framework.

Kim only had one grade-level partner, who taught a bilingual class. She recalled, "We didn't do a whole lot of collaboration because she was a bilingual class. We would talk about math and that kind of stuff, but she wasn't as outgoing as some of the other staff that I know. But she was very nice and it was nice to work with her." During a few professional development meetings throughout the year, Kim worked with the bilingual second grade teacher and the third grade teachers on writing. The first lessons I observed were a result of this collaboration. Kim's lessons on writing a three-paragraph essay were far too difficult for the students in her class, a fact that the team somehow did not anticipate. During her first year, the only other collaboration involved the creation of a writing rubric. She posted this in her room but did not do much teaching or assessment with it. As discussed in Chapter Two, Kim did not teach much writing, and she remained unclear about writing content and limited in her tools for teaching writing.

The cases in this study show a range of grade-level support. Thanks to support of their experienced colleagues, Carol, Natalie, and Kendra were able to deepen their appropriation of writing workshop tools and learn the writing content for their grade-level. The other participants in this study did not receive adequate grade-level support, and their understanding of writing content and pedagogy remained limited throughout the first year. In the next section, I discuss the ways schools and districts structure time and allocate resources and how these decisions impact what writing content is taught, how writing is taught, and how often students receive instruction.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND FOCUS

Schools differed widely in their treatment of writing, and this, too, had an impact on teacher appropriation. Some schools maintained a strong focus for a particular approach to writing, while others encouraged teachers to teach writing in any manner they saw fit—provided students performed well on assessments. Some schools allocated significant resources to the teaching of writing, such as professional development days, coaches, and teaching materials. At other schools, writing was not a

focus, and resources were used for other school needs. In this section, I describe the impact of school and district organization and focus on teacher appropriation.

EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR WRITING

Two of the teachers who enjoyed the most grade-level support, Natalie and Carol, also worked at schools in which writing workshop was a focus. Therefore, there was alignment between the new teacher's conceptual framework, the grade-level team, and the school and district goals and expectations for writing instruction. Both districts had maintained a sustained focus on writing workshop for a number of years. Natalie's district had worked with consultants to build mentoring capacity within the district. At the time of the study, three district literacy coaches were available to support teachers in reading and writing workshop. In addition, the district had developed unit plans for the core units of study at each grade level to support teachers who were new to writing workshop. "[The kids] do a *lot* of writing," Natalie said. "It's a big deal in our district, in our school especially. And our grade level, even, probably more than any other grade level." Carol's school had partnered with a private foundation that had supported many area school districts with professional development and curriculum for writing workshop. The partnership was no longer active, but the district had continued its commitment to this approach to writing instruction. Through required professional development days in the fall and winter, district literacy coaches trained new teachers to set up a writing workshop and teach the core units of study. Carol attended two days of training in the fall. She recalled, "When I went to the meeting, a lot of it was teaching us what writer's workshop was, and I was like, 'I already knew!' . . . No problem!" The district also provided a variety of resources for planning. "We have a ton of curricular books to pull," Carol said. "We have a whole book room for the teachers. Any book I've heard of—even last year with Cindy, the whole Lucy Calkins; her whole thing for each grade level is here." Like Natalie's school, Carol's school emphasized teacher autonomy and responsiveness to students' needs while providing core curricular support with clear objectives and a scope and sequence.

Mari and Kendra's school also had a history of work with the same foundation as Carol's school. Unlike Carol's school, though, the only trace of the district's sustained focus on writing workshop was the practices of some of the teachers in the school. The principal, who was new that year, did not articulate an expectation that teachers approach writing in a particular way. Students participated in district-wide assessments three times per year, but the assessment rubrics were not particularly instructive in terms of what should be taught. The only writing curriculum was Houghton Mifflin, which provided limited support for writing instruction. Moreover, daily lesson suggestions embodied a different set of tools than those used in writing workshop. (I discuss curricular materials in depth in Chapter Six.) Mari and Kendra shared a new teacher support provider, Sheryl, who had taught writing workshop for 20 years. She had a wealth of knowledge to share, but the structures of the new teacher support program did not allow time for her to mentor them in writing instruction. Mari found that the mentoring program helped her teaching more generally, but she expressed disappointment that she did not have access to Sheryl's expertise in writing instruction:

> We have such limited time together, and right now we're working through this whole… process to get fully credentialed through the state, which is filling out forms and setting up some questions for our grand inquiry, the Inquisition. . . . It's too bad, because that's really what this program should be about. She's a mentor, and so that really, I think, would be the best use of our time together. . . . So what I would love to be doing with her is really picking her brain on writer's workshop because she did it. She did writer's workshop, and not everybody here is doing it. So if I could find the one teacher that was doing it, she's the one I want to talk to. But we just don't have the time.

In this environment with minimal resources, Kendra was lucky to have support from her grade-level partner. Mari, on the other hand, did not have the support she needed, and she struggled throughout the first year.

Sheri and Beth worked in school districts that were making efforts to improve writing instruction. Both districts encouraged teachers to teach writing in the way they saw fit. Both districts provided training and materials to supplement the state-adopted

writing curriculum. The intention on the part of the administration seemed to be to provide teachers with plenty of tools for teaching writing without requiring anything in particular. The only school-wide organizational feature that brought some continuity across the classes was a quarterly writing assessment. The genre of this writing often dictated classroom instruction, at least in the week or two leading up to its administration. Beth attended a professional development training in the 6 +1 Traits and received a binder of lesson ideas. Sheri attended training in the 6 +1 Traits and in Step Up to Writing and received supplemental binders from each, along with a book on teaching the 6 +1 Traits. Sheri also had support from a writing coach, who was to help her with Step Up to Writing, but the brevity of the coaching and the nature of the tools used in coaching did not support Sheri's appropriation of the Step Up to Writing tools. Neither Sheri nor Beth was able to appropriate the supplemental materials, a problem I discuss in Chapter Six. Throughout the first year, both teachers lacked a clear trajectory in their teaching. Neither attempted a unit plan, and they typically planned one lesson at a time without much continuity between lessons. Without clear guidance from their districts, schools, or grade-levels, both teachers were adrift.

Kim, Abby, and Eva also worked at schools that did not specify an approach to teaching writing. Kim said that her principal believed that writing needed more attention, which is why they were asked to spend some of their grade-level planning time articulating writing goals. But there were no additional materials or training; they had their Open Court texts, the state-adopted text for language arts instruction, and most teachers did not find the writing component of this program useful. Aside from two writing assessments and some assignments traditionally given to the sixth grade students, Abby had no guidance at the district, school, or grade level for writing instruction. At Eva's school, the district focused on reading and mathematics support. She did not feel supported in writing, and was unsure about her teaching:

> Eva: I still don't have a lot of confidence in writing, I don't know if that comes over time.
>
> Interviewer: You mean writing instruction, plus writing?

> Eva: Even teaching it. I don't know—I always worry that I'm teaching it wrong: "Is this the correct tense?" Kind of being over-critical of myself, and making sure you understand the material correctly. A lot of times there's more than one way to translate the Step Up To Writing curriculum. I don't want to teach them wrong.
>
> Interviewer: So it's still a little unclear to you, some of the curriculum.
>
> Eva: Yeah. But that's a consensus across the teachers at this campus, from what I hear.
>
> Interviewer: About the curriculum?
>
> Eva: Yeah, and the whole district. Nobody likes Open Court's writing, so we have Step Up To Writing, where the rest of the district doesn't, but it's still a struggle since I wasn't here when they had the training. It's not a district-wide adopted thing, so there's not really someone you can call and say, "Can you help me with Step Up To Writing?" There are people I can call and get help with Open Court, but district-wide, teachers are struggling with writing. There's not a set, 'what to do.' That's something that's in the district's hands right now, we're trying to work on. It's kind of a lost feeling.

COMPETING DEMANDS IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS BLOCK

School and district organization and focus in other areas had an impact on writing instruction, too. For example, Mari, Kendra, Eva, and Kim had to work their schedule around a mandated English language development block that took place 4-5 days per week. This 30-40-minute period required that the students in a grade-level be redistributed into different classrooms by English proficiency level. When the program started in the fall, Mari complained that her writing workshop was cut from four days per week to three days per week. Kim could hardly manage to get through the Open Court reading lessons and, with the reshuffling of students for English language development, there was no regular time left for writing instruction.

Eva, too, felt the press of language arts requirements. In the early fall, she could manage to teach the required Open Court reading lessons, which took about 90 minutes, and still have time for a 45-minute writing period writing four days per week. Once the

school began restructuring for English language development, she lost 40 minutes of language arts time. Only seven of Eva's 30 students were English learners, but the policy required that she and the other fourth grade teacher regroup their students. For 40 minutes per day, Eva taught language support lessons from Open Court to seven students while the other students worked independently.

> The first six weeks of school, it was every week. After that, it probably went to every three weeks. Once we started doing EL—which is 40 minutes a day, four days a week - that took my writing block. . . . So it was a struggle to figure out when to teach writing and still get EL in. I would still give them writing assignments during EL, but it wasn't teacher-directed because I had to be in the back with my EL kids. At fourth grade they still need a lot of teacher-direction with writing, so trying to figure out how to work all that in was a struggle. . . . So instead of spending a full 40 minutes a day four times a week, it was like 20 minutes here, 10 minutes there, 40 minutes here, 10 minutes here—it wasn't as cut and dry as: "Okay, today we're doing brainstorming, tomorrow we're doing an outline, tomorrow we're doing a rough draft." It seemed like it was really drug out. It was hard for them to figure it out, and hard for me to figure it out. But I couldn't give them that big block of time like I needed to. . . . Yeah, we were more monitored on EL than we were on writing. And we're monitored on Open Court and Harcourt, so those had to make sure they were in.

Abby also found it impossible to fit everything in. She was teaching in a self-contained classroom in a middle school, but she kept to the bell schedule. This gave her 50 minutes to teach language arts—even less on early-release Wednesdays. She recalled grappling with how to fit all of language arts into such a short period:

> I kind of had to create my own schedule. I tried to get to grammar once or twice a week. Always had the warm-up in the beginning with paragraph editing, I would have to incorporate the reader, the workbook, because we had so many stories we had to read through. . . . .I'd try and pull some writing assignments off of there, sometimes there were suggestions, but I really felt like, unfortunately, writing was one thing that was among the mix of everything else you had to do with language arts. It was like you had to set aside a good week, sometimes, to get through the process. . . . Then [during the other weeks] trying to at least do a paragraph, whether it was a response to reading something that we had done, probably at least once a week. Not as much as I would like, but again, I never really felt like I was ever - I never saw that being put

> into action. Student teaching, it seemed like when she changed gears to go to writing, that was all they did.

Abby also pointed out that writing was not tested at her grade and, for this reason, was not emphasized by the English/History core teachers at the school. She reported that the scant writing instruction that she provided was more that what they were doing in the other sixth grade classes.

In summary, most participants used their conceptual frameworks for writing instruction to guide their decision-making in the first year of teaching. Southern University graduates had a more robust toolkit with which to approach their first jobs. All participants entered their first positions needing support in one or all of the following areas: conceptual and pedagogical tools for writing instruction, writing content knowledge, and transitioning to a new grade-level. The settings of the first teaching job mediated these novice teachers' learning and efficacy in teaching writing during the first year. The role of grade-level support was notable as a significant factor in teacher appropriation for the three strongest teachers in the study. Teachers' transitions were also eased when there was a clear expectation for writing instruction and alignment between supports. Teachers who had minimal support or faced scheduling challenges with competing programs (e.g., English language development) found it difficult to give writing instruction consistent time and attention.

COPING WITH GRADE-LEVEL TRANSITIONS: THREE CONTRASTING CASES OF CONSISTENT CONTRADICTION OR CONSISTENT CONTINUITY ACROSS SETTINGS

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, a shift in grade-level from preservice to the first year of teaching posed challenges for new teachers. Two cases, Carol and Natalie, illustrate how continuity within and across the settings for teacher learning can support a smooth grade-level transition, supporting new teachers as they learn to use the conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching in a new grade level. The cases differ in

their main area of need. Natalie had strong content knowledge for writing, but she had scant preservice preparation in her methods course and no models in her teaching placement to support her pedagogically. Carol had a strong conceptual framework for the teaching of writing, but she needed some support in translating her skills from fourth grade to first grade. She also needed to learn writing content for first grade. The case of Sheri, who had similar needs to those of Carol, shows how contradictions between preservice and first-year settings as well as contradictions among first-year settings present significant challenges for new teachers.

NATALIE: CONTINUITY OF SUPPORT THAT PROVIDED CONCEPTUAL AND PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING AND SUPPORTED THE GRADE-LEVEL TRANSITION

As discussed earlier in the chapter, Natalie did not have a model for writing instruction in her kindergarten placement, and she did not agree with the model of writing instruction in her sixth grade placement. She took her ideas about how to approach writing instruction from her methods course. Natalie was confident in her knowledge of writing, but she was not as confident about how to teach the content to third graders. In the spring of her first year of teaching, I asked her what aspect of writing instruction about which she felt least confident. She replied:

> Probably least confident about—honestly, all the units, until I see the end product, I'm like, "Oh, I don't think it's working, I don't think it's working," and then I get to the end and it's like, "Oh, it worked." Maybe that's more a symptom of being a first year teacher than anything. "It's not working! It's not working!" and then, "Oh, wow, they did do good." You read them and you're like, "Whoa! I taught them, kind of!" I think that's a lot of it. Subject matter-wise, not so much. It is third grade writing, it's not rocket science. That; "Am I doing the right thing, is this the right thing to do with them?"

Given her strong content knowledge from her writing background but tenuous grasp of teaching tools from her preservice year, Natalie needed support with the planning and teaching of writing. Her school and district provided this support, giving her structured

opportunities to learn while allowing her to draw on her content knowledge strengths to create her own units of study.

Aligned grade-level, district, and curricular support

Natalie described her first job as very supportive. She was supported by the principal, the grade-level team, her co-teacher, and the district literacy coaches. Natalie's administration and faculty expressed a commitment to writing workshop, and they had worked to build teaching and coaching capacity through work with consultants. The district provided training and curricular support, and there was an expectation that all teachers would organize their instruction using writing workshop tools and primarily genre-based content (e.g., as opposed to trait-based, prompt-based, or cross-curricular writing), but the district guidelines were not prescriptive; curricular materials were available, and teachers were encouraged to alter these in response to the needs of their students. Natalie contrasted her experience to those of many of her colleagues in other districts:

> Since they do the [writing workshop] they're very into trying different ways to get the kids to write. It's not formulaic; we don't have to use the adopted curriculums if we don't want to. It made it easier to do what the kids needed and wanted, I think, than what I've heard in a lot of districts. I think a lot of other districts vary: "On this page you're going to do lesson 2.2 and do this worksheet and that and the other." I was able to look and go, "Well, the kids understand grammar, but they're struggling with literary devices, so we're going to take an extra week and do literary devices and get them caught up on that so that they're better, well-rounded writers."

The writing workshop approach aligned with Natalie's conceptual framework for teaching writing. She recognized the congruence between settings, and the district's curriculum and support helped her to more fully appropriate some of the tools she had briefly tried in the preservice year.

Natalie began her teaching year without any training in the district curriculum. Since she was initially hired as a long-term substitute, she did not qualify to attend training. A grade-level partner helped orient her to the curriculum. Later in the fall, when Natalie became a district employee, she was supported by both grade-level team

meetings and coaching. She appreciated the collegiality of the grade-level group and the school as a whole. She felt supported and knew that she could get help if she needed it. Typically, though, Natalie reported that she would not ask for help, but she would learn through meeting with her colleagues and others' questions. She explained:

> Some of it's my stubbornness, and some of it was I thought, "You're doing good," [sic] so I didn't really come very often with questions. A couple of times I'd be there and there was Rebecca, one of the other teachers, her personality is just very worrisome, so she would always have questions. She was talking and I'd be like, "Oh, that's a good thing she asked about that, I could use some help with that." But I never really… I'm very stubborn and independent and an only child, so I'm like, "I can do it myself, I can figure it out." So I didn't really go to them for much in the way of help.

The structured opportunities to learn in the grade-level meetings seemed to help Natalie. She also seemed to learn a lot from the literacy coach, who supported the new teachers at the school in learning to teach writing workshop and in learning to plan. Natalie recalled:

> [The literacy coach] came four times, and we went through the different... we evaluated what we were supposed to be looking for, kind of set some benchmarks and standards and went through how we could get the kids there, and then we planned out units. . . . [And they taught us that]"You can't just pull the lesson plan out, you have to figure out where your kids are and what they need." Which is the whole point of the project. . . . Also there were five of us that were new first year teachers at the school, so we would get together and plan the units together and stay on pacing. Then we'd go through with Claire, one of the ladies, she'd get a Post-it pad out, and we'd put one for each day of the week, and then we'd write the teaching point out, what we wanted them to have done by a certain point. That was also pretty helpful and supportive.

Through her training with the literacy coach, Natalie had learned to set objectives and plan teaching points day by day. Initially, her planning was supported by a curriculum that she could follow as a model, making adjustments for her students as needed. Later in the year, these planning skills were critical in helping her create original "extra" units of study. The integrated support allowed Natalie to move from a superficial

understanding of writing workshop tools to a deeper appropriation. Already strong in content knowledge, the tools for planning and instruction that she learned in her first job enabled her to provide strong, research-based instruction to her students. Next I turn to a description of Natalie's teaching to illustrate her appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools for writing instruction.

Natalie's teaching

Natalie organized her instruction using a daily reading and writing workshop. The units of study in the two workshops often supported each other. For example, students read and responded to texts in a particular genre before they embarked on a study of the genre as writers. Each day, students would come to the carpet with their writing notebooks. The minilessons began with a connection to students' current work followed by an articulation of the teaching point, which was written on chart paper. Students copied this teaching point into their notebooks as the class settled in at the carpet. Once the lesson commenced, students closed their notebooks and attended to the teacher. Natalie used modeling almost exclusively, drafting on chart paper and thinking aloud. She also conferred with students during the work time. Units of study typically focused on genre, though the first unit I observed focused more on building a community of writers and the rituals and routines of writing workshop.

The classroom was set up to support the norms of writing workshop and to remind students of earlier teaching points. For example, a calendar showed the timeline for each unit of study. Teaching points from each day's reading and writing workshop lessons were written on chart paper and posted on a bulletin board.

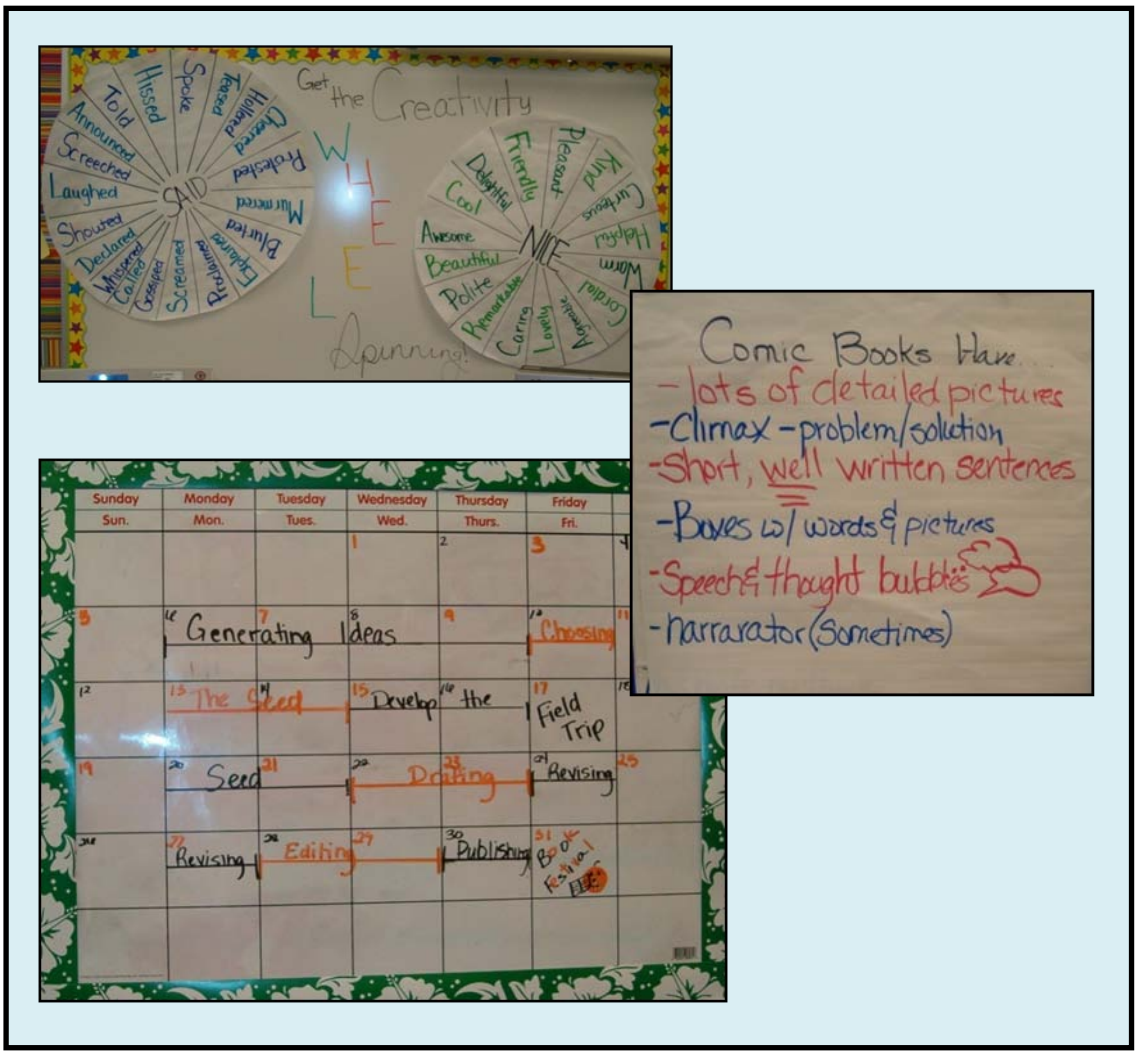


Figure 20. Charts from Natalie's classroom. Top left: Artifacts from lessons on word choice. Right: Attribute chart from a writing workshop unit on comic books. Bottom left: class calendar for a personal narrative unit.

I observed Natalie during three units: personal narratives, comic books, and persuasive business letters focusing on an issue of students' choice. Here I describe lessons from her unit on business letters to highlight her teaching practices. She began the unit by asking students to think about issues in the world that they would like to see changed. She modeled filling in a graphic organizer to help students gather letter-writing ideas. It had three columns across the top: issue, person, and key points. The students then created their own organizer in their writing notebooks. During the lesson and subsequent writing time, students generated ideas ranging from saving tigers to pollution to school funding to graffiti. They wrote their best guess for whom to send the

letter, and began gathering key points they could make for each of the letter ideas. The graphic organizer below shows one student's work from this day.

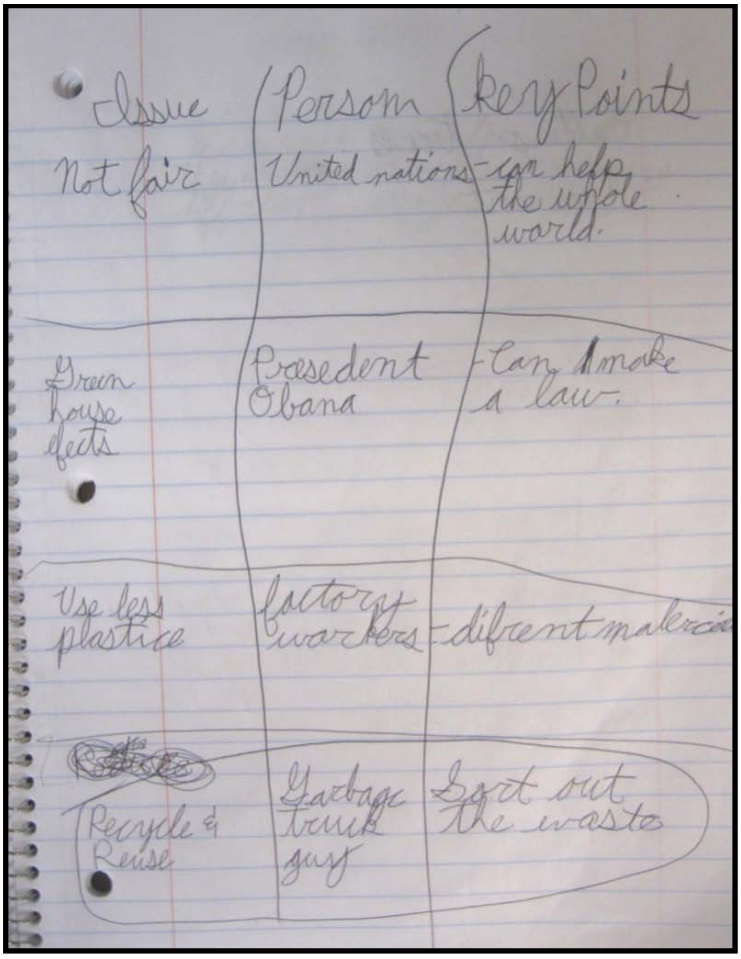


Figure 21. Graphic organizer for collecting letter-writing ideas.

On the second day of the unit, Natalie had the students copy this teaching point into their notebooks: "Excellent letter writers come up with a solution to their community issue and discuss this in their letter in a respectful way." She told the students that today they will "zero in on our topic and think about how to say it in a respectful way. Sometimes when we feel very strongly, then we tend to say things in a way that might hurt the feelings of the person we are writing to. So we need to think carefully about how we say things." She then showed the students a letter she had written to President Obama, which was not written respectfully. After reading the letter to them and giving the students some think time, she had them share their ideas for revisions with a partner.

Then she and the class worked together to craft a more respectful draft. During the writing time, students finalized their letter choices so that Natalie could look up the name, title, and mailing address of the appropriate person. These third graders were excited about writing to someone about issues that were meaningful to them. They shared their letter ideas informally with each other and helped each other with key points to include. On the third day, Natalie's teaching point read: "Excellent letter writers make sure their letter is written in the proper format so that it's easy for the reader to read and understand the information." As she taught the students about letter form, she emphasized the purpose of each part of the letter, and how these formalities showed respect or provided important information for the recipient. This was the students' first school attempt at writing such a formal letter, and they all tried to incorporate appropriate language and provide respectful requests and helpful suggestions.

Conclusion

As in all her units, Natalie's writing content knowledge, effective pedagogical choices, and belief in her students came through. She believed that students should engage in writing tasks that had real audiences, and she provided them that opportunity in this unit. She also believed that her third graders were capable, and she held high standards for them to take the writing work seriously. She provided explicit instruction, modeling what she wanted students to do, and she organized opportunities for students to practice what she had taught. She also provided scaffolding through conferring, helping students develop their ideas and a respectful, professional voice. Natalie came to her first teaching job with confidence in writing and a strong sense of the kind of writing teacher she wanted to be. The grade-level support, coaching, and curriculum in her teaching setting helped her appropriate the pedagogical tools she needed to make use of her content knowledge in the classroom.

CAROL: CONTINUITY OF SUPPORT THAT PROVIDED CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORTED THE GRADE-LEVEL TRANSITION

As discussed in the previous chapter, Carol had appropriated a strong set of conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing, which she had learned through

the methods course and fourth grade field placement. Now teaching in a first grade classroom, Carol was less sure of her abilities:

> First grade was kind of a shock to me. . . because I was in fourth last year, and I kind of really wanted to do third or fourth, and here I am in the first. . . . I'll tell you, when I came in, I was terrified of teaching children how to write and read. I thought, "There's no way I can teach them how to read and write."

She had spent the preservice year thinking about the teaching of writing in terms of the intermediate grades and had not considered or seen images of writing instruction in the primary grades. For example, in the fall she commented on her difficulties with conferring at a new grade level:

> [Conferring is] one of the things I wish I had paid more attention to . . . [in the preservice year]. I feel like I know what conferences are, but in my head, I was applying it to fourth grade when I was talking to Cindy. I can only say now what they were talking about, like, "Right here, you can add inner voice and descriptive language and dialogue." My first graders are nowhere near that, so I have to really sit down and think about what that means for a first grader.

Carol had chosen to work at the school because there was an articulated support and expectation for teaching writing workshop at the district and school levels. She had considerable support for learning how to recontextualize what she had learned in the preservice year for first grade instruction. In the fall and spring of her first year, Carol attended district professional development focusing on writing for new teachers. The training helped her learn about the units of study at her grade-level. She also had strong support from her grade-level team. The grade-level team met weekly for an hour, where they would discuss the plans for the upcoming week. All her teammates used a writing workshop approach to teaching, and they organized their instruction into units of study, mostly focusing on genre. Her grade-level mentor, Monica, checked in with her regularly throughout the week, providing resources and extra support as needed. Carol was thankful for the support, stating that it was critical to her success:

> We have a good staff here, a lot of support. My grade level partner, I always tell her, "I couldn't function." I'm like, "I don't even know—I wouldn't even know what to do" [without your help].

Once Carol had the grade-level objectives from her team, she drew on curricular supports to help her with the details of planning her writing lessons. Carol also reached out to her Southern University colleagues for advice. The continuity between Carol's preservice training, principal's expectations, district support, grade-level team, and curricular materials helped Carol translate her fourth-grade understanding of writing workshop to the new context of first grade. This continuity resulted in Carol's deepened appropriation of the conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing, and her teaching was remarkable for a novice in her first year. To illustrate Carol's appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools, I now turn to a description of her teaching.

Carol's teaching

As described in Chapter Two, Carol had a strong appropriation of many of the key tools for writing instruction. She ran a writing workshop four days per week for about 45 minutes. When I visited in the sixth week of school, the students were already accustomed to many of the rituals and routines, including gathering on the carpet, participating in minilessons, starting independent work, conferring with the teacher, pair sharing, and author's chair. Evidence of teaching these routines could be seen in charts throughout the room, which Carol referred to often (see Figure 22). She had launched writing workshop in the first week of school, and she had talked with students about the importance of writing. In these first months of school, Carol wanted to help students see that they could use writing to tell about themselves and their experiences.

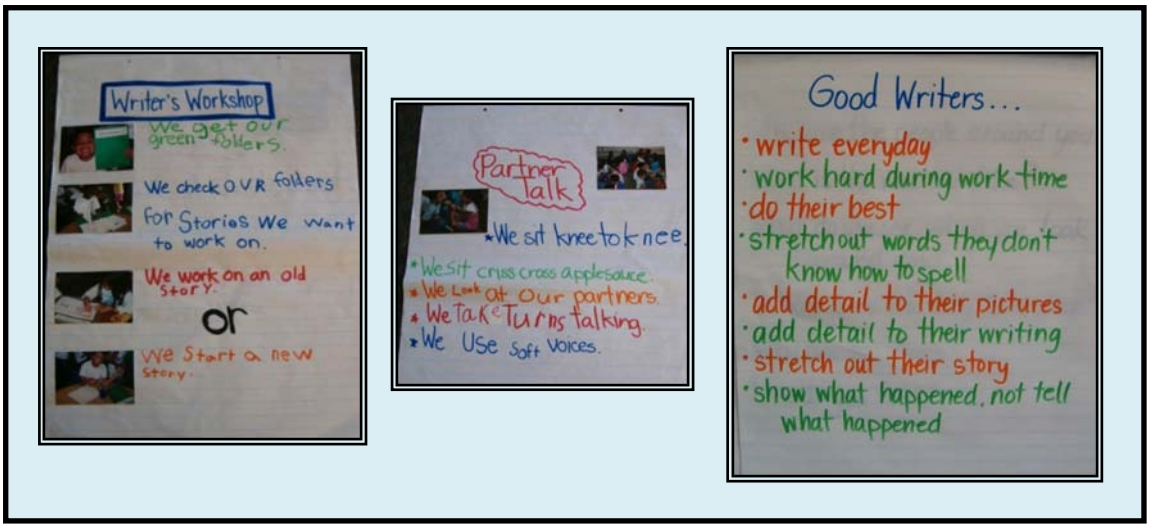


Figure 22. Charts supporting the rituals and routines of writing workshop.

I observed lessons during three units: small moment narratives, how-to books, and small moment narratives (revisited). All nine observations had a clear objective and seemed appropriate to the students' needs. For example, in the fall unit on small moment narratives, the students had been learning to choose a "small moment" to write about (i.e., not the morning-till-night, or "bed to bed," stories typical at this age). They had also learned that their story should include details. The chart in Figure 23, created in a lesson prior to my visit, shows questions students should try to answer in their narratives.

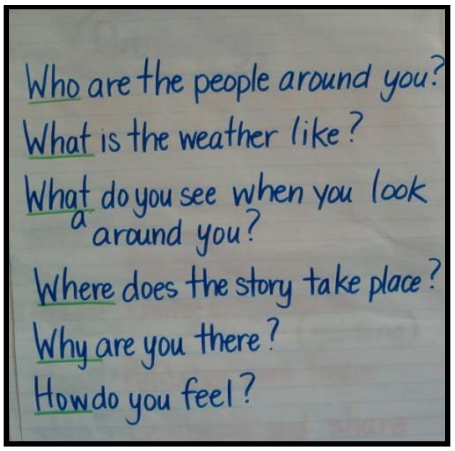


Figure 23. A chart from a lesson on adding detail to narratives.

The lesson series I observed continued the focus on adding detail by providing students with strategies for adding more to their stories. During the lessons, Carol employed a variety of strategies for teaching writing, including modeling, writing with students, and using mentor texts as examples of good writing. Her lessons focused on recalling all the events in the story, using the five senses for description, and "showing, not telling." For example, in the second lesson she drew on a familiar experience, working in the class garden, and invited students to help her compose a detailed narrative (see Figure 24).

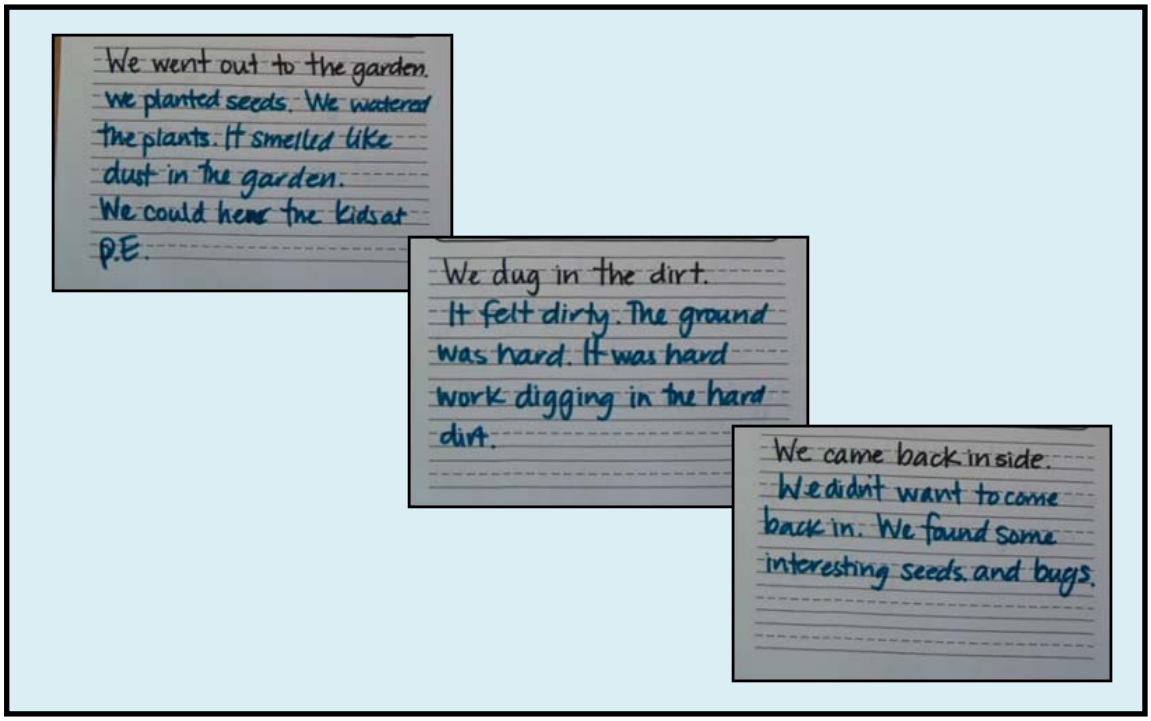


Figure 24. Shared writing. The first sentence on each page is the original; subsequent text was added during the lesson.

She began by reading her original story (the first sentence on each page) and then asked students what they thought. They replied that it was boring because it did not have enough details. They offered more details about what they did, and then Carol asked some guiding questions: What did we hear outside? What did the dirt feel like? As the students contributed responses, she crafted revisions to the original story. After

the minilesson, Carol would typically confer with four to five target students and then work with as many additional students as possible.

The work time was characterized by a hum of activity. Most students worked for the entire writing period. They started with a "silent write," (which was not altogether silent since students were sounding out words and often appealed to their table-mates for help), and moved to a social writing time in which students could share their writing with one another or ask for help from a friend. The students looked forward to the closing ritual of author's chair. Typically, students would share their writing, either finished or in progress, and students would provide feedback in the form of compliments. Sometimes students would also be encouraged to offer suggestions. Carol usually picked students who had tried to incorporate the teaching in that day's minilesson, but she balanced this with giving everyone an equal opportunity to share. No matter who was sharing, she always found something about the student's writing that she could compliment in order to reinforce or extend her teaching objectives.

While the level of appropriation varied, there was evidence in all students' work of learning from the minilessons. For example, in Stephanie's writing (Figure 25), we see the stretching of a small moment—washing the dog—across three pages, something Carol had taught at the beginning of the unit. We also see the inclusion of details specifically suggested in Carol's lessons—the weather ("It was sunny."), visual description ("She is black and brown." "When I put soap on her, she was shiny."), feelings ("I had fun. I was happy."), and "show, don't tell" ("I was jumping up and down."). Some of these details are out of sequence and reflect this novice writer's attempts at revision, a sophisticated skill for first graders.

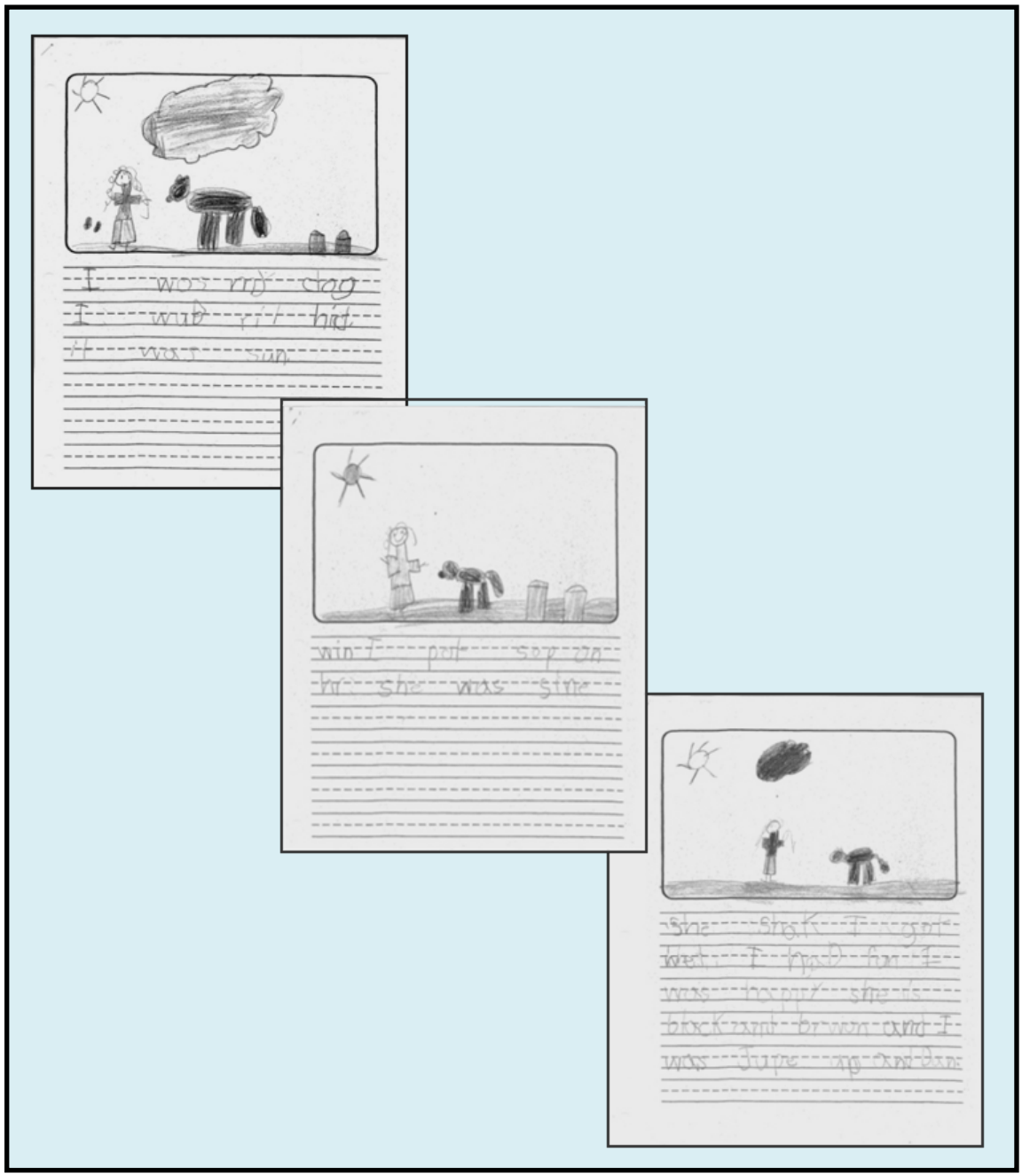


Figure 25. Stephanie's writing. Page one: "I washed my dog. I rubbed really hard. It was sunny." Page two: "When I put soap on her, she was shiny." Page three: "She shook. I got wet. I had fun. I was happy. She is black and brown and I was jumping up and down."

Conclusion

In many ways, Carol might be considered an exemplary first year writing teacher. Each unit and lesson within a unit had clear objectives appropriate to her students' needs, and units were standards-based and informed by assessment of student work. Students received feedback through regular conferring (though some received significantly more support than others). The workshop abuzz with activity, and most

students exhibited behaviors that showed they were interested in writing, felt competent as writers, and were willing to try new writing skills. When I asked Carol where she learned her approach to teaching writing, she said, "Well, I think that's what we learned last year in Cindy's class, that's how she set it up for us. . . . And then Lucy Calkins [curriculum] uses the same format of mini-lessons, and then independent work, and then sharing out. That's pretty much where I've gotten it from." Carol was fortunate to experience a complete alignment between the writing content and pedagogy promoted in her methods course, the curriculum in the school setting, and her grade level team.

SHERI: CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN AND ACROSS SETTINGS THAT COMPLICATED THE GRADE-LEVEL TRANSITION

In her preservice year, Sheri had grown in her confidence to teach writing. She believed that she had the tools she needed to begin writing workshop instruction, which she had learned to teach in a fourth/fifth grade setting. In her final focus group, though, she shared that she had just accepted a position teaching kindergarten, and she expressed uncertainty about whether or not the tools she had learned would be useful to her in the new setting:

> If I were teaching older grades, I thought it [writing workshop] would be really awesome. But I'm teaching kindergarten, and I have no idea what I'm going to do. . . . I am going from 4th and 5th grade to kindergarten next year, so it's like it's all new for me. And there will be writing but I don't know how that's going to work; I really don't know.

Upon starting her first job, Sheri was optimistic that she would get the support she needed to teach writing. The school district placed considerable importance on writing instruction; the district provided training to teachers and had hired a full-time literacy coach. Sheri had several opportunities to learn about writing instruction in the first year of teaching, including grade-level meetings, professional development, and coaching, but the tools that were provided in these opportunities did not mirror those that Sheri had learned during the preservice year. Moreover, the opportunities during the first year of teaching were somewhat contradictory and brief. Below I describe the first-year settings in which Sheri learned to teach writing.

Learning from the grade-level team

Sheri met regularly with her grade-level team. They exchanged ideas and offered support, but there was no grade-level plan to which all the teachers were committed. The teachers' approaches varied, but none used a writing workshop approach, and none used the district curricular materials with any regularity. The veteran teacher Sheri most admired had an "organic," integrated approach to teaching. At times, Sheri was unable to envision how she might appropriate a lesson idea from her without appropriating the entire unit, and that felt overwhelming to her. She also expressed her frustrations with attempting to emulate her colleagues:

> Getting ideas from other people and trying to incorporate those, it's hard to make it your own, even though it totally makes sense how other people do things. Trying to do it yourself, it comes out totally different.

The kindergarten was a half-day program, and teachers were assigned two to a room. Sheri was placed with another first-year teacher, Anne. She did more planning with Anne than any of the other teachers. They drew heavily upon their grade-level colleagues and on Anne's ideas from her student teaching in kindergarten. Sheri named her grade-level team as the most influential on her teaching. The supports I explain next, professional development and coaching, had little bearing on her teaching. Though she had hoped they would help, they left her confused or with limited information.

Learning from professional development

Step Up to Writing was a resource for teaching writing that the district had purchased to supplement the state-adopted language arts text. As mentioned above, Sheri's more experienced grade-level colleagues did not use either of these resources. Melisa, the district writing coach, provided training in Step Up to Writing in the fall. Unfortunately, the training was not tailored to her grade level, and Sheri found the thick binder overwhelming. Sheri recalled the fall training:

> We had a short, three-hour training on it, but it's nothing I feel comfortable with. . . . We have a whole binder of stuff, and I can't even look at it right now. I don't have time to look at that right now. [When Melisa trained us] she said, "This three hours is not nearly enough of what you guys will need."

Each time I visited Sheri, she expressed her commitment to spend some time with the binder, lamenting that she still didn't really know what or how she should teach, but she never found the time to utilize it.

In the fall, the teachers also received training on the 6 +1 Traits of writing. Sheri found this training to be inspiring, and she was eager to use some of the tools from the training. However, the training wasn't enough to get her started.

> So it was good. We got a binder for that. Haven't looked through that since then. A lot of great ideas, there's a lot of great ideas in everything, but finding the time to even go back and revisit, "What was that, that she talked about?" It was kind of hard to find the spare time to incorporate that kind of stuff. Maybe the summer will be my time to catch up.

Like the Step Up to Writing binder, the Six plus One Traits binder was intended as a writing supplement rather than a writing program. The district also provided a resource book for teaching the 6 +1 Traits through literature, an idea that Sheri was particularly excited about. She saw the book as a stepping stone to becoming more like her experienced grade-level colleagues:

> Our neighbor, Sharon, does that with everything, everything in literature. She doesn't do the practice book; she doesn't do any of that. I feel like I have to because I don't know what else to do, but this [book] is like what she does off the top of her head. It's kind of nice to have something like this that I can do, because you can get concepts about print through literature, for writing, anything like that.

As with the Step Up to Writing Binder, she expressed her intent to use these materials, but she wasn't able to find the time.

Learning from coaching

During the year that I observed, all the new teachers at Rolling Hills Elementary received support from a writing coach, Melisa. Melisa came for observation cycles in the fall and winter. The visits included: demonstration lessons with each teacher's class, observations of each teacher, and feedback on their instruction. Sheri wasn't sure of the specific goal of the coaching activities, but she assumed that they would provide support for their overall writing program using the strategies from Step Up to Writing. In the fall, Sheri explained:

> My partner and I are a little confused about what the expectations are. It's not an evaluation, she's coming—she demonstrated the lesson for us and she's coming to observe, I guess, guide us. The techniques she uses of Step Up to Writing are—it's not much of a writing program, it's more of strategies you can use to teach writing. . . . I'm hoping it [the coaching] gains for me some insight, maybe the strategy of Step Up to Writing will be more beneficial. So I hope . . . she'll be able to help sort of guide my writing instruction more.

In the fall, I observed the same lesson that Melisa observed (the "Pumpkins are" lesson, described below), and I stayed afterward to observe the coaching session. The coaching lasted about 30 minutes and was mediated by three artifacts: a "selective scripting" sheet, a seating chart, and a post-observation conference form. On the selective scripting sheet, Melisa wrote down some of the key events and phrases from the lesson. The seating chart included notes on the behaviors of students. Sheri and Melisa filled out the post-observation conference form together.

Guided by the coaching forms, Melisa focused the conference on classroom management and Sheri's challenges in supporting one student, a beginning English learner who was often disengaged from the classroom activity. Although this might not be surprising for a beginning teacher struggling with classroom management, Sheri did not struggle in this area. She only had 16 students and almost all were willing and eager to participate in classroom activities. After discussing each child that stood up, talked to a neighbor, raised a hand, or talked out of turn, the discussion moved to the post-observation conference form. This form drew out answers from Sheri about her objectives, assessment of teaching strengths and challenges, and an articulation of next steps. There was very little discussion of the lesson design, pedagogy, or content and very few recommendations from the coach. Sheri recalled that the support was not very useful:

> The debrief with her really wasn't—I don't remember, I have to look at my notes again, but I can't remember there was much help, I don't think, that she was giving me. It was more like a conversation, "How did it go," kind of like the talks that you and I have. Like, "Oh how'd it go?" "This is what I did." . . . And I would think—this might be outside of your study—but I would feel like if we're having a coach there would be more room for tips and advice, and ways of [teaching] writing. Here

> you're studying me, a beginning teacher, and I feel like I need more from this coach that's given to me. It's kind of a weird thing.

In the winter, I asked Sheri about her second coaching session. Sheri shared the documents from their debriefing and walked me through it. Like the fall debrief, Melisa used a selective scripting sheet to document the lesson. This time, however, she did not take notes using a seating chart and she did not ask Sheri to fill out a post-observation form. Instead, she used a "Coaching and Feedback" sheet, which made a lot more sense to Sheri. She found the feedback in this meeting to be very helpful.

> Yeah, I actually really found it useful. . . . I really did, and I didn't feel like there was the pressure because I was really unclear about whether we were supposed to be using Step Up To Writing, or not using—I mean, it's still unclear to me. [But] she's taught kindergarten and first grade, and she has taught in districts that you have a lot of language learners. She also has a lot of insight on that kind of stuff. "Can you just come be the coach for everything? Just be a mentor?" It's amazing; she has a lot of good knowledge. So we didn't get to talk about that kind of stuff, the Step Up To Writing stuff, but it worked out well.

On the coaching and feedback form, Melisa had suggested that making a five senses chart with her students might help her generate descriptive language. She also suggested that Sheri allow students to develop their own sentences rather than provide a frame. As the quote above suggests, Sheri was thankful for Melisa's feedback. However, she was frustrated that she still did not know how to use the Step Up to Writing materials.

Sheri's teaching

Throughout the year, Sheri maintained that she was unsure about what or how to teach writing in kindergarten. There were periods during the year in which she did not do any writing with the students. When she did teach writing, there was usually a whole-class lesson about every two weeks and a journal center once or twice per week. The instruction fell into three categories: 1) high frequency word sentences, 2) free writing sentences, and 3) fill-in-the-blank sentences. The high frequency word sentences and free writing sentences were done in ability groups during centers. In both cases, students were asked to think of a sentence (sometimes including a high frequency

word, sometimes not) and write it in their notebooks. The goal of these activities was to learn concepts of print, such as spacing between words and letter-sound correspondences. Fill-in-the-blank sentences were taught to the whole class and to small groups in a writing center. In these lessons, Sheri created a sentence frame ahead of time and then generated options for completing the sentences with students, which she wrote on a chart. Students then copied the entire sentence or filled in a blank on a worksheet. The goal of these lessons focused on description, with concepts of print as a secondary objective.

Sheri supported students as they wrote, helping those who weren't sure what to do or who just needed some help hearing sounds in words. Students casually talked among themselves while drawing and writing, often sharing what they were doing, but they did not have any formal time in which they talked about their work to each other. Sheri saw this informal talk as important to their learning:

> When we do the journals I kind of just try to set them up, and if I sit there, they're just going to keep asking me for help, so I'll get up and do something else, just monitor, make sure that they're actually on task. If they talk to their neighbors, that's good, they should be talking to their friends. They should be resources for each other.

Upon completion of the writing assignments, students would take their work to Sheri, who usually provided some feedback in terms of a complement or a directive to change or add something. Next I provide an example of Sheri's teaching:

Sheri and her 16 kindergartners gathered on the carpet. Sheri had written "Pumpkins are . . ." on a chart. She began the lesson by reading this to the students, explaining that today they would be writing about what pumpkins are. She began with an example, writing ". . . orange." on the first line below the sentence frame. Next she passed two pumpkins around, asking each child to describe the pumpkin by completing the sentence "Pumpkins are ____." Naturally, these five-year-olds had many things to say about pumpkins that did not fit the sentence frame. Longer contributions were simplified to a single word, and contributions considered erroneous (e.g., "green") or

figurative (e.g., “like a head with hair”) were not included on the chart. Several children could not think of anything and passed on their turns.

Figure 26. "Pumpkins are ____ " chart.

Finally, the children were to complete a worksheet that required them to write the final word in the sentence “Pumpkins are ___.” by copying from the chart. Because none of the children could read the chart, they approached the task in a number of ways. Some asked for help, while others just copied a word and then asked, “What did I write?” (See Figure 27 for work samples).

Encouraging kindergartners to describe the world around them can be a useful way to help them think about adding details. However, by limiting the acceptable descriptions to adjectives—a concept these children did not understand—Sheri created a task with parameters for success that were not clear to the students. This frame limited the ways in which students could share their observations, and it narrowly defined their product possibilities. The task also limited what the teacher could validate, since every word had to fit into the syntactic and semantic frame that she had established. Students seemed to engage with this lesson from a task-completion orientation; they copied the sentence frame, asked for help locating a word (or just copied one), drew a picture, and brought the paper to the teacher for evaluation.

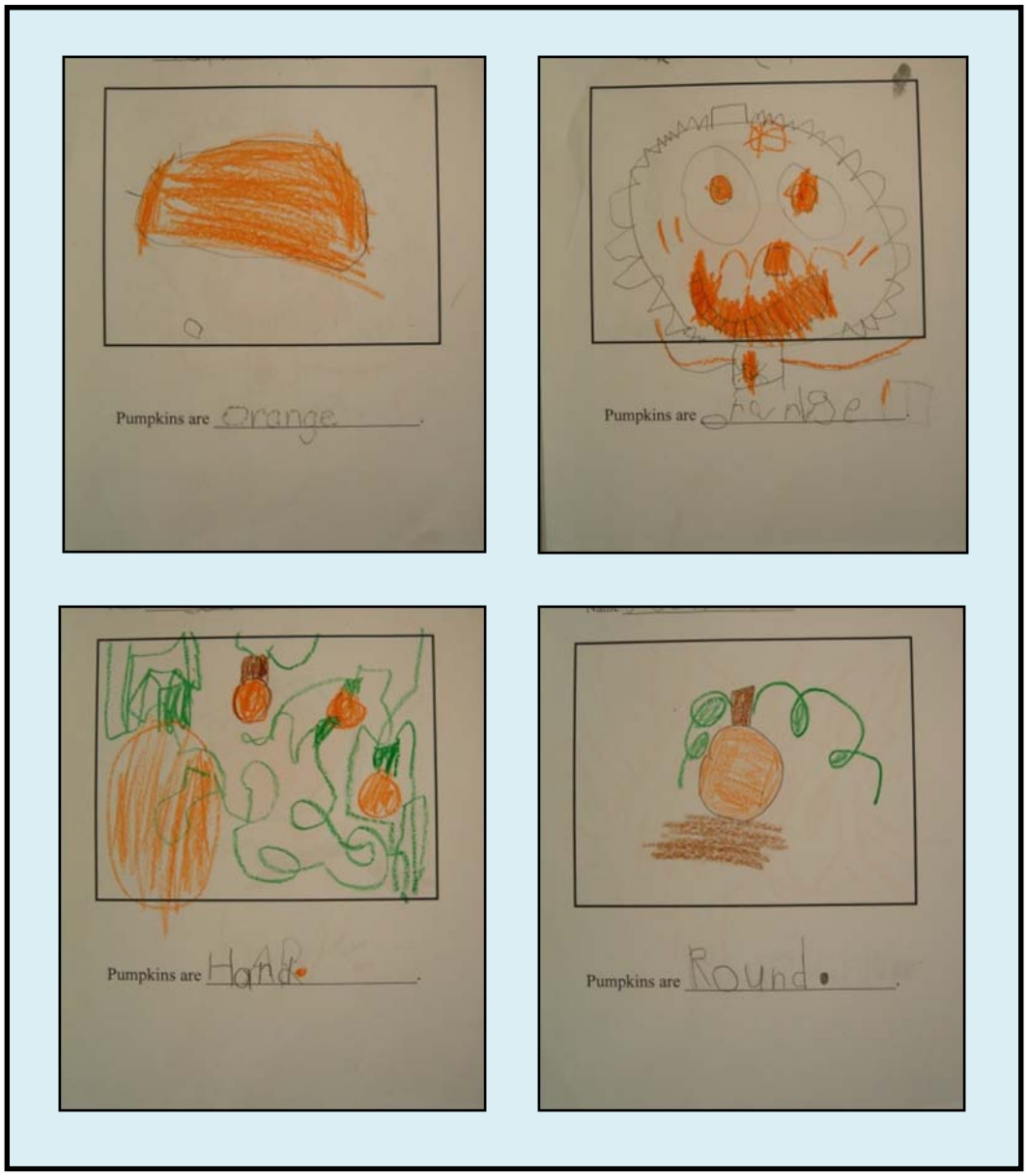


Figure 27. Work samples from the "Pumpkins are" lesson.

The top left sample left shows a students' tracing of dots to form the letters for "orange." Sheri drew the dots on the student's paper because copying proved too difficult. The top right sample shows a student's drawing of the letters for "orange." The bottom two work samples are representative of students who were more familiar with letters and comfortable with the task of copying.

Throughout the year, Sheri struggled to determine what to teach and how it should be taught. In February, she described her need for direction:

> I think… Just having a rhyme or reason for doing things. I think sometimes I know what needs to be done, or what should be done, but I'm never quite sure of the reasons. A lot of people say with standards, if you're going to teach something, you kind of have to have something to

> back it up. Why are you doing this? So I think sometimes I'm like, "Okay, well, I think we should do this, I think they need this, but why is it? What are they showing me is the reason that they need this?" Or "Why are we doing this?" If I'm desperate for a lesson or something like that, I might pull it out of the Houghton Mifflin book, then later I'm like, "Why are we doing this?" . . . But that's where I kind of feel the gap. It's just understanding—understanding what kindergarteners need. Kind of year-long, at-a-glance kind of thing. They have the research to show that some kids are at school—they have all the different kinds of—I don't know what you call that. Levels that they're at, some kids are here, some kids are inventive spelling, things like that. Then building upon that for the whole year. Although I think you should teach for what your kids need, but having a general idea, I think, is maybe my goal for next year. Having an idea about the kind of areas we need to go, maybe each month. Or what skills we need to be working on. That's where I feel like the gap is, there. I'm not that far ahead of myself where I can think, "Next month we should be working on this."

Conclusion

Sheri struggled to teach writing throughout her first year of teaching. She entered kindergarten unsure of the usefulness of the conceptual framework she had appropriated in the preservice year. None of the settings in the first year helped her recontextualize her tools for a new grade-level. It was as if she had not been trained to teach writing at all.

Sheri was aware of her difficulties, but the path to stronger teaching was unclear to her. The grade-level team, coaching, professional development, and curriculum each offered different tools, overwhelming her and pulling her in different directions. Looking back on her first year, she summed up her frustrations: "There's [sic] just too many things that are put on your plate, it's like, 'Okay, use this tool, use this tool.'" None of these settings were sustained or supportive enough to help Sheri appropriate new tools. As a result of multiple contradictions across settings, Sheri did not spend much time on writing, and her pedagogical tools limited opportunities for students to explore different purposes, forms, and techniques for writing.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the impact of settings for learning to teach writing in the first year of teaching. Teachers came to their first jobs with the conceptual frameworks that they had appropriated during the preservice year. Most applied these frameworks to the new contexts in which they were to teach, and the frameworks of Southern University graduates were more adaptable and robust than those of Northern University. Differences between the preservice and first-year grade-levels posed significant challenges for some teachers. Overall, the participants in this study did not have a strong grasp of the content of writing instruction, though graduates of Southern University at least had a sense of the kinds of things one might teach. As these new teachers entered the field, it was clear that they would need support in order to provide quality writing instruction to students.

This chapter also discussed new teacher support for writing instruction along two dimensions: grade-level support and the organization and focus of the school and district. Unfortunately, most teachers in the study did not receive support that was sufficient to deepen or expand their appropriation of tools for writing instruction. Carol and Natalie were exceptions, enjoying support from their grade-level teams, professional development, and curriculum, all of which aligned with their conceptual frameworks. They were the two strongest teachers in the study, providing the most consistent, well-designed instruction, and their experiences can serve as a model for supporting new teachers. Kendra also had the opportunity to build on what she had learned in the preservice year. Her grade-level partner provided support in a school that did not offer much direction or many resources for the teaching of writing. Kendra's ability to improve her practice with only grade-level support is a strong case for the power of sustained, detailed co-planning with a more experienced colleague. But her case also shows that grade-level support was not enough; Kendra did not have the confidence to fully enact the writing workshop model, omitting the central pedagogy of conferring from her teaching. Finally, I presented the cases of Natalie, Carol and Sheri.

Their learning trajectories and resulting practices are markedly different, and these differences that can be attributed to their opportunities for learning in the first year.

Throughout the section on school and district organization and focus, I alluded to curricular resources. The resources for teaching writing varied widely by school in number and approach. Though the learning settings described in this chapter were strong influences on teacher appropriation, curricular resources were an equally powerful mediating force for study participants. I take up the topic of curricular artifacts in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: THE ROLE OF CURRICULAR ARTIFACTS IN LEARNING TO TEACH WRITING

In Chapters Three and Four, I show that writing knowledge for teaching is not addressed in the preservice program, and most graduates did not have the writing knowledge they needed to teach writing K-8. Moreover, Northern University graduates did not have a robust set of pedagogical tools for organizing instruction or teaching students how to write. In Chapter Five, I discuss the challenges teachers faced in a new grade and the support they received at the grade, school, and district levels. I discuss how the support mediated appropriation of writing knowledge for teaching and conceptual and pedagogical tools for instruction. In this chapter, I explore the role of curricular artifacts in learning to teach writing. In the first section, I describe the cases of Carol, Abby, and Mari as they learn to teach writing, in part, through the curricular artifacts to which they have access. The cases demonstrate the power of curricular materials to inform new teachers' practices, the importance of curriculum that represents sound teaching practice, and the need for coherence between curricular artifacts and grade, school, and district support. I then turn to an analysis of curricular materials appropriated by study participants. I look at the degree to which these artifacts are designed to be adaptable and how that flexibility relates to a novice teachers' ability to use and learn from them. Next, I use the concepts of transparency and face (Little, 2002) as a lens for examining aspects of teaching practice that are made visible in these materials. I discuss the differences between resources and what these differences afford novice teachers. The chapter concludes with a comparative analysis of three curricular resources.

CURRICULA AND RELATED TEACHING OUTCOMES

All teachers in the study used curricular materials, at least to some degree. These materials mediated teachers' planning and instruction in terms of what they taught, how they taught, and their pacing. The nature of these artifacts varied on a number of

dimensions, including the level of explanation, scope and sequence, content, and conceptual and pedagogical tools embodied in the materials. These differences had implications for the content and quality of teachers' instruction. In the three sections below, I provide an analysis of some of the curricular materials that teachers used, highlighting the pedagogical and conceptual tools implicitly or explicitly embedded in the documents. I also examine the aspects of knowledge for teaching writing that are privileged in the curriculum. I discuss why and how the teachers reported using the resource and analyze the teacher's practice in light of the resources used.

CURRICULUM AS PART OF A NETWORK OF ALIGNED SUPPORT: THE CASE OF CAROL

As discussed in Chapter Five, Carol had strong support at the school level, and she was lucky to experience complete alignment between her conceptual framework and the philosophy of the school in which she began her career. However, first grade was new to Carol, and she required significant support in understanding how the tools she learned in her fourth grade preservice experiences would translate to her new grade. She gained direction in methods, content, and pacing from her grade-level team and from the district's professional development. However, when it came time to plan each lesson, her primary resource was not her grade-level team. Rather, it was the curriculum.

Carol's primary resource was *Units of Study for Primary Writers* (Calkins et al., 2003), which was aligned with her conceptual framework and the approach to teaching writing at her school. This curriculum is organized as a set of small books. Two of the books, *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Writing* and *The Conferring Handbook*, support teachers in the pedagogy of writing workshop and include a DVD with video of sample lessons and conferences. The remaining books provide a detailed, lesson-by-lesson curriculum for seven writing units:

- *Launching a Writing Workshop* by Lucy Calkins and Leah Mermelstein
- *Small Moments: Personal Narrative Writing* by Lucy Calkins and Abby Oxenhorn

- *Writing for Readers: Teaching Skills and Strategies* by Lucy Calkins and Natalie Louis
- *The Craft of Revision* by Lucy Calkins and Pat Bleichman
- *Authors as Mentors* by Lucy Calkins and Amanda Hartman
- *Nonfiction Writing: Procedures and Reports* by Lucy Calkins and Laurie Pessah
- *Poetry: Powerful Thoughts in Tiny Packages* by Lucy Calkins and Stephanie Parsons

Together, the units make up a year-long curriculum for primary writers, each exploring some aspect of the purposes for writing, genre, writing process, and writing craft. Basic conventions are addressed but not emphasized. Carol had a separate time in her class schedule for teaching these skills, and she used a different set of curricular materials to support that teaching.)

Carol's writing curriculum provides far more explanation about teaching writing than most curricular resources for elementary writing. The units provide information about writing process, genre, craft and conventions as they are pertinent to kindergarten through second grade levels. They include samples of student work, explanation of common areas of struggle for young writers, and tips on how to provide extra support. Each lesson is explained on several levels. The main steps of the lesson are printed in bold. Underneath each section, the authors provide transcripts from an actual lesson, including the comments of students. This transcript is not a script for teachers to read; rather, it provides a model for what the teaching might sound like. In the right-hand margin, the authors provide rationale for the pedagogical tools. For example, in a lesson on personal narratives, the authors provide an outline of a lesson that compares two versions of a narrative in order to highlight the value of details. Under each bolded section of the lesson outline, there are portions of transcript from an actual lesson. In the right-hand margin, parallel to the portion of the lesson that illustrates the comparison, the authors provide rationale for using comparison to teach the concept:

> If you read aloud wonderful literature in order to illustrate a quality of writing that you hope children incorporate in their writing, the problem is that children do not necessarily grasp what qualities of writing make the literature effective.

> Abby [the teacher] accentuates the craft-technique she wants her children to notice by showing that the author could have written this content in a different way. This is a very effective way to draw children's attention away from the content only (there was a fire) and toward the author's craftsmanship (Calkins & Oxenhorn, 2003, p. 2).

The sidebars draw the reader's attention to what is important to notice in the way the lesson is taught. Oftentimes these sidebars provide the conceptual tools that undergird the pedagogical tools used in the lesson. Both the transcripts and the rationale are textual parallels of two pedagogies of clinical professions, modeling and decomposition of practice (Grossman et al., 2009). The Calkins et al. (2003) curriculum assumes a workshop approach, and each lesson provides suggestions for writing conferences and closure with the same level of detail used in the minilesson portions of the plans.

There are a number of conceptual tools that undergird this curriculum. Here I highlight a few of the most prevalent conceptual tools. The first is a constructivist view of learning. Though that term is never used, both the organization of the teaching as a workshop and the rationale for the pedagogical decisions point to a constructivist view. For example, in the rationale section of a personal narrative lesson plan, the authors discuss how to foster students' internalization of a writing vocabulary:

> Abby uses carefully chosen key phrases often, and in this instance she repeats the phrase "to stretch out her Small Moment" because she wants this to become part of her children's repertoire of writing goals and strategies. Repetition is helpful for all human beings, and especially to young children. Don't try to say the same thing in twenty different ways—settle on one phrase and use it often so that your children internalize it (Calkins & Oxenhorn, 2003, p. 4).

There is an assumption that all children can learn about the craftsmanship and purposes of composition, provided that the content is taught at an appropriate level. A related conceptual tool is student development in writing, which is explained throughout the curriculum along with ways to support student learning (e.g., feedback in the writing conference). Throughout the curriculum, there is an emphasis on encouraging students to see themselves as writers. The sample transcripts demonstrate a teacher who addresses her students as writers, and the lessons provide suggestions for how to foster students' identities as writers. For example, the lesson transcript for the closure of the

lesson draws upon the work of Sophie, a kindergarten student. After noting the child's use of details, the teacher draws a parallel between Sophie's work and that of children's author Vera B. Williams: "Let's keep trying to write true stories just like Sophie and Vera have done" (Calkins & Oxenhorn, 2003, p. 8). The rationale at the right of the lesson plan encourages teachers to draw parallels between the work of their students and the work of published authors: "It's a lovely touch to put young writers in the same category as published authors and to refer similarly to all these writers as models" (p. 8). The authors also emphasize the role of choice, audience, and purpose in the writing curriculum, helping children to think about what they want to express and how they can best do that in their writing.

The pedagogical tools embedded in the curriculum align with those that Carol appropriated in her preservice year. They include all the components of workshop teaching (e.g., minilessons, writing time, conferring, share time, and opportunities for student talk such as pair sharing and peer conferring). The most frequently used pedagogical tools in the minilessons are explanation of model texts, inquiry of model texts, and modeling. I use the term "modeling" to refer to the demonstration of a teaching point through thinking aloud and writing in front of students. During the lessons, there is also typically a short, structured time for students to talk with each other or contribute ideas to the whole group.

Carol found this curriculum helpful on a number of levels. It helped her to break down the larger curricular objectives into small, daily increments. While she had some of this support from her grade-level partners, their short, weekly meetings often left the specifics of each lesson unarticulated. The sample teaching scripts, sample student comments and work, and commentary on student development helped Carol envision her teaching and benefit from the authors' knowledge of the challenges of particular writing tasks. She said, "It's also nice when I'm following kind of a script." Carol appreciated the sample dialogue and student work that represented what to expect from young writers. She remarked, "She tells you what's going to happen, too." At the

beginning of the year, Carol followed the curriculum closely. As she became more confident, she drew upon a number of resources to support her planning. She recalled:

> At the beginning of the year I used Lucy Calkins a lot, that was who I did my first—I did the writerly life, I did the personal narrative, and then procedural with her stuff. I did three units with her. Then non-fiction, I kind of made up on my own, and used what Marcia was doing, too. This last one, just kind of pieces from everywhere.

Carol's use of the curriculum could be seen in the lessons I observed; she drew heavily on the suggestions in these units. Her practice demonstrated a clarity and confidence uncharacteristic of a first-year teacher. Recall that Carol was one of the strongest teachers in the study; she appropriated more content knowledge and research-based tools for the teaching of writing than most of her first-year colleagues.

None of the other participants had access to curriculum as detailed and comprehensive as that of Carol. However, Natalie—another strong teacher in the study—was provided a curriculum that included teaching points for each day in the unit. Some of the units included a sample teaching script, too. Natalie found these very useful as a beginning teacher. When she began writing lessons on her own, she maintained the key features embedded in these tools. She explained, "I used the New York Reading and Writing Project model of the mini-lesson, and then I wrote my own teaching points."

LIMITED CURRICULUM, LIMITED INSTRUCTION: ABBY WORKS WITH WHAT SHE CAN FIND

As discussed in Chapter Five, Abby had almost no support for writing instruction. Like the other four case teachers in this predicament, her tools for teaching writing came from previous experience and from the materials to which she had access. During her first year, she used the following resources: 1) sample assignments from the sixth grade language arts team, 2) graphic organizers and worksheets from Four Square writing, a method she was introduced to in her field placement, 3) *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6* (Clark, 2004), a book purchased at a teacher store, and 4) a Step Up to

Writing binder from a professional development seminar that she had not attended. Each of these resources provided a similar framework for thinking about writing, which mirrored Abby's conceptual framework: Students were coached to write in response to a prompt, primarily through prewriting activities and graphic organizers that indicated content specifications at the paragraph and sentence level.

For example, the lessons I observed in the fall focused on an "I am thankful for" essay. On the first day, Abby led the students in filling out a brainstorming sheet. Then students were to pick three things (or categories) that they were thankful for and transfer them to a Four Square graphic organizer. Abby chose "family, friends, and material items" as her three ideas. Figure 28 shows the overhead transparencies from this lesson; student worksheets matched these overheads.

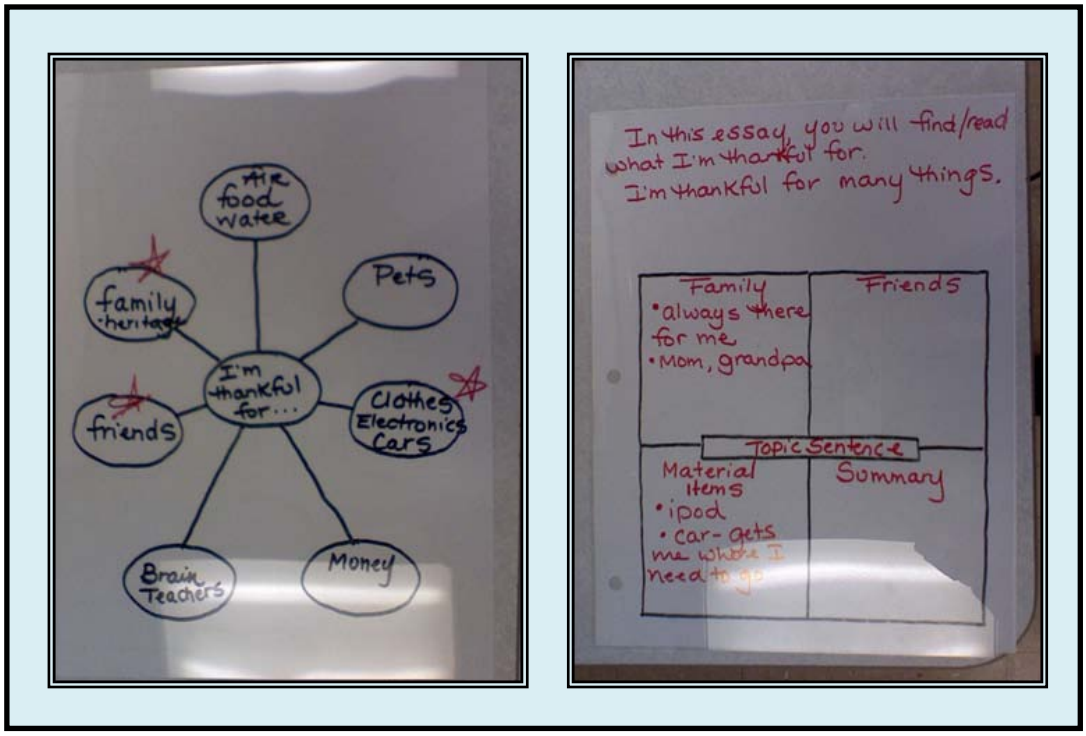


Figure 28. Day one: Brainstorming web created by Abby and Four Square graphic organizer.

On the second day, Abby displayed a Four Square worksheet on the overhead that required students to "Circle the two reasons that make the best argument for the sentence. Remember to avoid opinions!" Here is an example of one of one of the questions:

3. Pizza is the best food:
    a. It rules.
    b. It's inexpensive.
    c. It tastes the best.
    d. It has all food groups

Her purpose for the activity was to help students think about more and less compelling reasons one might provide in an essay. However, she did not model how this might look in an essay about being thankful, and the worksheet seemed to lead students to believe that they should focus on facts. Many of the students' essays reflected the "no opinion" idea in their thankfulness essays. As a result, they sounded rather disengaged. For example, one student wrote:

> The last thing I am thankful for is plants. Since I am a vegetarian, I need them to live. They help the environment. Plants also produce oxygen to breathe.

And another wrote:

> Material items are very important things to be thankful for. I am thankful for my home because it is good shelter and has lots of storage and what would [I] live in without a house. A car is good for traveling. Books are good for education. That's what I'm thankful for.

The second day's lesson continued with the introduction of the Four Square drafting template pictured below. Here, again, Abby focused students' attention on the form—one idea from each of the four-square boxes was to be transferred into paragraphs two through five. She reviewed the sample introductory sentences on the Four Square overhead (from day one) and provided suggestions for the remaining sentences of the introductory paragraph. Abby told the students to add "juicy details," but she did not explain or model what she meant by that. Perhaps she was looking for idea development. If she were, she did not seem to be clear on exactly what this might look like or how she might support it. The broad nature of the categories she modeled (e.g., family, material items, friends) would likely lead students to write a series of loosely connected sentences about each item or person. And, while the worksheet

activity highlighted specificity, it did not show students how to develop an idea that would be compelling or interesting to read.

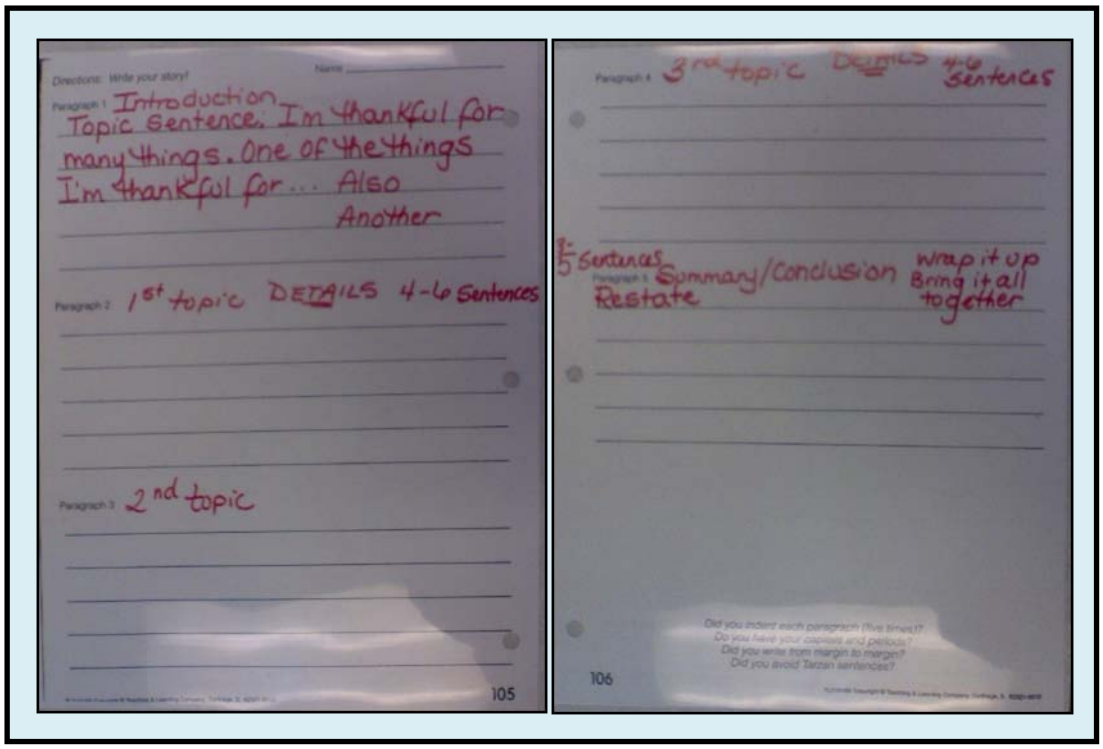


Figure 29. Graphic organizer for five-paragraph essay.

Students worked on their drafts during class and finished the assignment for homework. On the third day, the students exchanged papers and filled out a peer review sheet. This sheet asked students to make sure that the paper had the required components and to edit for conventions. At the end of the review sheet, they were asked to make two positive comments and two suggestions, but there were no guidelines for these.

The winter observation cycle followed a similar lesson sequence, but this time Abby used a prompt and graphic organizer from Step Up to Writing. I asked Abby to explain how much she followed the Step Up to Writing curriculum for this lesson. She replied:

> Abby: Almost exactly, even the topic. I thought, "This is perfect!"
>
> Interviewer: So that was a useful resource for you, then?

> Abby: It was, very definitely. It looks like it came from—it's actually PowerPoint slides that were in the binder, left for me by the other teacher, along with a roomful of junk. But he left [this] as well. It was helpful. It looked like maybe it was a Step Up To Writing training or something, you know, how you can print out the PowerPoint slides? So that's actually what I've been doing.

The assignment required students to write one paragraph about their two favorite movies. Students spent three days brainstorming and organizing ideas for a paragraph. Abby's primary goals were to have students: 1) follow the prompt, 2) fill out the graphic organizers properly, and 3) write an introductory sentence, supporting sentences of a specific kind and number, and a conclusion. Figure 30 shows the materials Abby used.

The curricular materials used for all of these lessons provide very little support in terms of content knowledge or pedagogical tools. The importance of planning and organization are highlighted in these documents. But they do not provide support for understanding or teaching the qualities of a strong essay. Abby did not teach much writing during her first year, but she reported that her teaching looked like the lessons described here.

For the last observation cycle, Abby used a different resource for her unit on persuasive business letters: *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6,* published by Teacher Created Resources (Clark, 2004). In many ways, this resource is similar to those Abby had used before. There are worksheets that do not represent strong pedagogy for teaching writing, and there are plenty of graphic organizers that do not provide scaffolding for anything besides basic organization. For example, the graphic organizer for a persuasive business letter is simply paper with lines in the shape of a letter (e.g., lines for the salutation, address, signature, and paragraphs); there is nothing to help students think about framing or organizing their arguments. The approach to genre is formulaic, with a heavy focus on conventions (in this case, the parts of a business letter). However, there are a few differences that provide a bit more support for writing knowledge for teaching and pedagogical tools, and this translated directly to Abby's teaching.

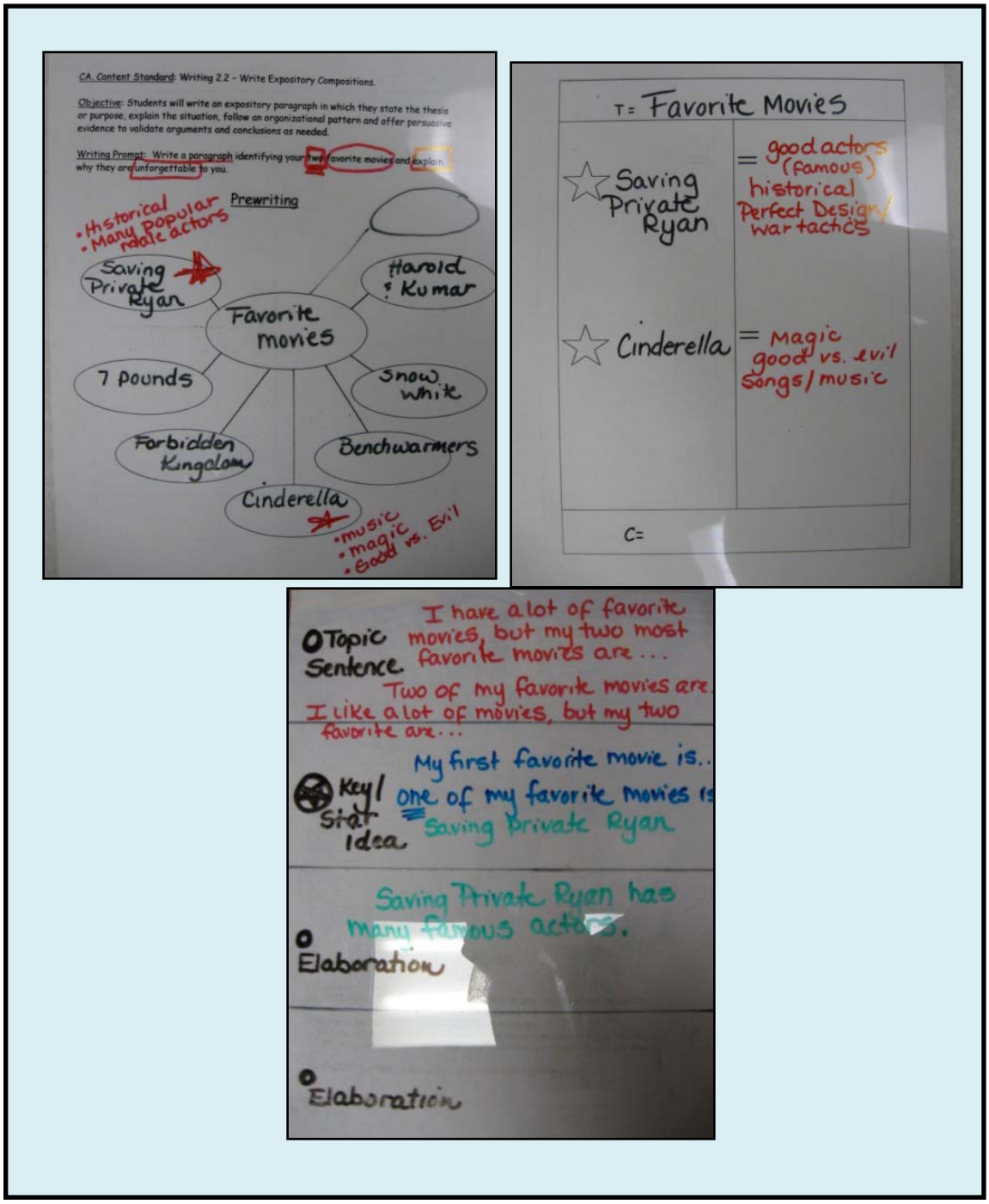


Figure 30. Materials used for Abby's "favorite movies" paragraph lessons based on the Step Up to Writing binder.

Until the spring, Abby had never used model texts as part of her teaching. When she saw the idea in *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6* (Clark, 2004) as part of a unit on persuasive business letters, she decided to use the sample letters they provided as part of her lesson. "I probably wouldn't have necessarily thought to go find examples of

business letters and print them out," she explained. This resource also provided genre definitions, though they were thin. Abby appreciated the information and said it helped her understand what she should teach:

> Abby: Especially, I think for me, as a first year teacher, the idea of, "Really? I've got to do this? I've never thought of that."
>
> Interviewer: In terms of what you would teach—so there was also content in those books?
>
> Abby: Right. . . . And the idea of a certain structure of the different writing. To me, I would just start writing, because I've learned it, it's ingrained. To actually have to go back and step down to a level where it's like, "Okay, maybe they don't realize the structure of a persuasive or a narrative piece."

It seemed, though, that Abby herself struggled to understand the characteristics of different genres. In her preservice focus group interview, she explained that this was something she had to research on her own, and she lamented that genre was not included in their methods course:

> I think that even just the format . . . I had to go into teaching persuasive writing. I had to go look it up on the Internet to find out, oh, okay so I need a counter argument. I think more specific formats, so "okay, expository text, this is how we do it." You need that for the older students. I feel like the writing process is just so involved that this [course] was kind-of skimming over the— And we didn't have any English [methods] courses. This [course] just kind-of took the place of all of it . . . English was all kind-of shoved in with [the] reading [course].

The genre information in *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6* (Clark, 2004), though limited, helped Abby to include features of writing content in addition to the prewriting, organization, and details that she had been teaching all year. In the persuasive business letter unit, Abby discussed audience and purpose for the first time that year, concepts that were highlighted in the curriculum. She tied purpose to word choice and voice, which was also noted in the curriculum as "The writer should maintain a professional-feeling tone throughout the piece and should not come across as attacking or forcing the reader." While the idea for the teaching came from the curriculum, the teaching moves

were Abby's innovations. For instance, she provided examples and non-examples of appropriate wording. She also helped students think about how to "spin their complaint into a request," explaining to students that this angle would be more likely to get a positive response. Unfortunately, her appropriation of the ideas of audience, purpose, voice, and word choice as part of the content of writing did not fully extend to her pedagogical decisions; students wrote letters to real businesses based on real concerns, but the students created fictitious manager names and addresses, and the letters were never sent.

Abby's need for content knowledge and tools for teaching was common in the study. As I discussed in Chapter Five, even graduates from Southern University had difficulty with the content and pedagogy of writing instruction as it related to their new grade. Without a strong conceptual framework, graduates from Northern University were in even greater need of support. Abby's only support was through curriculum, and the quality of the curriculum mediated how well she was able to teach. Her case demonstrates how curricular supports such as prompts, graphic organizers, and outlines are not adequate scaffolds, leaving too much of the content and pedagogy unexplained. Her case also shows how teachers may appropriate the tools in the curriculum regardless of quality, particularly if they do not have a conceptual framework for evaluating such curricula. Finally, we see in Abby's teaching that curricular materials can expand teachers' pedagogical repertoires and content knowledge.

STILL SEARCHING: THE CASE OF MARI

Recall that Mari learned to teach writing in a fourth grade classroom. Her conceptual framework for teaching writing included a writing workshop approach, which she planned to take into her job in second grade. Mari had not been prepared to use the pedagogical tools of the workshop with second graders, and she did not have the content knowledge for teaching she needed. She hoped that the support at the school would help her use and expand the tools she had appropriated during the preservice year.

As it turned out, Mari did not have support for writing instruction at the school or district level. Most of her grade-level team did not teach using a writing workshop approach. Her one planning partner for writing, a second-year teacher, was also a novice. Together they planned their writing units. Judging from Mari's lack of clarity, though, their planning was not well-articulated. Mari searched for support for what and how to teach throughout her first year, but she never found a resource that provided the comprehensive support she needed. In the winter, she expressed her need for a curriculum with a clear scope and sequence:

> Not that I want it to be so scripted, but just kind of give you an idea of where you're headed. I don't know if it's that I don't have the right books yet, that I haven't come across the right books that are going to help me get there. Or if I haven't found the perfect website—I don't know. I'm still looking. Still looking.

Indeed, Mari did a fair amount of looking. Next, I describe the main resources that mediated Mari's teaching during the first year. Unfortunately, none of these tools both aligned with her conceptual framework for teaching and provided adequate support.

Mari began the year planning with her BTSA mentor's old plan book. Sheryl, the BTSA mentor, had been a second grade writing workshop teacher for many years. At the beginning of the year, Mari's lessons focused on setting up rituals and routines for writing workshop and on helping students gather ideas for writing in a notebook. Her BTSA mentor's plan book helped her think about what lessons she would need to teach to get the workshop started, such as establishing norms and getting students excited about writing. But soon Mari needed to delve into content-focused lessons, and here she found that her mentor's plan book did not provide enough support. In the winter, she said:

> I'm really using my support provider's planning guide as sort of a guide on where to go, but it's not enough detail. I look at her guide, and it says just a brief little, "Doing this today." I have to go—I'm researching it to the hilt, because I'm not exactly sure what that means. . . . Like, "What did you do?" More than just "table of contents, we talked about table of contents today." So you talked about the table of contents… what did

> they write when they went back to their desk for forty minutes? What were they writing about? The table of contents? I don't know. So I see the mini-lesson, but where's the writing piece? That's what's missing. I don't want to just put a prompt up on the board, although I guess I could.

We can see here that Mari has a framework for how each writing day should proceed. Each day's workshop would include a lesson, followed by time for students to work independently on their ongoing writing work. When she looked for evidence of the ongoing work, however, she could not find any clues in the plan book. Moreover, she couldn't always see the link, or the ongoing work, from one lesson topic to the next. By spring, Mari had given up on using the plan book altogether. When I asked if it was supporting her planning, she said:

> Not so much, because at the beginning I tried to figure out what she was doing, but I think her lesson planning… She knew what she needed to do, but it was kind of cryptic to me, so it was really hard to follow the path. Like, she might write something and then I couldn't—I would lose it. I would look, and days later, what happened? Where did it go? How many days did you spend doing that? It seemed like it was too many days.

Mari also mined her methods course materials for ideas. The course provided examples of a few charts and lesson ideas, but there was very little in her class notes that could help Mari develop her writing content. Candidates were taught basic unit design, but Mari never mentioned this in interviews. They were also given unit plans written by experienced teachers, but these were only sketches like those in Sheryl's plan book, undecipherable to the novice.

She consulted her course textbook, *Literacy in the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach* (Tompkins, 2001), for ideas; she said she found the book to be very helpful, but in her interviews she could not recall how the book had been helpful. None of the lessons I observed came directly from that source. Mari also consulted two books that she was required to buy for the methods course, Fletcher and Portalupi's *Craft Lessons* (1998) and *Nonfiction Craft Lessons* (2001), to help her plan. Cindy had required the candidates to buy the books in hopes that they would use them to instantiate tools from

the methods course in their first jobs. For Mari, though, the books did not provide the kind of support for unit design that she needed.

> I could never make those [*Craft Lessons* and *Nonfiction Craft Lessons*] work for me. I was really confused, it just left out such big parts. . . . . It would give you some ideas about—I don't know, maybe a mini-lesson? It never really fully fleshed out—what were the students supposed to be writing? . . . It wasn't the whole picture. It felt like big chunks were left out. And for someone like me that needed the *whole* picture, it was very confusing. I wanted to use it, and Cindy was like, "This is the book you're going to use, this is going to be your bible." I'm like, "Okay, great!" I'd pull it out and I'd pour through that book, I'd look at every single unit, or every single lesson… I was like, "How do I use it? How do I use this? I don't know how to make this work!"

Despite her dedication to the methods course and willingness to go back and revisit her notes, the materials did not provide enough support for Mari to develop a writing curriculum.

Mari also looked online for teaching ideas. Her favorite site, "Mrs. Meacham's Classroom Snapshots" (http://www.jmeacham.com/), was a main resource for teaching ideas across the curriculum. In her winter interview, Mari raved:

> Oh my gosh, I don't even know who she is but I'll thank her forever. . . . She's awesome; she has everything up there. Pictures of her lesson plans, she's got ideas and… yeah, it's kind of fun. . . . I really like seeing what other teachers have done and how they do it."

Most of the ideas she got from this website she had filed away for later. So, although Mari valued the website, it did not provide an immediate support for her writing instruction. She explained, "Gosh, there's just not enough time in the day, is there? I wish I could do it all *right now*, but I know—it's a process of building what you're doing over time."

During Mari's first year, her school was implementing an approach for supporting English learners called *Systematic English Language Development* (Dutro & Moran, 2003). The program was to be used when the students were regrouped for daily English language development time and throughout the day. She learned how to use the pedagogical tools through a series of brief trainings during staff meetings; she also

received a binder. Mari used one of these pedagogical tools, which I call "fill-in-the-blank-paragraph," quite extensively, including during the writing workshop. This pedagogical tool was designed to help English learners produce extended, organized text through the use of paragraph frames.

In this type of lesson, the teacher determines the topic and provides a fill-in-the-blank paragraph for the students on a chart. Sometimes word lists are provided to help students with language to fill in the blanks. The teacher then models how to think through each sentence and fill it in with the appropriate information or opinion. Often the students are invited to help the teacher think about how to fill in each sentence. Then students go to their seats and complete the same task, sometimes with the same topic (e.g., Egypt) and sometimes with slight variations (e.g., responses to different books). The photographs below show artifacts from some of Mari's fill-in-the-blank lessons.

Mari used this tool to teach response to literature and response to nonfiction. She also used it for a number of prompted writing activities. Mari acknowledged that the sentence frames could be limiting, but she did not see them that way. She felt they were a powerful tool for English learners because they provided a lot of language support. And even her competent writers who were unsure, she said, could just copy the sentences and fill them in. She encouraged students who were confident to write their own sentences, and she believed this provided differentiation. However, she never taught lessons on how they might vary the frame (e.g., writing engaging leads and closing sentences, changing the content). Moreover, many of the aspects of writing that Mari had aspired to teach were missing from these lessons, largely because the frame did not allow for much decision-making or variation: students were not engaged in the process of planning, organizing, or originally articulating ideas; they were not learning about writing craft; they were not learning about attributes of a genre; they were not asking themselves "What do real writers do?" Within these frames, though, there was space for the students to express their opinions or share something about themselves,

which Mari valued. Mari did not seem to notice the contradictions between her conceptual framework and the fill-in-the-blank tool.

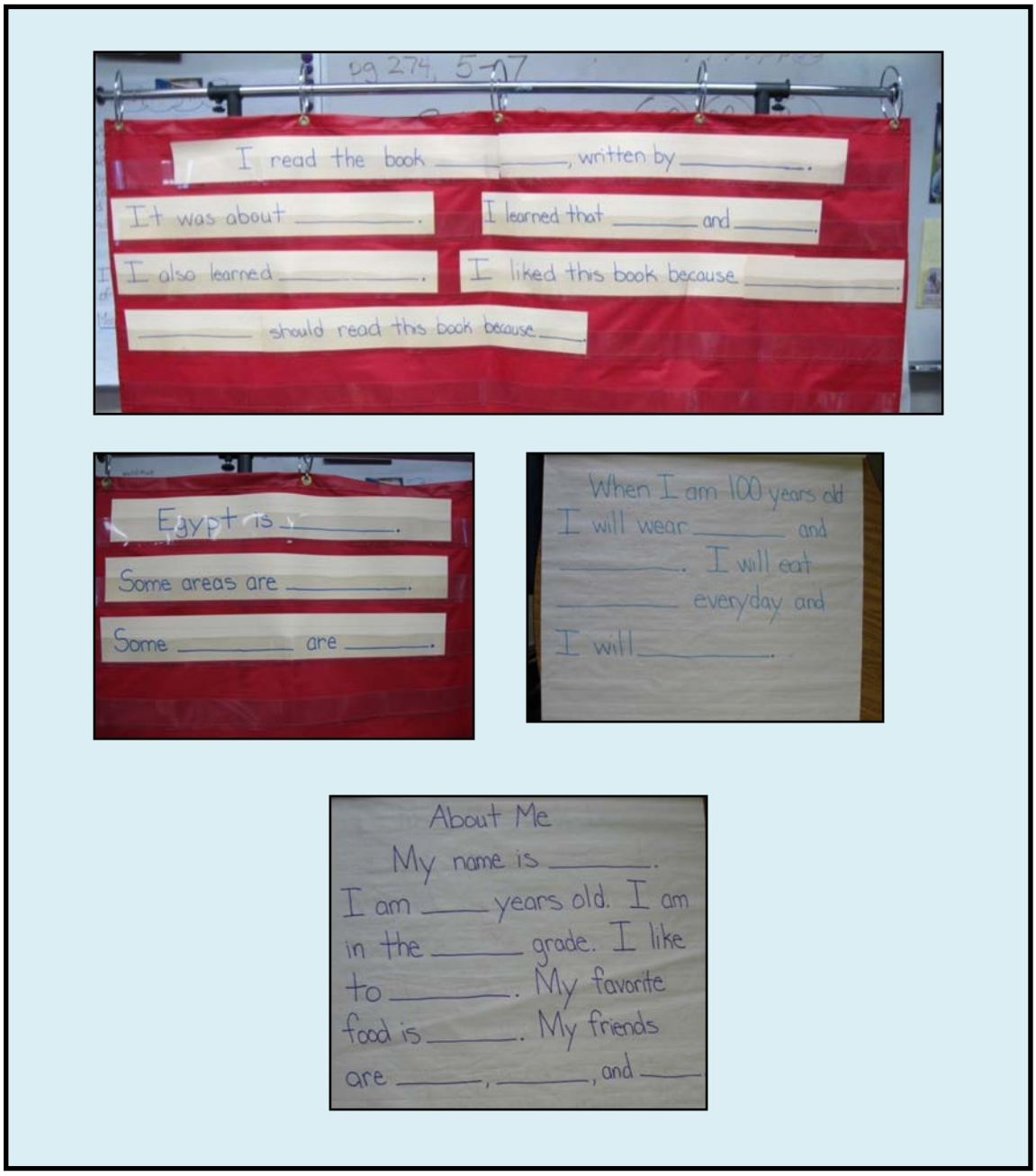


Figure 31. Fill-in-the-blank lesson artifacts.

It wasn't until the spring that Mari realized there were ideas for writing workshop in the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) teacher's manual. She had been

using the manual for her reading instruction, but writing workshop plans had gone unnoticed. The workshop lessons are not included in the five-day lesson plan outline, suggesting that perhaps these are an optional curricular piece as opposed the core curriculum. The five-day plan for what appears to the core curriculum did not align with Mari's conceptual framework for teaching writing. The lessons focused heavily on grammar, and writing lessons relied on assigning prompts. In addition, the curriculum was not organized into units of study that would work well in a writing workshop approach.

After nearly a year of searching for some guidance with her writing instruction, Mari was thrilled with the mini-units included in her teacher's manual. There are eight lessons in each unit, which are organized by steps in the writing process: one day to look at a model text and "read as a writer," two days of prewriting lessons, two days of drafting lessons, one revision lesson (though the focus is sometimes on conventions), an editing lesson, and a publishing day. Mari seemed reticent to use the curriculum, having heard disparaging comments about such curriculum from her methods course instructor and her colleagues. But she was pleasantly surprised with what she found:

> I was looking through this the other night, just getting my lesson plans together, and I saw that they have these reading/writing workshop ideas. I thought, oh… I tried to wing it, teaching them how to write instructions one time. I mean, I knew that I wanted them to—they needed to learn how to write instructions, but we just did something really quickly, and it didn't really go anywhere. It wasn't as good as I wanted it to be. So I wanted to do it again, and I found this, and this is really, actually pretty complete. . . . I need to use this more. I tend to not lean on this because I want to get ideas from other places. People talk so badly about this, but I think even just getting the ideas is okay. Even if I go in a different direction, or I don't do everything, it's a good place to start. It's just another resource. . . . The nice thing about this is it kind of tends to follow the standards, so I feel better about touching on the standards if I'm kind of getting some direction from this. And that's what I'm hoping to include next year, when I do my whole year planner, to make sure that I'm touching. That's the one thing I guess I'm worried about, is making sure I'm touching each of the standards.

Unlike the regular Houghton Mifflin lesson suggestions, the Reading-Writing Workshop section aligned more closely with Mari's conceptual framework. For

example, the teaching points (copied onto Mari's instructional chart, below) fall under two of the broad categories of writing content that Mari articulated throughout her first year. First, the lesson provided an age-appropriate guideline for thinking about "what writers do" when they choose a topic for a procedural essay: They write about something they know how to do and can explain. Second, the list indicates some features of procedural text (e.g., an introductory sentence, steps in order using order words, and a closing). Finally, it hints at some crafting techniques that a writer could use to engage the reader in the introduction and the conclusion, though the manual does not provide much information about how a writer might do this. A limitation of the curriculum is that it skims the surface of genre attributes, writing process, and craft without providing in-depth textual examples, explanations for teachers, or lessons.

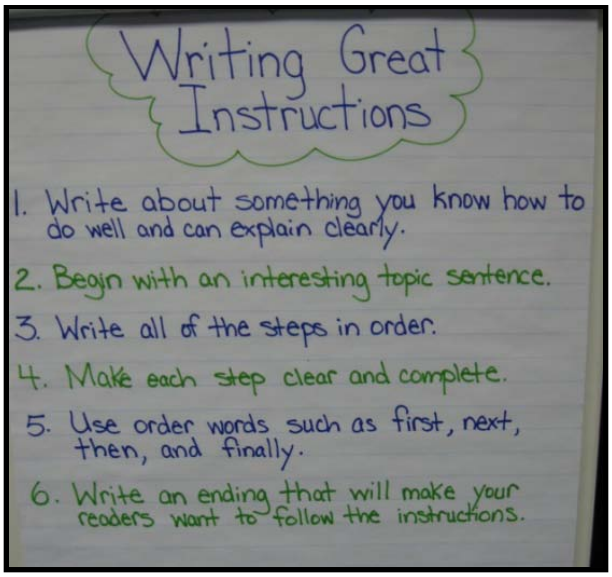
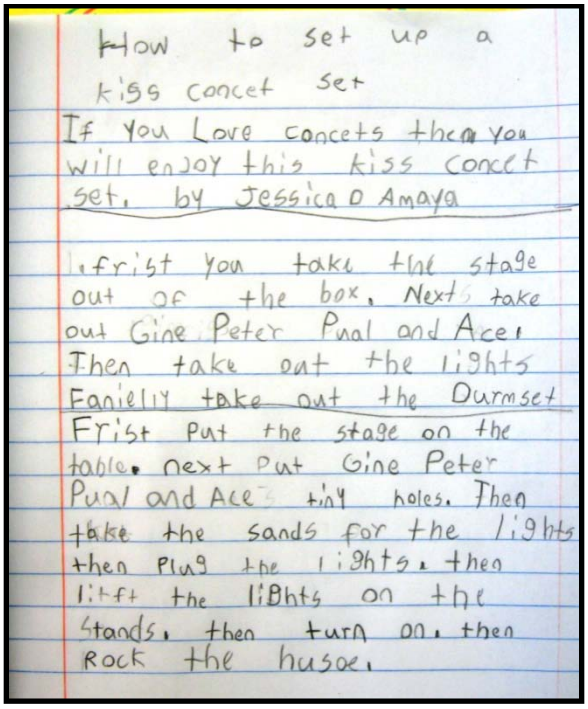


Figure 32. Writing Great Instructions chart

In the lesson I observed, Mari did not follow the recommended lesson sequence in the manual. She used the information about writing procedural text to help her decide what she should emphasize (see above). In her lesson, she read aloud the provided student example on how to snorkel. This model proved difficult for students to follow, since there were not many helpful photographs and most students had not heard of snorkeling before. She also wrote an example on gardening in her writing notebook, which she shared. For both examples, she went over the items on the "Writing Great

Instructions" list to confirm with students that each example fit the criteria for great instructions. In the manual, some of the points on the "Writing Great Instructions" chart are broken down into lessons on subsequent days, the first being a lesson on choosing a topic. However, Mari decided not to follow this suggestion. Instead, students began writing their drafts right away.

This lesson outlined a lot of expectations with very little instruction on how students might include the genre attributes in their writing. However, some students seemed to already have some knowledge of procedural writing and were able to meet Mari's expectations. The text "How to Set up a Kiss Concert Set" exemplifies some of the most advanced work in the class.


How to set up a
kiss concet set
If you Love concets then you
will enJoy this kiss concet
set. by Jessica o Amaya

1.frist you take the stage
out of the box. Next take
out Gine Peter Pual and Ace.
Then take out the lights
Fanielly take out the Durmset
Frist Put the stage on the
table. next Put Gine Peter
Pual and Ace tiny holes. Then
take the sands for the lights
then Plug the lights. then
litft the liBhts on the
Stands. then turn on. then
Rock the husoe.

Figure 33. Student work sample entitled "How to Set up a Kiss Concert Set"

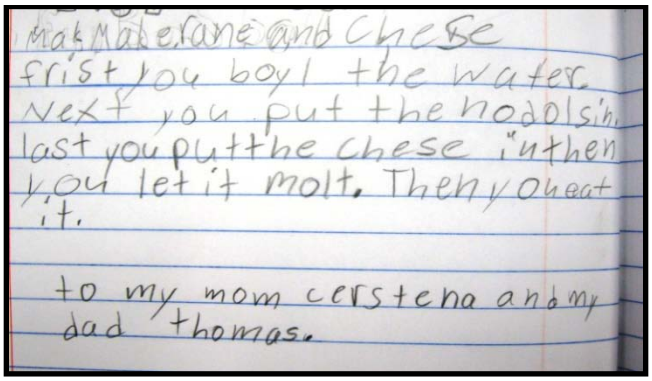


Figure 34.Student work sample entitled “Making Macaroni and Cheese.”

Most students were not able to include all the components that Mari touched on in this lesson, and they would have benefitted from structured opportunities to work on each of the objectives over several days. “Making Macaroni and Cheese” is an example of student work that represents partial understanding of the task. Mari noticed this, and in her follow-up interview suggested that in the future she might use more of the lessons in the manual:

> Mari: So, they probably could use more time to draft it and pre-write. I mean, this—actually [in the manual] there’s the whole pre-writing thing, choosing a topic, organizing and planning what I need… This is actually very, very detailed.
>
> Interviewer: Are each of those supposed to be a different day?
>
> Mari: Yeah. Drafting, proofreading, and publishing.
>
> Interviewer: Do you think you’ll do any of that?
>
> Mari: You know, if we keep going with this, which I want to, because I think they’re doing—I think it’s neat… This is nice. And it could come out this good [points to student model, “How to Snorkel”]. So we would have to keep going, and obviously we didn’t do this part, but we could go on to the proofreading part, and the revising.

Though Mari was just becoming familiar with the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) materials, we can see that it helped her delineate what she should teach (e.g., the “Writing Great Instructions” chart) and encouraged her to break down her teaching into

more manageable pieces. The curriculum provided some much-needed support for Mari but, unfortunately, there are only eight suggested workshop lessons for each four-week unit.

Throughout the year, Mari expressed frustration with not knowing where she was headed in writing. She often found herself coming up with the content of lessons on her own, trying to draw conclusions from vague standards and plan books. She described her curriculum throughout the first year as scattered:

> Mari: We're bouncing all around, I'm not really landing anyplace.
>
> Interviewer: But you mentioned that you've been looking at [the standards] all along.
>
> Mari: Yeah, but even still, it's like, "Is that—did I do it? Is that it?" . . . "Did they get it? Is that enough? Do I want to go back to it? How much did they need?" . . . . I'm really bouncing all around a lot with writing. So we'll finish this [procedural piece], then we do need to get back to poetry, and we do need to finish our "I am" poem, because I want to put those up for Open House.

Despite working in a school district with a history of supporting writing workshop and having a mentor who was expert in writing workshop at her grade level, Mari was not able to access the accumulated knowledge of her mentor, school, or district. The Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) curriculum offered helpful, though limited, support; given her struggles with content, it's unlikely that she would be able to expand the two-week units into longer units. At the end of her first year, Mari was still lost as to how she should organize her content for writing instruction. She was moving down to first grade in the coming year and was optimistic that working with this team would provide the support she lacked in her first year:

> I'm really excited about it. And the first grade team, they do writer's workshop, they do reader's workshop, they do GLAD, they do systematic ELD. All the new things that are coming in, that we've been trained on recently - they are so enthusiastic. They are jumping on it. . . . I'm really thrilled that they sit down and they plan out their writer's workshop, and we talk about the strategies, the mini-lessons, what

> they're going to learn, what they're going to do. . . . I won't feel like I'm just trying to reinvent the wheel.

CONCLUSION

In this section, I have highlighted the conceptual and pedagogical tools embedded in the curricular artifacts of three teachers, and I have shown how these curricula mediated teachers' practices. The case of Carol shows how alignment between preservice training, school and district expectations, the grade-level team, and curriculum supported Carol's instruction. For Carol, curriculum played a vital role in providing writing knowledge for teaching and helping her translate her fourth-grade tools for writing to a new grade. Without adequate support, Abby and Mari struggled to learn to teach writing. The curricula to which they had access were their primary opportunities for learning. The cases illuminate the need for support while showing the power of curricular materials alone to mediate teacher practices.

Curricular artifacts are one tool used by policy makers, administrators, teacher educators, and school faculties to promote coherence (e.g., across a school, district, or state's classrooms; between the university and the its graduates' classrooms). If curriculum is to serve as a support for teachers as well as a means for creating coherence, understanding the utility of various curricular resources might help us improve such artifacts and choose them wisely. In the next section, I discuss curricular resources available to the teachers in my study and explore their affordances and limitations for teacher learning.

CURRICULAR RESOURCES: AFFORDANCES AND CHALLENGES

State policy-makers, district personnel, school administrators, and teacher educators all have a stake in the content and pedagogy of writing instruction in schools. Curricular tools, such as state standards, state curricula, and district assessments are designed to create some coherence in writing instruction across the grade, school, district, or state level. Teacher educators also strive for coherence, but their goal is typically to create continuity between the preservice work and graduates' practice,

thereby transforming teaching toward reform-oriented approaches over time. Here I discuss curricular resources of two types: 1) those that are created to guide the content of instruction and 2) those that provide some level of support in lesson and unit planning. I discuss these two types of resources in terms of their affordances for teacher learning and the support they may require if they are to support coherence.

STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS: THE PROBLEM OF MULTIPLE INTERPRETATIONS

Standards and district-wide assessments, which delineate what should be taught at each grade level, were used by all the teachers in the study. For example, when Natalie and her teaching partner decided that she would teach "extra" genres, she based her choices on the reading genres required for third grade as outlined by the state standards. The standards are brief, though, and novices and experts alike are often left wondering, as Mari did: "Did I do it? Is that it? Did they get it? Is that enough?" Consider the second grade standards for writing (Figure 35), which were to guide Mari's instruction.

There is not much information here about how second graders should be using the writing process and very little information about what constitutes a strong narrative at this level. We learn almost nothing about the expectations for a friendly letter, except that students should include the proper format and consider their audience and purpose. This example illustrates how "standards based" instruction, at least in writing, could mean very different things to different people.

For the most part, district expectations for what to teach were aligned with the standards, though there were additional requirements in some districts. All the districts in the study administered writing assessments, and all teachers in the study geared their instruction toward these assessments—at least in the weeks leading up to their administration. Rubrics for these assessments were provided, and teachers' views and use of them were mixed. For example, each quarter I observed Beth in the weeks preceding a district writing assessment. After observing over six hours of instruction in preparation for a writing assessment, I asked about the criteria on which they would be

scored. Beth wasn't able to tell me, as she had planned her lessons based on the prompt but not on the rubric. During interviews later in the year, however, she had a better sense of what was expected of students—particularly what aspects of the writing would help them score a "four." Sheri's attention to the district writing assessment was similar. In the spring, she focused her instruction on writing more than one sentence, which was the criterion for scoring a four on the district's kindergarten rubric. She explained:

> Part of our writing assessment, in order to get them to score a four on the rubric, they need to write more than one sentence, and everybody wrote one sentence or less. So now that we just finished conferences, we're starting the third trimester, I want to make sure that everyone is going to master all the standards.

WRITING

1.0 Writing Strategies Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

1.1 Group related ideas and maintain a consistent focus.

Penmanship

1.2 Create readable documents with legible handwriting.

Research

1.3 Understand the purposes of various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, atlas).

Evaluation and Revision

1.3 Revise original drafts to improve sequence and provide more descriptive detail.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0. Using the writing strategies of grade two outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences:

a. Move through a logical sequence of events.

b. Describe the setting, characters, objects, and events in detail.

2.2 Write a friendly letter complete with the date, salutation, body, closing, and signature.

Figure 35. Second grade writing standards, in full, from English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (California Department of Education, 1998. p. 13.)

Other teachers were frustrated by a lack of clarity regarding assessment expectations, even when a rubric was provided. For example, depending on the

assessment, Eva's students were held to expectations from three different rubrics. She found these rubrics cryptic as well as cumbersome:

> Actually it's hard, because fourth grade has the California writing test, so we have that rubric, but we also have this new program, . . . which tests on Open Court at the end of every unit, and that has a different rubric. Then there's also the district writing test that they do K through seven, except for fourth grade, and that rubric too. I kind of tried to look at all three of them, and tried to make my own off of that. I'll give them a one-through-four on punctuation, a one-through-four on grammar. . . . It's hard to figure out because the state, and the unit test, and the district, all the rubrics are different. . . . and the students are understanding the rubrics differently. One's a lot of words, one's more circling a point scale. The new district one we just implemented this year is really, really time-consuming for teachers. There's so many boxes to read. "Students have to do this and this to get a two, the student has to do this and this to get a three." We haven't been trained on how to do it yet, so we're kind of doing it "fly by the seat of our pants." So I'm trying to incorporate the new rubric, but it's really hard because I don't necessarily understand it fully, yet.

After considerable effort during the fall to use district and state rubrics to inform instruction, Eva abandoned rubric use altogether because it was too confusing for her. Kendra and Mari's district was also struggling to establish useful rubrics that captured expectations for students at each grade level and for each genre that was assessed. Kendra explained:

> The district assessments are a joke. Just how they have them graded. [The assessments themselves are] good, and you can see, "Well, obviously the kids are understanding this, or they're not." But how they're graded is silly. . . . [The rubric] works well for the personal narrative, but the other ones, not really.

Kendra's third graders were assessed in personal narrative, response to literature, and friendly letters. As Kendra explains above, much of the rubric pertained to personal narrative and did not apply to other genres. Abby's frustrations with the assessments were in regard to district follow-up. She administered an assessment in the fall, but she

never received her students' scores and often wondered how her students compared with others at their grade-level. According to Abby, the spring district assessment was not administered, and no explanation for the decision was provided.

In summary, California standards served as a vague reference point for teachers in the study. District assessments did not provide much guidance, either; teachers knew which genre to teach and some were able to glean some teaching points from the rubrics. Therefore, while standards and assessments may have provided a small measure of continuity across grade-levels and schools, many teachers did not have the knowledge or support to translate the standards or assessments into implications for classroom teaching. For most of their planning, teachers relied on other curricular materials, such as the state-adopted language arts curricula, alternative curricula provided by the schools, additional resources from preservice education, the internet, teacher stores, and the like. I now turn to a discussion of these curricular resources and what they afforded for teacher learning.

CURRICULAR RESOURCES FOR PLANNING AND TEACHING

In providing curricular resources for teachers, schools differed in their missions. All aimed to provide support for planning, instruction, and assessment, but they varied in the degree to which they aimed for coherence. Natalie and Carol's schools had strong institutional identities as writing workshop schools, and there were clear expectations that teachers would use workshop curricula in lieu of the state-adopted program. The other schools in the study were very flexible in their expectations for writing instruction, with several schools providing optional curricular materials to supplement the state-adopted programs.

Although there were some common core curricula across teachers, each teacher in the study had a different set of curricular tools at her disposal. Teachers also drew upon resources from the preservice methods course, especially graduates of Southern University. Some brought resources from their student teaching placement, too. Abby and Eva bought their own resources from a teacher supply store. Each of these resources afforded different opportunities for learning to teach writing. In this section, I

discuss these resources along two dimensions: adaptability and transparency. I describe the affordances and limitations of curricular materials that were more or less flexible in terms of 1) their application to a number of teaching contexts and curricular objectives and 2) their organization either as free-standing lessons (i.e., highly adaptable) or as lessons embedded in units in which each lesson is contingent upon previous lessons (i.e., less adaptable). I then turn to a discussion of aspects of practice that are articulated in the artifacts and the degree to which these aspects are explained, making them understandable, (i.e. transparent), to the novice teacher. I examine what is highlighted, and therefore what can be learned, as well as what is absent. The section concludes with a discussion of three curricular resources and what they afford new teachers in learning to teach writing.

Affordances and Limitations of Adaptable Resources for New Teachers

One of the central dimensions on which curricular resources differed was the degree to which they were adaptable. There were two main ways in which resources were more or less adaptable. The first was the applicability of the materials for a variety of contexts. Some materials were geared toward a specific lesson objective for a specific grade and were in the form of lesson plans. Others were much more general. Their structure was like a template, and they could be used for a variety of lesson objectives and a variety of grades. Of course, there was also overlap in which a general template for teaching was employed in a detailed lesson for a particular grade and teaching point. The second way in which the materials were flexible was the degree to which they were embedded in a unit. Some curricular materials were a collection of stand-alone lessons that were not organized in a scope and sequence; they were designed to be used flexibly as a "supplement" to a unit. Lessons in other resources were organized by units ranging from two to twenty lessons.

Teaching templates: A highly adaptable resource.

When teachers planned their own lessons, they often appropriated the more adaptable, template-like tools. These tools offered new teachers structure when planning on their own, but they did not afford them many opportunities to learn. For example, Abby used

the Step Up to Writing and Four Square graphic organizers as her primary tools for teaching writing. Eva used similar tools in planning her lessons. Embedded in these resources were pedagogical tools for teaching the writing process through modeling and graphic organizers. The tools aligned with these teachers' focus on the writing process and provided a predictable structure for teaching as well as a structure for students' prewriting and drafting. These tools highlighted the initial stages of the writing process—generating ideas, organizing ideas, and drafting. The materials provided less support for revision, however, and the step-by-step presentation of organizers may have helped to perpetuate these teachers' notions of the writing process as linear rather than recursive.

Mari, Kendra, and Sheri also appropriated tools that offered high adaptability but few opportunities to learn about writing instruction. They appropriated a fill-in-the-blank activity—Mari and Kendra from their Structured ELD support materials and Sheri from the state-adopted Houghton-Mifflin materials. This approach could be used for a number of genres and teaching objectives. Sheri used fill-in-the-blank sentences for lessons on describing words, action words, and concepts about print. Mari used fill-in-the-blank paragraphs for writing responses to literature, content-area writing, and creative writing. Kendra used this approach for response to literature only in an effort to help her students pass a district assessment that required a formulaic approach to the genre. This template for teaching was attractive to the teachers because it ensured that all students would be able to complete the writing assignment successfully, regardless of their levels of English language proficiency or orthographic knowledge. Success in these cases was measured by the students' production of a product closely matching the model. However, as discussed elsewhere, a fill-in-the-blank approach limited opportunities for teachers to learn about what their students could do. Moreover, it limited students' opportunities to experiment with conventions and craft and to engage authentically with an audience.

Several participants used the architecture of a minilesson (Calkins, 2001) to support their planning. As the term architecture suggests, it is merely a framework to

help teachers think through their planning. However, there are some conceptual and pedagogical tools embedded in this structure, which consists of four parts: connect, teach, active involvement, and link. In the "connect" portion of the lesson, teachers are to relate the day's instruction to the ongoing work in the classroom, which assumes that there is some ongoing study of writing. The second segment, "teach," underscores the importance of teaching in the subject of writing, which is not insignificant given the ubiquity of teachers' assigning of writing without teaching it. "Active involvement" reminds teachers that getting students involved in the lesson will help them engage and transfer the learning to their own work. Finally, the architecture prompts teachers to "link" the day's teaching point to students' ongoing work, reminding teachers that, in this model, students should be engaged in their own projects rather than responding to prompts. Carol, Natalie, Kendra, and Mari all used this template as the primary tool for structuring their lessons. The cues in the architecture support some aspects of teaching, but there is no support for what to teach and very little support for the method of teaching (e.g., modeling). As one might imagine, there was wide variation in the quality of minilessons that I observed, depending on the teachers' command of the subject matter and her ability to appropriately teach it to her students.

In summary, adaptable, template-like curricular tools were a useful but insufficient resource for new teachers. Sheri, Eva, and Abby used these tools almost exclusively. For Sheri, the template-like tools were easy to use and plan; though she had other resources, she did not use them. Eva and Abby, who were both in need of support, had very few opportunities for learning through their use of curricular resources. Unfortunately, these teachers' instruction did not provide many opportunities for their kindergarten, fourth-, and sixth-grade students to learn about writing. Kenrda, Carol, and Natalie all had more support, and they were able to use the adaptable, template-like tools in conjunction with other resources, such as curricular guides and the expertise of grade-level colleagues. As a complement to other resources, the template-like tools provided a helpful structure for planning and instruction.

Lesson plans

When designing their own lessons, teachers appropriated adaptable, template-like tools with ease and frequency. However, when looking for pre-planned lessons, teachers did not favor adaptability. In fact, curricular resources that were collections of stand-alone supplemental lessons were scarcely appropriated by teachers. This might come as a surprise to Sheri's principal, who prided herself on providing a variety of resources for writing instruction from which her teachers could pick and choose. Sheri had the state-adopted Houghton Mifflin text, a Step Up to Writing binder, and a Six Traits binder. Only the Houghton Mifflin provided a scope and sequence for lessons, and this is the only resource of the three that she used. The other resources would have required Sheri to sift through the many lesson ideas, determining what would be appropriate for her students and how the lesson could be integrated with and supported by other lessons. The prospect of this task was overwhelming for Sheri, who said of her Step Up to Writing binder, "I don't feel trained enough to bust it out." Though excited about her training in the 6 +1 Traits, those curricular materials also remained on the shelf throughout Sheri's first year:

Beth responded similarly to the 6 +1 Traits binder that she was given. She enjoyed the training, and she taught the one lesson that was demonstrated during the training. However, she didn't access the binder for more ideas. And recall Mari's frustration in attempting to use *Craft Lessons* and *Nonfiction Craft Lessons* (Fletcher & Portaluppi, 1998 & 2001); she could not fill in what should come before or after the suggested lessons. The only successful use of the stand-alone lesson collections was with the same *Craft Lessons* books. Before consulting these resources, both Kendra and Carol had a clear sense of what they were teaching and their unit design. They consulted the books to look for additional lesson ideas that would support their objectives. It seems that such resources might be helpful for new teachers who are highly supported and well-organized. But for teachers like the majority of those in this study, a lack of clear trajectory and coherence made the resources more cumbersome than helpful.

As the cases of Carol, Abby, and Mari illustrate, participants favored lesson plans that were situated within a unit. Carol found the *Units of Study for Primary*

Writing (Calkins et al., 2003) provided by her district to be extremely helpful in teaching her first several units of writing workshop. And recall Mari's enthusiasm for the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al. 2003) materials which, in the spring of her first year, provided the most comprehensive writing unit she had seen. Abby had a similar discovery in the spring when she bought a curricular mini-unit that focused on persuasive writing; it was the first time that year that she had a guide for successive lessons focusing on genre characteristics, and she found the lesson ideas very helpful. Overall, it seems that lesson plans that are part of a unit serve teachers better than stand-alone, supplemental plans.

FACE AND TRANSPARENCY IN CURRICULAR ARTIFACTS: HIGHLIGHTING CONCEPTUAL TOOLS, PEDAGOGICAL TOOLS, AND CONTENT

The lesson plans available to teachers differed widely in the level of explanation provided. Some resources were brief notes of only a few words, while others were as long as nine pages. Sparse lesson plans were difficult for teachers to follow, and in most cases were never appropriated. For example, during the preservice methods course, Cindy gave her students copies of unit plans from very experienced teachers. She thought that these resources represented some of the best thinking on unit planning for writing workshop, and she believed that these resources might help her students as they began teaching. However, like the Fletcher and Portaluppi (1998 & 2001) books she asked them to buy, the unit plans were not much use to novices. In fact, none of the participants even mentioned these plans as a resource. The case of Mari might help to explain why. The plans that Cindy provided were mere sketches with only a few words to note the day's teaching point. Like the mentor's plan book that Mari struggled to decipher, these unit sketches required inferences only an experienced teacher would be able to make.

In studies of teacher learning communities, Little (2001) has drawn attention to the ways in which teachers' representations of practice are partial. What is highlighted in these representations, the "face," has implications for teacher learning by drawing

teachers' attention to one aspect of practice but not others. In addition, the degree of transparency in the representations affects group members' access to the details of the teaching practice. In this chapter, I explore one type of representation: curricular artifacts. As in Little's study, the face and transparency of these representations supported or limited teachers' access to professional knowledge.

The amount of detail—and what that detail highlighted—varied considerably among resources. Curricular tools that were more usable for novices provided more faces of practice within the lessons and had a higher degree of transparency. For example, the elaborated lesson plans in Carol's *Units of Study for Primary Writing* (Calkins et al., 2003) were quite dense, ranging from six to nine pages each and including references to video on a separate CD. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the conceptual and pedagogical tools of workshop teaching are embedded in the Calkins materials. Lessons include detailed models of pedagogy for whole-class teaching and conferring accompanied by rationale. Each unit also includes a significant amount of content knowledge and what of this content students at the primary levels are likely ready to learn. Finally, it provides samples of children's work with commentary and a rubric for assessing students on the teaching points of the unit. These materials offer extensive opportunities to learn but require significant time of the teacher.

In contrast, Mari's Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) unit and Abby's Teacher Created Resources (Clark, 2004) unit provide succinct, one-page lesson plans. These abbreviated plans offer greater ease of use. In a pinch, a teacher could quickly read the lesson before class and, with only a few minutes of preparation, be ready to teach. For example, consider the pages from the Houghton Mifflin program in Figure 36. The user-friendly layout provides ready access to the main ideas in the lesson.

Figure 36. From Delights Teacher's Edition, California in Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy, Grade 2, Theme 6. Copyright © 2003 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

These plans have some of the same features as Carol's curriculum but in a condensed form. The shorted plans provide teachers with step-by-step guidance for how to teach each lesson (e.g. questions to ask, charts to use). Like Carol's curriculum, these materials offer a sample teaching script (though much more brief), a curricular feature that several participants found helpful. Both the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) and Teacher Created Resources (Clark, 2004) curricula also provide one or two samples of student work, though they serve a different purpose than those in the Calkins materials created by Calkins and colleagues (2003). Houghton Mifflin and Teacher Created Resources provide typed student work samples that are conventionally correct to use as models in the lessons. Finally, the Houghton Mifflin materials provide a rubric for assessing student writing based on the teaching points in the unit. As one might expect given the condensed nature of these lessons, they do not include rationale or provide suggestions for supporting individuals who may struggle with the teaching objectives.

The two teachers with the strongest teaching, Carol and Natalie, also had the most elaborated lesson plans with which to work. Of course, they were also in highly supportive environments. But both relied heavily on the units provided by their districts, at least in the beginning, and both found the materials very useful, often following the lessons closely. While Natalie's units from the New York Readers and Writers Project were more detailed than the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) or Teacher Created Resources (Clark, 2004) materials, each lesson was about one page. The common thread between Natalie's plans and Carol's plans was an elaborated teaching script and a faithful representation of the conceptual and pedagogical tools of workshop teaching through this script. This led me to wonder if there was something about the teaching scripts that differed between Natalie and Carol's curricula and those of Mari and Abby. In the next section, I compare the curricular materials used by Carol, Mari, and Abby to illuminate differences in representation of a common and important writing pedagogy: the analysis of models.

REPRESENTATIONS OF WRITING INSTRUCTION: A COMPARISON

In this section, I analyze lessons from *Small Moments: Personal Narrative Writing* (Calkins & Oxenhorn, 2003), the Reading-Writing Workshop lessons on procedural writing from Houghton Mifflin Reading (Cooper et al., 2003), and persuasive letter writing lessons from *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6* (Clark, 2004). I chose for comparison three lessons that use the same pedagogical approach: the use of model texts, student inquiry, and teacher explanation to understand genre characteristics and writing techniques. As Hillocks (1984) and others have pointed out, students benefit from textual models, especially when the techniques used by the writer are made clear to the students (Graham & Perin, 2007). This level of explicitness is the first step in supporting students' appropriation of the techniques. Otherwise, students' observations may never be generalized to broader principles that can be applied to other texts and to their own writing. Since most scholars of writing instruction agree that the use of models is more effective when they are explicitly unpacked (Delpit, 1988), I evaluate these teaching scripts to see if they model such explicit support.

Carol's curriculum: *Units of Study for Primary Writers*

Here I examine the same lesson from which the earlier examples were drawn. This lesson is designed to show students how details can enhance the quality of a narrative. The lesson suggests that the teacher read *A Chair for My Mother* (Williams, 1984) and point out the detail in a passage by contrasting the text with a simpler, one sentence alternative that lacks detail. After the technique of adding details is named and illustrated through examples and non-examples, the lesson plan suggests asking students to think about Williams' text as writers. The following sample dialogue suggests how the conversation might go. In this excerpt, children have just shared their observations of Williams' text with a partner:

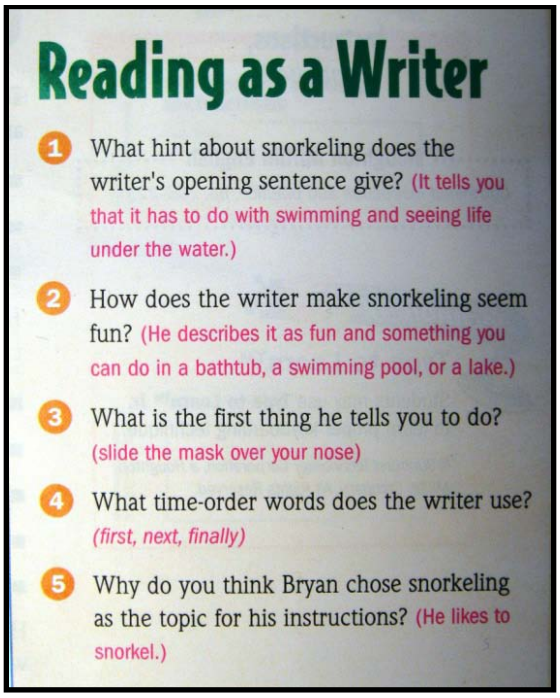
> **Signal for the class to come back together and ask them so share the details discussed.**
>
> "What were some of the tiny details Vera wrote to stretch out her Small Moment?" Abby rephrased the question, "What did you notice about Vera B. Williams' writing?"
>
> Milo raised his hand. Signaling for him to speak, Abby whispered "Eyes on Milo" to all her children, as if reminding them of something they knew well.
>
> "She wrote one thing and then another and then another," Milo said. "Then she put it together."
>
> "Huh!" Abby's tone suggested Milo had just given her a brand-new and illuminating insight.
>
> To encourage others to take in what Milo has said, Abby repeated his insight as if she was listening to it again, responding to it with wonder. "'She wrote one thing and then another and then another, then she put it together!' You are right, she did do that, Milo! That's how Vera slowed her writing down, isn't it?
>
> "She didn't just say 'We looked for our family,' did she? She said, 'Mama grabbed my hand and we ran. My uncle Sandy saw us and ran. . . . That's such a helpful observation, Milo."
>
> Sophia raised the hand that wasn't churning the ruffles on her sundress, "Yeah, Vera didn't just say they saw the fire. She told us about the pretty yellow and red flowers they saw."

> **When children point out particular things the writer has done, remind them that these are techniques toward the writer's larger purpose, which you will explain, was "to stretch out a Small Moment."**
>
> **"**Exactly! Sophia noticed how Vera B. Williams stretched her Small Moment out and made it big. She did this by telling us details like the detail about the yellow and red flowers that they saw, right, Sophia?" (Calkins & Oxenhorn, 2003, pp. 4-6)

In this lesson excerpt, we see through the sample dialogue that students are invited to notice Williams' use of detail. Calkins and Oxenhorn show and explain the teacher's role in helping students to notice details and in explicitly connecting what they notice back to a shared vocabulary for talking about writing craft. They show the teacher how to disentangle the content of the writing from the technique that is used by naming the technique and finding multiple examples. This kind of curricular transparency draws teachers' attention to the pedagogical moves that support student learning in ways that a more compressed lesson suggestion, such as "Discuss the details in Vera Williams' *A Chair for my Mother*" would not.

Mari's curriculum: Houghton Mifflin's Reading-Writing Workshop

As discussed above, the sample dialogues in Mari's curriculum were far briefer that those found in Carol's curriculum. In this lesson plan, teachers are directed to "review" the characteristics of good instructions with students, though I found no lessons in the second grade curriculum that teach these attributes prior to this point. Next, the text suggests that the teacher and students read the student sample, "How to Snorkel." The lesson provides some sample questions for the teacher to ask and sample student answers.



Reading as a Writer

1. What hint about snorkeling does the writer's opening sentence give? (It tells you that it has to do with swimming and seeing life under the water.)
2. How does the writer make snorkeling seem fun? (He describes it as fun and something you can do in a bathtub, a swimming pool, or a lake.)
3. What is the first thing he tells you to do? (slide the mask over your nose)
4. What time-order words does the writer use? *(first, next, finally)*
5. Why do you think Bryan chose snorkeling as the topic for his instructions? (He likes to snorkel.)

Figure 37. From Delights Teacher's Edition, California in Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy, Grade 2, Theme 6. Copyright © 2003 by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

Although the genre is different, the core skill of reading like a writer is at the heart of both the Calkins lesson, described above, and this lesson. But there are clear differences in the transparency of these curricula. Whereas Carol's materials make visible the teacher moves that support student analysis of a model text, compressed representations in the Houghton Mifflin materials do not illuminate these teaching moves. Moreover, the answers provided in the text do not show teachers how to parse out the content of the piece from the techniques the writer uses. For example, the question about the introduction, "What hint about snorkeling does the writer's opening sentence give?" does not help students in thinking about the techniques they might use to craft an engaging lead for a procedural text (e.g., directly addressing the reader with a question, providing an enticing image of fun or accomplishment). This short representation is all that the curriculum provides to help teachers engage students with the model. Teachers using this manual would have to bring considerable pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge to this lesson.

There is also not much content knowledge provided in the unit. The Calkins and Oxenhorn (2003) unit is rich with explanations of writing process, genre, and writing techniques as they pertain to young children as well as writers and writing more generally. The Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) book offers less in this regard. For example, day three of the unit provides a worksheet in which the students write down the procedure to be explained, list the materials needed, and draft a beginning sentence. If the students had engaged in some analysis of model texts with different introductions, this would be a perfect place for them to try out some of their techniques with their own topics. An experienced teacher might guess that the intent behind the lesson is to help students learn about engaging leads. However, a novice will not find techniques for interesting beginnings in the lesson. The lesson simply directs students to "think about a beginning sentence" (p. 327B). The focus on genre, writing process, and craft in the Houghton Mifflin lessons provided some support for Mari. Unfortunately, as the example above shows, the curriculum she deemed "pretty complete" falls short of providing new teachers with sufficient faces of practice and the transparency to support explicit teaching with model texts.

Abby's curriculum: *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6*

Abby's most useful curricular resource did not come from her school or district; it came from a teacher store. *Writing Workshop Grades 4-6* (Clark, 2004) offers mini-units for several genres. Like the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) materials, the representations of practice are compressed. Abby used the section on persuasive writing for a series of lessons on persuasive letters. The first page of the unit is an information page for teachers, which briefly describes three types of persuasive writing and their purposes: letters, editorials, and reviews. The authors highlight the "three main components" of persuasive writing as "the topic, the opinion, and the suggestion." Finally, the information page provides "Tips for Persuasive Writing", which are as follows:

> Creative use of language, graphics, structure, and examples can make for effective persuasive writing. The writing must be accurate and factual. The writers should maintain a professional-feeling tone throughout the

> piece and should not come across as attacking or forcing the reader. (Clark, 2004, p. 106)

The lesson I discuss here focuses on teaching the attributes of a personal persuasive letter. In this lesson, the teacher is directed to provide her students with copies of a model text, a letter written by a student to her grandmother. After pointing out the difference in form, content, and audience between this type of letter and a business letter, the lesson directs teachers to ask the following questions of students:

> - To whom is the letter addressed (*Grandma*)
> - What is the purpose of the letter? (*To convince Grandma to attend Grandparent's Day at school*.)
> - What persuasive techniques does the author use? (*Sandy first expresses that she would love it if her grandma would come. She then lists the specific reasons why she thinks her grandma should come. She says that they are friends, she thinks she is funny, she likes to be around her grandma, and she thinks that her class will love her grandma*.)
> - What other things can be learned from this letter? (*Answers will vary*.) (Clark, 2004, p. 107)

As with the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) curriculum, we see that this sample dialogue does not decouple the content of the piece from the writing techniques that are used. The sample answer in bullet three does include the key words "specific reasons," but this could be easily missed by students. After the discussion, the lesson suggests that students write a "fictional letter to their grandma" (Clark, 2004, p.107) They are to receive a "personal letter graphic organizer" (p.107), which is lined paper that marks the place for date, salutation, closing, and the like. It does not draw students' attention to components of a persuasive letter, such as stating a request and providing reasons. The lessons suggest that teachers encourage students to "Brainstorm three persuasive techniques to use in the letter. Select one or two that would be most effective"(p. 107). Since this lesson did not include three techniques for persuasion, I examined all the lessons leading up to this lesson. With the exception of stating reasons to support a request or opinion, none of these lessons provided techniques of persuasion (e.g., addressing the counter-argument). Moreover, the "creative use of language, graphics,

structure, and examples" (p. 104) mentioned in the information page is never elaborated upon elsewhere in the unit. As discussed earlier in this chapter, these lessons provided a learning opportunity for Abby. After using the curriculum, she had a new pedagogical tool—using mentor texts—and she focused more on audience and purpose that she had before. However, as a model for explicit teaching of writing techniques, this curriculum does provide many faces or transparency related to teaching using a model text. As with the Houghton Mifflin (Cooper et al., 2003) materials, there was minimal transparency around the characteristics of writing that teachers should make explicit for students. In addition, the sample dialogues in both materials did not include a key face of practice, response to student comments, which could have illuminated the ways in which teachers can support students in noticing and naming craft techniques in writing.

CONCLUSION

Teachers can be supported in writing instruction through a variety of means. While the previous chapter discusses the impact of setting features on teacher learning, this chapter examines the features of curricular artifacts and how they may mediate teacher learning. Of course, study participants' learning involved a complex interaction between the content knowledge, conceptual tools, and pedagogical tools that were: represented in their conceptual frameworks, embedded in the curricular materials, promoted by their grade-level team, and endorsed by school and district mechanisms such as professional development. While recognizing the interplay of all of these experiences in learning to teach, I have sought to describe the role that curricular materials might play in helping teachers navigate the content and pedagogy of writing instruction.

My study shows that for both highly supported and unsupported teachers, curricular materials can mediate teacher learning. It also shows that curricular artifacts designed to create coherence across schools, districts and states, (e.g., standards and assessments), are too broad by themselves to create meaningful consistency. In looking at the nature of artifacts for lesson planning and their affordances, I found that teachers

readily appropriated tools that were highly adaptable in terms of their applicability across grades and genres. However, these tools did not provide much opportunity for learning about writing content or tools for teaching. In addition, these artifacts were so adaptable that they did not offer much in terms of developing high-quality lessons; the teaching quality for teachers using these tools depended on the strength of their conceptual frameworks and the support in the settings in which they were learning to teach. When case study teachers did not write their own lessons, they sought those that provided a clear objective and list of steps. Plans that were situated in a unit tended to be appropriated, while curricular supplements with stand-alone lessons were left on the shelf. I show that there is wide variation in curricular resources—even among those lesson plans that were organized in units and provided some detail. The faces of practice that are represented (e.g., subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical tools, in-the-moment responses to students, rationale) and the degree of transparency of these aspects of practice afford different opportunities for teacher learning.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS

In this comparative case study, I examined how teachers are prepared to teach writing and what supports or hinders their appropriation of effective conceptual and pedagogical tools in the preservice and first years of teaching. Activity theory afforded a lens on teacher learning that highlighted continuity and contradiction within and across the settings in which teachers participated over time and the effects of these dynamics on teacher appropriation. The cases illuminate several factors that contribute to the complexity of learning to teach writing in the elementary grades and delineate promising directions for supporting teacher learning in the preservice year and beyond.

The findings replicate other studies on new teacher learning, which show that teacher appropriation is supported by continuity across multiple settings (Allen, 2009; Bickmore et al., 2005; Cook, Smagorinsky, Fry, Konopak, & Moore, 2002; Philipose, 2010; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Valencia, Martin, Place, & Grossman, 2009). Teachers who experienced some continuity between their methods course and their field placement learned more in their preservice year than those who had no alignment. Of those teachers who were well-supported in the preservice year, we see a relationship between teaching quality in the first year and the degree of continuity between the preservice settings and those of the first job. This study adds to the literature on learning across settings by uncovering the difficulties in transitioning to a new grade-level. Even program graduates who felt well-prepared to teach writing and articulated a clear vision for their practice had difficulty envisioning and enacting writing instruction in grades much different from their field placement classrooms. Recent statistical analyses document the consequences of such continuity or disjuncture on student achievement; researchers found that teachers who began their careers in grades similar to those of their student teaching had students with higher language arts and mathematics achievement scores than those teachers who had a significant change in grade level (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008).

Findings also point to the importance of quality methods instruction and the content of the methods course. There were marked differences in teacher learning between the two cohorts. These differences were due in part to contradictions between the field placement and the methods course at Northern University and continuity between those settings at Southern University. However, according to interviews and observational data, the pedagogy of the methods course played a strong role in teacher appropriation. Cindy's approach included connections to the field and consistent efforts to be responsive to candidates' sense-making of the course material and of teaching literacy more broadly. Although there were significant differences in learning between cohorts, neither program taught subject-matter knowledge for writing. With the exception of Natalie, all participants had limited knowledge of writing as a content area, and several teachers had misconceptions about writing that had a negative impact on the quality of their teaching. Also notable was both cohorts' unfamiliarity with the two state-adopted curricular programs that are used in most California schools, which were left unaddressed by both methods course instructors.

Graduates from Southern University did not just appropriate more conceptual and pedagogical tools than their Northern University colleagues; they held a conceptual framework for the teaching of writing, or a network of interrelated conceptual and pedagogical tools that, in concert with content knowledge, guided their decision-making on several levels (e.g., job placement, curricular choices, and planning). Importantly, all participants' notions of good writing instruction—regardless of origin, cohesion, or instructional soundness—persisted through the first year of teaching. The notion of a conceptual framework for teaching writing provides a useful lens for analysis of appropriation beyond the uptake of particular conceptual and pedagogical tools. The construct may also inform methods course design.

Within the settings of the first teaching job, relationships between teacher performance and level of support reveal the need for alignment of objectives and approaches for teaching writing at the school, grade, and curricular levels. Only two case teachers, Carol and Natalie, enjoyed a high level of continuity and support among

the settings of the first job, and these two teachers demonstrated much deeper appropriation of tools for writing instruction than the other study participants. Although support and continuity was variable, most teachers had access to curricular artifacts, and these artifacts mediated both what and how teachers taught. The nature of the curricular artifacts used to teach writing varied widely across teachers. Those teachers with access to curriculum that provided multiple faces of practice and a high degree of transparency through explanation and example were afforded richer opportunities to learn about writing and writing instruction. Together these findings have implications in a number of domains, including: how we think about teacher appropriation for subject-matter teaching, methods course content and pedagogy, teacher education program design, preparation of teacher educators, curriculum design and adoption, district and school administration, and policy. In this chapter, I discuss these implications and suggest directions for further research.

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR WRITING INSTRUCTION AS A TOOL FOR ANALYZING APPROPRIATION

In this study, I used levels of appropriation defined by Grossman et al. (1999) as a heuristic to inform data collection and conduct analysis. The scale highlighted the degree to which teachers appropriated conceptual and pedagogical tools and guided investigations of the conceptual tools undergirding teachers' practices. This scale was sufficient to capture what I noticed in the teachers who struggled, since they had very few, loosely connected tools for the teaching of writing. However, it did not capture all that I noticed regarding stronger teachers' appropriation of conceptual and pedagogical tools. Stronger teachers had an interrelated, cohesive set of tools—what I call a conceptual framework—for the teaching of writing. These teachers articulated their constructed relationships among tools (e.g., pedagogical to pedagogical, pedagogical to conceptual, conceptual to conceptual) as well as between the tools and writing content. These frameworks played a significant role in teachers' practice, supporting their ability to critique their own experiences with writing in school, analyze the teaching in their field placements, seek resources and colleagues that aligned with their views of good writing instruction, and implement research-based practices.

I propose that we can uncover a richer understanding of teacher learning by analyzing appropriation in terms of the development of a conceptual framework. In analyzing these frameworks, investigation might include looking at the number and type of tools appropriated and their degree of appropriation (as delineated by Grossman et al., 1999), content knowledge, and the ways in which the teacher makes sense of these tools as a whole, and the degree of cohesion (or points of disjuncture) among the components. The notion of the conceptual framework for writing instruction has implications for the ways in which we characterize teacher appropriation for subject-matter teaching, which leads to implications for preservice methods instruction. I discuss these implications and considerations, along with other implications for methods courses, in the next section.

IMPLICATIONS FOR METHODS COURSES

The study has several implications for the content and pedagogy of writing methods courses. These include supporting teacher candidates' appropriation of a conceptual framework for writing instruction, including writing subject-matter knowledge and common elementary writing curricula as part of the course content, and employing strong pedagogical practices.

Supporting appropriation of a conceptual framework for writing instruction

The notion of developing a conceptual framework for the teaching of writing (as well as for other subjects) seems a promising avenue for teacher educators to explore. Candidate appropriation of a robust conceptual framework may be one way in which teacher educators can fortify teachers for the complex and challenging settings of their first years of teaching. The case of Sheri cautions us to think carefully about the kind of the framework we hope teacher candidates will take up. Sheri's conceptual framework, a neat package of content knowledge, pedagogical tools, and conceptual tools for teaching fourth grade writing workshop, was not adaptable to her first teaching job in kindergarten, where there were no supports for this approach to teaching. One could argue that Sheri simply needed to expand her content knowledge and tools to a broader grade-level span. However, consider the many teachers who take jobs in which they are

required to use a particular curriculum that does not align with the approaches promoted in teacher education. In such cases, even a framework for teaching writing workshop across all the grades may not be useful.

Deciding what sort of framework should be promoted in teacher education requires us to revisit long-standing tensions between the progressive approaches promoted in the university and the more traditional approaches often supported in the field. Perhaps the tools we encourage novice teachers to take up should be robust enough to support them in instantiating research-based practices yet flexible enough to adapt to the requirements of and resources in the first teaching job. This type of framework might mitigate the transition into teaching by providing teachers with usable tools for any situation. However, the ability of novices to hold a cohesive yet adaptable set of tools requires a level of expertise that may be difficult to achieve. And there may be consequences for holding tools more flexibly. For example, perhaps beginning teachers will show less conviction for reform approaches, taking a relativistic stance that will only encourage their practice to move toward the mean. Or perhaps they will take up strong research-based pedagogies, such as modeling and providing feedback, but neglect to instantiate progressive ideas that challenge traditional student-teacher power relations, such as providing students with opportunities to create knowledge and to engage with writing projects that meet their chosen purposes. The nature of a conceptual framework that best prepares teachers for the field is a topic that requires more theoretical consideration and research. While the optimal framework(s) for novice teachers are unknown, the study points to two key areas that should be addressed in the methods course. I discuss these in the next section.

Missing pieces in preparation for writing instruction

Across both programs, there were two aspects of teaching writing that were not addressed: content knowledge for teaching writing and the use of curriculum materials. These missing pieces had ramifications for teachers as they entered the field. The longitudinal data show the importance of content knowledge in the teaching of writing—even when teaching very young children. Eight of the study participants

needed substantial support in content knowledge. For Abby, Beth, Kim, Eva, Mari, and Sheri, a lack of content knowledge limited what and how they taught. In literacy methods courses that are already full, it is unrealistic to expect that teacher educators can prepare teachers for all the writing content they will need to teach. However, there may be some high-leverage aspects of content that could be addressed. For example, candidates could learn about the writing process and study one or two typical school genres in depth.

Another implication for methods course content concerns state-adopted curricula, which was ignored in both methods courses I observed. In John's methods course assignments, students were to create original lessons, not use the curriculum. In Cindy's class, the curriculum was cast as a poor representation of practice, unusable because it did not embody the conceptual and pedagogical tools of the writing workshop approach. Most of the candidates enrolled at Southern University did not work with cooperating teachers who used the state-adopted materials, and they were therefore unfamiliar with them. In our zeal to prepare teachers to instantiate reform-oriented approaches to writing instruction, we cannot ignore the real-world contexts in which graduates will teach. Teacher educators might consider ways to help candidates unpack the curricula, often compressed representations of practice, for what they do and do not reveal about the teaching of writing. In addition, class discussions on the ways in which the tools embodied in these artifacts overlap with or contradict the tools promoted in the course might help novices to analyze and begin to modify these resources in ways that more closely align with their conceptual frameworks. In this way, incorporation of curricula into the methods course can be seen as an opportunity for learning rather than as acquiescence to traditional modes of teaching.

High-impact approaches to teaching in teacher education

Graduates of Southern University attributed much of their learning to their methods course. They appropriated conceptual frameworks that (in most cases) supported their practice in the first year. Looking at Cindy's pedagogical approach may provide insight into how to better support teacher appropriation during their short time

in teacher education. Cindy used several pedagogies promoted and researched in the teacher education literature, such as modeling and reflection (Grossman, 2005). Two additional, consistent components of her approach were responsiveness and co-teaching with a novice third grade teacher. Cindy assessed the ways in which her students made sense of the course material and their placements through weekly written dialogues (the reflection-connection) and in-class discussions. She used these strategies to integrate candidates' knowledge and field experiences into the course and respond to their learning needs. Candidates were very enthusiastic about the presence of a strong first-year teacher, Christina, in their methods course. Cindy and Christina modeled writing workshop instruction, with candidates participating as students. Instructors each took the lead in teaching and debriefing the lessons, and candidates reported that the combination of novice and expert perspectives was informative and inspiring. Cindy worked to create a "third space" in which the perspectives of novice teachers, university faculty, and teacher candidates were valued (Zeichner, 2010). Given the difficulties of connecting coursework to the field, Cindy's responsive approach and co-teaching model may be effective tools for helping candidates to integrate their learning from the methods course and the field placement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The findings also have programmatic implications for the preparation of teacher educators and teacher candidates. John's struggles as a teacher educator make a strong case for the need to support teacher educators, many of whom enter their role without any formal training or support. Though these instructors may be excellent classroom teachers, they are not necessarily prepared for the job of preparing teacher candidates. Teacher education programs could lift the level of teaching in their courses by offering support in the form of classes, coaching, or apprenticeship models. These supports might focus on effective pedagogies of teacher education such as modeling and analysis of teaching practices. Mentors could support new teacher educators to articulate their course foci in terms of the content knowledge, conceptual tools, and pedagogical tools—and relationships among these tools—that they believe to be essential for teacher

candidates. A clearly articulated conceptual framework for the teaching of writing might help teacher educators to organize instruction around those ideas.

Preparing teachers for reform-oriented approaches is a tall order for a one-year, post-baccalaureate program. It is easy to see why preservice programs may be inclined to focus their efforts solely on preparation for reform teaching in the hopes that teachers will graduate with the strongest possible understanding of a reform-based approach. Choosing idyllic settings for teacher apprenticeship, however, is likely to mask the complexity teachers will face when navigating the norms and rules of more typical schools. Programs might consider expanding their partnerships to schools that represent a range of resources, needs, and practices. Through cross-institutional collaboration, hybrid spaces for learning could be established to support faculty, practitioners, and novices alike (Zeichner, 2010). Perhaps collaborators could tackle some of the many challenges of supporting quality writing instruction for all students, which might include supporting teacher content knowledge and developing school coherence. Through such partnerships, a teacher education program may be able to maintain a mission of preparing reform-oriented teachers while providing opportunities for prospective teachers to adapt reform-oriented tools for use in a variety of settings. For example, teachers may learn how to navigate curricular resources, which can be difficult for new teachers to use. I discuss the challenges and affordances of these resources in the next section.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM

In describing the use of artifacts in professional work, Goodwin (1994) notes that professionals "engage in active cognitive work, but the parameters of that work have been established by the system that is organizing their perception" (p. 609). As a key mediating artifact of teaching, curriculum can play a significant role in shaping how teachers think about writing and writing instruction. Unlike the codified tools of archeology and police work that Goodwin analyses, however, curricular materials for writing instruction might be characterized as haphazard, with wide variation in the quantity and qualities of the curricular tools to which teachers have access. Despite this

range, curricular materials were a strong force in case study teachers' practice, a finding that mirrors those of other studies of teacher learning (Arzi and White, 2007; Grossman & Thompson, 2004).

In analyzing curricular artifacts, I first employed Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of transparency to examine the degree to which these artifacts, often used by teachers in isolation, were accessible to the novice. I found that most curricula provided compressed representations of practice that required some expertise to use effectively. I also found that the artifacts varied in terms of the aspects—or faces—of teaching that they represented (Little, 2001). In her study of teacher learning communities, Little discusses the need for representations of practice for sharing professional knowledge, a need that is heightened by minimal opportunities for teachers to see the practices of their colleagues. In developing a theory of strong curriculum, I suggest the use of the concepts of transparency and face as lenses for analyzing the affordances of curricular artifacts.

Using transparency and face as lenses for analysis, I found that many ubiquitous tools for elementary writing instruction (e.g., graphic organizers, fill-in-the-blank templates, and the minilesson) provide a procedural face without representations of content or pedagogy. Even tools that offer lesson-specific guidance in the form of steps, examples, or descriptions often did not provide enough transparency for the novice. The curriculum that offered the most support provided several faces not usually present in such artifacts. These included: information on writing process, craft, and genre characteristics as they are relevant to primary writers; sample student-teacher dialogue during the lessons along with identification of and rationale for the teaching moves presented in the dialogue; student work samples, explanation of common areas of struggle for young writers, and tips for providing extra support; examples of one-on-one student support through writing conferences, and video of demonstration lessons and student-teacher conferences. Curriculum that provides background in content and student development along with well-explained lessons is indeed rare. In the current curricular landscape, typical curricular artifacts may inform novices' work, but they do

not serve to usher beginning teachers into a way of thinking about and teaching writing that is robust and shared by the profession.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Considering the minimal guidance and curricular resources for writing provided by the California Department of Education, it is no wonder that several of the districts and schools in my study sought to provide additional support for teachers in this area. The findings indicate that some of this support may be more confusing than helpful. For example, a high value on teacher autonomy seems to be the reason why some districts chose to provide a number of unrelated resources from which teachers could pick and choose. Experienced teachers may enjoy this freedom, but new teachers do not have the expertise to choose effectively. The cases of Carol and Natalie demonstrate the positive impact of a school setting with a clear mission for the teaching of writing and multiple levels of aligned support, including grade-level planning, training and coaching, and curriculum. Administrators interested in supporting new teachers in writing should establish clear goals for student achievement, provide a high-quality curriculum, and encourage coherence in instructional practices through performance expectations and opportunities for teacher collaboration and support.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

In looking at the teaching of writing alone, the degree of discontinuity between settings in the activity systems of teachers' first jobs was at times staggering. If we are to improve student achievement in writing, there must be greater coherence and clarity regarding the expectations for student achievement, and there must be structured support to help teachers instruct to meet those expectations. At the state level, neither the standards nor the fourth grade writing assessment (now gone) nor the state-adopted curricula provided enough guidance for new teachers. As illustrated through the second grade example in Chapter Six, the California State Standards for Language Arts do not provide the content knowledge teachers need. The state frameworks, which elaborate on the standards, don't provide much more. Since the state assessment for fourth grade is no longer administered, the only state-provided reference point teachers have for

writing instruction is one of two adopted curricula. These provide some guidance in terms of content and pedagogy, but they lack the transparency that a novice would need to learn to teach writing.

Standards such as the National New Standards for Primary Reading and Writing (New Standards Primary Literacy Standards Committee, 2004) provide a model of a standards document that can serve as a learning tool for new teachers and promote continuity in the profession. These standards include a clear articulation of student expectations. They provide information on student development and include work samples with commentary. There are also models of good curriculum that provide support for content knowledge and transparency in representing teacher practices (see, for example, National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Unfortunately, the expertise represented in these materials is largely absent in the commercial materials that vie for state adoption; these publishers are charged with the arduous task of including an entire language arts curriculum into an easy-to-use manual, and this appears to be done at the cost of greater detail. Curriculum adoption committees considering a new text adoption often focus on the degree to which the proposed curriculum addresses the state's standards. Perhaps a criterion for adoption should also be the learning opportunities that the curriculum affords through transparent representations of multiple faces of practice, information on student development, and content knowledge.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are a number of promising avenues for future research that stem from the results of this study. One area of interest is the pedagogy of teacher education. Many studies of preservice teachers find that the apprenticeship of observation and the field placement far outweigh the methods courses in their impact on teacher learning (Van Hover & Yeager, 2004). The case of Southern University illustrates an outcome in which the methods course plays a central role in teacher learning. Teachers attributed much of their learning to the methods course, but they also benefitted from alignment

between the course and their field placements. Cindy's pedagogical practices of responsive teaching and expert-novice co-teaching provided a consistent feedback loop and strong connections to the field that felt tangible and achievable to candidates. These teaching tools seemed to have a powerful influence on learning. There are still relatively few studies that examine the pedagogy of teacher education and its long-term effects, and more research is needed.

Another strand of research might examine the nature of teachers' conceptual frameworks for the teaching of writing and which frameworks allow for adaptability to new settings while still supporting a strong vision of research-based practices. It may be useful to research novice teachers as well as experts. By studying expert teachers, we may be able to generalize some framework characteristics that are particularly useful, such as networks of conceptual and pedagogical tools. Expert teachers may also help us delineate the content knowledge needed to teach elementary writing. Liping Ma's (1999) work on "knowledge packages" may provide some direction for how to investigate teachers' content knowledge for writing. Ma defines knowledge packages as sets of conceptual and procedural tools for understanding a particular mathematics topic. Ma found these frameworks assisted teachers in making decisions about what and how to teach. Perhaps strong teachers of writing have such knowledge packages. Understanding how such content knowledge is organized and how they use this knowledge for teaching could be useful in determining the aspects of writing content that should be emphasized in teacher education.

In addition, Ma's definition of a "profound understanding of fundamental mathematics" may provide a framework for theorizing and investigating expert teachers' content knowledge for writing. In this framework, Ma proposes four characteristics: connectedness, multiple perspectives, basic ideas, and longitudinal coherence. Each of these may apply to writing as well. Connectedness describes a teacher's intent to present a "unified body of knowledge" rather than isolated topics (Ma, 1999, p. 122). In writing, we might see this, for example, in the integration of crafting and grammar instruction (e.g., sentence combining lessons). The second

characteristic in Ma's framework emphasizes multiple perspectives, stressing that multiple solutions are possible and helping students build a flexible understanding of mathematics. Just as teachers without deep content knowledge in mathematics may cling to the standard algorithm as "correct," so my data suggests that less-knowledgeable writing teachers may cling to prescriptive notions of genre or formulaic approaches to the writing process. In the third characteristic, basic ideas, Ma notes that teachers with a profound understanding of mathematics stress the fundamental ideas of the discipline. In writing, a fundamental idea might be the consideration of audience and purpose when making decisions about genre, content, craft, and presentation, a consideration often lost in school writing tasks. The final characteristic, longitudinal coherence, describes the teacher's deep understanding of the continuum of learning in the discipline and how that informs her practice. An investigation of the parallels between the thinking of expert mathematics teachers and teachers of writing, as well as other disciplines, may advance a theory of the core understandings within a conceptual framework for subject-matter teaching that are necessary for highly effective practice.

A related question might address how development of a conceptual framework could be fostered through particular activities in teacher education and through the first years of teaching. For example, perhaps teachers could periodically draw concept maps of the subject of writing or of the conceptual and pedagogical tools for teaching writing and discuss their conceptualizations with their peers. Such explicit work may help prospective teachers to articulate what they know and prompt them to draw connections that might otherwise remain nascent. It would also provide an assessment for teacher educators regarding how their students understand the content area and tools for teaching.

Some preservice programs support teachers' appropriation of a strong conceptual framework by focusing solely on a vision of reform teaching. This training could cause difficulties for teachers when it does not take the expectations and resources of most school settings into account. The findings of this study indicate that prospective teachers may benefit from a preservice program that provides tools for

transitioning into typical teaching contexts, such as learning to work with state-adopted curricular materials. Research has shown that continuity across the methods course and field placement support teacher appropriation. This is also true in my study, but Sheri and Mari faced considerable difficulties navigating a curricular terrain that was quite different from their preservice model. Their difficulties might have been mitigated through preservice experiences in field placements or coursework that explored more than one approach to teaching writing—including those approaches represented in the state-adopted curricula. More research is needed to determine what kinds of field placements best support teacher learning for diverse contexts while supporting teachers' appropriation of a strong conceptual framework. One promising approach might be the development of innovative university-school partnerships that work to circumvent the "two-worlds pitfall" (Feiman-Nemser & Buchman, 1985). Research of such partnerships may shed light on the ways in which schools and universities can work together for improved instruction for all students.

Finally, the field could benefit from research that uncovers the characteristics of curriculum that best support new teacher learning. This study indicates that most curricular materials do not afford many opportunities to learn about the content or pedagogies of writing instruction. While I identified the characteristics of resources that seemed to be more or less helpful to novice teachers, more research is needed to determine the content, organization, and layout that can provide the best support. The efficacy of materials to support teacher appropriation could be researched through a number of methods. Similarly-prepared teachers using different curricular materials could be compared using a think-aloud protocol while planning. Classroom observation and student achievement data could also provide insight into the impact of differing curricula. Finally, teacher feedback on the usefulness of the materials could help refine the design. While it may seem unnecessary to gear curriculum toward novice teachers, many experienced teachers are also "novices" when it comes to writing, focusing primarily on written language conventions in their teaching (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdéz, & Garnier, 2002). Such teachers could also benefit from curriculum that provides more support.

CONCLUSION

This comparative case study of two teacher education programs and their graduates challenges the notion that teacher education does not make a difference. Strong alignment between the preservice settings, along with quality methods instruction, can support teacher candidates' learning. The study also explains why we may not always see the effects of teacher education; in comparing two comparable institutions, I found vast differences in teaching and program quality. If we are to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by teacher education programs to improve teaching quality, we must first improve the teaching quality of the methods courses and create strong partnerships in the field.

While we should continue to research the knowledge that provides the best start for new teachers as they begin to teach writing, the field has established some core conceptual and pedagogical tools that support student learning (see Chapter One), and these should be featured in literacy methods courses. The study also points to the need for greater coherence and support at the school, district, and state levels and the need for curricular materials that are comprehensive. While policy may be slow to change, administrators can work within their schools and districts to establish continuity and curricular support for new teachers—and all teachers requiring support for writing instruction. There is much work to be done if we are to improve the writing achievement of our nation's youth, and researchers, educators, and administrators each have important part to play in the change.

APPENDIX A

Interview for University Methods Course Instructors

Introduction: Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of how beginning teachers learn to teach writing. In particular, I am interested in how the opportunities to learn about writing in methods courses, student teaching, and the first teaching job impact teacher learning. This interview will help me to better understand the methods course.

1. How long have you been teaching methods courses that address the teaching of writing in elementary grades?
2. I'd like to learn more about the part of your course that focuses on writing. What are the main things you hope the teacher candidates will learn about teaching writing in the elementary grades?
3. Do you believe that the things you mentioned [name them] are the most essential for preparing effective elementary writing teachers?
    a. Why?
    b. Are there other things that are essential that you are not addressing in your course?
    c. If yes, what are they? Why did you choose not to include these things in your course?

4. What are some of the ways that you teach [main things from Q1]?
    a. Note connections to syllabus, follow up on items on syllabus not addressed by respondent
5. Can you recall one lesson or activity in particular that you thought was effective in addressing these goals? What was it?
6. Would you walk me through that lesson/activity?
7. What aspects of the activity do you think contributed to teacher candidates' learning?
    a. Were there activities prior to or following this lesson that supported the learning?
8. What other aspects of your practice are important for teacher candidates' learning to teach writing?
9. What are the other settings in which all teacher candidates will have an opportunity to learn more about the teaching of writing?
    a. Probe for information about the nature of the learning experience—structured, unstructured, through another lens (e.g., ELL course)
    b. Probe for information about how the instructor regards this experience (e.g., relies on it to address key topics, doesn't know what it's about)
10. How do you think that the teacher candidates in this program are prepared to teach writing in elementary classrooms?
    a. Probe: What strengths do they bring to their first teaching jobs?
    b. In which areas will they likely need support?
    c. Listen for markers related to obstacles or supports and probe

APPENDIX B

Focus Group with Preservice Teachers[5]

Introduction: Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of how beginning teachers learn to teach writing. In particular, I am interested in how the opportunities to learn about writing in methods courses, student teaching, and the first teaching job impact teacher learning. This focus group will help me to better understand your experiences in your methods courses, your placement, and in the program in general as it relates to learning about writing instruction.

Part One: Free Write and Share

- Please take a moment to think about your placement experience. What are some of the most important things, positive and negative, that you have learned about literacy instruction from this experience?
- Now please think about writing instruction in particular. What are some of the most important things, positive and negative, that you have learned?
- Now we are going to share our thoughts. It's likely that you have all had unique experiences, so of course what you learned will be different.

Part Two: Partner Share and Group Discussion

- Working with a partner, think about what you have learned in coursework about literacy instruction, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Work together to create a list of ideas.
- Share. I will chart all ideas on chart paper as teams share their lists, asking teachers to clarify terms.
- Discuss: What do you think your methods teacher would say if you asked him/her to describe an ideal writing program?

Question for each participant: What do you feel you still need to learn?

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[5] This protocol is based on those used by Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin, and Place (2000).

APPENDIX C

Inservice Teacher Pre- and Post-Observation Interviews[6]

Pre-observation:

1. What have you been doing in writing for the past week or so?
2. Describe what I'll be observing when I come to visit.
3. How is the lesson organized?
    a. Probe: time, grouping, differentiation
4. Tell me why you're doing this lesson
    a. What kinds of things did you take into consideration?
    b. Why is [lesson topic] important for your students to learn?
        i. Where did you get the idea that this was important?
    c. Why did you choose [instructional approach/method] as the way to teach this topic?
        i. How did you get the idea for this instructional approach/method?
5. How do you think it's going to go?

NOTE: These questions will also be asked informally before the second and third lessons in the three-lesson observation strand.

Post-observation:

1. What were your thoughts about the lesson?
    a. What surprised you? What was most challenging? How typical was the lesson?
    b. Probe: I noticed that . . . tell me more about . . .
2. At any point, did you change what you thought you would do? Why?
3. What do you think the students learned today?
    a. How do you know?
    b. Which parts/concepts were easy/difficult for which students?
4. Who do you think the lesson worked best for? Who do you think the lesson did not work as well for?
5. What will you do tomorrow?
6. As you think ahead to next year, if you were teaching this again, would you make any changes? Tell me about your thinking behind that.

NOTE: Questions one through four will be asked informally at the end of the first and second lessons in the three-lesson observation strand.

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[6] This protocol is based on those used by Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin, and Place (2000).

APPENDIX D

Teacher Interview One[7]

Summer 2008

Introduction: Thank you for participating in my study. The purpose of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of how beginning teachers learn to teach writing. In particular, I am interested in how the opportunities to learn about writing in methods courses, student teaching, and the first teaching job impact teacher learning. This interview will help me to better understand what you have learned about writing instruction and how you envision your writing instruction in your first year of teaching.

In this interview, I first want to talk with you about your background in school. Then we'll move to more specific questions about teaching writing and your preparation.

1. Tell me about your experiences with writing
   i. Probe for: courses, recreational writing, writing online
   ii. Probe for sense of enjoyment, sense of efficacy
2. Are there ways in which you feel these experiences have prepared you for teaching elementary writing?
3. Thinking back through your schooling, what teachers stand out for you and why?
   i. Probe: elementary/secondary; college; outside-of-school teachers/mentors
4. Tell me about your decision to become a teacher.
   i. Probe: When did you decide to become a teacher? What influenced your decision? How would you describe the teacher you'd like to become? What influenced your ideas about this?
5. Tell me about what you see as the reasons for teaching writing in elementary school. What are your goals for your students? What areas would you want to cover in your classes?
6. Could you talk to me about the major areas that make up writing as a subject area? Tell me how the areas are related to each other. (Could you draw a map of the different areas and their relationships?)

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[7] These interviews are based on interviews used by Grossman, Valencia, Evans, Thompson, Martin, and Place (2000).

7. When you think about your teaching ideal, what is your vision for writing instruction?
    i. Probe: what would you be doing? What would students be doing?
    ii. Do you think you'll be able to enact this vision?
8. What is the most important thing you want students to learn about writing in your class this year?
9. In the area of writing, what are some of the most important things you have learned from your teacher education program?
10. What do you think your methods teacher's image of good writing instruction looks like?
11. What are the ideas you have encountered in teacher education that you think will be most valuable as you begin your first year of teaching?
12. Tell me about your experiences in the field in the program.
13. What has stood out for you?
14. What have you learned about writing instruction from the field?
15. Think about the teacher you spent the most time with. What do you think is his/her image of good teaching in writing?
16. How does this fit with what you learned in the university?
17. In what ways did you have an opportunity to use the methods you learned in your university courses in your field experiences?
18. What else would you like to say about what you have learned in teacher education either in class or in the field?

Teacher Interview Two

Fall 2008

Introduction: Thanks for your continued participation. I have been enjoying my observations and learning a lot. Today I am going to follow up on some of the topics from the summer interview. The purpose is to understand what you have learned about writing instruction so far, how you think your writing instruction is going, and how you envision your writing instruction for the rest of the year and beyond.

1. How's it going so far? Now that you've been teaching for several weeks, tell me what it's like to be a teacher here.
    a. Probe for supports: mentor, grade level, resources, orientation
2. How do you organize or structure your class for language arts instruction? What curriculum will you use?
    a. Probe: origin of resources, clarify structural terms
3. Are there colleagues or mentors with whom you plan?

4. When you plan for writing instruction, what sorts of things do you consider?
    a. Probe for: goals for class, materials specific to writing instruction
5. Tell me about the students in your class. How does what you know about these students inform your decisions about what to teach in writing?
6. The last time we talked, you described your vision of writing instruction like this: Read quote from previous interview. Now that you have been teaching for a little while, would you change or add anything to your vision?
7. Based on your current experience, how do you feel about enacting your vision this year?
8. As you look ahead to the school year, what do you feel most confident about? What do you feel least confident about?

Teacher Interview Three

Spring 2009

Introduction: Thanks for your continued participation. I have been enjoying my observations and learning a lot. Today I am going to follow up on some of the topics from the fall interview. The purpose is to understand what you have learned about writing instruction so far, how you think your writing instruction is going, and how you envision your writing instruction for the rest of the year and beyond.

1. How's it going so far? Now that you've been teaching for several months, tell me what your experience of working here has been.
    a. Probe for supports: mentor, grade level, resources, orientation
2. How do you organize or structure your class for language arts instruction? What curriculum do you use?
    a. Probe: origin of resources, clarify structural terms
3. Are there colleagues or mentors with whom you plan?
4. When you plan for writing instruction, what sorts of things do you consider?
    a. Probe for: goals for class, materials specific to writing instruction
5. Tell me about the students in your class. How does what you know about these students inform your decisions about what to teach in writing?
6. The last time we talked, you described your vision of writing instruction like this: Read quote from fall interview. How, if at all, would you revise that vision now?
7. Based on your current experience, how do you feel about enacting your vision this year? Next year?

8. As you look ahead to next year, what do you feel most confident about? What do you feel least confident about? What changes will you make to your writing instruction?

APPENDIX E

Assignment #1
The Writing Process
Due May 14
30 points

In this assignment, you will take a group of students through the writing process. You will explain how you engaged students in pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. You will include with your assignment evidence of student work in the drafting and publishing phases.

Step 1: **Setting** - Describe the group of students you will be working with and the setting in which you taught. Explain the writing needs of the students, and the desired outcome.

Step 2: **Standards** - Connect the student needs with the one or more of the English Language Arts Content Standards for Writing or Oral and Written Language Conventions.

Step 3: **Mini-Lesson** - Design one or more mini-lessons that will help you teach the standards and meet the writing needs of these students. Your mini-lessons should include steps in the **Architecture of a Mini-lesson**.

Step 4: **Drafting** - Include at least one rough draft that is collected after one of your mini-lessons.

Step 5: **Conferring** - Include a dialogue of a writing conference that you had with a student in this group.

Step 6: **Revising, Editing, and Proofreading** - Discuss how a student or students were able to revise, edit, and/or proofread their first draft.

Step 7: **Published Writing** - Present at least one final draft of student writing.

Step 8: **Assessment** - Discuss how you would score this final draft.

Step 9: **Reflection** - Reflect on your experiences teaching this lesson.

Note: In Kindergarten or First Grade two separate writing assignments (rather than a rough and final draft) may be used for steps 4 and 7. All steps above will be given 3

points. 3 additional points will be awarded for overall presentation. This assignment needs to be typed.

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