

**Tracing the Mediating Contexts of Disciplinary Writing Instruction  
from Professional Development to Classrooms**

by

Michelle Mai Kwok

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Educational Studies)  
in the University of Michigan  
2016

Committee:

Professor Elizabeth B. Moje, Chair  
Professor Chandra L. Alston  
Professor David P. Gold  
Professor Chauncey B. Monte-Sano

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents,  
Trung Dinh Nguyen  
and  
Hoa Thi Mai  
for their unconditional love, support, and sacrifice.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for my advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Elizabeth Moje. I could not have completed this dissertation without your guidance, support, and encouragement. You have helped me grow from a student to a scholar. Thank you for so generously sharing your expertise and opening doors to help me see just how far I can explore.

Thank you to the members of my committee, Dr. Chandra Alston, Dr. Chauncey Monte-Sano, and Dr. David Gold, for their mentorship and critical feedback to improve my writing. I have appreciated your positivity and willingness to support me both academically and professionally throughout this process. Thank you for encouraging me to see and write past my own disciplinary boundaries and for your insight into teacher education research and rhetoric and composition studies.

My deepest thanks goes to the members of the Writing Group. You not only invited me into your community, but completely welcomed me. Thank you for your trust.

I would like to thank my community at the School of Education. To my professors, thank you for inviting me into the world of academia. To my graduate student colleagues, I am so grateful to have a support system to look after my academic needs and overall well-being. A special thanks goes out to my colleagues in the ALD research team for your feedback and encouragement in the final stages of completing my dissertation, and for your unique insights which have developed my own thinking around adolescent literacy and disciplinary literacy. I hope that we continue to collaborate for years to come.

I am indebted to my family, whose love and support have sustained me throughout my educational career. To my sister, Annie, thank you for your unconditional support. To my father, Trung Dinh Nguyen, your sacrifices instilled in me the value of educational opportunity and equity. And to my mother, Hoa Thi Mai, thank you for your relentless love and care, and extending your love to my growing family.

To my husband, Andrew Kwok, thank you for being my foundation, my calm, and my comfort. These first years of marriage have been a whirlwind, both of us completing our dissertations while raising Madelyn notwithstanding, but your academic and familial support has made this experience not only possible, but also joyful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF APPENDICES .....	vii
ABSTRACT .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. Introduction .....	1
II. Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives .....	13
III. Research Methods and Design .....	43
IV. A Complication of Collaboration: Making Sense of Disciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, and Generality .....	72
V. Social and Structural Influences of Learning How to Teach Disciplinary Writing .....	127
VI. Conclusions and Implications .....	187
APPENDICES .....	229
REFERENCES .....	252

## LIST OF FIGURES

1.1: Disciplinary Literacy and Cognitive Processing Instruction Models.....	9
3.1: Contextualized Research Design.....	44
3.2: Observational Memo and Open Coding.....	58
3.3: Key Linkage Chart .....	61
4.1: The WG Mission Statement .....	74
4.2: Teachers’ Posters of Genres and Skills by Content Area.....	81
4.3: Teachers’ Posters of Feedback on Student Writing Sample in Three-Day Training .....	91
4.4: Total of Needs in Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training.....	103
4.5: Sentence Starter Bookmark—Artifact from Monthly Meeting.....	109
5.1: Three-Day Training Teacher Feedback Needs: Incorporate into Instruction.....	142
5.2: RAFT Assignment Used by Mr. Lynden .....	164
5.3: Graphic Organizer to Compare Two Primary Documents Used by Mr. Lynden.....	167
5.4: RAFT Rubric Used by Mr. Lynden.....	173
5.5: Student RAFT Example .....	175
5.6: Mr. Lynden’s Feedback.....	176
5.7: Sentence Starters Used by Mr. Lynden .....	180
5.8: Modeling the Sentence Starters .....	181
6.1: Key Linkage Chart .....	189

## LIST OF TABLES

1.1: Overview of Research Design .....	5
3.1: Data Collection Timeline .....	46
3.2: Overview of Research Design .....	47
3.3: Focal Teachers.....	55
3.4: Steering Committee .....	55
3.5: Gots and Needs Categories from Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training .....	64
4.1: Gots Categories from Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training .....	97
4.2: Presentation of Tools in Monthly Meetings .....	107

## LIST OF APPENDICES

A: District Demographics .....	229
B: Focus Group Interview Protocols .....	230
C: Teacher Interview Protocols .....	232
D: Coding Key.....	237
E: Genres and Skills Posters from Three-Day Training.....	246
F: Student Sample from Three-Day Training.....	251

## **ABSTRACT**

Despite the growing push towards educational reform for disciplinary writing instruction, attention to the role of professional learning programs in achieving those reforms is poorly understood. To understand the experiences of subject area teachers learning to teach disciplinary writing, I conducted a qualitative study examining a professional development program called the “Writing Group” (WG), which was designed to prepare teachers how to teach disciplinary writing through collaborative learning experiences. The WG was comprised of a multidisciplinary team of teachers (n participants= 267) that participated in professional development involving three-day trainings and monthly meetings.

I studied the context of the professional development and followed four focal teachers into their classrooms, tracing teachers’ understanding writing instruction beginning with their professional development experiences and concluding with their enactment of writing instruction. I engaged in constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) throughout the professional development and instructional data to find patterns within and across the data sources and to triangulate my findings.

Analyses revealed that the contexts of the WG and teachers’ schools mediated teachers’ understandings of disciplinary literacy instruction and how they taught writing. Although the WG was designed as a professional development for writing instruction through interdisciplinary collaborative experiences, the professional development facilitators and participants missed opportunities to discuss the characteristics of writing and teaching writing in discipline-specific ways. The WG gravitated toward general perspectives on writing in part because teachers



conflated interdisciplinary approaches to writing instruction with generic approaches, which did not fully meet the teachers' instructional needs. Even so, teachers were highly invested in the professional development because they felt a sense of solidarity and ownership of their teaching within the WG community. Furthermore, the general approaches to writing fed into teachers' instruction, even as the pressures of teaching bolstered teachers' use of generic writing strategies and their loyalty to the WG. The teachers found solace in the WG as a protected space away from these pressures of teaching, so they remained positive of the WG and did not critique it or its members for fear of jeopardizing the organization, even if teachers enacted strategies with limited success.

This dissertation responds to the recent conversations about what disciplinary literacy instruction means and what it entails in the face of national reform and the pressures of teaching. My findings suggest that the work of applying generic writing strategies to teach disciplinary writing instruction is challenging and requires disciplinary understanding as well as literacy expertise. In addition, the findings of this study raise questions about how the structures of professional development programs can serve its goals. Further examination of the structures of professional development is necessary to understand how to honor teachers' expertise while also leaving room for members to productively critique each other and grow.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Rationale**

Claiming an “adolescent literacy crisis,” research and policy has long called attention to the low levels of reading and writing proficiency among high school students (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; CCAAL, 2010; Kamil, 2003; NCW, 2003). For example, the 2011 results of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), show that only 27 percent of 12th grade students scored at the Proficient level or above in writing (NCES, 2012). Analyses show that more than half of first-year college students were unable to write analytical arguments, synthesize information in writing, or write papers that were relatively free of language errors, skills that are critical to academic success (Sabler, 2002). Without a solid grasp of writing skills, it is unlikely that students will thrive in college or in the workplace (NCW, 2004). As a response to this issue, educational researchers have turned to disciplinary literacy instruction as a way to prepare students for these increased writing demands. The turn to disciplinary literacy has shifted research on general writing and literacy to the ways writing is carried out as a function of discipline-specific skills, knowledge, and purposes (Moje, 2007, 2008).

The premise of this research study came from a concern that, by and large, schools are not spaces where adolescents have access to the particular ways of writing in the disciplines, or the ways of writing that are necessary to prepare them for college and the workforce. In the past thirty years, writing instruction in secondary schools has largely remained the same. Applebee

and Langer's landmark study in the 1980s on the state of high school writing instruction revealed that writing was rarely assigned in high school (Applebee, 1981, 1986; Applebee, Auten, & Lehr, 1981). And over thirty years later, the amount of writing opportunities in classrooms has slightly increased, but these opportunities seem to largely involve writing tasks where students copy existing information (Applebee & Langer, 2006, 2011), instead of building on or transforming information in order to communicate claims and contribute knowledge to a community (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987, 2006). In addition, on the occasions when writing is assigned in high school, writing assignments are used largely for summative assessment purposes (Read & Landon-Hays, 2013) rather than opportunities to learn disciplinary ways of writing and thinking. Students have limited opportunities to learn to write partly because teaching and assessing writing is a time-consuming and complicated task, one that teachers might not fully be prepared for (Huot, 2002; Kihara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009; Read & Landon-Hays, 2013). Teachers may also face difficulty attending to students' academic literacy skills as well as content area instruction (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

In response, the Common Core State Standards (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010) has specified expectations for students to write academically in all of their content area courses. Subsequently, teachers who specialize in subject areas such as math, science, and history are now expected to teach disciplinary writing. However, despite the growing push toward educational reform for disciplinary writing instruction, attention to the role of professional learning programs in achieving those reforms is poorly understood. In addition, although interest in adolescent literacy has grown (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000; Snow & Biancarosa, 2004), much of this research overlooks the role of writing and secondary writing instruction in

literacy development (Graham & Perin, 2007; Kwok et al., in press), and even less research focuses on disciplinary writing instruction (Kiuahara, Graham, & Hawken, 2009). A more comprehensive approach to studying how teachers learn to teach disciplinary writing is necessary because teachers are responsible for carrying out the writing standards of the Common Core into practice (Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Spillane, 1999).

Researchers have also argued that current research on professional learning opportunities is inadequate because it does not account for teachers' values, motivations, and the processes by which teachers take up new instructional practices (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2002), nor does it account for the ways teachers learn in professional development contexts and how they apply what they have learned to suit instructional purposes (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Desimone, 2009).

To address these calls for deeper understandings of how teachers learn to teach writing, I draw on a sociocultural view of teacher learning (Kelly, 2006; Lasky, 2005; McDonald, 2005). Viewing teacher learning through a sociocultural lens emphasizes that teacher expertise is always situated in particular contexts, and that the process of learning does not solely reside in the individual, but that teachers learn to take on particular ways of instructional practice within communities, thus shaping and being shaped by the group's learning (Kelly, 2006). Therefore, teachers do not learn to teach in isolation; rather, research suggests that teachers learn effectively when they can collectively examine, question, and evaluate conceptions of teaching and teaching practice in learning communities (e.g. Snow-Gerono, 2005; Talbert, 2009).

Yet, few studies have problematized the social relationships within collaborative professional development settings and how those social dynamics mediate what and how teachers learn (Clark, 2001; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). This study addresses

this gap in the literature to investigate how the social and cultural practices in professional development and school settings matter in the ways teachers learn to teach writing in their content area. I pay particular attention to the ways relationships of power play out in professional development and at school while acknowledging that power does not reside in individuals, but moves in unpredictable ways as people interact with each other (Foucault, 1972).

### **Overview of Research Design**

To understand how subject area teachers learn to teach disciplinary writing, I conducted a qualitative study examining a professional development program, called the Writing Group<sup>1</sup> (WG), which was designed to prepare teachers to teach disciplinary writing through collaborative learning experiences. In this study, I sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do subject area teachers in a sustained professional development group support each other to teach disciplinary writing?
  - a. To what extent do teachers' motivations and values matter in how they learn to teach writing?
  - b. To what extent does the teacher community play a role in their professional development?
2. What methods do the teachers carry from professional development into their practice of teaching disciplinary writing?
  - a. What are the focal teachers' understandings of writing in their discipline?
  - b. What are the focal teachers' understandings of how to teach disciplinary writing?
  - c. How and why do the focal teachers adapt writing strategies and activities from the WG into their instruction?

---

<sup>1</sup> Names of the professional development organization and teachers are pseudonyms.

## Setting

The WG was comprised of a multidisciplinary team of teachers which provided professional development involving three-day trainings and monthly meetings where teachers learned about different tools and strategies for teaching disciplinary writing (n participants=267). Within this context, I studied a focal group of at least one teacher from each content area that was represented in the WG monthly meetings: English Language Arts (n=2 females), history (n=1 male), and science (n=1 female). Each of the four focal teachers came from different schools and from three different districts, but all participated in the monthly meetings.

## Data Sources

The qualitative data used to carry out this study came from two categories of sources: Professional Development and Instructional data. The table below provides an outline of all the data sources, organized by research question and category.

*Table 1.1: Overview of Research Design*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Data Sources</b>
<b>1. How do subject area teachers in a sustained professional development group support each other to teach disciplinary writing?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent do teachers' motivations and values matter in how they learn to teach writing?</li><li>• To what extent does the teacher community play a role in their professional development?</li></ul>	Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• teacher feedback on the three-day trainings (n=275)</li><li>• teacher feedback on the monthly meetings (n=34)</li><li>• field notes, memos, and artifacts (n hours of observation=77)</li><li>• focus group interviews (n=2)</li></ul>
<b>2. What methods do the teachers carry from professional development into their practice of teaching disciplinary writing?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the focal teachers' understandings of writing in their discipline?</li><li>• What are focal teachers' understandings of how to teach disciplinary writing?</li><li>• How and why do the focal teachers adapt writing strategies and activities from the WG into their instruction?</li></ul>	Instructional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• field notes, video, audio, and artifacts of classroom instruction (n hours of observation= 87)</li><li>• multiple semi-structured interviews with focal teachers (n=12)</li><li>• student writing samples (n=30)</li></ul>

The sources of data from the professional development included: a) observations (n hours=77) and b) teacher feedback forms (n=309). I observed the professional development over the course of two years. The purpose of attending these professional development sessions was to get a sense of the community in which teachers learned about disciplinary writing instruction. The WG also provided me with access to teacher feedback forms in which teachers shared what they learned, what they planned to implement, and/or what additional support they needed in order to implement what they learned.

The sources of data from teachers' instruction included: a) observations (n hours= 87) and b) multiple semi-structured interviews (n= 12). To study how teachers took up the writing instructional tools they learned through professional development, I observed four focal teachers and their implementation of two units of instruction that included writing opportunities. I conducted three hour-long semi-structured interviews with each focal teacher. I conducted these interviews with the goal understanding why the teachers taught writing, what they focused on when teaching and evaluating writing, and why they valued their time in the WG. I also used the interviews to explore teachers' considerations for planning and implementing the unit in relation to what they had learned from the WG.

### **Analysis Methods**

I engaged in constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) throughout the professional development and instructional data. I first engaged in open coding within each data source, continually comparing those codes with the raw data and my analytical memos (Charmaz, 2014) to refine my definitions of each code. I then moved to axial coding to merge codes across data sources to create larger themes of findings. Throughout my analysis process, I engaged in constant recursive data analysis and moved back and forth from

the professional development data and the instructional data, which allowed me to triangulate the data and validate my findings.

### **Key Terms**

For the sake of clarity, I define several key terms necessary for understanding the findings of my dissertation, terms that are often used interchangeably in education and literacy research. I pair each key term with another key term to highlight the key distinctions I make in my dissertation.

### **Generic Strategies and Disciplinary Literacy Instruction**

Literacy strategies, as we know them today, have come from a long history from cognitive processing theory. In Figure 1.1, I present two diagrams of how literacy strategies are viewed through cognitive perspectives and the role that literacy strategies can play in disciplinary literacy instruction. The nested diagram on the left represents what teachers need to teach literacy strategies across the content areas based on *cognitive processing* models of reading development (the core of the diagram). In this model, *reading strategies* were originally created to assist learners comprehend texts across the content areas (Herber, 1970). These reading strategies (e.g. underlining, self-questioning) were based on cognitive models of reading development, and were meant to help students read independently over time. Researchers also developed *teaching strategies* (Alvermann & Moore, 1991), meant to scaffold students in engaging in the reading strategies (e.g. graphic organizer, semantic feature analysis). These teaching and learning strategies came to be known as content area literacy strategies. In turn, a professional development that views literacy from a cognitive perspective may be in favor of teaching *generic strategy instruction*, where strategies can be taught out of context and students are expected to transfer reading and writing skills across the content areas.



In contrast, for teachers to teach *disciplinary literacy instruction*, they first need a foundation in *disciplinary ways of knowing*, which is represented as the core of the nested diagram on the right, below (see Figure 1.1). Disciplinary ways of knowing involves having a foundation of content knowledge of the disciplinary domain, but it also involves much more. Disciplinary ways of knowing involves understanding the particular ways of constructing and communicating knowledge within the discipline (Bazerman, 1981, Parry, 1998), which requires identifying with the disciplinary community (Lemke, 1990). For a mathematician to engage in disciplinary ways of knowing, for example, she would need a solid foundation of math content knowledge, but she would also need to know how to work with that knowledge in practice: how to read into definitions and proofs and to use that knowledge to solve other intellectual problems. In addition, to communicate her findings, she would need to identify with other mathematicians in her community.

Because disciplinary communities revolve around this construction of knowledge, members must engage in *disciplinary literacy practices* to actually perform their work and communicate with each other. In turn, teachers need to know about the unique literacy practices they engage in, and how and why those disciplinary literacy practices serve particular ways of disciplinary knowing and inquiry.

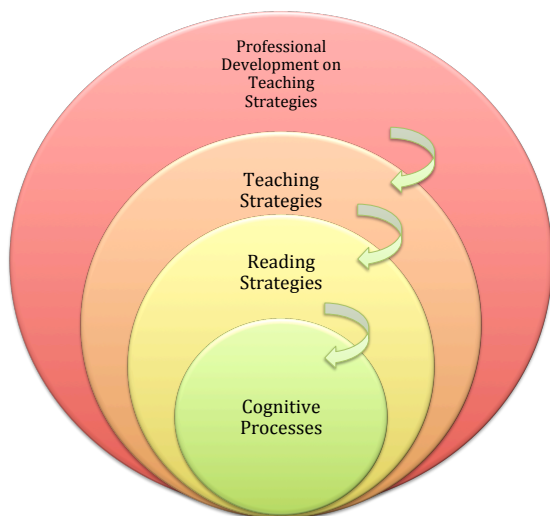
Once teachers have a foundation in the disciplinary ways of knowing and the ways that literacy supports them to construct, communicate, and investigate knowledge in their discipline, they must find ways to support their students in engaging in similar disciplinary work.

*Disciplinary literacy instruction* engages students in discipline-specific reading and writing practices that support them in making sense of and constructing knowledge in the service of disciplinary inquiry and learning. Because so much of what expert writers do is taken-for-

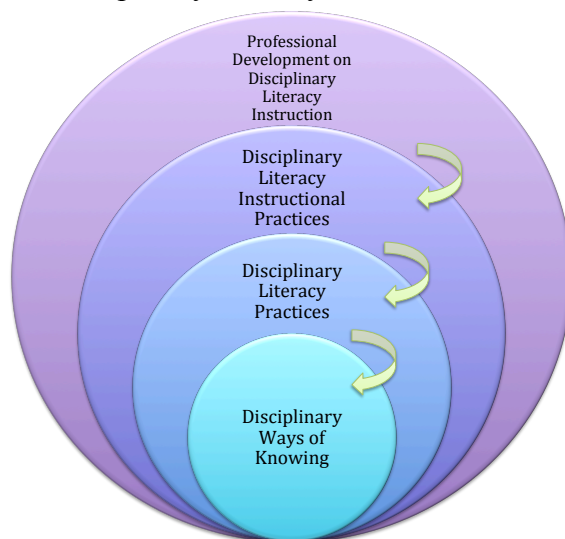
granted, part of the work of inviting students into disciplinary communities is to make explicit how disciplinarians think and how they engage in literacy practices to do their work. Teachers can use comprehension and composition strategies from cognitive science research to make explicit and to elicit these disciplinary ways of reading, writing, and thinking. When doing so, part of the work of disciplinary literacy instruction requires teachers to apply strategies to disciplinary purposes for reading and writing and to account for the demands of disciplinary audiences. When literacy teaching strategies are used to carry out disciplinary literacy instruction, the strategies do not look generic because they have been tailored according to the teachers' discipline-specific instructional goals, what the teacher knows about his/her students, and the purposes for reading and writing in the service of disciplinary inquiry. In this sense, literacy strategies are situated in disciplinary literacy practices, which ultimately serve to support students to engage in disciplinary inquiry.

Figure 1.1: *Disciplinary Literacy and Cognitive Processing Instruction Models*

Cognitive Processing Instruction Model



Disciplinary Literacy Instruction Model



Moving one step further outward in the nested diagram on the right (Figure 1.1), to support teachers to teach disciplinary literacy instruction, *professional development on*

*disciplinary literacy instruction* needs to be able to create opportunities for teachers to develop and identify the unique disciplinary literacy practices, which are shaped by unique disciplinary ways of knowing. Professional development leaders also need to support teachers in developing their instructional practices, and be able to support teacher participants in seeing that the goal of disciplinary literacy instruction is to engage in disciplinary literacy practices in the service of disciplinary inquiry and ways of knowing.

In this model, professional development leaders support teachers to see how their instruction may support students in these unique ways of thinking, reading, and writing, and why the literacy practices and ways of knowing that students engage in are uniquely shaped by disciplinary norms and epistemologies. Such meta-awareness and navigational work is especially important if teachers are learning in a group that is comprised of teachers from across the disciplines.

### **Disciplinary, Interdisciplinary, and Multidisciplinary**

For a group to be *interdisciplinary*, the group must be composed of people who belong to or represent the thinking and practices of different disciplines. They must have a reason for coming together that requires multiple disciplinary perspectives, such as working on a complex or far-reaching intellectual problem (e.g. AIDS prevention, the use of technology in education). By working together, members of an interdisciplinary group draw on the intersections of their work to solve a problem and learn about the similarities and differences of the disciplinary ways of knowing and practice in each of the disciplines. To do work at these intersections, however, requires members to know the practices of their own discipline well so that they recognize what is unique about their contributions to the work, and how they can build on each other's disciplinary stances to the work. Therefore, to be a truly interdisciplinary group, members of the

group must have *disciplinary ways of knowing* and engage in *disciplinary literacy practices* themselves..

A *multidisciplinary* group, in contrast, does not mean that teachers are necessarily working on the same teaching problem or sharing their disciplinary knowledge for the benefit of each other's understanding or tackling a common problem. I define a multidisciplinary group as a space where teachers from different disciplines are mixed together, but are not necessarily collaborating at the intersections of their work. In other words, teachers might be in the same space, but they are not working on a common interdisciplinary goal and they are not learning about the practices of other disciplines to inform their understanding of their own disciplinary practices.

### **Community and Teacher Learning Community**

Research has long argued for a clearer conceptualization of *community* as applied to educational research (Grossman, Wineburg, Woolworth, 2001; Moje, 2000; Westheimer, 1998). Even though some have warned against simply borrowing notions of community from sociology and anthropology and applying them directly to education (Little & McLaughlin, 1993), models such as “communities of practice” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) which were not originally intended for educational settings, are now prominently used in educational research. Consequently, the term “community” in educational research often means a group of teachers who are working together toward the same goals (Wenger, 1998). Absent from this definition, however, are the relationships of power that mediate the bonds of the community (see Moje, 2000). Therefore, in order for a group of teachers to be a true *teacher learning community*, the members must experience some tensions that serve as catalysts for growth and learning (Grossman, Wineburg, Woolworth, 2001). This is particularly important if the teacher learning

community serves as professional development for teachers. A professional development program can be a community: a space where teachers are working together towards common goals; but it also must be a teacher *learning* community: a space for critique, dissension, and growth.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives**

#### **A Sociocultural Stance on Disciplinary Literacy**

Even with the push of the Common Core State Standards and reform efforts to develop literacy skills for all youth (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Zygouris-Coe, 2012), there is still much debate on what it means to teach literacy in the disciplines. Indeed, some question whether disciplinary literacy should even be a goal of instruction (Fagella-Luby, Graner, Deshler, Drew, 2012; Heller, 2010). The recent attention to disciplinary literacy has given rise to a debate between content area literacy instruction and disciplinary literacy instruction for supporting adolescents to comprehend and produce complex texts.

I preface by saying that I take a sociocultural stance on literacy. A sociocultural perspective on literacy asserts that literacy is not just the skill of reading and writing, but that reading and writing is always situated in and mediated by particular cultural and social contexts (Gee, 2012; Scribner & Cole, 1981). My sociocultural stance on literacy influences how I define disciplinary literacy practice and instruction because I view disciplinary literacy as a sociocultural construct. In short, I see content area literacy as focusing on generic skills and strategies to be applied to content specific texts. Disciplinary literacy instruction, in contrast, encourages teachers to situate strategies within the practices, social and cultural norms, and epistemologies of the disciplines. Disciplinary writing instruction also supports students to see how genre forms and conventions are a function of these disciplinary ways of thinking, being,

and doing. I begin with an overview of how disciplinary literacy for secondary instruction emerged in literacy research to help explain how I view the relationships among literacy strategies, the practices of disciplinary experts, and disciplinary literacy instruction.

### **Content Area Literacy and Disciplinary Literacy Instruction**

Since 1937 when Gray when coined the slogan, “Every teacher a teacher of reading,” (Whipple, 1937) educators and researchers have debated how subject area teachers should teach both reading skills and content. Herber (1970) popularized the notion that teachers should teach students both content and literacy strategies to support their reading within content area classrooms, even offering his own slogan: “content determines process” to suggest that teachers could integrate strategies into their instruction to support students’ content learning. Theories of content area literacy at this time were based in cognitive psychology and the idea that teachers should build on readers’ schema to help them access content area texts. In turn, this gave rise to content area literacy instruction as largely generic strategy instruction that could be applied to any content area domain. Content area literacy approaches also encouraged teachers to choose appropriate strategies based on what teachers knew about the content and their students (Jones, Palincsar, Ogle, & Carr, 1987). Yet, the notion that teachers should choose strategies based on the norms, practices, and epistemology, or nature of knowledge, of the content area had not yet been introduced.

As content area gained ground in literacy research, the ways researchers thought about strategy instruction became more complex. Moore, Readence, and Rickelman (1983), for example, provided a framework for thinking about and researching the recurring issues about the study of content area reading instruction. Issues included who should teach content area literacy, how to build student autonomy and independence while teaching strategies, and how to build

developmental trajectories of strategy instruction. Of particular concern was whether or not skills and strategies should be taught dependent on the content, or if generic skills should be taught and then applied across the content areas. Even though the term “disciplinary literacy” had not yet been popularized in the literature, researchers were beginning to question whether generic literacy strategies were appropriate and adequate enough to support students across the content areas given the differences in content and texts.

Taking up the question of whether one should teach generic or discipline-specific strategies, researchers have taken different stances on what disciplinary literacy means and actually is. Some researchers have taken a developmental perspective on disciplinary literacy and differentiated between generic and discipline-specific strategies, but have made these distinctions in different ways. For example, Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) built on the concept of disciplinary literacy as a response to educators’ frustrations about the practicalities of teaching both content and reading skill. They asserted that literacy instruction is embedded in the teaching of content and presented a model of disciplinary literacy instruction to help students move from generalizable reading skills and strategies to discipline-specific reading skills and strategies. With this model, they argued for a developmental approach for adolescent literacy development, as students moved from basic literacy skills to more specialized disciplinary literacy skills associated with the texts of history, science, literature, or math. Thus, the differentiation of literacy strategies was based on students’ level of literacy development as well as the content area in which they were reading.

Sociolinguistic perspectives on disciplinary literacy are also based on a developmental perspective of literacy, but are more focused on the meanings of language patterns that are specific to each discipline (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Fang, 2012; Fang & Schleppegrell,



2010). Sociolinguists have examined how language patterns become more complex as students grapple with more complex texts and abstract ideas (Christie, 2012). An example of a language feature that is often introduced in secondary science and history texts is nominalization, in which non-noun words or phrases are recast as a noun (Schleppegrell, 2004). Nominalization allows writers to describe complicated processes and synthesize them so that writers can refer back to these processes in one word or phrase, allowing writers to construct meaning in even more complex and abstract ways. The point of analyzing language patterns closely is to help learners “raise their awareness about the varied ways language constructs knowledge in different subjects” (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010, p. 591). In addition, these language analyses are always tied to the disciplinary social and cultural norms and conventions in which the text was written (Hyland, 2004, 2012).

Lee and Spratley (2010) explain that a major challenge for adolescents in secondary school is the shift they experience from *learning to read* to *reading to learn*. In reading to learn content, adolescents need to be able to read in more complex and sophisticated ways that require content knowledge. Therefore, students need more specific and sophisticated kinds of literacy strategies to support them in reading complex texts. The authors promote using generic and discipline specific reading strategies to teach content and reading strategies in tandem. As with Shanahan and Shanahan (2008), they differentiate between generic and discipline specific literacy strategies, and suggest that students should move toward using more discipline specific literacy strategies as they acquire more specific content knowledge. The authors also suggest that teachers should build on students’ prior knowledge and scaffold instruction to encourage students to use strategies more independently over time.

Although I do acknowledge that there is a difference between teaching strategies in generic ways and discipline specific ways, I make a different distinction than the work of the researchers I have just detailed here. I take a sociocultural stance on disciplinary literacy and assert that as teachers take up strategies in their instruction, they must adapt the strategies to fit the disciplinary purposes for making sense of and constructing knowledge (Gillis, 2014; Johnson, Watson, Delahunty, McSwiggen, & Smith, 2011). Therefore, as strategies are adapted or translated, they might not look so generic anymore. So, the debate between content area literacy and disciplinary literacy instruction is not a matter of whether or not one should teach generic literacy strategies vs. discipline specific strategies (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, Stewart, 2013; Fang & Coatam, 2013) but how to develop any kind of strategy to support students' inquiry and literate practices within a discipline and the institutional contexts of their classrooms.

In addition, even though generic strategies are produced for the purpose of being translatable across the disciplines, I argue that some strategies might not work for a particular discipline given the particular purpose, texts, and literate practices of the work at hand. In taking on a disciplinary literacy instructional approach, teachers not only choose to teach literacy strategies based on their understandings of students, of the content area, and of the complex texts, but also based on the social and cultural norms, practices, and epistemologies of the disciplines (Johnson et al., 2011). Moje (2008) explained how the purpose of teaching disciplinary literacy is not just about how to support students' access the complex texts of the disciplines, but to support students in constructing knowledge and developing their inquiry skills.

“...producing knowledge in a discipline requires fluency in making and interrogating knowledge claims, which in turn require fluency in a wide range of ways of constructing and communicating knowledge. Literacy thus becomes an essential aspect of disciplinary

practice, rather than a set of strategies or tools brought in to the disciplines to improve reading and writing of subject-matter texts” (p. 99).

Therefore, a major goal for teachers in enacting disciplinary literacy instruction should be to support students’ inquiry and construct knowledge, or write, in ways that are in line with the discipline’s cultural norms and ways of thinking. A key aspect of disciplinary literacy instruction, then, is to make disciplinary writing conventions explicit for students and to help them see why those writing conventions exist as cultural norms for building disciplinary knowledge. Therefore, as strategies are actually used in instruction, there is no such thing as a generic strategy because it is always used within particular contexts to support particular ways of writing and thinking. Rather, the concern for educators is how to adapt and develop strategies to support students to engage in the social, cultural, and epistemological norms and practices of the disciplines. Equally important, very few studies are dedicated to examining how teachers learn to teach the literacy practices of the different disciplines (for an exception see, Monte-Sano, 2012).

A sociocultural stance on disciplinary literacy not only takes into account the context of the disciplines, but also the institutional contexts in which students learn reading and writing strategies. In critiquing generic strategy instruction, O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje (1995) argue that “secondary content literacy research and teaching must move beyond the teaching of strategies alone and toward teaching pre- and inservice teachers to recognize, analyze, and work within the complexities that shape secondary teaching and learning” (p. 447). They bring to the foreground the complexities of secondary institutions, pedagogies, and school cultures and how the social, cultural, and epistemological norms and practices of the discipline mediate the teaching and learning of disciplinary literacy instruction. Therefore, the work of using strategies to support disciplinary literacy instruction is not simply about “infusing” (p. 454) strategies into instruction,

but involves making considerable adaptations appropriate to one's discipline and school context.

### **A Sociocultural Stance on Disciplinary Writing**

In terms of secondary writing and writing instruction, educational research and policy work has been valuable in identifying specific cognitive skills and strategies necessary for high-level reading and writing (Graham & Perin, 2007; Newell, Beach, Smith, & VanDerHeide, 2011), but have underrepresented the social aspects of writing effectively within an academic domain or subject area. For example, *Writing Next* provided eleven research-based strategies for effective adolescent writing instruction including collaborative writing, summarization, and writing for content learning (Graham & Perin, 2007). Although such strategies are useful, this meta-analysis largely ignored how such strategies are situated within sociocultural learning contexts and how academic writing is a social practice. This is problematic because research suggests that a primary focus on skill instruction may actually slow down literacy development (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009; Haycock, 2001; Lee & Spratley, 2010). Even work acknowledging the specialized nature of writing practices within each content area has tended to focus on the distinctiveness of the strategies used (Boyd, Sullivan, Popp, & Hughes, 2012; Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011), rather than on the discipline-constructed norms or expectations that guide such strategy use.

In addition, what this work does not report is that these skills, strategies, and ways of writing are products of socialization into certain linguistic conventions that aid the writer in communicating more effectively with their disciplinary audience (Hyland, 2012). Strategic writers find ways to write that are consistent with the norms and conventions that members of the discipline expect, and these conventions have developed over time as the group favors one way

of writing over another because these ways of writing fit with their social and cultural beliefs about what knowledge is and how it is produced (Lemke, 2001).

Although all disciplines share the work of producing and communicating knowledge, how that work is carried out in writing looks different. For example, Bazerman's (1981) analysis of journal articles from three disciplines shows that that readers in biology generally share and accept ways of gathering evidence and criteria for evaluating claims and evidence. Consequently, writers in biology do not urge their readers to believe their findings. Rather, they expect their audience to evaluate the soundness of the argument based on the norms of science. In contrast, because sociological audiences do not share common frameworks or criteria for justifying their claims, writers in sociology must be more explicit in convincing their readers toward their argument. Part of supporting one's argument in sociology involves reconstructing the relevant literature to establish a framework for the argument. Overall, there is no all-encompassing rule that requires a discipline to follow one convention or another, yet over time, various disciplines come to favor certain genres and conventions based on their epistemologies and purposes for communication; these favored genres and conventions become the norms by which others who seek to enter or communicate with members are identified and positioned.

A sociocultural perspective of disciplines serves as a reminder that the specialized practices, norms, and conventions of the disciplines are all socially constructed and based on the goals, purposes, and epistemologies of the disciplines. Therefore, disciplinary practices are borne out of and are continually refined through interaction with other members of the community. What this means for teachers who are learning how to teach disciplinary writing is that they must learn how skills and strategies can be embedded as practices in the shared goals and epistemologies of the disciplines. In addition, teachers need to make explicit the norms and

conventions of the disciplinary discourse community for their students, especially in situations where time to learn is constrained or where differences in conventions are stark. In other words, students need access not just to certain skills and strategies, but also the shared goals and epistemologies of the disciplines.

Lemke (1990) explained that whenever people engage in the discourse of a discipline, “we are helping to create, or re-create, a community of people who share certain beliefs and values. We communicate best with people who are already members of our own community: those who have learned to use language in the same ways that we do” (p. x). Lemke highlights the social nature of disciplinary discourse. In this sense, disciplines can be thought of as discourse communities, where language is used based on shared understandings and values. Furthermore, those understandings involve epistemological understandings and ways of communicating those understandings in writing, or “how we use the specialized language of science [or math, history, literature] to make sense of the world, and to make sense of and to one another” (Lemke, 1990, p. ix).

Because research on disciplinary writing at the secondary level is limited, I turn to research situated at the college level to illustrate how writing practices differ as a function of the members’ expectations and epistemologies of the disciplines. For example, Gimenez (2012) studied the writing of undergraduate students in midwifery or nursing programs to highlight the domain-specific nature of disciplinary practices based on the epistemologies and cultural practices of those disciplines. Because nursing was more associated with a positivist stance and midwifery with a more constructive model of knowledge, the ways that students dealt with criticality, evidence, and impersonality in their writing differed. In particular, nursing students tended to evaluate their evidence in hierarchical manner (with opinion least valued for writing)

whereas midwifery students tended to evaluate evidence dependent on context and the situation of the writing topic. The findings of this study suggest that the ways the students wrote in the disciplines differed not only as a result of working with different content, but also in “the ways this content [was] produced, communicated, evaluated, and renovated...[so] being literate in a discipline means understanding of both disciplinary content and disciplinary habits of mind” (Fang & Coatam, 2013, p. 628). Skilled writers, therefore, seem to draw on their awareness of audience, disciplinary epistemologies, and cultural norms to guide their writing choices. Likewise, research comparing students’ approaches and perspectives of writing for different audiences (Carbone & Orellana, 2010; Gunel, Hand, & McDermott, 2009) underscores the notion that disciplines are governed by socially created norms and conventions. Distinct disciplinary ways of writing and thinking exist as a function of the norms, expectations, and ideas about how knowledge is generated in the discipline (Lemke, 2001). Epistemologies within the discipline, therefore, may produce particular writing practices, even as epistemologies are reproduced by those practices.

To study the relationship between writing, epistemology, and disciplinary cultures, Parry (1998) analyzed 24 doctoral dissertations from the sciences, social sciences, and humanities to categorize the language features that writers make in each of these academic domains and to show how those language features are a product of the purposes for writing in a particular discipline. For example, because a purpose of writing in the sciences is to report findings of the physical world and add to existing knowledge, the nature of arguments in science are typically analytical and are not qualified or justified. In contrast, a purpose for writing in the social sciences is to describe and explain human experiences and to test existing frameworks of thought. Therefore, the nature of arguments are typically qualified and hortatory, or attempting to

change commonly held perspectives in the discipline. Parry's analysis underscores that there are key differences of writing in each of the disciplines, and these differences are shaped by epistemological and social norms. In addition, these differences are rarely made explicit for those learning to write in the disciplines. Therefore, one major challenge with learning how to write inside of the disciplines is that the conventions and norms of academic writing are often tacit, yet students must somehow learn these tacit and taken for granted ways of producing and communicating knowledge within the disciplines.

To unpack what the literate practices of disciplinary experts actually look like, educational researchers have turned to the practices of experts in science (Bazerman, 1985; Yore, Hand, & Florence, 2004), history (Greene, 1994; Rouet, Favart, Britt, Perfetti, 1997; Wineburg, 1991), math (Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011), and poetry (Peskin, 1998). Many of these studies compared the literacy processes and understandings of disciplinary experts to students' practices and understandings. For example, Wineburg (1991) conducted an expert-novice study by using a think-aloud protocol to compare the reasoning processes of eight high school seniors and eight historians as they reviewed historical documents. In general, the historians were apt to use sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration heuristics and read the documents with a purpose of addressing a historical problem they identified. Students, on the other hand, had a tendency to read the documents as fact rather than as a historical account to be interpreted. Such differences in reading and strategy use were in part based on the differing epistemologies between experts and novices. Because the historians shared a tacit understanding of the goals and purposes of knowledge generation in the discipline, they seemed to easily engage in taken-for-granted reading practices in the discipline even when they had less knowledge of the particular



history topic. The students, in contrast, did not have access to the implicit purposes, practices, and/or epistemologies of history to guide their strategy use.

To study the relationship between awareness of disciplinary epistemologies and writing, Greene (1994) compared the writing approaches of 15 college juniors and seniors with three historians. The students and historians differed in how they approached writing tasks, and this difference seemed related to their epistemology and respective sense of audience. The students saw knowledge as given sets of information to report to their teacher who would eventually evaluate their work. This limited epistemology seemed to influence their writing choices, relying more on the historical sources for information and being hesitant about establishing an argument or opinion in their report. The historians, in contrast, held an epistemology of knowledge as constructed in history, and saw their role in helping to construct that knowledge. In turn, they did not explicitly make references to an audience during their think-alouds. In addition, their understanding of how to write reports and solve problems seemed consistent with the expectations of how to communicate and justify their contributions to knowledge in the disciplinary community. These findings suggest that the expert historians did not have to address an audience explicitly because they were already immersed in the culture of history. In a sense, the historians had already come “to think critically about what they read, integrate information from different sources with their own knowledge, and structure their work in ways that adhered to certain habits of mind in history” (Greene, 1994, p. 95). Such differences between students’ and expert historians’ practices also suggest that students did not have explicit access to disciplinary literacy practices in history.

These expert-novice studies have shown that the literate practices of disciplinary experts are shared based on their social, cultural, and epistemological norms for working with

knowledge. Thus, disciplines can be defined as cultures with shared ways of thinking, being, and doing (Gee, 1990) that bring context and purpose to these epistemologies and practices of members. Members of a discipline share an epistemology for working with knowledge through discursive practices, and writers draw on this epistemology, as well as shared discursive practices, to communicate effectively with one another. The expert-novice studies also show that experts draw on these epistemologies to give purpose for their inquiry; they identify a problem space and then work with texts in specialized ways to make sense of, construct, and communicate knowledge (Moje, 2015).

### **Disciplinary Writing Instruction as Invitation into Disciplinary Cultures**

If disciplines are cultures, then what does it look like to invite someone into a disciplinary culture? How does one teach the discursive practices and ways of thinking of another culture? In other words, what should disciplinary literacy instruction look like? Although there is still debate on what constitutes the practices of disciplinary literacy instruction, Moje (2015) offered a conceptual framework for disciplinary literacy instruction based on a sociocultural stance to attend to students' "affect and emotion, imagination and curiosity, value and purpose (what some refer to as 'motivation'), and social and cultural practices, interactions, conventions, and norms" as they learn within the disciplines and learn how to navigate across in- and out-of-school domains (p. 255). The heuristic for teaching disciplinary literacy includes four Es: *engage*, *elicit/engineer*, *examine*, and *evaluate*, which are designed to apprentice students through cycles of framing problems, analyzing texts, and communicating claims. Moje's framework draws on the practices that give purpose to the work of disciplinary experts, and it provides a heuristic for teachers to scaffold learners through these cultural and social literacy practices. The framework serves as a reminder that the purpose for teaching students to write should be to support students

in these disciplinary practices. Furthermore, the teaching of writing strategies should be situated in disciplinary practice, rather than in isolation or for the sake of teaching a strategy.

For teachers to teach disciplinary literacy, they need an understanding of disciplinary literacy practices for working with and constructing knowledge. To this end, studies have also looked into teachers' understandings of what it means to teach writing as teachers develop disciplinary expertise (Monte-Sano, 2008; Monte-Sano & Harris, 2012). Monte-Sano (2008), for example, compared the instructional approaches of two history teachers, Bobeck and Rossi, to examine which approach seemed to support students to write historical written arguments. Although Bobeck and Rossi assigned the same amount of reading and essay assignments, most of Bobeck's students improved their writing scores, whereas the student scores in Rossi's class largely stayed the same, or in approximately one-fourth of the class, declined. Monte-Sano attributes these results to the different epistemological and pedagogical approaches of the teachers. Largely guided by a disciplinary epistemology that history is about interpreting the past (Stearns, Seixas, Wineburg, 2000), Bobeck gave students multiple opportunities to develop their interpretations through interactive discussions and group work, thus engaging in discussions to make their thinking visible. In addition, students had opportunities to have one-on-one conferences with the teacher to work on their writing practice. In contrast, Rossi's teaching seemed largely driven by the AP test. To that end, he mainly covered historical facts through lecture, where students were expected to listen silently, take notes, and memorize. In addition, he assigned essay assignments with little guidance, providing approximately six minutes of writing instruction the entire time that Monte-Sano was observing. Monte-Sano concluded that "[t]hese different epistemological stances permeated each teacher's worksheets, activities, and assignments" (2008, p. 1069). Although both were veteran teachers (each with more than ten

years of teaching experience) and sufficient knowledge of their discipline (both had degrees in history), Bobeck's students seemed to write better historical arguments because she apprenticed them into sharing her epistemology of history as interpretation and using that epistemology to provide writing activities that guided her students' historical reasoning. As such, Bobeck invited students into the disciplinary discourse community of history by explicitly guiding them through historical ways of thinking and writing.

To inform how teachers might support students to write in the disciplines, researchers have also studied students' perspectives of writing in the disciplines (Barton, 1993; De La Paz, Ferretti, Wissinger, Yee, & MacArthur, 2012; Forman & Ford, 2013; Hand, Hohenshell, & Prain, 2004; Monte-Sano, 2010; Monte-Sano & De La Paz, 2012; Prain & Hand, 1999; Young & Leinhardt, 1998). Recent work such as Monte-Sano and De La Paz's (2012) study examined the relationships between particular characteristics of writing tasks and students' historical reasoning. They created four argumentative writing tasks using the same texts, but aimed at a different method of historical reasoning (i.e. situated, sourcing, document analysis, and causal) and randomly administered one of these four tasks to 101 students. To determine students' historical reasoning skills, students' writing samples were scored based on a rubric that focused on substantiation, perspective recognition, and contextualization; these were historical reasoning traits that Monte-Sano (2010) had previously identified as qualities of adolescent history writing. Results suggested that students were more likely to engage in historical reasoning when the prompts asked students to do historical investigative work such as sourcing, corroborating texts, and examining causation. Monte-Sano's work gives us a glimpse of the shared heuristics of developing writers as they learn to become part of the discourse community of history. In

addition, this work revealed that it is possible for students to call upon some of the tacit historical reasoning skills to use in their writing when they are explicitly asked to do so.

An important aspect of writing within the disciplines is that the practices are often tacit and taken for granted (Parry, 1998; Wilder, 2012). Even though we can visually see the products of students' writing, what lies invisible are students' thought processes as they constructed their piece, and the considerations they made based on their audience, their knowledge of the topic, and their purposes for writing. Educational research on supporting students to access the tacit and taken for granted thinking process of experts has focused on metacognition. At its core, metacognition is "being able to talk about the different cognitive, social, and metacognitive capabilities that are needed, and when and why they are useful" (White & Frederiksen, 2005, p. 211). I add that metacognition is not only about talk, but writing can also serve as an opportunity for students to make visible the disciplinary practices that involve more tacit ways of writing, being, speaking, and doing (Greenleaf et al., 2001). Composition researchers drawing on cognitive theory (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Murray, 1972) made some aspects of the invisible process of writing visible through an instructional framework called the process approach, which gained hold in secondary writing instruction. Through the process approach, writers go through stages of pre-writing, writing, revision, and publishing activities.

Such explicitness may be most important for disciplines that make up the academic domain of ELA because there has been little attention to these disciplines in contrast to other disciplines such as history, science, and math. In literary studies, there is some resistance to making the features and writing practices explicit, and not everyone believes that instruction should make these practices visible for writers (Wilder, 2012). As a response to this gap in the research, Wilder (2012) examined the disciplinary writing of literary studies by charting

disciplinary topoi, or methods for constructing and evaluating literary arguments, and exploring how literary professors and students drew on these topoi in their writing and assessment. She found that even though teachers resisted making explicit some of these disciplinary norms and literary topoi, they did adhere to them in their evaluation. Furthermore, when students were explicitly taught these disciplinary topoi, they were able to draw on the topoi in their writing and scored higher than students who did not receive any explicit instruction. Instead of playing a “guessing game” of what teachers wanted, students had clearer expectations for their writing and how their writing was shaped by disciplinary norms and conventions.

I take the stance that in order to improve students’ writing, students must be explicitly invited into the disciplines as cultures, and this is especially important for students who do not regularly have access to these disciplinary cultures outside of school (Delpit, 1993). When students do not have clear understanding of why they are writing the way they are for class, their writing experience is decontextualized. This decontextualization, Wardle (2009) argued, is a reason why students are challenged by writing in school. In attempting to navigate vague or contradictory purposes for writing in class, the students end up writing a “mutt genre,” or a piece that is only seen in the context of the class and is not applicable to actual writing in the disciplines.

Teaching disciplinary writing, then, plays a crucial part in apprenticing students into disciplinary cultures. Students can be apprenticed into the disciplines through communication and writing that develops their awareness of the particular ways of writing and thinking in each discipline based on social and cultural norms. In a classroom community, teachers apprentice students to take on ways of writing and thinking as practices that would otherwise remain tacit in the classroom. Students as apprentices “learn to use the relevant tools in the context of their use

within the belief system that gives purpose and meaning to the tasks they undertake. The knowledge of the community is evidently constructed, acquired, developed, distributed, and validated through intense social interaction” (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1968, p. 25). The work of teaching how to write inside the disciplines is thus a social, cultural, and cognitive process, as students and teachers interact and communicate with each other to work on common goals and contribute to shared knowledge. For teachers to frame purposes for writing in the classroom and provide students a context for their writing, teachers themselves need disciplinary understanding.

### **Apprenticing Teachers into Disciplinary Literacy Instruction**

For teachers to apprentice their students in disciplinary writing they must be able to know how to write in the disciplines (Pytash, 2012). Teachers must have some expertise in the ways of thinking and communicating in their discipline to show their students how to write inside discourse communities. Holt-Reynolds (1999) also asserted that having content knowledge is necessary for teaching, but actually knowing how to translate that knowledge to students and helping them be aware of disciplinary practices requires that teachers also be aware of the practices that are unique in their discipline. The skill of translating strategies to fit disciplinary literacy instruction is thus an expert teaching skill. Thus, before teachers apprentice students, teachers need to be apprenticed in the disciplines to understand for themselves the practices and epistemologies of the disciplines.

Apprenticing teachers, however, is a complex task given what is required in teaching disciplinary literacy. Just as apprenticing students into disciplinary writing is not just about supporting their content knowledge but also about their writing practice, so is the apprenticeship of teachers about supporting their content knowledge and their teaching practice. For teachers to invite students into the disciplines, they also need to be a part of the disciplines and have an

understanding of how the literate practices they engage in help to construct knowledge even as the practices are shaped by disciplinary epistemologies and cultural norms for communicating knowledge.

Therefore, teaching disciplinary literacy requires attention to what is being taught, but also why and with attention to how cultural and social norms may mediate one's teaching. Teachers are often evaluated based on their observable teaching skills. But what is unseen in teaching also needs to be made visible to apprentice teachers into teaching disciplinary literacy. I draw on the work of early sociocultural theorists (see Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990) who studied how experts of certain trades, such as tailoring, modeled and scaffolded the practices of the trade. In these apprenticeships of practice, many of the skills that novices learned were observable; for example, one could clearly observe the particular method of measuring a garment. Unlike an apprenticeship of practice, much of the planning and consideration in teaching is difficult to 'see' because the ways that the teacher thinks through a problem are usually invisible. This process of making teachers' thinking visible is especially important in the later grades because students' work is abstract and involves the tacit ways of thinking, reading, and writing within the disciplines (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, Mueller, 2001). To support teachers in explicitly inviting their students into disciplinary discourse communities, studies have looked into professional development that emphasizes metacognitive strategy and communication to make explicit the often taken-for-granted disciplinary ways of thinking, reasoning, and representing those thoughts in writing (Curwen, Miller, White-Smith, & Calfee, 2010; Greenleaf et al., 2011; Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, Mueller, 2001; Osborne et al., 2013).

I situate the notion of making thinking and practice visible within teacher education as a way of apprenticing teachers into disciplinary literacy instruction. I also draw on Moje's (2008)



definition of *metadiscursive pedagogy* to highlight the interactions that take place when teachers work to make their thinking and practice visible. In addition, a sociocultural take on metadiscursive pedagogy allows for a reflective awareness on the purposes, epistemologies, strategies, and audiences for writing in the disciplines. Moje asserts that metadiscursive pedagogy can help teachers teach students how to access the literacy practices of the disciplines, based on the social and epistemological goals of the discipline. Situating this pedagogy within teacher learning, teachers can talk about how and why they enact disciplinary instruction to make their reasoning and instructional choices visible. But to be metadiscursive is not only about making thinking visible for learners and teachers. As Moje (2008) states,

“To be *metadiscursive* means that people not only engage in many different discourse communities but also know how and why they are engaging, and what those engagements mean for them and others in terms of social positioning and larger power relations” (p. 103).

In order for teachers to be metadiscursive, teachers must talk about how and why the instructional strategies they use support their students in their discipline. This is especially true if the professional development community is multidisciplinary because each discipline has shared practices that may or may not be shared by other disciplines. As teachers engage in metadiscursive conversations about their instruction, they can see the similarities and differences in the ways they teach writing, and why those differences exist based on epistemological, cultural, and social norms.

### **Collaborative Models of Professional Development**

Teachers thus need opportunities to study and talk about their teaching with others in order to be apprenticed into disciplinary literacy teaching practices, and a collaborative

environment is conducive to bringing out these conversations. In the past two decades, there has been an increase in collaborative models of professional development, informed by constructivist theories of learning that have been applied to teacher learning (Keiny, 1994). For example, researchers have put forth principles for effective professional development models that foreground collaboration, shared goals, and a sustained learning time (Desimone, 2009; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Little, 1988). This movement came about partially as an attempt to engage teachers more fully in professional development because educators have resisted traditional forms of professional development (i.e. one-time, top-down models) in search for more collaborative and sustained programs for teacher learning (Wilson & Berne, 1999). Teachers have also sought collaboration as a way to reclaim a sense of authority and ownership in their teaching (Putnam & Borko, 1997) and have sought collaboration for social support in an otherwise isolating profession (Hargreaves, 1994).

Research suggests that teachers learn effectively when they can collectively examine, question, and evaluate conceptions of teaching and teaching practice within learning communities (e.g. Hadar & Brody, 2010; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001; Schnellert, Butler, & Higginson, 2008; Talbert, 2009). Engeström (1994) also asserted that teacher learning does not happen in isolation but is always dialogically constructed (Bakhtin, 2010) in collaboration with others. Such collaborative learning environments require “good conversations,” which Clark (2001) defines as requiring “safety, trust, and care”; “common ground”; and a sense of being voluntary for teachers. Therefore, collaborative models of professional development can provide a safe space for teachers to offer questions and express uncertainty about their teaching (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). Also, collaboration is key to teacher motivation and developing the self-efficacy needed to implement literacy strategies

(Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Collaborative environments can foster teacher commitment, which is vital for any reform change to be implemented successfully (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005).

Opportunities to collaborate are vital for inquiry and teacher learning, where teachers co-construct and negotiate what it means to implement school change (Coburn, 2001; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1992, 1999). Professional learning communities, a popular model of collaborative professional development, have been shown to have a positive impact on teaching practice and student learning (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). For example, Sherin and van Es (2009) showed that through a focused discourse and reflection, teachers can develop a “professional vision” or a way of noticing the key aspects of their teaching, and that this awareness may positively influence their instruction. Franke et al (1998)’s work showed that teacher community played a central role in providing teachers with opportunities to discuss and revise their thinking about children’s mathematical thinking, which in turn informed their teaching.

Another example of teachers learning to make meaning in professional development as a community of practice is the Strategic Literacy Initiative (SLI) (Greenleaf et al., 2011; Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, Mueller, 2001). One goal of the SLI was to begin to understand students’ disciplinary reading challenges and work on surfacing tacit knowledge and practices as a way to support students’ reading. One aspect of the professional development model to note was that the SLI worked collaboratively with content area teachers to find ways of making explicit for teachers and students the tacit ways of thinking, being, reading, writing, and communicating. The SLI conducted a large-scale study to measure teacher changes in knowledge and instructional practice, as well as student achievement in science and reading, and overall found gains using this model (Greenleaf et al., 2011).

Despite the promise of collaborative models of professional development, some have called for a more comprehensive conceptualization of teacher learning and professional development (Desimone, 2009). Little is known about *how* teachers learn from professional development, especially when opportunities for teachers to learn are fragmented—in mandatory staff meetings, in the moments between class periods, or in Master’s programs (Wilson & Berne, 1999). There is little understanding about “what exactly it is that teachers learn and by what mechanisms that learning takes place” across the varied and disjointed opportunities for teacher learning (p. 174).

Researchers have argued that current research on professional learning opportunities is also inadequate because it does not account for teachers’ values, motivations, and the processes by which teachers take up new instructional practices (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2002), nor does it account for the ways teachers learn in professional development contexts and how they adapt what they have learned to suit instructional purposes (Ball & Cohen, 1999) and how their school workplace mediates how teachers learn (Scribner, 1999).

This study addresses this gap in the literature to investigate how the social and cultural practices in professional development and school settings matter in the ways teachers learn to teach writing in their content area. I draw on a sociocultural view of teacher learning (Kelly, 2006; Lasky, 2005; McDonald, 2005), which emphasizes that teacher learning is always situated in particular contexts, and that the process of learning does not solely reside in the individual, but that teachers learn to take on particular ways of instructional practice within communities, thus shaping and being shaped by the group’s learning (Kelly, 2006).

Drawing on sociocultural theory also allows me to problematize how the construct of community is conceptualized (Moje, 2000) and explore how relations of power are enacted

through discursive practices. In particular, few studies have problematized the social relationships within collaborative professional development settings (Clark, 2001; Snow-Gerono, 2005) and how those social dynamics mediate what and how teachers learn. Professional development communities are not always so positive and tensions do exist, even in collaborative contexts (Johnston, 1997).

Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001), for example, examined a collaborative professional development in the form of a book club with English and history high school teachers. One of their major findings was that tensions within the community are necessary for teacher learning. They assert that true teacher learning communities experience what they term *essential tensions*, and these tensions are catalysts for further learning and growth. Even more, a lack of tension may signal that teachers are hiding their concerns for the sake of the community ties (Moje, 2000). Grossman et al. termed this kind of social dynamic as a *psuedocommunity*, where members hide their frustrations, critical questions, or concerns so as to not disrupt the positive collegiality within a group.

As teachers in the book club developed ways to talk to each other, they began to surface tensions across disciplinary boundaries. Over time, however, they realized that the tensions within discussions were a reflection of their differing disciplinary stances and not because of a difference in personalities. Members of the book club realized that they read differently because of their disciplinary backgrounds, and that some ways of reading that are viewed as problematic in history may actually be valued in English. The role of metalanguage, or professional language to talk about teaching and disciplinary stances thus plays an important role in teacher learning within professional development communities. However, this metalanguage does not come naturally to teachers; it must be learned. Grossman et al. (2001) found that the teachers needed to

learn how to talk to each other, to address the differences and tensions, so that they could see that they thought differently about the readings because of disciplinary stances, rather than because of clashes in personality.

To examine these essential tensions, I pay attention to the ways relationships of power play out in professional development and at school while acknowledging that power does not reside in individuals, but moves in unpredictable ways as people interact with each other (Foucault, 1972). For example, a perhaps predictable flow of power might be from an administrator to a teacher, but power relations also exist among teachers even in collaborative settings. Relations of power can be heightened when teachers hold different titles at school (Creese, 2002), such as a content area teacher and a literacy specialist, or when teachers come together from different subject area subcultures (Ball & Lacey, 1984; O'Brien & Stewart, 1990) each with their own different set of ideas and values on the role that literacy instruction plays in their classroom. Furthermore, though teachers co-construct knowledge in collaborative professional development communities through micro-practices and interactions (Coburn, 2001), these communities are situated in larger systems of power that can mediate interactions (Foucault, 1980; Moje & Lewis, 2007). Therefore, literature suggests that part of understanding teacher learning in professional development will require understanding the complex power dynamics that could be in play when teachers from different backgrounds different experiences come to work together.

### **A Sociocultural Perspective on Professional Development**

Taking a sociocultural stance requires me to study teacher learning not only within the professional development setting but also within the school contexts and networks in which teaching and learning happens (Scribner, 1999). Borko stated that “To understand teacher

learning, we must study it within these multiple contexts, taking into account both the individual teacher learners and the social systems in which they are participants” (2004, p. 4). As such, I explain how I draw on sociocultural theory to conceptualize the contexts of the WG professional development and teachers’ schools, and how these contexts might relate to how teachers learn to teach disciplinary literacy instruction.

### **The Professional Development Context**

A sociocultural lens allows me to examine how the activities, tools, and systems of the professional development context (McDonald, 2005) influence teacher understanding. I see instructional tools as both conceptual and practical tools (Grossman, Smagorinsky, Valencia, 1999). For example, practical instructional tools might include the strategies, activities, and resources that teachers integrate into their instruction. Conceptual instructional tools might include the frameworks, concepts, theories, and principles that guide teachers’ thinking around instruction. I also view discourse as a tool for representing these understandings. Discourse does not only include the language that teachers use to make sense of their instruction, but also their practices (Vygotsky, 1978). These discursive practices are how teachers make sense of and represent their knowledge of writing instruction. The ways teachers use discourse in professional development has been shown to influence how teachers learn to teach (Freeman, 1991). Examining teachers’ discourse in professional development can also draw out how teachers learn to adapt their discourse or how they experience tensions in their learning (Freeman, 1993; Grossman, Wineburg, & Woolworth, 2001). Therefore, I pay particular attention to the discursive practices of the WG professional development through their language, activities, and tools to see how teachers made sense of and adapted what they learned.

## **Schooling Contexts**

A sociocultural perspective also allows me to consider how teaching contexts might influence how teachers learn to teach. Schools have ways of “communicating and legitimizing knowledge” (Mercer, 1992) and teachers shape their teaching beliefs and practices in relation to these schooling structures, policies, and traditions (Cuban, 1984). Structures such as the curriculum, school, and classroom culture influence how teachers learn to teach literacy in their content area (O’Brien, Stewart, & Moje, 1995) because teachers must teach within the structural influences, and oftentimes constraints, of school. Furthermore, teachers must balance between personal ownership and autonomy of their teaching and the larger structures and powers of the school institution (Lieberman & Miller, 1992). Because learning, and learning to teach, is situated in these complex, social environments (Anderson, 1996) teachers must work to translate what they learn in the professional development context to meet the particular needs of the classroom context in which they teach.

Lea and Street (2006) provide a framework for thinking about the relationships between power and disciplinary literacy development, which they call the academic literacies model. Lea and Street see learning as “involving both epistemological issues and social process, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities” (p. 369). Such relationships of power and ideology might mediate students’ academic literacy learning at both a broader level, such as district or school requirements, and on local levels, such as classroom norms and writing assignments.

For example, because students participate in many academic communities and work within the structures of schooling, they may experience challenges or contradictions among differing goals and expectations across communities as they work to enact/construct their



identity (Engeström, 2001; Russell, 1997). On a local level, students may feel conflicted about completing an assignment for a grade versus completing an assignment out of genuine curiosity. It is therefore difficult to ignore “the impact of power relations on student writing, the centrality of identity in academic writing, academic writing as ideologically inscribed knowledge construction, [and] the nature of generic academic, as well as disciplinary specific, writing practices” (Lillis, 2003, pg. 195). Recent studies have begun to show how students and teachers might have different understandings about the implicit expectations embedded within writing assignments (Helstad & Lund, 2012). These differing expectations can be shaped by students’ and teachers’ respective understandings of the content areas (Kibler, 2011).

Another influence on teachers’ beliefs and practices of literacy instruction is their students’ expectation of what entails work in the content area (Measor, 1984; Moje, 1996). Teachers must consider how to make writing purposeful to motivate students to write in their content area classes, especially for the subject areas other than English class, where they are already expected to write. Although high school students may not be expert members of a discipline, high school classrooms should be spaces where students begin to take on approximations of disciplinary practice. When students’ academic communities are composed of their teachers and other students in the class, students’ opportunities for learning are influenced by student-teacher relations. Students have ideas about what the nature of reading and writing should be like in each of their content area courses (Greene, 1994). And, teachers make decisions based on their interactions with students. Student-teacher relationships can be so powerful that they influence how literacy is taught and practiced in the classroom (Moje, 1996).

## **Teachers' Understandings of Disciplinary Literacy**

Given the pressures and influences of professional development and school structures, research has shown that some teachers have resisted the call for every teacher to teach disciplinary literacy. Ratekin, Simpson, Alvermann, and Dishner (1985), for example, argued that teachers resisted literacy instruction because they held a simplified model of content area literacy instruction, a model that better fit the hectic pace of their workplace. Or, teachers simply found little value to the content area reading strategies. O'Brien and Stewart (1990) complicated Ratekin et al.'s findings to assert that in addition to the commonly reported sources of resistance, such as pressures and constraints of the workplace, teachers resisted teaching literacy in the classroom because the strategies they learned did not support the practices of their discipline. Teachers may have found little value to the literacy strategies because they did not see a place within their discipline for the particular kinds of reading practice that the strategies supported. Or, teachers held misconceptions about the nature of work in their discipline and did not see a place for literacy instruction for teaching content. Draper (2000) and Siebert and Draper (2008) came to similar findings particular to content area literacy instruction addressed to mathematics teachers. In addition to teachers' misconceptions about literacy, teachers' histories and personal beliefs of literacy may also influence how they actually teach and take up literacy instruction strategies (Holt-Reynolds, 1992).

### **Summary**

Overall, I take a sociocultural perspective on disciplinary literacy, disciplinary literacy teaching, and teacher learning. Disciplinary literacy from a sociocultural stance foregrounds the notion that disciplines are cultures with their own ways of being, thinking, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. For students to learn the discourses of the disciplines, they must be

invited or apprenticed into the social, cultural, and epistemological practices and norms of the disciplines.

A sociocultural stance on disciplinary literacy instruction asserts that teaching is a complex task that requires a level of understanding in the content, literate practices, and epistemological norms of the disciplines. To attain this expertise, teachers must be apprenticed into disciplinary literacy instruction, in the ways of teaching strategies to fit the goals of instructions, purposes of disciplinary work, and learning needs of students.

Last, a sociocultural stance on teacher learning communities foregrounds considerations of the multiple contexts in which teachers learn, including professional development and school contexts. Work on teacher learning communities serves as a reminder that these communities are imbued with relationships of power that mediate how and what teachers learn.

In this study, I traced the teachers' learning from the WG professional development community to teachers' classrooms based on the assumption that the social and cultural norms and practices of professional development contexts, school contexts, and disciplinary cultures matter in how teachers learn to teach disciplinary writing instruction. In the next chapter, I present an analysis of teachers' understandings of disciplinary writing instruction and the instructional tools they learned, and how teachers' understandings and discussion of strategies were shaped by the collaborative nature of the WG professional development.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **Research Methods and Design**

#### **Research Context**

I worked closely with a group of teachers and district leaders who identified themselves as the Writing Group (WG) who had created a sustained professional development on disciplinary writing instruction. The WG worked with a regional education service agency that reached 75 schools within nine districts (two counties) in a Midwest state. The districts within the region varied considerably demographically and socioeconomically (see Appendix A for more detailed comparisons).

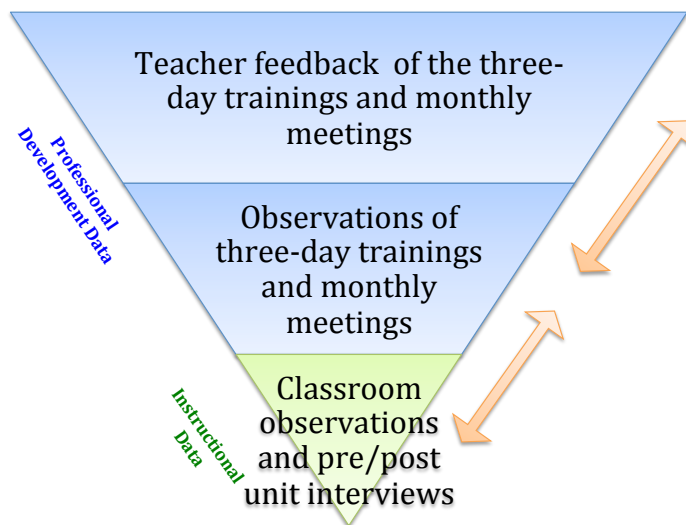
The WG worked with the regional education service agency to provide two strands of professional development on content area writing throughout the year. One strand of professional development involved a three-day workshop offered three times a year, which was run by the WG teacher leaders and attended by subject area teachers from grades 6-12 across the nine districts. From 2011 to 2014, 267 teachers had voluntarily attended this workshop to share and learn about topics such as creating and assessing writing assignments, modeling, metacognitive thinking, and providing students opportunities to write. Once WG teachers had attended the three-day teacher training, they were invited to participate in the monthly continuation meetings, where teachers continued to learn about different instructional tools for teaching writing and ways to support other teachers at their schools in using these tools. From 2011 to 2015, 22 teachers regularly attended the WG monthly continuation meetings.

## Research Design

### Overview of Design

I engaged in a close analysis of both strands of the WG professional development as well as teachers' classrooms to trace the development of teachers' writing instruction. I collected multiple types of qualitative data from a variety of sources, which I describe in more detail in the following section. In combination, these sources of data made up a contextualized research design, in which close studies of focal teachers were situated in larger-scale professional development data (see Figure 3.1 below).

*Figure 3.1: Contextualized Research Design*



### Timeline of Research Study

I conducted this study over the course of two and a half years, from October 2013 to March 2015. In October 2013, I gained access to study the WG professional development. The WG initially sought out a research partnership to gain evidence that could be used to support further administrative support. The WG steering committee reached out to my faculty advisor, who then invited me to work with the WG. After meeting with the steering committee, we forged a partnership on the condition that I would report my findings to them. Over the course of the

study, I gained the trust of the steering committee by sharing my initial findings with them and regularly attending steering committee planning meetings. Because they were interested in trying to collect data that suggested student learning achievement, I regularly helped them think through the research concerns in collecting and analyzing such data.

Once I gained access to the WG, I applied for and was granted IRB approval in January 2014. The bulk of my observations of three-day trainings, monthly meetings, and classroom instruction began in February 2014. By the time I began observing the WG professional development meetings, teachers had been participating in the WG for three years. Because I sought to study what teachers understood about disciplinary writing instruction, my method of data collection represents their understanding at a point in time. Therefore, I did not observe teachers' instruction over a long period of time, or pre- and post- their involvement in the WG. My purpose in observing the teachers was to see what they were taking up from the WG at that point in time. In addition, because my other research question was about the WG community, this warranted a long-term observation. The three-day trainings were conducted similarly each time, so I only observed that training once. The monthly meetings, in contrast, were conducted differently and used different materials for each meeting. To really get a sense of the WG community, I continued to observe monthly meetings for two years. Attending the monthly meetings as I wrote this dissertation helped me to keep close to the data. A timeline of my data collection process is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Data Collection Timeline

Professional Development Data	Nov 2013	Dec 2013	Jan 2014	Feb 2014	Mar 2014	Apr 2014	May 2014	Jun-Aug 2014	Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Mar 2015
Observations of three-day trainings	14			6, 7											
Teacher feedback of three-day trainings															
Observations of monthly meetings				27	27	24	20		25	30		11			26
Teacher feedback of monthly meetings							20			30		11		6	26
Focus group interviews							29								26
Teacher survey										23					
<b>Instructional Data</b>															
Ms. Gable observations					11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26	14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23, 25, 28	1, 2, 5, 6								
Gable interview and collection of samples					11	16	29								
Mr. Lynden observations					18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26	2, 29, 30	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8								
Mr. Lynden interview and collection of samples					21	17	30								
Ms. Tanner observations					20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 31	1, 2, 3, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28	1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15								
Tanner interview and collection of samples					24	23	14								
Ms. Wallace observations					18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 29, 30	2								
Wallace interview and collection of samples					19	15	7								

Note: Numbers in table represent the specific dates of collection. Numbers in red represent observation dates when I collected video recording as was not in the classroom.

## Overview of Data Sources

The qualitative data used to carry out this study come from two categories of sources: Professional Development and Instructional data. Table 3.2 provides an outline of all the data sources, organized by research question.

*Table 3.2: Overview of Research Design*

Research Question	Category	Data Sources
<p><b>1. How do subject area teachers in a sustained professional development group support each other to teach disciplinary writing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent do teachers' motivations and values matter in how they learn to teach writing?</li> <li>To what extent does the teacher community play a role in their professional development?</li> </ul>	Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teacher feedback on the three-day trainings (n=275)</li> <li>teacher feedback on the monthly meetings (n=34)</li> <li>field notes, memos, and artifacts (n hours of observation=77)</li> <li>focus group interviews (n=2)</li> <li>a teacher survey on instructional practices (n= 150)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. What methods do the teachers carry from professional development into their practice of teaching disciplinary writing?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the focal teachers' understandings of disciplinary writing and how to teach disciplinary writing?</li> <li>How and why do the focal teachers adapt writing strategies and activities from the WG meetings into their instruction?</li> </ul>	Instructional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>field notes, video, audio, and artifacts of classroom instruction (n hours of observation= 87)</li> <li>multiple semi-structured interviews with focal teachers (n=12)</li> <li>student writing samples (n=30)</li> </ul>

**Professional development.** The sources of data in the Professional Development category address my first research question:

How do subject area teachers in a sustained professional development group support each other to teach disciplinary writing?

- To what extent do teachers' motivations and values matter in how they learn to teach writing?
- To what extent does the teacher community play a role in their professional development?



These data sources included: a) field notes, memos, and artifacts from observations of three-day trainings and monthly meetings (n hours of observation=77), b) focus group interviews (n=2), and c) teacher feedback forms of the three-day trainings (n=275) and monthly meetings (n=34).

**Observations.** I observed the professional development, and in particular the monthly meetings, over the course of two years. I observed the three-day teacher training from November 14, 2013 to February 7, 2014. The training was held three times a year, but each training is implemented in a similar manner. Therefore, I observed the three-day training once to get an understanding of the foundations of the WG.

I observed the monthly meetings from December 5, 2013 to March 26, 2015 over 11 occasions. The teachers requested that I did not audio or video record these sessions, so I took extensive field notes (Emerson, Fritz, & Shaw, 2005) and collected artifacts as my primary method of data collection. After each session, I wrote analytic memos (Lempert, 2007) to reflect, explore, and theorize about any patterns I noticed within and across data sources.

The purpose of attending these professional development sessions was to get a sense of the community in which teachers learned to implement disciplinary writing instruction. I observed how community was bolstered by a sense of solidarity and ownership, which was fostered through discussions of teaching. Observing these sessions helped me to see teachers' disciplinary stances on writing. I paid attention to the ways that disciplinary stances were expressed, or a lack thereof. I also observed how teachers were positioned in this community and why they valued the WG so much. Through my analyses, I identified key characteristics of the WG community that mediated how teachers' views on disciplinary writing instruction and how taught writing.

**Teacher feedback forms.** The WG collected a series of teacher feedback forms at the end of their professional development sessions. The WG provided me with access to teacher feedback forms from 2013-2014 academic year (n=275) that the WG collected during their three-day teacher trainings. The forms asked teachers to complete the following statements:

- Today, I really “got”...  
(new insights, understandings, confidence about...)
- Today, I need...  
(help with questions about, more time on..., to just...)

In addition, the WG provided teacher feedback from the monthly meetings (n=34) which asked teachers questions about what they learned, what they planned to implement, and/or what additional support they needed to implement what they learned.

**Semi-structured focus group interviews.** Over the course of two years, I developed relationships and earned the trust of the steering committee. This allowed me to conduct semi-structured focus group interviews with the steering committee during their planning meetings. The focus group interviews allowed me to get a better sense of why and how the WG was developed, including the principles and expectations that guided the WG and how they developed over time (see Appendix B for focus group interview protocols). Each interview took approximately thirty minutes. Both semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed.

**Teacher survey.** The regional education service agency administered a teacher survey about instructional practice. This survey asked teachers questions about their experiences with teaching disciplinary literacy and about their opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. Originally, the agency intended all teachers from the nine districts to complete this survey, but the survey results did not transpire. A group of 150 teachers within one district, however, did complete the survey. These data provide some context for understanding teachers’ instructional literacy practices and their opportunities for collegiality in their school and district.

**Instructional data.** I used the data in the Instructional category to answer my second research question:

What methods do the teachers carry from professional development into their practice of teaching disciplinary writing?

- What are the focal teachers' understandings of disciplinary writing and how to teach disciplinary writing?
- How and why do the focal teachers adapt writing strategies and activities from the WG meetings into their instruction?

The data sources in this category included: a.) field notes, video, audio, and artifacts of classroom instruction (n hours of observation= 87); b.) multiple semi-structured interviews with focal teachers (n hours of interview= 12); and c.) student writing samples (n=30).

**Observations.** To study how teachers took up the writing instructional tools they learned through professional development, I observed four focal teachers and their implementation of two units of writing instruction. The focal teachers invited me to the units of instruction of their choosing, but the units must have incorporated some kind of writing instruction and opportunities to write.

From February to June of 2014, I observed the four focal teachers and their implementation of two units of writing instruction. During the observations of 87 hours of classroom lessons, I took extensive field notes as my primary source of data (Emerson, Fritz, & Shaw, 2005), but I also video and audio recorded the lessons as secondary data. Teachers also video and/or audio recorded themselves on days when I could not be present in the classroom because I was observing four teachers within the same time period. The video recording primarily focused on the teacher. I sent out a passive consent letter to the students of each class

which explained that I would be observing and video/audio taping the lessons. I also introduced myself to each class, explaining that I was studying how teachers learned to teach writing.

Throughout the unit, I collected instructional artifacts such as: handouts, assignments, readings, PowerPoint slides, student samples, and instructions. These artifacts provided context to my data analyses and proceed with my semi-structured interviews. For example, it was helpful for me to have copies of the assignments as reference when I conducted the semi-structured interviews with the focal teachers.

Following Vanderheide and Newell (2013), I opted to sample contiguous lessons within an instructional unit rather than observe instruction at various time points. By observing a whole unit planned and implemented by the teacher, I was able to see how certain events led to opportunities for writing. Throughout the observations, I paid particular attention to moments where teachers invited students into the culture of the discipline through opportunities to practice thinking or writing like a member of the discipline, or through explicitly teaching students about the writing practices of the disciplines. I also observed moments where teachers took up strategies or frameworks from the WG, or any moment of writing instruction or opportunities to write. However, I paid attention to all the instruction because I was aware that prior activities could lead up to writing instruction. For example, a teacher might discuss the features of a text early on in the unit, which would provide the model for an opportunity to write later on in the unit. In addition, a deep reading of a text, for example, may have been an integral episode in preparing students to write and communicate in response to the text. As such, I did not limit my observations and field notes to explicit moments of writing instruction.

***Semi-structured interviews.*** I conducted three hour-long semi-structured interviews with each focal teacher (see Appendix C for teacher interview protocols). I conducted an interview

before I began observing each teacher, and one after observing each unit of instruction. Each interview took approximately hour. For the first interview, I asked teachers to share a bit about themselves as teachers and what brought them to the WG. I also asked them to briefly reflect on the texts, activities, and assessments they planned to use in their unit.

After the teacher implemented the first unit and finished grading all of the assignments for that unit, I conducted a second interview. I asked teachers about their understandings of writing practice in their discipline, asked them to compare that to the writing practices of other disciplines, and what it meant for them to teach disciplinary writing. I also asked teachers to reflect on their overall implementation of the unit, their considerations and foci for giving feedback on the writing assignment, and any reflections about how their experiences in the WG that may have influenced their implementation of the unit, if at all. Last, teachers brought three student writing samples, and I asked them to reflect on the writer's strengths, areas for improvement, and suggest next steps for the writer.

The third interview was conducted similarly to the second interview, except that I did not ask teachers about their perspectives on disciplinary writing again. Instead, I asked teachers about their students' areas of growth over the two units and what the teachers focused on in terms of writing feedback. I also asked teachers about their future goals with the WG.

The purpose of these interviews was to get an overall understanding of why the teachers taught writing, what they focused on when teaching and evaluating writing, and why they seemed to value their time in the WG. I also used the interviews to explore how teachers' considerations for planning and implementing the unit involved what they had learned from the WG. All semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

*Student samples.* For each unit, teachers provided me with three student writing samples that they had identified as a high, medium, and low performance respective to the whole class. Teachers shared writing from the same student in the first unit as in the second unit I observed. These student samples served as a reflection piece for a part of the semi-structured interviews.

In combination, I used both categories of data to trace the development of teachers' writing instruction beginning with their professional development and concluding with their enactment of writing instruction. The close examination allowed me to see how the WG and teachers' schooling contexts mediated their writing instruction.

### **Focal Participants**

Within this context, I worked with a focal group consisting of at least one teacher from each content area that was represented in the WG monthly meetings: English Language Arts (n=2), history (n=1), and science (n=1). On October 24, 2013, I presented at a monthly meeting to recruit teacher participants, explaining that I was designing a dissertation study on how teachers used writing strategies from the WG professional development in their teaching. Teachers were self-selected to be participants in this study. Five teachers volunteered to participate, and from the five, I engaged in purposive sampling (Patton, 1990) to select four focal teachers. The selection criteria I used to select focal participants included: a.) being a member of the WG monthly meetings; b.) being a veteran teacher (i.e. at least five years of teaching); c.) regularly using WG strategies in their teaching. Since there is extant research on the considerable time and consistency it takes for teachers to change their practice as a result of professional development (Supovitz & Turner, 2000; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007) and to learn and develop teaching expertise (Borko, 2004; Schoenfeld, 2011), I limited my search of focal teachers to veteran teachers who had been attending the monthly continuation meetings

since the meetings first started in 2011, instead of choosing novice teachers or teachers who had only attended the three-day teacher training once. In addition, because one of my research questions is about how teachers took up the strategies they learned from the WG and used them in their instruction, I decided to work with teachers who actually tried to use the strategies from the WG in their instruction. Based on the recommendations of the steering committee and my first-hand observation, I recognized that one teacher did not explicitly teach writing, so he did not participate in this study as a focal teacher. The other four teachers, on the other hand, actively tried to incorporate WG ideas into their instruction.

Because my purpose was to document how teachers collaborated to make sense of and creatively develop writing instruction, I did not determine my selection criteria to make comparisons among the focal teachers. Conveniently, however, the four focal teachers taught within different content areas. This allowed me to see how different contexts might have played into the ways they enacted instruction more comprehensively. Looking at teachers' instruction from different content areas, in particular, allowed me to see how the disciplines may have shaped their writing instruction. Although teachers taught at schools which varied socioeconomically and demographically, I intended to leverage the information I gathered about the contexts of each teacher's instruction to understand why each teacher made certain instructional choices, rather than make comparisons across the focal teachers.

I also worked closely with the steering committee, who provided valuable insight into the workings and history of the WG. Demographics of the focal participants and steering committee are shown in the tables below.

*Table 3.3: Focal Teachers*

Pseudonym	Subject and Grade Taught	Years Taught
Ms. Gable	English teacher, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade	12 years
Ms. Tanner	English teacher, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade honors	21 years
Mr. Lynden	History teacher, 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 years
Ms. Wallace	Science teacher, 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	12 years

*Table 3.4: Steering Committee*

Pseudonym	Position	Years Taught
Ms. Gable	English teacher	12 years
Ms. Patterson	English teacher	19 years
Ms. Clary	English teacher	19 years
Ms. Brandt	District English Department Chair	17 years
Ms. Young	Coordinator of Literacy Instruction at education service agency	15 years in education

### **Role of the Researcher**

I served different researcher roles within the professional development setting and the classroom setting. I acted as an observer in the classrooms and a participant observer in the professional development meetings.

Within the classroom, I made every effort to disrupt the environment as little as possible. I usually found a place to observe in a back corner of the room in an attempt to be inconspicuous. I took notes by hand and filmed instruction using a small hand-held camera. The filming primarily focused on the instructor. I sent out a passive consent letter to the students of each class which explained that I would be observing and video/audio taping the lessons and gave them the option not to be video recorded. No students requested not to be filmed. I also introduced myself to each class, explaining that I was studying how teachers learned to teach writing. For the most part, students did not interact with me. On a few rare occasions, I participated in activities with the invitation of the teacher and student(s).



When I began observing the WG, I was aware that some teachers might have been leery of me as a researcher coming into their teacher-led space. I participated only when invited, and tried not to conjure up the university or make too many references to my research experience in my contributions. However, teachers were eager to include me in their activities from the beginning and sometimes approached me with questions about research in relation to their teaching experiences. The sense of community in the WG was strong as members quickly invited me to participate.

The sense of community became even stronger as I continued to observe professional development meetings for a second year. I earned the trust of the teachers and the steering committee, which gave me the opportunity to conduct focus group interviews with the steering committee during their planning meetings. The WG also welcomed me into their community by giving me a Certificate of Collaboration at the end of the first year. In addition, members gave me gifts and emailed me congratulatory messages at the end of the second year when I was expecting my first child.

Although I felt a strong sense of community within the WG, I strived to remain objective and critical of what I was observing. As an advocate for the goals of the WG, I knew that the organizers had invited me to study their work so that I could report my findings to them, including areas where I saw the WG could improve on in supporting its teachers.

### **Method of Analysis**

I engaged in constant comparative analysis throughout my analysis of the Professional Development and Instructional data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I first engaged in open coding within each data source, continually comparing those codes with the raw

data and my analytical memos (Charmaz, 2014) to continually refine my definitions of each code.

For the observational data, I wrote a memo after observing each lesson. The memo included a summary of what happened, noting any moments in instruction that represented writing instruction, and any reflections I had as I developed my theories and hypotheses. I also tagged each lesson with codes for easy reference (see Appendix D for Coding Key). An example of a memo with respective codes is shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Observational Memo and Open Coding

Ms. Wallace, March 18, 2014

The third trimester just started, and Ms. Wallace is introducing a new unit on genetics. Yesterday, teachers filled out a questionnaire about their learning experiences and background knowledge on topics that will be covered over the trimester because many of these students are new for her (students change every trimester). She spends some time going over norms for their science notebook, for consistent organization which will be important when they do labs.

Then she launches the unit with a LINK strategy (learned from WG). Yesterday, she had students read a short bio on baby Pierre and today, she has students talk at their table groups about how baby Pierre relates to genetics. The class comes up with a list of connections between the text and the topic of genetics, including: dominant/recessive; Punnett square, DNA, and genes (this is the “L” for the LINK).

The class then comes up with a list of questions of what they want to learn more about in terms of genetics. Some examples of questions include: Has an offspring ever received more than 50% of genes from one parent? What determines recessive and dominant? Why can you have blonde hair when you’re young, but then it turns brown? How do Punnett squares relate to DNA or genetics? Do non-sexual reproducers have genes?

After the class came up with a list of questions, they come up with a big question (with Ms. Wallace’s help) that will drive their inquiry over the course of the unit. The question they came up with was: “How do traits get passed on? How do traits affect me?”

They start their first lab, survey of human traits, to be continued tomorrow.

Reflection

Evidence of disciplinary instruction. Students came up with an intellectual problem and with sub-questions to their problem. Ms. Wallace made the LINK work for her. Highly scaffolded activities that were connected to the LINK, and different participation structures throughout the lesson. Students seem to have a fair amount of background knowledge based on the topics and questions they came up with. Learning seems valued in class (e.g. student high-fives another student for contributing to class discussion). Overall, high participation.

Codes

- Intellectual problem
- WG strategy
- Discuss while writing
- Expectations
- Purpose-setting

Overall, the observational data were rich with examples of what teachers understood to be disciplinary literacy instruction, and how teachers enacted what they learned from the WG.

For the interview data, I first transcribed each interview as soon as I could after I conducted each interview. I used the data from each interview and my observations to inform

how I would conduct the subsequent interviews. For example, after conducting the first interview, I began to notice that teachers seemed to have varying ideas as to what disciplinary instruction was. To test this hypothesis, I created interview questions for the second semi-structured interview that would address their perspectives on disciplinary practice and disciplinary writing instruction.

I open coded interviews at the level of an idea unit (Jacobs & Morita, 2002). Ideas could be as short as one sentence or as long as a page. The distinctions I made when coding idea units were not about length, but rather the topic that teachers talked about. When the interview changed topic, that signaled a complete idea unit. Within the interview data, I began to see codes around disciplinary stances and solidarity within the WG community. Some codes included: community, collaboration, commonalities, data-oriented, and argument (see Appendix D for Coding Key).

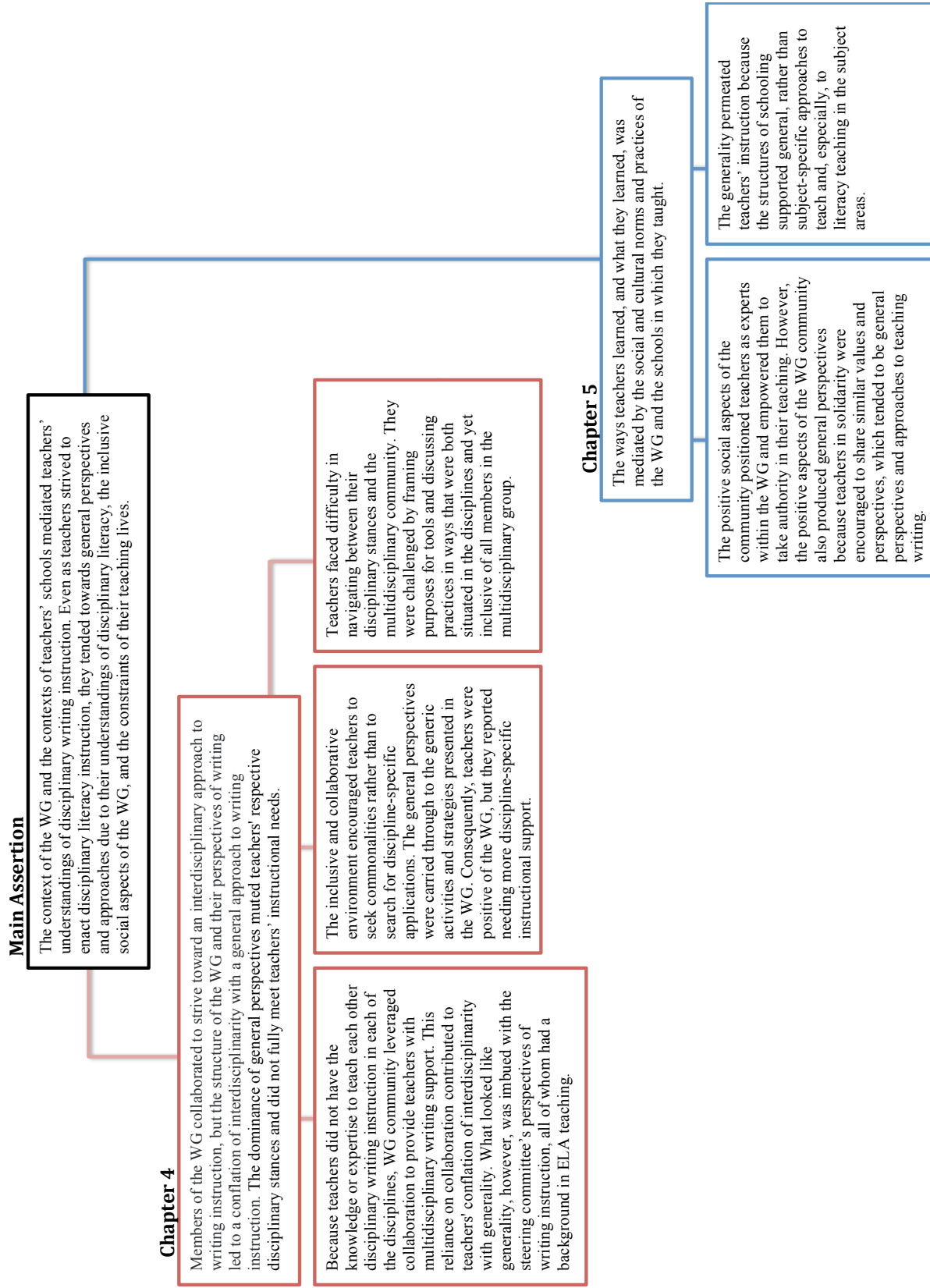
Analyzing the data while I collected them allowed me to refine my semi-structured interview protocols and subsequent observations. I used the initial codes to begin to build theories around why and how teachers learned to teach writing in their classroom, and I was able to test out these theories in conducting the interviews with focal teachers and the steering committee. For example, through my observations of the three-day trainings I began to see a difference in the ways that ELA teachers viewed writing instruction and the ways that the other subject area teachers viewed writing instruction, so I decided to explore this further by asking the focal teachers about their disciplinary stances during the second interview.

Throughout the analysis and data collection process, I kept a research journal to help me keep record of the patterns I saw within and across each data source. The analytical memos (Charmaz, 2014; Lempert, 2007) in my research journal included: a log of the definitions of

codes, choices I made during coding, and questions and hypotheses I had. Once I finished the data collection process, I continued to compare the codes I had generated thus far with the reflections in my research journal, other codes, and the raw data. This helped me to move from open coding to axial coding. I began to merge codes across data sources to create larger patterns of findings. In this manner, I engaged in constant recursive data analysis and moved back and forth from the Professional Development data and the Instructional data, which is signified by the arrows in Figure 3.1: *Contextualized Research Design* (see page 44). For example, as I coded the teacher interview data for key characteristics of why teachers valued the WG, I went back to my observations of the monthly meetings to find confirming and disconfirming evidence of the same characteristics.

In constantly returning to the data and moving across the data sources, I was able to triangulate the data and validate my findings. In addition, I continually revised and developed a key linkage chart (see Figure 3.3 below) to illustrate the relationships among my key assertions and findings. In this manner, I moved between the Professional Development and Instructional data to create a cohesive representation of the WG community, the teachers' perspectives, and the teachers' schooling context.

Figure 3.3: Key Linkage Chart



## **Analysis of Teacher Feedback Forms**

As with the rest of the data, I conducted constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) of the teacher feedback forms. Because the teacher feedback forms (n=275) were a large source of data that was uniform in format and collected systematically by the WG, I provide further clarification about how I went about analyzing these data. As a reminder, the teacher feedback forms asked teachers to complete the following statements at the end of each day during the three-day training:

- Today, I really “got”...  
(new insights, understandings, confidence about...)
- Today, I need...  
(help with questions about, more time on..., to just...)

First, I engaged in open coding of the teachers’ Gots and Needs comments. I kept the teachers’ Gots and Needs as separate categories, and I organized teachers’ comments by day (first, second, or third day of three-day training) to see what topics made the most impressions on the teachers on a given day, or how impressions may have changed over the course of the training. Throughout the open coding process, I continually compared the codes generated to the raw data to refine the definitions and boundaries of each code (see Appendix D for Coding Key).

I coded the teacher feedback data to the grain size of each statement. A statement generally consisted of one phrase or sentence, though some statements included more than one sentence. In the feedback form, teachers wrote separate statements, which were signified by separate bullets, or separate spaces. Because I coded at the statement level, some statements were assigned more than one code. For example, the following statement, “networking with people in and out of my content area. Very useful to learn what people do with the teaching of writing in other disciplines” seemed to speak to this teacher’s opportunities for collaboration and opportunities to work with teachers of other disciplines. Therefore, I coded this statement with

two codes: “collaboration” and “interdisciplinary.” In other instances, teachers wrote about different strategies and frameworks in one statement, which I also double coded. For example, one teacher wrote, “everything was good. In general it has given me more clarity on what I should emphasize with my students (GAP) and given some ideas for activities (four corners).” I coded this statement: “framework-mind the GAP” and “strategies and activities-4 corners.” As a result, the number of code instances was more than the actual number of teacher feedback statements. In particular, 670 teacher statements yielded 756 instances of Gots and Needs codes total.

While conducting the initial coding, I also scrutinized whether or not a teacher wrote a Got or a Need by continually returning to the original data. There were instances where a teacher wrote a comment in the Got area, but the meaning of the comment was expressed as a Need. For example, one teacher wrote that she Got, “teaching ELA writing in general. I’m a 17 year science teacher, no experience with English” (emphasis teacher’s). Although this teacher reported learning about ELA writing instruction, her underlying message was that she needed more specific instruction that she could apply to teaching writing in science. As such, I placed this comment in both the Gots and a Needs category, with the code of “disciplinary.” Another example of a comment that was placed in both the Gots and Needs categories was, “liked the 4 I’s but need more resources for immersion.” I coded this comment as “Got-framework-4 I’s” and “Need-resources” because the teacher seemed to both “get” an overall framework for designing writing lessons, but needed more resources to enact a part of this framework.

In addition, comments about teachers’ affect and praise for the presenters were expressed in both columns. Because praise for the PD facilitators could be considered a positive aspect of PD, I moved all comments of praise into the Gots category. An example of a praise comment



that was originally expressed as a Need but was moved into the Gots category was, “These workshops have been so helpful—I appreciate your time and talents” (emphasis teacher’s). Lastly, I moved all comments about positive teacher affect to the Got category, even if they were originally written in the Need category, because these comments indicated that teachers Got a sense of accomplishment or a confidence boost. An example of a positive comment on teacher affect included, “The courage today was great. I feel more confident after this session!” When teachers expressed a need for more emotional support in relation to writing instruction, these comments about affect remained in the Needs category. An example of an affect comment in the Needs category was, “I’m hankering for more opportunities to develop writing I’m emotionally committed to and I think teachers who feel the power of that kind of writing will be more committed to developing further writing experiences in their classes.”

After I created the initial Gots and Needs codes, I engaged in axial coding to reduce codes into larger categories. For example, since some teachers mentioned “getting” strategies and activities more generally, and other mentioned specific activities that they Got, I combined these codes together to create a larger “Got-Strategies and Activities” category. The resulting four Gots categories and five Needs categories reflect my overall findings of teachers’ impressions of the PD.

*Table 3.5: Gots and Needs Categories from Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training*

<b>Gots Categories</b>		<b>Needs Categories</b>	
Activities and strategies	190	Enactment	198
Frameworks and ideas	172	Time total	51
Social	71	Integration into schooling structures	18
Connections and integration to schooling and disciplines	48	Social	26
Positive aspects of PD	32	Critiques for PD improvement	10

After collapsing the codes to create larger categories, I found that teachers seemed to generally Get the following: a) resources, activities, and strategies to implement in their classroom, b) conceptual and procedural frameworks for teaching writing, c) opportunities for collaboration and attending to social needs, and d) conceptual connections to other domains of teaching. Throughout the three-day training, teachers seemed to Need: a) more guidance and/or resources for implementation of activities and strategies, c) guidance on how writing instruction fit into their existing curricula and school structures, c) time to integrate what they had learned into instruction, and time in general, and d) continued opportunities for collaboration after the three-day training. Teachers also provided some suggestions on how to improve the professional development meetings.

### **Limitations**

By design, this was a focused study of a small group of four focal teachers, situated in a relatively small professional development group (n=22), which was situated in a larger group of teachers who attended the three-day training (n=267). Because so much of the data came from these four focal teachers, however, I am careful about making gross generalizations about teachers' experiences in the three-day training. I primarily draw on the teacher feedback data to report teachers' experiences in the three-day training because it is a related but somewhat different context than the monthly meetings.

I recognize that the teachers' gender, race, and the socioeconomic status of teachers and their schools may have mediated my findings. Most of the teachers attending the WG were women, and all the members of the steering committee were women. This may be due to the fact that teaching is predominantly female profession (Feistritz, 2011; NCES, 2013), but I recognize that gender could have played into teachers' sense of solidarity and community. In

terms of teaching pressures, I realize that teachers probably experienced different extents of freedom and constraint within their schooling systems, which may have influenced the extent to which they could modify their instruction to incorporate WG strategies. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to delve deeply into each teachers' lives at school, so I had to rely on teachers' reports of their teaching lives.

I also acknowledge that despite the pressures that teachers faced, the teachers in the monthly meetings must have received some support at their school or else they would not have been able to leave once a month to attend the WG monthly meetings. Some of the teachers who attended the monthly meetings were expected to share what they learned to other colleagues at their school in return for being able to attend these meetings every month. Consequently, teachers who attended the monthly meetings taught at schools that generally had high attendance of teachers who had attended the three-day training. Therefore, the monthly meeting teachers may have been more willing to try out strategies from the WG to lead other teachers at their school in using the WG strategies. The four focal teachers also volunteered to participate in this study, so they may have been particularly positive and high implementing members of the WG. In addition, the focal teachers chose the class period that I observed, so they may have chosen a class period where they thought they taught most successfully.

### **The Origins of the WG**

To understand the major assertions of this study, I provide some information on the context of the WG professional development, particularly why the WG was formed with the goal to support subject area teachers across the disciplines to teach disciplinary writing, and why the WG steering committee promoted collaboration as a major feature of its identity as an organization.

The WG was created as a response to several district and national education reforms. With the Common Core initiative well underway, teachers across the districts became concerned that reading instruction was being privileged in professional learning opportunities over writing instruction. Adding to that concern was the fact that across the districts, a well-established professional development program on content area reading instruction already existed that did not address disciplinary writing instruction. As a response, the regional education service agency sent out an invitation to all teachers across the districts to work on a professional development program centered on disciplinary writing. Here, Ms. Gable, one of the founding members of the WG, recounted how the organization was created.

**Gable:** There was a call to address writing. And it's something that the [regional education service agency] just sent out a bunch of invites for. I showed up and there were a ton of people at the meeting. I feel like 30-40 people were at the meeting. From there, it was who actually feels like working on this more and that's where our steering committee came from... (Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

As it turned out, all the teachers who volunteered to continue to develop the writing professional development program happened to be ELA teachers. It may not be surprising that those who rose to the call for a professional development on writing had an ELA background, as writing instruction has been typically relegated to ELA classrooms (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2006, 2007; Russell, 2002).

The group of volunteers became the founding members of the WG and acted as the steering committee who oversaw the direction and planning for the three-day trainings and monthly meetings (see Table 3.3 on page 55). Even though all the steering committee members came from ELA backgrounds, their goals from the beginning were clear: to create a writing

professional development program that would address writing in all of the content areas. Here, the steering committee recounted their first considerations as they developed the WG, which began in the spring of 2010.

**Clary:** Maybe even in those beginning meetings of a lot of people, it was a serious question of...should we just be bringing in something we were looking at in our English classes? Or should this be something that is school wide? It was actually a question that was brought up in and as we...all of this came together, one of the core principles was no it can't just be in English classes to start it.

**Gable:** And I think it was also the idea that there were some administrators who were saying at the time that English teachers needed to teach technical writing and English teachers needed to teach, and we were like, "Whoa, whoa." I don't know science. Like, a science teacher is an expert at science writing. I'm an expert at short story and poetry and expository essay and the history teacher is going to be the expert at document-based questions. So, it was a response to that effort, too, I think.

[...]

**Brandt:** Right because so often one of the big problems with teaching writing across the curriculum is the English teachers are tasked with teaching the whole building how to write and English teachers don't know how to write like a scientist or a historian in the way that scientists and historians know how to write like one. But then we were very understandable that our scientists and historians might not feel comfortable with that either. Right? (Focus group interview, May 29, 2014)

Realizing that they were not equipped to teach writing across the content areas because they were a group of primarily ELA teachers, the steering committee wanted to promote a sense of

collaboration within the WG community. This collaborative environment would serve several purposes in identifying the roles of the teacher participants and facilitators of the professional development meetings.

First, the steering committee acknowledged that they were not experts in teaching writing across the disciplines, but that subject area teachers could come with expertise that all members could tap into. As Ms. Gable stated, “I don't know science. Like, a science teacher is an expert at science writing. I'm an expert at short story and poetry and expository essay and the history teacher is going to be the expert at document-based questions.” As such, the committee sought to include input from the WG participants and promote a sense of collaboration as a way of providing learning opportunities to teachers who were outside their own area of ELA expertise. As a group of ELA professionals, it was to the committee’s advantage to promote collaboration because it allowed for the voices and ideas of the non-ELA teachers to be heard.

Second, fostering a collaborative environment also allowed the steering committee to distribute responsibility for writing instruction across the content areas, and not just let it reside in the realm of ELA. It seemed important to the steering committee to mark a shift of responsibility of teaching writing from English teachers to all subject area teachers. As Ms. Brandt put it, “so often of the big problems of teaching writing across the curriculum is the English teachers are tasked with teaching the whole building how to write and English teachers don't know how to write like a scientist or a historian.” Thus, the steering committee did not assume responsibility for teaching all teachers how to teach writing, and this allowed teacher participants to collaborate and take ownership for teaching others how to write in the different disciplines. Members of the steering committee also reacted to administrators who placed responsibility on the English teachers to teach every type of writing, as Ms. Gable’s comment

suggests. Promoting collaboration thus served as a move to form an identity as a professional development group that valued interdisciplinary approaches to writing instruction, and a way to disperse responsibility of writing instruction across the content areas.

Realizing that they were not equipped to teach subject area teachers how to teach writing in content areas other than English, the steering committee also sought to develop their professional development program from the ground up with continual input from teacher participants. During its first year of development, teachers in the WG were encouraged to bring ideas or resources they had for teaching writing, and the steering committee collected these ideas, strategies, activities, and teacher feedback from the meetings to create a three-day training module. After a year of facilitating meetings and gathering resources from teacher participants, the steering committee organized the materials, and using the teacher feedback, decided what would be used for the three-day training in the following years. Here, the steering committee recounted their process of creating the WG from its beginnings.

**Gable:** ...[The planning started by] putting it all in a binder and picking the best stuff. Which we used, we had all the surveys from the participants to inform what they liked the best and what should stay. What was most helpful for them. It was a matter of organizing by topic, and logical connections.

**Clary:** That first year was like month by month. It was like, "What are we going to do this month? What did they say? What have we done?" It wasn't like we went into that first year with some grand overview of all these best practices. We were pulling from our classrooms but also from our meetings. (Focus group interview, May 29, 2014)

Consistent with the steering committee's values of collaboration, it seemed very important to them that the ideas for what would ultimately become the three-day training came from the participants, and not solely from the steering committee's own experience and teaching.

Thus, the steering committee strategically created a collaborative environment as an avenue to support each other to teach writing across the disciplines, even if the steering committee themselves were primarily from an ELA background. However, although collaboration is generally thought of as a positive characteristic of a community and may have been crucial in creating an environment wherein teachers across the disciplines were able to learn to teach writing on a surface level, I sought to understand the complexities of how teachers learned to teach disciplinary writing within the multidisciplinary community and how teachers integrate principles of disciplinary writing into their own instruction.

After gaining an understanding of the foundations of the WG, how and why it was created, and how these circumstances led to the WG's values of interdisciplinary collaboration, I began to wonder: How did teachers learn to teach writing in discipline-specific ways within a multidisciplinary community? What considerations did the ELA teacher leaders make in supporting teachers across the disciplines to teach writing? Why were teachers so drawn to the Collaborative?

In Chapter Four, I present an analysis of the WG community, including the members' understandings of disciplinary writing instruction and strategies they presented. I follow with Chapter Five, which focuses on how the contexts of the WG and teachers' schools mediated how they learned to teach and enact disciplinary writing instruction.



## CHAPTER IV

### **A Complication of Collaboration:**

#### **Making Sense of Disciplinarity, Interdisciplinarity, and Generality**

In this chapter, I explore the context of the WG professional development—the relationships, activities, and tools of the WG—that may have influenced teachers’ understandings and enactments of disciplinary writing instruction. I draw primarily on the professional development data to explore the contexts of the WG three-day training and monthly meetings. The professional data referenced in this chapter include: teacher feedback forms, field notes, artifacts, and focus group interviews with the WG steering committee.

Through my analyses, I show how the WG identified itself as an “interdisciplinary” group, but the ways that the professional development was carried out seemed to promote generality, rather than interdisciplinarity. I assert that the structure of the WG and members’ perspectives of disciplinary writing instruction led to a conflation of interdisciplinarity with a general approach to writing instruction. Teachers came away with general resources for teaching writing, which muted teachers’ respective disciplinary stances and did not fully meet their instructional needs. Therefore, the WG was a multidisciplinary group because teachers from multiple disciplines were present in the same space, but they were not learning about each other’s distinct disciplinary genres and strategies to inform their own understanding of disciplinary writing instruction.

I organize this chapter by three assertions. The first assertion is about the WG as a whole, the second assertion is about the three-day training, and the third assertion focuses on the context of the monthly meetings. First, I assert that the WG relied on collaboration to provide teachers with writing instruction support across the content areas, but in so doing, the WG gravitated toward general perspectives and approaches to writing instruction. Second, the WG offered largely generic strategies and ideas in the three-day professional development meetings, which seemed to constrain WG members' understanding of disciplinary writing instruction. Third, even with sustained support and opportunities to collaborate with each other, the members of the monthly meetings faced difficulty in framing purposes for tools and discussing practices in ways that were both situated in the disciplines and yet inclusive of all members in the multidisciplinary group. In what follows, I provide the data analyses to warrant these assertions.

**ASSERTION 1: Collaboration Did Not Support the WG to  
Provide Multidisciplinary Writing Professional Development**

As I explained in Chapter Three, the steering committee recognized early in their development of the WG that they did not have the expertise to teach disciplinary writing to teachers across the content areas. As a solution, they created a collaborative environment so that teachers across the disciplines could provide writing instruction support for each other. However, I found that collaboration, in this context, did not appear to accomplish the WG's desired goals for interdisciplinarity. Teachers did not learn about the writing practices of other disciplines to inform their own instruction. Rather, the collaborative context seemed counterproductive to learning disciplinary writing instruction and more geared toward promoting generality. This conflation of interdisciplinarity with generality was revealed in the perspectives of the steering committee and the activities of the professional development.

## The Steering Committee’s Definition of Interdisciplinarity

To understand how the steering committee sought to leverage the collaborative environment that they created to provide literacy support for teachers across the content areas, I present an analysis of the steering committee’s discussion of their mission statement (see Figure 4.1). My first finding was that, disciplinary writing instruction, as I defined it, was not made explicit in the WG’s mission statement. Although one of their professional development goals was to support teachers in learning disciplinary writing instruction, the mission statement included no explicit principles relating to inviting students into disciplinary literacy practices, epistemologies, or purposes. This led me to wonder what the WG steering committee meant by an “interdisciplinary approach” as stated in the second principle of their mission statement: “An interdisciplinary approach is key to improving student writing.” In the rest of this section, I focus my analyses on their definition of an “interdisciplinary approach” to writing instruction to show that what the steering committee meant by “interdisciplinary” varied, which had implications for the way they carried out the WG professional development meetings.

*Figure 4.1: The WG Mission Statement*

The WG Mission Statement: As members of the Writing Group, our mission is to understand writing in content areas in order to make explicit the processes and strategies needed to expand and improve student writing.

We believe:

1. Teachers should maintain ownership for their students’ writing in their content area.
2. An interdisciplinary approach is key to improving student writing.
3. Content area teachers who understand their own writing processes are the best mentors for their student writers.
4. Teachers are the best teachers of other teachers.
5. Educational practice should be balanced with theory and research.
6. Students should have flexibility and choice when writing.
7. [The professional development on reading] provides a foundation for better writing instruction.

During our second focus group interview together, I asked the committee about the second principle in the mission statement: “An interdisciplinary approach is key to improving student writing” and what it meant to them. I focused on this principle within the mission statement because it seemed central for recruiting and supporting teachers of all subject areas. This principle also seemed reflective of the steering committee’s priorities of disciplinarity and collaboration. To unpack this principle, Ms. Brandt explained her understanding of what disciplinary writing looked like across the disciplines.

**Brandt:** ...we can all agree that, oh yeah, we all have to use evidence to support our claims. We all do it but we don't all do it in precisely the same ways. And I'm not talking about MLA style. I'm talking about which claims needs supporting and what kind of evidence are you going to use. And when you're in science, your conclusions need supporting based on this evidence from your experiments. That's not going to look the same as your claims about the theme in this piece of literature and you're using passages from that piece of literature. [...] It's kind of nice because you're seeing the layers. So there's this first layer of, no writing doesn't look the same in all the disciplines. Oh, but there are some moves that writers make that are true across all the disciplines but then when we look underneath that layer, how you make those moves doesn't look the same in each of the disciplines. (emphasis in Brandt’s voice; focus group interview, March 26, 2014)

Ms. Brandt’s stance was that although writers in each discipline write arguments, these arguments are produced through different writing practices. Specifically how claims are made, and what arguments look like, differ across the disciplines based on the types of data or content that a writer used. This understanding of the commonalities and differences of writing across the

disciplines—or what Ms. Brandt called, “the layers”— seems to point to the her definition of “interdisciplinary.” Ms. Brandt’s comments implied that her understanding of an interdisciplinary teacher learning community entailed discussions of the distinctions and commonalities of writing across the disciplines so that teachers could better understand the literate practices of their own discipline by distinguishing them from the literate practices of other disciplines. This definition of interdisciplinarity seems to be aligned with my definition provided in Chapter 1, where teachers learn about the similarities and differences of literate practices across the disciplines to further inform their own understanding of their discipline. However, the members of the steering committee did not seem to hold the same definition for interdisciplinarity as Ms. Brandt. Ms. Gable, in particular, held a different notion of what interdisciplinarity meant, a perspective that seemed to be shared across the WG members and seemed to influence the way the WG was run.

During our first interview together, Ms. Gable and I discussed her views of what the writing practices of ELA looked like. In this interview, Ms. Gable revealed her perspectives on how writing practice was similar across the disciplines. In this excerpt, she referenced an activity from the WG three-day training and connected it with her views of what argumentative writing looked like across the disciplines.

**Gable:** [In English] we do a lot of focus on the explanation, which I know is having evidence and an explanation to support are something that are across the board, no matter the content area....I don't remember what part of the three-day training it is, but we talk about, what does writing look like in your content area. Every single group always says that they want evidence to support whether it's from *Catcher in the Rye* or the science lab or the primary source. Everyone wants evidence to support and they want an analytical

explanation to go with it. Not just restating facts and summarizing, but explaining how that evidence supports whatever idea they're putting forth. So I think that's a commonality. Again, ours would differ because we are responding to, again, a question about *Kindred* and character development or themes or symbols or an ACT-high-school-type scenario. (Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

In contrast, to Ms. Brandt's definition of interdisciplinarity as "the layers" of similarity and difference, Ms. Gable's view of interdisciplinarity seemed to highlight only the areas of commonality in writing across the disciplines. In discussing the argumentative writing practices of English, Ms. Gable referred to an activity from the three-day training in which teachers gave feedback on a sample of student writing and discussed the characteristics of argumentative writing. Ms. Gable began to acknowledge that content or text could influence the ways people write arguments in ELA when she said, "we are responding to, again, a question about *Kindred* and character development or themes or symbols or an ACT-high-school-type scenario," but she did not further elaborate on how these content differences might influence how she taught writing in ELA, or how teaching argument in ELA might differ from the other disciplines in relation to differing content and texts. Rather, she emphasized the similarities by using phrases such as "across the board, no matter the content area," "every single group always wants evidence to support," and "that's a commonality."

Her perspective seemed influenced by her commitment to collaboration and her perspectives on what writing looked like in ELA. As a major steering committee member, she might have felt responsible for promoting collaborative experiences leading her to focus on aspects of writing that teachers could talk about "across the board." Subsequently, her views of interdisciplinarity could have played a role in the way she worked with the committee to

design and present activities in the WG professional development meetings. In addition, as a member of the steering committee, Ms. Gable's perspectives on writing suggest that the steering committee's understanding of disciplinary writing instruction might also have been mediated by their respective ELA backgrounds.

Likewise, Ms. Patterson, who regularly facilitated the three-day meetings, may have focused on trying to find common ground as a way of encouraging teachers to participate in the professional development. In this excerpt, Ms. Patterson referred to another activity in the three-day training where teachers listed the genres and skills that they typically assigned and taught in their content area.

**Ms. Patterson:** This kind of comes up during the three-day training, it's very overwhelming to feel like you're in a bubble and you have to do it all but when you're working together collaboratively, and you can see the overlap. That module that we do where we put up, these are genres that we write in our content area, these are skills that we focus on in our content area, these are problems that we have. And then you put them up and then you can see the overlap. It's like, look we can help each other. We can draw on each other's resources. That's so much more doable and manageable for people if it's across the board and you can make those connections but then also, to go back to that first one [principle in the mission statement], "maintaining ownership," it's like, yeah we overlap in a lot of ways but this is how it's specific in my area and I can own that but still make connections with my colleagues. Because if you feel like you're the only one doing something in your building it kind of feels futile. [...] So I think people feel, in having these discussions together over the three-days, feeling really empowered. What they feel

like they can own and what they feel they can go to others for. (Focus group interview, March 26, 2015)

Like Ms. Gable, Ms. Patterson believed that teachers felt connected with each other when they saw how their writing instruction “overlapped” with other teachers’ instruction “across the board.” This sense of connection was a source of empowerment for teachers, who might have otherwise felt as if they were alone in teaching writing and that their teaching efforts were “futile.” Unlike Ms. Gable, however, Ms. Patterson also noted that teachers needed to maintain ownership of their teaching by seeing what made writing unique in their discipline. Although Ms. Patterson saw the importance of discussing the similarities of writing for empowering subject area teachers to teach it, she also saw the importance of helping teachers see the differences so that teachers could have a better understanding of what made their discipline unique.

My analysis of the steering committee’s understanding of interdisciplinary approaches to writing instruction show that even within the group, there was not a clear understanding of what interdisciplinarity meant. Although the members of the steering committee created the mission statement of the WG together, they may not have held the same perspectives. In particular, Ms. Gable’s views of writing highlighted similarities as a way of promoting collaboration. Yet, although Ms. Patterson valued collaboration and empowerment, she, like Ms. Brandt, also recognized the importance of understanding “the layers” of similarity and difference across the disciplines. Therefore, Ms. Gable’s view of interdisciplinarity somewhat contradicted Ms. Brandt’s and Ms. Patterson’s views. This distinction matters in the way that the WG meetings were carried out, as shown in my analysis of an activity from a three-day training session.

### **General Perspectives Taken Up in Three-Day Training**



I present an exemplar of an activity from the three-day training that represents how Ms. Gable's perspective of interdisciplinarity was not hers alone but actively shared among the WG members and supported by facilitators. In this activity, teachers were asked to make a list of the common genres and writing skills that they taught and assigned. Teachers formed content area groups. On the particular day that I observed (February 7, 2014), there were two ELA groups, two social studies groups, two science/math groups, and one math group for a total of seven groups. Teachers created posters with their lists of genres and skills and the common challenges that students faced in writing in their classroom. Figure 4.2 shows the transcription of two of the posters (for a transcription of all of the posters from the three-day training, see Appendix E).

Figure 4.2: Teachers' Posters of Genres and Skills by Content Area

**ELA Group**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary analysis</li> <li>• I search</li> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Reflect/respond</li> <li>• Essays: persuade, narrative, research</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Metacognitive books</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Memoir</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Vowels</li> <li>• Myths</li> <li>• Speech debate</li> <li>• Quick writes</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Biographies</li> <li>• Informational text</li> <li>• Opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following instructions, directions</li> <li>• Questioning</li> <li>• Structure/organization</li> <li>• Evidence/support</li> <li>• Grammar/syntax</li> <li>• Talk to the text</li> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Form opinion</li> <li>• Thesis/assertion</li> <li>• Revision</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• What is good writing?</li> <li>• Peer editing</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Pre-write</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's boring</li> <li>• Revision is unnecessary</li> <li>• "I'm a great writer"</li> <li>• Txt spk ☺ LOL!</li> <li>• Poor support "my opinion is enough"</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• <u>TIME</u>: grading, conference w/kids, revise time is limited</li> <li>• Paragraphs= a # only</li> <li>• Juvenile voice</li> <li>• Good writing= spelling correctly only, "nice" handwriting</li> </ul>	

**Social Studies Group**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonfiction</li> <li>• Narrative</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Letters/simulated memoirs</li> <li>• Reflections</li> <li>• Dialogues</li> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• Extended response</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Graphic novels</li> <li>• Comic strips</li> <li>• Cartoons</li> <li>• Argumentative essays</li> <li>• Opinion/editorial</li> <li>• Persuasive essays</li> <li>• Poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a position statement</li> <li>• Read/interpret graphs</li> <li>• Using evidence to support</li> <li>• Write counterarguments</li> <li>• Identifying a thesis, theme, and/or main idea</li> <li>• Persuasive language</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• Citing sources</li> <li>• Vet sources</li> <li>• Selecting effective evidence</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality vs. quantity</li> <li>• Substantiating opinions</li> <li>• Teaching kids to use sources properly</li> <li>• Not wanting to redo/revise writing</li> </ul>	

Analyzing the posters across the subject areas, I found some similarities in the genres and skills that content area groups listed, particularly in relation to argument writing. Across the content area posters, I noticed that all content area groups listed some form of skill that involved supporting argumentative claims with evidence. I transcribed all of the teachers' the points that related to evidentiary support, shown below.

ELA

- Evidence/support
- Citing evidence

Social Studies

- Using evidence to support
- Validating claims w/evidence

Science/Math

- Objective presentation of facts and evidence
- Claim-evidence-reasoning
- Citing
- Verify with evidence

The abundance of comments related to evidence and support reflects the push for teaching students how to write argumentatively across the content areas (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010, NCW, 2003). This pattern could have also emerged because all disciplines recognize some form of argument writing in the form of claim, evidence, and warrant (Toulmin, 2003). Indeed, this pattern is what may have led Ms. Gable to say, “we do a lot of focus on the explanation, which I know is having evidence and an explanation to support are something that are across the board, no matter the content area” (Personal interview, March 11, 2014).

Yet, when the content area groups of teachers shared their posters to the whole group, teachers were not asked about the underlying reasons for the commonalities across posters, or for any distinctions across posters. After content area groups created their posters, the whole professional development group was asked, “What insights can we gain from looking at our expectations and challenges across content areas?” (PowerPoint slide, February 7, 2014). The resulting discussion about writing focused on common and surface-level writing skills such as: writers in all content areas need to know how to write a thesis, getting students to overcome writer’s block and get their ideas down on paper, the physical demands of handwriting and typing, and grammar and mechanics (Field notes of three-day training, February 7, 2014).

The genre and skills poster activity had the potential to reveal how commonalities and differences in writing are rooted in the disciplines. Even discussing the commonalities could have been a way to debrief the activity as an entryway into how all disciplines write some form of argument, which could then move into a discussion on how those similarities play out in different ways across the disciplines. Thus, the poster activity had the potential to address some of “the layers,” as Ms. Brandt had put it, of similarity and difference in how writers write for the disciplines. For example, in noticing that all teachers listed comments about evidence and

support in their posters, teachers could have discussed *how* writers use evidence to support their arguments in different ways across the disciplines. However, it seems that the teachers did not yet know how to talk about these common and different features of writing and how these were shaped by disciplinary norms, so instead, the discussion veered toward general considerations of teaching writing. My analysis shows that although the steering committee intended the professional development to be interdisciplinary teacher learning community based on collaborative experiences, the way the professional development meetings were enacted and maintained actually privileged generic perspectives of writing instruction. I further support this sub-assertion in the next section.

### **Collaborative Professional Development Structure in Three-Day Training Positions**

#### **Teachers as Experts**

Relying on a collaborative structure to provide disciplinary expertise introduced another complication in the ways that teacher participants were positioned in relation to the steering committee. Within this collaborative structure, teacher participants were expected to teach each other how to teach writing, but it was unclear to the steering committee whether or not the teacher participants had the necessary disciplinary and literacy expertise to support each other. What is more, although the steering committee attempted to position teachers as disciplinary experts, they were unsure of the extent to which teacher participants in the three-day training actually understood how to enact disciplinary writing instruction for themselves. I present an analysis of the steering committee's perspectives of members' knowledge of disciplinary writing instruction to show how the WG positioned teachers as both experts and novices.

**Kwok:** And you feel like the teachers, at least in the three-day training, they get that? That there are different layers of similarities and differences?

**Clary:** I don't know, I think it comes out, I think they have to continue to practice to figure that out.

**Patterson:** I think they get the idea, don't they?

**Brandt:** I don't think they get it like we get it, but I do think that they begin to—

**Patterson:** It's like the beginning of...

**Clary:** I think it's introduced as an idea.

**Patterson:** And I get it, when we talk about it, they're like, “Oh...” But whether or not they can...but I think that's part of what the three days is though. It's supposed to introduce it and empower people so they feel like I can go forward and do this. (Focus group interview, March 26, 2015)

Ms. Patterson stated that teachers understood the general commonalities and differences of writing instruction at a conceptual level, “but whether or not they [could]” implement that principle into practice required more time and support than the three-day training could provide. Here, she realized that is one thing to be able to talk about the characteristics of disciplinary writing broadly, but it is another to be able talk about what disciplinary writing instruction might entail in a particular discipline. It is yet another task to be able to teach other teachers in different content areas how to teach disciplinary writing.

In attempting to provide writing instruction support across the disciplines, the facilitators and steering committee positioned teachers as experts in their content area even though they implicitly recognized that teachers might not hold that expertise in their discipline, in literacy, or in using literacy to teach students the writing practices of the disciplines. However, without representation of the different disciplines in the steering committee, they may not have had much of a choice. In other words, because the steering committee and most of the facilitators came

from the same content area domain (ELA), they had to rely on the contributions of teacher participants for support outside of ELA. Yet, because they did not fully expect members of the three-day training to have the expertise in teaching writing, the steering committee remained largely in control over how the WG was run even when they strived to position teacher participants as equals. Furthermore, because the steering committee was in control, their perspectives of disciplinary literacy instruction mattered in how they managed the WG.

### **Conflation of Interdisciplinarity with Generality**

I turn to my analyses of Ms. Gable's interview responses to support the assertion that the collaborative structure of the professional development may have encouraged general perspectives and approaches to writing instruction because all teachers were positioned as experts within the collaborative community, even if the steering committee recognized that teachers may not have had the expertise to teach each other disciplinary writing instruction. In particular, when teachers were expected to support teachers in other disciplines, they may have resorted to their assumptions of what writing looked like in the other disciplines and notions of writing that they were already familiar with.

In this section, I draw on the interview data from Ms. Gable for several reasons. As a member of the steering committee and regular monthly meeting facilitator, Ms. Gable had a major influence in designing the professional development activities for the three-day trainings and monthly meetings. Therefore, she may have influenced how the members conceptualized disciplinary writing instruction and how those ideas were distributed through activities. In addition, she was the primary facilitator of the monthly meetings.

In our interviews together, Ms. Gable talked about analysis and argumentative writing and it became clear how much she assumed about the nature of writing across the disciplines.

**Kwok:** Maybe even taking a further step back, does analysis differ within argument across content areas? Across disciplines?

**Gable:** I mean I think at its heart it's that, again, using evidence to support your ideas. I mean I think that's a pretty strong commonality and I don't know the other genres well enough to say what tiny little differences they have. I would presume you wouldn't use a first-person voice in a lab report or, I mean, I know you don't do it in history. You talk about your subjects, your people, your examples, or your instances, whatever it is. So, I would assume that they have more in common than what separates them. I haven't written a lab report in ages though. This is why whenever people say writing teachers need to teach everything, I'm like (laughs) you do not want to have me to be teaching lab reports. Right? Like, informational texts, you can do all that. Eek, no. (Personal interview, April 16, 2014)

Here, Ms. Gable made some assumptions about the nature of writing arguments in domains other than ELA. Because Ms. Gable did not know the writing practices of other disciplines deeply, she made an assumption that there were “tiny little differences” among the disciplines in terms of writing an argument and she did not detail what these differences might be. Yet, she also implicitly recognized that there are significant differences in writing. She expressed not feeling comfortable teaching informational writing or lab reports as opposed to narrative texts, suggesting that there are enough differences in writing arguments across the disciplines to the extent that she would not be able to teach writing in other content area. However, Ms. Gable’s dismissal of these differences of writing practices, that the disciplines have “more in common than what separates them,” suggests that she tended to search for the commonalities of writing across the disciplines.



Ms. Gable made some assumptions about the commonalities across the disciplines, but she made some assumptions about the differences, too. Specifically, Ms. Gable suggested that the difference between ELA and the other disciplines was that ELA primarily attends to creative writing, whereas the other disciplines primarily attend to informational writing and research.

**Gable:** I think other disciplines are much more for informational writing. I mean that would be the focus of what they go in depth on. How to write, like document-based questions, DBQs is what they call them. Or research. To be honest, I don't really do huge research papers. We do little research papers, but we don't do any big research papers. Again, I hope that other content areas would do that. The same way, again, they expect me to go in depth on how to write short stories, so. I have a much more heavier lean on creative writing and the elements of what makes writing. I would expect a history teacher to talk about how to make your paper concise and I don't know if they really hit on the other things. I don't really expect them to teach about vivid writing or sensory details. I think these are applicable in those different disciplines but I don't really expect them to go in that kind of depth. (Personal interview, April 16, 2014)

Whether or not she intended it, Ms. Gable's discourse set up a dichotomy between teaching writing in ELA and teaching writing in other content areas. That is, whereas elements of rhetoric and creative writing are taught in ELA, the other content areas "are much more for informational writing." Ms. Gable's comment implies that ELA writing does not foreground matters of content, and that informational writing does not involve rhetoric or persuasion, both of which signal a generic perspective of writing. This dichotomy of ELA as rhetoric and creative writing versus the other disciplines as content-based writing or writing that requires research and data is a simplified representation of the nature of writing across the disciplines and a pattern that shows

itself in the professional development activities and the views of the WG members who attend the three-day training.

Overall, without the knowledge of writing practice in the other disciplines, Ms. Gable made some assumptions about the commonalities and differences of writing. These assumptions seemed to come from Ms. Gable's familiarity with writing within ELA. In making these assumptions about the similarities and differences, she tended to reduce the complexity of writing practice into general or surface level conceptions of disciplinary writing. These assumptions were present in the strategies and discussions of the three-day training.

**ASSERTION 2: General Perspectives Influence the Strategies and Discussions of  
Disciplinary Writing During Three-Day Training**

Under my first assertion, I made the argument that the steering committee's position on interdisciplinarity was mediated by their desire to create a collaborative community and by the fact that they all had an ELA background. The steering committee strove to position teachers as experts and include all perspectives shared across members, and in doing so, they highlighted general perspectives and approaches to writing instruction. In this section, I present analyses of data from the three-day training. I first present an analysis of an activity from the three-day training to show that teachers had some disciplinary knowledge, but these understandings were not tapped into. In other words, the professional development activity was not interdisciplinary because it did not elicit different disciplinary perspectives from the teachers for the benefit of all members. Furthermore, even though the professional development structure did not encourage teachers to tap into the disciplinary literacy knowledge of other teachers, teachers were also drawn to generic strategies as a response to their busy teaching lives. I also draw on teacher feedback data from the three-day training to assert that teachers were drawn to generic strategies

because they were seemingly easy to adapt and easy to implement. Even so, teachers reported needing more discipline-specific support.

### **Disciplinary Stances Muted**

I present an analysis of an activity from the three-day training to show how subject area teachers' held disciplinary views about writing, but these perspectives were muted for the sake of solidarity and community within the group. This exemplar also reveals that Ms. Gable's assumptions about writing—that ELA mainly deals with matters of rhetoric and the other content areas mainly deal with informational writing—was a perspective that was shared in the three-day trainings, which overall is a general view of disciplinary writing.

For this activity, teachers formed content area groups. During this particular three-day training (November 14, 2013), there were two groups each of science, English language arts, and history content areas for a total of six groups. Teachers were told that they were going to read a student writing sample of an argument. The assignment format and prompt was typical of an ACT-type essay where the student was given a debatable topic and asked to “take a stand” on that topic, which in this case was cloning (see Appendix F for student sample). After consulting with the WG steering committee, I found out that the student only responded to the prompt at hand, and did not have any supplemental texts to refer to when writing his/her response. After teachers read the writing sample, the content area groups were asked to make a list of the students' strengths, weaknesses, and future lessons they might implement if they were the student's teacher on a piece of poster paper. I transcribed all the teachers' posters, which is shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Teachers' Posters of Feedback on Student Writing Sample in Three-Day Training

<p><b>A. Science</b></p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opinion is clearly stated</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> and last paragraphs are related</li> <li>• capitalization</li> <li>• engaging topic</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• factually inaccurate</li> <li>• lacks evidence, mostly opinion             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ evidence is other's opinions, but why?</li> <li>○ quotes needed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• punctuation is misleading</li> <li>• did not mind the GAP</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• direct instruction on cloning</li> <li>• what constitutes evidence</li> <li>• how to research and finding reputable sources</li> </ul>	<p><b>B. Science</b></p> <p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no details or support of argument</li> <li>• general statements</li> <li>• religious vs. science but no quotes or data</li> <li>• ex. Dolly-lost: several grammar, structural errors</li> <li>• Buddhism, Hinduism?</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to support argument</li> <li>• references</li> </ul>
<p><b>C. Social Studies</b></p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• claim is up front</li> <li>• body ¶s attempt a reason for support</li> <li>• attempt to refute counter claims</li> <li>• elements of good writing:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ sourcing (kind of) information</li> <li>○ transitions</li> <li>○ occasional strong/clear topic sentence</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accuracy of content sources?!</li> <li>• focus of topic/paragraphs</li> <li>• lack of specificity in title</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sourcing/reliable sources &amp; citing</li> <li>• thesis/purpose statement</li> <li>• paragraph organization</li> </ul>	<p><b>D. Social Studies</b></p> <p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• established strong opinion</li> <li>• decent topic sentences</li> <li>• some research (UNESCO, WHO)</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• needs clear evidence             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lacks substantiated claims</li> <li>○ lacks specificity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• repetitive</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opinion/evidence T-chart</li> <li>• sequencing</li> <li>• works cited</li> <li>• punctuation, mechanics</li> <li>• pronoun/antecedent</li> </ul>

E. English Language Arts	F. English Language Arts
<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passionate argument; clearly takes a position</li> <li>• strong thesis</li> <li>• 5 paragraph structure</li> <li>• knowledge of providing examples, “experts,”...</li> <li>• few mechanical errors</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cite sources—where are these ex. from?</li> <li>• don’t just ask questions—</li> <li>• paragraphs lack unity &amp; coherence</li> <li>• persistent sentence structure errors</li> <li>• convoluted sentences—WHAT?</li> <li>• Too many generalizations/sweeping statements</li> <li>• Need to use articles (a, an, the)</li> <li>• Pronoun overuse</li> <li>• not truly understanding the issue</li> <li>• redundancy</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read aloud</li> <li>• counterarguments &amp; how to address them</li> <li>• avoid “absolutes”?</li> <li>• proper citing of sources &amp; validity of sources</li> <li>• clear support &amp; connection of thesis</li> <li>• sentence structure, etc.</li> <li>• going through writing process</li> <li>• organization</li> <li>• the need to understand your topic</li> </ul>	<p><u>Strengths:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong opinions</li> <li>• good topic sentence</li> <li>• attempt to cite others</li> <li>• length (has 5 paragraphs)</li> <li>• read-ability (spelling, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><u>Weaknesses:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of evidence/support</li> <li>• one-sided argument</li> <li>• words omitted</li> <li>• <u>vague</u></li> <li>• organization</li> <li>• too many ?s @ end</li> <li>• poor conclusion</li> <li>• lack of defining terms</li> </ul> <p><u>Future Lessons:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>conference</u> w/student</li> <li>• do research—opposing opinion, citations</li> <li>• lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ outlining</li> <li>○ incorporating research</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Taking a glance across the teachers’ posters, it seemed that the feedback for the student sample was somewhat consistent across the content areas. Almost all groups made comments that the student’s claim statement was a strength of the paper. For example, teachers wrote, “opinion is clearly stated” (science), “claim is up front” (social studies), and “strong thesis” (ELA). The consistencies across the content area groups could be due to the writing sample

itself, which was more a standardized test genre than a genre that clearly represented work from one of the disciplines. In addition, the writing sample was not representative of a typical assignment in any discipline because the sample was not a text-based response; rather the student was asked to respond based on prior knowledge and personal experience. Furthermore, the argumentative genres of all disciplines have some form of claim-evidence-warrant structure (Toulmin, 2003), although the particular features of the arguments would look different across disciplines. These reasons could account for some of the consistencies of the lists of student strengths across the content areas.

Upon further investigation, however, there were clear distinctions across the content area posters. For example, the science groups seemed to give feedback focused on the inaccuracy of facts presented (e.g. “factually inaccurate,” “lacks evidence, mostly opinion,” and “no details or support of argument”). The social studies groups’ feedback focused on the inaccuracy of where the information was sourced from (e.g. “Accuracy of content sources?!”). These comments are reflective of shared disciplinary practices to question the validity of evidence in science (Hand, Lawrence, & Yore, 1999), and question the validity of sources in history (Wineburg, 1991). Analyzing the teachers’ posters, therefore, revealed that teachers attended to the norms of the disciplines when evaluating student writing (Wilder, 2012). In contrast, the ELA groups seemed emphasize formal features of writing that were unrelated to purpose and audience. For example, the ELA groups commented on matters of organization (e.g. “paragraphs lack unity & coherence”), aesthetics (e.g. “Pronoun overuse”), and grammar and mechanics (e.g. “too many ?s @ end”).

After all the teacher groups presented their posters, the professional development facilitators asked teachers to debrief what they saw across the posters. The comments included,

“we all teach argument” and “we all want a clear thesis” (Field notes of three-day training, November 14, 2013). Once again, in the tendency to seek commonalities across disciplines, the discussion of writing features got reduced to general characteristics. The data suggest that teachers held disciplinary stances and had ideas about what writing looked like particular to their discipline, but they never got taken up in discussion. Without discussing and making explicit the unique disciplinary literacy practices, conversations of any commonalities were reduced to generalities and the teachers may have left the professional development activity conflating interdisciplinarity with generality.

The facilitators might not have taken up the differences across content areas as much as the similarities as a way to introduce or apprentice teachers into disciplinary writing instruction. Finding common ground was an effective and empowering entry into the idea of teaching writing in every content area class. As Ms. Patterson stated in a focus group interview, the three-day training was “supposed to introduce it [disciplinary writing instruction] and empower people so they feel like I can go forward and do this” (March 26, 2015). The underlying message that teachers seemed to receive when discussing the similarities was that all teachers were in this endeavor together. To quote one teacher’s feedback comment on the three-day training, teachers may have felt that: “We (as teachers of different subjects) are in this together. We are working towards the same goals.” On a related note, the facilitators might have seen the whole group discussion as a time to focus on commonalities across disciplines, and may have seen small group discussions as a time to think about characteristics and considerations particular to each discipline.

Another possible explanation is that perhaps the facilitators might not have been aware of the need to step out of their own ELA domain to lead others in considerations of how skills

might be different. Since most of the facilitators taught ELA themselves, they may not have recognized that in highlighting the commonalities, they were promoting generalist perspectives, rather than helping teachers understand writing in their own discipline. In other words, the facilitators may have thought they were promoting interdisciplinarity, rather than generality, given the varied definitions of interdisciplinarity shared within the steering committee and the ideas of what writing instruction should look like from an ELA perspective. This analysis shows that the challenge of conflating interdisciplinarity with generality was not the steering committee's alone, but a challenge for the facilitators and members as well.

### **Teachers Were Presented with and Were Drawn Toward Generic Strategies**

I turn to my analysis of teacher feedback forms from the three-day training (see Chapter Three for description of analysis methods) to support the argument that the WG was encouraged to offer generic writing strategies because teachers were drawn to strategies they thought they could easily implement. The WG provided me with access to teacher feedback forms from 2013-2014 academic year (n=275) that the WG collected during their three-day teacher trainings. The forms asked teachers to complete the following statements:

- Today, I really “got”...  
(new insights, understandings, confidence about...)
- Today, I need...  
(help with questions about, more time on..., to just...)

Overall, patterns within the teacher feedback forms suggested that teachers highly valued the professional development and found it useful. However, teachers also left wanting more specific information about how to teach writing in their discipline, suggesting that the support and resources that the WG provided were not discipline-specific.

Analyzing the Gots codes aggregated by day revealed which days and topics generally made the most impressions on teachers. Table 4.2 shows the total instances of Gots codes for



each day in the training and the total instances of codes across the three days. I organized the codes into five categories: social, schooling concerns, PD concerns, activities and strategies, and frameworks and principles. For definitions of each code and category, see the Coding Key (Appendix D).

Table 4.1: Gots Categories from Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training

Category	Got Code	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Total
Activities and strategies (n=190)	Activities and strategies-general	21	33	12	66
	Activities and strategies-4 corners	20	2	2	24
	Activities and strategies-6 word memoir	0	9	0	9
	Activities and strategies-assessment	0	0	4	4
	Activities and strategies-checklists	0	0	4	4
	Activities and strategies-cubing	0	10	0	10
	Activities and strategies-exit cards	1	2	0	3
	Activities and strategies-free write	1	0	0	1
	Activities and strategies-gallery walk	1	0	0	1
	Activities and strategies-good writers list	2	0	0	2
	Activities and strategies-peer feedback	0	0	9	9
	Activities and strategies-personal writing history	7	0	0	7
	Activities and strategies-RAFT	0	29	1	30
	Activities and strategies-rubrics	0	0	7	7
Activities and strategies-social dimension, post-it note activity	0	0	4	4	
Activities and strategies-writing process analysis	9	0	0	9	
Frameworks and principles (n=172)	Framework-10 design principles	0	18	0	18
	Framework-4 I's	8	0	0	8
	Framework-4 sure things	0	0	2	2
	Framework-mind the GAP	44	5	1	50
	Principle-appropriate feedback	2	1	15	18
	Principle-increase writing opportunities	1	0	1	2
	Principle-models and modeling	26	1	1	28
	New insights	16	13	4	33
	New insights-CCSS	0	4	0	4
Social (n=71)	Affect	8	8	3	19
	Collaboration	19	18	15	52
Schooling connections (n=48)	Connection to PD on reading	5	2	0	7
	Disciplinary	1	7	3	11
	Grade specific comment	1	0	0	1
	Incorporating activity into instruction	6	9	1	16
	Incorporating activity into instruction-disciplinary	3	2	0	5
	Interdisciplinary	3	3	2	8
Aspects of PD (n=32)	Time during PD	3	7	1	11
	PD instruction	1	4	2	7
	Praise	6	3	5	14

The resulting categories of codes suggest that teachers reported taking away activities and strategies that they could use in their teaching (n=190), frameworks and ideas for thinking about how to teach writing in their classroom (n=172), and opportunities to collaborate with other

teachers and feel empowered to teach writing (n=71). Some teachers also made connections between their PD experience and another aspect of their teaching (n=48), such as an idea about how to incorporate an activity into their instruction or how to make a connection between what they learned and a characteristic of writing in their discipline. Other teachers appreciated how the PD was managed (n=32) in terms of instruction and time given during the PD to work on lesson planning.

To see what made the strongest impressions on teachers, I further analyzed the three most occurring codes on any given day of the training, which were: “framework-mind the GAP” (n=44), “activities and strategies-general” (n=33), and “activities and strategies-RAFT” (n=29). Since the code “activities and strategies-general” refers to a comment where a teacher reported taking away an activity or strategy but not mentioning any particular one by name, I pay closer attention to the *GAP* and *RAFT*.

*Mind the GAP* was a framework for creating writing assignments. When assigning writing, teachers were encouraged to consider the Genre, Audience, and Purpose of the piece. Teachers were also encouraged to make these aspects of writing explicit to students while teaching writing. These three aspects of writing—genre, audience, and purpose—are interrelated and the WG emphasized that an effective piece of writing attends to form, who the piece is being written for, and the reason for which it is being written. In creating a *RAFT*, students are expected to attend to the Role, Audience, Form, and Task of the piece, usually in writing a response to a text or topic. Teachers often supply students with multiple possibilities for each aspect of the RAFT, so that students have a choice in what they write and how they will write the text response. As such, students typically have the opportunity to generate creative texts through the RAFT strategy.

In addition to the quantity of codes for *GAP* and *RAFT*, the teachers' feedback seemed to suggest that they were most enthusiastic about these two resources. Below are some enthusiastic comments from teachers.

Regarding *GAP*:

- “the GAP is a great acronym”
- “I thought the discussion of GAP was really helpful and easy to use”
- “mind the GAP—love that”
- “the GAP--what it means and why it is so important”
- “I love using GAP”
- “I really enjoyed learning about the concept of GAP”
- “GAP—flexibility for our writers”

Regarding *RAFT*:

- “I really am excited to try RAFT in my classes”
- “Also found the RAFT idea interesting and adaptable”
- “RAFT—loved the common cold activity”
- “Great ideas from using the RAFT model”
- “RAFT was really key.”
- “Enjoyed the RAFT activity—nice reminder of this”
- “I enjoyed our activities especially RAFT”
- “I have a great idea for RAFT”
- “I really liked the article activity [RAFT]. It's a fantastic way to read informational text with a creative, fun, collaborative activity”
- “such great ideas especially the RAFT”
- “I will probably use the RAFT exercise in classes going forward”
- “I really got RAFT activity. I like how it can be applied to any subject area.”

Teachers' expressed their “enjoyment” and “love” for the GAP and RAFT and also showed their enthusiasm through strong statements that they underlined, such as, “RAFT was really key.” Not only were GAP and RAFT two of the most occurring codes, but the teachers also seemed most excited about using the GAP and RAFT.

In addition to teachers' enthusiasm, teachers expressed that they thought RAFT and the GAP would be easy to adopt. Phrases such as “flexibility,” “adaptable,” “easy to use,” and “applied to any subject area” suggest that teachers thought this activity and framework could be easily implemented into their own instruction. Furthermore, teachers might have described

RAFT as “adaptable” and “[applicable] to any subject area” because they might have seen RAFT as a strategy that they could implement without too much effort to change their existing writing instruction. This may have led some teachers to make comments such as, “I will probably use the RAFT exercise in classes going forward.” Likewise, phrases such as “easy to use” and “flexibility” suggest that teachers might have seen the GAP as a framework that seemingly would not interfere much with their existing curriculum. Introducing the GAP may have been helpful for teachers in thinking about how genre, in any discipline, is a function of the purpose of writing and the discourse community that one is writing for (Swales, 1990); however, there was no follow through to see what the genres actually looked like in each discipline given differences in the audiences and purposes for writing. As with the other three-day training activities, the GAP was a useful tool to find common ground among teachers and could have been a starting point for a conversation about disciplinary differences, but there was no follow through into what those differences looked like.

Another characteristic that RAFT and the GAP have in common is that they are both acronyms. Of all the strategies and frameworks presented by the WG, these were the only two that were acronyms, yet these were also the two highest occurring codes in the teacher feedback data. This finding suggests that teachers may have gravitated towards ideas and activities that they could easily remember, or ideas and activities that sounded appealing. Indeed, all the strategies and activities reported by the teachers were easy to remember and could act as stand alone activities, such as “peer feedback,” “rubrics,” “4 corners,” and “exit cards.” All of the strategies that teachers reported taking away can be seen in Table 4.1 of Gots codes, shown previously (see page 97). This finding is a reflection of the professional development itself because almost all activities that were offered, and certainly all that were highlighted, were

intended to attend to a diverse group of teachers across the disciplines so the strategies were generic by design.

The tendency for teachers to be attracted to flexible or easily adaptable strategies is also reflected in a comment from one of the focal teachers, Ms. Wallace. Here, she discussed what she appreciated about the strategies presented in the WG meetings.

**Wallace:** So what I really liked about the Writing Group was...it gave you tools that you could use almost immediately in your classroom. Essentially, I could leave the workshop and say, "Okay, we're going to try doing this strategy today." It also made sense with what we were doing. It wasn't like, "Do this instead." It was something you could use to supplement what you were already doing. (Personal interview, March 19, 2014)

Ms. Wallace reported appreciating that she could "immediately" implement the strategies in her classroom, suggesting that the strategies she learned about were easily to adapt. Like *GAP* and *RAFT*, Ms. Wallace might have appreciated that she could easily implement the strategies and activities that she learned from the WG as a "supplement," without much forethought and planning as to how it would fit into her curriculum, suggesting that she was learning generic, stand alone strategies.

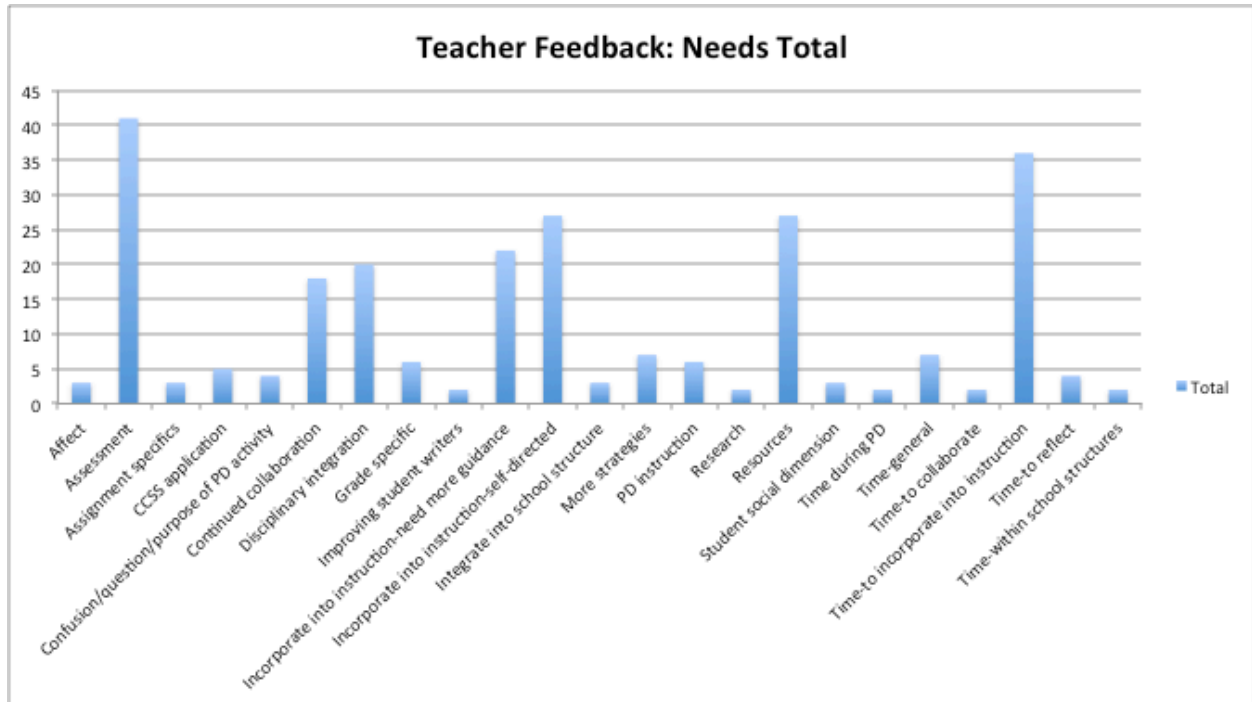
However, this finding may also be a reflection of the context that teachers had to learn and teach within. Perhaps teachers gravitated towards activities that seemed easier to adopt and that would not disrupt their current instruction dramatically because of their busy teaching schedules. Given that teachers already had a host of instructional demands on a daily basis, teachers may have been searching for the easiest ways to integrate writing instruction into their existing curriculum.

Another challenge was that the focus on strategies within the professional development without attention to how the strategies needed to be adapted to suit each discipline's ways of knowing and particular literacy practices. For example, RAFT was a popular and potentially helpful framework in which to develop writing tasks, but because it seemed like a strategy that required easy adjustments, there was more potential to neglect the considerations needed to apply the framework to suit disciplinary ways of knowing and support students in disciplinary literacy practices. Therefore, the WG offered potentially useful strategies and resources, but teachers needed more time and support to actually apply these resources to fit their disciplinary literacy instruction. This claim is further supported by my analysis of the Needs codes in the following section.

### **Teachers Needed More Discipline-Specific Support**

Even though teachers were drawn to generic strategies, they also reported needing more discipline-specific instructional support. Because the three-day professional development was intended as an introductory training, it may not be surprising that teachers reported still needing support on how to actually adapt strategies into their discipline. Based on the chart below of the totals for each of the Needs codes, the patterns across the high frequency Needs codes suggest that teachers were most concerned about: assessment, how to incorporate with they had learned into their instruction, opportunities to collaborate, resources, and time to actually integrate what they had learned into their existing curriculum and instruction.

Figure 4.4: Total of Needs in Teacher Feedback of Three-Day Training



Despite the number of teachers who reported taking away activities, strategies, and ideas as Gots, some of the biggest concerns for teachers was knowing specifically how, and finding the time, to incorporate strategies and activities into their subject area instruction. For some teachers, needing more support to integrate activities and strategies into instruction meant finding content area-specific resources to carry out an activity (“resources,” n=27). For others, integration meant finding the time to plan and incorporate what they had learned into their instruction (“time to incorporate into instruction,” n=36). Some explicitly mentioned disciplinary concerns for integration (“disciplinary integration,” n=20). Lastly, others sought continued opportunities to collaborate so that they could continue to get ideas and resources for integration (“continued collaboration,” n=18). This need for further specific support again points to the general perspectives of writing discussed in the PD, the generic nature of the strategies and activities



presented, and the time constraints of the training to offer teachers more support to modify the generic strategies.

Even with the RAFT strategy, which teachers reported to be “[applicable] to any subject area” and “adaptable” in the Gots section, teachers had many questions and concerns about the specifics in implementing the strategy, some of which are shown below.

- “more info on how to develop your own RAFT assignment”
- “more time with RAFT and how to develop the chart”
- “Questions about evaluating RAFT activities. Use one rubric based on the content, or rubrics specific to each RAFT option?”
- “more help with RAFT for ELA”

Such comments suggest that teachers needed more support beyond the three-day training to figure out the details of adapting generic strategies to suit the purposes of their discipline and existing curriculum. Overall, teachers seemed to face difficulty in knowing how to adapt the strategies and activities into their own instruction, but they seemed excited about taking away resources that they could use immediately in their teaching.

In sum, analyses from the activities and the teacher feedback forms from the three-day training revealed that: 1) teachers held disciplinary stances that were not readily taken up during the professional development, conflating interdisciplinarity with generality, 2) teachers were drawn to generic strategies, yet were expected to adapt those strategies to their own content area, and 3) teachers needed more support on how to adapt strategies for discipline-specific instruction. In the next section, I further examine why teachers may have faced difficulty in adapting strategies, yet came away from the professional development invested in the WG and teaching writing in their content area.

### **ASSERTION 3: Monthly Meeting Teachers Challenged by Navigating between their Disciplinary Stances and the Multidisciplinary Space**

Recall that the steering committee intended the three-day training to be an introductory course and they did not expect the teachers to know how to enact disciplinary writing instruction, even though they relied on their participation for multidisciplinary support. On the other hand, Ms. Gable, the main facilitator of the monthly meetings, firmly believed that members of the monthly meetings understood the complexity of disciplinary writing instruction much more than the three-day participants did, presumably because monthly meeting members received sustained support.

**Kwok:** What about in the monthly meetings, do you feel like people get that there are these different layers of similarities and differences across the disciplines?

**Gable:** The continuity group? Yeah, yeah. I mean, you see the monthly meetings, so I feel like we have all the All-Stars and so yeah, I think they totally see that and that's how we can have Nadia who teaches a health and foods class, which is so far from my content area, can get up and talk about these things and everyone is like, "Ooh! And this! And this! And here's my application and here's my deviation." And that we can have all these people from all these content areas presenting very different assignments with varied applications. (Focus group interview, March 26, 2015)

Ms. Gable clearly showed confidence in the monthly meeting members, whom she called the "All-Stars." According to Ms. Gable, these "All-Stars" learned about strategies, tools, and activities and easily adapted them into their own instruction. It may seem obvious to attribute the three-day training participants' apparent lack of understanding of disciplinary writing instruction to a lack of time and sustained support since those were the two main differences observed

between the three-day training and the monthly meeting participants. Indeed, time was a major influence in how teachers took up writing strategies, a pattern I return to in the next chapter. However, solely attributing teachers' challenges to time and support seemed too simple. I turn to an analysis of the monthly meeting activities to show that the monthly meeting members, like the facilitators of the three-day trainings, also tended toward generic discussions of the instructional tools they shared.

In this section, I present three exemplars from the monthly meetings of members presenting instructional activities or tools. The exemplars include presentations of a sentence starter bookmark presented by Ms. Gable, a summary activity presented by Ms. Wallace, and a discussion about technological tools for writing. Because teachers were regularly invited to share activities, strategies, or tools they had tried out themselves, the resources that teachers presented in the monthly meetings were different from those presented in the three-day trainings. Sometimes, these resources came out of group discussion, such as the discussion of technological tools. Other resources came from brainstorming and reflecting on students' needs, such as Ms. Wallace's summarizing activity. And others came from the teacher's own research for planning, such as Ms. Gable's sentence starter bookmark.

These three exemplars represent the challenges that teachers from the monthly meetings faced in framing purposes for tools and discussing practices in ways that were both situated in the disciplines and yet inclusive of all members in the multidisciplinary group. In particular, teachers seemed challenged by setting appropriate purposes for professional development activities and stepping out of their own content area domain to support teachers in other domains. Teachers also tended toward discussions of logistics as another type of general, but inclusive, discussion. I present data to warrant the assertion that the inclusive and collaborative

environment within the multidisciplinary group influenced the ways teachers presented and discussed tools.

For each tool or activity, I categorized whether the resource was presented generically or in a way that was situated within a particular discipline. A tool might be presented in a generic way if the presenter did not frame the purposes for using the tool or explained how the tool supported students’ disciplinary reading or writing. Likewise, I also analyzed whether or not the teachers discussed the possibilities of the resource in a general manner or in ways that attended to the potential affordances and challenges of using the tool to support students’ disciplinary literacy practice. In my categorization of professional development discussions, I also identified whether or not teachers critically questioned the use of the tools to show that teachers did not always accept the tools at face value. However, my analysis also shows that even if teachers evaluated the tools, they did not always do so based on disciplinary considerations.

*Table 4.2: Presentation of Tools in Monthly Meetings*

<b>Tool or Activity</b>	<b>Presentation: Generic or Situated?</b>	<b>Discussion: Generic or Situated?</b>
Sentence starter bookmark	Generic	Critical but generic
Summarizing activity	Situated	Generic
Technology book talk	Generic	Critical but generic

### **Inconsistent Writing Purposes in Presenting a Strategy**

I turn to the first exemplar to support the assertion that one challenge for teachers in traversing the disciplines to provide multidisciplinary support was providing appropriate purposes for teachers to appropriate the tool, practice using the tool, and discuss the challenges and affordances of using the tool in discipline-specific ways. In this exemplar, Ms. Gable attempted to step out of her ELA domain into the domain of teaching to present the strategy in a way that was inclusive of all members. In other words, she had used the strategy with a particular

purpose in mind in her teaching, but generalized the presentation of the strategy to include the participation of all teachers in the professional development.

In her classroom, Ms. Gable had used a sentence starter bookmark (see Figure 4.5) to support her students in writing reflections on their progress as they learned to write responses to ACT-type prompts. She asked her students to compare two of their essays, one written early in the unit and one written later in the unit, for areas of growth as a writer. She also asked her students to use at least three sentence starters in their reflection to promote brainstorming. Students wrote their reflection in response to the following prompt.

Directions: Write a reflection where you compare and contrast the two essays using three different words from the Writing is Thinking bookmark.

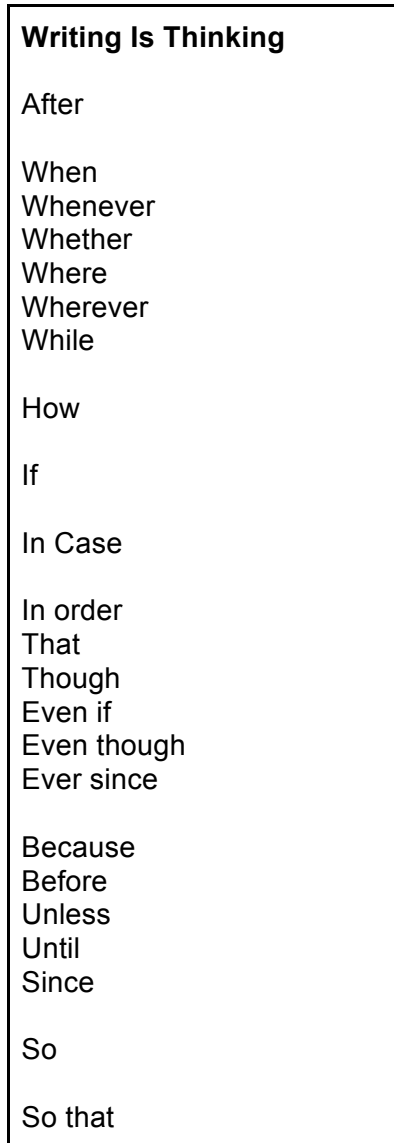
Some areas to consider:

- structure
- length
- sentence variety
- complexity of examples
- sub group variety
- logical, specific examples
- counter argument
- thesis clarity
- topic sentence clarity

What changes do you see? How is essay 3 different than 1? Where is your growth? What still needs work? (Field notes of observation, March 25, 2014)

Ms. Gable shared that she was inspired to use the sentence starters after reading an article, “The Writing Revolution,” (Tyre, 2012) which, in short, detailed one teacher’s approach to raising test scores in her classroom by teaching students to how to write analytically using text-based evidence. Ms. Gable decided to adapt the idea of using sentence starters to help her students as they reflected on their own writing process. As she stated, “The idea is to compare different parts of information because of the words used in the bookmark” (Field notes of monthly meeting, April 24, 2014).

Figure 4.5: Sentence Starter Bookmark—Artifact from Monthly Meeting



During Ms. Gable’s presentation of the sentence starters in the monthly meeting, teachers read “The Writing Revolution” article that had originally inspired Ms. Gable. Because teachers did not read a classroom text to experience the tool, I categorized the presentation of this activity as generic rather than situated within a specific content area. That is, teachers experienced the bookmark resource as teachers, not as students. In addition, the bookmark itself was generic because it was not organized around any writing principles or meanings. For example, some

transition words are temporal (e.g. before, after, whenever), some are hypothetical (e.g. even if, in case), and some are causal (e.g. because, since) but there is no clear categorization in the way the words and phrases are organized.

I also categorized the discussion as generic, even though there were some critical reflections about writing instruction. After reading the article, teachers were asked to write two summative statements about the article using the sentence starters. Then, they were asked to discuss the following prompts:

- How did the bookmark get your thinking on paper?
- How could you add or adjust these prompts to make them work in an upcoming lesson?
- How do you imagine building “Writing is Thinking” opportunities into a future lesson?

(PowerPoint slide, April 24, 2014)

The questions that Ms. Gable posed could have encouraged teachers to think about how to modify the sentence starters to fit their instruction. The discussion that transpired, however, was about teaching students expository versus creative writing. The discussion hinted at disciplinary concerns, but was overall quite removed from considerations of how teachers might use or adapt the bookmark to support students in engaging in disciplinary literacy practices. Below is an excerpt from my field notes.

*Lynden says he has mixed feelings about the article, which focuses on teaching expository writing, because he feels that “good writing is expressive.” Gable responds that writing about balancing between voice and content accuracy. Another teacher chimes in that students need to be able to write creatively and also expository. Gable says, “It’s all about transferable skills, right?” Lynden brings up the questions whether “writing skills are caught or taught.” He mentions that Nancy Atwell’s stance is that*

*writing is caught, but this article strongly argues that teachers must explicitly teach students writing skills.* (Field notes of monthly meeting, April 24, 2014)

This conversation was surprising given the discussion prompts on the PowerPoint slide. Instead of responding to the prompts provided by Ms. Gable, the group responded to the content of “The Writing Revolution” article. The group wrestled with concerns about creativity and exposition, and writing skill in general, but what got lost in discussion was how the bookmark as a tool could be used to support students’ writing and learning, and what adjustments might be needed to support writing in each discipline. For instance, actually critiquing the bookmark might have led to productive ideas on how to adapt it and improve it.

The disconnect between Ms. Gable’s intentions of presenting the bookmark and the discussion that actually transpired could be due to several reasons. First, the bookmark itself was far removed from the problems and principles presented in the article that teachers read. The article referenced teaching students how to use text-based evidence, and mentioned that using certain sentence starters could aid students in writing analytically. The “Writing is Thinking” bookmark, however, did not provide sentence starters that were specific or particularly conducive to using text-based evidence. Second, Ms. Gable used the bookmark for a different purpose than teaching her students to write using text-based evidence. In her presentation, she mentioned that she gave the bookmark to her students to use while they wrote a reflection, not to write a piece that used text-based evidence. This is an important point that never came up in discussion, and likely contributed to Ms. Gable’s success in using the bookmark. If teachers intended to use the bookmark, it would have been important for them to know that the words and phrases included in the bookmark were used for reflective writing and that adjustments would probably need to be made if they wanted to use it for a different genre or purpose.



Overall, the inconsistencies in the purposes of writing instruction—from the way sentence starters were mentioned in the article, to the bookmark, to the way the bookmark was used Ms. Gable, to the way the bookmark was presented in professional development—muted the ways teachers could discuss any possible affordances or challenges in using sentence starters to support students to write in discipline-specific ways. None of these inconsistencies were discussed during the meeting, although any of these points could contribute to a teacher’s success or failure in using the bookmark. Indeed, in Chapter Six I detail Mr. Lynden’s challenges in using the bookmark to support his students in writing pieces using text-based evidence.

### **So Steeped in One Disciplinary Culture That it Was Difficult to Step Out**

I present the second exemplar to support the assertion that another challenge in presenting strategies to a multidisciplinary group of teachers was knowing how to step out of one’s own disciplinary culture to invite others into a discussion of the purpose of the strategy and considerations made to implement the strategy. Ms. Wallace was a former scientist who had earned her doctorate in marine biology. She regularly organized her instruction around intellectual problems and led students through collecting and working with data, analyzing and synthesizing their findings, and communicating those findings, all of which are dimensions of disciplinary instruction (Bain, 2005; Moje, 2015).

For example, Ms. Wallace invited her students into each unit by asking them to form a driving question for the topic of the unit. For a unit on evolution, the class that I observed came up with the question: “What is evolution and how does it affect the world?” (Field notes, April 17, 2014). Other key characteristics of disciplinary instruction is evident in one her labs that simulated the evolution of finches on the Galapagos Islands. At the beginning of the lesson, she introduced the key question: “Why and how did the finches of the Galapagos Islands evolve into

species with different beak shapes on the different islands?” (Artifact, April 22, 2014). Students then engaged in a simulation where they used different tools (e.g. clothespins, chopsticks, spoons) to represent different beak shapes and traveled to multiple stations or “islands” to collect the food of that island (e.g. water, beans, rubber bands). Once the class compiled their data, they were asked to complete the following analyses.

Analysis: Answer the following in your science notebook:

1. Based on the class data, on which island was your beak type most successful? Was your prediction correct? Explain why the birds with your beak type were most successful on that island.
2. Based on the class data, on which island was your beak type least successful? Was your prediction correct? Explain why the birds with your beak type were least successful on that island.
3. Summarize/Explain what you would expect to happen on each of the different islands over time.
4. Are there any beak types that you think might disappear over time? Why or why not?
5. Can an individual (one single finch, for example) evolve? Explain your answer.

Conclusion: Answer the key question. Why and how did the finches of the Galapagos Islands evolve different beak shapes? Correctly use and underline the words variation, adaptation, overproduction, descent with modification, selective pressure, population, fitness (or fit), geographic isolation, and speciation. (Artifact, April 22, 2014)

Over the course of this lab, students collected data, analyzed the data, synthesized their findings, and communicated their findings to each other. During this evolution unit, Ms. Wallace found that students were having difficulty with communicating their claims in a concise and effective manner, so she devised a summarizing activity which she later presented to the WG. Referring back to Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1, these data show that Ms. Wallace had a foundation in disciplinary ways of understanding, disciplinary literacy practices, and was attempting to engage in disciplinary literacy instruction. She attended the WG monthly meetings because she wanted to further develop the literacy aspect of her disciplinary literacy instruction—to help her students see how they were practicing reading and writing as ways into the science community and to develop scientific ways of thinking.

During one of the WG meetings, Ms. Wallace was asked to present a summarizing activity that she did in her classroom that she thought went particularly well in supporting her students' disciplinary writing. I present this exemplar to show that even though Ms. Wallace had some foundation in disciplinary ways of knowing, disciplinary literacy practices, and even some disciplinary literacy instruction, actually supporting and leading others teachers to learn more about disciplinary literacy instructional practices proved to be a different task that was challenging for her.

What struck me about the summarizing activity that Ms. Wallace presented was that it was the only activity I observed in any of the monthly meetings that used a disciplinary text in conjunction with the writing activity. To present, Ms. Wallace gave a brief introduction to the activity, stating that she had created this summarizing activity as a way for students to discuss their writing and synthesize information from texts without simply copying the texts because her students were having difficulty extracting the most important information from their data when writing lab reports, thereby providing the group with her instructional purpose for using the strategy. She found that the activity helped her students make claims and include pertinent information in their lab reports.

Teachers were asked to read a passage on cell growth and reproduction, the same text that Ms. Wallace had assigned her students to read as homework. After reading the passage, teachers were asked to create a summary of the text in at least five sentences. Then, in small groups, teachers shared their summaries with each other and crafted a group summary. These group summaries were posted around the room and as each group shared their summary, Ms. Wallace offered points of similarity and contrast to point out certain strengths of the summaries. An example of how she facilitated discussion included, "Notice how both of these groups included

information on cell mutations” (Field notes of monthly meeting, December 11, 2014). Although there was only one other science teacher in the meeting that day, all teachers were able to participate in the activity, and many commented on how much they had learned about the cell growth cycle. Following the discussion, each teacher voted on the “best” summary and the whole group reviewed some of the characteristics that made the “winning” summary strong.

For teachers to experience and make sense of the writing activity, it was necessary for teachers to engage in the text, and the content of that text. As I mentioned earlier, this was the only writing activity I had seen presented in the monthly meeting where the presenter and the participants engaged in a content-area specific text, and because this, I categorized the presentation of this activity as situated in a particular discipline. As the teachers went through the process of the activity, they learned about a scientific concept, the cycle of cell growth, and were able to see how students might have made sense of the text through cycles of reading, writing in response to, and discussing the text themselves.

As the participants began to debrief the activity, however, the discussion became generic. The debriefing discussion overall was short and positive. Overall, teachers mentioned that they might be able to use the activity in their classes. However, there was no discussion of what changes might be necessary to adapt the activity to fit their classroom instruction. Likewise, teachers’ feedback on Ms. Wallace’s summarizing activity (Feedback forms, December 11, 2014) was also positive, but short and did not indicate how teachers intended to use the activity in their classroom. Some examples of teachers’ comments on their feedback forms included:

- The summary activity might work well for my AP students to make sense of the federal budget process.
- [Ms. Wallace's] thing was really cool. Will mos-def use.
- New method of summarizing
- Great summarizing activity
- My favorite thing of the day was [Ms. Wallace's] exercise using the article and summarization activity. I can and will likely use the above-mentioned activity

Although in the first comment, the teacher made a reference to a particular concept, it is not clear how she could have used the summary activity to teach about the federal budget process. The other feedback comments were even more general, though all comments were positive and supportive.

To further understand why the debriefing discussion did not attend to the disciplinary purposes of the summarizing activity and the ways it supported students to engage in disciplinary literacy practices, I examined Ms. Wallace's understanding of writing in science, drawing on the assumption that perhaps the debriefing session could have been extended if teachers had a better understanding of the practices of each other's disciplines. Here, Ms. Wallace attempted to explain what argumentative writing might entail for other disciplines, such as history.

**Kwok:** So, in terms of argument, argumentation, in particular, how might that differ across content areas?

**Wallace:** So, argumentation is, it's still sort of like a debate, but again in science you've got to have perhaps more numbers or more facts or like an experiment or something that you're referring to that you're arguing on. I would think that the other disciplines would want to have that as well, but the fact that you have data, set data, and I don't know if it's called that in other disciplines. You could argue like, "should we have longer school lunch" and your data might look more like "number of minutes it takes to eat something" or whatever. That would be sort of like a scientific...it would become more scientific by

having that data as opposed to just saying like, "we don't have enough time to eat" those kinds of things. Does that make sense? So for me, a scientific argument has to have numbers and data that has been analyzed in some way...Here's the data, pick out the numbers that matter, and tell me why those numbers matter and how that can be interpreted in terms of drawing your conclusions. So, I guess arguments have that same foundation, but to me what makes it a truly scientific argument is that foundation in data.

(Personal interview, April 15, 2014)

As a previous marine biologist, Ms. Wallace was well steeped in her own discipline, but her understanding of the practices of other disciplines seemed to be limited. In attempting to describe the writing practices of other disciplines, Ms. Wallace could not confidently comment on the practices of other disciplines to say how they might be different. Her uncertainty was expressed in phrases such as “I would think that the other disciplines would want to have that” and “I don’t know if it’s called that in other disciplines.” Because Ms. Wallace did not have a clear idea of writing practices in the other disciplines, she may not have had the confidence or ability to lead a discussion on how her summarizing activity might be adapted to suit writing in the other disciplines. Like the three-day training facilitators, she did not step out of her science content domain to lead others in considerations of writing within other content areas.

Because Ms. Wallace did not have an understanding of the writing practices of other disciplines, she may have rested on assumptions about the other disciplines. As I argued previously, teachers may have conflated interdisciplinarity with generality because they rested on characteristics of writing that they were most familiar with. In particular, Ms. Wallace’s perspective of the nature of scientific arguments seemed to influence how she made sense of argumentative writing in other disciplines, as represented below.

**Wallace:** So many of my—I don't know if I've argued much that isn't scientific. I mean I'm trying to think like in my personal life...

**Kwok:** Or what you might imagine historians...

**Wallace:** Yeah, like I'm trying to imagine what a historian would debate about...Like when something happens. Again, wouldn't you have data that you are referring to as your source of why you think a certain thing? So like, to me, I guess a lot of arguments, or are all arguments have a foundation in science because you have to have the data and then draw your conclusions from it? So I don't know. I guess I'm such a scientist, I don't know how to argue any other way? (Personal interview, April 15, 2014)

Ms. Wallace was so steeped in her science practices that she did not “know how to argue any other way.” This may have limited her ability to imagine what her summarizing activity might have looked like in other content areas and lead a discussion on supporting writing in other content areas. As she tried to imagine the writing practices of an historian, for example, she returned to considerations of data, which she deemed as a scientific practice. For her, it was impossible to make an argument without data or content. As Ms. Wallace attempted to parse out the characteristics of argumentative writing, she came to the conclusion that all arguments must have a foundation in data, and therefore assumed that “all arguments have a foundation in science because you have to have the data and then draw your conclusions from it.”

Without an understanding of the writing practices of other disciplines, Ms. Wallace was not aware of the considerations needed for other content area teachers to adapt her strategies when presenting strategies to teachers of other content areas. Likewise, Ms. Wallace may have faced challenges when adapting strategies from other disciplines to her own because she might not have been able to resituate the purposes of particular practices from other disciplines into her

own context. Therefore, to be an interdisciplinary teacher learning community, members need to have some awareness of the writing practices of other disciplines to translate writing activities from one context to another. Without this understanding, teachers tended to have debriefing discussions without fully exploring what it might take to adapt a strategy into their own instruction.

This exemplar shows that even if teachers had a deep understanding of their own discipline, as I suggest Ms. Wallace did, this discipline-specific expertise may not have been enough for teachers to support other teachers to adapt the resources into their own disciplinary writing instruction because teachers needed to be able to navigate the similarities and differences of disciplinary literacy practices in the multidisciplinary group, but teachers did not have a way to make explicit what those practices were and why they existed. In addition, the generality existed because the structure of the professional development did not tap into Ms. Wallace's disciplinary expertise and the considerations she had made during her instruction and presentation to support learning. This challenge may have been due to a lack of time during the professional development or teachers did not have a focused way of talking about the features of disciplinary literacy instruction.

### **Evaluation of Strategies Based on Logistical Concerns**

The last exemplar represents yet another challenge that teachers faced in supporting each other to examine instructional writing tools without a focused way to discuss the features of disciplinary literacy instruction. Although teachers evaluated the usefulness of strategies they learned about, the teachers tended toward logistical concerns to critique strategies instead of the challenges and affordances of using the strategy to support disciplinary writing instruction. I suggest that this happened in part because they faced daily teaching pressures and were most



concerned with the amount of time and work it would take to use the strategy. In addition, I assert that they did not engage in deeper, discipline-specific conversations about how to use the tools they did not have the language to do so and they wanted to be inclusive of everyone in the group.

One of the ongoing activities in the monthly meetings was a book club. In the 2014-2015 school year, the WG decided to discuss a book about supporting students to use technology to craft digital pieces of writing, titled *Crafting Digital Writing*. For each meeting, teachers read a chapter of the book, discussed how the chapter might be applied to their teaching, and then the group decided on some practical goals for using what they learned in their teaching and to share with the group for the following meeting. Some topics covered in the book included studying the craft of digital writing, crafting audio, video, and web-based texts and presentations, and providing students with digital mentor texts. On September 24, 2014, the author of the book, Troy Hicks, was invited to talk during the monthly meeting. On October 30, 2014, the monthly meeting just following Hicks' visit, the teachers discussed chapter three of the book, which was about crafting texts using resources found on the Internet. The teachers also came to the meeting with many adaptations and implementations of using technology in the classroom to facilitate writing. During the meeting in October, teachers brought up several considerations of how to use technological tools to facilitate student learning, rather than for the sake of using technology in the classroom. Below is an excerpt from my field notes.

*Mr. Lynden brought up Pictochart as one online resource that he had reservations about, which was a tool that was introduced by Hicks during his presentation. Pictochart is a tool to help students create infograms. Mr. Lynden was critical of this tool because it did not offer students much flexibility in how to present*

*their information. The “designing part [of creating the infogram] was already done” and students “just dumped the content in there.” Although students were able to work with content and think about how to present information in an accessible manner, Mr. Lynden was “not entirely convinced of the usefulness” of Pictochart because much of the craft of creating an infogram had already been completed by the program. Mr. Lynden wondered if there were other online resources that allowed for more student creativity and craft.*

*Other teachers had the same concern. “Is the student going through digitally enhancing,” Ms. Tanner wondered, “or is she just filling in the blanks in S’more? [another resource for creating infograms].” She critiqued the purpose of using the tool: “how effective was it for my goal?” and wondered if it was worth the effort of using an online resource for the sake of it by saying, “I wouldn’t have gone through so much work to find resources.” She acknowledged that using the S’more did seem to motivate some students to get involved with the activity, but she wasn’t sure if all students benefited from the online tool. Mr. Lynden chimed in again: “but did they learn the craft? They learned the content, which is good. But was it just fill in the blanks?” The teachers wrapped up the discussion and decided to incorporate some kind of resource from the next chapter in the book. Ms. Gable reminded the group that whenever they try out an activity or use a resource, “it shouldn’t be forced or artificial” to which Mr. Lynden nodded in agreement. (Field notes of monthly meeting, October 30, 2014)*

The teachers’ discussion about Pictochart and S’more touches on considerations about not using a tool just for the sake of using a tool, and the tool’s ability to support students in thinking about digitally crafting writing as opposed to “just fill in the blanks.” Although these were sound critiques, the discussion did not venture into discipline-specific concerns about using

any particular tool. These initial discussions about technological tools show how the teachers were able to be skeptical of and critique tools, and not just accept tools and use them just because they were shared in the professional development. It also revealed moments when teachers critically reflected on their practice after trying out a tool and noticing their areas of success and areas for improvement. These discussions were not necessarily discipline-focused, but there is evidence of some critical discussion and evaluation of the resources that were shared.

However, as teachers' continued to discuss the technological tools, they began to focus on matters of logistics rather than on aspects of digitally crafting writing in discipline-specific ways. Teachers shared various tools they had come across without sharing the teachers' considerations of how the tool helped students' writing or learning. Logistical considerations included: if students needed an account, if the tool was free, and privacy concerns. Although such considerations were important, these considerations were removed from the principles in Hick's book, and certainly removed from the principles of disciplinary literacy learning. Indeed, one teacher noted this shift in his/her feedback form: "I wonder if we can focus a bit on digital craft at some point (not just digital tools)" (feedback form, December 11, 2014). Overall, teachers seemed to focus on what they could take away immediately from the tool, rather than the principles behind using the tool. Below are the notes about teachers' experiences with different online tools, which teachers posted on a PowerPoint slide (Artifact, October 30, 2014).

**Tool: Smore**

Pros: Easy to plug in info, instant formatting, prints off nicely (sometimes if longer than a page, it cuts off at a funny place). Good for individual or pair.

Cons: Many of my students had problems losing work. You do have to save it on your own, unlike many web tools, it doesn't save automatically. So stress this with students who choose to use this. Not group friendly.

**Tool: Piktochart**

Pros: Lots of templates. Not necessary to have data to use.

Cons: free version limited.

**Tool: Glogster**

Pros: Cool formatting. Prints off great with an automatic QR code on the bottom for viewing videos if they have any linked.

Cons: Free account only allows for 10 students to use your teacher account unless you pay for it. This was frustrating because so many of my students wanted to try it.

In contrast to the teachers' discussion about digital craft, the comments above are exclusively concerned with logistical and practical concerns for tool use. Though teachers could examine the tools with a critical eye, their considerations were not about supporting disciplinary literacy learning, and they ultimately discussed the logistics of a tool to determine whether the tool was worth using or not.

Overall, teachers seemed more concerned with evaluating whether or not they would use a tool based on their immediate and logistical concerns, rather than whether or not the tool could support their students' disciplinary writing. These logistical discussions were another type of general discussion that came about partly because teachers could only discuss tools and include everyone in the conversation by talking about tools in logistical ways. In addition, as with teachers' gravitation toward strategies that seemed to be easy to adapt, teachers' tendency toward logistics points to the pressures and lack of time that teachers may have faced at school. If teachers were to use any tool, they first needed to know how much time, money, and effort was required to use it, implying that disciplinary considerations of the tool were secondary.

The three exemplars show the variation of considerations teachers needed to present tools in ways that supported their colleagues' disciplinary literacy instruction and encouraged collaboration. As a collection, these exemplars show how teachers were able to evaluate

resources and talk about integrating them into their instruction, but not always with an eye towards providing students with disciplinary learning experiences. These exemplars also showcase the range of types of tools shared by monthly meeting members, and the range of challenges introduced in presenting these tools to a multidisciplinary group.

Overall, I found that teachers tended to general discussions when evaluating tools, rather than evaluating the tool based on the extent to which it could support disciplinary literacy learning in their content area. A possible explanation could be that the monthly meeting members were positioned as experts, even though they experienced similar challenges to teaching a multidisciplinary group as the facilitators of the three-day training. Some teachers encountered challenges in stepping out of their own domain to support teachers in other domains. They also veered toward generic discussions to be inclusive of the whole group. Arguably, these teachers encountered more challenges than the three-day facilitators because the tools they presented had not been reviewed and vetted by the steering committee, so presenting tools also came with a sense of vulnerability. In addition, teachers had to present a purpose or frame the activity in a way that was inclusive and seemed useful for everyone in the group.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

I return to the main assertion of this chapter, that although the WG was designed as a professional development for writing instruction through interdisciplinary collaborative experiences, the professional development facilitators and participants conflated interdisciplinary approaches and perspectives with general approaches and perspectives, which muted teachers' respective disciplinary stances. Both strands of the WG professional development gravitated toward general perspectives and approaches to writing instruction, rather than learning about

teaching writing in discipline-specific ways. This generality was produced through several aspects of the community.

First, the collaborative and inclusive environment of the multidisciplinary group contributed to an inadvertent generality that dominated the ways teachers participated in and talked about writing instruction. For example, the steering committee strategically centered the WG professional development around collaborative experiences because they hoped teachers across the content areas would provide the expertise for teaching writing that they, as ELA professionals, could not provide. In an attempt to empower teachers and encourage solidarity, the facilitators foregrounded the common writing skills across disciplines, rather than the particularities of each discipline.

Second, the tools of the WG community, or the strategies, activities, resources, and discourses for writing instruction that the WG offered, also contributed to the generality. Teachers seemed to leave the three-day training and monthly meetings pleased with what they had learned because of the amount of strategies, activities, and other resources they could use immediately in their classroom. But the tools were easily adaptable because teachers were taught to use them in generic ways. Consequently, teachers left needing more guidance and more time to actually think through the considerations needed to adapt and implement these activities in their classrooms. Yet, teachers were fully invested in the professional development and remained very positive about their experiences.

Third, some teachers in the monthly meetings engaged in disciplinary ways of knowing, but these perspectives were not taken up in the professional development. Consequently, teachers may have rested on assumptions of what writing looked like in other disciplines, and rested on what they were most familiar with. These are assumptions and misconceptions that could have

carried into teachers' understanding of writing in their own discipline in relation to others. These possible challenges to writing instruction could have been exacerbated because of the generic strategies that they were offered.

The findings suggest that learning how to support others to teach writing in this setting, where teachers across the disciplines come together to learn, requires being able to make explicit the disciplinary ways of knowing and literacy practices to navigate between disciplinary and interdisciplinary spaces. However, teachers did not quite enter this tension, opting to lean towards generic perspectives to promote solidarity and community.

In the next chapter, I further explore the generality and how teachers' school contexts might have influenced how teachers learned to teach writing. In many ways, this schooling context was the teachers' daily reality that influenced in how teachers took up writing resources and taught writing in their classroom. I take up several points introduced in this chapter and explore them further in the next chapter. I further examine why teachers remained committed to and invested in the WG, despite the challenges they faced in using the resources from the WG to fit their disciplinary writing instruction. In addition, I examine why teachers were so drawn to logistical and immediate concerns when sharing and evaluating resources for teaching writing.

## CHAPTER V

### **Social and Structural Influences of Learning How to Teach Disciplinary Writing**

In Chapter Four, I detailed how teachers foregrounded generality over disciplinary perspectives and practices because of the perspectives, resources, and relationships within the WG. In this chapter, I explore how the positive social relationships of the WG and teachers' school environments mediated the way teachers took up writing strategies. I draw on the professional development and instructional data in this chapter. The professional development data I draw on include: field notes and artifacts of monthly meetings, three-day training feedback, and focus group interviews. The instructional data include: interviews with the focal teachers and field notes and artifacts from observations of their instruction.

In this chapter, I show that there were multiple other influences contributing to the generality that existed outside of the WG professional development materials. I also show how the generality permeated teachers' instruction because the structures of schooling supported general, rather than subject-specific approaches to teaching, especially to literacy teaching in the subject areas. First, I provide more evidence to support the assertion that teachers were invested in the WG because it met their social needs. The positive social aspects of the WG—including a sense of collaboration, solidarity, and ownership—positioned teachers as experts in their content area and empowered teachers to take back authority in their teaching. The social aspects of the WG also encouraged teachers to try out writing strategies and offer more opportunities to write in their classroom. However, the positive aspects of the WG community also produced general



perspectives because teachers in solidarity were encouraged to share similar values and perspectives, which tended to be general perspectives and approaches to teaching writing.

Second, I argue that the schooling pressures that teachers faced also mediated how they took up writing instruction strategies. Teachers routinely dealt with a hectic teaching lifestyle, a lack of time, isolation, a pressure to grade writing, and finding ways to frame purposes for students to write. Their hectic lifestyle and the schooling pressures they faced only heightened their appreciation for the positive social aspects of the WG as a cherished space away from school where they could relax, have some time for peace and quiet, and actually do some lesson planning. Therefore, even if teachers were not receiving specific support to teach disciplinary writing, teachers were still highly loyal to the WG.

The chapter ends with an exemplar of one teacher's enactment of instruction to show the multiple influences that came to bear on his understanding of disciplinary writing and enactment of writing instruction. As with the other teachers, Mr. Lynden's successes and challenges with teaching writing in his history classroom were shaped by the social context of the WG, the schooling pressures he faced, and his understandings of disciplinary writing instruction in history and ELA.

### **Social Context of the WG: Sense of Positivity, Collaboration, Solidarity, and Ownership**

In a professional learning space where teachers came together to share ideas and resources around teaching writing, each with their own disciplinary cultural practices and ways of thinking about knowledge, I observed surprisingly little tension within the WG community. Teachers seemed to be on board with every resource or idea that was shared. Even when teachers came away with specific questions about how to implement an activity or strategy in their classroom, they overall seemed pleased with the professional development. I assert that the

loyalty and positivity that teachers felt came from a sense of collaboration, solidarity, and ownership in the WG. These positive social aspects of the WG highly motivated teachers to try out writing instruction strategies and offer more opportunities to write in the classroom. Yet, in what follows, I use the data to warrant the claim that the overwhelming sense of positivity in the WG was another contributor to the general perspectives and approaches that prevented a deep subject-specific treatment of literacy learning.

### **Positivity**

Teachers' sense of positivity came from, and contributed to, several social aspects of the professional development, including teachers' sense of collaboration, solidarity, and ownership. One of my first impressions of the WG professional development was that teachers seemed very positive of the WG professional development, an impression that was realized by the data I collected over the course of two years. At the end of my first day observation, I overheard two people say to each other, "this was the best PD I've ever been to!" (Field notes of three-day training, November 14, 2013). When I asked them why they felt this way, one of the teachers responded that they appreciated not being talked down to, as was usually their experience in other professional learning environments. They like how they were given a voice. They also enjoyed the organic, or from the "ground up," feel to the professional development rather than a professional development where everything was scripted and dictated to them from the "top down." They also valued being given opportunities to work with each other throughout the day.

As I continued observing both strands of professional development, other conversations and artifacts reflected the teachers' sense of positivity for the WG. For example, as a warm-up activity for one of the monthly meetings, teachers were asked to write questions where the answer would be "Writing Group." The following are the teachers' questions.

Poster quotes for Writing Group:

- What is the one thing each month that helps to stretch your teaching?
- What is the most useful PD I've had as a teacher?
- What inspires me and other teachers not only to imbed more writing in class but be better teachers?
- What is an opportunity for teachers to work together to grow in the implementation of disciplinary writing?
- What local PD will improve the quality of teaching and writing for secondary teachers?
- What is most helpful in keeping your learning curve on an upward slant?
- What is something you look forward to every month?
- What is one of the best PD I have ever been involved with?
- Can you recommend some PD with lots of good take-aways?
- What is an awesome, teacher led writing across the content areas professional development group? (Artifact from monthly meeting, May 20, 2014)

The teachers' questions reflect the overwhelming sense of positivity for the WG, to the point where one teacher said to me, "you should share this in your study!" Phrases such as, "inspires me," "look forward to," and "one of the best" reflect teachers' positivity for the WG. Phrases such as "stretch your teaching," "most useful," "good take-aways" also suggest that teachers valued the WG because they found it a useful experience where they could grow as teachers. Last, the questions point to teachers' sense of ownership of the professional development in phrases such as "local PD" and "teacher led." I will return to teachers' sense of ownership later in this chapter.

Another example of the positive tone I witnessed throughout the WG is reflected in Ms. Gable's description of the WG as a facilitator of the monthly meetings.

**Gable:** I felt like a lot of it [other school professional development meetings] was just like, nagging. Like, "Oh I can't believe we have to do ACT. Who likes these tests anyway." And I was like, "Okay, no one likes it, moving on. Can we actually share some positive ideas?" And I never have to do that with that group [of monthly meeting teachers] which is why I like it. (Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

In contrast to other professional development meetings at school, Ms. Gable did not feel as though she had to redirect the teachers' discussions in the WG monthly meetings. This suggests that the teachers in the monthly meetings generally did not complain about their teaching or learning experiences, at least not in Ms. Gable's presence. Rather, Ms. Gable's response demonstrates that, when together, the monthly meeting teachers shared positive ideas.

As Ms. Gable continued to talk about the WG, she discussed the vision of the WG for the following year and continued to contrast the WG with other professional development meetings that she was required to attend.

**Gable:** I'm excited about continuing with the monthly meetings next year. I feel like those are a real sense of positive energy and I don't look forward going to many meetings but I look forward to going to those. I always leave feeling better which is rarely a sentiment that I can express about other staff meetings. So I look forward to that...continuing this philosophy of not requiring people to do Writing Group but talking about it in such an honest way about how it benefits you and your class and your practices that people want to come to it. I dread the day that the district mandates that people have to come because that means we'll have a bunch of grumps at the three days. Who wants to teach grumps? I like how it's mainly been people who choose to come and it would be fantastic to continue that. (Personal interview, May 29, 2014)

Another aspect of positivity was that teachers participated in the WG out of choice, which suggests why teachers might have been willing to talk about their teaching in honest ways. In contrast, when teachers were mandated to attend professional development meetings, teachers could be "grumps."

Over the course of two years, I investigated what contributed to the overwhelming sense of positivity shared by members of the WG. Why were teachers so invested in the WG? And how did the positivity relate to teachers' learning experiences? The sense of positivity may have motivated teachers to keep coming to meetings, but as Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) have argued, every teacher learning community experiences essential tensions that act as turning points for teacher growth. In the following sections, I explore this notion of positivity more through the WG's sense collaboration, solidarity, and ownership and the relationships among these three constructs. I argue that these positive social aspects of community motivated teachers to use writing strategies, but may have also contributed to general writing perspectives and approaches.

### **Collaboration**

One of the most striking features of the WG was the sense of collaboration felt among its members. Collaboration served as a major source of motivation for teachers to attend and contribute to the professional development. Collaboration was one of the most occurring Gots code in the three-day training feedback data (n=52), second only to activities and strategies (n=66). Within the monthly meetings, teachers found collaboration to be a major source for their learning, as Ms. Wallace explained.

**Wallace:** “Okay I have this assignment and I would really like to modify it and make it more writing intensive so can somebody help me do that?” And that is incredibly helpful [to be able to say] because even when you're given these tools, you still don't know necessarily how to implement them or you try one and it doesn't go well. And so having the feedback from other people and the support from other people that have done it is huge. That's why I'm still going to the facilitator monthly meetings is, it's not easy to be

out of my classroom that often...but I love the follow-up of being able to get that support and that continued collaboration. (Personal interview, March 19, 2014)

As with the three-day training teachers, Ms. Wallace seemed enticed by the resources she learned about, and found the added benefit of processing these resources with colleagues to be most helpful for improving her instruction.

Collaboration also allowed the monthly meeting teachers to have a sense of ownership for their teaching, as they brainstormed and came up with ideas to implement resources. Since everyone was so positive, teachers were motivated to share their ideas with the group and thus sustain the collaborative atmosphere. The monthly meetings, in particular, depended on teachers' contributions for its content. In this way, the monthly meetings were developed from the "ground up" instead of from the "top down," which Mr. Lynden explains further.

**Lynden:** And I like the way that it's run. I like that it's collaborative. I like that it's not top down. I'm not standing and listening to someone give me a PowerPoint walking through a binder because again the collaborative piece helps cool things to happen and to develop. And I need that. Because when I'm not, when I'm here, the honest answer is that there's not a lot of time and space for collaboration. And when we have district PD it's just not like that. We have a box we have to check and the state requires us to do these things and we're going to do that period. And you remember what it's like to be a student sitting in a chair all day and going like, "What are we doing here?" And I literally was looking at a PowerPoint looking at the Os [on the slide]. That was my portal to nothingness during this whole day because it's just so passive. I wanna be a better teacher. I want to grow. I want to learn. (Personal interview, March 21, 2014)

Collaboration gave the monthly meeting teachers a sense of ownership because they were not passive and not being talked down to, but they were actively playing a part in their learning. Here, Mr. Lynden described an image of himself sitting passively in his chair, staring at the PowerPoint slides which were his “portal to nothingness.” In contrast, he was able to take part and take ownership in his teaching at the WG “because again the collaborative piece helps cool things to happen and to develop.” The WG allowed for the time and space to collaborate, in contrast to school where “there's not a lot of time and space for collaboration.” Like Ms. Gable, Mr. Lynden also pointed to the fact that teachers attended the WG voluntarily, adding to teachers’ motivation to collaborate. As Mr. Lynden stated, “the state requires us to do these things and we're going to do that period” suggesting that he was mandated to go to other professional development meetings.

The teachers’ engagement also motivated the facilitators of the WG, adding to the overall sense of positivity of the group. For Ms. Gable, collaboration was an essential aspect of the WG that motivated her to lead the group.

**Gable:** I'd rather run a continuity meeting than a three-day training because I think they're just so smart and they're so collaborative. I say that with emphasis because the [reading professional development] group is so not collaborative. They don't want to work with us which is fine and we've come to an understanding with that. (emphasis in Gable’s voice; Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

Once again Ms. Gable contrasted the WG to another professional development, this time the reading professional development group that was highly implemented across the districts. In stating that the reading professional development was “so not collaborative,” Ms. Gable implied that the reading professional development was the kind of “top down” learning environment

where teachers were talked at or even down to, rather than recognized as a source of knowledge. On the other hand, Ms. Gable highly regarded the teachers in the monthly meetings, trusting and depending on them to come to the meetings with strategies and resources to share. The teachers' investment and willingness to collaborate highly motivated Ms. Gable to lead the monthly meetings. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ms. Gable referred to the teachers of the monthly meetings as the "All-Stars," which she expanded on here.

**Gable:** But I love that we'll come and Natasha will present on this awesome thing she did in class which I just did last week in my class. They're so applicable. And then like, "Oh Brian has this cool thing and Maureen wants to share this too." Everyone has this bubbling wealth of knowledge. And everyone in the group is really smart and a great teacher. So I really respect them. I look to them as master teachers who I trust and value and within a heartbeat I would implement any of the ideas. I so often do which is nice.

(Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

Ms. Gable considered the monthly meeting teachers as the "All-Stars" because they had a "bubbling wealth of knowledge" and were often willing to present their ideas to the group. She praised the teachers for presenting resources that were highly "applicable" that she could implement "in a heartbeat." Her statement shows a deep level of trust for the teachers to share responsibility in leading the professional development.

### **Solidarity**

In this section, I show how the solidarity came about because the teachers protected the WG was seen as a special space away from school. The WG was a small, intimate group where teachers came away with such positivity that they not only banded together in solidarity, but



protected the WG as the small, grass-roots organization that did not have the same amount of administrative backing as other larger professional development programs in the area.

The sense of solidarity contributed to teachers' outlook and investment to participate in the WG. As one teacher stated in her feedback comment of the three-day training, "We (as teachers of different subjects) are in this together. We are working towards the same goals." This feeling of belonging, that teachers were not alone in their endeavors, encouraged teachers. It also pointed to a lack of solidarity that some teachers felt at their school. During one of our semi-structured interviews, Ms. Gable contrasted the solidarity of the WG with the lack of solidarity at her school.

**Gable:** ...it really helps to have a community of like-minded people to work with. Again, not everyone that's in your building or district shares common values. Students should write a lot. And we say that to some people and they're like, "I'm sorry I teach science. We don't do that." Well, you should be. It's nice to be surrounded by people who share a similar philosophy and a similar approach in their classroom because it can be really frustrating to not have a support system like that....I'm honestly often quite frustrated in my whole department here at [my school] so it can be nice to find a collaborative, welcoming, similarly practicing group to connect with. (Personal communication, March 11, 2014)

Frustrated with the lack of a cohesive values and vision for teaching writing at her school, Ms. Gable found support and solidarity in the WG. Not everyone at her school was interested in teaching writing in their classrooms in contrast to the WG, where she knew everyone wanted to learn more about writing instruction. In the WG, Ms. Gable found "a community of like-minded people to work with" who shared "a similar philosophy and a similar approach" to teaching

writing as hers. For Ms. Gable, one of the group leaders, collaboration seemed to mean agreement, which may have been what contributed to general approaches so that there were no points of dissension or disagreement.

Teachers may have also felt a strong sense of solidarity because of the marginalized position of the WG in relation to other professional development programs that were supported by the regional education service agency. In particular, teachers in the three-day training and monthly meetings repeatedly contrasted with the reading professional development, which was a much larger professional development program that most teachers across the districts had attended. The reading professional development program was well known and well supported by administrators and deeply implemented across the districts, in contrast to the WG which was relatively small and in its beginning stages of development. Here, Ms. Gable recalled why she decided to become a member of the steering committee in response to the reading professional development.

**Gable:** I just wanted to see a thoughtful companion piece to [the reading professional development program] which had been embraced and really entrenched in a very positive way in our district and throughout a couple of counties. I just wanted to have an equally [and] thoughtfully done piece for writing. (Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

Because the reading professional development “had been embraced and really entrenched” across the districts in the area, those who chose to attend the WG were in a sense setting themselves apart from the majority of teachers at their school who had attended the reading professional development, which may have contributed to a sense of solidarity within the WG. Over time, the relationship of the WG as set apart from the reading professional development became even stronger. As Ms. Gable stated, “They [the reading professional development] don't

want to work with us which is fine and we've come to an understanding with that” (Personal interview, March 11, 2014).

Mr. Lynden also hinted at the political implications of regularly attending the WG instead of attending the reading professional development.

**Lynden:** I'm going to keep going to meetings if my new principal lets me. I know that they've embedded [the reading professional development] more throughout the school there, dedicated to revisiting it as a staff. I guess I could see it being possible that in my capacity as this person with the Writing Group being able to share. But I have to see how it goes. I've learned a lot how to voice my opinion, when to voice it, when to not voice it. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

By deciding to regularly attend the WG meetings, Mr. Lynden identified himself as a “person with the Writing Group” instead of a person with the reading professional development program. Because the reading professional development was deeply embedded at his school, he felt that he had to be cautious about sharing and promoting the WG for fear of being seen as an outcast by his administrators or school community. He had to learn “how to voice my opinion, when to voice it, when to not voice it” in expressing allegiance to the WG and possible resistance to the reading professional development that competed with the WG for district resources and administrative backing.

The steering committee intended teachers to be active participants within the professional development, but the steering committee also intended the monthly meeting teachers to become teacher leaders within their schools which may have contributed to the teachers’ sense of ownership and solidarity over the WG program as a whole. When speaking to Mr. Lynden about his outlook for the WG, for example, he talked about his responsibility to act as an advocate for

the WG to recruit more teachers to join. He stated that “we need to encourage to be rogue. Not to depend administrators to do it for us.” Being “rogue” as Mr. Lynden put it, is an interesting word choice, implying that in order for the WG to gain more popularity and to recruit more members, teachers had to go against the larger schooling system or go under the radar of the administrators who usually governed over teachers’ professional learning opportunities. Mr. Lynden’s comment suggests that having a sense of ownership and solidarity with the WG was about maintaining one’s power as a teacher and siding with the WG as a smaller, grass roots kind of organization. In joining the WG, teachers were choosing not to depend on the larger systems of schooling and power to determine their professional learning opportunities, but taking ownership for their own opportunities for learning. His approach to go “rogue” therefore seemed to be an attempt to navigate between the WG community, the reading professional development, and his community at school.

Going rogue also meant going unnoticed, which is possible when a group is relatively small. The marginalization of the WG seemed to have come about because the WG was a relatively small group. But the WG seemed to gain a sense of solidarity and protectiveness of this intimate and marginalized group. This seemed especially true for the members of the monthly meetings, which was a relatively small group (n=22). As Lynden explained, “Obviously having a huge group wouldn't be really helpful. I think if that group was two or three times the size it would start to feel like there was just too much going on” (Personal interview, May 30, 2014). The quote suggests that part of the solidarity that teachers felt came from the intimacy of the WG.

However, in being a small group, the teachers also did not want to be pushed around or told what to do. For example, Ms. Brandt hinted at relationships of power when she talked about

a promotional video that was created to recruit members to the WG in response to the Common Core during one of the focus group interviews with the steering committee.

**Brandt:** Common Core was coming hard and fast at the same time. The whole video is about, don't let Common Core be done to you. Take control and you can make Common Core make sense in your own classroom. Come join this collaborative of teachers who are going to take control of this national change. (Brandt's emphasis in voice; focus group interview, May 29, 2014)

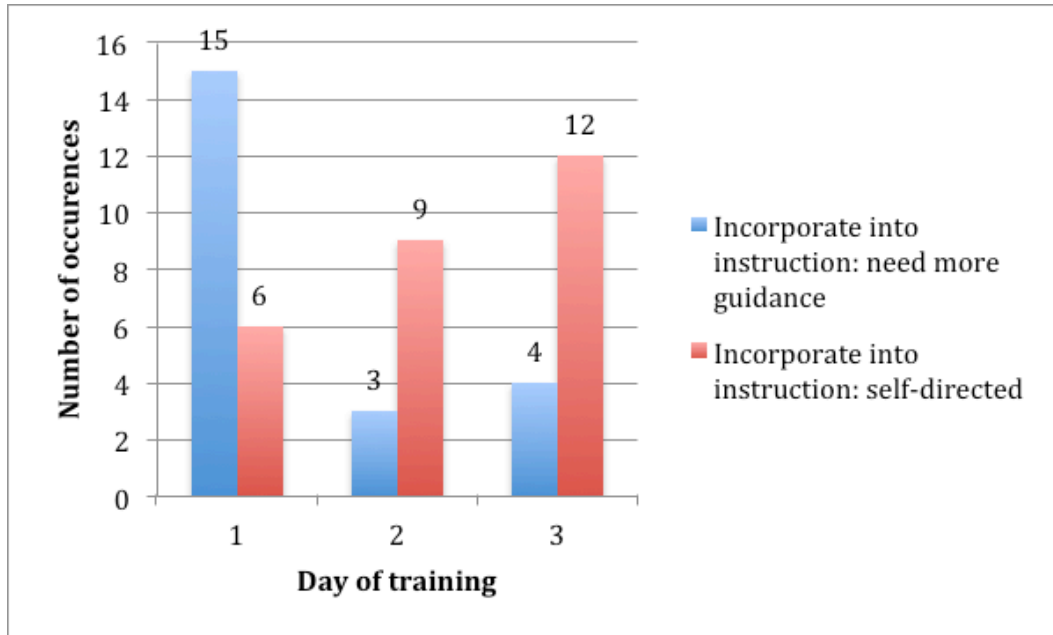
Ms. Brandt's statement suggests that one of the underlying aims of the WG was to empower teachers to reclaim power and ownership over their teaching. Within this community, not even national reform would take over the WG. Instead, teachers would "take control of this national change." With all the mandates that teachers had to follow, the WG positioned teachers to take ownership and authority in their teaching, reclaim their voice, contribute to a community, and in so doing feel a sense of power.

The sense of collaboration, ownership and solidarity set up an identity of the WG as a small, grassroots organization that hoped to empower teachers to teach writing in their classroom. As the WG was a smaller professional development than the reading professional development, it had to compete for administrative and financial support. Thus, an "us" versus "them" mentality was set up for teachers who became members of the WG which only fortified their sense of community, solidarity, and ownership of the WG. Teachers were encouraged to take control instead of being "done to," to be "rogue" instead of relying on administrators, and to find their "voice" in advocating for the WG.

## Ownership

In addition to a sense of collaboration and solidarity, teachers and the teacher leaders felt ownership of the strategies and resources that they learned. This finding of taking ownership is represented in the teacher feedback forms, even over the short three-day workshop. Specifically, I documented a pattern within the responses that expressed what teachers felt they needed (the Needs response in What I “Get” versus What I “Need”). I differentiated between whether teachers asked for help or further instruction on how to carry out an activity (i.e. code: incorporate into instruction—need more guidance), or whether teachers stated some responsibility that they needed to incorporate an activity into their instruction (i.e. code: incorporate into instruction—self-directed). An example of a teacher who reported that he/she needed more guidance was, “help writing assignments that are clear to students and are not overwhelming.” In contrast, the following comment, “I need to go back and practice more with stuff I am not so sure of. Keep trying so far it is helping so much,” suggests that the teacher understood what he/she learned conceptually, and needed to take responsibility for carrying out certain writing instruction activities. The chart below illustrates the number of codes for each day of the three-day training.

Figure 5.1: Three-Day Training Teacher Feedback Needs: Incorporate into Instruction



By distinguishing between requests for more guidance and self-directed comments about incorporating writing activities into instruction, I was able to see that these two codes seemed to have an inverse relationship over time. Teachers on Day One had more comments and questions about implementation (n=15), but the number of these comments dramatically decreased on day 2 (n=3) and day 3 (n=4). On the other hand, teacher comments that were self-directed steadily increased over the training, from day 1 (n=6) to day 3 (n=12). The decrease in explicit teacher questions for more guidance and increase in comments where teachers stated some responsibility for implementation suggests that teachers overall gained a sense of ownership or responsibility for taking on writing activities over the three-day training.

In addition to ownership of the strategies and activities they learned, the steering committee and monthly meeting teachers also felt ownership of the WG as a community. From the beginning, the steering committee sought to establish an identity for the WG as a program that was different from any existing professional development in the area. One of the purposes

for developing a unique professional development identity was to support teachers in establishing a sense of ownership for their teaching. This is reflected in one of the principles of the WG mission statement, which reads, “Teachers should maintain ownership for their students’ writing in their content area.” Ms. Patterson further explained the sentiment behind this principle during a focus group interview.

**Patterson:** And I think it was also, we didn't want a canned program, right? That's what "teachers should maintain ownership." That's not somebody from the outside coming in. That it's teacher driven rather than something from the outside right. (Focus group interview, March 26, 2015)

In order for teachers to feel comfortable collaborating with each other and feel united in teaching writing, teachers also needed to feel in control of their instruction. Teachers had to feel that they had authority of how their teaching could change, “rather than something from the outside” dictating how they should teach. The steering committee prioritized a sense of ownership within the WG mission statement because they reacted in response to existing programs that mandated teachers’ instruction. Ms. Brandt builds on Ms. Patterson’s comments here.

**Kwok:** Why develop from the ground up? Why not use an existing program?

**Brandt:** Because we were afraid of all the things that were going to be done to us. We wanted to be collaborative but we didn't want to do to other teachers. It was absolutely based on our philosophy that teachers are the best teachers of other teachers. Which of course came from the...Writing Project. (emphasis in Brandt’s voice; focus group interview, May 29, 2014)

Here, Ms. Brandt continued to use the discourse of something being “done to” someone. The steering committee reacted to other professional development programs, where they were



constantly being “done to” or being told exactly how to teach. Being told what to do ran counter to teachers participating and sharing their ideas, so the steering committee worked to position teachers as experts in their content area and valued their contributions to the meetings. However, some teachers may not have had the disciplinary knowledge or literacy expertise to be positioned as experts to teach other teachers disciplinary literacy, which was why they attended the professional development.

In addition, positioning teachers to take ownership of their teaching made the act of sharing their teaching practices more personal than if teachers shared their teaching experiences that they had learned from an outside program. Consequently, other teachers might not be inclined to criticize teachers who shared their own creative ideas and practices for fear of hurting each other’s feelings. The sense of ownership that teachers felt may have made it more difficult for teachers to critique each other’s teaching.

### **Conclusions about the Positive Social Aspects of the WG**

Collaboration, solidarity, and ownership all contributed to teachers’ sense of positivity and investment in the WG and these three social aspects of the WG are related to each other. Teachers were encouraged to collaborate with each other to develop the WG from the “ground up,” which led to their sense of ownership over the skills they learned and the WG program itself because they were contributing ideas to the community, rather than being told what to do from an outside entity. Teachers’ ownership in turn contributed to their sense of solidarity because they were reacting to prior professional development experiences where their teaching was controlled from the “top down.” Instead, they came together with the common goal of teaching writing in their classroom and reclaiming authority over their teaching. Because teachers felt like they “were all in this together,” they felt more open and comfortable contributing their ideas to

the community. These group dynamics contributed to the overall positive sense of community shared amongst WG members. Consequently, teachers were highly motivated to learn more about disciplinary writing instruction and invested in trying out strategies they learned.

The binding agents of the WG community—collaboration, solidarity, and ownership—may not have caused the generality that I explained in Chapter Four, but I assert that these positive social ties bolstered the generality because people were encouraged to be “like-minded” and the perspectives that were foregrounded in this community tended to be general perspectives of writing that were promoted by the steering committee and facilitators. As members may not have wanted to disrupt the community, they may have shied away from their own disciplinary stances. In addition to the social context of the WG, the contexts of teachers’ schools also mediated how teachers understood and took up writing strategies, which I explain more in the following section.

### **Schooling Pressures**

The positive social aspects of the WG may have contributed to the general perspectives dominant in the community, but so might the schooling structures and contexts that teachers had to work within. So much of what the teachers reported about their work was negative—particularly in terms of the amount of space and time that they had to teach and plan for teaching—that this may have heightened teachers’ values for the positive social aspects that the WG provided. In this section, I unpack some of the realities of their teaching lives, including: the grind of teaching, a lack of time, isolation, writing assessment, and students’ expectations for writing in the classroom, and how these schooling pressures contributed to their investment in the WG despite their need for more discipline-specific support.

## The Grind of Teaching

The teachers' hectic, overwhelming, and often stressful environment at school was one of the unfortunate realities that motivated teachers to seek a space where they could get away. For many teachers, the WG provided this protected space away from teaching. The teachers who attended the monthly meetings, in particular, highly regarded the WG as a special space away from school. On more than one occasion, the monthly meeting teachers started their meeting with an activity called Be Here Now, in which teachers took a moment of quiet reflection and shared anything that was on their minds so that they could spend the rest of their time together being completely present at the meeting. After sharing their thoughts, the teachers debriefed the activity. Below is an excerpt from my field notes on one occasion when they did the Be Here Now activity.

*After the Be Here Now icebreaker, Ms. Tanner said, "I'm excited to be here because the pace is calm and quiet, which is so different from school. Two other teachers agree with her. (Field notes of monthly meeting, December 11, 2014)*

For Ms. Tanner, the WG offered a "calm and quiet" space, which she did not get at school. At least two other teachers agreed with her, pointing to the hectic lives that teachers led at school.

One advantage of having some time and space away from their hectic teaching lives is that monthly meeting teachers left feeling reenergized. When asked why he was a member of the WG during one of our interviews, Mr. Lynden shared how the opportunity to refresh helped him teach better.

**Lynden:** The cool thing about going to the Writing Collaborative is that it gives me time and space to breathe. I can get away from it all and I can get off the wheel and there's other people saying, "Ooh check this out. I've been doing this. Have you ever thought

about that.” And it just opens up, it just gives me time to work and think and come up with ideas because when I'm here, I'm less productive in terms of creativity, you know coming up with new and different things to engage my students in the process of writing. [...] you kinda fall back on to things that you know and the context of just trying to be ready to teach everyday. (Personal interview, March 21, 2014)

Out of everything that the WG provided, Mr. Lynden seemed to value that he got to get away from his hectic teaching life. It gave him “time and space to breathe” where he could “get off the wheel,” bringing to mind the image of him running on a huge hamster wheel just to keep up. The WG gave him the chance to step away so that he could collaborate with others and think creatively about his teaching. Without the opportunity to step away from teaching, he tended to “fall back” on old practices.

Likewise, Ms. Wallace expressed how the WG gave her the motivation to be creative in her teaching.

**Wallace:** More than anything for me personally, it's those follow-up meetings, just to keep me personally motivated and engaged in doing it. Because if I don't have that, I know, I get caught up in the minutia of every day and making sure I cover all the stuff and so I lose the desire and the mechanism by which I can do lesson planning and actually come up with neat ways to teach this stuff. (Personal interview, May 7, 2014)

Just keeping up with the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching seemed to drain teachers of their creative energy. Like Mr. Lynden, Ms. Wallace reported getting “caught up in the minutia of every day” so having a space to step away was a source of motivation for her. Without the WG, she would “lose the desire and the mechanism” to grow and refine her teaching.

As for Ms. Gable, the WG provided a source of energy that she needed from the wear and tear of teaching.

**Gable:** This is my 12<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and it can sometimes be hard to be energetic about something that can wear you down. So it's nice to have that every month. I gladly make the time for it. It feels worthwhile. Nothing's worse than missing a day of work and having sub plans and the grading that piles up to just sit there to watch some crummy video or an awful speaker. (Personal interview, March 11, 2014)

As with the other monthly meeting members, Ms. Gable was highly motivated to lead the monthly meetings because it gave her a source of energy and rejuvenation for teaching. It was not enough to be away from teaching, but the positive energy of the WG was refreshing for her in comparison to a more passive professional development, where she would “sit there to watch some crummy video or some awful speaker.” At the WG, she and the other teachers engaged in collaboration, which I have argued gave them a sense of solidarity and ownership over their teaching. These opportunities to claim back their teaching were a breath of fresh air from their day-to-day teaching lives. Therefore, teachers may have been protective of the WG because it offered them a space away from the daily pressures of their teaching. Teachers may have valued the positivity they experienced so much so that they may have overlooked whether or not they were learning writing strategies that helped them teach.

### **Lack of Time**

Related to teachers' hectic lifestyles was their lack of time to plan for and implement writing instruction. Within the teacher feedback forms of the three-day training, teachers mentioned needing time so frequently that I broke down those codes into separate groups of needing more: time in general (n= 7), time during the professional development (n= 2), time to

collaborate (n= 2), time to plan and incorporate strategies into instruction (n= 36), time to reflect (n= 4), and time at school (n= 2). By far, teachers in the three-day training most often reported needing the time to incorporate what they had learned into their instruction, suggesting that the schooling structures outside of the WG did not support teachers in the time they needed to adapt strategies into their content area. Although teachers may have taken away ideas and strategies that they were excited about and wanted to implement, they needed the time to plan, find resources, and create space in their teaching schedule to integrate those strategies and ideas into their instruction. Some examples of teacher comments regarding time to implement instruction included, “I just need more time to process and figure out how to put these things into practice” and “always, more time to implement” (teacher feedback of three-day training, emphasis teacher’s). Teachers seemed to realize that incorporating these strategies into their instruction would require some adaptations, but they were concerned about finding the time to make those changes.

This pressure may also suggest why teachers were drawn to activities and strategies that were seemingly easy to adapt, such as RAFT. Teachers left the three-day training with questions about how to incorporate strategies into their teaching, but they were not given the time to think about it, which may have prevented teachers from further developing their writing instruction. Without the time to adapt strategies and reflect on their instruction, teachers may have appealed to generic strategies or strategies that were easy to use, simply because they had no time to modify the strategies they learned about. This offers another reason why teachers may have drawn to strategies that were easy to use, which may have contributed to the generality in the WG.

## Teaching as Isolating

Teachers in the three-day training and the monthly meetings may have also valued the collaborative opportunities of the WG because they felt isolated at school. With their hectic teaching lifestyles, teachers did not have the time or space to see each other, much less work together. Indeed, research has long documented that the structures of teaching isolate teachers (Little, 1990; Lortie, 1975). Ms. Wallace shared her realities of what it was like to try to plan lessons with a colleague when teaching can be so rushed and isolating.

**Wallace:** If you don't have that time to sit and, I mean Natasha is also in the Collaborative and she teaches in the third floor and we never see each other. It might sound crazy, we both teach in the same school, but the only time we see each other is at the Writing Group and so at that time we can sit down and be like, “let's craft an essay for the test together,” or “let's come up with the project that we're working on.” How can we—and we can't do that without that. And so if we don't have that support of continued meetings, there's just no time to ever continue that work. So like a lot of neat stuff has come out of being able to do that. (Personal interview, May 7, 2014)

Ms. Wallace valued the monthly meetings because it gave her the time and space that she dedicated to collaborating with her colleague. The lack of opportunities to collaborate at school may have stood in stark contrast to their opportunities to collaborate in the WG, contributing to sense of isolation at school and their loyalty to the WG as a space that met their social needs.

Other teachers valued meeting teachers from different schools and disciplines because it allowed them to peek into each other's practices and gave them a chance to be social in an otherwise isolating job. Within the three-day teacher feedback, teachers reported an appreciation

for opportunities to collaborate (n=52) as well as a need for continued collaboration (n=18). Ms. Tanner, for example, valued the social opportunities that the WG afforded her.

**Tanner:** I'm a really social person. It was an opportunity for me to meet other teachers, new teachers who I shared something in common with. They aren't all English teachers. There are social studies teachers and science teachers and initially there were even some foreign language teachers, special ed. teachers. The opportunity just to meet other teachers at other districts and to find out what they're doing in their classroom and learn from them and share my ideas with them...I guess another reason for that writing collaborative that I didn't anticipate that has been rewarding is that relationship that I have developed with the other teachers. And I think that's been very helpful....

Networking has been very helpful. (Personal communication, March 24, 2014)

The opportunity to hear ideas from teachers of other content areas and “to find out what they’re doing in their classroom” is an obvious benefit of the WG. In addition, because the social environment of the WG was so positive, teachers may have appreciated the opportunity to develop relationships and network with teachers at other schools and in other content areas even more. Overall, the WG remained highly valuable for teachers because it met their social needs and gave them opportunities to collaborate which they did not get at school.

### **Writing Assessment**

Assessment was another major concern for teachers and was the most reported need in the teacher feedback forms of the three-day training (n=41). As a response to these concerns, the WG provided a principle of “appropriate feedback” during the three-day training, which largely meant keeping feedback concise and simple. The WG offered strategies for keeping teachers’ feedback to a minimum and broadened teachers’ view of the role of writing in the classroom



beyond assessment. On the first day of the three-day training, for example, the WG underscored the importance of providing students with multiple opportunities to practice their writing without having to assess every piece of student writing. On the second day, the WG presented a packet titled, “Writing to Learn,” filled with writing activities and strategies that did not require teachers to spend time providing thorough feedback. The focus of the third day was assessment. The WG offered multiple forms for assessing writing, focusing on strategies for giving students feedback in ways that did not require too much time. Despite these supports, teachers’ concerns about assessment only increased over the three-day training (day 1=10; day 2=15; day 3=16). This finding suggests that teachers’ concerns about assessment grew because their questions about what feedback should look like or focus on according to disciplinary norms or a particular assignment were not addressed in the three-day training. This finding is also consistent with previous research, which has shown that teachers mainly use writing in the classroom as a means to assess students, rather than as opportunities for students to learn (Read & Landon-Hays, 2013).

Teachers also seemed more concerned with the amount of time it took to provide feedback than the actual substance of the feedback given. For example, teachers in the monthly meetings reported stress and difficulty in grading students’ writing. During an icebreaker activity, teachers were given a list of answers and had to write the questions to those answers. Below are the teachers’ questions to the answer “appropriate feedback,” which was one of the major principles of the WG.

Poster about Appropriate Feedback:

- What is one of the most challenging & time intensive parts of grading student work?
- What do I struggle with most to do effectively for ALL classes/students?
- How do I manage collecting & grading writing?
- What is your biggest challenge in relation to grading?
- What is one of the 4 pillars of the WG that is also most difficult to do in a timely manner? (Artifact from monthly meeting, May 20, 2014)

Phrases such as “most challenging,” “struggle with most,” “biggest challenge,” and “most difficult” reflect the teachers’ overall concern about grading writing. In addition, the phrases “time intensive,” “manage,” and “timely manner” point to the lack of time that teachers had to provide appropriate feedback. The lack of time teachers had to assess writing was one of the major challenges that the focal teachers reported. Ms. Tanner expresses her frustration with assessing writing here.

**Tanner:** And it's the most difficult thing in teaching writing. It's the number one most challenging thing of all. How are you supposed to collect 80 essays? And give immediate feedback? You can't. [...] The writing is will always be the challenge. For the reasons I've already stated, they don't get enough of it because people don't assign it. Because it takes so long to assess. So that's always going to be a challenge. (Personal interview, March 24, 2014)

For Ms. Tanner, providing students feedback on their writing was “the most difficult thing” particularly because it took so much time to provide every student with feedback. As Ms. Tanner explained, such pressures led many teachers not to assign much writing in their class.

To alleviate the pressure of providing students with appropriate feedback, the WG emphasized providing students with short and focused feedback, rather than supporting teachers to examine the effective feedback might look like according to their students’ writing needs. As Ms. Gable stated, “I think the philosophy of the writing collaborative is that you don't have to

write all over every paper.” Thus, it was unclear what teachers focused on in their feedback to make it useful and helpful for their students.

On a practical note, encouraging teachers to provide students with concise feedback made sense, given the sheer amount of writing that teachers had to review every time they assigned writing. Teachers were met with a constant pressure of assessing writing and providing appropriate feedback, which could have influenced how and what teachers taught students in terms of writing. So, even if teachers wanted to delve deeper into their writing instruction or provide even more opportunities for writing, they may not have had the time to assess it and thus not assign much writing.

Teachers’ considerations for providing concise feedback also included not making feedback “overwhelming because of the amount of things that need to be fixed” (Personal interview, March 24, 2014, Ms. Tanner). This concern is echoed in Mr. Lynden’s statement: “Digestible feedback is important so that they actually get something out of it. Not a page full of marks and stuff that they are just going to dump because it's too overwhelming” (Personal interview, April 17, 2014) However, the teachers in the three-day training or the monthly meetings did not receive much support on what the feedback should look like or focus on according to the disciplinary norms or assignment. To attend to teachers’ concerns about providing only the most useful feedback, the WG focused on providing strategies that reduced the amount of time it took to give feedback, rather than discussing what features of feedback might be most helpful for students. Overall, the teachers seemed more concerned with the amount of time it took to provide feedback and not overwhelming their students with feedback than the actual substance and purpose for providing feedback.

## Students' Expectations for Writing in the Classroom

Another schooling pressure that teachers routinely dealt with was convincing or motivating their students to write. Since it is popular conception that people learn how to write in English class, students did not expect to do much writing in their other content area classes. For example, during one of the three-day trainings, teachers formed content area groups and wrote about some of the common challenges they face in teaching their students to write in their class. Out of six non-ELA groups, five wrote at least one comment suggesting that their students did not see a place for writing in their class or found writing to be especially difficult in their class. The comments were as follows:

- **Science/math group:** This is math/science, not English
  - **Science/math group:** “I can’t write”; “I can’t do math”; Writing is “work”
  - **Science group:** “Why do we have to write?!”; They don’t want to be wrong
  - **Social studies group:** History is all about names & dates ☹
  - **Social studies/world languages group:** Engagement (i.e. not liking it)
- (Artifact, February 7, 2014)

In contrast, the two ELA groups did not comment on the same difficulties of motivating their students to see a purpose for writing in ELA. This data suggests that teachers who did not teach ELA had the extra challenge of convincing their students that there was a reason to write in their subject area class.

The teachers’ perspectives of students’ expectations for writing came out most clearly in the interviews with focal teachers. Here, Mr. Lynden describes his students’ reactions when he tried to get his students to write in history class.

**Lynden:** I've been teaching writing in this class since I started teaching seven years ago. And the students often are aghast at like, “What? Why are we writing? This is history.” I think their sense is...“let's play some Jeopardy. Let's do some multiple choice tests.” Right? Like, “I learned that fact. Here it is!” So, what happened to me was that I came in

guns slinging and like, “We're gonna do this.” And so I always had the passion for like, “Yes, you are going to write.” I've had to learn over the years that there is a balance....Especially when it comes to history because first of all they're not sure that it's supposed to be a part of it. That's not what they've been taught right....So that has always been a challenge and I've had to learn how to balance that like, “Okay fine let's play some games here and there.” (Personal interview, March 21, 2014)

Although Mr. Lynden had a great passion for teaching writing, he also had to entice his students to write in his classroom because his students did not see the purpose of writing in history. According to Mr. Lynden, his students thought of history work as learning the facts and being able to demonstrate their learning through multiple choice tests and games, such as Jeopardy. Consequently, Mr. Lynden had to find creative ways to set purposes for writing to write to motivate his students and scaffold them into writing within history class.

Likewise, Ms. Wallace incorporated more creative writing in her class in order to motivate her students to enjoy science. In speaking about her goals for teaching science, she said, “So I want my students to feel they can do it, it's accessible, but be interested in it too.” Like Mr. Lynden, Ms. Wallace may have incorporated more creative writing activities in order to motivate her students to write in science, but also to try and help them learn the content in a more accessible manner.

**Wallace:** ...some of the students just love those opportunities [to write creatively] and so it's fun, it's really amazing what they're capable of doing when they're given those chances. So that has definitely changed that. I would always have them write but never creatively. It was always writing for content specific things. So much more creative types of writing with science has definitely changed as well [...] it does help them access the

content ultimately because they hear it in a text message kind of format or whatever format the students have chosen. So they hear it not just from a textbook but from more colloquial type writing and speaking. So I do think that it helps some of the students access the content. (Personal interview, March 19, 2014)

Ever since Ms. Wallace became a member of the WG, she reported incorporating more creative writing opportunities in her classroom and broadened her perspective on what kinds of writing she could assign as a science teacher. She saw that “some students just love those opportunities” to write creatively, which may in turn have given her further motivation to continue providing opportunities for creative writing in her classroom. Ms. Wallace may have been more willing to include more creative writing opportunities in her science classroom because she learned more about creative writing in the WG, which offered activities and strategies that tended to promote creative writing such as RAFT, cubing, and personal writing history.

For Ms. Wallace, the purpose of such writing was to help students discover what they had learned, rather than to use the writing as an evaluation of their learning. Throughout my observations of her teaching, and indeed in my observations of all the focal teachers, I saw teachers provide students with opportunities to write in class, often multiple times throughout the period. These were often low-stakes writing that were not evaluated for a grade. For example, teachers asked their students to reflect on their learning or reflect on their writing process. As with the teachers in the three-day training, the focal teachers learned resources for teaching writing and broadened their perspectives on the role of writing in their classrooms.

In addition, Ms. Wallace seemed more inclined to incorporate more creative writing opportunities in her instruction in order to motivate her students to write and access science content since her students could learn about the content “not just from a textbook but from more

colloquial type writing and speaking.” As with Mr. Lynden’s approach to incorporating more creative writing in his instruction, Ms. Wallace considered how to incorporate creative types of writing while attending to students’ content learning in order to motivate her students to write and be interested in science. However, perhaps if students saw the purpose of writing in science as being about communicating findings related to a scientific investigation, then teachers might not feel as though they had to motivate or entice their students into writing.

Although students may have enjoyed the creative writing opportunities in Ms. Wallace’s class, these writing activities did not seem to represent the writing of science, which may be appropriate as a low-stakes opportunity for students to discover their learning, but not necessarily to be used as evaluative pieces. The differing purposes for creative writing opportunities seems to get lost in the presentation of activities in the WG, as is apparent in Ms. Gable’s statement, “poetry and short stories are creative writing but I want them [students] to see that essays really shouldn't be that much different. They should be creatively expressed too.” As a result of the WG’s general emphasis on “creative writing” and providing students with more writing opportunities, there seemed to be a lack of supporting teachers to frame writing activities in ways that were aligned with the purposes, audiences, and epistemological norms of the disciplines. This lack of attention to the purposes of writing may have led Ms. Wallace to say that “all writing is good writing.” With the pressure to motivate students, teachers may have been drawn to these creative writing opportunities without fully considering what adaptations were needed to teach students the purposes for writing in the discipline, not just providing students with more opportunities to write. These differing purposes for creative writing also show up in the exemplar of Mr. Lynden’s teaching, in the next section.

Overall, teachers faced numerous schooling pressures on a daily basis that influenced the way they taught writing in their class and their ability to take up writing instruction strategies. Teachers needed to spend much time and effort to adapt generic resources into their discipline-specific instruction. However, they did not have the time and space at school to plan for writing instruction, nor the opportunities to work with other teachers. In addition, teachers faced constant pressure to evaluate students writing while motivating their students to write, so teachers broadened their perspectives on the role of writing in their content area class, particularly providing more creative writing opportunities. The schooling pressures, along with the generality that mediated teachers' experiences in the WG, complicated teachers' enactment of writing instruction.

### **Teaching Case: Mr. Lynden**

Despite learning about largely generic activities and strategies for teaching writing, the teacher participants were invested in using these strategies and activities in their instruction. Perhaps their investment and loyalty came from the sense of community, solidarity, and ownership instilled in the WG. Or, perhaps teachers did not realize how much it would take to fully integrate strategies and activities into their disciplinary instruction. In this section, I share a teaching exemplar that shows how the disciplinary, schooling, and social aspects of learning to teach writing influenced one teacher's enactment of writing instruction. I turn to an exemplar of Mr. Lynden's instruction that represents the challenges and successes he experienced in integrating activities presented by the WG into his disciplinary instruction and discuss the possible influences that supported or constrained his teaching. I chose to present a case on Mr. Lynden in particular because his experience was representative of the other focal teachers in several ways. Like Ms. Wallace, he engaged in disciplinary ways of knowing and literacy



practices, but wanted to develop his disciplinary literacy instruction. In addition, he also drew on his knowledge of ELA and held some perspectives that were similar to Ms. Gable and Ms. Tanner. Mr. Lynden earned a Bachelor's in history and a Master's in English education, and had been teaching history for seven years at the time of this study. And, as with all the other focal teachers, he was a loyal member of the WG committed to using writing instruction strategies and also routinely experienced the pressures of teaching.

I also chose to use Mr. Lynden's teaching as an exemplar because his experiences underscore the extent to which strategies need to be applied to the disciplinary context to support students' disciplinary ways of knowing and disciplinary literacy practice. His perspectives of ELA and history seemed to come to a point of conflict when he tried to enact two writing strategies in his history classroom. In particular, in using a strategy he learned from the WG, students' purpose for writing in history seemed muddled. Throughout my analyses, I revisit some of the schooling and social aspects of the WG that Mr. Lynden commented on to show how his uptake of WG resources was a complicated issue dealing with his understanding of disciplinary writing instruction in history, disciplinary writing instruction in English, the general perspectives, approaches and resources in the WG, and the schooling pressures he regularly faced.

### **Mr. Lynden's Reflections of Disciplinary Writing**

Ever since becoming a member of the WG, Mr. Lynden seemed to have taken up a more general perspective on writing across the disciplines, especially to make space for creative writing and fiction in history class. His reflections of disciplinary literacy across the content areas revealed distinctions that may have influenced his enactment of writing instruction.

**Kwok:** Thinking across disciplines, what types of differences do you see in reading and writing in history and reading and writing in other content areas, English, math, science?

**Lynden:** I don't know anymore (laughs). It all seems to expect the same thing of people like when it's in its most authentic form...Although, if you're talking about "English" (quote-unquote with fingers), the sort of manufactured discipline I guess, it focuses more on reading and writing about fiction often...But I think that's a big difference between the two. Primarily in history you're trying to focus on nonfiction stories...English is so much more about, it can be more about technical things. When I'm grading a history paper, I'm not really grading for grammar and sentence structure. I'm looking more at ideas and thought process and how much are they actually discussing things that happened. I kind of see, sometimes I feel like history can be a nonfiction version of English. Reading, writing, expressing your ideas in different genres. It's just sort of nonfiction rather than fiction. (Personal interview, April 17, 2014)

In his opinion, writing served the same purposes across the disciplines “in its most authentic form,” although ELA was more focused on fictional writing and the “technical” aspects of writing such as grammar and sentence structure, whereas in history, students worked more with nonfiction texts and their “ideas and thought process” as they made sense of those texts.

Reflective of the findings from the WG three-day training activities, Mr. Lynden, as a non-ELA teacher, seemed to hold perspectives on disciplinary writing that were primarily tied to content.

Mr. Lynden articulated writing in history and other non-ELA subject areas as working with nonfictional texts “to make sense of a new idea.” Another distinction that Mr. Lynden made about ELA was that it was a “manufactured discipline” because the content of ELA dealt with fiction and the “technical” aspects of writing such as grammar and mechanics whereas the other

disciplines dealt with factual content and nonfiction writing. This comparison is a similar point Ms. Gable made about ELA being more for creative types of writing and the other content areas more for informational or analytic writing. Even though Mr. Lynden made distinctions between the purposes for writing in ELA and history, he seemed to open up to a broader conception of the role of writing in his history classroom, partially in response to his students' expectations of writing in history, partially in response to his background in history and English, and partially as a result of his experiences in the WG.

### **Using RAFT as an Assessment**

The data I analyzed in this teaching exemplar include Mr. Lynden's teaching artifacts and his interview responses about a unit he taught on the Civil Rights movement. The intellectual problem that framed the unit was: "To what extent does Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 represent both a success and a failure of justice in a democratic society?" Every activity that students engaged in was meant to help them address this intellectual problem.

One of the activities that students were asked to do was to create a RAFT. As described previously, RAFT was one of the most popular strategies presented in the WG three-day training. RAFT is a heuristic that is intended to support students to attend to the Role, Audience, Form, and Task of their piece, usually in writing a response to a text or topic. The purpose of a RAFT is to support students to attend to the particularities of a genre by taking on writing norms that are appropriate for a given audience and purpose for writing. Teachers often supply students with multiple possibilities for each aspect of the RAFT, so that students have a choice in what they write and how they will write the text response. Although the RAFT was not intended to be used as an assessment, Mr. Lynden decided to use the RAFT as a final writing assignment, so that students could answer the intellectual problem in a more creative manner. The assignment that

Mr. Lynden developed is shown in Figure 5.2 (Artifact, May 2, 2014). According to this assignment, a student might choose to take on the Role of a reporter and write a newscast (Form) to inform (Task) the public (Audience) of the efforts to desegregate schools and the response to those efforts.

Figure 5.2: RAFT Assignment Used by Mr. Lynden

American History 9	Name _____		
Project C RAFT			
<p><i>To what extent does Birmingham, Ala. in 1963 represent both a success and a failure of justice in a democratic society?</i></p> <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answer the question</li> <li>• Effectively refer to, use, reference, and/or quote the documents and resources provided and used (the website, the documents, the laws, etc.)</li> <li>• One of your referenced documents must be either the Declaration of Independence and/or the Constitution.</li> <li>• The work should be authentic in look, feel, and final format (production).</li> <li>• Submit to Turnitin.com</li> </ul>			
Role	Audience	Format	Task
Clergy	Public	Speech	Complain
Reporter	Government	Letter	Promote
Student	Politician	Diary	Warn
White citizen of Birmingham	Newspaper	Letter to the Editor	Condemn
Business Owner	Congregation	Essay	Celebrate
Elderly	Classmates	Pamphlet	Dispute
Police Officer	Co-workers	Newscast (Radio/TV)	Inform
Firemen	Spouse	Film Short	Comment
Parent	Myself	Newspaper Article/Editorial	Convince
Government official (state, local, federal)			Report
Local Birmingham Civil Rights Worker			
Out of State Civil Rights Worker			

Mr. Lynden intended for his students to produce a RAFT to help them answer the intellectual problem. However, in appropriating the RAFT strategy in this way, Mr. Lynden's purpose for using the strategy seemed split between providing students an opportunity to write creatively and to build historical thinking and writing skills. I argue that he seemed as focused on the RAFT and using it to assess his students as with providing students a purpose for their historical inquiry. For example, when he conferred with his history department colleagues, they decided that a RAFT would be an appropriate assessment given that the students were going to participate in a simulation of the events leading up to the Birmingham Civil Rights movement. During the simulation, each student was expected to take on the role of an actual historical figure during that time period, and so Mr. Lynden and his colleagues decided that a RAFT would be an appropriate extension of taking on a role, but as a writing assessment. However, students should not be graded students on whether or not they can complete a RAFT; rather, RAFT is a possible strategy that can be used to support students' historical thinking by encouraging them to take on a historical role and develop historical empathy.

Also, Mr. Lynden decided to use the RAFT strategy to encourage students' creativity and interest in the unit. As I explained previously, Mr. Lynden incorporated a greater variety of types of writing in his history classroom for the purpose of motivating his students to write. This was a response to his students' understanding of the work in history class; he thought that his students did not generally see themselves writing in history class and were more apt to say, "let's play some Jeopardy. Let's do some multiple choice tests." Here, Mr. Lynden explained why he and his history department team decided to choose RAFT to serve as the final writing assessment for the unit they taught on the Civil Rights movement.

**Lynden:** We kind of ended up deciding on the RAFT because it offered a lot of creativity...The hope was to get them to read and write but to get them more interested in reading and writing and do a better job of reading and writing. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Mr. Lynden responded to this dilemma by seeking a strategy to motivate his students, rather than understanding that the motivation could come from having a real and meaningful purpose for writing in history. Even though he saw the work of history as primarily dealing with nonfiction texts (a “nonfiction version of English,” as he stated previously), Mr. Lynden seemed to welcome the opportunity for students to create fictional accounts of the past, while incorporating primary source data. However, in appropriating the strategy, he seemed to lose sight of a purpose for his students to use the RAFT strategy that was in line with the purposes for writing in history. Based on Mr. Lynden’s classroom activities, his purposes for teaching reading and writing for this unit seemed to be to support students in historical thinking and answering the intellectual problem. For example, before introducing any reading or writing activity, Mr. Lynden would remind students of the intellectual problem and focus their reading on issues of democracy and justice (Field notes, May 2, 2014).

### **Problems with RAFT for Supporting Students’ Historical Inquiry**

To further support the claim that Mr. Lynden supported his students to engage in historical thinking, I present an exemplar of a reading activity he taught during this unit. Mr. Lynden led his students in comparing and contrasting two primary sources: a public statement from the clergymen in Birmingham and Dr. King’s letter in response to the clergymen. He created a graphic organizer to support their comparison, which is shown in Figure 5.3 (Artifact, May 6, 2014).

Figure 5.3: Graphic Organizer to Compare Two Primary Documents Used by Mr. Lynden

		<b>Alabama Clergymen- April 12, 1963</b>	<b>Dr. King- Letter from A... – April 16, 1963</b>
Sourcing	Why is the letter being written?		
	What do you predict will be said in the letter?		
Contextualization	What else is going on at this time? (same answer for both)		
Close reading	What is one word you would use to describe the TONE of this letter?  Find a quote to support your answer.		
	What is the Clergymen’s/Dr. King’s best argument for why direct action should stop/continue?		
Corroboration	Why do you think Dr. King eventually won this argument? Use textual evidence to support your answer.		

In this activity, Mr. Lynden led a discussion and close reading of the two documents. Students were supported in historical thinking practices such as sourcing, contextualizing, and corroborating the documents to understand why the documents were written, the main arguments of each document, and the historical events that surrounded the writing of these two documents (Wineburg, 1991). First, he asked students to source each document, and then asked, “What do we think so far? What is the purpose of each letter? What do we predict will happen?” (Transcript from video, May 6, 2014). Then, he asked them to contextualize each document by



identifying some key events that happened just before and after the time of writing. Mr. Lynden explained to his students what he meant by contextualization.

**Lynden:** We have two letters, but that's not the whole story. Imagine a giant circle that is Birmingham in the 50s and 60s and these two letters are just two dots in that circle. In order to truly understand these letters we need to try to get a sense of that whole circle, the context in which these documents were created. (Transcript from video, May 6, 2014)

As he continued with the lesson, he encouraged his students to read for the argument of each piece, asking, “Do you have a sense of the basis of the argument for both groups? Who are these people? What is their role? Religious leaders. So what will be the foundation of their argument?” and leading them to corroborate the documents to explain why Dr. King’s argument prevailed. Overall, this exemplar from Mr. Lynden’s teaching shows that he sought to provide students with activities that supported their historical thinking to answer the intellectual problem.

Yet, when reflecting on his use of the RAFT, Mr. Lynden expressed some struggle between providing students with opportunities to engage in creative work while framing a purpose for them to write in history.

**Lynden:** In terms of the RAFT, the assignment itself, was considered a success...The kids, giving them some freedom was really good. Some of them just sort of slap something on there, some of the kids that are your typical good students, and do really well with the typical assignments, struggled with the creative aspect of it. They hit the benchmarks in terms of using the number of documents and that kind of stuff. But in terms of creating an authentic thing, they struggle with that. But at the same time, I had kids who, they had a really hard time writing an essay but they gave me really cool awesome things. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Mr. Lynden described a tension between providing opportunities for his students to write creatively and construct writing that was “authentic” in history. During his instruction, he explained what he meant by “authentic.”

**Lynden:** How do you plan to make it [the RAFT] authentic? Lighting it on fire isn't going to make it look authentic. Look and feel are good, but is there something other than lighting the edges on fire and crumpling it up and spilling coffee on it that you can do? Before you do something like that I think you should focus on the writing, the tone, the words, the feeling. You've got examples to look at. (Transcription of video, May 7, 2014).

I argue that students struggled with constructing “authentic” history writing because the RAFT was asking them to create a historically-based fictional account, but students were also expected to answer the intellectual question. Although Mr. Lynden valued giving his students freedom and creative choice while writing, he also expected his students to engage in historical inquiry to answer the intellectual problem. This might be why some of his students enjoyed the opportunity to write creatively, whereas some of his other students, who “are your typical good students, and do really well with the typical assignments, struggled with the creative aspect of it.” In addition, these “typical good students” who may have had an understanding of the literate practices in history struggled with the RAFT because they did not see the purpose for writing a RAFT in history. The RAFT strategy was too far removed from what history writing looks like and did not support them in answering the intellectual problem.

Mr. Lynden realized that his students needed to engage in more historical inquiry and research to participate in the simulation activity and produce RAFTs that were more historically situated. As he reflected on his implementation of the unit, he described how he wanted to

provide more opportunities for his students to engage in historical inquiry leading into the simulation, which would then lead into the RAFT assignment.

**Lynden:** ... I think there can be more in the frontloading, that part of it. Rather than just saying, “here's a list of the people, here's a piece of paper to take notes on. Go home and do some research on this person and find out who they are, so that you can be in that situation.” I don't think they really knew enough about them. I think when it's that kind of inquiry, where I go, “Here's a person and go home research and write some stuff down in this box.” They probably read Wikipedia for a couple of minutes, wrote a few things down, and didn't quite understand who that person was. If I really wanted them to take on that role and be that role, there probably needs to be more careful inquiry. More creative inquiry. To get them to truly get like, who was this person. And in the context of this event, who was this person...But maybe this is a case where they needed a lot more knowledge of the actual project and the actual campaign and the negotiations before they went through the motions and the simulation. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

To support students' writing and participation, Mr. Lynden realized that he could have provided more guidance in students' historical research. In an effort to provide students with a different and creative writing experience, he seemed to have diverted his attention away from supporting students' historical inquiry skills. In hindsight, however, Mr. Lynden realized that supporting his students' inquiry and historical research would have ultimately helped them to participate in the simulation. The RAFT strategy, however, did not serve his purposes in supporting students' inquiry. If the RAFT was modified, it could have been a useful tool to scaffold students' writing about the roles different historical figures played in Birmingham, Alabama in the service of addressing the intellectual problem. But the RAFT structure, without modification, was not

aligned with the intellectual problem to which the students' work was directed that it unlikely served the historical purpose for writing well.

As Mr. Lynden expressed his concerns about guiding their research and inquiry, he also expressed concerns about supporting students to write in the different genres possible in the RAFT.

**Lynden:** Providing examples is hard with the RAFT because there are so many different possibilities...Now here's a model of what a newspaper article looks like. You've given me what you've can. But now how can you take what you've already done and really make it look like a newspaper, make it sound and feel like a newspaper article. Who would've been writing it? So if you're really taking this on, who was a reporter in Birmingham in 1963? What was their stance? Can you tell from their writing? Who was the editor of the newspaper and were they responding to the letters to the editor and things like that. So I think there's more room for authenticity and for even further diving into history almost like it's a lab. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Mr. Lynden considered what it might take to use the RAFT writing assignment as a way to support students' historical inquiry skills. In expressing his concerns about content, form, and authenticity, he implicitly acknowledged that the RAFT strategy did not support his students in the historical investigation and inquiry needed for them to address the historical problem space in this unit. Therefore, his commentary was not about content versus form, but about how the RAFT strategy was designed to produce particular forms that did not also serve the particular inquiry that students needed to engage in to learn history and to learn to write in history. The RAFT was not "authentic" or aligned with a purpose for writing in history, and it did not support students' inquiry, "for even further diving into history almost like it's a lab." These data suggest

that Mr. Lynden realized the disconnect in using the RAFT strategy to serve historical inquiry, but he did not know how to solve the problem given his allegiance to the WG and investment in using tools that he learned from the WG in his instruction.

### **RAFT Rubric**

The disconnect between the purpose of the RAFT and the purposes of historical inquiry was augmented by the assessment rubric Mr. Lynden used. Here, he described how he happened upon this rubric during one of the WG monthly meetings.

**Lynden:** So I actually ended up pulling this when we were looking through books [during the monthly meeting], potential books for next year. I think it was one of the Kelly Gallagher books, I didn't even really have time to write down the title because they were shuffling around so quickly. There was a whole section on RAFT and there was a rubric right there and this could apply to any. And I scribbled it down really quickly on a piece of paper and I just, I think I altered it a little bit so that it could fit the use of the documents and stuff. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Like the RAFT activity, the rubric seemed to appeal to Mr. Lynden because it seemed easily adaptable and “could apply to any” RAFT activity. As such, he did not have to spend much time adapting the rubric; he “altered it a little bit so that it could fit the use of the documents and stuff” by adding the third criterion relating to text-based evidence. Aside from this revision, however, the other rubric criteria primarily assess students’ format and creativity. Below is Mr. Lynden’s revised rubric (Artifact, May 2, 2014).

Figure 5.4: RAFT Rubric Used by Mr. Lynden

Criteria	Score										
The Role is clear, fits the format, and the audience	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NO
Choice of format is appropriate; replicates format conventions accurately	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NO
Extensive use of notes, text, document, and research. Details are evident. Question is answered.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NO
Original and interesting; imaginative yet appropriate	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	NO

Because this rubric was designed for use with any RAFT assignment, the rubric is quite generic and mostly attends to matters of format and creativity. The only criterion related to content is the third criterion, which Mr. Lynden included as a revision to the original rubric. Despite this revision, the rubric remained quite general and did not explicitly articulate Mr. Lynden’s expectations for writing. For the rubric to be more specific and purposeful, the criteria might have assessed students’ argument to the essential question of the unit, given their particular RAFT choices. For example, instead of the general criterion, “The Role is clear, fits the format, and the audience,” a more specific criterion might have been, “The writer addresses the specific audience in a convincing manner by making references that are situated within the historical time period.” Revising the criteria to be more specific to history writing practices does require more time and consideration, but it is worth the effort because the writing expectations are made clearer to students, as well as students’ purpose for writing.

Even more problematic, however, was that the rubric and RAFT did not attend to an historical purpose for taking on these roles and audiences. The rubric represents Mr. Lynden’s

attempt at marrying his purposes for the RAFT (to offer a creative writing opportunity) with his purposes for writing in history (historical inquiry). For example, one of the criteria is to write a piece that is “original and interesting,” but students are also expected to “use notes, text, document, and research.”

The RAFT might have supported students because the act of taking on a role can support students to build their historical empathy and contextualize textual evidence, which may help to advance their consideration of the sources they use in their writing and their biases (Foster & Yeager, 1998; VanSledright, 2001, 2004). However, the structure of the RAFT as it was used did not support these kinds of historical ways of knowing because students were being asked to conjure up a way to answer the intellectual problem while attending to a made-up audience. I transcribed an excerpt from example of one student’s writing, which is shown in Figure 5.5, to show how students were challenged by the competing purposes of the RAFT and for writing in history.

*Figure 5.5: Student RAFT Example*

At school there can't be colored people and they can't get the same education as us white folks. I have seen the riots in town. Just the other day I saw a colored man getting beaten by a police man because he was protesting with a bunch of other colored people. I think they were protesting for freedom. In school we learned about the 1 amendment and it said we as American citizens have the right to freedom of speech, right to protest and the right to practice any religion they want to. But what is going on in Birmingham, Alabama is unconstitutional. Police are arresting people for protesting and that goes against the constitution. In amendment 6<sup>th</sup> is says "in all criminal prosecutions the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy trail". In birmingham people were being arrested and kept in there and not having a court date or trial to be set free. In the letter from Birmingham jail it says that "Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States" which is true because of the hatred towards colored folks is insane from what I have seen when i get out of school.

The RAFT strategy as it was used did not help students to frame a purpose, audience, and format that would support them in answering the intellectual problem. Students were being asked to choose a format that needed to make sense given their pretend audience; however, this format also needed to make sense for using textual evidence because that was a requirement of the assignment. On the one hand, students were expected to create a fictional account of the past by selecting a role, audience, and format of writing that may have existed during the Civil Rights movement. On the other hand, students were expected to respond to the intellectual problem and use textual evidence, and a list of supplied sentence starters, in their response. Because of these competing requirements for writing, some students seemed confused and wrote pieces that were more like fiction writing disguised as historical writing. Or, according to Wardle (2009), they



wrote a “mutt genre,” or combined the writing conventions of multiple genres to meet the decontextualized expectations for writing in school. As the sample of student writing shows, this student confused the genre conventions for writing because the audiences and purposes for writing unclear.

Because students wrote fictional pieces that also tried to answer the intellectual problem, Mr. Lynden struggled with how he should provide feedback. Was he supposed to assess students’ creativity in how they assembled their RAFT? Or should he attend more to the argument that students made to answer the intellectual problem? This struggle is evidenced in his feedback and in the way Mr. Lynden explained his feedback on the same student’s writing that I presented previously.

*Figure 5.6: Mr. Lynden’s Feedback*

Criteria	Score
The Role is clear, fits the format, and the audience	7: I’m not certain of your role.
Choice of format is appropriate; replicates format conventions accurately	7: I’m still not certain of your role based on the format. It feels at times like a letter and at other times like an essay.
Extensive use of notes, text, document, and research. Details are evident. Question is answered.	9: You included a lot of good, useful, and relevant details.
Original and interesting; imaginative yet appropriate	7: You seemed to struggle to integrate these things into an authentic format.

Mr. Lynden’s Discussion of His Feedback

**Lynden:** So it took me a minute, it wasn't obvious what the role was. After a while I felt like she was either writing a letter, or she was writing a diary entry. One or the other, it was hard to tell. And then the format was just a typed couple of paragraphs...But, she

fulfilled the requirement to use, you know one of the criteria was extensive use of notes, text, document, research, documents and research. So like use the stuff we gave you. Extensively. And include details in there and quotes. And she did that. She scored, I gave her a nine out of 10 for that because she had a lot of really good useful and relevant details. The way she used it was relevant. She seemed to understand what she was putting in there. She just struggled to interpret things in an authentic format if that makes sense.

(Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

As Mr. Lynden gave feedback, he struggled with assigning a final grade for the student because although the student included historical details, she “struggled to interpret things in an authentic format.” His struggle might have been a function of the generic rubric and the disparate purposes of the RAFT and his purposes for reading and writing in history. Mr. Lynden’s written feedback focused on the lack of a defined format or genre represented in the student’s writing that was “authentic.” In his words, at times the student’s writing read “like a letter and at other times like an essay.” However, the student’s challenge in writing an authentic sounding letter may have been a function of Mr. Lynden’s expectation to include textual data from the primary sources. Although Mr. Lynden expressed concerns about the students’ use of content and “authentic format,” content and form are artifacts of audience and purpose for writing, which shape and are shaped by the norms of the discipline.

Overall, the RAFT and the RAFT rubric did not attend to the considerations of the discipline, so students had to address multiple and competing purposes for writing. It was unclear to the student why she was taking on a role, who she was writing to and why she was writing to that audience, and how this piece of writing was addressing the historical problem; therefore, the

student had difficulty writing in a way that was consistent to the norms of history. These are not issues of “authentic form,” but are in fact issues of the discipline.

Given the generic RAFT activity and rubric that Mr. Lynden learned about in the WG professional development meetings, it may not be surprising that Mr. Lynden seemed to struggle with using the RAFT and rubric in purposeful ways that were situated in the epistemologies, purposes, audiences for writing in history. The WG provided some support in terms of form for the RAFT and rubric, but did not provide the kind of support that Mr. Lynden needed to really adapt the assignment and rubric enough to support his students to engage in historical inquiry. His attempt to provide more creative outlets for students’ writing came at a cost of supporting students’ historical inquiry because he saw the RAFT strategy as an answer to motivating his students, a notion that came from the WG of providing more creative opportunities to write.

### **Appropriating Textual Evidence Sentence Starters for RAFT**

The second challenge that I present was when Mr. Lynden tried to integrate another generic tool within the already problematic RAFT assignment. This tool was a set of sentence starters he learned about during one of the WG monthly meetings. These were the same sentence starters that Ms. Gable shared, which I analyzed in Chapter Four.

**Lynden:** I used the textual evidence sentence starters with them [the students] and that was something [Ms. Gable] had brought. And that really was good for me because I'm more of a history person than an English person. And though I do teach writing, those are the little mini many lessons that help me to help my students more. And so I've been able to find students really trying to use those textual evidence sentence starters and integrating quotes from *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail* in there. It's not always well

done, it's not always the right sentence starter, but it's an attempt. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

By saying that he was “more of a history person than an English person,” Mr. Lynden suggested that he did see himself teaching his students matters of rhetoric and form. His response relates back to the distinction he made about writing in ELA and the other disciplines, where in ELA teachers tended to focus on the “technical” aspects of writing such as “grammar and sentence structure.” The sentence starters seemed to be an easy way to support his students to incorporate textual evidence in their writing and attend to form. Thus, he was excited to use the sentence starters because he had an expectation that students use textual evidence in their writing. In an attempt to modify the resource to fit his students’ purposes for writing better, he added another column of “textual evidence sentence starters” to the “Writing is Thinking” bookmark that Ms. Gable had provided. Figure 5.6 shows the set of sentence starters he used (Artifact, May 2, 2014).

Figure 5.7: Sentence Starters Used by Mr. Lynden

Writing Is Thinking	Textual evidence sentence starters:
After	On page ____ it said...
When	The author wrote...
Whenever	
Whether	The graphic showed...
Where	
Wherever	An example is...
While	
How	In the text it said...
If	I learned from reading ____ that...
In Case	Based on the reading...
In order	
That	According to the text...
Though	
Even if	For example...
Even though	
Ever since	For instance...
Because	Because...
Before	
Unless	
Until	
Since	
So	
So that	

Because one of the criteria on the RAFT rubric was the “extensive use of notes, text, document, and research,” Mr. Lynden encouraged his students to use these sentence starters throughout the unit and for students’ RAFT writing. Referring to the sentence starters, he explained, “This just helps you to write about documents, to cite evidence from a text. And the Writing is Thinking stuff that we looked at yesterday, that helps you to write about and think through writing about issues” (Transcription of video, May 2, 2014).

Mr. Lynden also modeled how to use the sentence starters during an activity in which students applied one of the Amendments of the Constitution to an event during the Civil Rights movement to make the argument of whether or not the event was representative of democracy or justice. This activity, again, was meant to support students in thinking about the intellectual problem of the unit “To what extent does Birmingham, Alabama in 1963 represent both a success and a failure of justice in a democratic society?” Together, the class created a response, shown below (Artifact, May 5, 2014). The words in bold and underlined are the sentence starters that Mr. Lynden chose to use.

*Figure 5.8: Modeling the Sentence Starters*

Quote/Paraphrase/Summary	Application to Birmingham
<p><b><u>According to</u></b> the first Amendment of the US Constitution, “Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech...or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”</p>	<p><b><u>When</u></b> the courts of the state of Alabama and the local law enforcement issued the injunction on April 10, 1963 banning parades, protests, and the encouragement of protests, they were in violation of the first Amendment of the US Constitution because...</p>

The purpose of this activity was to support the students to use the Constitution as evidence for their written argument about whether or not the events in Birmingham represented democracy or justice. Because he expected his students to cite primary documents in their RAFT writing, he strongly encouraged his students to use the sentence starters.

**Lynden:** I’m encouraging you to use these [sentence starters]. In a sense we are drafting potential ways of discussing Constitutional issues in the context of what was happening in Birmingham. So we are drafting that. It’s the RAFT draft.

Mr. Lynden also aimed for his students to write this argument as a historically-based fiction piece based on the RAFT format. Because of these conflicting goals, students seemed to

have trouble using the sentence starters in useful ways to support their argument while creating a fictional account. Mr. Lynden described one student's trouble with using the sentence starters, a student whom he noted usually submitted strong papers. For the RAFT, the student chose: *Role*-out of state Civil Rights worker, *Audience*-public, *Form*-speech, and *Task*: convince.

**Lynden:** ...his textual evidence starters that he used, he probably could have, he used them, but he probably could have used maybe different ones. Or, alter them a little bit to fit the genre. The way that he used it, it would work well in an essay. He says, "Our negotiations in the past haven't worked well for winning rights. According to *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King Jr. in April of the same year..." Right? He's pulling, he's unmoored with history there for that second. He's speaking as a ninth grader in 2014 from [City, State] for a second. But he's doing what I told him to do. He lifted those textual evidence starters and put them in there and he used it. For me maybe there's something to coding or categorizing those by genre. When you're giving a speech and someone is quoting another person, how do they typically do that? How is it different from if they were writing? That's just another aspect of this genre thing that here that I can provide my student. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Although it was appealing for Mr. Lynden to be able to lift the sentence starter tool from the WG and use it in his instruction, he also found that one of his students was similarly "[lifting] those textual evidence starters" and placing them in his writing in ways that did not contextually and historically make sense. When the student wrote, "According to *A Letter from a Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King Jr..." he was using the sentence starter "According to the text..." provided by Mr. Lynden. As a result, the student's writing was "unmoored with history there for that second" because the student wrote like a student writing an essay, rather than writing like a

Civil Rights worker who was writing a speech. However, the student used the sentence starter to move his argument forward and answer the intellectual problem. In addition, Mr. Lynden acknowledged that the student was “doing what I told him to do” in using that sentence starter and he implicitly recognized the disjunction among the purposes for the RAFT, the sentence starters, and writing an historical argument. In attempting to navigate all of these purposes, the student understandably seemed confused in his writing.

Overall, although the sentence starters seemed to support students in using textual evidence to support their claims, the resource seemed to be at odds with supporting students to create fictional accounts of history that seemed “authentic.” As with the RAFT assignment and rubric, Mr. Lynden realized that he needed to adapt the resources he used to fit the context and purposes for writing in history. To use the sentence starter resource effectively, Mr. Lynden needed to analyze the resource himself and consider what the resource offered to support students’ writing according to the genre, audience, and purpose for writing. In addition, Mr. Lynden needed to analyze the RAFT and the sentence starters for the possible challenges that students might have in using them for writing in history class, especially because the RAFT as it was did not support students’ disciplinary writing in history. The RAFT and the sentence starters represent the kind of stand-alone, seemingly easy to adapt tools that were offered by the WG. Mr. Lynden’s challenges show that teachers need to reflect on the purposes of the strategies they use, how strategies might work together, and the purposes for reading and writing in the discipline.

Although Mr. Lynden did make adaptations to the RAFT assignment, the rubric, and the sentence starters in an attempt to support his students’ writing, he also faced challenges in using these resources in his instruction. These challenges seemed to come from the fact that these



resources supported different purposes for writing. The RAFT seemed to support creative writing, the sentence starters seemed to support students in using text-based evidence, and the rubric was Mr. Lynden's attempt to combine these two instructional goals. Even if he was beginning to see a disconnect between his purposes for teaching writing in history and the purposes of doing a RAFT, he remained positive about using the RAFT partly because of his allegiance to try out strategies from the WG. In addition, Mr. Lynden seemed influenced his desire to incorporate more creative writing opportunities to engage his students. In the end, his considerations of purpose and audience of the discipline became muddled for his students as they wrote according to the RAFT guidelines, and this posed challenges for Mr. Lynden in integrating the RAFT strategy and sentence starters into his instruction and assessing students' writing ways that supported their historical inquiry. These teaching examples reveal just how challenging it is to adapt generic strategies into instruction in meaningful ways that support students' disciplinary learning.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Although the teachers needed more discipline-specific support, teachers valued the WG for providing a space that offered many comforts that they did not experience at school. They valued their time in WG professional development meetings in part because the collaborative environment tended to the teacher participants' social needs. The WG was a space where teachers felt like their ideas were valued and there was a sense of solidarity in sharing ideas. Teachers were positioned as experts in their content area, giving them a sense of ownership over their teaching without being told what to do, how to teach, or having to follow the latest mandates from administrators and reform policies. In addition, these positive social aspects of the WG community played into the general perspectives and approaches because teachers valued

their sense of collaboration, solidarity, and ownership over offering each other substantive critiques of the resources that were shared.

The schooling structures and contexts were a mechanism that supported the generality in the WG. The teachers viewed the WG as a space where they could get away from their hectic teaching lives, so teachers valued the WG even when it did not offer discipline-specific support for teaching writing. In addition, the teachers came to the WG for its resources that teachers could immediately use in their instruction, which teachers appreciated because they often lacked the time to spend processing how to integrate writing strategies into their instruction. Teachers' instruction was also mediated by students' expectations for writing and the constant pressure to evaluate writing, both of which may have influenced teachers to take up more creative writing assignments that may not have required in depth feedback, but posed problems by confusing the purposes for writing in the disciplines.

Mr. Lynden found teaching writing challenging, but not because he was a novice teacher. Indeed, Mr. Lynden's challenges were not as a result of one problem. The social aspects of the WG, the schooling pressures, the generality of the WG, and his perspectives on disciplinary writing all played a role in how he took up and enacted writing instruction strategies. The data reveal that Mr. Lynden had an understanding of the norms for inquiry in history. Yet, the contextual factors influencing his teaching: a lack of time, the generality of the WG, a need to motivate his students, and his allegiance to the WG—all complicated his writing instruction and mediated how he could support his students in the writing and thinking practices of history. Thus, the task of supporting teachers to teach writing is a systemic matter. The WG tried their best to attend to the social aspects of teaching, but even so, teachers had to deal with disciplinary and social pressures in their classroom. Given the complexity of supporting teachers to teach

disciplinary writing, I offer conclusions, suggestions, and hypothesize what it would take to provide support teachers with writing instruction support in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Introduction

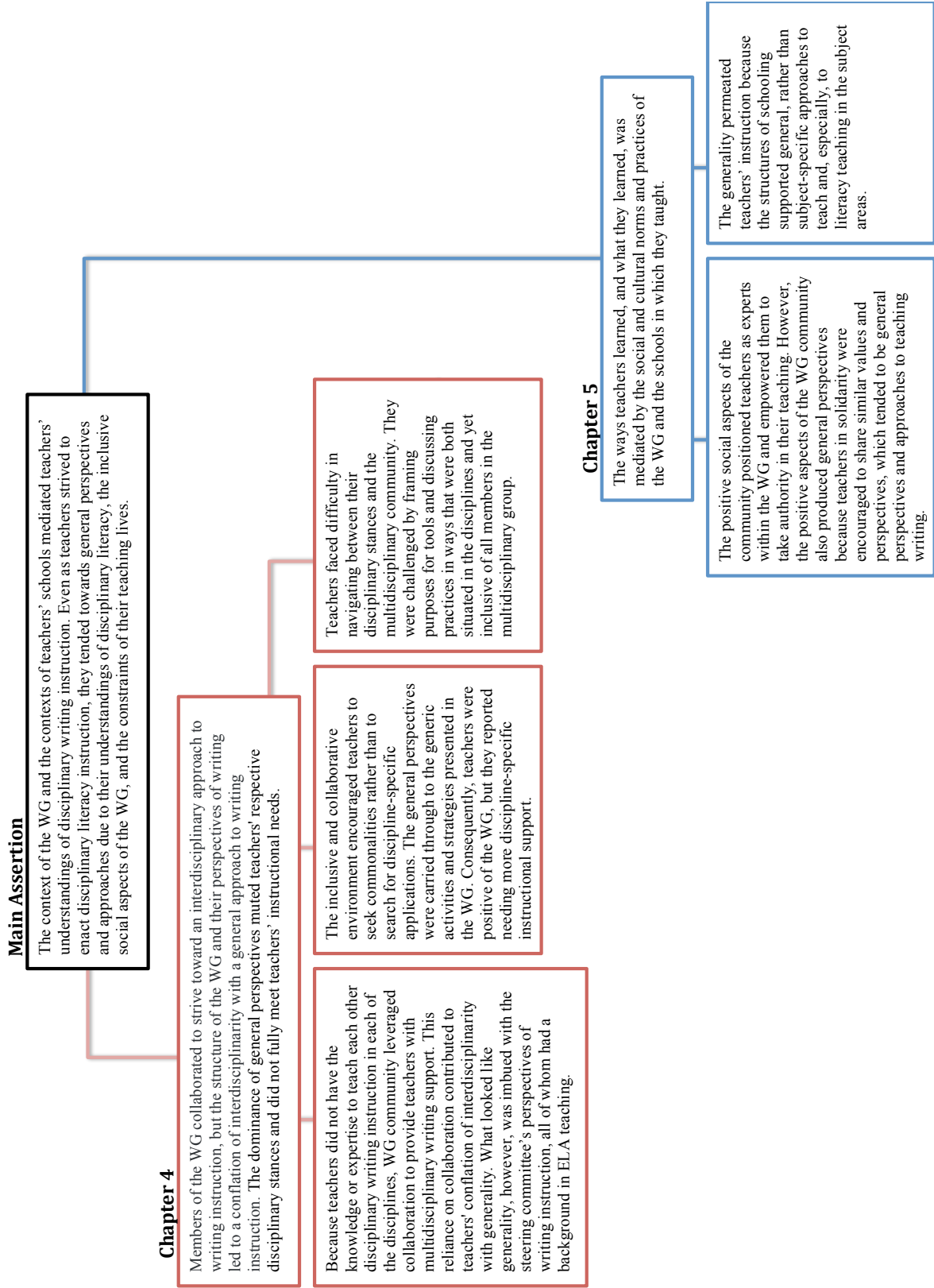
Learning to teach writing is a complicated matter mediated by teachers' disciplinary understandings and the cultural norms and practices of the professional development and of teachers' schools. The findings of this study indicate that supporting teachers to teach writing in deep, disciplinary ways is not just about deepening their content knowledge. The focal teachers in this study had some disciplinary knowledge that influenced their teaching. Nor is learning to teach writing just a matter of sustaining teachers' motivation and investment. The focal teachers in this study were so invested in the WG that they took time away from their teaching to attend the meetings once a month, and consistently reported using the strategies, activities, frameworks, and resources they learned through the WG in their instruction. Finally, supporting teachers to learn to teach disciplinary writing was not just a matter of time. Although the focal teachers received sustained support, they still faced challenges in enacting what they learned. What, then, does it take to support teachers who are learning to teach disciplinary writing?

Given all the possible mediators to teachers' learning, it may not be a surprise that the WG teachers faced challenges in advancing a truly interdisciplinary approach to teaching writing. Yet, the focal teachers I worked with seemed to be able to carry out some measure of writing instruction despite these challenges. They offered multiple opportunities for students to write in response to disciplinary texts. They offered students low-stakes opportunities for writing

in the classroom so that students could practice their writing without feeling constantly evaluated. They gave students opportunities to reflect about their writing processes, strengths, and areas for improvement. They also encouraged their students to brainstorm ideas with each other, to help each other refine and build on each others' ideas before writing them down. The WG laid a solid foundation on which teachers could learn to teach writing. With more discipline-specific support to teach writing, however, teachers could provide students with opportunities to write where considerations of purpose, audience, form, and content are not disparate but integrated.

In what follows, I provide an overview of my major findings and assertions. I then discuss how these findings contribute to educational theory and research. I end the chapter questioning what it would take for teachers to be fully supported in teaching disciplinary literacy and make suggestions for educational practice, teacher education, research, and policy in continuing the work of supporting teachers' learning. Below is my key linkage chart to serve as a reminder of the main assertions in this study.

Figure 6.1: Key Linkage Chart



## **Main Assertions**

What teachers learned was a function of their understandings of disciplinary literacy instruction, the context of the WG, and the contexts of their schools. Even as teachers strived to enact disciplinary literacy instruction, they tended towards general perspectives and approaches due to the inclusive social aspects of the WG and the constraints of their teaching lives.

Within the WG, teachers and facilitators conflated interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches to writing instruction with general perspectives and approaches, subsequently muting their individual disciplinary stances. The generic views and approaches were then promoted and shared among WG members, even if they did not fully meet the teachers' instructional needs. Teachers were positive about the tools they learned about because they seemed easy to use, but they reported needing more discipline-specific instructional support.

The generality was bolstered by teachers' surface level understandings and assumptions of disciplinary writing instruction across the disciplines as well as their desire to be a part of the WG community. In particular, teachers faced difficulty in framing purposes for tools and discussing practices in ways that were both situated in the disciplines and yet inclusive of all members in the multidisciplinary group. Thus, the inclusive and collaborative environment mediated the ways teachers made sense of the tools for instruction in discipline-specific ways.

The ways teachers understood how to teach writing was mediated by the positive social aspects of the WG and the constraints of their schools. The positive social aspects of the WG community—which teachers felt as a sense of collaboration, solidarity, ownership—ostensibly positioned teachers as experts within the WG and empowered them to take authority in their teaching. Teachers in solidarity tended not to offer critique towards their peers for fear of risking positive community ties. In addition, teachers remained loyal and protective of the WG because

of its marginalized position against other professional development programs in the area. These dynamics supported the dissemination of general approaches and perspectives.

The generality fed into teachers' instruction, even as the pressures of teaching bolstered the generality. In particular, teachers felt worn down by their hectic teaching lives, a lack of time, feelings of isolation, pressures to assess writing, and making compromises for meeting students' expectations and motivations for writing. The teachers found solace in the WG as a protected space away from these pressures of teaching where they could find peace and quiet. The pressures of schooling only intensified the teachers' loyalty to the WG, so they remained very positive of the WG and did not critique it or its members for fear of jeopardizing the organization, even if they enacted strategies with limited success.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of this study reveal how the social and cultural norms and practices were deeply rooted in the WG and in teachers' schools, and how these contexts mediated teacher learning. In my conclusions, I introduce the concept of *hegemony of generality*, define this term, and explain what contributed to the hegemony of generality.

#### **The Hegemony of Generality**

In an attempt to be inclusive of all teacher participants from varying content areas, the WG professional development gravitated toward general perspectives of writing. I assert that the dominance of general perspectives and approaches was a *hegemony of generality*, and it mediated how teachers learned to teach disciplinary writing instruction.

I adapted the term *hegemony of generality* from Antonio Gramsci's (1971) construct of *cultural hegemony*. The word "hegemony" typically conjures up the idea of one group dominating another group by force. But in Gramsci's definition of hegemony, a ruling group can



be successful in dominating subordinate groups by convincing and persuading the subordinates that the rulers had their best interests in mind. Once subordinates are convinced that the rulers know what is best for them, subordinates willingly participate in their own hegemony.

I draw on the concept of cultural hegemony to explain how members of the WG inadvertently participated in maintaining a general approach to teaching writing even though they strived to teach disciplinary writing in deep, meaningful ways. I preface my conclusions by clarifying that none of these contributors was solely responsible for the hegemony, and none of these contributors is unique to the WG. These contributors can be seen in any professional development, but I argue that it was the combination of these multilayered dynamics that produced and sustained the hegemony of generality. The major contributors to the hegemony of generality include: relationships of power, a desire for community and collegiality, a lack of a metalanguage to talk about teaching and disciplinary literacy practices, and the institutional structures within and around the WG.

### **Relationships of Power**

The interactions between the WG leaders and teacher participants revealed how power flowed in unpredictable ways throughout the WG (Foucault, 1980). The first power dynamic I will explain is how power relationships were mediated by the means of control and expertise among the WG leaders and teacher participants. The second power dynamic I will explain is the marginalization of the teachers and the WG as an organization, and their means of self-protection.

Regarding the first power dynamic of control and expertise, the steering committee attempted to cede control of the WG to the teachers by positioning as equals in the collaborative community. The steering committee's ideal was for teachers to teach each other how to teach

disciplinary writing, rather than leading the WG themselves. However, this ideal was complicated because in an attempt to position all members as equal and be inclusive of all perspectives of writing from across the disciplines, the WG foregrounded general aspects of teaching writing. In addition, these general ideologies were dispersed in the WG through general approaches, strategies, and activities for teaching writing.

The steering committee's ideal to position teachers as equals was further complicated because some teacher participants did not have the expertise that they were positioned to have, or their expertise of disciplinary understanding and literacy practices was not tapped into. Because teachers did not make apparent their expertise, they ceded their power to the steering committee. However, as the steering committee acknowledged, they did not have the expertise to teach disciplinary writing across the disciplines either. So, even though the steering committee attempted to position teachers as equals, the steering committee still largely remained in control of the group, even if teachers felt empowered and positioned as experts. This power dynamic mattered because the steering committee's conflation of interdisciplinarity as generality pervaded the community.

In addition, the teacher participants may have ceded control to the WG leaders because they were ELA teachers and writing has historically been taught in ELA. Despite the steering committee's efforts to position teachers as experts, the content area teachers may have thought of the WG leaders as the expert writing teachers because of their background in ELA. The WG leaders may not have even realized that they were in control of the ideologies in the WG because they were not aware of the nuances of other disciplinary perspectives and rested on their assumptions of what disciplinary writing looked like in the other disciplines. This lack of an awareness, shared by WG leaders and the teacher participants, of the particular disciplinary ways

of knowing and literacy practice across the disciplines actually maintained power within the ELA steering committee and promoted general perspectives.

The second relationship of power is about the marginalization of the WG and the teachers. The marginalization of the WG also played into the hegemony of generality because it led members to feel protective of the WG. The WG can be thought of as a counterpublic professional development group (Fraser, 1990) that banded together advocate for resources and administrative support. And for the monthly meeting members, their small group size reinforced the feeling that they were an intimate, grass roots, counterpublic group. In their solidarity, the monthly meeting teachers felt empowered and protective of the group.

But the sense of marginalization went beyond the WG and into the profession of teaching itself. In the current era of teaching, where teachers are incredibly burdened and isolated, teachers often feel disempowered as professionals. The WG served as a safe haven where teachers actually felt valued and had opportunities to interact with other teachers. As a result of the marginalization that teachers feel in their professional lives, the members of the WG may not have wanted to jeopardize this safe space. This sense of self-protection, in turn, may have mediated teachers' willingness to surface tensions within the community.

### **Desire for Community and Collegiality**

I argue that the WG members never got to the point where they experienced tensions across subject area boundaries partly because of their desire to sustain collegial group dynamics. Gramsci (1971) explains: "Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over with hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed" (p. 161). In a cultural hegemony, rulers and those who are ruled work together toward the same goals and ideals to establish an equilibrium.

Similarly, the WG steering committee, as the “ruling group,” sought to do what was best for the teacher participants. The committee made efforts to be inclusive of all teachers from different content areas, for example, by asking members to contribute to the professional development and share strategies with each other.

However, in attempting to create equilibrium across multiple disciplinary cultures, what resulted was a hegemony of generality that did not serve anyone’s interests as well as it could have. This is not about one group having dominance over another, but rather about each member subjugating his or her own needs in a desire to maintain the community. The teachers attempted to be inclusive of each other, but the only way they could engage all members in learning about writing instruction was at a general level.

The data suggest also that teachers’ desires to empower each other and promote solidarity competed with their goal to be an interdisciplinary community. Although the WG had identified themselves as an “interdisciplinary” professional development group, there was not a consensus as to what interdisciplinarity meant. Some believed that interdisciplinarity meant learning about the similarities and differences of writing across the disciplines to inform their own instruction. Others believed that interdisciplinarity meant finding common ground and working together in learning to teach writing. This confusion led to a conflation of interdisciplinarity and generality. Even if there was not a clear definition of interdisciplinarity as one of the goals for the WG, the ways interdisciplinarity was enacted in the professional development meetings did not take up teachers’ respective disciplinary stances and foregrounded generality. I conclude that to truly take an interdisciplinary approach to professional development, teachers first need the opportunity to develop some expertise in the practices, epistemologies, and understanding of the purposes for reading in their own discipline.

Discussing the commonalities of writing instruction practices may be a helpful first step, but these discussions can quickly become general if there is not an understanding of why these commonalities exist, and at which points do the practices begin to diverge. In learning something new with people who do not share the same experiences, there is a tendency to seek common ground and build on what is familiar. But, as Grossman et al. (2001) warn, teachers must keep moving beyond the disciplinary commonalities and move into spaces that introduce question, criticality, and tension as catalysts for learning. Surfacing disciplinary tensions, however, requires intention; members do not regularly actively seek the differences or as they termed it, *subject matter fault lines*.

These [subject matter fault lines] are the kinds of issues that rarely get surfaced in the fleeting interactions that typify interdisciplinary marriages of convenience... In such marriages, there is a leap toward agreement, as participants search for what disciplines have in common rather than what makes them distinct. But an approach to interdisciplinarity that preserves difference, casting it as a strength rather than a problem, must allow for the articulation of multiple voices. (p.972)

As with Grossman et al.'s (2001) study of an interdisciplinary book club, the members of the WG repeatedly veered toward areas of commonalities and agreement. This tendency contributed to their sense of positivity, solidarity, and overall community. Unlike the experience documented in the Grossman et al. study, however, subject matter fault lines did not surface across the disciplinary groups.

The irony is that teachers came to the WG seeking community, but I argue that it was a lack of a real teacher learning community that mediated what and how they learned. If a key feature of a teacher learning community is that teachers experience moments of tension and

difficulty, then I conclude that the WG did not yet get to the point where they were a true interdisciplinary learning community. I return to Ms. Gable's statement which suggested that she saw the WG community as a group of "like-minded" people. For her, community seemed to mean complete agreement, yet this definition of solidarity negates the kind of disagreement and tension that Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) assert is necessary for teacher community learning. The complete lack of apparent tension that I observed suggests that members of the WG may have been hiding or holding in their points of disagreement for the sake of the community ties (Moje, 2000). Grossman et al. (2001) assert that true teacher learning communities experience essential tensions, including tensions among subject matter subgroups, that surface and are used as points of learning among interdisciplinary groups. The lack of tension therefore suggests that teachers were either hiding their discipline-specific stances or they did not realize that they were discussing strategies at a generic level.

Teachers may have shied away from the essential tensions or held back their discipline-specific comments because they wanted to uphold the positivity of the group. Raising disciplinarity would surface questions, critiques, differences, and essential tensions that would jeopardize the positivity of the group. Posing discipline-specific concerns could also be seen by others as a clash in personalities or character, as was observed in the Grossman et al. (2001) study. Consequently, teachers were not particularly encouraged to offer each other critique, even if teachers or teacher leaders presented strategies that were vague, general, or non-applicable. In addition, the WG was a group that teachers felt protective of, a space where they felt valued and empowered. This is further complicated by the sense of solidarity that members shared in protecting the WG as a small, marginalized professional development space.

Grossman et al. (2001) termed this kind of social dynamic as a *pseudocommunity*, or a façade that members of a group put on because they have frustrations but do not want to voice them. I, however, do not suggest that the WG was the same kind of pseudocommunity in that the evidence suggests that teachers truly enjoyed their time with each other although Hargreaves (1994, 1999) also warns against the tendency to mistake “interactional congeniality” for true teacher learning communities.

The data suggest, however, that there was a lack of apparent tension because teachers did not voice their individual disciplinary stances. Or, perhaps teachers were still working out their foundational understandings. At the time of my study, I did not observe any *subject matter fault lines* surface, though it is possible that such tensions could still happen in the future. Grossman et al. (2001) argue that the tensions “might not be apparent during the honeymoon phase of the interdisciplinary marriage but they begin to surface once the relationship gets cozy” (Grossman et al., 2001, p. 967). So, perhaps teachers were not yet ready to surface tensions because they were still trying to get to know each other and understand how to teach writing at a foundational level. Despite the teachers reporting their overwhelming appreciation for community ties, the group may not have actually gotten “cozy” enough or had a deep enough understanding of literacy practices in their discipline before they could call themselves an interdisciplinary group.

### **A Lack of a Metalanguage for Talking about Teaching and the Disciplines**

The tendency to seek common ground may have been due to a lack of a common language to talk about their writing instruction. T.J. Jackson Lears (1985) explains how a hegemony can develop and be sustained through the language in a group, or lack thereof: “The available vocabulary helps mark the boundaries of permissible discourse, discourages the clarification of social alternatives, and makes it difficult for the dispossessed to locate the source

of their unease, let alone remedy it” (p. 569-570). Although the WG members could hardly be thought of as the “dispossessed,” this quote speaks to how language and social relations can produce contexts—or communities—wherein members are not even fully aware of what is missing from their experience. The members of the WG were limited in the “available vocabulary” they needed to actually discuss the practices of the disciplines. Here, “available vocabulary” might be thought of as a semiotic tool (Vygotsky, 1978) that people use to form their interactions, social activities, and thought or consciousness. Or, “available vocabulary” could also refer to the discursive practices (Foucault, 1972), or language, norms, and practices for representing knowledge and meaning. Without these tools or discursive practices—the disciplinary understandings, epistemologies or the language used to talk about disciplinary practices—the WG was limited in their understanding of writing instruction as generic strategy instruction.

The data indicated that some of the focal teachers, such as Ms. Wallace and Mr. Lynden, had an understanding of disciplinary practices. This was evident in Ms. Wallace’s presentation of her summarizing activity. Although she was steeped in the disciplinary practices of science, she appeared to have a limited “available vocabulary” (Lears, 1985) for talking about disciplinary differences and did not step out of her discipline to show how the summarizing activity might be modified for other teachers. Therefore, although many of the teachers brought disciplinary understandings to their learning in the group, they may not have known how to share their knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. But without the metalanguage to allow members to tap into their knowledge and talk across difference, the WG remained a multidisciplinary group, rather than the kind of interdisciplinary group that could further support their learning. Without



making the disciplinary literacy understanding explicit, teachers tended to fall back on to their assumptions and what was most familiar to them.

The lack of a metalanguage was also problematic for teachers in using the strategies they learned. This problem was evident in the lack of a clear purpose during Ms. Gable's presentation of sentence starters, which posed challenges for Mr. Lynden when he tried to use the sentence starters in his own instruction. Part of the metalanguage needed, then, might be around helping teachers to translate strategies from one context to another. For example, it was challenging for the professional development facilitators to step out of their own disciplinary culture to help other teachers translate generic strategies into their respective disciplines. In addition, even if the facilitators intended to hear contributions from teachers of other disciplines, the facilitators may not have even realized that they were guiding discussions towards more general perspectives of writing because of their limited available vocabulary. The monthly meeting teachers also experienced difficulty in stepping out of their content area domains to help others translate strategies to fit disciplinary purposes and talk about instructional practice metadiscursively for each other's benefit.

This lack of a common professional language to talk about teaching was not a problem that solely existed in the WG. Rather, it is a problem within the field of education itself. Grossman et al. (2001) explain that "compared to medicine or law, education has been unable to forge a shared language of norms and values, and practically every significant question in education remains contentious" (p. 947). In such a vast and complicated field, any one term has multiple meanings and is defined differently based on different theoretical stances, which makes it difficult to solve problems of teaching practice. This was evident in the sometimes contradictory definitions and ways that interdisciplinarity played out within the WG. Without a

shared language, the members of the WG should have faced some inevitable tensions in learning to teach writing. However, the positive social ties of the community seemed to mask these tensions.

Wilson and Berne (1999) add that teachers appreciate the opportunity to talk about their work, but have “little experience engaging in a professional discourse that is public and critical or their work and the work of their colleagues” (p. 181). I would add that teachers also do not regularly have many opportunities to talk about their disciplinary understanding and literacy practices. Wilson and Berne (1999) argue that teachers may shy away from critical discussions of teaching partly because teachers have been trained to be “polite and nonjudgmental” at school, and teachers rarely have opportunities to engage in critical dialogue about their teaching practice (p. 186). Therefore, supporting teachers to critically discuss their teaching, to enter those “essential tensions” is challenging and sometimes painful work. Such “critical collegueship” (Lord, 1994), however, seems to be key in the difference between a group of teachers and a teacher *learning* community.

Furthermore, Wilson and Berne (1999) argue that bringing teachers into critical discussions is challenging because teachers, who already regularly face criticism within the U.S. educational system, do not want to invite others to further critique them and may not want to reveal what they do not yet know. With so much at stake, teachers may be hesitant to reveal their own needs and areas for growth. So, leaders of professional development have the unique challenge of facilitating professional development that is challenging, rigorous, and substantive, yet also motivates teachers to invest in the professional development (Little, 1989). In an attempt to balance these two concerns, “professional development projects might find themselves facing attempts at similar bargaining down (or out) of content” (Wilson & Berne, 1999, p. 201). In other

words, to entice teachers into the professional development, teacher leaders might lean towards creating a collegial community and less of a teacher learning community that surfaces disciplinary tensions.

Without a professional metalanguage to talk about teaching, members of the WG may have found it difficult “to locate the source of their unease, let alone remedy it,” (Lears, 1985, p. 570) which was exacerbated by the strong community ties. Indeed, members did not express discontent with the WG and remained overwhelmingly positive about their learning even if they enacted generic strategies with limited success. Overall, supporting teachers to learn in professional development settings is not just about providing substantive content, or about providing a collegial community, but it involves supporting teachers to talk about their teaching and learning in ways that are critical and collegial.

### **Structures of Professional Development**

**Teacher positionality within the multidisciplinary group.** The hegemony of generality was an ideological hegemony brought about by the multidisciplinary nature of the group. Despite the steering committee’s best efforts, the hegemony seemed to take over from the very beginning of the organization. After the steering committee gathered contributions about writing from the teacher participants, they then made their own philosophy of what disciplinary writing instruction meant to them, an ideology that made sense to them given the multidisciplinary dynamic of the group and the daily pressures of their teaching lives. Lears (1985) explains this process: “Selectively refashioning the available spontaneous philosophy, a group may develop its own particular world view—and ideology that cements it into what Gramsci called a “historical bloc” possessing both cultural and economic solidarity” (p. 571). Given what the WG had in terms of an “available spontaneous philosophy”: their understanding of writing instruction, of

disciplinary writing in their own disciplines, their assumptions about writing instruction and the nature of writing practice in other disciplines, and their teaching expertise—the WG developed a historical bloc or an ideology about disciplinary writing instruction. Their ideology of disciplinary writing instruction was not particularly informed by research or disciplinary expertise, but rather their own experiences of teaching writing in their classrooms. As teachers from multiple disciplines came together, led by a steering committee of ELA teachers, the WG developed an ideology of disciplinary writing instruction that was actually an approach to using generic writing strategies.

The WG found solidarity in this common ideology of disciplinary writing instruction because it empowered them to work together and it fit their everyday reality of teaching. The teachers were complicit with their experience because their understandings of disciplinary literacy instruction and their sense of community did not signal any need for something more than what they were learning. The combination of a lack of discipline-specific support and strong positive sense of community led the teachers to participate in the hegemony of generality.

Even more, the steering committee sought to distribute responsibility and power among the teacher participants; the committee did not see themselves as ruling over the teachers, rather all were working toward the ideal of teaching disciplinary writing. In other words, the steering committee “wanted their interests to dominate, rather than their persons” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 105). However, it was this delegation of responsibility that allowed the hegemony of generality to thrive because teacher participants did not know how to support each other in something that they were trying to also learn for themselves. So, teachers were loyal to the WG and participated in the hegemony partly because they were positioned as experts.

The findings bring into question the role of expertise and positionality in collaboration models such as communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). In a community of practice, members move from legitimate peripheral participation to central participation or expertise. But how does learning happen when teachers are already positioned as experts, but are not, in fact, experts in the aspects of teaching that they are trying to learn? Who acts as a mentor or more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978)? Indeed, why would teachers attend a professional development to learn about writing instruction if they were already positioned as experts of writing instruction? I come to the conclusion that the collaborative structure of the WG, where all teachers were positioned as experts, obstructed the goals of the professional development to support teachers in teaching disciplinary writing.

The ways that the hegemony of generality played out in the WG show that power is not static and is not owned by one group or person, but flows through interactions in unpredictable ways (Foucault, 1972). The teachers subjugated their desire for discipline-specific approaches for the sake of solidarity and protection of the group (Gramsci, 1971), which they so valued as a space where they felt empowered and had ownership in their teaching. What they did not realize, however, was that they were denying themselves a more robust learning opportunity as they strove to protect the pleasant feeling of community (Moje, 2000).

Based on my findings, I conclude that there are different kinds of expertise involved in teaching disciplinary literacy. Teachers are experts of teaching their students within the particular contexts of their schools. But teachers also need some expertise in the content, epistemologies, and literacy practices of their disciplines and how to teach those practices (Bain, 2000; Lemke, 1990) and some were not experts of disciplinary literacy instruction even though they were positioned to be experts.

**Institutional structures.** In the era of the Common Core State Standards, it makes sense that the WG members conflated strategy instruction with disciplinary literacy instruction. After all, the CCSS literacy standards (NGACBP & CCSSO, 2010) foreground literacy in English language arts and address literacy in science, social studies, and “the technical subjects” as a kind of afterthought and embedded within the ELA standards. Nor do they present discipline-specific standards for each of the three afterthought subject areas, except to invoke evidence-based argument.

In this context, the WG attempted to fashion an ideology about writing instruction that also fit the institutional constraints and daily pressures of their teaching lives. The steering committee developed the professional development from the ground up, and with the ideas that were contributed from teachers, the WG found “some values more congenial than others, more resonant with its own everyday experience” (Lears, 1985, p. 571). In this case, the steering committee and the teachers found and developed strategies that were resonant with their day-to-day pressures of teaching and expectations for reform, and these tools tended to be generic strategies.

Another feature of the context of this professional development was that it was marginalized and administrators did not support this program as much as the professional development on reading that was also offered in county. The findings suggest that this marginalization influenced how teachers interacted with each other within the WG. For a professional development program to experience agitation from within and then use that disruption as a turning point for learning (Grossman et al., 2001), then the professional development itself should be well supported and on stable ground. However, how could the WG members be expected to engage in critical and honest discussions about the substance of their

learning if they are also concerned with the well-being of their organization and feel a sense of protectiveness over it? The teachers in the Grossman et al. (2001) study, in contrast, were able to surface tensions without these worries because the professional development program was funded by a research project that supported the teachers in having critical discussions. The findings thus suggest that professional development programs do not operate in isolation; professional developments are surrounded by districts, schools, stakeholders, and discourses about reform and teaching that may influence the sustainability of professional development programs (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006).

An even larger institutional context that may have influenced the interactions within the WG were the current conditions of teaching. Perhaps teachers were so drawn to the WG because of the current discourse about teachers who are held responsible for so much, and are often the first ones to blame for problems in education. The data suggest that the teachers of the WG were starved for a community and a safe space away from the negativity and pressures surrounding teaching and education. Also, teachers were so satisfied with the social support and the comforting space they found themselves in that it masked their evaluation of the WG as a teacher learning community.

These findings complicate research on teachers' resistance to teaching literacy in their classrooms (Ratekin, 1985; Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1992) because the constraints of schooling did not produce resistance to teaching literacy, but rather an investment to the WG community. For example, O'Brien and Stewart (1990, 1992) argued that teachers resisted content area literacy instruction because they did not think the strategies applied to their discipline, they felt an additional burden for teaching literacy, they had concerns about the resources they were given to use, and teaching literacy seemed very different from the

pedagogical style they were used to. The focal teachers in the WG also faced similar pressures of teaching, but rather than contributing to teachers' resistance to literacy instruction, the teaching pressures only encouraged teachers to protect the space of the WG and be further committed to developing their literacy instruction. Thus, the teachers in the WG were committed to teaching disciplinary literacy, despite the teaching pressures that could have caused other teachers to resist disciplinary literacy instruction as in O'Brien and Stewart's study.

Next, I explore what it means to apply the concept of hegemony of generality to the teaching of disciplinary literacy and the study of teachers' learning within professional development settings.

### **Contributions to Theory and Research**

In this section, I detail how the findings of my dissertation contribute to theory and research by posing questions about disciplinary literacy and professional development. In posing these questions, I hope to contribute to conversations, rather than suggest that my study actually answers these questions. The questions I pose have no simple answers, and in situating my dissertation within education and literacy research, I am actually left with more questions than answers.

#### **What Does It Take to Teach Disciplinary Literacy?**

The WG did their best with the tools that they had and laid a solid foundation for teachers' learning. Teachers came away with many resources and a sense of rejuvenation, but with further specific support, teachers may have been able to integrate strategies into their instruction and invite students into disciplinary cultural practices with even more success. With further specific support, teachers may have been able to use strategies that were in line with the disciplinary purposes of their instructional unit.



The hegemony of generality existed because teachers needed to develop facility with the language, tools, or practices to talk deeply and metadiscursively about their disciplinary cultural practices. They were grasping at a way to study the disciplines deeply, but they did not have the tools to do so. The hegemony did not persist solely as a matter of novice teaching, a lack of content knowledge, or a lack of pedagogical content knowledge. However, it is unlikely that teachers had been exposed to the idea that disciplines are forms of culture, with shared ways of knowing, doing, believing, acting, and reading and writing (Gee, 1990; Moje, 2008) which are often tacit and taken for granted (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001). Having the opportunity to tease apart these ways would advance their focus on the kinds of reading and writing done within and across disciplines. Therefore, one critical missing ingredient in the WG was attention to the disciplines as cultures with their own sets of practices. Without the opportunity to tease apart the practices of the disciplines, teachers fell back onto concrete, but superficial representations of the writing practices of the disciplines. They also fell back on their assumptions of the practices of other disciplines. And, they fell back onto logistical concerns of strategies because they felt a daily pressure in school.

Some professional development programs have worked on inviting teachers into the doing and the thinking of the disciplines. Franke et al. (1998) assert that inviting teachers into disciplinary instruction does not mean solely providing them with strategies and new curricula, “rather it frequently entails teachers making changes in their basic epistemological perspectives, their knowledge of what it means to learn, as well as their conceptions of classroom practice” (p. 67). I would add that supporting teachers to teach disciplinary writing is not just about developing their disciplinary knowledge, but also their disciplinary literacy knowledge, or the codes and tools that are necessary for communicating their disciplinary thinking.

Similarly, Warren and Rosebery (1993) developed a teacher learning community where teachers could make sense of the practices and epistemology of science. They hoped teachers would learn how to teach their students how to read, write, think and communicate in the discipline through this exploration of the epistemology of science. The researchers elaborated on their goals in this excerpt:

The idea [behind the professional development] is not simply to inculcate a new set of teaching strategies or implement new curricula, as is often done in the name of teacher development and instructional reform, but to involve teachers in doing science and thinking about science as a discourse with particular sense-making practices, values, beliefs, concepts and objects, ways of interacting, talking, reading and writing. This "insider's view" of scientific practice can then form the basis for rethinking classroom practice. (p. 11)

Guided by these goals, the staff led teachers in workshops of “doing science.” As they engaged in investigations of science, they also discussed and explored the nature of science: how knowledge is constructed, what counts as evidence, and how to develop theory. Through these investigations and discussions, the researchers found that teachers developed their disciplinary understanding in ways that influenced their science teaching, although teachers found it difficult to adopt scientific discourse. This research shows that teachers can develop their disciplinary understanding, but it takes more than just providing teachers with strategies, and that teachers need support in actually being able to talk about their disciplinary practices and their teaching.

As I previously mentioned, there is so much to know about the discipline, and literacy, to teach disciplinary literacy. Often, the first response in evaluating teachers’ ability to teach disciplinary literacy is to question whether teachers have the disciplinary knowledge. Indeed,

many assert—without any apparent evidence—that teachers do not possess the requisite disciplinary knowledge or practices. My findings, however, indicate that the teachers in the group did have knowledge of the discipline and its practices and yet still struggled to connect or critique the literacy practices they were examining to their disciplinary work, which complicates assumptions that teachers cannot teach disciplinary literacy because of a lack of disciplinary knowledge.

Teachers' disciplinary understandings can certainly inhibit one's ability to teach disciplinary literacy, but my findings suggest that there were other influences at play. For instance, some teachers had the knowledge and could demonstrate their own thinking inside the disciplines, but it is another task to actually teach these ways of thinking, writing, and reading to novices who are not yet members of the disciplines. What is more, it is difficult to even know if teachers are capable of doing all that is required to teach disciplinary literacy given the pressures and constraints of teaching. It may be unreasonable to evaluate whether or not teachers can teach disciplinary literacy if they are not given the time or space to plan and enact such instruction. Furthermore, if teachers are not given the time and space to talk about what is necessary for teaching disciplinary literacy, and how strategies are tools to be used in the service of disciplinary inquiry (Moje, 2008; 2015), then how can they be expected to teach disciplinary literacy effectively?

What is more, there may be some confusion in the field of literacy as to what disciplinary literacy instruction is, and this confusion may have played into what happened in the WG. Disciplinary literacy is currently a much-discussed topic in scholarly conversations. In effect, content area literacy strategies are being recast as disciplinary literacy strategies in research and curriculum materials. Literacy strategies are being called disciplinary literacy strategies because

they are happening in subject area classrooms. To teach disciplinary literacy, however, students actually have to engage in disciplinary inquiry to read, write, and communicate in the discipline. The WG leaders may not have recognized this difference given the prominence of generic content area literacy strategies being repackaged as disciplinary literacy strategies.

### **How Might Teacher Learning Communities Be Created and Sustained?**

With the concerns for more comprehensive studies of professional development, research has attempted to characterize what makes for an effective professional development. Desimone (2009), for example, proposes a core conceptual framework for measuring teacher learning within professional development programs. Based on her review of the research, she proposed the following core features of professional development to support teacher learning: content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. Like Desimone, I argue for a more comprehensive study of professional development because professional development programs are too often evaluated based reports of teacher satisfaction. However, I would go a step further than Desimone because the WG could be said to have surpassed measures of teacher satisfaction and have met all of the core features that Desimone proposed, and yet still have not met their goal in teaching teachers to teach disciplinary writing.

One explanation as to why the WG professional development did not meet its members' goals despite having all of the "right" core features is that the structure did not help members to meet the goal of learning disciplinary writing instruction. The collaborative structure of the WG facilitated teacher investment, but appeared to have not facilitated deep learning of disciplinary writing instruction, at least not in its current iteration. The steering committee chose a collaborative structure for their professional development in resistance to traditional (i.e. top-down) forms of professional development, which is often the case (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006;

Wilson & Berne, 1999). However, there is not a sole dichotomy between top-down and bottom-up models of professional development (Talbert, 2010) and the findings point to the problems of assuming that bottom-up models of professional development are always best.

Other professional development structures exist where teachers can tap into multiple forms of expert knowledge. For example, in a professional development project called Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), Carpenter, Fennema, and Franke (1996) were able to support teachers in a collaborative environment. The goals of CGI were to support teachers in the ways of thinking in mathematics and to help them see how their students thought within the discipline. To meet these goals, the researchers purposefully selected materials, such as video of instruction and student work, to help teachers think about their students' mathematical thinking and how to support it. The collaborative environment helped to motivate teachers, but with the researchers' support, also helped to develop teachers' mathematical thinking and teaching. Because one goal was to help teachers understand how their students thought in math, the teachers were the experts in knowing their students as learners and knowing the context of their schools. And because another goal was to develop mathematical reasoning, the researchers also brought in their expertise in mathematical practices and framed activities and materials to encourage discussion around this topic. The researchers also built on teachers' existing conceptual frameworks about mathematics and how to teach so that teachers would continue to use ideas from the professional development years later (Franke, Carpenter, Levi, & Fennema, 2001). As a result, all members were valued in this teacher learning community. The research experts did not hold sole authority in the community, but they did produce the expertise necessary to meet the learning goals.

The collaborative structure of the WG, in contrast, positioned teachers as experts on a topic for which they had limited expertise. In effect, the structure of the WG did not help the members learn how to teach disciplinary writing. So, before any group designs a professional development program, they must consider how the structure may help them to achieve their goals and not assume that a teacher-led structure is the best option for supporting members to meet those goals. Therefore, clearly articulating that the goals of professional development—and what teachers need to know and be able to do to meet those goals—is necessary for designing professional development structures that facilitate meeting those goals. If indeed the goal of the WG was to support teachers in how to teach disciplinary literacy, then they needed to support teachers with the disciplinary thinking, the disciplinary literacy practices associated with that thinking, and the skills in how to teach disciplinary literacy. The WG provided useful writing strategies, but without the framing of disciplinary thinking and disciplinary literacy, teachers had difficulty adapting those strategies into their instruction in ways that supported students' disciplinary inquiry. With appropriate framing, teachers may have better understood how to use strategies to support their instructional goals in the service of disciplinary inquiry.

In addition, the findings of this study call for a move away from dichotomous models of professional development and toward more integrative, true community-based models. Professional development leaders should thus have a clear sense as to how teachers' expertise can contribute to the attainment of their goals and invite other experts to extend their learning as necessary. This is a difficult task, as professional development leaders must balance between considerations of enticing teachers to enter the community and providing rigorous and substantive learning experiences (Little, 1989).

## **Implications**

My aim in this study was to examine what it means for teachers who tried to 1) learn how to invite students into a disciplinary culture through its writing practices and 2) learn the practice of disciplinary writing instruction from teachers of other disciplines. I found that the WG laid a solid foundation for learning how to teach disciplinary writing, but the teachers could only go to a certain point in their instruction because the lack of an alternative teacher community, metaknowledge or metalanguage of their disciplines, and outside expertise offered in the professional development sessions produced a kind of hegemony of generality, in which teachers subjugated their own questions about the discipline in favor of group harmony and cohesion. As a result, teachers did not have the tools—or even the will—to dig deep into disciplinary literacy instruction, despite indications that they wanted more from the professional development.

If professional development communities are mediated by complicated systems of power, then what does it take to support teachers in teaching disciplinary literacy given the pressures of teaching and the current structures of educational reform and professional development? In the following, I suggest implications for instruction, teacher education, and policy to move towards a more comprehensive approach to supporting teachers' learning that attends to teachers' disciplinary understandings, and the relationships of power and positionality within professional development communities.

### **Implications for Teacher Practice**

In calling the teachers who attended the monthly meetings the “All-Stars,” Ms. Gable mistook their abilities to talk about strategies for knowing how to adapt and implement them in ways that were in line with disciplinary purposes for writing. Her statements are a reminder that being able to talk about strategies and actually being able to enact them require kinds of

expertise. It is important for teachers to be able to bridge their understandings about a strategy and use the strategy in purposeful ways. Such skill requires changing the nature about how teachers talk about their instructional practice. As teachers are called to support their students in being metacognitive about strategies as a way into the disciplines (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001), teachers should also be called to talk metadiscursively about their practice as an apprenticeship into disciplinary writing instruction. Such talk and reflection would open the boundaries of the “available vocabulary” (Lears, 1985, p. 569) or tools, discourse, and understanding of the instructional practices that make one’s discipline unique, and thus gain some control over the hegemony of generality.

### **Implications for Teacher Education**

**Developing professional discourse.** Because teachers in the WG had varying understandings of disciplinary literacy in their own discipline, one implication for teacher education is that pre-service and practicing teachers should be given opportunities to learn what disciplinary literacy means in their discipline as well as ways of teaching disciplinary literacy in their discipline.

Such support might take the form of facilitating metadiscursive discussions in professional development, wherein teachers unpack a generic strategy and discuss what it would take to translate it into their disciplinary instruction. However, if teachers from different disciplines are to work together in learning to teach disciplinary literacy, teachers must first be able to talk about the specific writing practices that make their discipline unique and the epistemology that guides their disciplinary practices. Such metadiscursivity is necessary so that teachers do not make assumptions about what constitutes writing in their disciplines or other disciplines. Because disciplines are cultures, the shared practices in a discipline are often tacit, so



teachers should first reflect on what makes their discipline unique and possibly examine these understandings with disciplinary experts. With that foundation in place, there is a possibility of sharing strategies across content areas in a meaningful way. Some activities that might support teachers in talking metadiscursively about their instruction include engaging in think alouds, analyzing video of instruction, or being coached through a reflective protocol so that teachers can identify and discover what they already do that is skillful. Teachers might also shadow a member of a discipline as she does her work, or teachers might invite disciplinary experts to their professional development to talk about what their work entails.

The situated nature of disciplinary writing instruction poses challenges for teacher learning, but it also represents the challenge that adolescents face in navigating different disciplinary domains on a daily basis at school. Furthermore, this challenge points to the promise of a true interdisciplinary approach in professional development to support youth in navigating these domains. However, when teachers in a multidisciplinary setting come together, they would need some understanding of the practices of other disciplines in order to benefit. Otherwise, teachers would fall back on assumptions of the practices of other disciplines, which would influence how they present activities and how they could offer support for translating strategies.

Teachers in disciplinary specific groups, on the other hand, might be able to go much deeper into developing disciplinary specific writing strategies because of their shared disciplinary practices. Once teachers establish their understanding of disciplinary specific writing practices, they could devote the rest of their time together on translating generic strategies into teaching activities that work for the purposes of their discipline, the needs of their students, and the goals for instruction. Teachers in discipline-specific groups would also greatly benefit from having opportunities to unpack the literacy practices of their discipline with a disciplinary expert.

Teachers may also benefit from protocols for sharing and receiving ideas about writing instruction. Establishing protocols may honor teachers' expertise while leaving room for questions and critique from their colleagues. Much consideration and planning is needed for taking a strategy that is situated in one discipline and presenting it to teachers, whether they are in the same discipline or across disciplines. Teachers need to consider how and why the strategy worked for their students, their disciplinary purposes, and their instructional goals. Teacher presenters could then talk metadiscursively about the strategy and their instruction and be able to lead reflective discussions to help other teachers situate it into their respective disciplinary purposes.

The monthly meeting teachers valued opportunities to contribute their ideas and experiences because it positioned them as experts with ownership over their teaching. To continue this practice, teacher presenters should be given guidelines for presenting and leading discussions that encourage teachers to talk about their instruction in metadiscursive and disciplinary ways. The teacher presenter could act as a facilitator to support participants in thinking about how to integrate an activity into their classroom in a similarly situated way. Making use of such protocols may limit discussions that solely foreground questions about logistics and procedures, and invite more discussion around how a strategy supported students to access and build their understanding of disciplinary content. To support teachers in using strategies as tools for disciplinary inquiry, teachers need to be supported in talking about the purposes and considerations for using strategies. To this end, I have designed an example of a protocol for presenters and observers to share literacy strategies.

## **Protocol for Presenter:**

### Planning for Presenting

- What were the instructional goals of your lesson?
- What was the intellectual problem?
  - What disciplinary practices did you want students to engage in to address the intellectual problem?
- What was the purpose of the strategy?
  - How did the strategy support students' disciplinary inquiry?
  - How did it support students' writing?
- When did you use the strategy?

### Talking Points for Presentation

- What were the instructional goals of your lesson?
- What modifications did you make to the strategy, and why?
- How did the strategy support students' disciplinary learning? How did you know?
- What were your key moves in using the strategy?
- What were your successes/challenges?

## **Protocol for Observer:**

### During Observation

- How is the strategy helping you engage in reading/writing disciplinary texts?
- What challenges are you facing?
- What are you learning?

### Reflection and Application

- How might you see this strategy being used in your classroom?
- What would be the purpose of using this strategy in your classroom?
  - How might this strategy support disciplinary literacy practices? Which practices?
  - How might the strategy support students' disciplinary learning? How will you know?
- What modifications will you need to make, and why?
  - What disciplinary practices was the presenter supporting in his/her presentation, and what modifications will you need to make to support your students in your discipline?

### Wrapping Up

- What questions do you have?

Such a protocol may not be revolutionary, but it may help teachers in developing ways to talk about their teaching, and to be explicit about the ways they read and write in the disciplines. Returning to the monthly meeting activity where Ms. Gable presented the sentence starters, having a protocol such as the one I have provided may have surfaced Ms. Gable's purposes for using strategy early on in her presentation. Then, in knowing those purposes, Mr. Lynden may have modified the strategy differently, or decided not to use them at all.

**Making space for teaching, literacy, and disciplinary experts.** The recent move in professional development models to honor teachers' expertise is commendable. Collaborative models of professional development have been shown to highly motivate teachers (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008) and to be a key element for teacher learning (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Many teachers are the experts in methods of supporting their students in their classrooms and schools, and this expertise should be honored. Honoring the expertise that teachers have, however, does not necessitate a stance that teachers know all there is to know about instruction. Like the false dichotomy of top- versus bottom-down models, there is a similarly false and similarly dichotomous view that experts in one domain have nothing new to learn in or about other domains. Teacher educators need to question how to produce meaningful contexts wherein teachers' positions and experiences are valued, but teachers are also not given full responsibility for already knowing precisely what they came to professional development to learn more about

Future studies of teacher professional development should therefore examine how power works within professional development models that rely on shared responsibility, models such as professional learning communities (Hord, 1997), collegial study groups (Dana & Yendol-Silva, 2003), and critical friends groups (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000). Such research is necessary to

understand how to position teachers as experts while leaving room for teachers to critique one another and to grow and learn together. Exploring how power works within professional development communities is a complex matter. One must not assume that good intentions to distribute power and responsibility are enough to represent the voices, needs, and ideas of all teachers. It is not just a matter of exploring the intentions of the leadership, but a matter of continuous, critical self-reflection to actually seek out the tensions within a community and the voices of those who may be marginalized (Snow-Gerono, 2005).

Such work is necessary even when teachers report to be satisfied and happy with their learning because examining the social within professional development is not just about teachers' motivation, but about the ways in which the social structures mediate how teachers take up tools and enact instruction using those tools. Thus, I call for close examinations of social relationships and how power plays out in professional development communities, not just for the sake of teachers' motivation and investment, but for the sake of improving teachers' instruction.

Yet, there are various kinds of expertise needed to enact disciplinary literacy (or any) instruction. Teachers need to know something about the content and epistemologies of the discipline, whether the expertise is in math, science, literature, or history. In addition, teachers need to be able to analyze the literacy challenges and affordances of strategies for students writing particular texts of the discipline so that they can translate generic strategies into discipline-specific instruction. Teachers also have to be experts in knowing their students' strengths and needs.

Because different types of expertise are needed to teach disciplinary literacy, teacher educators should consider university and secondary school collaborations to support teachers in developing the different areas of expertise needed to enact disciplinary literacy instruction.

Collaborations might include inviting university professors or even college graduate students who are well-steeped in their discipline to help teachers unpack the practices of the discipline and lead metadiscursive discussions. As disciplines are cultures, those who study within the disciplines, or academics, are steeped in the practices of the disciplines and have epistemological understandings that guide their writing and thinking practices. Academics might help teachers identify what is expertly executed in their teaching and to give teachers the language to name their instructional practices. Disciplinary experts can also help teachers access the language and tools to name their practices and help them translate generic strategies into their discipline, all while being careful of the power relationships that may come about in partnerships between schools and universities (Johnston, 1997).

Professional development and university partnerships might also take the form of inviting literacy specialists to partner with both disciplinary experts and classroom teachers on providing strategies and analyzing the affordances and challenges of the strategies given the disciplinary practices and the teachers' instructional goals. Such partnerships also means honoring teachers as experts of their classroom instruction as they modify suggestions based on what they know about their students and classroom context. In an ideal professional development setting, disciplinary experts and literacy specialists could work in tandem to support teachers. Gramsci said that "All men are intellectuals" (1971, p. 9). In other words, all people have some kind of expertise, just different kinds of expertise. Because the task of teaching disciplinary literacy is so complex, supporting teachers to do this complex work requires the collaborations of people with different kinds of expertise, and honoring their different kinds of expertise.

**Questions of scale.** As I make suggestions for future directions of professional development on disciplinary literacy instruction, I keep in mind concerns about the possibility of

generalizing the WG context both laterally and scaling up. The WG was successful in keeping teachers motivated and invested in trying out writing strategies. But what might happen if the WG were to scale up? Was there something about the intimacy of the WG monthly meeting community that kept teachers invested? When I asked some teachers to consider where they would want the WG to go next, they voiced their concerns about maintaining a sense of community, staying motivated, and continuing implement writing instruction, which Mr. Lynden touched on here.

**Lynden:** Obviously having a huge group wouldn't be really helpful. I think if that group was two or three times the size it would start to feel like there was just too much going on. People get to know each other well [in the small group] and there's a lot that works well with that. I do have some colleagues that have trained in [the WG] but there hasn't been the opportunity through me for them to continue to go back and revisit it. They just have the [three-day] training and now it's over. So not being able to have that professional learning community, or with [the reading professional development,] we used to have monthly or bimonthly meetings where everybody who was trained would get together and we do that. Well they [the administration] decided they didn't have the money for the subs anymore so they wouldn't allow us to do it. It was like "well, train everybody." But sounds like you're going to train everybody to say they were trained. Rather than to actually do this stuff. (Personal interview, May 30, 2014)

Mr. Lynden's comments point to several concerns for the future direction of the WG. For Mr. Lynden, the size of the group mattered and he enjoyed the intimacy of the space. However, there is something to be said about the possibility of growing the monthly meeting community. In such a small group, it is possible that those in smaller content area groups were not represented well.

For example, in the monthly meetings, it was common for at least five ELA teachers to be in attendance, but only one or two science or history teachers. With such small numbers, it was probably difficult for teachers in the science and history content areas to collaborate in content area groups. In addition, there were no math teachers in the monthly meetings. As I think about the future, teachers need to feel a sense of community which often comes about in small and intimate groups. Yet, it is important to actually have enough people participate and collaborate with each other. As groups grow, it is important to continue a sense of community to keep teachers invested.

Another concern that Mr. Lynden pointed to was that providing teachers with sustained support requires administrative and financial support. As Mr. Lynden explained, the reading professional development gained footing in part because it had administrative backing. But as the funds in his district dried up, so did the opportunities for teachers to attend follow up meetings and receive sustained support for implementing reading strategies. For the WG to continue to receive administrative support, they must provide data that suggests student and teacher learning. Therefore, a challenge for the WG and other small professional development groups is to constantly prove that the money, time, and effort being spent is worthwhile for teachers and students.

Scaling up a small professional development group can offer another problem. One of the aspects that motivated teachers to go to the WG was that they volunteered to attend. As Ms. Gable said in one of her interviews, “I dread the day that the district mandates that people have to come because that means we'll have a bunch of grumps.” However, in the course of scaling up, administrators might mandate teachers to attend which could influence teachers’ motivation to participate. In addition, teachers might attend professional development more as a formality



than as an opportunity to learn. For example, as the reading professional development gained footing across the districts, Mr. Lynden stated that teachers were mandated to attend “to say they were trained, rather than to actually do this stuff.” The WG is also susceptible to the same downfalls, especially because so many teachers have attended the one-time three-day training (n=267) in comparison to the follow-up monthly meetings (n=22), suggesting that administrators could say that teachers participated in the WG professional development, without having to provide the means for sustained support.

### **Implications for Educational Policy**

The findings show that the task of supporting teachers to teach writing, or anything for that matter, is a systemic issue. The WG tried their best to attend to the social aspects of teaching within the professional development space, but even so, teachers dealt with disciplinary and social pressures in their classroom, school, and district. My analyses showed that the structures of schooling bolstered the hegemonic structure of the WG even as teachers took away strategies and brought them into their instruction. What teachers took away from the professional development was partly a function of the schooling structures and teaching pressures that they face.

Recognizing that national reform sometimes comes with the consequence of teacher resistance (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2006), the WG responded to this call to the best of their ability with what they knew about disciplinary literacy and the tools they had. Teachers bought into the WG because it informed by the teachers’ strengths and needs. The WG attempted to build on teachers’ instruction, given their realities and the pressures of teaching. It also provided teachers a protected space away from teaching to reflect and collaborate. I suggest that schools may

integrate opportunities for collaboration, reflection, time, and space into the school workplace so that teachers need not seek out spaces outside of school.

Much work needs to be done in developing supportive materials for teachers that are in line with disciplinary purposes and developed by research. Curriculum developers who are responding to the Common Core and the drive to teach disciplinary literacy should partner with disciplinary and literacy experts so that they have an understanding of frameworks and epistemologies guiding the norms around disciplinary literacy practices.

### **Directions for Future Research**

Although I did analyze some of the strategies offered by the WG, this study is not as much about the writing strategies as it is about how teachers learned the strategies, why or how those strategies were generated, and the contexts that influenced how teachers took up strategies. In the following, I propose directions for future research in the areas of disciplinary literacy and professional development.

#### **Disciplinary Literacy**

To push disciplinary literacy instruction forward, more research needs to be developed on how to actually generate and translate strategies into disciplinary practices. Without such research, there is a danger of merely recasting content area literacy strategies as disciplinary literacy instruction. Research is needed to understand the extent to which teachers need to understand disciplinary norms, epistemologies, and practices in order to adapt strategies into their instruction. How much expertise do teachers need in the disciplines, in teaching, in pedagogical content knowledge, in literacy to enact disciplinary literacy instruction? In addition, future research could foreground what makes for effective strategies that are discipline-specific so that teachers can apply them in their teaching.

One issue with the hegemony of generality was that the ELA teachers seemed to take up strategies easier than the other teachers. This may be because many of the strategies were developed for ELA and literary texts. However, little is actually known of secondary teachers' disciplinary literacy instructional practices in the disciplines that make up the subject-area called English language arts, namely literature and composition and rhetoric (Rainey, 2015; Wilder, 2012). To expand this notion even further, expert-novice studies have revealed what the expert practices of science, math, history look like, but what about the practices of teaching students how to engage in disciplinary practices? What does the pedagogy of disciplinary literacy instruction actually look like? How do we know when a teacher is doing it successfully? As disciplinary literacy instruction is gaining ground in the field of literacy education, closer studies are needed of how teachers actually enact such instruction. What adaptations and considerations do teachers make given their students, classroom, school, department, district, and discipline? Such research is critical and promises to be informative. Although disciplinary literacy instruction is necessary as a matter of preparing adolescents for college and career readiness and as a matter of social justice (Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2007, 2008; Nelson, 2012), there is currently debate on what disciplinary literacy instruction should actually look like (Rainey, 2015; Rainey & Moje, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008, 2012).

Taking research on disciplinary instruction a step further would be to study the effectiveness of disciplinary instruction based on standards of student achievement. Although disciplinary literacy instruction is a topic that is currently gaining popularity in educational research, very few, if any, studies exist on the effectiveness of such instruction on student achievement. Research could examine the relationship between disciplinary literacy instruction and more standard measures of student achievement such as standardized test scores, but could

also examine the relationship of other outcomes of student learning such as their disciplinary discourse, motivation, and inquiry skills. To this end, research might be conducted in the classroom, and researchers might analyze the discourse of teachers and students, as well as examples of student work.

I traced how teachers learned from professional development and enacted what they learned in their classrooms; future studies could extend that trace to see how students take up disciplinary literacy strategies and the challenges and affordances of these strategies to their learning. Research could explore how students come to learn reading and writing as practices situated in a discipline, and how their epistemologies of the disciplines and schooling play into their understandings.

Given the dearth of research on secondary writing and secondary writing instruction, future research could draw connections between disciplinary reading and disciplinary writing practices and instruction. Building on what is already known about disciplinary reading practices, what does this mean for writing practice? How does reading practice lead students to build on or produce disciplinary knowledge and contribute to a disciplinary discourse community?

### **Professional Development**

Following Wilson & Berne (1999), I also conclude that studying teacher learning in professional development settings is complicated and difficult to do. In my study, I did not try to document what teachers learned over time, but instead focused on what the teachers understood about disciplinary literacy and on the methods they took from the professional development. However, even studying what sense teachers made of the professional development was

complicated because their understanding was shaped by their previous understandings of disciplinary literacy instruction, their relationships to other members, and their school contexts.

To add to this complexity, future research could look into the social, political contexts of professional development and how those contexts mediate how professional development programs operate. For example, if teachers must surface differences and tensions as turning points in their learning, then research should examine the conditions under which teachers can make that turning point. How might professional development leaders know when and how to turn moments of tension into moments of learning? Under what conditions is it safe for teachers to surface uncertainties, questions, and disagreement? How might teachers be positioned within in the community without being held solely responsible for teaching themselves? If the political and social contexts of professional development matter, then researchers must consider those contexts in their evaluation of teacher learning within professional development.

In sum, this study illustrates the challenges that teachers and professional developers faced as they built a teacher learning community together. They struggled to navigate the tension between honoring teachers' expertise and introducing new knowledge and skills for teaching disciplinary writing. Their desire to maintain a strong community across disciplinary boundaries, coupled with their lack of language for describing disciplinary differences, led the teachers to silence their questions about and critiques of strategies they learned. They built a community where they felt valued, but they did not learn as much as they all desired. Such tensions are not unique in teacher learning communities. If educators hope to continue to improve disciplinary writing instruction, then we must continue the complex work of studying a variety of ways that teachers can learn to teach disciplinary writing and what it means for teachers to enact their knowledge into the real contexts of their classrooms.

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix A: District Demographics**

District	Total schools	Total students	Total classroom teachers	Student/Teacher Ratio	Percentage of students with an IEP	Percentage of ELL students	Per Pupil Expenditure	Drop out rate (2013, 4 year rate)
District A	32	16635	9667	17.21	11.34%	4.01%	\$13,614	3.85%
District B	4	2492	138	18.03	12.32%	0.84%	\$12,164	4.82%
District C	6	3578	194	18.41	11.12%	0.42%	\$14,276	5.42%
District D	8	4540	248	18.34	17.49%	1.06%	\$12,205	9.67%
District E	3	1200	63	18.97	13.83%	1.33%	\$11,627	1.98%
District F	4	2585	137	18.83	12.50%	1.59%	\$20,472	8.56%
District G	7	5235	261	20.04	13.09%	1.36%	\$11,819	1.63%
District H	3	1106	64	17.3	19.17%	0.27%	\$12,366	6.80%
District I	8	3635	236	15.38	17.19%	3.74%	\$17,468	18.11%
State								10.54%

**Note:** District data is from the 2011-2012 academic year unless otherwise noted; fiscal data is from the 2010-2011 academic year.

## **Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Protocols**

### **First Focus Group Interview**

- 1) How did the mission of the WC come about?
  - i) Ownership
  - ii) Interdisciplinary
  - iii) Teachers of other teachers
  - iv) Student choice
  - a) How about the four sure things?
- 2) Why does the Collaborative focus on these particular dimensions of teaching writing?
  - i) creating a community of writers
  - ii) modeling and making use of models
  - iii) providing opportunities for writing
  - iv) metacognitive thinking
  - v) providing feedback
- 3) Why did the Writing Collaborative develop from the ground up? Why not solely use an existing program such as Reading Apprenticeship or the National Writing Project?
- 4) In terms of the monthly continuation meetings, what is your sense of what teachers do with what they learned?
  - a) For their own teaching?
  - b) For sharing information with other teachers?
- 5) What do you expect teachers to come away with from the professional development opportunities? How about in terms of:
  - a) finding a community of other writing teachers?
  - b) finding resources for teaching writing?
  - c) providing opportunities for their students to write?
  - d) providing feedback?
  - e) supporting students' to use writing as a means for metacognitive thinking?
  - f) anything else?
- 6) Of the items outlined in your mission, what do you think is most challenging for teachers? What do you expect might pose challenges for the teachers in terms of implementing what they've learned? How about in terms of:
  - a) providing opportunities for their students to write?
  - b) providing feedback?
  - c) supporting students' to use writing as a means for metacognitive thinking?
  - d) any other challenges?
- 7) How many teachers go to the 3-day training session only once? How many return multiple times?
  - a) What makes teachers return back to the teacher training sessions or the continuation meetings?

- i) Do they become a part of a community?
  - ii) Do they receive continued support after attending the training session?
- 8) If time and resources were not an issue, what would the next steps of the Writing Collaborative be in terms of providing support or instruction for teachers?

### **Second Focus Group Interview**

I'd like to ask a few questions about the WC mission statement. In your discussions about moving forward, I think it's good practice to return to your origins and reflect on what this means for the future.

First off, let's talk about what the mission statement means to you. Let's start with the first one.

Could you explain what you mean by "Teachers should maintain..."

Repeat for first 3 statements.

The WC Mission Statement: As members of the Writing Collaborative, our mission is to understand writing in content areas in order to make explicit the processes and strategies needed to expand and improve student writing.

We believe:

- Teachers should maintain ownership for their students' writing in their content area.
- An interdisciplinary approach is key to improving student writing.
- Content area teachers who understand their own writing processes are the best mentors for their student writers.
- Teachers are the best teachers of other teachers.
- Educational practice should be balanced with theory and research.
- Students should have flexibility and choice when writing.
- Reading Apprenticeship provides a foundation for better writing instruction.



## **Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocols**

### **Teacher Interview Protocol 1: Pre-Unit Interview**

#### **I. Who the teacher is**

##### **Content area.**

- 1) Why did you decide to teach high school [content area]?
  - a) What matters the most in teaching [content area]?
  - b) What does it mean to practice [content area]?
  - c) Why read in [content area]?
  - d) What does it mean to be aware in [content area]?
    - i) To what extent does one need disciplinary awareness to write in [content area]?

##### **Writing.** Why is it important for students to learn how to write in [content area]?

- 2) What is difficult about teaching writing?
  - a) What is rewarding about it?
- 3) Why did you decide to be a part of the Writing Collaborative?
  - a) Why do you take time out of your teaching schedule to go to the monthly meetings? What do you get out of it? What keeps you returning to the meetings?
  - b) What is the most helpful aspect of the meetings for you?
  - c) Has your approach to teaching writing changed at all since you've started attending the Writing Collaborative professional development sessions? If so, how?
    - i) Is there something in particular that you've used that someone shared with you in the PD?
- 4) Do you have an assignment that you've changed after attending the WC PD? Or, do you have an assignment you created before becoming a member of the WC?
  - a) Do you have sample writings from this assignment (high, medium, low).
    - i) Why did you evaluate the writings this way? What were you paying particular attention to?
  - b) Have your assignments changed since becoming a member of the WC?
  - c) If changed:
    - i) What is good about this writing assignment?
    - ii) What did you change about it?
    - iii) Why did you decide to make those changes?
    - iv) How did the students' writing change?
  - d) If before:
    - i) How are your assignments now similar or different from this assignment?
    - ii) What is good about this writing assignment?
    - iii) If you were to change this writing assignment to make it better, what would you do?
      - (1) How would you expect your students' writing change?

#### **II. Planning for the unit**

Note: Teachers will bring any instructional materials they have developed for the unit.

- 5) Overall, what is the unit about?
  - a) How did the idea for this unit come about?
  - b) What are the objectives for the unit?
    - i) What are the big concepts being addressed in the unit?
    - ii) Are there certain skills that students should have or develop more by the end of the unit? If so, what are they?
  - c) What informed your unit planning? What considerations did you make?
    - i) students' background knowledge or cultural background?
    - ii) content area/disciplinary practice?
    - iii) experiences in the Writing Collaborative?
  
- 6) **Assessments.** What **assessments** do you plan to use throughout the unit, particularly assessments involving writing? [Teacher will choose 1 assessment from the unit to talk about.]
  - a) What do you expect students to know and be able to do in this assessment?
    - i) How are those expectations reflected in this assessment?
  - b) What do you anticipate will be challenging for students?
  - c) What kinds of information do you hope to gather from these assessments?
    - i) What do you plan to do with that information?
  - d) What considerations did you make when creating this assignment?
    - i) What was your purpose for:
      - (1) wording the directions this way?
      - (2) including an example?
      - (3) including a rubric?
  - e) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that you considered when creating this assessment?
  
- 7) **Activities.** Let's take a look at some of the **activities** that involve some kind of writing in this unit. [Teacher will choose 1-2 activities from the unit to talk about. With each activity, ask the following questions]
  - a) What are you asking the students to do in this activity?
  - b) In what ways did you think the activity will support students in meeting the unit objectives (e.g. developing conceptual understanding, developing writing skill)?
  - c) Do you anticipate any challenges in completing this activity? From a teaching standpoint, or from a student standpoint?
  - d) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that informed your planning of this activity?
  
- 8) **Texts.** Let's take a look at some of the **texts** you chose to use in this unit. [Teacher will choose 1-2 texts from the unit to talk about. With each text, ask the following questions]
  - a) What were some of your considerations in choosing this text?
  - b) What are the advantages or anticipated challenges of this text?
  - c) In what ways did you expect students to use this text?
  - d) How is the text meant to prepare students for their writing, if at all?
  - e) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that helped you choose this text?

## Teacher Interview Protocol 2: Post-Unit Interview 1

### Writing in the disciplines

- 1) What does it mean for a [expert] to 'do' [content area]?
- 2) What does the work of [content area] look like?
- 3) What does it mean for a student to do [content area]?
  - a. How is that similar/different than a [expert's] work?
  - b. In what ways do you support students to do this work?
- 4) What kinds of writing do you typically assign in the [content area] class?
  - a. What types of differences do you see between reading and writing in [content area] and reading and writing in another content area such as [content area]?
  - b. What does it mean to write an argument in [content area]? How might that differ in [other content areas]?

### Examining feedback on student writing

Note: Teacher will have the assignment that he/she assigned as a final project for the unit in front of them.

- 1) Looking over the assignment, what were your major expectations for student writing?
  - a) How does this assignment support students to write in [content area] in particular?
  - b) What were your overall impressions of students' writing?

Note: Teacher will have at least three samples of student writing in front of them, graded high, medium, and low.

- 2) [With each piece of student writing, ask the following questions] What are your overall impressions of this paper?
  - i) Why did you give the paper this grade?
  - b) What is the writer doing well?
  - c) What does the writer still need to work on? What is the gist of your feedback?
    - i) Was this something you expected to focus on in your feedback, or did this focus develop as you read the paper?
  - d) What should the writer focus on the next time he/she writes?
    - i) What might you do next time to support this student in addressing this writing challenge?
  - e) How is this paper reflective of [content area] writing?
    - i) How does this paper fare in terms of an argument [genre] in [content area]?
- 3) **Overall impressions.** Thinking across the student papers in your class, what did you pay particular attention to when grading the papers? What were some common themes in your feedback?
  - a) Were your expectations consistent across the class or more individualized? Which expectations were more consistent/individualized? Why?
  - b) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that you considered when giving feedback?
    - i) Did that influence the way you gave feedback at all? If so, how?

- 4) Based on the outcomes of this unit, what do you think you will focus on in the future in terms of supporting your students' writing?

Overall impressions of the unit, if time

- a) What kinds of understanding did students come away with?
  - i) In terms of conceptual understanding?
  - ii) In terms of their writing?
  - iii) Did students learn other things from the unit that you did or did not anticipate?
- b) Do students get to do this kind of writing regularly?
- 5) Which activities went particularly well?
- 6) Which activities were difficult or challenging for students?
  - a) Did this surprise you?
    - i) Did you make any modifications in the moment? Why?
  - b) What instructional moves did you make that supported students' writing in [content area]?

Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that you considered or helped you when implementing this unit?

## **Interview Protocol 3: Post-Unit Interview 2**

### Overall impressions of the unit

- 1) What were the objectives for the unit?
- 2) Which activities went particularly well?
  - a) What did students come away with in terms of conceptual understanding or writing skill?
- 3) Which activities were difficult or challenging?
  - a) What instructional moves did you make that supported students to write this paper?
- 4) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that you considered or helped you when implementing this unit?

### Examining feedback on student writing

Note: Teacher will have at least three samples of student writing in front of them, graded high, medium, and low.

- 5) [With each piece of student writing, ask the following questions] What are your overall impressions of this paper?
  - a) Why did you give the paper this grade?
    - i) What did you really focus on while giving this student feedback?
      - (1) Was this something you expected to focus on in your feedback, or did this focus develop as you read the paper?
  - b) How did the student address [major topic/concept/issue/problem] or prompt in this paper?
  - c) How is the student using evidence to support their [argument/analysis]? Could you talk me through their analysis?
- 6) What did the writer do well?
  - a) What does the writer still need to work on? What is the gist of your feedback?
- 7) Looking across the student's papers, do you see any areas of change or growth?
  - a) What should the writer focus on the next time he/she writes?
- 8) Overall impressions. Thinking across the student papers in your class, what did you pay particular attention to when grading the papers? What were some common themes in your feedback?
- 9) Based on the outcomes of this unit, what do you think you will focus on in the future in terms of supporting your students' writing?
  - a) Were your expectations consistent across the class or more individualized? Which expectations were more consistent/individualized? Why?
- 10) Is there anything you learned from the Writing Collaborative that you considered when giving feedback?
  - a) Did that influence the way you gave feedback at all? If so, how?
- 11) Where do you see the Writing Collaborative going next, or where would you like to see the Writing Collaborative going in the future?

## Appendix D: Coding Key

### Observation Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Intellectual problem	Introduces or refers to intellectual problem
Writing directions	Gives directions to a writing assignment or activity
Close reading, analysis	Leads a reading activity where students engage in deep analysis of text
Explicit disciplinary norms	Makes explicit the norms of the discipline
Grammar, mechanics	Instruction particular to grammar, mechanics, error correction
Test-taking	Instruction on how to write in response to standardized tests (e.g. ACT)
Purpose-setting	Framing the purposes of a lesson, unit, or activity
Argument writing	Making explicit the features of argument writing
Expectations	Stating expectations for writing activity or assignment
Modeling	Modeling how to write for a certain activity. Or giving feedback on models of writing.
WG strategy	Uses a strategy learned from the WG
Low-stakes writing	Provides opportunity to write that will not be graded. Writing just to practice, or writing to reflect, discover ideas.
Multiple texts	Provides multiple texts and/or types of texts to work with
Exam	Administers quiz or exam
Discuss while writing	Students discussing text, activity, analysis, or findings before or during writing to get their ideas out
Metacognitive reflection	Students writing or talking about their writing process: what they did well and what to improve for next time
Peer review	Students giving each other feedback
Writing and reading in class	Students having the time to read and write in class independently
Group work	Students reading, writing, and/or discussing text in groups
Presentation	Students presenting written work to peers. (e.g. posters, skit, gallery)
Research	Students researching the topic in class, either individually or in groups. Collecting information, data.
Discuss reading	Students discussing reading in small groups or whole class
Note-taking	Students taking notes from lecture, video.

## Teacher Interview Codes

Code	Definition	Example
Goals for students	Teacher's goals for student learning in general	I think I want my students to be able to leave with the sense that what's happened before to us matters now. That's it's not a study of the past, that it's not a collection of facts and dates.
"Good writing"	Explanation of the characteristics of good writing	So the idea of being vivid and using sensory details. Be concise. Employing implication not just making obvious statements. Making it interesting to read and that flow of your voice. That it doesn't just sound like robo voice.
Disciplinary understanding	Explanation of teacher's understanding of the epistemology or practices of the discipline	So I think the historian is supposed to find as much information about a topic or an idea and contextualize it and corroborate it and try as best as they can to frame it in the context of who they are and what is necessary for a society at present and say something about it and give us a frame through which to see it.
Disciplinary understanding of other disciplines	Explanation of teacher's understanding of the epistemology or practices of disciplines to which he/she does not belong to	Although if you're talking about English, the sort of manufactured discipline, it focuses more on reading and writing about fiction.
Argument	Explanation of the features of argument writing	All arguments have a foundation in science because you have to have the data to draw your conclusions from it.
Commonalities	Talk about the commonalities of writing across the disciplines	I mean I think at its heart it's that, again, using evidence to support your ideas. I mean I think that's a pretty strong commonality and I don't know the other genres well enough to say what tiny little differences they have.
Differences	Talk about the differences of writing across the disciplines	In science you've got to have perhaps more numbers or more facts or an experiment or something that you were referring to that you're arguing on.
Expert vs. novice	Differences in understandings and practices of novice (their students) vs. expert writers in the disciplines	So they're not experts yet. So part of what they have to do is prove that they know the material. Rather than being the expert in their field they have to prove that they know the content.
Schooling structures	Talk about the pressures or constraints of school	Because when I'm not, when I'm here, there's not a lot of time and space for collaboration. And when we have district PD it's just not like that.
Time, grading	Assessment takes up time	It's overwhelming for me to read that paper because of the sheer amount of time it takes to grade it. I imagine for a student to get it back it's also overwhelming because of the amount of things that need to be fixed.
Value of WG	Explanation of why teachers are members of the WG	The reason why I enjoy going back at this point is to get new ideas of other things to try and just the support from everybody else and they're like, okay I tried this and it didn't work or you know, that kind of thing. It really is a collaborative to be able to share those ideas and the support.

Future of WG	Ideas for next steps for the WG	I would love it if more teachers got trained because I think it's, it's not new, it's a lot of stuff that people are ready to, it's just if we can get common vocab, like if we can get the Mind the GAP idea and get teachers doing that.
Feedback-expectations for writing assignment	In discussion of feedback, explains expectation for the writing assignment.	I wanted them to have well explained details because so often they stop short like they're halfway through explaining and they're like, that's why. Well you have to connect the dots and finish the thought.
Collaboration	Talk about social needs and collaboration	I'm a really social person. It was an opportunity for me to meet other teachers, other new teachers that I shared something in common with.
Feedback-strengths	Feedback on what the teacher saw as a strength of the paper	It was really passionate. It is highlighted the important themes of the document that we looked at and used them in a proper context.
Feedback-critiques	Critiques of students' writing	It's just wordy, not quite the concise and clear opinions we are looking for, her reasons.
Feedback-critiques of grammar	Critiques of students' grammar or formal features	She also already has a bunch of errors. Like blocking she doesn't have an ING ending. There is no E for they. THY so tiny little things.
WG take aways	Things that teachers learned from the WG in terms of strategies or principles	This is the kind of thing that is an entrance ticket. It is something I definitely learned from the WG and when we were done and I looked at the questions for the first four chapters, there isn't a single thing I wasn't going to ask them that they didn't bring up themselves.
Unit overview	Explanation of unit, goals, activities...	Overall the idea was to create a document-based activity but one that would really engage the students...
Writing assignment	Explanation of the writing assignment within the unit and rationale behind the assignment	So they were in charge of writing an argument that's for another biologist so they could use the vocab and not have to define it. What your claim is and trying to convince others of your claim...
Lesson activities	Reflection of class activities: goals of the activities, successes, changes for next time	That was mildly successful. I think role-playing is hard to organize, it is really hard to organize. It takes a lot of planning.



## Teacher Feedback: Gots Codes

Gots Code	Definition	Example
Affect	A positive comment about teacher's motivation, engagement, or renewed passion to teach writing or use what he/she has learned.	"I really feel motivated to go back and look at some of my assignments in order to improve them." "loved it...it was affirming...much of this I do already...but we so rarely get any kind of affirmation"
Collaboration	Comment about getting opportunities to share or build on each others' ideas on teaching writing.	"Good collaboration time with colleagues." "Discussing details/opinions with groups."
Connection to PD on reading	Most, if not all, teachers who attended the WC three-day training also attended a PD on reading instruction. The reading PD is highly implemented across the districts. Any connections made to the reading PD was assigned this code.	"The idea of thinking of Writing Collaborative as [name of reading PD] for writing!"
Disciplinary	Any comment that explicitly made a connection between material presented in the PD and the teacher's discipline.	"It was also helpful to look at genres, misconceptions, and challenges for my content areas because it has always been difficult for me to incorporate writing into the science and math curriculum."
Grade specific comment	Comment about teacher's instructional history. (There is only one instance)	"I taught 8 yrs in HS and this is my 1st year at the MS"
Ideas about incorporating strategy or activity into instruction	A teacher's explicit comment about incorporating a strategy/activity in his/her instruction. The comment is about implementing a strategy/activity in general, not in a particular discipline.	"How powerful peer review can be. I got ideas on how to implement this in my classroom"
Ideas about incorporating strategy or activity into instruction- Disciplinary	A teacher's explicit comment about incorporating a strategy/activity in his/her instruction. The comment is about an idea on how to implement a strategy/activity in a particular discipline.	"I see how I might apply a 'strategies for good writers' list, in particular as it relates to lab write-ups."
Interdisciplinary	An explicit comment appreciating the interdisciplinary nature of the PD.	"The time we had to discuss and share with other teachers (even in different content areas)" (Interdisciplinary and collaboration code) "We (as teachers of different subjects) are in this together. We are working towards the same goals. "
PD instruction	A positive comment on the PD presenters' facilitation and planning of the training.	"The various facilitator styles and activities balance of planning, discussion, and paperwork"
Praise	Praise for PD facilitators, not specific to the way that PD was run.	"These workshops have been so helpful--I appreciate your time and talents"

Take away-activities and strategies	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on an activity or strategy. No specific activities or strategies mentioned. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"Some ideas to enhance my teaching strategies"
Take away-activities and strategies-4 corners	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on the 4 corners activity. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"I will also make more use of the four corners strategy"
Take away-activities and strategies-6 word memoir	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on using 6 word memoirs. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"6 word memoir"
Take away-activities and strategies-assessment	A comment about taking away ideas or resources for assessing student writing, but not explicitly naming one of the assessment strategies presented in the PD. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction.	"I came expecting to get better, quicker, more helpful ways to assess. I got the above!" "I loved the ideas about looking for one thing when grading. This helps me a lot."
Take away-activities and strategies-checklists	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on checklists. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"checklists are the bomb"
Take away-activities and strategies-cubing	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on cubing. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"Cubing is cool and very flexible (by changing up the prompts)"
Take away-activities and strategies-exit cards	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on using exit cards. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"Need for exit cards"
Take away-activities and strategies-free write	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on using free writes. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"free write"
Take away-activities and strategies-gallery walk	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on using gallery walks. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"gallery walk"
Take away-activities and strategies-good writers list	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on making a list of things "good writers" do. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"some new strategies: 'good writers' list"
Take away-activities and strategies-peer feedback	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on peer feedback. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"in depth information about feedback--using 'blind' peer feedback" "more ideas to use better peer feedback"

Take away-activities and strategies-personal writing history	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on personal writing history. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"Personal writing history"
Take away-activities and strategies-RAFT	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on RAFT. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"RAFT was really key."
Take away-activities and strategies-rubrics	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on using rubrics. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"good refreshers on rubrics and feedback"
Take away-activities and strategies-social dimension, post-it note activity	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on a post-it note activity demonstrated in the PD. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction	"I love the social dimension activity that can be used in so many ways in ELA" (Take away and Disciplinary code)
Take away-activities and strategies-writing process analysis	A comment about taking away ideas or resources on writing process analysis. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate strategy or activity into instruction. Writing process analysis involves teachers and students being metacognitive of their writing process so that they can reveal their own writing strengths and weaknesses	"loved the support/barrier idea to do with my students" "the writing process questions to ask to clarify writing"
Take away-framework-10 design principles	A comment about taking away an overall framework or set of principles for designing writing assignments. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate framework into curriculum.	"10 design principles for writing assignments" "the importance of integrating the 10 design principles into assignments to make them more clear and meaningful for them"
Take away-framework-4 I's	A comment about taking away an overall framework or set of principles for designing lessons that immerse, integrate, inquire, and instruct writing. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate framework into curriculum.	"immersion, integration, etc. very valuable"
Take away-framework-4 sure things	A comment about taking away an overall framework or set of principles of the "4 sure things" coined by the WC. No mention of how the teacher plans to incorporate framework into curriculum. Also, no mention of which of the 4 sure things independently (e.g. appropriate feedback, mind the GAP, etc.)	"4 sure things I can do to improve student writing"
Take away-framework-appropriate feedback	A comment about taking away an idea on assessment or appropriate feedback, within the larger "4 sure things" framework presented by the WC.	"the value of different types of assessment and the needs of students" "distinguish REASON why (assigning grade, or giving feedback, or formative assessment) assignment was given in order to appropriately "grade/evaluate"

Take away- framework-increase writing opportunities	A comment about taking away an idea on increasing writing opportunities, within the larger "4 sure things" framework presented by the WC.	"the value of writing more frequently in my classroom"
Take away- framework-mind the GAP	A comment about taking away an idea on minding the GAP, within the larger "4 sure things" framework presented by the WC.	"mind the GAP. I like to focus on genres because I 'get' it. Audience was something I didn't give much thought--now I will. Purpose is something that is very clear to me."
Take away- framework-models and modeling	A comment about taking away an idea on models and modeling, within the larger "4 sure things" framework presented by the WC.	"New ideas about modeling (besides just showing examples from previous years)" "some ideas for using models that lead students away from merely copying" "modeling: important to show significance of details/elements that create genre"
Take away-new insights	A comment where a teacher gained insight into an aspect of teaching writing, not tied to any of the frameworks or ideas presented by the WC.	"Understanding the need for flexibility" "That writing is a very important process that needs to be explicitly taught to expand and improve the writing process"
Take away-new insights-CCSS	A comment where a teacher gained insight or made a connection to the Common Core State Standards	"Common Core extension"
Time during PD	Explicit comment about being given time during PD to work on lesson plans, collaborate with others, reflect on, or apply what was learned.	"time to reflect on writing practices"

## Teacher Feedback: Needs Codes

Needs Code	Definition	Example
Affect	A negative comment about teacher's motivation, engagement or other feeling during PD, or needing help on how to feel more confident about what is being presented in the PD	"The writing we did was somewhat superficial. I'm hankering for more opportunities to develop writing I'm emotionally committed to and I think teachers who feel the power of that kind of writing will be more committed to developing further writing experiences in their classes." "I need more time to figure out the best way to feel 'OK' about assessing specific things and not marking up a whole written piece"
Assessment	Needing further guidance on how to assess writing	"I need help with thinking about how to best grade/assess student work"
Assignment specifics	Asking about an activity not presented by the WC	"book reports"--ideas on how to teach when student have free reading and must write about end of reading"
CCSS application	Needing guidance on how to connect or apply the PD to the Common Core State Standards	"more common core application now that we have the GAP approach established"
Confusion/question/purpose of PD activity	Further questions about the details or purpose of a strategy or activity presented in the PD	"the parts of the actual lesson--namely instruction and immersion look very much alike. Am I missing something?"
Continued collaboration	Seeking ways to continue to collaborate during or after the three-day training	"will look forward to hearing what people/other teachers come up with tomorrow"
Disciplinary integration	Seeking ways to integrate strategies and activities learned in PD into disciplinary instruction	"how I as a science teacher can have my kids write more and in what form"
Grade specific	Seeking ways to integrate strategies and activities learned in PD into grade specific instruction	"more time on grade specific GAP focus/how info about it would vary across grades in order to 'spiral' or build on ideas each year"
Improving student writers	Concerns about how to use what is learned in PD to improve students' writing scores or proficiency levels	"moving our basic writers to proficient"
Incorporate into instruction-need more guidance	An explicit comment seeking more help to incorporate strategies, activities, or frameworks into instruction	"how do you model without 'giving students the answer?' (in their mind) I don't want them to think the things I show are the only way to go about it"

Incorporate into instruction-self-directed	A comment where the teacher takes responsibility to incorporate strategies, activities, or frameworks into instruction	"to find something connected to the next book we're reading to use for the lesson plan"
Integrate into school structure	Seeking ways to integrate strategies and activities learned in PD into the existing school structures (departmental, school, or district)	"to implement some of this with the blessing of the science department"
More strategies	Seeking more writing strategies	"more practical ideas for teaching everyday in classroom"
PD instruction	A critique about PD instruction or facilitation	"It would be very helpful in the future if the entire packet in the binder was paginated. I spent a lot of time flipping around trying to find the right page (and I don't think I was alone)"
Research	Seeking more connections to research	"more research of what 'appropriate' feedback is"
Resources	Seeking more resources (e.g. handouts, books) for activities and strategies presented	"would have liked copies of the assessment samples to keep (resources and assessment code) more sample templates"
Student social dimension	Concerns about attending to students' motivations and engagement during writing	"how can I help students to write with enjoyment based on what they experience in the classroom?"
Time during PD	Seeking more time during PD to work on PD activities, collaborate, or reflect	"I think it would be nice to have a little more time to complete the writing prompts, I was unable to complete due to time constraints"
Time-general	A general comment about needing more time, in life	"time, as always"
Time-to collaborate	Seeking more time to collaborate with colleagues within and across schools	"A day together before the start of the 2014 school year would help to refocus."
Time-to incorporate into instruction	Seeking more time to plan and integrate what was learned into instruction	"to just absorb the info and try to anticipate future uses" "some time to get started--time is essential as we are learning/thinking about these new things"
Time-to reflect	Seeking more time to reflect and absorb was presented in PD	"just need more time to figure it all out" "need time to get my brain back--SUPER fried! wonder if a Monday/Friday or Tues/Thursday might be better to give brains time to process"
Time-within school structures	Seeking more time to incorporate what was learned into instruction, within the limited time of schooling	"how to find more time to do quality writing instruction when turn around time and curriculum are such challenges to my time"

## Appendix E: Genres and Skills Posters from Three-Day Training

### Group 1: ELA

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary analysis</li> <li>• I search</li> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Reflect/respond</li> <li>• Essays: persuade, narrative, research</li> <li>• Poetry</li> <li>• Metacognitive books</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Notes</li> <li>• Memoir</li> <li>• Drama</li> <li>• Vowels</li> <li>• Myths</li> <li>• Speech debate</li> <li>• Quick writes</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Biographies</li> <li>• Informational text</li> <li>• Opinion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following instructions, directions</li> <li>• Questioning</li> <li>• Structure/organization</li> <li>• Evidence/support</li> <li>• Grammar/syntax</li> <li>• Talk to the text</li> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Voice</li> <li>• Form opinion</li> <li>• Thesis/assertion</li> <li>• Revision</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Transitions</li> <li>• What is good writing?</li> <li>• Peer editing</li> <li>• Reflection</li> <li>• Pre-write</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's boring</li> <li>• Revision is unnecessary</li> <li>• "I'm a great writer"</li> <li>• Txt spk ☺ LOL!</li> <li>• Poor support "my opinion is enough"</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• <u>TIME</u>: grading, conference w/kids, revise time is limited</li> <li>• Paragraphs= a # only</li> <li>• Juvenile voice</li> <li>• Good writing= spelling correctly only, "nice" handwriting</li> </ul>	

### Group 2: ELA

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summaries</li><li>• RAFT</li><li>• ABCDE paragraphs</li><li>• Narratives</li><li>• Research</li><li>• Journaling</li><li>• Reflecting</li><li>• Journaling</li><li>• Thesis-based</li><li>• Poetry</li><li>• ACT prompts</li><li>• Analytical essays</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Argument</li><li>• Writing as a process</li><li>• Literary terms</li><li>• Analysis</li><li>• Appealing to audience</li><li>• Strategies</li></ul>
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Length</li><li>• Deadlines</li><li>• Citing evidence</li><li>• Not a formula for writing</li></ul>	

### Group 3: Social Studies

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nonfiction</li><li>• Narrative</li><li>• Research</li><li>• Letters/simulated memoirs</li><li>• Reflections</li><li>• Dialogues</li><li>• Articles</li><li>• Extended response</li><li>• Poetry</li><li>• Graphic novels</li><li>• Comic strips</li><li>• Cartoons</li><li>• Argumentative essays</li><li>• Opinion/editorial</li><li>• Persuasive essays</li><li>• Poetry</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Write a position statement</li><li>• Read/interpret graphs</li><li>• Using evidence to support</li><li>• Write counterarguments</li><li>• Identifying a thesis, theme, and/or main idea</li><li>• Persuasive language</li><li>• Transitions</li><li>• Citing sources</li><li>• Vet sources</li><li>• Selecting effective evidence</li></ul>
Challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quality vs. quantity</li><li>• Substantiating opinions</li><li>• Teaching kids to use sources properly</li><li>• Not wanting to redo/revise writing</li></ul>	



**Group 4: Social Studies**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Political cartoons</li> <li>• Dialogue</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Cause and effect</li> <li>• Analysis of event</li> <li>• Primary and secondary documents</li> <li>• Historical fiction</li> <li>• Skits</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Children’s books</li> <li>• Note taking</li> <li>• Speeches</li> <li>• Research paper</li> <li>• Powerpoints/Prezi</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary—display knowledge</li> <li>• Link brain to pencil</li> <li>• Research (proper)—sourcing, types of sources</li> <li>• Empathy—understanding both sides</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History is all about names &amp; dates ☹</li> <li>• Students put too much thought into “how long” not “quality”</li> </ul>	

**Group 5: Social Sciences and World Language**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Magazines</li> <li>• Informational articles</li> <li>• Maps</li> <li>• Songs</li> <li>• Videos</li> <li>• Fiction</li> <li>• Nonfiction</li> <li>• Comics</li> <li>• Cartoons</li> <li>• Paragraphs (including sentence structure)</li> <li>• Argumentative essay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Summarize</li> <li>• 5 paragraph format</li> <li>• Thesis/topic sentence</li> <li>• Contextualizing, corroborating, understand bias</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of content knowledge base</li> <li>• Summarizing/citing vs. copying</li> <li>• Engagement (i.e. not liking it)</li> <li>• Validating claims w/evidence</li> </ul>	

**Group 6: Science**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expository</li> <li>• Lab reports</li> <li>• Diagrams</li> <li>• Explanations</li> <li>• Research papers</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Presentations of research of evidence</li> <li>• Cartoons</li> <li>• Brainstorming/question generating</li> <li>• Compare/contrast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to work as a collaborative group</li> <li>• Objective presentation of facts and evidence</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Standard notation, conventions</li> <li>• Claim-evidence-reasoning</li> <li>• Talking at reading</li> <li>• Graphing conventions</li> <li>• Basic writing skills, punctuation/capitalization</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing something is a commitment</li> <li>• They don't want to be wrong</li> <li>• Poor writing skills</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• "Why do we have to <u>write</u>?!"</li> <li>• vocabulary</li> <li>• product v. process</li> <li>• citing resources</li> <li>• capturing the thought on paper...they work so hard at making sense of it and then have trouble putting into complete sentences on paper</li> </ul>	

**Group 7: Science/Math**

Genres	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab report</li> <li>• Informative text-various formats</li> <li>• Word problems</li> <li>• Evidence-base research</li> <li>• Fiction</li> <li>• Journaling/reflection</li> <li>• Compare/contrast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing how much detail</li> <li>• Correct symbols of graph</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I can't write"</li> <li>• "I can't do math"</li> <li>• The hypothesis should be "right"</li> <li>• Precision of word choice</li> <li>• Explaining process</li> <li>• Symbols <math>\leftrightarrow</math> words</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> <li>• Transferring meaning</li> <li>• Writing is "work"</li> </ul>	

**Group 8: Science/Math**

<b>Genres</b>	<b>Skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Summaries</li><li>• Lab reports</li><li>• Analyses</li><li>• Journaling</li><li>• Technical report writing/research</li><li>• Algorithms</li><li>• Modeling/pictures, diagrams</li><li>• Compare/contrast</li><li>• Short stories</li><li>• Argumentation</li><li>• Presenting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Content area vocabulary/knowledge</li><li>• Proper grammar</li><li>• Citing</li><li>• Draw a conclusion</li><li>• Format of a lab report</li><li>• Reading/interpreting tables and graphs</li><li>• Making a hypothesis</li><li>• Verify with evidence</li></ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is math/science, not English</li><li>• Linking NGSS to Common Core</li><li>• Understanding formal writing</li></ul>	

## Appendix F: Student Sample from Three-Day Training

### Cloning

---

Cloning is making a living organism from one organism to another. But cloning is wrong, both morally and physically. Scientists clone humans and animals to find cures and etc. but they are really treating them like lab rats. The clone will not be able to live full life like the others, but they will live a life of suffering and pain. Many religious people believe that cloning animals and humans is morally and physically wrong.

Christian Muslims and Jews have all voiced their opposition to human cloning. They say that it is "playing God"; that it is intervention in the body's natural process. Many other organizations agree with the Muslims, and the Jews. The UNESCO and the WHO organizations find that cloning violates dignity. Most religions believe that we should accept what nature has given us, and we have no right to custom make another human being. Cloning is not natural for humans, they should just enjoy life as is. Stop trying to figure out how to progress life. Let nature take its course. Religions have asked these questions: would clones be as human as natural humans? Would they have a soul? Or would they simply be walking genetic doubles?

Clones are just living long enough for doctors to harvest their organs and then they are terminated. Scientists use clones to perform experiments. Yes, scientists do many experiments to find cures for aids, and cancer. But why recreate life to make them suffer all over again? Cloning someone who had cancer when they died and having it again when they are cloned is not right, because that person will just relive their suffering and pain. To show how bad these scientists are, a baby that was cloned in Israel and the parents do not want to come to America because they are afraid that the scientists will just treat their child like a lab rat, running all of these experiments and tests on their child.

Many scientists do not agree with the idea of cloning. One of them is Evan Ian Wilt, one of Dolly's creators. He does not approve of human cloning. When Dolly was cloned, they lost over 200 embryos and this would be even sadder for human embryos. Wilt wonders about the length of clone's life. Would its life span be the length of the remaining years of the answers to many questions before we start human cloning, says Wilt. But for many people in the world cloning should not even start.

Without a doubt, cloning is not a good idea. As we have read, many people believe that the cloning of humans is unnatural and against God's plan. They believe that children were meant to be created by biological mother and father. Some worry that cloning will take away individual personalities and abilities. Do we have the right to play God? Do we have the right to clone someone and make him or her suffer and not live a full enjoyable life? Do we have the right to create these lives?

## REFERENCES

- Achinstein, B., & Ogawa, R. (2006). (In) Fidelity: What the resistance of new teachers reveals about professional principles and prescriptive educational policies. *Harvard Educational Review, 76*(1), 30-63.
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2006). *Reading and writing in the academic content areas*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2007). *Making writing instruction a priority in America's middle and high schools*. Washington, D. C.: Author.
- Alvermann D. E., & Moore D. W. (1991). Secondary school reading. In R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 2, pp. 951–983). New York: Longman.
- Anderson, J. R., Reder, L. M., & Simon, H. A. (1996). Situated learning and education. *Educational Researcher, 25*(4), 5-11.
- Applebee, A. N. (1981). *A study of writing in the secondary school*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Applebee, A. N. (1986). *The writing report card: Writing achievement in American schools*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research.
- Applebee, A. N., Auten, A., & Lehr, F. (1981). *Writing in the secondary school: English and the content areas*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

- Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2006). *The state of writing instruction in America's schools: What existing data tell us*. Albany, NY: Center on English Learning & Achievement, University at Albany.
- Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2011). A Snapshot of Writing Instruction in Middle Schools and High Schools. *English Journal*, 6, 14-27.
- Bain, R. (2005). "They thought the world was flat?": Applying the principles of how people learn in teaching high school history. In M. S. Donovan & J. D. Bransford (Eds.), *How Students Learn: History, Mathematics, and Science in the Classroom* (pp. 179-214). Washington, D. C.: The National Academies Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (2010). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist Ed.). Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, D., & Cohen, D. (1999). Developing practice, developing practitioners: Toward a practice-based theory of professional education. In G. Sykes & L. Darling-Hammond (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession*. (pp. 3-32). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ball, S. J., & Lacey, C. (1984). Subject disciplines as the opportunity for group action: A measured critique of subject sub-cultures. In A. Hargreaves & P. Woods (Eds.), *Classrooms and staffrooms: The sociology of teachers and teaching* (pp. 232-244). Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press.
- Barton, E. L. (1993). Evidentials, argumentation, and epistemological stance. *College English*, 55(7), 745-769.
- Bazerman, C. (1981). What written knowledge does. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 2, 361-387.

- Bazerman, C. (1985). Physicists reading physics schema-laden purposes and purpose-laden schema. *Written Communication, 2*(1), 3-23.
- Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2004). *Reading next: A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher, 33*(8), 3-15.
- Boyd, F. B., Sullivan, M. P., Popp, J., & Hughes, M. (2012). Vocabulary instruction in the disciplines. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 56*(1), 18-20.
- Brown, J., Collins, A., & Duguid, P. (1968). *Situated cognition and the culture of learning*. Palo Alto, CA: Institute for Research on Learning.
- Brozo, W. G., Moorman, G., Meyer, C., & Stewart, T. (2013). Content area reading and disciplinary literacy: A case for the radical center. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 56*(5), 353-357.
- Cantrell, S. C., & Hughes, H. K. (2008). Teacher efficacy and content literacy implementation: An exploration of the effects of extended professional development with coaching. *Journal of Literacy Research, 40*, 95-127.
- Carbone, P. M., & Orellana, M. F. (2010). Developing academic identities: Persuasive writing as a tool to strengthen emergent academic identities. *Research in the Teaching of English, 44*(3), 292-316.
- Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (CCAAL). (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success*. New York: Author.

- Carpenter, T. P., Fennema, E., & Franke, M. L. (1996). Cognitively Guided Instruction: A knowledge base for reform in primary mathematics instruction. *Elementary School Journal*, 9(17), 1-20.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Christie, F. (2012). *Language education throughout the school years: A functional perspective*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Christie, F., & Derewianka, B. (2008). *School discourse: Learning to write across the years of schooling*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Clark, C. M. (2001). *Talking shop: Authentic conversation and teacher learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clarke, D., & Hollingsworth, H. (2002). Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18(8), 947-967.
- Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23(2), 145-170.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1992). Communities for teacher research: Fringe or forefront? *American Journal of Education*, 100(3), 298-324.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249-305.
- Creese, A. (2002). The discursive construction of power in teacher partnerships: Language and subject specialists in mainstream schools. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36(4), 597-616.
- Cuban, L. (1984). *How teachers taught: Constancy and change in American classrooms, 1890-1980*. New York: Longman.



- Curwen, M. S., Miller, R. G., White-Smith, K. A., & Calfee, R. C. (2010). Increasing teachers' metacognition develops students' higher learning during content area literacy instruction. *Issues in Teacher Education, 19*(2), 127-151.
- Dana, N. F., & Yendol-Silva, D. (2003). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(5), 563-577.
- Delpit, L. D. (1993). The politics of teaching literate discourse. In T. Perry & J. W. Fraser (Eds.), *Freedom's plough: Teaching in the multicultural classroom*. New York: Routledge.
- De La Paz, S., Ferretti, R., Wissinger, D., Yee, L., & MacArthur, C. (2012). Adolescents' disciplinary use of evidence, argumentative strategies, and organizational structure in writing about historical controversies. *Written Communication, 29*(4), 412-454.
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher, 38*(3), 181-199.
- Draper, R. J. (2002). Every teacher a literacy teacher? An analysis of the literacy-related messages in secondary methods textbooks. *Journal of Literacy Research, 34*(3), 357-384.
- Dunne, F., Nave, B., & Lewis, A. (2000). Critical friends groups: Teachers helping teachers to improve student learning. *Phi Delta Kappan, 28*(4), 31-37.
- Emerson, R. M., Fritz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2005). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Engeström, Y. (1994). Teachers as collaborative thinkers: Activity-theoretical study of an innovative teacher team. In I. Carlgren, G. Handal, & S. Vaage (Eds.), *Teachers' minds*

- and actions: Research on teachers' thinking and practice* (pp. 43-61). Bristol: PA: The Falmer Press.
- Engeström, Y. (2001). Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of education and work, 14*(1), 133-156.
- Faggella-Luby, M. N., Graner, P. S., Deshler, D. D., & Drew, S. V. (2012). Building a house on sand: Why disciplinary literacy is not sufficient to replace general strategies for adolescent learners who struggle. *Topics in Language Disorders, 32*(1), 69-84.
- Fang, Z. (2012). The challenges of reading disciplinary texts. In T. Jetton & C. Shanahan (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy in the academic disciplines: General principles and practical strategies* (pp. 35-68). New York: Guilford Press.
- Fang, Z., & Coatam, S. (2013). Disciplinary literacy: What you want to know about it. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 56*(8), 627-632.
- Fang, Z., & Schleppegrell, M. (2010). Disciplinary literacies across content areas: Supporting secondary reading through functional language analysis. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53*(7), 587-597.
- Feistritzer, C. E. (2011). *Profile of teachers in the U. S.* Washington, D. C. : National Center for Education Information.
- Flower, L., & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communicatio, 32*(4), 365-387.
- Forman, E., & Ford, M. J. (2013). Authority and accountability in light of disciplinary practices in science. *International Journal of Educational Research, 64*. 199-210.
- Foster, S. J., & Yeager, E. A. (1998). The role of empathy in the development of historical understanding. *International Journal of Social Education, 13*(1), 1-7.

- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon.
- Franke, M. L., Carpenter, T., Fennema, E., Ansell, E., & Behrend, J. (1998). Understanding teachers' self-sustaining, generative change in the context of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*(1), 67-80.
- Franke, M. L., Carpenter, T. P., Levi, L., & Fennema, E. (2001). Capturing teachers' generative change: A follow-up study of professional development in mathematics. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), 653-689.
- Freeman, D. (1991). "To make the tacit explicit": Teacher education, emerging discourse, and conceptions of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 7*(5), 439-454.
- Freeman, D. (1993). Renaming experience/reconstructing practice: Developing new understandings of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 9*(5/6), 485-497.
- Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(4), 915-945.
- Gee, J. P. (1990). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses, critical perspectives on literacy and education*. New York: Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2012). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. New York: Routledge.
- Giles, C., & Hargreaves, A. (2006). The sustainability of innovative schools as learning organizations and professional learning communities during standardized reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(1), 124-156.

- Gillis, V. (2014). Disciplinary literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 57(8), 614-623.
- Gimenez, J. (2012). Disciplinary epistemologies, generic attributes and undergraduate academic writing in nursing and midwifery. *Higher Education*, 63(4), 401-419.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high school*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. N. Smith Eds.). London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Greene, S. (1994). The problems of learning to think like a historian: Writing history in the culture of the classroom. *Educational Psychologist*, 29(2), 89-96.
- Greenleaf, C., & Hinchman, K. A. (2009). Reimagining our inexperienced adolescent readers: From struggling, striving, marginalized, and reluctant to thriving. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(1), 4-13.
- Greenleaf, C., Litman, C., Hanson, T., Rosen, R., Boscardin, C. K., Herman, J., Schneider, S., Madden, S., & Jones, B. (2011). Integrating literacy and science in biology: Teaching and learning impacts of Reading Apprenticeship professional development. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(3), 647-717.
- Greenleaf, C., Schoenbach, R., Cziko, C., & Mueller, F. L. (2001). Apprenticing adolescent readers to academic literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(1), 79-129.
- Grossman, P., Wineburg, S., & Woolworth, S. (2001). Toward a theory of teacher community. *The Teachers College Record*, 103, 942-1012.

- Grossman, P. L., Smagorinsky, P., & Valencia, S. (1999). Appropriating tools for teaching English: A theoretical framework for research on learning to teach. *American Journal of Education, 108*(1), 1-29.
- Gunel, M., Hand, B., & McDermott, M. A. (2009). Writing for different audiences: Effects on high-school students' conceptual understanding of biology. *Learning and Instruction, 19*, 354-367.
- Guskey, T. R. (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 8*(3), 381-391.
- Hadar, L., & Brody, D. (2010). From isolation to symphonic harmony: Building a professional development community among teacher educators. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(8), 1641-1651.
- Hand, B., Hohenshell, L., & Prain, V. (2004). Exploring students' responses to conceptual questions when engaged with planned writing experiences: A study with year 10 science students. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 41*(2), 186-210.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: Teachers' work and culture in the postmodern age*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1999). The knowledge-creating school. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 47*(2), 122-144.
- Haycock, K. (2001). Closing the achievement gap. *Educational Leadership, 58*(6), 6-11.
- Heller, R. (2010). In Praise of Amateurism: A Friendly Critique of Moje's "Call for Change" in Secondary Literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54*(4), 267-273.

- Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Helstad, K., & Lund, A. (2012). Teachers' talk on students' writing: Negotiating students' texts in interdisciplinary teacher teams. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*, 599-608.
- Herber, H. L. (1970). *Teaching reading in the content areas*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Holt-Reynolds, D. (1992). Personal history-based beliefs as relevant prior knowledge in course work. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*(2), 325-349.
- Holt-Reynolds, D. (1999). Good readers, good teachers?: Subject matter expertise as a challenge in learning to teach. *Harvard Educational Review, 69*(1), 29-51.
- Hord, S. M. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.
- Huot, B. (2002). *(Re)Articulating writing assessment for teaching and learning*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2004). *Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Hyland, K. (2012). *Disciplinary identities: Individuality and community in academic discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sabler, R. (2002). *Academic literacy: A statement of competencies expected of students entering California's public colleges and universities*. University of California: Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates of the California Community Colleges.

- Johns, A. M., & Swales, J. M. (2002). Literacy and disciplinary practices: Opening and closing perspectives. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 1*, 13-28.
- Johnson, H., Watson, P. A., Delahunty, T., McSwiggen, P., & Smith, T. (2011). What it is they do: Differentiating knowledge and literacy practices across content disciplines. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*(2), 100-109.
- Johnston, M. A. (1997). *Contradictions in collaboration: New thinking on school/university partnerships*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jones, B. F., Palincsar, A. S., Ogle, D. A., & Carr, E. G. (1987). *Strategic teaching and learning: Cognitive instruction in the content areas*. Elmhurst, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescents and literacy: Reading for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Keiny, S. (1994). Constructivism and teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 10*(2), 157-167.
- Kelly, P. (2006). What is teacher learning? A socio-cultural perspective. *Oxford Review of Education, 32*(4), 505-519.
- Kibler, A. (2011). "I write it in a way that people can read it": How teachers and adolescent L2 writers describe content area writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 20*(3), 211-226.
- Kiuhara, S. A., Graham, S., & Hawken, L. S. (2009). Teaching writing to high school students: A national survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 101*(1), 136-160.
- Kwok, M. N., Ganding, E., Hull, G. A., & Moje, E. B. (2016). Sociocultural approaches to high school writing instruction: Examining the roles of context, positionality, and power. In C.

- A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of Writing Research* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.
- Lasky, S. (2005). A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(8), 899-916.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Lea, M., & Street, B. (2006). The "academic literacies" model: Theory and applications. *Theory into Practice, 45*(4), 368-377.
- Lears, T. J. (1985). The concept of cultural hegemony: Problems and possibilities. *The American Historical Review, 90*(3), 567-593.
- Lee, C. D., & Spratley, A. (2010). *Reading in the disciplines: The challenges of adolescent literacy*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Lemke, J. (1990). *Talking science: Language, learning, and values*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Lemke, J. (2001). Articulating communities: Sociocultural perspectives on science education. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 38*(3), 296-316.
- Lempert, L. B. (2007). Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 245-264). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1992). *Teachers: Their world and their work*. New York: Teachers College Press.



- Lillis, T. (2003). Student writing as 'academic literacies': Drawing on Bakhtin to move from critique to design. *Language and Education*, 17(3), 192-207.
- Little, J. W. (1988). Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership. In A. Lieberman (Ed.), *Building a professional culture in schools* (pp. 78-106). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Little, J. W. (1989). District policy choices and teachers' professional development opportunities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11, 165-179.
- Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record*, 91 (4), 509-536.
- Little, J. W., & McLaughlin, M. W. (1993). Perspectives on cultures and contexts of teaching. In J. W. Little & M. W. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Teachers' work: Individuals, colleagues and contexts* (pp. 1-8). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher; a sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McDonald, M. A. (2005). The integration of social justice in teacher education dimensions of prospective teachers' opportunities to learn. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(5), 418-435.
- Measor, L. (1984). Pupil perceptions of subject status. In I. Goodson & S. Ball (Eds.), *Defining the curriculum: Histories and ethnographies* (pp. 201-217). London: The Falmer Press.
- Mercer, N. (1992). Culture, context and the construction of knowledge in the classroom. In P. Light & G. Poutterworth (Eds.), *Context and cognition: Ways of learning and knowing* (pp. 28-46). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Moje, E. B. (1996). "I teach students, not subjects": Teacher-student relationships as contexts for secondary literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(2), 172-195.

- Moje, E. B. (2000). Circles of kinship, friendship, position, and power: Examining the community in community-based literacy research. *Journal of Literacy Research, 32*(1), 77-112.
- Moje, E. B. (2007). Developing socially just subject-matter instruction: A review of the literature on disciplinary literacy teaching. *Review of Research in Education, 31*, 1-44.
- Moje, E. B. (2008). Foregrounding the disciplines in secondary literacy teaching and learning: A call for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52*(2), 96-107.
- Moje, E. B. (2015). Doing and teaching disciplinary literacy with adolescent learners: A social and cultural enterprise. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(2), 254-278.
- Moje, E. B., & Lewis, C. (2007). Examining opportunities to learn literacy: The role of critical sociocultural literacy research. In C. Lewis, P. Enciso, & E. B. Moje (Eds.), *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power* (pp. 15-48). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Moje, E. B., Young, J., Readence, J. E., & Moore, D. W. (2000). Reinventing adolescent literacy for new times: A commentary on perennial and millennial issues in adolescent literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 43*, 400-411.
- Monte-Sano, C. (2008). Qualities of historical writing instruction: A comparative case study of two teachers' practices. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(4), 1045-1079.
- Monte-Sano, C. (2010). Disciplinary literacy in history: An exploration of the historical nature of adolescents' writing. *Journal of the Learning Sciences, 19*(4), 539-568.
- Monte-Sano, C., & De La Paz, S. (2012). Using writing tasks to elicit adolescents' historical reasoning. *Journal of Literacy Research, 44*, 273-299.

- Monte-Sano, C., & Harris, K. (2012). Recitation and reasoning in novice history teachers' use of writing. *The Elementary School Journal*, 113(1), 105-130.
- Moore, D. W., Readence, J. E., & Rickelman, R. J. (1983). An Historical Exploration of Content Area Reading Instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 18(4), 419-419.
- Murray, D. (1972). Teach writing as a process not product. *The Leaflet*, 71(3), 11-14.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2012). The nation's report card: Writing 2011. Retrieved from Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). *Digest of education statistics, 2012*. Washington, D. C.: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
- National Commission on Writing. (2004). *The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution*. New York: The College Board.
- National Commission on Writing. (2004). *Writing: A ticket to work...or a ticket out*. New York: The College Board.
- Nelson, N. W. (2012). On disciplinary literacy and access to education for all. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 32(1), 1-4.
- Newell, G., Beach, R., Smith, J., & VanDerHeide, J. (2011). Teaching and learning argumentative reading and writing: A review of research. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 46(3), 273-304.
- National Governors Association for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers (NGABP & CCSSO). (2010). Common Core State Standards. Washington, D. C.: Author.

- O'Brien, D. G., & Stewart, R. A. (1990). Preservice teachers' perspectives on why every teacher is not a teacher of reading: A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Literacy Research, 22*(2), 101-129.
- O'Brien, D. G., & Stewart, R. A. (1992). Resistance to content area reading: Dimensions and solutions. In E. K. Dishner, T. W. Bean, J. E. Readence, & D. W. Moore (Eds.), *Reading in the content areas: Improving classroom instruction* (3rd ed., pp. 30-40). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.
- O'Brien, D. G., Stewart, R. A., & Moje, E. B. (1995). Why content literacy is difficult to infuse into the secondary school: Complexities of curriculum, pedagogy, and school culture. *Reading Research Quarterly, 44*(2), 442-463.
- Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. Review of *Educational Research, 81*(3), 376-407.
- Osborne, J., Simon, S., Christodoulou, A., Howell-Richardson, C., & Richardson, K. (2013). Learning to argue: A study of four schools and their attempt to develop the use of argumentation as a common instructional practice and its impact on students. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 50*(3), 315-347.
- Parry, S. (1998). Disciplinary discourse in doctoral theses. *Higher Education, 36*(3), 273-299.
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peskin, J. (1998). Constructing meaning when reading poetry: An expert-novice study. *Cognition and Instruction, 16*(3), 235-263.
- Prain, V., & Hand, B. (1999). Students perceptions of writing for learning in secondary school science. *Science Education, 83*(2), 151-162.

- Putnam, R. T., & Borko, H. (1997). Teacher learning: Implications of new views of cognition. In *International handbook of teachers and teaching* (pp. 1223-1296). Netherlands: Springer.
- Pytash, K. E. (2012). Engaging preservice teachers in disciplinary literacy learning through writing. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*(6), 527-538.
- Rainey, E.C. (2015). What does it mean to read literary works? The literacy practices, epistemologies, and instructional approaches of literary scholars and high school English Language Arts teachers. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Rainey, E.C., & Moje, E. B. (2012). Building insider knowledge: Teaching students to read, write, and think within ELA and across the disciplines. *English Education, 45*, 71-90.
- Ratekin, N., Simpson, M. L., Alvermann, D. E., & Dishner, E. K. (1985). Why teachers resist content reading instruction. *Journal of Reading, 28*(5), 432-437.
- Read, S., & Landon-Hays, M. (2013). The knowing/doing gap: Challenges of effective writing instruction in high school. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education, 2*(3), 6-15.
- Readence, J., Bean, T., & Baldwin, R. (1992). *Content area reading: An integrated approach* (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt.
- Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rouet, J.-F., Favart, M., Britt, M. A., & Perfetti, C. A. (1997). Studying and using multiple documents in history: Effects of discipline expertise. *Cognition and Instruction, 15*(1), 85-106.

- Russell, D. R. (1997). Rethinking Genre in School and Society An Activity Theory Analysis. *Written Communication, 14*(4), 504-554.
- Russell, D. R. (2002). *Writing in the Academic Disciplines: A Curricular History* (2nd ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1987). Knowledge telling and knowledge transforming in written composition. *Advances in Applied Psycholinguistics, 2*, 142-175.
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (2006). Knowledge building: Theory, pedagogy, and technology. In K. Sawyer (Ed.), *Cambridge Handbook of the Learning Sciences* (pp. 97-118). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schleppegrell, M. (2004). *The language of schooling: A Functional linguistics perspective*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Schnellert, L. M., Butler, D. L., & Higginson, S. K. (2008). Co-constructors of data, co-constructors of meaning: Teacher professional development in an age of accountability. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(3), 725-750.
- Schoenfeld, A. H. (2011). Reflections on teacher expertise. In Y. Li & G. Kaiser (Eds.), *Expertise in mathematics instruction* (pp. 327-341). New York: Springer.
- Scribner, J. P. (1999). Professional development: Untangling the influence of work context on teacher learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 35*(2), 238-266.
- Scribner, S., & Cole, M. (1981). *The psychology of literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Shanahan, C., Shanahan, T., & Misischia, C. (2011). Analysis of expert readers in three disciplines: History, mathematics, and chemistry. *Journal of Literacy Research, 43*(4), 393-429.

- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching Disciplinary Literacy to Adolescents: Rethinking Content-Area Literacy. *Harvard Educational Review, 78*(1), 40-59.
- Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2012). What is disciplinary literacy and why does it matter? *Topics in Language Disorders, 32*(1), 7-18.
- Sherin, M. G., & van Es, E. A. (2009). Effects of video club participation on teachers' professional vision. *Journal of Teacher Education, 60*(1), 20-37.
- Siebert, D., & Jo Draper, R. (2008). Why content-area literacy messages do not speak to mathematics teachers: A critical content analysis. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 47*(4), 229-245.
- Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Towards an R&D program in reading comprehension*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.
- Snow-Gerono, J. L. (2005). Professional development in a culture of inquiry: PDS teachers identify the benefits of professional learning communities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*, 241-156.
- Spillane, J. P. (1999). External reform initiatives and teachers' efforts to reconstruct their practice: The mediating role of teachers' zones of enactment. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 31*(2), 143-175.
- Stearns, P. N., Seixas, P. C., & Wineburg, S. (2000). *Knowing, teaching, and learning history: National and international perspectives*. New York: New York University Press.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Supovitz, J. A., & Turner, H. M. (2000). The effects of professional development on science teaching practices and classroom culture. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 37(9), 963-980.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Talbert, J. E. (2010). Professional learning communities at the crossroads: How systems hinder or engender change. In A. Hargreaves, A. Lieberman, M. Fullan, & D. Hopkins (Eds.), *Second international handbook of educational change*, (pp. 555-571). New York: Springer Science and Business Media.
- Toulmin, S. E. (2003). *The uses of argument*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tyre, P. (2012). The writing revolution. *The Atlantic*, 310(3), 96-101.
- VanDerHeide, J., & Newell, G. (2013). Instructional chains as a method for examining the teaching and learning of argumentative writing in classrooms. *Written Communication*, 30(3), 300-329.
- VanSledright, B. (2001). From empathetic regard to self-understanding: Im/positionality, empathy, and historical contextualization. In O. L. Davis, E. Yeager, & S. Foster (Eds.), *Development of historical empathy: Perspective taking in social studies* (pp. 51-68). Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield.
- VanSledright, B. (2004). What does it mean to think historically...and how do you teach it? *Social Education*, 68(3), 230-233.
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80-91.



- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wardle, E. (2009). "Mutt genres" and the goal of FYC: Can we help students write the genres of the university? *College Composition and Communication*, 60(4), 765-789.
- Warren, B., & Rosebery, A.S. (1993). *Equity in the future tense: Redefining relationships among teachers, students, and science in linguistic minority classrooms*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Education.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Westheimer, J. (1998). *Among school teachers: Community, autonomy, and ideology in teachers' work*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Whipple, G. M. (Ed.) (1937). *Thirty-sixth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing.
- White, B., & Frederiksen, J. (2005). A theoretical framework and approach for fostering metacognitive development. *Educational Psychologist*, 40(4), 211-223.
- Wilder, L. (2012). *Rhetorical strategies and genre conventions in literary studies: Teaching and writing in the disciplines*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Wilson, S. M., & Berne, J. (1999). Teacher learning and the acquisition of professional knowledge: An examination of research on contemporary professional development. *Review of research in education*, 173-209.
- Wineburg, S. (1991). Historical problem solving: A study of the cognitive processes used in the evaluation of documentary and pictorial evidence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(1), 73-87.

- Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. L. (2007). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.
- Yore, L. D., Hand, B. M., & Florence, M. K. (2004). Scientists' views of science, models of writing, and science writing practices. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 41(4), 338-369.
- Young, K. M., & Leinhardt, G. (1998). Writing from primary documents: A way of knowing in history. *Written Communication*, 15(1), 25-68.
- Zygouris-Coe, V. (2012). Disciplinary literacy and the Common Core State Standards. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 32(1), 35-50.