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Understanding the Spatial Context of Pre-Service Teachers and Writing Instruction: Movement
from Disbelief to Belief

By

Lanette Valena Jimerson

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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in

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in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

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Fall 2011

Lanette Jimerson
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Abstract

Understanding the Spatial Context of Pre-Service Teachers and Writing Instruction: Movement from Disbelief to Belief

By

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Pre-service teachers generally receive minimal instruction in the teaching of writing, and little of this instruction is grounded in teachers' engagement as writers beyond their K-12 experience and the academic essay. This study examines pre-service teachers' imagined context of the classroom and their resulting disbeliefs and beliefs of the possibilities of writing instruction. Central to this study is a focus on classrooms as spaces produced through teachers' and students' real and imagined relationship to writing, one another, administrators, and education in the larger societal context.

Examining what is occurring in classrooms, teacher education programs, and professional development programs through a spatial lens affords a more complex understanding of how pre-service teachers engage in the act of teaching and from where they draw both imaginative and material resources. The study of space, the lived space of teachers in their credential programs and within the classroom, can provide a purview of the challenges to developing teachers of writing.

Observation of pre-service teachers in a four-day institute focused on the teaching of writing provided a window to understand the ways in which the classroom as a produced space influences, both positively and negatively, pre-service teachers' beliefs about writing instruction. Three important areas of focus developed from this study. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to write, and opportunities must include all genres. More research is needed on interrogating teachers' beliefs regarding students of color and their writing ability. And lastly, inquiry—questioning of their own teaching— not just experience in writing, is necessary for pre-service teachers to develop strategies for combating the effects of urban, high-need school spaces.

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Introduction

Space and writing have been a significant focus of mine for decades. My first engagement with space did not occur as a graduate student studying classrooms or as a teacher leading a group of students through the writing process. It occurred as a junior in high school trying to make it through a gifted and talented English Literature course. Although being a teenager presents its own challenges in getting through such a course, I had an added component: I was homeless. I lived in several shelters during my high school years, but my junior year had been by far the most disjointed. I lived in three shelters, one shelter twice, a local motel, and in my mother's ex-boyfriend's apartment. Space was central, specifically the lack of personal space.

My new understanding of what it meant to not have a home directly impacted my ability to write smooth essays and witty responses. An experience I will never forget and often recall when thinking of the potential role a teacher plays in a student's future, is the day Mr. Bennet called me up to his podium to inform me that he had officially removed me from the gifted senior English course. He began with the sentence, "For someone so gifted orally, your writing is unbelievably poor." Mr. Bennet had no idea what it was like to try to write at the bottom of a bunk bed in a warehouse, housing thirty other families, or in the middle of someone's living room, which was also the bedroom for my two brothers and me. Not much writing can occur when you are riding buses after 10 p.m. because returning to the shelter without a guardian is cause for calling child protective services.

What I instinctively knew then that I can only frame now is that the lack of space in my personal life shoved out any possibility for me to think of writing. To write meant to think, to think meant to reflect, to reflect meant to face the awful reality of my current circumstances. I had no space and being a teenager I had no inkling when, if ever, I would be able to create a space; and so I didn't write.

The experience of leaving the gifted class is still very present in my bodily memory. I have written about it many times and shared the story too many times to count. As a graduate student my first pilot study was of a seventh grader who was homeless. She, like me, lived among strangers, who were for all means and purposes family. In that first study I was not sure of what I was seeking to understand. I had no hypotheses about how space mattered. In truth I could not have defined space beyond the fact that she did not have a home.

Yet in that study the young lady helped me to see something I had not previously considered. Her imagination was connected to her bodily experience. In detailing the book *The Giver*, she often explained how she couldn't understand what was happening. I began to ask her about other books she had read and she gave the same standard answer: none of them made sense. I asked her to tell me of a book she did enjoy reading, and with a new light in her eyes she began to tell me about *James and the Giant Peach*. If you are not a lover of children's books you may be unaware of the story line; I'll give you one hint— it's spatial. James loses his parents and is sent to live with two unkind aunts. Before his parent's death, his father had given him a brochure of New York, a place he had never been, but his father had told him that life there was fantastic. James holds onto the brochure as a way to withstand his current lived experience. After several weeks, a magical man approaches and offers him magical crystals to escape from his aunts. On his way back to the house James trips on a tree root and the crystals fall onto a barren fruit tree. The tree begins to grow enormous fruit. After a few mishaps, James escapes in the peach and travels the ocean. As he approaches New York waterways, military and common

citizens believe the peach to be a bomb, but once it lands on the Empire state building and James walks out of the peach and recount his journey and painful past, the citizens rejoice. The seed of the peach turns into a huge mansion and James is welcomed as a hero.

James and the Giant Peach is extremely spatial. James has a specific relationship with his parents, which is shifted when he must live with his unkind aunts. James attempts to re-imagine his lived experience through the materials available at his aunts, the brochure of New York. Forced to spend time on the hillside, James' imagination calls into existence magical crystals and a giant peach, which transforms his possibilities for living. This fantastic re-imagination of space— spatial practices (living in a peach, speaking to insects), spatial relationships (new found allies, a retreat from his mean aunts, the loss of his parents), and relation to space (the risk he took in stepping into the peach, new identity as a hero and author in New York) is the type of possibility my subject needed to believe in: that there could one day be a space for her again. She understood James' spatial configurations and cheered his triumph over the space that had constrained him. I understood this as well, which made me question how school could address this kind of spatial understanding for her and how my experience with such understandings had impacted my teaching.

In my career as a teacher I strove to make the space personal. I added couches, lamps, plants, pictures, stuffed animals and health products to my classroom. In the bottom cabinet were a set of dishes and a two-eye burner. I have transformed my room into an art space, musical space and medieval space. I imagined all the possibilities, inviting students to imagine with me, and labored to make them come true. I had no blueprint and, to be honest, I had no understanding of those who found my imagination off-putting. I worked most of my 14 years in isolation, rarely allowing others to get a chance to inquire about my thinking and planning process. I let only one teacher in 14 years take a pretend walk in my mind to attempt to understand why I saw the classroom space so differently and why I felt that taking a field trip every month was as much a necessity as reading the canon. His response should have been a wake-up for me, an opportunity for me to see that re-imagining space was dissimilar, but it was not. He openly questioned the sanity of my practices, giving a play-by-play of what he could see happening in the space of *his* classroom. Two words summed it up for him: chaos and disruption.

It pains me to say that it wasn't until I had left teaching for a teacher-coach position in a different district that I began to realize that the classroom space isn't the same for every teacher. The space of the classroom has its own context: past practices (Ms. So and So had this room before you and she generally did x,y, and z), relationships (If a student doesn't do as you ask send him to the office, or I never send my students to the office) and ambitions (We are program improvement or we are a blue ribbon school, immediate images and discourse are tied to these two descriptors). Even though we call every instructor a teacher and every room a classroom, there is great variety. In that variety a classroom space is produced and re-produced. From the materials to relationships to the perceptions of those within and outside of the school, the classroom is not a neutral, empty space; it is socially constructed, including the teacher within the classroom.

The most salient example of the classroom as a specific space, and the implications of produced spaces, came from my work with a new science teacher. She was bemused when I suggested she could still have experiments in her room even though the true lab room was currently being used for storage. In her imagination, it was impossible to perform an experiment in a room without lab sinks and black, large, non-absorbent counter tops. After a year of conversation and re-imagining of not only the space but also her relationship with her students

(after all, they would need scalpels!) and her identity as a science teacher, she took a chance and ordered cow eyes. I had witnessed the science teacher go from disbelief to belief, to imagining something that I had already imagined. For the first time I realized that it wasn't that teachers didn't want to implement new practices, it was that the space of the classroom impacted them as much as it impacted students: they could not imagine some practices as appropriate for the classroom. What was worse is that I also realized that unless someone is willing to stay the long course to shift space, teachers have a slim chance.

Thus began my journey through graduate school and a quest for an understanding of space and teaching. Today I have many more tools for this inquiry: spatial theory, embodiment, hybridity, and so forth. I also have come to understand that shifting teachers' imagination has been an implicit goal of teacher education since Shulman (1979) introduced pedagogical content knowledge and Cazden (1988) noted the initiate-response-evaluate pattern of classroom talk. These issues have been taken up through culturally relevant pedagogy and teacher inquiry, yet until recently the impact of the classroom space went unexamined. The emergence of classroom spatial studies have begun to forefront spatial theory in understanding what it takes to assist teachers in implementing "best practices" and how wholesale change often undermines the possibility of long term change. Remember James? Although he loathed his life with his aunts he did not readily escape into the peach; rather he held onto what he had, though it did little to sustain him, as he built new spatial practices, relationships, and lived experiences. Only then did he fully step into the core and agree to be taken into the hoped for, but unknown, life.

If we consider teacher education as the first obstacle along the way to Manhattan— after all, most pre-service teachers mistake the credential program as a barrier to the real life of teaching— how can we provide the material for new imaginations? How can teacher education impact the imagination of teachers, specifically teachers of writing? Are there current spatial models of professional development that can inform this work?

The Teaching of Writing

Writing has long been an interest of educational researchers and a variety of other scholars and social scientists. Text, once thought to be the marker of civilization (Goody and Watt, 1963), is still considered to be the index of a quality education (National Writing Council, 2006). There is an expectation that students become good writers by the time they graduate from high school. Moreover, the context in which this learning occurs must be connected to students' lives and the types of writing students will need to create as adults (National Writing Council, 2006). Vygotsky (1980) argues that students should write more and in authentic contexts, yet it has been impossible to teach students to write in an authentic manner based on the training system used in most schools. The training system Vygotsky referred to is the process of teaching writing in which the context and audience for writing is exclusively the teacher. Although this type of writing has been deemed as less beneficial, and rote learning of writing has been deemed a relic of the past in favor of process-oriented writing, the translation of such thinking into classroom practices has faltered.

Current research and teacher practice demonstrates that the training of writing, rather than the teaching of writing (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000), still exists in the form of teacher prompts, constrained timelines for writing, writing organizers and color-coded sentences. Considered the "Neglected R," national reports have found that on average students graduate from K-12 education without having to write more than two pages and once a week; the amount

and level of writing required by students is dismal (National Writing Council, 2006). Applebee and Langer's (2006) recent report on writing showed that more than 50% of 8th graders reported that less than 50% of classroom instruction focused on writing. More importantly the writing required of students was not significant in length or complexity and 9% of high school students are not required to write at all.

Closely connected to the time students are (not) writing in classrooms is the professional development of pre-service and new teachers. According to Applebee and Langer (2006), teachers reported only receiving professional development concerning the teaching of writing to state or district standards. Although teachers reported using process-oriented writing instruction to teach writing based on the standards, "what teachers mean by this and how it is implemented in their classrooms remains unclear" (p. 28). Teachers do not receive professional development while teaching, and even more unsettling is the fact that teacher education programs rarely provide teacher candidates a course specifically designed to teach writing (Darling-Hammond, 2005). The National Commission on Writing (2006), in their report on the Neglected "R", recommended that teacher education programs "provide pre-and in-service opportunities so that teachers themselves can write and enjoy the opportunity to respond to examples of student and peer writing" (p. 70).

Examining what is occurring in classrooms, teacher education programs, and professional development programs through a spatial lens affords a more complex understanding of how pre-service teachers engage in the act of teaching and from where they draw both imaginative and material resources. The study of space, the lived space of teachers in their credential programs and within the classroom, can provide a purview of the challenges to developing teachers of writing.

Educational research such as I am proposing is not new. Teacher educators have looked at teacher imagination, knowledge and understandings about writing in the last two decades and have found that many new teachers lack the content and pedagogical knowledge to implement writing instruction (Shulman, 1986). In response, teacher education programs have instituted several practices: literacy autobiographies, pen pals, student teaching, cohort groups, socio-cultural courses, performances and teaching portfolios (Darling-Hammond, 2005). Despite these new practices, research has shown that teacher candidates hold beliefs and dispositions about writing that obstruct explicit writing instruction in the classroom (Norman and Spencer 2005) and that more formal coursework must be provided to enable future teachers to effectively teach writing. Few studies have looked at how the space of the classroom impacts teacher instruction (Leander and Sheehy, 2007). In this study I hope to unveil the ways in which pre-service teachers imagine writing and the spatial practices that are and are not appropriate for teaching writing. I do so by analyzing a four-day writing institute for pre-service teachers and follow that up with interviews and a case study of how one teacher attempts to implement the knowledge into his teaching practice. I am specifically interested in the spatial shifts teachers make both in their imaginary and in their classroom in order to improve their writing instruction and student writing in their classroom.

Spatial theory contends that all space is produced through social relationships and that all relationships are shaped by space (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre, a french philosopher, saw space as a product of social relationships. "Space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such 'objects' are thus not only things but also relations" (p. 77). Classroom studies takes up Lefebvre's theory to interrogate how the facilitation of information within a set of

relations between students, teachers, writing (as both a content area and act), and the wider society produces a classroom space.

Spatial Theory and Classroom Studies

Classroom studies attempt to understand the context of the classroom through an examination of how such a context is created through teacher-student interaction, materials introduced into the classroom and the general discourse of schooling both within the school site and the larger public. Spatial classroom studies draw heavily from the work of Lefebvre (1991) and his theory of the production of space. Sheehy (2007) specifically addressed the need to analyze the creation of context writing that, “Classroom research, framed as critical, has assumed too much about people and too little about context” (Sheehy, 2007, p. 3). Sheehy contends that a spatial framework is necessary because educational researchers continue to ignore space as a product of social relations and thus, “The result is that, while there are theories of space, many classroom studies bypass using them and instead treat space as a canvas that can be painted—over and over—with appropriate practices” (ibid, p. 1). The foundation for Sheehy’s and other educational researchers’ call a spatial theory in *New Literacy Studies* also draws from Foucault’s (1977) work on the body politic, the control over the body that is established through the control of space.

Altering practices in classrooms is not simple. Sheehy (2007) specifically addresses the difficulty in altering practices, imagination and objects of study within classrooms. Shifting to more authentic, process-oriented instruction requires new roles and a new imagination of space. Unlike the training system where students must imitate the model given by the teacher, process-oriented writing students must construct the organization, goals, and context. Yet changing space is not an easy task. Teachers must be able to withstand the uncomfortable place of the in-between, as students struggle to understand their new roles and new definition of competence. During this period of readjustment, student uptake of new practices can look much like a roller coaster ride, with many dips, turns and drops. Without fortitude to withstand the in-between space and the imagination to conceive what the space of the classroom will be once students become oriented to the new roles and practices, teachers are destined to return to old spaces and old practices.

The National Writing Project does not make explicit reference to the works of Lefebvre and other spatial theorists, yet a spatial analysis is implicit in its foundation, the three tenets, as well as the language used by members of the organization. An analysis of each tenet through Lefebvre’s trialectic—perceived, conceived and lived—clearly demonstrates that the mission of the NWP is to produce a space, one in which teachers are central and their relationship to writing and its materials (as well as the experience of writing) are more in line with the experience of their students.

The National Writing Project model is a form of professional development for teachers of writing. It includes all the necessary components of effective professional development. Warren-Little (2006) has identified four critical components of effective professional learning communities (PLC). PLCs must be driven by teachers’ questioning their practice. The questioning must be rooted in actual data from both their teaching context and the wider frame of education. Because the questioning is rooted in data, and data is context specific, PLCs must be responsive to various contexts. Lastly the practice of data-driven inquiry must be continuous, for

the teaching is a continually changing process. The NWP project model incorporates these key components within its professional development model. It asks teachers to be inquirers of their classrooms, to review student work, school data, and national data, it respects that teaching is context specific and thus there is no one way to teach writing, lasting NWP has continually provides opportunities for teachers to engage in inquiry and as new areas of learning emerge new networks are created, such as the New Teacher Initiative. The New Teacher Initiative offered new teachers, those with less than three years of teaching experience the general threshold for participate in NWP, to engage in inquiry. Despite this widening of the net, there are no formal opportunities for pre-service teachers to participate in the National Writing Project. It is my intention to examine the applicability of the NWP model to pre-service teachers.

Significance of Study

Teacher education programs have been under attack as the educational progress of students in K-12 public schools continues to fall below the desired proficiency rate. One area of substantial underachievement is writing. From the inception of the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 1969, writing has seen the least amount of growth (NAEP, 2007). Furthermore, teacher education programs continue to focus on writing as only a subcomponent of reading instruction. The National Writing Project is the first organization focused on the teaching of writing in all content areas, with an intentional focus on the experience of teachers as both writers themselves and teachers of writing.

Although there have been studies on the impact the NWP has on teachers and the quality of writing in their classrooms (Lieberman, 2003; Stokes, 2010), there has not been a study addressing the potential of the writing project model within teacher education. This study attempts to uncover the potential of the National Writing Project model in the training of writing instruction for pre-service teachers. This attempt is not solely focused on English teachers, although the participants in this study happen to be English teachers. Just as the National Writing Project examines writing in all content areas, the need for all pre-service teachers to have both experiential and theoretical training in writing is required if students in K-12 schools will be able to meet the challenges of 21st century living.

Dissertation Overview

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 applies the theoretical frame of spatial theory to writing instruction and teacher education. The chapter then outlines the emerging focus on pre-service teachers through the New Teacher Initiative pilot developed across several NWP sites. In my review of current literature on spatial theory and classroom studies, I align the goals of this study within the current work in classroom studies and detail the ways in which this study addresses a new focus: pre-service teachers. Chapter 1 ends with a call to better understand how teacher education programs can assist pre-service teachers in

(re)imaging the classroom space to provide authentic writing opportunities for students. It examines this possibility through the mini-institute offered by the Rosewood Writing Project¹.

Chapter 2 details the methodology, data collection, and analysis procedures of this study, as well as the position I embodied as a researcher. I consider this study to be only an entry point into inquiry around pre-service teachers and writing instruction. I used ethnographic methods to develop codes applied to data within the institute and my follow up observations.

Chapter 3 examines the mini-institute and its impact on the imagination of the seven pre-service teachers who attended. I connect the practices of the institute to spatial theory as well as probe its implications for teacher education. I discuss four themes that emerged from the coding that resonated with a number of participants: belief and disbelief; what can be considered writing; race, writing and geography; and teachers as writers. I connect the experiences of the participants with spatial theory and teacher education research to examine the ways in which pre-service teachers' imagination of writing instruction is disrupted through the institute.

Chapter 4 examines an interaction between two participants during a collaborative activity. The shift in participant structures leads to an unveiling of two participants' student identities: one as an achiever and the other as a "bad" student. This chapter examines the challenges in having students work collaboratively.

Chapter 5 focuses on one participant, Mr. Z, as he enters the classroom as a credentialed teacher. In this chapter I analyze the factors that support and constrain Mr. Z's imagination when planning and attempting to implement writing practices. I pay particular attention to the writing practices that allow Mr. Z to cope with the stressors of teaching writing. I end the chapter with an analysis of one authentic writing practice, the novella, and how it is positioned within the classroom and within Mr. Z's imagination.

The final chapter is my attempt to coalesce the knowledge gained from the institute and observations of Mr. Z's teaching. I offer suggestions for taking up spatial theory as a starting point for potential shifts in the implementation of student teaching, which has become an increasing component of teacher education programs, as well as a call for deeper engagement in writing instruction, especially opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice writing instruction with colleagues and a deeper integration of technology and writing.

¹ The names of participants and other actors in this study are pseudonyms. I chose to use the formal moniker for Mr. Z, as he was the only participant I observed in the classroom, where formal use of names was an expected norm, unlike the mini-institute where first names were addressing each other by first name was the norm. I did not use a pseudonym for the National Writing Project as the model referred to in this study is specific to this organizations and has been widely researched. All schools and locations have pseudonyms.

Chapter 1 Theoretical Frame and Literature Review

“Classroom interaction, involving literacy practices such as reading, interpretation, writing, image production, and talk, continually produces social space” (Leander, 2004. p.117).

This chapter reviews the literature on spatial theory, teacher education and the National Writing Project. The chapter begins with an explanation and illustration of the production of the classroom space. I then look at the role of teacher education programs, the dominant training institution for classroom teachers, and their approach to developing the imagination of pre-service teachers’ in terms of writing instruction. I argue that teacher education programs have far to go in order to give adequate opportunities for pre-service teachers to imagine teaching writing first and foremost, and then teaching writing in ways that engage all students. I argue that the National Writing Project model, examined through a spatial lens, offers a paradigm for shifting pre-service teacher’s imagination of teaching writing without creating a one-size fits all approach.

Classrooms as a produced space

Classrooms have expected practices that have been re-inscribed for eons: lesson plans, worksheets, individual desks, bell schedules, permission to talk or move, undivided attention on the teacher. These practices can be viewed as producing a space of obedience and acquiescence. In Foucauldian terms classroom practices create docile student bodies. Students sit and write, speak only when given permission and give full authority to the teacher. Docility diminishes the power of the body to move and do as it pleases, while at the same time it increases the power of authority (Foucault, 1977). Students are kept from moving about according to each one’s pleasure, and instead students move only as directed, evaluated on whether or not they are efficient in moving their pens, opening their books and looking at the teacher. Students who challenge the practices of the classroom through daydreaming, creating new objects of study by yelling out or passing notes, or completely refuse to engage are swiftly disciplined, and if they do not correct their behavior, then they are removed from the space, sent to the dean’s office or the detention room (Ferguson, 2000).

The control of the body is not the only factor in producing space. Lefebvre’s (1991) spatial theory pinpoints a trialectic for understanding the production of space. He asserts, “Spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes,” (p. 46). Lefebvre’s theory is based on the belief that space is not an empty container in which people, ideas, and materials are placed inside without consequence. Instead space is a consequence of the production of relations between person and person, person and ideas, and person and object. Teachers and students act upon and are acted upon in spaces. In addition, both teachers and students imagine school in certain ways and engage schooling with their imaginations, struggling at each moment to bring their imagination into fruition. As relations are inscribed in places, the practices within a space, the relations of people who use that space, and the ideas appropriate to

the space are experienced as natural. As Sheehy (2010) explains, “Believing that what we do in everyday practice is real or natural is a major means of reproducing certain practices such as repetitive work practices, or in the case of schools, repetitive literacy practices” (p. 19). Classrooms have spatial practices, representations of space, and representational space.

Spatial Practices

Spatial practice is the everyday routine and rhythm of life. The repetition of ways of being creates automaticity and “ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion” (Lefebvre, 1991. p. 33). In the classroom the dominant spatial practice is the IRE— initiate, evaluate, respond— routine (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979). Teachers initiate a conversation, students respond to the initiated topic (no changes are permitted!), and then the teacher evaluates the students’ responses. This is a spatial practice that inscribes roles for both student and teacher. It becomes predictable, can be engaged with 2 or 200 students, and requires minimal mental and physical energy. Many of the spatial practices in classrooms are tools for control: lining up to leave and enter the room, sitting at individual desks, completing one’s own work alone, and raising hands for permission to speak or move about. These spatial practices can be found in classrooms from California to New York and in Westernized education spaces across the globe.

Representations of Space

The rationale, or ideology of why classroom practices are exactly as they should be, is the representation of space. Research has shown that no teacher comes into the practice without a rationalized understanding of what it means to do school (Lortie, 1975). This is equally true of educational planners—whether politicians, textbook publishers, district officials, parent teacher associations or architects. Such policy-makers develop educational systems and space based on their ideologies (Ball, 1987): district officials put out mandates and manage schools based on their ideas of how schools should operate (Gitlin & Margonis, 1995); textbook publishers develop curriculum and decide which stories should be told and from whose perspective (Luke, 1995); and parents deem what is appropriate for their children and their desires to have a highly ranked schools for their children at all costs including facing prosecution (Saiger, 2010; Applebome, 2011). Representations of space are key spaces of power. Representations of space are the product of decision-making. In this space decisions determines who perspective is considered most valid made, how resources are allocated, and schools are conceived so that they work on behalf of those with the most power. It is why the achievement gap will never disappear and why when Brown versus the Board of Education drastically changed the make-up of schools, unequal access to materials and college preparation courses (Oakes and Rogers, 2006; Cone, 1992), placement of less experienced teachers in courses for struggling students (Achinstein et. al., 2004), and the return to de-facto segregation through district lines and heavy policing of these boundaries such that pre-Brown school populations are now 21st century populations.

Representational Space

The bodily experience of spatial practices and representations of space is termed representational space. “Representational space is alive: it speaks...It embraces the loci of

passion, of action and of lived situations” (Lefebvre, 1991. p. 42). Representational space unveils the contradictions between the spatial practices and the representation of space—between the ideology and the reality of life. Representational space is the “space, which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (p. 39), the space of creativity. It is the space where the bored student figures out how to communicate across the room, play a full video game on their phone, or create art on the desk without once being spied by the teacher. Despite the groans such an example might bring, representational space is the space of innovation, of breaking free from the naturalized production of space that supports inequality.

Here are two additional examples of the way in which the trialectic: spatial practice, representations of space and representational space are instantiated in the classroom. In the first case a teacher uses a scripted curriculum. Students read a story, then the teacher has them complete a number of worksheets and verbally respond to questions. The scripted curriculum is the result of a district office mandate and the work of textbook publishers. The mandate and the textbook are the material manifestation of the ideology that teachers are unreliable at planning, implementing lessons, and moving students academically and thus a scripted program is necessary to ensure students’ success. The scripted curriculum experienced by one or several of the students could be boredom, daydreaming or acquiescence (but rarely engagement). The teachers can fall in line with the program, or resist through pretend fidelity implementing a self-created lesson when the door is closed.

Another case is possible. A teacher imagines his students capable of gaining additional knowledge independently and sharing this information with the class. Thus, in his classroom students drop out of discussions to search the Internet or other classroom resources to report back to the class pertinent information. The teacher and students feel within their bodies the impact of individual contributions to the learning process; they are engaged with the material and with each other.

Unfortunately, the notion of allowing students to participate in information gathering during class time is considered a big risk for many teachers because it is a direct contradiction of conventional schooling, and the spatial practices, representations and representational spaces attached to schools. A middle school colleague of mine often questioned my sanity when I shared what my students were allowed to do in class. He told me he imagined permission for a student to get up and move about would domino into disruption. He could see his students walking past and hitting each other, others yelling out and him losing total control of the students. He could not imagine another process, which is not surprising if we recall the scores of movies made that portray the wildness of the classroom and the “risk” teachers take when they re-imagine the space of the classroom and the engagement of students. These movies play off the commonplace imaginary of schools. Schools are like Disneyland; everyone knows what to expect, the experience to be had, and anything outside of that experience is not a happy place. Minimal attention has been paid to the production of the classroom space, because schools are a taken-for-granted space, embedded with ideology that has endured over decades and has thus become naturalized. Key to understanding such naturalization is understanding how the imagination of common places works in (re)producing space.

School as a common place

Common places are spaces that are generally imaginable by the majority of people within a given society (Sheehy, 2010). The café is a common place. Most Americans can describe a

café and the appropriate ways of being at a café. The shared imagination of common places, like schools, makes change challenging. Consider the task of re-imagining cafes as a place where studying and meeting for academic endeavors is prohibited. Many cafes have tried to discourage this behavior, with very little success, as the commonplace imagination of a café is the abundance of students poring over their books or laptops and not a cup of coffee. Schools are common places as well. “School is a commonplace, a site belonging to everyone’s imagination” (Sheehy, 2010, p. 3). Over the centuries change in schools has proved extremely difficult (Tyack & Cuban, 1997). The imaginary of a common place constrains the potential of new imaginations, new ways of being in a common place.

Schools are “constantly contested terrain(s) of words that occupy the imagination of what school, as a place, is” (Sheehy, 2010, p.3). How teachers talk about teaching and students affects what interruptions they may attempt. The discourse of schools, such as the explanations of student failure, orders space and relations. We can understand the process of producing space by how the space is discussed—what is said about the space. “Every discourse says something about a space and every discourse is emitted from a space” (Lefebvre, 1991. p. 132). For example, the discourse about schools shifts depending on the geographical space, the suburbs or the inner city. Within schools, discourse divides and fragments the student and teacher population. Discourse affects what is regarded as the truth and can be used as a technology of power. “[Discourse] can be used to include or exclude people based on whether they adhere to the tenets” of the discourse community and space (Sheehy, 2010. p. 20).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act is situated within a discourse of failing education (1983). It is an ideologically-driven statement about how teachers should engage in the act of teaching and what kind of students schools should develop. The words of the NCLB act work in concert with the commonplace imagination of education to produce the current space of schools and the relations within and across schools: highly qualified versus unqualified, low performing versus high performing, below basic versus highly proficient. The discourse of failing schools implicates the institutions that support the production of the school space. Universities have been under fire for their training of teachers. New credential programs aimed at training teachers to be more effective in teaching in high-minority, high-poverty schools are just one example of the impact the discourse of failing schools on university programs (Pearson, 2009; Feinman-Nemser, 2001; Wang and Odell, 2003). As credential programs attempt to address these issues, an increasing focus on writing at the K-12 level, has unveiled another shortcoming in teacher education: a failure to address writing instruction. Writing is increasingly important to communication in the age of global communication via the Internet (National Commission on Writing, 2006).

Writing Instruction and Teacher Education

Research in teacher education has found that training for new teachers in writing instruction is secondary to reading instruction (Norman and Spencer, 2005). In fact, although many new English teachers earned English degrees as an undergraduate, very few are required to take composition courses or a writing instruction course in order to earn an English teaching credential (Grossman, 2000). Because writing instruction in teacher education programs is minimally addressed, pre-service teachers rely on their experiences of writing as a student and their own imaginations of what teaching writing might be like (Feiman-Namser, 2001). Memories and beliefs developed from past experiences function as a guide for pre-service

teachers on how to teach writing. This type of memory/experience has been termed “apprenticeship through observation” (Lortie, 1975). Along with “apprenticeship through observation” a majority of pre-service teachers believe that writing is a gift that one either possesses or not (and many pre-service teachers self-identify themselves as giftless!) (Norman and Spencer, 2005). In interviews pre-service teachers often comment on the humiliation and frustration they felt as a student struggling through writing assignments with no clear direction on how to become a better writer. Ironically, pre-service teachers believe that assigning large volumes of writing rather than teaching writing is effective in developing better writers (Norman and Spencer, 2005).

Further complicating the role of teacher education programs in writing instruction is that few programs have “explicit strategies to help students to confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 305). The lack of a structure in teacher education programs to address writing instruction and unexamined beliefs about writing and teaching often causes teachers to shy away from writing in their classrooms. The National Educational Assessment Project found that more than 60 percent of students are never or infrequently asked to write and when they were, 60 percent of students were not required to write more than a page. As noted in the National Commission on Writing Report (2006) and Applebee and Langer’s (2006) study of writing instruction in K-12 classrooms, much of what students are expected to do in terms of writing deals less with the construction of extensive, structured, writing and more with the completion of short answer questions and worksheets. The only exception to this is the analytic essay, which is required of a majority of students in the 12th grade. Nonetheless “students seem not to be given assignments requiring writing of any significant length or complexity” (p. 12). Teachers are not asking students to write and teacher education programs are not training teachers to teach writing.

Spatializing Teacher Education

A spatial rendering of teacher education and writing is required to understand the impact of the lived experience of pre-service teachers both as former students and future teachers. Pre-service teachers decide what practices are appropriate for teaching writing based on their own experiences as a student writer. As discussed previously, spatial practices are ways of doing and being in a given space. These ways can include bodily movement, verbal and mental activity and exchanges, and material manipulation. Spatial practices in writing instruction show up in the worksheets (generally planning organizers), prompts used to initiate student writing (often written to imitate the prompts used for state assessments), and the mental conceptions of thesis statements and ideas/topics for writing (often limited to the teacher’s selections), and the rubrics and assessments of writing (such as the 6 + 1 writing traits).

Since 1989 teacher education programs have attempted to respond to the needs of pre-service teachers by changing the (spatial) practices of the program and expanding the clinical component, or what is generally termed student teaching. The amount of student teaching pre-service teachers are required to complete has increased from 3 weeks to a year and in some programs 16 months. The increase in student teaching hours is intended to change the relationship between the credential students, theory and teaching. That is, it is meant to overwrite teachers’ own K-12 educational experience, their lived experience as students, in order for them to engage the necessary shifts required to teach 21st century students (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Cohort groups, case study exercises, literacy autobiographies and student pen pals are just a few

of the strategies implemented in various programs across the nation to shift pre-service teachers relationship to writing as a content area and their understanding of student writing development. (Moore, 2000; Squires, 2009; Norman and Spencer, 2005). Despite these new practices, there are few opportunities for pre-service teachers to experiment with applying the new practices to their own teaching (Bainbridge and Macy, 2008). Teacher education programs have attempted to shift spatial practices, or the lived space of pre-service teachers, to create new conceptions of teaching writing yet “there has been less discussion about what goes on within the black box of the program—inside the courses and clinical experiences that candidates encounter” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 303). Teacher education programs have added new practices but they have not consistently investigated how these practices impact the everyday practice of pre-service teachers. Thus, the shift simply increases student teaching time. Analyzed theoretically, teacher education programs have conflated a shift in time with a shift in space. This confusion is the result of time taking precedence over space, where space is simply a holding container for social life. A focus on time provides no opportunity to question the conceived space, the classroom representations of writing, teachers, and students, and thus prohibits rendering a new space, a space of innovation with new ideologies, practices and experiences. Gratefully, not all credential programs have ceded space to time. There are a few programs that have produced new spatial practices that overwrite pre-service teachers’ previous lived experiences. These programs operate with the believe that “Teaching effectiveness and teacher training [must] include consideration of the context in which teachers work (Hoffman and Pearson, 2000. p. 34). These new spaces are successful in providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to examine their beliefs and to alter what is possible in the space of the classroom (Norman and Spencer, 2005, Moore, 2000, Darling-Hammond, 2006). The success of these programs is founded on a re-conception of teacher-student relations, such as pre-service teachers writing letters to students in an elementary class instead of simply reading about how elementary students write letters; the letters were not only sources of data for learning, teachers began to get to know the students as well. The limited success in teacher education programs to date is not indicative of the possibilities in shifting the experiences of teachers and students engaged in writing, it is a result of a lack of focus on writing instruction at the teacher education level and the varied ways to provide teachers with real writing experience, both as a writer themselves and with the writing of students they know. The National Writing Project, for one, offers teacher education programs a valuable paradigm for changing the way teachers develop student writers.

National Writing Project Model

The National Writing Project (NWP) had its origins in the creation of the Bay Area Writing Project. Jim Gray, a high school teacher and teacher educator, and a group of colleagues from the university and high school, believed that teachers were more adept at providing professional development to other teachers than outside consultants created the Bay Area Writing Project in 1974. Professional development in writing instruction before BAWP typically consisted of a highly controlled space in which teachers were recipients of knowledge imparted by experts (Gray, 2000). Professional development was held in large meeting rooms, lecture style. Teachers were not asked if they had clarifying questions nor were they asked about how well the agenda for the day fit with their current needs. In many ways, professional development was an extension of the university classroom. Despite the fact that the participants were not all new to teaching (some of them were 20 years into their teaching career), the relationship between

the teachers and the organization leading the workshop was akin to a professor and his undergraduates. BAWP asserted that teachers could do a better job at training each other in writing instruction than the professional educators (Gray, 2000). This new paradigm shifted teachers from the passive role of consumers to the active role of producers of knowledge. Central to the work was the engagement of teachers in cooperative learning and writing.

Jim Gray developed the Summer Institute, where through writer's workshops, author's chair, teaching demonstrations and inquiry, teachers struggle together with writing. Teachers, from kindergarten through college, experienced writing both as a student and as a teacher. NWP believes that teachers "learn from practice—the practice of writing and the practice of teaching...learning-by-doing and learning-in relationships" (Lieberman & Wood, 2003, p, 26). The goal of Summer Institutes is to understand and challenge the benefits of various teaching practices and to expand the purposes for writing beyond testing. Through the Summer Institute teachers learned and experienced the three tenets of the writing project: writing teachers must write, teachers have knowledge that should be shared with other teachers, and students must have ownership over their own writing.

The tenets of the National Writing Project are aligned with research on writing and professional learning for teachers (Applebee & Langer, 2006; Warren-Little, 2006). NWP seminars address the needs of various student populations, with the understanding that there is no one type of classroom. NWP maintains a commitment to writing in all of its diverse facets and purposes (Stokes, 2010). A study of classrooms across the nation taught by writing project teachers revealed that, "classroom writing time included many different writing strategies, such as planning producing, revising, and sharing" (NWP, 2002, p. 22). Not only did students in writing project classrooms go through the writing process more often, the writing they were asked to complete originated from their own interests and personal life. "In over half of the assigned tasks collected for the study, teachers explicitly asked students to connect the topic to significant experiences, observations, feelings, or situations in their lives" (p. 24).

NWP defines writing as more than just the English essay and, thus, teachers from all content areas are invited to attend the summer institute. The inclusion of all subject areas is based on the belief that "effective writing programs teach students to write for many audiences in many modes, including those required for subjects other than English" (p. 16). Writing is also considered a tool for thinking and demonstrating knowledge. NWP teachers ask students to use writing as a tool to craft their knowledge into original compositions. Forty-eight percent of assignments in the study required students to use writing to construct knowledge, a skill that is pivotal to success as an adult learner.

NWP has traditionally been an organization for teachers with a minimum of 3-5 years of experience in the classroom. In 2002, NWP engaged in a practice termed "widening the net," or the active expansion of the organization's mission, and began to address the needs of new teachers of writing. The New Teacher Initiative aimed to support "new teachers by deliberately engaging them in both the teaching and the learning of the discipline of writing" (Inverness, 2006, p. 3).

The New Teachers Initiative (NTI) responded to teachers in the Urban Sites Network, a NWP network that "evolved with its own philosophy and techniques for teacher inquiry, paying special attention to issues of race and ethnicity" (NWP website, 2011). The Urban Sites Network urged NWP to address the lack of well-trained, *new* teachers of writing— as new undertrained new teachers generally get their first teaching position in an urban school. Project sites within NWP had attempted to assist new teachers but discussion at the Urban Sites conference indicated

a need for a more concerted effort to address pre-service teachers' needs. After many sessions to discuss possible support programs NTI was launched in 2002. NTI was developed as a two-part, phased program, with 9 project sites implementing the program the first year and nine more sites implementing the project the second year.

The mini-institute, the focus of this study, was an extension of the NTI and modeled after the Summer Institute. The mini-institute provided pre-service teachers an opportunity to engage in the teaching and learning of writing.

Spatial Theory and the Tenets of the NWP

The National Writing Project does not make explicit reference to the works of Lefebvre (1991) and other spatial theorists, yet a spatial analysis is implicit in its foundation, the three tenets, as well as the language used by members of the organization. An analysis of each tenet through Lefebvre's trialectic— spatial practice, representations of space and representational space— demonstrates that the mission of the NWP is to produce a space, one in which teachers are central, their relationship to writing and its materials (as well as the experience of writing) are more in line with the experience of their students (Stokes, 2010).

The NWP's first tenet—teachers are the best teachers of other teachers— implies a profound spatial shift in the embodied space of the school. In decades past, and some would say currently with the onslaught of scripted programs, teachers were seen as receivers of information, participants and not leaders. The reframing of teachers as leaders of professional development requires a new conception of school and the role of teachers within the school. It requires that teachers have a new relationship to the work of schools and to the district personnel. They are no longer persons to be taught, but persons who can teach each other about how to teach students. To engrain this shift project sites that offer professional development to schools require that a teacher is present at all professional development planning meetings.

The second tenet— that there is not one way to teach writing—allows for teachers to adjust their writing program based on their experience in the classroom. "What the NWP provides to teachers is not a codified model of 'how to teach writing'" (Stokes, 2010, p. 159). NWP understands that life experience influences the ways in which people, including students, engage in the world and that teaching practices must shift accordingly. The purposes of writing and the audience one may imagine when writing are deeply connected to the lived and imagined experience of students. This is the space of innovation in the NWP model.

The third tenet— that writing teachers must write— positions the teacher in a dual role of fellow writer and teacher in the classroom. This dual role complicates the power dynamic within the classroom. Research shows that most writing teachers experience anxiety and lack of confidence in their own writing (Nathanson, et. al., 2008; Norman & Spencer, 2005). For writing teachers to write means they must also experience the shortcomings of their own writing and acknowledge the challenge in becoming a better writer. This dual perspective places teachers in a position to experience bodily and physically the experience of their students and to use their own experience as a resource for developing practices that support students in becoming competent writers.

Despite the three tenets and a purposeful new space produced by the enactment of the principles, the professional development model of the NWP is not unique. It follows an everyday

practice of workshops in which there is a lead presenter and an audience. NWP relies on the traditional space of professional development in order to shift that space to one that meets the tenets of its mission. As noted in NWP's report on the NTI, "professional development, structured as a workshop series, is a strategy that is commonly used in public school settings, and easily recognizable to teachers and administrators in contexts external to the Writing Project. No one has to explain what a workshop series is" (p.20). The difference between traditional workshops for teachers and those created by NWP is the roles that teachers embody, the engagement with writing as both material and idea, and the lived experience of the workshop. The goal of the NWP is to ensure that writing teachers experience writing through a dual perspective, as both teacher and student:

The NTI teachers we interviewed looked back on their writing experiences prior to the NTI with a bit of chagrin, noting that while they "talked the talk" with students they didn't "walk the walk" regarding their own writing. Few actually had the interest or took the time to write themselves, and if they did it was only in "traditional" formats. In contrast, NTI programs challenged these new teachers to write for themselves. (NWP, 2002. p. 15)

Employing a spatial framework to analyze the practices of the NWP is important as it allows educational researchers a window into the contexts that provide professional development and support to teachers of writing. In many respects the NWP model is a representational space in which the roles, materials and conceptions of writing classrooms are reorganized to allow for new inventions and possibilities. In fact, the NWP has shown itself to be consistently looking for new ways in which to respond to traditional conceptions of education. The founder, Jim Gray, called this widening the net, but in a spatial lens it can be considered akin to Lefebvre's theory of the potential of representational space to counteract the limitations of representations of space, or the space of educational policies. The shifts engaged to create new contexts for the changing needs of students is undergirded by a focus on inquiry. Inquiry as a professional disposition is important for teachers to possess in the current educational environment, as student populations shift, funding dwindles, and cycles of curriculum constraint and freedom occur. In order for teachers to understand and design contexts that provide opportunities for learning for all students, they must be able to engage in teaching through the dual role of teacher and learner, and they must continually be able to grasp the experience of their classrooms from both the perspective of a learner and a teacher.

Chapter 2 Qualitative Methodological Approach

This study uses qualitative methods to better understand how pre-service teachers imagine teaching writing and what influence, if any, the mini-institute has on their imagination regarding teaching writing and identifying as a writer. Qualitative research uses ethnographic methods such as participant observation, interviews and descriptive fieldnotes to investigate the everyday, commonsense interactions of participants.

I recorded data for this study with a camcorder and computer recording software. The advent of technology and the convenience of the camcorder provide new tools for engaging in ethnographic methods. Although not data itself, videotapes of research endeavors can offer a continual opportunity of positing a piece of data as, “a tape segment can be played over and over again, and questions of what is actually on the tape versus what observers think they saw can be resolved by recourse to the tape as the final authority” (Jordan and Henderson, 1995, p. 45). These tools are then analyzed through a process of coding and triangulation, a process guided by the theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter 1.

Research Questions

1. How, if at all, does participation in the RWP mini-institute impact novice teachers’ understanding of writing instruction?
2. What shifts in understanding classroom space, if any, do teachers experience? (spatial practices, representations of space, and representational space)
3. Which practices from the institute, if any, do participants implement in their teaching practice?

Methodological Approach

In this study I engaged in ethnographic methods. Ethnographic methods involve “sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, respecting, recording, [and] respecting” (Willis & Trondman, 2000, p. 5) the lived experience of the participants. Tools of ethnography are interviews, fieldnotes, video and the collection of artifacts. I considered the institute to be a focal event in which participants were engaged in a meaningful interaction where collective sense-making, learning, and literacy development were occurring (Goodwin, 1994). To analyze the data collected, I engaged in a system of coding. Coding is a systematic way of organizing data for analysis, including highlighting key events and using graphic representations such as videos, charts, and transcripts of dialogue (Bogdan and Bicklen, 2007). In analyzing the data I also drew on discourse analysis. Discourse Analysis seeks to understand how language and the production of text work in tandem to create subjectivities. Luke (1995/96) asserts “Subjectivities are strategically constructed and contested through textual practices and they are crafted in the dynamics of everyday life” (Luke, p. 21). Schools are contested sites of power where teachers and students attempt to construct identities; professional development opportunities are key interaction where teachers, through talk and positioning, index their relationship to the content, students, school site, and teaching as a profession. Lastly I draw on the emerging field of classroom studies. Classroom studies interrogate school spaces through analysis of the everyday practices and processes, relations and

materials of classrooms, intent on discovering how these practices, processes and relations hinder or enable learning (Sheehy, 2010).

Video Taping

I used one digital camcorder to videotape the institute. The camcorder was placed in the corner of the front of the room, high at an angle. The position of the camera allowed me to capture all of the participants while at the same time placing the camera in an unobtrusive place. (Hall, 2007). Each day I alternated which corner the camera was placed in order to provide new points of focus for myself as I reviewed the tapes in the evening. Alternating the location ensured that I would not become focused on only the participants in the center of the screen (Barron & Engle, 2007; Jordan & Henderson, 1995). Videotaping also allowed me to analyze the seating pattern of the participants and the leaders of the institute. This is especially important as this study uses spatial theory as its primary theoretical framework. Spatial theory requires that space is not taken for granted, including something that can be seen as simple as where a person chooses to sit. Observation does not allow such an opportunity to (re)view interaction of participants. Videotaping provided the opportunity to go back and rewind an interaction to gain a better understanding of the relations involved and the often minute yet important turns of talk occurring, especially those done covertly, such as the whispering between two participants when they learned that the leader of the institute was going to be in their writing group.

Interviews

Interviews allow researchers to probe and engage in guided conversations to allow participants to frame their experiences in their own words and in some cases to choose their own points of focus. I engaged in both formal and informal interviewing as a tool to hone in on my research focus and as a check to see if my areas of focus were valid to the central experience of the participant's. Informal interviews took place at the end of the institute activities after all other participants had left to provide privacy. Formal interviews followed an interview protocol I developed (Appendix 1) and were scheduled with participants in advance. Participants were asked to choose a location in which they felt safe speaking, some chose a room on campus, while others preferred a local café. I asked open-ended questions to provide an opportunity for elongated conversation as well as to not constrain participants from sharing their views. I paid close attention to participants' speech patterns, including wait times between responses to not close off communication (Briggs, 1994). I transcribed the interviews shortly after the interviews and if necessary sent follow-up emails for clarification. Informal interviews generally lasted 15 to 20 minutes and formal interviews lasted from 30 minutes to an hour.

Focal Site: Rosewood Writing Project

A member of the National Writing Project network and a beginning teacher educator, I began to wonder the applicability of the Writing Project model for pre-service teachers. I learned that the Rosewood Writing Project, one of seventeen writing project sites in California, had

received a mini-grant from NWP and plans to create a mini-institute were already in process². The mini-institute was funded through the New Teacher Initiative established in 2002 by the National Writing Project to address the writing instruction needs of new teachers³. I contacted the director Delisa, who was willing to let me observe the mini-institute.

I selected RWP as the site because not only was it time efficient, but the fact that a program was already developed meant I could shift my focus from developing a mini-institute to observing its potential benefits. I could now situate myself outside of the designing of the institute. This shift is important in teacher education research as teacher educators often engage in research of their own courses. Implications for teacher education from research of one's own course often leave pivotal questions unaddressed, such as what was the impact of the dual role of the researcher as teacher and researcher (Risko, et. al, 2008). Choosing RWP as the research site eliminated this issue, as the mini-institute had been already designed before my inquiry. Delisa offered me an opportunity to change the institute but I declined, asking only that a set of pre-survey questions be added to the registration form and that Delisa make herself available for an interview so that I could learn the goals of the mini-institute. Delisa and I met three times so that I could understand the context and goals for the mini-institute. Delisa stated the main goal of the mini-institute:

We are going to dig deeper into the thinking... student teachers go to Joan Cone⁴ or a Saturday Seminar but they don't have the thinking behind it. That comes from experience. Things will be made far more explicit about what is going on in your teacher head. (Personal interview, 2010)

Participant Selection

One of NWP's core values is that engagement in professional development should be voluntary. All of the participants volunteered to attend the mini-institute during the week of their Fall break from university courses. Participants were drawn from several local traditional and alternative credentialing programs. RWP created a registration form and emailed it to all of the

² Initially I approached another California writing project to create a mini-institute for pre-service teachers. This inquiry was the result of teaching two quarters in the credential program at the university the writing project was housed. In my time teaching, I was remiss to discover that the collaborative syllabus for the course had no specific opportunities for the students to engage in writing, nor to discuss teaching writing to students. The director, inquired with other directors about my proposal, which led to my discovery that an institute at the Rosewood Writing Project was already planned.

³ RWP's interest in assisting pre-service teachers is not a new focus. Like all other writing projects, RWP's directors often teach in the credential programs and supervise student teachers. In fact back in the 1980s, a RWP teacher consultant, someone who leads professional development for local sites, developed a mini-institute for credential students, which was offered for several years.

⁴ Joan Cone is a national educational consultant whose work is known for focusing on detracking English classrooms and providing equitable access to rigorous teaching for diverse student populations.

local credential programs. Due to their close relationship with the local universities, both the director and co-director, gave a short presentation informing credential students of the mini-institute. Seven credential students decided to participate in the mini-institute. Two of the participants were in an elementary education credential program while four were in an secondary credential program and one was an intern in an alternative credential program. All of the participants were part of credential programs with a specific focus on urban education. Participants in the mini-institute had student taught for six weeks but had yet to student-teach a full semester, except for the participant from the alternative credentialing program, who was teaching full-time as the lead teacher.

Name	Credential Program
James	Elementary
Laleh	Elementary
Marissa	Elementary
Josey	Alternative Elementary
George	Secondary
Mr. Z	Secondary
John	Secondary

I sent a private email to all those who participated requesting an opportunity to interview them about their experience in the institute. Three participants responded to the initial email; however only one participant, Mr. Z, actually scheduled a follow-up interview. I sent a second email to all participants at which point, Laleh, one of the original three participants who had agreed to an interview, scheduled an interview. The third interview, with James, came after a chance encounter on the campus where the mini-institute was held. I did not attempt to reach any of the participants who did not respond after the second email. I interviewed each of the three participants, Mr. Z, Laleh and James, for thirty minutes. I then listened and coded the interviews. The goal of the interviews was to gather data on the participant’s learnings from the institute as well as to discern whether observation in their classroom was possible. Out of the three participants I chose to observe Mr. Z in his classroom. This decision was based on a number of factors including the fact that Mr. Z was willing to be observed; James’s student teaching for his credential program had already ended; Laleh felt that writing was not central to her student teaching placement, nor did she believe it would be central to the teaching job she expected to have the upcoming year (I discuss this further in a subsequent chapter).

Key Informant

Mr. Z was a key informant for this study. Mr. Z unveiled a consistent awareness with space as being relational as well as physical. He often referred to space and when asked to define his use of the term, he would differentiate his meaning by stating, “It is more than just physical, it is the mental space, the emotional space, the space that peer support creates” (Mr. Z, Post-Interview). Given my interest to understand teacher imagination and the classroom space, I wanted to see how Mr. Z’s beliefs about writing and space unfolded once he was teaching. Due to the pressures of his credentialing program, a bout of sickness and the interruption of the California Standardized Test to his student teaching, I was only able to observe him twice in the

Spring after the mini-institute. Although these two observations gave me some insight, they were insufficient for getting a fuller sense of how the experience of the mini-institute and the context of his classroom intersected. I asked Mr. Z if he would be willing to let me to observe him into his first year of teaching in the upcoming Fall. Mr. Z was in the process of interviewing for a position at his student placement site, which was also the high school he attended as a student. Unfortunately, he did not get the job; instead he was offered an 80% position in a neighboring school district. Mr. Z and I decided that it would be best to start observations a month or so after the school year had begun to allow for the typical shifting of students that occur during the first few weeks of school, a time in which counselors attempt to balance classrooms.

I observed Mr. Z for ten weeks as a participant-observer. Unlike like my observation of the mini-institute, in these observations I engaged in the classroom activities with the students. I had an assigned seat and when Mr. Z changed students' seats to further build community, I was also given a new seat. I audiotaped these observations and created fieldnotes. I also collected artifacts from the observations such as worksheets, handouts such as pages from the textbook, and student work. At the end of each week, I interviewed Mr. Z to gather more information and clarification on key incidents within my observations.

Data Collection Procedures

Phase I

I asked the director of the institute to include the following three questions as part of the registration form:

1. What knowledge would you like to gain in the area of writing instruction?
2. What writing skills and abilities do you want your students to have by the end of the school year?
3. Describe your own experience with writing.

I wanted to get an overview of the participant's relationship with writing and their expectations for their students. Although participants answered these questions before the mini-institute, I did not have access to their answers until after the mini-institute. I used this questionnaire to triangulate the responses from the three participants who agreed to follow-up interviews.

Phase II

I video and audio recorded the mini-institute. I wrote fieldnotes in order to document key moments; specifically moments that highlighted a shift in or disbelief of spatial practice or relations within the mini-institute. I also noted explicit talk from the director, co-director and presenters about shifting classroom space to allow for particular writing events. I noted these key moments by marking the time of interaction so that I could review the video and get thorough notes on the interaction, specifically turns of talk, uptake and negotiated talk— that is, when participants engage in ongoing discussion to arrive at an understanding or an agreement to disagree. Intermittently I interviewed the participants to gather some initial data on their experience in the mini-institute, making sure to interview participants who voiced disbelief about the unfolding of the institute and the spatial practices in which participants were asked to engage. I did not participate in any of the activities, though it was clear to participants that I was actively observing the interactions. I refused all offers to partner with participants except at lunch at

which time I engaged in short conversations as we ate. At times I assisted the director and co-director in handling administrative issues that would have been disruptive to the institute, such as redirecting a group of students who expected to have a meeting in the room we were using.

Phase III

After the mini-institute I interviewed three participants: Laleh, James and Mr. Z, the three participants who turned out to voice surprise with their experience in the mini-institute. The interviews lasted thirty minutes to an hour. Each interview centered on a key incident for the participant based on a review of the video data and my field notes. James's interview focused on his identification as a writer of fiction; Laleh's interview centered on the spatial practices and her own experience as a student writer; Mr. Z's interview centered on his understandings of the classroom space and his imagined classroom community. At the end of each interview, I asked the participant to share any thoughts that were not covered by my open-ended questions and to give me a purview of their student teaching assignment for the rest of the school semester as well as their projected teaching role for the upcoming school year. (See Appendix)

Phase IV

I observed Mr. Z in his classroom for ten weeks. For the first five weeks I observed him every day for one hour. For the last second five weeks I observed him only on Fridays for one hour, to see the routine writing event Mr. Z called the Novella. I audio recorded each observation and also took inconspicuous fieldnotes, mostly when students were taking an examination. I collected all handouts, and each week Mr. Z sent me his lesson plans, although these plans were often altered. At the end of each week I interviewed Mr. Z for fifteen to thirty minutes about the class, his planning, and the writing goals for his students. Each day before the start of his class and often after, I had informal conversations with Mr. Z regarding school-wide issues, such as new programs for behavior students, incidents within his classroom before I arrived or earlier in the week, issues or concerns that he was struggling with in balancing the given curriculum and his social justice perspective, his interactions with colleagues and administration, and managing the pressures of teaching while completing his masters program. These informal conversations often gave me focus during subsequent observations. Informal conversations became regular, and so I often began audio recording before the start of class and let the recording continue well after the students had left for the day.

Data Analysis Procedures

The focus of this study is to better understand how pre-service teachers imagine teaching writing and how their imagination is impacted by participation in the institute, an institute that purposefully attempts to shift teacher perspectives of teaching writing by having teachers experience writing as a student while at the same time engaging in metacognition and reflection. I analyzed the data collected through a process of coding for patterns and examples of Lefebvre's trialectic: perceived, conceived and lived space. Spatial theory as a framework draws on belief and disbelief as an indicator of a perceived space. I looked for patterns of participants' belief and disbelief across observations and interviews. I checked multiple sources of data, such as interviews, observations, and video for coding interactions that seemed significant to ensure analysis could be substantiated. In my first coding of the data I highlighted participant speech that indicated belief or disbelief with the interaction of focus, recollections of being a student,

statements about writing ability, imagination of teaching in the upcoming year and comparison of experiences in their credential program to the mini-institute.

To better understand participants' take on the interaction, I went back through the data to code materials, the conceived. Materials are an important component of producing space— in fact, this is the component that most lay people grasp when engaging in a conversation about space. I coded for instances in which participants were surprised at the materials engaged to produce writing, such as the demo in which they were required to eat lemons and chocolate or play with train sets. I also paid attention to the ways in which participant engaged with typical classroom material, such as worksheets, texts, and writing tools.

Lastly, I coded for patterns in relations. Relationships are important in spatial theory, and formal education is one of the most researched settings for how student and teacher identities are formed through relational interaction, particularly the role of power in education. In current teacher education programs, relationships are also placed nearer to the center (Bainbridge & Macy, 2008)— students are placed in cohort groups and ask to be reflective of their educational experience and their relationship to the content, teacher and peers— yet the application of shifting the power dynamics in classrooms is more complex than reading theory on how to build a classroom community and culture. I coded for instances in which relations between participants felt unexpected.

Positionality of the Researcher

I selected this research site based on my relationship with the National Writing Project. An English teacher for 10 years, I attended the Summer Institute in 2005 as a way to develop my own writing instruction. I would be considered a highly networked writing project teacher. I am a writing project consultant, often leading presentations and engaging in research for the network in various locations across California and the nation. My role as a teacher consultant and member of the advisory council allowed me direct interaction with the new director who heard of my interest through the network and informed me that an institute had already been planned and funded.

In 2009, I led an English Methods course for a California university and found that the content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers was insufficient for the role they would soon be asked to embody. In reviewing the research I found that, although writing is significant within discussions of student achievement, there is much less talk about the development of writing teachers. Consequently, research involving teacher educators often is based on that individual's course and thus does not exhibit clear methodology or reveal the complexities involve in researching one's own community (Jacobs-Huey, 2002).

In an attempt to increase my distance, I was overzealous in limiting my participation. I found this to be quite challenging. In fact, the first day of the institute several of the participants approached me to engage with them in the activities as they saw the director and TCs engaged as equal participants. In order to create more distance and clearly establish my role as a researcher, I marked myself as a non-participant by not sitting in the u-shaped arrangement; instead I sat in the far back with a book. Although I was not actively reading my book, participants read my distance as a clearer indication that I was not a full participant. I succeeded in creating a boundary but my placement in the room also hindered my engagement as a true participant observer and as such my fieldnotes were lacking in more qualifying details of participant bodily

and non-verbal communications; however the video of the mini-institute allowed me to capture a level of this element.

Chapter 3 The Mini-Institute for Pre-Service Teachers

The mini-institute for pre-service teachers was held four consecutive days from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in January 2010 at a local university. There were seven participants, six of which were earning their credential at the university where the institute occurred. The seventh participant was a teacher intern and unlike the rest of the participants, was teaching in her own classroom and was given time off by her principal to attend. Three of the seven participants were earning credentials to teach at the secondary level, while the remaining four were earning credentials to teach at the elementary level. Although only one participant was actively teaching at the time of the institute, all of the participants had spent time in classrooms teaching either through course-work placement (often called student teaching) or from prior teaching experience before entering their respective programs. In fact one participant, Mr. Z, had taught a whole year as a long-term substitute in a third grade class before entering the credential program. Unlike most training that pre-service teachers receive, the mini-institute was completely voluntary and participants attended during a non-university session. Despite the fact that the professional development was optional, 5 of the participants attended all four days. Josey, an intern, was required to miss a day and return to her job due to a walkthrough by district officials. John did not attend the third day due to illness.

The mini-institute followed the format of a standard National Writing Project (NWP) summer institute: demonstrations, research articles, writing groups, and food. In each of the four days there were two demonstrations. Demonstrations (which were lead by a current classroom teacher, with the exception of the director who had since returned to teaching part-time) are classroom lessons that participants experience as if they were students, with an added component of metacognitive reflection in which both the leader of the lesson and the participants discuss the lesson and its benefits and barriers for other teaching contexts. To deepen the understanding of the lessons and the philosophy behind the NWP model, participants read research and practitioner articles related to the teaching and the construction of writing. These articles were then discussed in both small and large groups to grapple with the potential applications and relevance to urban schools, a context most of the teachers expected to enter at the end of their credential program. Participants also participated in a writing group. Two afternoons for three hours participants facilitated their own engagement in writing through writing groups. The mini-institute concluded with an author's chair where participants read writing developed during their writing groups.

It may seem odd to point out that the participants were given breakfast and lunch at the events; not only was food provided, but menus from specialty restaurants were passed around for participants to choose their own meal. However minute this may seem the provisions marked a sense of care for the teachers who though they had not started an official position within schools noted the presence of food with great surprise and appreciation. In fact one participant wrote in his final evaluation of the institute, "It did not feel like a 'training' or 'professional development' at all. I think this might be because of the food" (George, reflection letter).

Beyond its optional status, the mini-institute presented writing through practices that were a significant shift from the way in which participants had, up to this point, experienced the formal process of indoctrination into teaching. Traditional professional development in the teaching profession is rarely optional, especially for pre-service teachers. In fact, many of the participants had participated in a required writing-focused course during their credential

program. The course was a week-long and held before the official start of the university school term. The similarities between the two writing focused courses—the university sponsored course and the mini-institute provided by RWP— were limited: topic, amount of time and location. The practices within these programs differed greatly. The two components of the mini-institute that deviated most from the participants’ lived experience of learning to be a teacher were the demonstrations and the writing groups. Most importantly, these two components make up the majority of the mini-institute activities. Out of the 24 hours participants spent engaged in the mini-institute, 7 1/4 hours were dedicated to writing groups, which is nearly a third of the time. Ten hours and 45 minutes were dedicated to demonstrations, which engaged the participants in writing and positioned them as students. In total, participants spent two-thirds of their time in the mini-institute actively engaged in writing.

This amount of writing is unprecedented in most credential programs. Research shows that a majority of credential programs require no focus on the teaching of writing. Most teacher education programs also do not assign writing in genres other than the academic paper (National Writing Project and Nagin, 2003; Risko, et. al, 2008; Squires, et. al, 2009). Aligned with the research participants stated that their university courses were mainly centered on theory. Participants had been given only one non-traditional academic writing assignment: to write a children’s book. Participants experienced a high-level of disbelief in regards to the amount of time given to their engagement in writing. Laleh was the most vocal in bringing this to the forefront of the discussion. “It was like totally different than any experience I’ve had before. Even we did something like this with like someone who works with the Writing Project and still it didn’t feel like this and there are people in our cohort that we know really well” (Laleh, Day 2). Laleh’s disbelief gives insight into how her experience exceeded what she had expected given her understanding of what it meant to learn about writing within her credential program. She struggled to pinpoint the shift, noting that the participants were already familiar to her and so was the idea of spending time on writing, yet the NWP model offered an experience that was drastically different.

In describing their experience during the institute and during follow-up interviews, participants expressed disbelief, finding that the writing activities felt more engaging than the way they had experienced writing as students. This new experience forced them to think of writing from the perspective of students and whether or not the writing instruction they had planned and/or implemented during their student teaching was as engaging.

The difference in experience is not accidental. The Rosewood Writing Project makes experience central to its model of professional development. As examined in Chapter 1, key to the NWP model are the relationships, material, and conceived space. Although the mini-institute took place within a university classroom, the role and practices, from where people sat to how the director positioned herself, were all geared towards creating an experience for participants that forced them to both think and experience writing through the dual lens of researcher and practitioner. Each day the director arranged the tables in a rectangle and explicitly chose a different seat, encouraging participants to do so as well. Delisa not only realigned her role within the institute by not keeping a marked place, she also participated in every activity and joined a writing group.

Delisa’s focus on relationships and space is not unusual; it is the implicit way most writing project teachers view classroom space. I would argue that results from how the NWP seeks to realign the teacher’s role within professional development from the “teacher in charge” to the dual role of teacher and student, and at any given point of time any participant can embody

the role of teacher and student. At one point Delisa had participants post their work up on the walls of the room. When asked why she chose to do this she responded, “It is like we stake our claim here. [The] writing makes it public, it claims the space” (Delisa, Interview, Day 2).

Participant belief and disbelief

The break from the expected allows insight into the norms of a place. Representations of space shape how a space is experienced. To be clear, schools are produced spaces. Urban schools produce a different space than suburban schools (Buendia, et. al., 2004; Brown, et. al. 2004). Moreover, urban schools of predominantly Caucasian students strive to produce a different space than that of majority minority schools. These differences are not haphazard, as policy makers and district personnel conceptualize these schools differently and those conceptualizations play out in marking boundaries for attendance, financial decisions, appropriate content for students to learn, and the identity formation of students and families.

Space is produced through a constant back and forth between the past and the present. “All ‘subjects’ are situated in a space in which they must either recognize themselves, or lose themselves” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 35). Participants in the institute continually went into their past and back to the present to understand the practices of the institute and locate themselves within those practices. For some, locating themselves was difficult and they experienced disbelief in the experience. In re-represented space people often experience disbelief, depending on how similar the re-represented space matches their memory and/or imagination of the experience they are expecting. Sheehy (2010) notes, “memory plays a central [role] in the spatial relations of places because we act with and from memory” (p. 2010, p. 7–8). People can have fluid engagement in space if their memories of that space and the practices are in line with the current experience. When the experience involves practices that are not in line with memory, processing the experience is done through contrasting what is occurring and what was expected.

Schools not only carry this sense of memory, but so do individual content areas within traditional schools, such as English and more specifically writing. Research shows that pre-service teachers have an identifiable set of beliefs about writing and the ability to teach writing to students (Norman and Spencer, 2005; Wang and Odell, 2004; Nathanson, et. al, 2008). This memory of schools has been widely researched and termed “apprenticeship through observation”. Teacher education programs have long struggled with pre-service teachers’ memory and often they attempt to have pre-service teachers engage in practices that they may not have experienced in their own K-12 education, such as the inclusion of Socratic seminars. In the case of urban schools it is difficult to get middle-class pre-service teachers to understand that the practices they experienced as students are not widespread in urban schools, including such basics as clean premises or textbooks and supplies for every student. This shift is difficult, even more so beyond the credential program, when new teachers are trying to mediate their understanding of teaching with colleagues who have their own views, sometimes opposing, on how writing should be taught (Smagorinsky, et. al, 2008).

The NWP model anticipates pre-service teachers drawing upon memory to understand writing. Demonstrations and activities are designed for them to experience them as if they were students in order for teachers to consider how their teaching practice might impact students and how they can provide access to writing for diverse student populations. The discussion at the end of each demonstration is an opportunity for participants to analyze their experience, consider

strategies to address tensions, and acknowledge successes. Participants in the institute did experience tension and success. Tensions were often a product of disbelief, or a break from an expected practice or an experience that brought into question a participant's memory of writing.

In the institute participants struggled with conceiving writing in ways that differed from their experience as students and even further struggled with imagining students of different socio-economic and racial backgrounds as being able to engage in writing the way they experienced it during the institute. This was evident in participant speech, as they recalled elementary through college experiences of writing and vocalized their surprise at their experience or the application of such experiences in traditional school spaces.

Pre-service teachers are generally focused on showing students "mistakes" in their writing rather than focusing on content and teaching students how to revise (Wang and Odell, 2004). Participants recalled teachers who told them to make revisions but never showed them how. "I used to have a teacher that would just circle the whole paragraph really big...like what is that supposed to mean?" (George, Day 2). The notion that teaching writing means correcting students is another hurdle that teacher educators have to jump. Pre-service teachers believe that most of teaching writing is giving critical feedback. The ever-looming red pen of correction is vivid in many pre-service teachers minds. Marissa shared during group discussion her memory of the red pen marks. "It makes me think about being in high school and there was this one teacher I had. I remembered just seeing in red ink NO and that's it" (Marissa, Day 2)

The NWP model encourages teachers to focus on students' strengths as well as their areas for improvement. This shift from critical to positive feedback as an entry point in discussing writing caused disbelief in some of the participants. Laleh admitted to being unsure that positive feedback would be given, and thus she waited to share until other participants took the risk first, to test the intersection of what was said to be a given and its actualization. "I think after we heard positive feedback a couple of times we were like, oh, I can do this, they are going to say really nice things to me about my writing" (Laleh, Day 1). Laleh's hesitation is important as it exemplifies the fact that students often resist participation until they are certain that the exchange is one of minimal risks and has use value. Sheehy (2010) has noted that objects of study in classrooms, such as worksheets (or in this case evaluation of writing) have long histories and complex relations. Evaluation of writing is tied to the state writing test, the "right" way to write, and the imagined tireless work of a gifted author to create a decent piece of writing. None of these relations fit within a frame of beginning with positive feedback. James was more willing to embody a new role as a fiction writer because the new practice of situating feedback within positive aspects made trying other genres of writing less risky:

We would always start with positive feedback so when I started my piece, I was still a little nervous, but comfortable knowing we would start out with positive feedback and not jump into literary criticism right away. It was totally constructive feedback but again it was constructive feedback in that we would start out with some of the good things and then move on and be like these are some things I think you should work on. (Post-interview)

The institute also demonstrated new ways to initiate writing (spatial practices), specifically starting writing through the introduction of new materials such as art supplies and bodily experiences such as tasting food. In two activities on descriptive writing participants drew and ate before beginning to write. Participants were given a case of crayons and markers and a

piece of white paper and then asked to draw a monster. Once they had completed their drawing they were asked to write a description of their monster using the drawing as a resource for descriptive language. The written description was then given to another participant to recreate the monster described. This activity gave the participants a resource for writing, a true audience and immediate feedback on whether or not they were successful. The participants then engaged in writing about the sour quality of a lemon, but they did this only **after** tasting a slice of lemon. In her reflection on the experience, Laleh articulated how the new practices can make writing more accessible and create clear distinctions between clear and unclear writing rather than simply being told to make the writing more descriptive:

I hated when my teacher would tell me to show not tell when I was in elementary school and high school. I just remember that really vividly like them saying ‘You need to show not tell’ but this didn’t feel like that experience at all to me even though that is exactly what we were doing. It felt, cause there was an actual experience, you know, it was real. Not like I was writing some story that I didn’t even want to be writing and then they are telling me to show not tell. (Day 3)

Is this academic? Writing, genres, and word play

Participants in the institute were engaged and found the new practices welcomed, yet they still held onto the notion that ‘real’ writing was analytic writing, the dominant practice of writing the standard five-paragraph essay. Dominate practices such as the academic essays or worksheets help to regulate the English classroom and define what is appropriate learning. “Deeply inscribed discourse of disciplines order(s) not only real practices but also what students imagined as possible and appropriate practice,” (Sheehy, 2010, p.74). Dominant practices also help to evaluate students’ academic progress and create a hierarchy of learning. In schools learning is partitioned into content area, and within content areas students are ranked and given access to the content that correlates with their ranking, thus producing roles of high achiever and low achiever (Simmons, 2010).

The status of students within the hierarchy is considered a reflection of the ability of the teacher, creating a hierarchy of good teacher and bad teacher. In highly tested schools, the content becomes even narrower. Participants in the institute, like most teachers in training, had been students in such partitioning and ranking educational systems for more than twelve years. Their experience of writing in classrooms more than likely had centered around the dominant practice of writing the academic essay. In fact, their ability to conquer the task of the academic essay opened the door for them to enter credential programs. So it was not unusual that the participants wondered with each activity if the writing created could be considered truly academic, despite their intuition that the writing they were experiencing could help students develop into better writers. This concern for only engaging in appropriate practices extended to participants’ personal choices in choosing a genre for their writing group, a time dedicated solely for their own growth in writing. When given the opportunity to choose the genre they wanted to write in, participants sought reassurance that indeed all genres of writing were appropriate.

James, whose goal was to become more confident in fiction writing, hesitated when given the opportunity to write fiction. He asked several times if it was okay for him to continue working on a fiction piece he had begun during an activity on the first day of the institute.

Despite answers in the affirmative from the director it was difficult for James to hold onto the notion that fiction writing was truly in line with the goal of writing in the program, “That sounds really good. I’m just double checking so we can work on the piece we started today?” In an age of scripted curricula and writing for a narrow audience, writing to learn and to explore one’s capacity for writing is usually limited. James began the institute with the belief that he could not write fiction, that as a writer he was only capable of producing the academic paper:

I have not done a lot of writing except analytical stuff you know. I just over time got really used to analytical writing. I was an English major in undergrad you know, [so] going into education it was still analytical writing, like observation based. It was the kind of writing I was mostly used to. I just feel like I really kind of lost touch with creative writing. (James, Post-interview)

Activities that allowed participants the opportunity to get to know one another through writing, engage in wordplay, and create expressive pieces such as poetry were considered fun and hence outside the space of academic writing. Despite the fact that participants voiced an understanding that getting to know students was an important part of teaching and creating a space in which students felt they had voice within their writing, questions arose regularly whether such writing was academic enough to be appropriate for the classroom. Mr. Z, who continued to articulate the need for his future students to see writing as a tool for empowerment and cultural identity, openly questioned writing activities that exemplified ways in which writing could be used to express cultural identity. In the debriefing conversations, after three activities that required participants to create poems and anagrams using words constructed from their names and write a line in a poem entitle “It’s About Time,” he commented, “I like that it was wordplay which is fun but is still drawing out vocabulary, drawing out thoughts of maybe how these words that are found in your name may relate to you. It may not be “academic” but it is still building vocabulary” (Mr. Z, Day 1). Mr. Z’s observation is interesting in that writing development requires vocabulary development. Vocabulary development is dependent on creating relationships between words and concepts already within a person’s field of knowledge, yet Mr. Z makes a clear distinction that the vocabulary development within the activity is not “academic” because it involved wordplay.

Supervision is also a mechanism of producing space. Schools are highly supervised spaces. For teachers supervision is embedded in their students’ standardized test scores. Pre-service teachers are generally more concerned that the allocation of time within the classroom reflect the priority of preparing students to do well on the test. Josey, already teaching in her own classroom, felt this pressure more than the other participants. She raised the concern with using class time on fun writing activities. “These are awesome but what about the time, do we have the time to do this. Would they (administrators) consider this something important? Right now it is all about time. Like would this help students with the (standardized) tests? Cause this is fun!” (Josey, Day 1) Josey saw writing as a tool for preparing for the test. Preparation for the standardized test as a lived, bodily experience should not be fun. Deviation from this expected lived experience could be cause for reprimand from an administrator.

Participants not only questioned whether the activities, including free-writing and implementing a class check-in, were appropriate for the academic classroom, they also wondered if languages other than English were appropriate. In finding words from their names to write a poem, Mr. Z chose a Spanish word, which Laleh immediately questioned. The prohibition of

languages other than English in classrooms is embedded in the politics of language and power (Smitherman, 2002). Spanish, in particular, is a contested language of use in schools and is directly tied to race and the projected loss of power for Whites as the population of Mexicans rises within the state of California, prompting anti-immigration bills.

Where I am going writing won't be important: Geography, Race, and Writing

Laleh was a second-year credential student who planned on teaching at an elementary school located in a high-poverty, high-crime, majority African American neighborhood. Darling Hammond (2006) notes, "in the classrooms most beginning teachers will enter, at least 25% of students live in poverty and many of them lack basic food, shelter, and healthcare...and about 40% are members of racial/ethnic 'minority' groups" (p. 301). During the mini-institute she was the most vocal about the way in which she experienced the professional development, constantly comparing it to the credential program and the relationships formed between her peers and writing. During her post-interview she spent a great deal of time talking about how much she appreciated that presenters continually made space for her to think about how teaching writing in various contexts would shift implementation of the practices demonstrated. Laleh imagined teaching writing to low-literacy African American students. "I know that the school I am going to work at will not have an emphasis in writing. I am real certain cause like every school that I have worked at in Parktown has a real weak emphasis in writing" (Post-interview, 2010). Laleh tied the students' race, geographical location and writing together. "I don't think it will be as successful with my students. I don't know why...we all have high expectations of each other and ourselves and students don't have those high expectations." Laleh made it clear in her interview that when she imagined her students, they were poor and of color, in contrast to the students she believed the strategies she was learning in the institute were aimed. "In my mind the entire week I was negotiating these things may work for students in Rosewood... I knew whatever I learned at the institute I would need to like tamper it a little bit for it to work for black and brown students."

Educationally, the nation's long held belief in mental differences between races continues to impact education. From segregation to the bell curve to the achievement gap, students of color are often imagined as failing students (Solorzano, 1997). Part of their inability to succeed is due to the place in which they live; their neighborhoods are spaces of lack, unproductive. As Mills (1997) notes the connection between people and land is considered deterministic. "You are what you are in part because you originate from a certain kind of space, and that space has those properties in part because it is inhabited by creatures like yourself" (p. 42). This sense of environmental determinism is what urban-focused credential programs, such as the one Laleh attended, attempts to mediate, yet as evidenced in Laleh's language the racialized space of schools in urban areas remains. The link between bodies and space, in this case the African American body and the space of West Parktown, is a signifier for failure (Kosek, 2006). West Parktown has been tied to African American bodies since the incorporation of the city (Self, 2003). West Parktown's tie to black bodies entrenches the space with other symbolic characteristics of blackness, such as a failure to take writing, a tool for power, seriously (but cf. Gates, 1986; McHenry & Heath, 1994).

The connection Laleh made between blackness and writing was contradictory, in that Laleh placed a focus on social justice and writing while at the same time voicing little expectation for writing to be present in spaces such as West Parktown. Not only were Laleh's perspectives in

conflict, her lived experience in trying the strategies with students gave her dissenting information. The level of engagement she experienced she attributed to the fact that she and the other participants had high expectations of themselves and writing, yet when she implemented the activities within her placement she was surprised to observe students just as engaged. “I remember when like me and Mr. Z would find a word we would be like oh my gosh look. My kids were doing that as well. I hadn’t seen them like that for a lot of the time, we were doing cut and dry stuff.” Laleh was surprised at the mini-institute because writing and social justice shared space, where students of diverse backgrounds were considered writers.

Laleh’s experience with the activities as opposed to just learning about them through lecture gave her a barometer of engagement. Although she was skeptical throughout the institute and still held to her belief that the school she would teach at would be weak in writing, her position on trying the activities she had experienced in the institute shifted. It is important to note that the impact of such experiences, like the institute, may not be evident in the first few years of teaching. In fact, Grossman and colleagues (2000) concluded that it may take several years after finishing a credential program before pre-service teachers learn how to efficiently and successfully implement theory learned in teacher education programs. Laleh, however, has already identified RWP as a resource for support in her attempt to shift her understanding of writing and black and brown students:

I think that I will try to connect with RWP and do things through them, ‘cause I know they can be powerful, ‘cause I have seen them be powerful. Who thought that’s what RWP was made for. I don’t know maybe it was, but I always thought it was for the high achieving to get them writing more and more. I didn’t see how it could apply to other kids. First of all, what we have already in the notebook I will be referencing because I have a stack of resources and they are the strongest resources. I really clearly know why I would be doing it and how to do it cause I’ve already tried it (Post-interview)

Laleh’s imagination of her students and the role of writing at her future school site is not just a personal opinion, it was shaped through the linking of bodies to spaces and the rooting of identities in “normative notions of space and difference” (Kosek, 2006, p. 112). Furthermore, Laleh identified as a person of color, she is Persian, an identity that is sometimes taken for granted as translating into a resistance of normative beliefs about students of color. Policy makers, state education officials, and the media craft spaces of education through consistent textual and visual information, tying failing schools and students of color together. These conceptions, or representations of space, run the gamut of deficit thinking, poorly maintained facilities, under-prepared staff, violence and disruption, and low academic expectations. Pre-service teachers who have imagined teaching in very different contexts struggle to adapt and flourish. The shift in space from teacher education programs to school sites is not neutral; the relationships, materials, goals and ideologies of those inside schools, and how this differs from those of the university and pre-service teachers themselves, must be taken into account (Grossman, et. al 2000, Smagorinsky, et. al, 2008).

Nonetheless, experiences during the student teaching and induction period can influence a teacher’s perception. Furthermore, organizations like the RWP can offer continual support for new teachers. Research has found that new teachers who attempt to implement novel practices in their individual classroom space can be isolated from colleagues. Engagement with like-minded colleagues through organizations such as RWP can lessen experiences of isolation through an

extended network. Although student teaching and the induction period are not an appropriate period to argue values and implement new practices (Smargorinsky, et. al, 2008), participation in the mini-institute had given participants their first memories of how writing can be engaged in the classroom.

Teachers as writers

Shifting beliefs of pre-service teachers about teaching writing is most effective when they are given opportunities to embody the role of writer. The NWP's foundational tenet is that teachers of writers must be writers themselves in order to assist students in developing their writing skills. No one is exempt from the role of writer, not even the director of project sites. Participants were surprised to learn that the director and co-director would be joining the writing groups. Initially, they believed that the director and co-director would be in an authoritative role—there to supervise them as opposed to joining them as equals. They whispered amongst themselves until Laleh finally asked the question aloud: “I imagined it as like five writers in a group that facilitates themselves so you are not facilitating right, like a teacher?” (Laleh, fieldnotes, Day 2),

Taking on the role of writer allows pre-service teachers to create new experiences with writing and to reflect critically on their own literacy development. Teacher education research finds that pre-service teachers can gain understanding of literacy development and teaching writing through being writers themselves. The NWP believes that “deep understanding arises from practice. Thus writers are the best teacher of writers” (Lieberman & Wood, 2003, p. 20). Laleh's statement during one of the debriefing discussions illustrates the benefits of having teachers who teach writing be engaged in writing:

It is a really good reminder that to be a writing teacher you need to understand yourself as a writer. You need to understand that process that you go through. You need to struggle with it to figure out what it is that you didn't like, what it is that you enjoy, how you can make it accessible. Especially what you don't like that is the best place to start from, 'cause then you are going to know how to deal with those who don't like it too (Laleh, Day 1).

In recalling the positive impact of their own writing as students, “pre-service teachers singled out the many opportunities they were given to write in their journals and to choose their own writing topics” (Norman and Spencer, 2005). Furthermore opportunities to examine their literacy development allows teachers to examine the “effects of specific instructional approaches, such as reading and writing workshops...and the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward reading and writing and their confidence in teaching literacy” (Norman and Spencer, 2005). Participants in the institute did not create personal literacy histories, detailing how they remember engaging with writing; rather, they wrote in writing groups and as part of the demonstrations. These opportunities to write, like literacy autobiographies, and the discussions that ensued, were useful for understanding teaching writing and allowed participants to examine their beliefs about teaching writing and to make conclusions about specific instructional practices:

Before this intercession institute I knew writing was really important and my mom's actually like a reading specialist in the school district, but I just, I never still knew how to implement it that much, what specifics could I do to work towards having kids feel comfortable with actually writing instead of having it feel forced (Post-interview).

Not only did writing help James identify specific strategies for teaching, it also helped him to become comfortable with the risks involved in teaching writing in his future classroom:

I was surprised that I actually kinda of got back into writing and I was surprised also how getting back into writing would sort of directly lead to, uh, me feeling less apprehensive about, you know, implementing it in a classroom. I should say I wasn't apprehensive because I didn't think that the kids wouldn't learn anything; I was apprehensive that I didn't think I'd be able to do it, implement it very well. I just wasn't confident, so this definitely helped (Post-interview)

The institute was not the first time that participants had experienced being a writer as a part of their credential programs. All of the participants stated that there had been *an* assignment in which they were required to write as if there were a student at their respective grade level. This one-time opportunity was rushed and failed to give adequate time for the writing process. James comments:

We had an assignment like this; it was create your own children's book. I told you we didn't do any creative writing [but] it was actually an instance of creative writing; but I don't really remember it well. I literally wrote that piece at the very last minute right before it was due. We spent a little time throughout the semester, uh, like ten-fifteen minutes in class jotting down notes for our children's story (Post-interview)

The assignments were seen and experienced as a one-time deal, thus participants did not associate the practice of writing as a continuous role they should embody as teachers. One reason may be that shifting roles requires many experiences and opportunities to "see" oneself within a role and to resolve the conflicts and tensions that arise from taking on new roles. George remembered clearly his credential's program attempt to help him examine his own role as a writer, yet the experience did not provide ample time for practice, as the attention to the role of writer was done not through actually writing but discussions about writing. "Last time we did this was before the fall of the semester. It was a whole bunch of neat ideas. I had a chance to try and implement some of them of these and it was so easy to get discouraged when something didn't work. Good to come back and see it again." Experiencing the role of writer helped to make his understanding of teaching writing clearer than when he had only been exposed to the practice through conversation in his credential program.

Last and most important, taking on the role of writing allowed participants to remember that writing has endless possibilities and that there are a variety of ways to develop students as writers. The NWP holds fast to the belief that there is not one way to teach writing (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). Marissa, who did not volunteer to speak often, shared that the experience helped her to see writing as flexible. "I thought of my own personal writing as flexible but not necessarily classroom writing. This showed me that. How you can teach it in a way that can

really empower the student to be flexible in their writing and know there are ways of going about the process” (Marissa, Day1).

Writing and Technology

Technology integration in schools has been a slow process, despite the fact that computer availability is stable regardless of what income level a particular school serves, (Ertmer, 2005) and that technology and writing in out-of-school settings have proven successful in engaging students while developing their literacy (Hull and Schultz, 2002) “The general focus in English education still seems to see technology as a tool rather than using [it] to open spaces for socially-situated rhetorical and pedagogical practices. Most significantly, many still accept a conceptual separation of literacy from technology” (Grabill and Hicks, 2005, p. 303).

The mini-institute provided experience with writing, however it lacked attention to 21st century technology and writing. Although participants were encouraged to email the director and co-director or to follow-up with presenters, there was not a specific technological focus in any of the demonstrations or discussions (with the exception of viewing NWP’s website for informational purposes). When one participant inquired if it was okay to use her computer, as a mediational tool she received conflicting messages. The director saw the computer as a barrier to interaction with the writing, “I think it is better to write by hand, the computer gets in the way of the writing” (Delisa, Day 2). The co-director, Shae, did not share this view, in fact she felt exactly the opposite, “I am able to flow better when I am writing on the computer,” (Shae, Day 2). The mixed-message around writing and computers, and the relational status of Delisa and Shae—Delisa made the final decisions as the director—and the limited link of writing to word processing is common within school settings. The debate in education research on whether using technology in writing assists or diminishes the writer’s ability to think and compose (Hartley, et. al, 2001) is implicit in the conflicting message Delisa and Shae gave participants.

The ability to create multimodal text is a rising expectation of learners, from crafting emails to creating more sophisticated products such as digital stories. Despite the increased need for students to be able to utilize technology for creating multimodal texts technology, digital writing is one of the more challenging practices to integrate into the classroom. Integrating digital writing forces a teacher to address spatial practices, specifically how will I use the technology in my class and what routines and rhythms will allow students to work independently and collaboratively with technological tools.

Integrating technology also requires a detailed focus on representations of space; how does the district policy on technology impact classroom use, which sites and software are considered appropriate, will what is accessible to my students today be accessible tomorrow!, and are the technological tools within a physical space that is productive for learning (DeVoss, et. al., 2010). Teachers must come to understand and negotiation how administrators and district officials have conceptualized appropriate use of technology in the classroom. To successfully negotiate representations of space, teachers must develop new relationships. Zhao and colleagues (2002) exemplify this required skill-set in their research on teachers’ use of technology in the classroom:

To make computers work teachers often need to continuously interact with technicians and administrators, two groups of people teachers have not traditionally had close relationships with. Thus teachers have to discover which individuals in the school or

district can provide the help they need, and they have to know how to work effectively with those individuals. Second, technology-based projects can make traditionally private classroom activities public and can expose students to an environment beyond the classroom walls, disturbing well-established school patterns. (p. 494)

Once teachers have successfully hurdled over the barriers of creating routines and rhythms to implement technology and created supportive relationships with administrators and technology personnel, they must attend to representational space, the issues that relate to whether or not students see the use of technology as learning and sustaining their teacher practice through inconsistencies, such as computer crashes. Like the teaching of writing, successful integration of technology and digital writing is deeply rooted in teacher beliefs and quality professional development (Ertmer, 2005).

While some teachers believe technology should be a consistent and authentic component of teaching writing, others see technology as appropriate for certain tasks, such as email. Gabril and Hick believe that the breadth of reach and instantaneous audience—and most often feedback—“may be one of the most significant impacts of computer technologies on the contexts and practices of writing” (p. 305). It was clear in the institute that the audience generated by the other participants created more opportunities for understanding writing and the challenges in teaching writing. Not only did the participants embrace the other participants as audience, they found that it gave them encouragement to branch out into writing they did not feel comfortable producing. Recall James’s multiple comments on forging ahead in his fiction because he received positive feedback, or Laleh’s willingness to participate after she saw Mr. Z. engage in feedback. A focus on technology and opportunities to experience successful use of technology in teacher education programs can increase the likelihood of teachers implementing technological practices in the classroom. Zhao and colleagues’ (2002) assert that, “successful implementation of classroom technology was more likely to occur when teachers viewed technology as the means to an end, rather than an end itself, and when they saw an intimate connection between technology and the curriculum” (p. 492). One intimate connection between writing and technology is the ability through technology to allow, “writers to access and participate more seamlessly and instantaneously within web spaces and to distribute writing to large and widely dispersed audiences” (Grabill and Hicks, 2005, p. 304). The access to a wider audience addresses the expectation for 21st century-skilled students to be able to communicate globally, regardless of their ability to move physically through spaces. Hull and James’ (2006) research on students engaged in an international digital network found that the use of technology in an out-of-school program provided “powerful representational tools and practices to speak back to spatial constraints” (p. 18).

If classrooms are socially produced space, as I argue they are, and as Gabril and Hicks make clear, “networks are classrooms” (Grabill and Hicks, 2005, p. 306), we must attend to the ways in which students engage in technology and writing—from Facebook status and Twitter, to emails and blogs. As the NWP tenet clearly states, to better understand teaching writing, teachers must write, which also includes digital writing spaces. Despite the lack of focus on technology within the institute, NWP is actively engaged in researching and expanding teacher practice in the realm of technology and writing. *Because Digital Writing Matters* (2010) details the ways professional development can shift to provide opportunities for teachers to understand how technology and writing can be combined. The authors implore, “we need to engage pre-service and in-service teachers in the same critical and rhetorical types of technology-rich literacy

activities that we would ask them to design for their own students” (DeVoss, et. al., p. 307). They warn that technology alone does not enhance learning, but that teachers should use technology as a way to create learning that is “deeper and richer because of technology” (p. 126).

Key to supporting teachers’ use of technology in the classroom for deeper and richer learning is professional development. The authors state that professional development must foster “ongoing, inquiry oriented learning communities where educators are supported and challenged to examine student performance and pursue ambitious instructional change” (p. 116). Similar to NWP’s perspective on improving the skills of writing teachers, professional development for writing and technology must keep the teacher and experience as central:

We advocate three elements of high-quality professional development programs for digital writing each of which is build on a strong foundation of personal experience, where teachers are invited to develop as digital writers and learners themselves (p. 118).

Similar to my critique of an overload of experience that minimizes reflection and inquiry, the authors caution against experience alone as enough to create rich technological writing experiences for students. They note that teacher experience alone is “not necessarily effective in facilitating reflection and learning” (p. 120). Providing opportunities for pre-service teachers—and all teachers—to reflect on the ways in which technology can enhance literacy development not only create a shift in their practice in the classroom but can also foster leadership development among pre-service teachers. Leadership development is a key component to professional development on technology:

Professional development to improve digital writing needs to go beyond a focus on technological skill development alone to include teacher leadership as part of the larger enterprise of technology development...when technology changes or disappears, specific skills change. Investment in leadership lasts (p. 116).

Leadership development has been linked to fostering resilience in pre-service teachers; especially teachers in high need schools (Boas, 1991).

This chapter focused on the experience of pre-service teachers within a mini-institute modeled after the way the National Writing Project provides professional development. Key to the NWP model is the actual experience of teachers writing. The participants remarked that the experience was outside of their experience as a student and their imagination of writing instruction. They found that writing can be fun and that developing as a writer involved engaging in multiple writing genres. The mini-institute did not provide enough experience for participants to answer important questions around the pressures of high-stakes tests, race and writing, or the use of technology within writing instruction, but it did provide a beginning of what is hoped to be a long career of teacher learning and reflection.

Chapter 4 Collaboration or Copying: Group Work, Worksheets and Writing

“The physical environment of the classroom determines the role of the teacher and the students and whether the work is more competitive or collaborative. It influences power relations among the students and between the teacher and students” (Hammerness, et. al., 2005, p. 341).

This chapter analyzes a turn of talk between two participants, George and Josey, during a writing-across-the-curriculum assignment that requires the participants to work collaboratively. “The teaching of writing has evolved over the last three decades to heighten the role of orality in improving writing, to include more collaborative work, and to enhance the role of peers as an audience for student writing” (Oschner and Fowler, 2004, p. 120). Of these three shifts collaborative work has perhaps been the most challenging to implement in the classroom. Writing in other content areas often involves collaboration: students engaging in an experiment, writing about a historical period, solving a mathematic equation. The interaction between George and Josey unveils the fact that they have very different understandings of collaborative work. Josey’s request for assistance is read by George as cheating.

Collaborative writing is seldom seen as appropriate in the English classroom, where each student is expected to struggle and win the battle of wrestling with words. Collaborative projects require new participant structures. Students in collaborative groups “must be participating members of that community, able to make constructive contributions to it” (Stock, 1986. p. 101). These new expectations can shift a student’s positioning within the classroom, causing some students to feel more or less competent. For students who are competent in individual work and the initiate-respond-evaluate exchange, group work can be seen as disruptive (Sheehy, 2010).

The writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) assignment was the first time in the institute that participants were asked to collaborate and work together to complete the writing assignments. The four writing assignments covered Science, Social Studies, Math and English Language Arts. The Social Studies assignment asked the participants to identify the picture that illustrated one of the first ten amendments of the Constitution. The form participants were asked to complete was a worksheet (Appendix 2), which signaled to George that there was a right and wrong answer. George described his success in education as a result of making the right choices, “I made the right friends who peered pressured me to take the right courses and as a result I got into good schools” (George, email communication). Although participants had used sentence frames (Appendix 3), which are in essence also worksheets, the sentence frames were for personal writing. Personal writing, unlike content area writing, was assumed to be open with no right answer, a metaphorical freespace.

Up until this interaction George followed along rather quietly, volunteering his opinion infrequently and asking few questions. Unlike George, participation in the institute was more disjointed for Josey. Josey, the only intern, was the only person in the institute actually teaching her own class. Her personal and teaching responsibility pulled her away from full participation. She was late the first day, was called back to her school site on the second day, and had to have her toddler join her during the afternoon of the last day. Furthermore, Josey often vocalized the stress, frustration and lack of preparedness she felt in teaching, and especially teaching writing. The group activity added to her frustration, and George’s goal to complete each worksheet

correctly created tension between the two. The presenter used the vocalized tension as a teaching point for group work and writing across the curriculum.

I chose to analyze this interaction to highlight the ways in which the introduction of new material, in this case the worksheet, shifts the positioning of learners within a classroom. The repositioning is often done through the ideology of schooling, pushing students into common terms of good student and bad student. In the interaction George is consistently described as having the right answers, while Josey is described as lost and needing help, but even more alarming is that she is considered a cheater, someone who is unwilling to do his or her share of the learning. As Hull and colleagues remind us, “There is a long, troubling history in American education of perceiving and treating low-achieving children as if they were lesser in character and fundamental ability... Some of these labels imply that students lacked intelligence, but the majority suggest a flawed character” (Hull, et. al, 1991, p. 311). What is more important is the ways in which George and Josey take up these roles, despite the fact that the “classwork” they are completing has no further implication—there is no grade at the end of the activity yet each person feels their student identity is at stake. Their interaction illuminates the challenges of group work within writing instruction.

The Interaction

The interaction begins with a broad statement from the presenter, Shae, of why all English teachers should know how to develop writing lessons for content areas other than English. The presenter shared her experience within schools that writing is seen as a topic that English teachers are responsible for preparing students to be proficient writers in all content areas:

For people who are trained in English, you know, when you get into secondary schools and middle schools people expect the English teacher to be the one, the only one teaching writing. So I think it is important for people with single subject English credentials to know that that is the rule that people may expect you to teach and just kind of know how literacy can be supported in content areas and working with expository texts; and, obviously, for elementary teachers you are supporting literacy development in all of your content areas. (Shae, Day 4)

The presenter then described the activities the participants would complete (Appendix 2) and then created random groups by handing out playing cards. Participants with the same suite were considered a group. Josey was identified as being a part of the Spades group. She was given the schedule for the group, which stated what order they were to engage the WAC activities.

Josey gave a short game-show-like performance with the card, lifting it to her face and drawing her hand down along the card as if she was a game show model, presenting the group with a prize. The other participants laughed at her performance and then shifted to listening to the directions. Josey then placed the card under her hat partially covering her forehead and eyes. The presenter continued to give directions highlighting that the groups would have 8 minutes to attempt each activity and then an opportunity to write about their experience engaging in the activity. Josey kept the card under her hat until her group member Marissa commented that the color of the card matched her shirt.

Josey’s initial engagement is important, as it can be read as immediately uncomfortable and a resort to joking or class clowning. Class clowning is a strategy used by students who are

intimidated, uncomfortable, or not skilled enough to perform amidst their peers in an academic setting (Ladson-Billings, 2002). More so, Josey continued to move toward a position of “bad student” as she transitioned through the various activities. George rose from his seat to meet his group, being sure to place his pencils, papers, and his drinking container in alignment. George approached Josey to see the schedule and when the group chooses seats, George chose the seat next to Josey. Despite the growing tension, George and Josey sat next to each other as they transitioned from table to table, through the different activities.

Their first activity was to compare two poems. The directions and reading for this activity was time consuming. There was little interaction between the four group members, with John sharing an exchange with the presenter that was inaudible. When time elapsed and the presenter asked the participants to write reflectively on the activity Marissa said that the group did not have enough time, to which the presenter responded, “That’s okay, that’s okay.”

The next activity asked the students to make an hypothesis about the speed of trains based on the train length and height of the ramp. George began to build a ramp at which point Marissa asked the presenter, “So should we do it together?” The presenter informed them that they would need to work together as there were not enough trains and ramps for each person to engage in the activity alone. After negotiating how to begin, the group started. John and George created the ramp, and with Marissa’s and Josey’s input, decided on which train to let go down the ramp. Josey had the timer but she failed to stop the timer when the train hit the bottom of the ramp. “I didn’t stop it right” (Josey, Day 4). At this point George pulled out his own phone and began to use its timer to time the train. John continued to acknowledge that Josey was operating the timer after Josey called out the time and it matched the time George had. George shifts to stating hypotheses about how changing the train’s length would affect the speed of the train. Eight minutes elapsed and the presenter asked the group to write on their experience. George wrote for about a minute, at which point he stopped writing and began to attempt another experiment, possibly to check his understanding of the experiment. He measured the ramp and placed a train on the ramp, calling for Josey to record the time. It was at this point that it became clear how important it was for George to get the right answer on his worksheet.

The next activity asked the group to describe a geometric shape and then share their description with the rest of the group. The description should be clear enough that the group members could guess the shape. The description was to be written individually. Each participant read the directions and looked at an image. Josey gave up reading, stating that the rest of her group would read it, and emitted a nervous chuckle. She then inquired on how the activity was supposed to occur:

Josey (leaning towards George): What do we do? Do we switch papers?

Unknown speaker (possibly George): Yeah

Josey: Oh, so we work on one person’s shape. Okay great.

Josey rubbed her head and looked over at Marissa at which point she saw Marissa’s paper and began to laugh because she was able to identify Marissa’s shape. Marissa responded with disappointment. “Did you see my shape? Aw, man, I am not very good” (Marissa, Day 4). Upon hearing the conversation the presenter came over to the group and reminded them that the goal was to give a descriptive clue to the other groupmates and have them guess the shape. Josey then points her pencil at George and stated, “Let’s do yours since you kept yours secret and followed the directions” (Josey, Day 4). The group let out a laugh at which the presenter inquired, “ You

guys showed each other?” Josey responded with a low, but clear “no”, as she placed her head in her hand. The presenter then continued, “Okay, you all get an F”. Josey interjected, “Ok, we’re doing George’s” (Josey, Day 4). The presenter paused, and then tacked on “and a detention” (Shae, Day 4).

George gave his description using the correct geometric terminology to describe a square. He even commented to the presenter that the activity was difficult, though he was able to use the correct terminology. “This was hard, although I know all the terminology.” George’s competency at the activity was affirmed by the presenter who then asked the other participants, “Did you guys get all that? Did you get all his examples of his shape?” Josey began to write, asking George to repeat each phrase of his description as she wrote it down. The presenter came back and asked the group, “Can anyone help George think of some more places you can see a square in the world” (Shae, Day 4). John responded to her question with a correct answer, while Josey mocked the presenter, who caught her and admonished her not to mock the teacher. Josey laughed loudly throwing her head back and stated, “I am a horrible student. I was a horrible child.” (Josey, Day 4). Although Josey was laughing loudly and the presenter was engaged in what on the surface could be read as jest, the interaction in its totality speaks to an underlying theme of Josey feeling inadequate and George consistently being identified as having the right answer, both in the eyes of his group mates and the teacher.

Josey volunteered John to describe his shape next. Josey was able to identify his shape and exclaimed, “I think I know what it is” (Josey, Day 4). The presenter responded to her and gave her permission to state her guess to the rest of the group. Josey gave her answer while at the same time shaped her two hands into a triangle. “It’s a triangle” (Josey, Day 4). The presenter confirmed her answer. Josey enthusiastically responded, “Yes I just taught that” (Josey, Day 4). Josey began to give several examples of John’s shape in the real world. It was the first time in the group work that Josey was able to give not only one right answer but multiple answers.

Despite giving a correct answer, upon the ending time for the activity, Josey stated, “I would separate all of y’all, including myself from you guys. We would get into so much trouble together” (Josey, Day 4). Separation is a common strategy to control the interaction of off-task activity or students performing below the expected level of achievement. It should be noted that although Josey does eventually give a correct answer, she ensured she would not have to share her description by volunteering her group mates to go instead. As Josey switched to the next table for the next activity, she stated to no one in particular, “I am a bad, bad student” (Josey, Day 4).

The positioning of George as a good student and Josey as academically behind is further established in the next activity where the group must match a picture to an amendment. Josey began asking for clarification of the directions. She was able to link one picture with an amendment but was unable to link a second picture. She attempted several times and then stated, “I can’t do this” (Josey, Day 4). At this point the presenter encouraged the group to work together. “Make sure everybody in your group is on the same place” (Shae, Day 4). Josey responded exasperated, “Okay, but they are moving too fast” (Josey, Day 4). Following George’s reply there was an exchange about how much help George should have provided Josey:

George: You copied my last two!

Josey: Well, you are moving fast. I’m trying (Josey attempted to look at George’s paper)

George: What, are you just going to copy my entire paper?

George is displeased with Josey's inability to do her own work. When Josey requested help from George he retorted that she had already copied his answers. Copying is considered a shortcut for those who are unable to do the work on their own. It is cheating.

The presenter informed the groups that they have only one minute left. Josey yelled out, "Oh my god, I can't believe this. There just isn't enough time" (Josey, Day 4). As Josey yells out the presenter sat on a nearby desk and watched the group. The presenter's use of proximity is a teaching strategy to keep students on task and ensure the expected outcome is met. At this point George began to give everyone else in his group the answers. Marissa then vocalized that she is also behind and asked George to repeat an answer. The presenter laughed and then said, "George is so focused on getting the answers. He is, like, come on guys, catch up. I am, like, three amendments ahead of you," George continued giving out answers, with his entire focus on finishing the worksheet and the expectation that he help the rest of his groupmates get the right answer. Josey reaffirmed her position as being behind on her work stating, "I can't keep up with you. Where are you?" (Josey, Day 4). At which the presenter, still laughing, responded; "George always did all the work in his groups" (Shae, Day 4).

Doing all the work for a group project is a breach of the expectation that each person in the group contributes their share. Josey was aware of this and called out, "George it's not your responsibility" (Josey, Day 4). George ignored both Josey and the presenter and continued giving Marissa and John the answers, at which point Josey clapped her hands and then seconds later she stated in a harsh tone, "Stop doing all the work. That what's I would tell him, just like that" (Josey, Day 4). Josey shifted to her teacher voice and knowledge, acknowledging that as a teacher, reliance on one participant is unacceptable. During the quiet writing time, George continued to work on the worksheet causing his group to erupt in laughter. Josey stated, "Let Go." To which George replied, "I'm doing the worksheet!"

The presenter called the participants to return to a larger group format in order to lead a debriefing discussion. She began by asking participants to share what it was like to work in groups and to write across content areas. There was a long pause and Marissa responded that it was helpful to write as a way to think through her processing. The presenter then asked, "Did anyone think of skills people would need to write in all the four content areas?" (Shae, Day 4). Josey then responded:

Oh yeah. I'm thinking about the group of children I work with. They would really have to understand what they have just done. Like, like, I would do this at the end of the week. Right before the afternoon, just to review what they have learned that whole week, just to reinforce it. Yeah that's how I would do it because if not, if not it would be a complete disaster (Josey, Day 4).

The presenter acknowledged that the writing across content areas requires a base of knowledge. She then asked the participants what did the activity make them realize about the student experience. Josey immediately responded, "I was really a bad student. I would be in detention. I would be the one that my teacher would go home at night like, 'Damn, that girl Josey just doesn't listen! Yeah'" (Josey, Day 4). To which the presenter responded, "So it brought up a lot of our own student identities" (Shae, Day 4). Josey's response identifies her as a bad student and

one who just doesn't listen, rather than a student who is unable to comprehend and complete the task at hand.

Mr. Z. responded to the question, pointing out that eight minutes was not enough time to complete the number of steps required in each activity—a drastically different explanation from Josey for why participants were not able to successfully complete the activities. The presenter built on Mr. Z.'s comment, "Obviously, no matter how accelerated you are, at the post-graduate level, it's still true that eight minutes is not quite fast enough" (Shae, Day 4). She then drew attention to George's focus on completing each worksheet. "George did you want to comment about what you learned about yourself in the groups?" (Shae, Day 4).

George, unabashedly, admitted to his need to complete the worksheet: "I am very bullish when it comes to worksheets and I refuse to let it go. I just wanted to fill everything out. I just wanted it right" (George, Day 4). Although George was replying to a direct question from the presenter, Josey interjected, "Let it go George" (Josey, Day 4). At this point the presenter decided to discuss the differing collaboration between the two groups:

I just want to highlight, not to put you guys on the spot, I want to highlight the group dynamic in George, Josey, Marissa and John' group, which was really interesting. In a lot of ways, Mr. Z., Delisa, and James were the ideal group. They were on task the whole time. But you guys were very real in the type of group interaction that you had. Josey was, like, wait I'm still trying to catch up, I'm two things behind, I'm doing this part. George was, like, no, "this one is number eight and this one is number five, this one is number three; come on you guys. And he is, like, done with the whole entire worksheet and they are, like, Uh, uh. Marissa is, like, wait I am trying to catch up. I feel like they are all over the board and John doesn't even have his worksheet. But that's okay because the point is everybody was engaged with the activity and they were writing. You will notice with group dynamics when you do random homogenous grouping a lot of times that is going to be okay. I honestly think that part of what I perceive as a strength in my teaching—but that someone walking into the room may have thought was pure chaos—was that I was okay with a little bit of, you know, groups are gonna look differently, and some are going to be right on task all the time, and some are going to need to talk and some are going to look off-task but *really* they are on-task. It is just about floating and managing groups and you get better at that. Kind of like the baby steps article was talking about, the first time you might be "oh my gosh, I am never going to do group work ever again," but you get better and your kids get better at group work. (Shae, Day 4)

As the group transitioned to break, Shae makes a jest of George's need to finish the worksheet. "If anybody would like to finish the assignment during that time you're welcome to" (Shae, Day 4). The presenter followed up her joke with an invitation for George to work with his groupmates. "George if you would like to work on the amendments you can" (Shae, Day 4). In the spirit of joviality George replied, "You guys want to copy my homework" (George, Day 4). George then furthered his competence as a student, "I play the system so" (George, Day 4). Josey retorted, "I'm so, so mad at George" (Josey, Day 4). Shae began to sympathize with Josey, sharing that she would feel the same way. At this point she more pointedly addressed the lack of support Josey felt:

The way I actually stop that from happening in the class is I say, “so remember group I am going to call on anyone at the end of class to tell me one thing and that person has to be able to explain it to me and that is your group grade.” George has to be responsible for everyone in his group knowing cause if I call on Josey, and Josey has no idea what George was doing and just copied the answers, then your grade is based on her answer. (Shae, Day 4)

Josey was comforted by the power afforded her in Shae’s explanation for holding George responsible for the entire group. “I would just jack you up. I would do it on purpose. I’d be like I don’t know. George didn’t help me” (Josey, Day 4).

The group enjoyed the banter and goes off to break, yet the conversation about Josey being a bad student and George being a good student was brought up again during the discussion after the break. The presenter stated that the goal of the discussion was to discuss the writing component of each activity. She asked the group if they enjoyed the writing of the math activity, to which Josey responded, once again highlighting the difficulty she had in completing the activities. “If you did it correctly it was really good. Um, it was fun to, um, figure out people’s shapes.” In the middle of her sentence she stopped talking and then laughed and placed her head down. “I just went blank. I’ll pass.” (Josey, Day 4)

The presenter provided another solution for creating a more collaborative working community for students who experienced group work the same as Josey and George:

I would give a certain amount of time dedicated to the writing. That way, if George is, like, finished in ten minutes but I am giving, like, 20 minutes for that activity, then George in that other ten minutes can really help to make sure that his group members are understanding in the same way that he is understanding. (Shae, Day 4).

There was a round of talk in which three participants took up the presenter’s solution and highlighted the benefits of working in a group. Mr. Z. supported the position that holding each student responsible for the learning of peers is beneficial to learning. He believes the pressure from peers creates more meaningful responsibility than if the pressure comes directly from the teacher. “It is better to have ten students yelling at each other than one person yelling at the student.” (Mr. Z, Day 3) It is clear that the “one person” Mr. Z. alluded to is the teacher because, as he uttered these words he pointed to himself. The presenter then makes an explicit connection to student relationships as key to peer pressure having a positive effect:

I try to make the groups supportive; George and Josey are actually friends, so if George is, like, come on Josey we have to get this then he is actually encouraging her and he is, like, not somebody she hates and she doesn’t care that he knows all the right answers. I only do random grouping like I did with us when the environment is safe enough that I know that everybody can work with each other” (Shae, Day 3)

At which point George interjected, “Sorry to rain on the parade but won’t that encourage copying?” (George, Day 3). The presenter acknowledged the perception that holding each person responsible for the whole group is unfair and detrimental to the achievement of the student that is

a high achiever. “In the end even if you are copying, you might get an A on the worksheet but that is balanced by the participation grade and your final assessment grade” (Shae, Day 3).

Implicit in Shae’s rationale was that the participants are all friends and are not threatened by difference of ability, yet this statement was contradictory to the voicing and gestures of George and Josey. The shift in participant structures were not mitigated by a previous relationship; as the ways of being changed within the institute, so did the relations among the participants. By the last activity, George labeled Josey a cheater because she had already copied his answers and was requesting to copy more of his knowledge. Josey’s inability to keep up and George’s open disapproval resulted in Josey vocalizing several times that she was a bad student who couldn’t keep up. Furthermore, Josey attempted to minimize the frustration and possible embarrassment she felt by injecting humor into every interaction, including disciplining herself for her inability to keep up.

If writing receives little attention in credentialing programs, collaborative writing receives even less. In a world of quick communication and multi-person compositions, providing practice for students to engage in collaborative writing is essential. Along with this is the need to help teachers create environments where collaboration does not create a dichotomy in the classroom between students who can and students who can’t, nor a situation in which one student becomes the producer of all the knowledge. As Hull and colleagues (1991) write in their article focused on remediation and writing:

It would be unwise just to rely on process pedagogy and experience in the classroom to foster the development of non-deficit attitudes among teachers and teacher-trainees. We need to spend some time thinking about teacher development not just what knowledge to impart about writing, but how to develop the ability to question received assumptions about abilities and performance, how to examine the thinking behind the curricula we develop and the assessments we make (p. 318).

To create an environment where students are collaborative learners and not simply placed a hierarchy of intelligence, new participant structures must be implemented and these structures need to be explicitly examined for their impact on the classroom space.

Chapter 5 Moving From the Imagination to Instruction

This chapter focuses on one participant, Mr. Z. I examine observations of Mr. Z teaching writing in a classroom designated for second language learners who have been unable to pass the English Language Proficiency test. Through these observations and follow-up interviews, I analyze the constraints and opportunities for writing and his responses to these pressures. I attempt to follow the shifts in Mr. Z's imagination of the possibilities of writing in the classroom, his attempts to use his participation in the mini-institute as a resource for his imagination, and the ways in which his imagination of teachers in general— and more specifically teachers of failing students— influenced not only his decision making but his bodily experience of teaching. I undertake this endeavour through analyzing Mr. Z's imagination of teaching while in the institute, the writing practices and routines he implements in his classroom, student uptake of writing events, and Mr. Z's reflections.

Mr. Z stood out during the post-institute interviews because he spoke of his experience in the institute through a frame of space. He shared how writing in the institute felt addicting:

I had the discipline. I had the space. I had the time. Partly, the physical area of being, like, in a [designated] room with nothing [expected] but writing. And then partly because I had, like my focus was on that, so it's like the space within my life to say this is just going to be for my writing, this week is just for writing. It just created that mental space and the physical space and, like, the support from peers, which creates its own kind of space, as well. (Post-interview 1)

He also viewed writing as a tool for power. "I learned that writing is power to create change. It is something I really want to teach my students" (Post-interview 2). Mr. Z viewed every interaction, especially interactions with youth who have been marginalized through media stereotypes and low-socioeconomic status, as an opportunity to hold space and regain power. Mr. Z's goal as a teacher was to provide access for his students to engage in powerful writing. "Keeping it real; they are going to be facing a lot of institutional barriers...like I told [a student] my job is to help you find a way to wiggle through, crack through" (Observation 17). Mr. Z's goal as a teacher was to provide access for his students to engage in powerful writing. In imagining how to meet his goal, Mr. Z fore-grounded the many 'spaces' of the classroom. He didn't see the classroom as an empty container; rather, Mr. Z's perspective took into account the spatial practices, representations of space, and representational space:

In my classroom I would love for it to be like this. I don't think it would work in the same way unless I created many, like, different steps to get to this kind of workshop where we have that comfort and that space, because it is more than just physical. Like I said, it is a personal space you have to create and it's a support system you have to create. So I think it would take a long time. I would stretch this one week workshop over the course or the quarter or year so students can slowly build that relationship so they can have that emotional space to feel free, take risks, support each other, laugh, vote for a nap. I don't know, with the pressures of the state and the school, if that would even be considered professional. To have a physical space in the classroom where there are 34 students and a teacher is also another challenge. So how to create that? So I might do

things like draw half of my students out in the hallway, half of them in the classroom and I am in and out. (Post-interview 1)

Mr. Z. clearly articulated his imagination of his classroom and hinted at some of the barriers he might face. Yet his thinking was created outside of the context of the actual classroom. I asked if I could observe him in his classroom to see how, if at all, he was able to put into effect the classroom space he imagined. The classroom is generally viewed as a container, yet the classroom is a produced space. As Leander et al (2010) remind us, “Classrooms are not merely material spaces that are readily perceived but also conceived spaces— representations of space that powerfully shape our attempts at new visions and productions of education” (Leander, et. al., 2010, p. 334). Mr. Z. was aware of some of the representations of space. His awareness of how representations of space can override a teacher’s goals and hopes for instruction was often evidenced in his talk; “I don’t know with the pressures of the state and the school if that would even be considered professional” (Post-interview 1). I wanted to understand exactly how awareness of these pressures, the impact of unexpected pressures, and his imagination of teaching intersected in his classroom.

Mr. Z’s positioning as a teacher and the school context

Mr. Z is a second-year student in an urban secondary credential program at a local university. Although this is his first year teaching with a credential, Mr. Z is not a new teacher. He taught a year as a long-term substitute and has held numerous jobs as an out-of-school educator. In the mini-institute he positioned himself as a social activist and a proponent of literacy as a tool of power. Mr. Z also believed in *educación*—“a model of schooling premised on respectful and caring relation” (Valenzuela, 1999, p. 61). He often situated his care and understanding in a discourse of urban experience. Many of his examples for using writing in the real world were based on the need to counteract the system. In debriefing the experience of descriptive writing, Mr. Z relates the skill of detailed writing to being able to write a police report:

Even transitioning this to academic writing, if you say it was sunny outside um a lot of people can interpret that in very different ways... We can even transition that. You know teach this and then say, well, this is a tool used for describing how you feel, describing what happened... if you ever have to make a police report (Mr. Z, Day 3).

Police reports are a genre for citizens who have high contact with the police, such as urban populations of Black and Brown youth. Mr. Z identified with other Latino youth from highly policed areas with mediocre economic opportunities. His focus on social justice for oppressed peoples and his experience as a Latino youth played heavily in his decision to teach at Malcolm X Middle School. Mr. Z’s choice was also rooted in his spatial history of being a Latino youth in the same city. Not only did Mr. Z draw on his own spatial-historical experience, he furthered his connection to the school through his knowledge of his older brother’s challenge in acceding to the position of a good student.

Malcolm X Middle School is located on the southside of what is considered a suburban city, 27 miles from where Mr. Z was earning his credential. Despite its current suburban status, the city has an increasing gang population and the area in which Malcolm X is located is

battlegrounds for two national gangs, the Norteños and Sureños. Although previously a majority African American neighborhood, like many areas in California the population demographics have shifted to a Latino majority population. Malcolm X's student population is 53 percent Latino and 26 percent of the students are English Language Learners.⁵

Mr. Z's classroom was located upstairs in the portables outside of the main building. Not only was his classroom outside of the main building, it was also adjacent to and in front of ongoing construction for a new gym, classroom wing, and outdoor theater. The construction caused several short disruptions. Although the window along the back of the classroom was relatively small, students would yell out in awe of seeing the crane carrying parts of the new building pass by the window; asked if others felt the vibration of workers jackhammering, nailing or putting up building frames; or saw the construction workers walking along the beams. During one observation, Mr. Z explained how his teaching was brought to a halt when workers decided to empty the port-a-potties mid-day. The stench entered the classroom through the back vent made students nauseous, forcing Mr. Z to relocate his class to the library.

Mr. Z inherited the room from a teacher who was on maternity leave. The teacher did not take down any of the decorations around the room. Mr. Z thought they were nice so he left them up and added social justice posters. The posters were of people recognized for fighting for equity, images of discrimination, and quotes about persistence and resistance. One section of the room is reserved for posting student progress reports, which Mr. Z posts every Friday. The far corner and front right side of the room is filled with student work, mostly poems and identity collages.

Mr. Z taught the students identified as academically behind, based on their standardized test scores and report card grades, and behaviorally challenged, based on the amount of contact with administrators and counselors for discipline issues. Mr. Z's teaching assignment was not unique; in fact 53 percent of first year teachers are placed in challenging courses (Darling-Hammond, 2006). What was unique was the decision Mr. Z made to accept a part-time position—which also meant part-time pay. Mr. Z requested to be 80 percent instead of full-time to reduce the level of stress he—and any teacher—might experience teaching challenging courses. All of his classes were considered intervention, as students in his course have an additional language arts course during the day. The intervention courses were specifically created to help students increase their standardized test scores. In total, Mr. Z taught 90 students who were deemed below grade level. He has two Strategic classes and one Inside course. The observations in this chapter will focus on the Inside course.

The Inside course is named for the textbook teachers used as the main curriculum. The students placed in this course were all English language learners who had scored a 3 or below on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Because the class was constructed around test scores it was a mixed class of seventh and eighth graders. It was developed as a space that would magically assist the students into transitioning to “good students.”

The Inside curriculum produced a space of its own, evidenced by the way that students placed in the class were routinely identified as “Insiders” by their teachers. On several occasions Mr. Z and the other teachers who taught the course referred to the students as the Insiders, for example, I gave my Insiders the vocabulary sheet today. The Inside class can be considered to have produced, in Harvey's terms, a degenerate utopia (Harvey, 2000). Degenerate

⁵ The population of English Language Learners would be considerably higher if the district had not intentionally created a nearby middle school as a center for second language learners.

utopias prioritize stability and harmony created through control and surveillance. In the degenerate utopia a critique of the space is not allowed (Harvey, 2000). Inside students were told that the class was a special place for them to learn the needed tested areas in education. Mr. Z. echoed the need for students to see his class as a place for them to gain the educational skills they needed. Ironically, Mr. Z also voiced and made visible the contradictions within the class. When he felt that students were becoming too comfortable with the academic deficits and behaviors attributed to Inside students, he reminded them that the program limited their opportunities. “We are trying to push you out so you can go to the next level. I don’t want you in Inside” (Mr. Z, Observation 4). Ironically, when students pushed back through disruption, voiced opposition to the goal of the class, or pointed out that students in Inside are forced to miss other opportunities, their tests scores and lack of academic success were used as a baton to silence their complaints and requests to be transferred out of the class:

Jennifer moved out of my class. There was some big drama about her leaving the program. She was failing my class and she was not doing so hot on the tests, but they still let her out to Strategic; she is no longer in Inside. Which I hope doesn’t cause a conflict [with] the students in here who I have been telling that they need to get their scores up. That is what I was told— that was the only way to get the students out, unless they had a real strong performance in class.... The other students know she wasn’t doing so hot and her behavior was not hot. (Mr. Z, Observation 21)

The resistance students displayed in Mr. Z’s class and throughout their day at Malcolm X resulted in a high number of suspensions and expulsions of the students in the class. By January, three students had been expelled and four students had such irregular attendance that they might come to class once every two weeks.

Routines and rhythm

Routines and rhythms structure the experience of places. The expectation of specific practices in a place assists in the production of that space. Routine “allows a culture (or classroom) to do work without consciously thinking about every act” (Sheehy, 2010. p. 62). In classrooms students become competent participants with little effort, they know when to raise their hand, take out a notebook, and when they can engage their own object of observation without being reprimanded. They are able to do this because learning is predictable. This predictability is implied in students’ question, “Is anything happening today?”⁶ Routines also assist the teacher in anticipating the next move and managing students. In fact, a key component of credential programs is training teachers to plan every minute of instruction time, even the time in which students are moving from one class to another or one activity to another. “One might almost see the classroom as the epitome of immobility as well, representing not only conventions

⁶ In a personal conversation with Kevin Leander he highlighted the fact that school is so predictable that students see the ‘learning’ in class as nothing really happening. Upon absences, students return and ask for the packet of work they have missed. In the set routines of classrooms there is no present, no surprise—learning in classrooms lack a moment-by-moment connection, everything is planned for the future. In today’s generation the future is generally the next test date.

of material structure but also conventions of teaching practice, of schedule, of seating charts, and seatwork routines” (Leander, et. al, 2010, P. 332).

Mr. Z’s class had expected rhythms and routines (Appendix 4). Students could expect certain activities to occur depending on the day of the week. Mondays began with a library visit and a vocabulary list for the week. Tuesdays were free-writing and the class begun a unit in the Inside book, Wednesdays were review of vocabulary words given on Monday for preparation for a quiz on Friday. Thursdays were for CST and CELT test preparation and finishing work begun in the Inside book on Tuesday. Fridays were vocabulary quiz days, reading the novella, posting up grades and completing any works held over from the week.

The routines in Mr. Z’s class were not only related to the curriculum but also to the management of the students’ bodies. Self-control was a repeated issue for Inside students:⁷

I feel a lot of internal pressure to make sure that when they are in the class they are getting more than they should be. Like getting pushed really hard, like hardcore discipline. So that if they get out of these remedial classes they will be okay in other classes. I feel like I am making up for [the skills they lack] plus training [them for high school]. A lot of students have really tough situations and a lot of discipline is needed to get around a lot of those. (Mr. Z, Observation 17)

Because the group was seen as deviant and lacking self-control, Mr. Z began each class with a posture exercise. Mr. Z saw the posture exercise as a way for students to develop self-control and develop reflection skills, particularly on how their thinking, or lack thereof in the heat of the moment, impacted their lives. Referring to how the school uses their lack of self-control as a reason for refusing to change their schedule, Mr. Z shared a hypothetical conversation. “I tell the counselor ‘Oh she is incredible’, they look at her referrals and suspensions and then at her test scores and are like ‘No’” (Mr. Z, Observation 20). Contradictory to his intention of reframing the students as able to enact self-control, Mr. Z used disciplinary discourse in his posture exercise, often requesting that students sit up, get their head off the desk and face forward, rather than allow them to fall into meditation in a position that felt most comfortable. Even as Mr. Z framed the posture exercise as a way to relax and let go, he controlled what relaxing and letting go could look like. “Heads up, pencils down, sit up straight or I will have you practicing after class” (Mr. Z, Observation 2).

Although the posture exercise was not a curriculum item, Mr. Z believed that the posture exercise could help with students’ achievement on tests. He saw the exercise as an opportunity for students to build their endurance of the silence of testing and to reaffirm the knowledge they had gained:

⁷ Inside students were highly regulated and placed in a passive role of listeners. After observing a few of his Inside students in other classes, Mr. Z noted the lack of verbal participation. The lack was a stark contrast to the yelling out Mr. Z consistently monitored in his room. The fact that the students were labeled as behavior problems made their movements inherently deviant, even when they were attempting to learn or support their classmates learning. Mr. Z decided to research the students’ yelling out for his master’s thesis. He found that students who seemed to be lacking self-control and yelling out, were, most of the time, attempting to participate in the discussion and understand the academic skills being taught. During one of my observations Mr. Z asked a student several times to stop yelling to which the student replied, “I am on task!”

I'm going to extend this one for a little longer because we're about to go into the test. Once again I talked to you about how this is proven to help you. Mental focus is everything, so for the next 30 seconds please be aware of how you are feeling about this test— don't share out loud, just think about it. Also, I'd like for you to imagine how much you have already learned. (Mr. Z, Observation 6)

Students in the Inside course were marked as deviant and thus highly regulated; much of this deviance was tied to gang activities. Each day when students arrived, Mr. Z would have them check their desk for gang graffiti. "I'd like everyone to look at your desk now. Remember the routine, we are all checking our desk; if there is any writing or tagging let me know now" (Mr. Z, Observation 1).

The teacher as a docile body

Docile bodies are often discussed in terms of students' minimal control over their body in schools. Because I had the opportunity to observe Mr. Z in the institute— where he was playful, smiled often, and spoke with passion— I was taken aback when I noticed his new demeanor in the classroom. Mr. Z often stood with a stiff pose, lifting his head in the air, and spoke in monotones to students. He fixed a slight grimace on his face and rarely showed emotion through his eyes. Mr. Z not only exhibited a standoff demeanor, he also wore formal clothing: a tie, dress shirt and slacks, and hair tightly tied back. After observing him for a week, I inquired on the striking difference of his embodiment of teacher compared to his participation in the institute. In fact, after school ended and most of the students cleared out Mr. Z would take down his hair and loosen his shirt.

Mr. Z saw his body as a point of control, as an instrument of producing the classroom space, and, most importantly, relationships in the classroom— primarily a relationship of authority and obedience. He saw his dress and response to students, including smiling, as processes of producing the space of the classroom. Mr. Z wore a suit and tie to class everyday with the understanding that his dress indexed his position of authority. Mr. Z made a clear distinction between his corporate clothes, what in society is indexed as the clothing of successful European Americans, and the urban wear of the youth. Implicitly in the clothes were the identities and practices tied to those who wore such clothes. "I am trying to dress up at least in the beginning...I decided not to— at least until they gain a full understanding of who I am and why I am so strict on them" (Mr. Z, Observation 5). Mr. Z saw his choice of clothing as a sacrifice, as he readily admitted he would rather wear his jeans than slacks. He compared his sacrifice to the similar choice that Malcolm X made during his work toward racial justice. "It's like what Malcolm X said, 'If I have to wear a suit and tie everyday so people will listen to what I say, then I'll do it. If I have to dress up so students can think, oh, this teacher is serious and take me seriously I will do it'" (Mr. Z, Observation 5).

Mr. Z saw his age and his position as a new teacher as a factor, as well. Choosing his dress and hairstyle posed a dilemma in setting boundaries and having students feel like they could trust him. Although, Mr. Z did not explicitly connect the fact that he was Latino, the same racial background as most of the students, he often saw his way of dressing and demeanor as a model for the students, and he chose to teach at Malcolm X because it had a large population of Latino students:

I have seen young teachers try to dress like the students so they trust them and I think I do it for the same reason but my logic is different. I know I'm young...I like that relationship and I have a good relationship with the students, but sometimes that can easily be blurred into how much they can slack on themselves or feel like they can push or how serious when I say something like, 'alright we need to get started.' If it's too friendly they might not know where the line is. (Mr. Z, Observation 5)

Mr. Z not only regulated his dress, he also regulated his responses to students. Choosing to be very formal and emotionally distant, Mr. Z held this positioning even when students' attempts to engage him in conversation were on task and thought provoking. "I'm always wary of enjoying comments because I don't want it to repeat and throw us off course...I am not sure if a student yells out something good [or] if someone yells out something silly [students] will know the difference" (Mr. Z, Observation 17). Mr. Z's regulation of himself provided students with only one experience of him, that of authoritarian. Mr. Z embodied this role because he felt that the goal of having students pass the standardized tests was more important than the students' experience of him, especially his humor.

The use of authority as a teaching tool is contradictory to Mr. Z's social justice stance. He often commented that class was brutal for him as well as the students. Yet the classroom as a geographical space, with an imaginary of teacher as center of control, overrode Mr. Z's social justice perspective. I argue that the pressures of testing, Mr. Z's own identity as a Latino male whose own student experience mirrored those of students in his class, and the marking of students as failures within the school worked in concert to inform the positioning available to Mr. Z. As Leander (2004) notes, "persons are produced at the interstices of multiple social spaces" (p. 117). Mr. Z's embodiment of an authoritative person was not what he imagined, yet the socio-political space of the classroom and his own space-time history led Mr. Z to revert to a docile body and insist that his students were docile as well. Positioning is never static but is impacted by "locally continuous practices [and] enduring struggles" (Leander, 2004, p. 117).

Through responding to my follow-up interview questions and interactions with his students, Mr. Z analyzed the impact of his options; he began to rethink his stance and its impact on his experience of the classroom and how students saw him. "Yeah the students always comment when I wear my hair down. The other day Jonathan was. like, 'Hey, I saw you Mr. Z with your hair out'; it's interesting 'cause I didn't think they really noticed" (Mr. Z, Observation 18). My positioning as an outsider and observer allowed me to draw attention to classroom interactions that Mr. Z was not able to notice or fully process in the midst of teaching— which is a common situation for teachers, not just new teachers (Sheehy, 2010). Mr. Z used my experience as a researcher and veteran teacher as a resource for responding to the pressures of the context of his classroom. By the end of my observations Mr. Z had begun to intersperse wearing jeans and his hair down with his more formal wardrobe. It was not merely my presence, but a growing relationship between Mr. Z and I through our conversations and my participation in his classroom, both as an observer and listener, and his growing relationship with his students. As the spatial practices became the routine and rhythms of the classroom, Mr. Z. no longer had to work hard for the everyday interactions thus he was able to shift his focus and consider other elements of his classroom. Sheehy (2010) posits that when teachers, "have produced a predicatable time/space rhythm and can start learning with the help of that rhythm, they do not have to work so hard to figure things out" (p. 61). Mr. Z. took up his students

perceptions of what initially seemed disconnected from his teaching only after he was able to create routines and rhythms in his classroom that did not leave him saying to himself, “I can’t do that again, that was brutal” (Mr. Z, Observation 5).

Testing discourse

The Inside students were outsiders within their own school. There was a marked space for them within the school and they were juxtaposed against students who are grade level. The students in Inside were stuck in the testing trap (Hillocks, 2002). Testing is a discriminant in society. “In order to accede to this [school] space, individuals (children, adolescents) who are, paradoxically, already within it, must pass tests. This has the effect of setting up reserved spaces, such as places of initiation, within social space” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 35). For the Inside students obtaining full participation into the wider school population was predicated on their ability to pass the CELDT test. The test is designed to assess whether second language learners have mastered English to the level that they can follow the routines and engage in the necessary communication required in a grade-level classroom. Most of the students in Mr. Z’s class were one level away from being re-designated, or being allowed to exit the English as a Second Language program. Exiting the program brought the privilege of being able to have an elective and leave school at three instead of attending classes after the formal ending of the school day.

Even though Mr. Z disagrees with testing as a way of marking students, he established routines in his classroom that supported testing. He, like many teachers, deny the validity of the tests, while at the same celebrating when students do well (Hillocks, 2002). “I can advocate for them to move out of [course levels] C to D or D to E, but to get them out of [Inside] to Benchmark has to be [based] all [on the] CST or the district benchmark. It hurts to see them fall asleep on the test” (Mr. Z, Observation 20).

The students were attempting to assimilate to the role of the academically successful,⁸ a role given a lot of significance in schools and society. The students took tests often: practice tests, district benchmark tests, and the CELT test. The class Mr. Z taught was a test prep course. This focus on testing separated the students from others-- most pointedly students in Mr. Z’s class were not able to leave school at 3 p.m. because their P.E. class was after school due to the number of interventions they had during the school day.

The scheduling of students in Mr. Z’s class was not the only way his students were marked as outsiders within the school. The entire curriculum focus of Mr. Z’s class was on passing the various standardized tests. Unlike the writing Mr. Z did in the mini-institute and the type of writing he hoped he would implement as a teacher, all of the writing in Mr. Z’s class was connected to testing. When asked about a short story students were writing, Mr. Z replied, “They

⁸ On one occasion Mr. Z’s university supervisor came to observe. Mr. Z invited his supervisor to share some information about college. The supervisor named the various degrees people can earn and then told the students all the degrees he had earned. Jose, a student, interjected, ‘I have a kindergarten degree.’ Although I did not ask Jose about his reply, his reply could be seen as a way to validate his intelligence as a student in a class marked as being for students who are low-performing. Additionally, students from low-socio-economic areas are less likely to receive a diploma and even less likely to earn a bachelor’s degree, especially minority males (Greene & Winters, 2006)

are going to need to write a short story for the final district test so I am going to go by the book so they can do well on the final [test]" (Mr. Z, Observation 12).

Writing the Novella: Creating a thin space for writing

Writing in Mr. Z's class was minimal. Students were often asked to complete a half sheet of writing and turn it into the basket (see section below). Mr. Z often shared that he had difficulty getting students to turn in writing, and when students did so he was unsure of what to do with the writing, he thus rarely used class time to have students further develop writing they had previously completed. Students did not complain about the lack of consistency or opportunities to write. It could be said that writing in Mr. Z's class was a thick place, in which students gave minimum engagement and went through the routines without an authentic engagement or investment in the outcome. Sheehy (2010) notes a thick space as one in which, "bodies and ideas [are] turned inward, most students [do] not engage with one another, and the object of study [does] not move into relations outside the classroom" (p. 100).

This type of thick place was true of Mr. Z's writing instruction, with the exception of the Novella. The Novella, a practice Mr. Z adapted from his mentor teacher, began as a peripheral activity and over time transitioned into a center of engagement. The Novella allowed for a thin place in which, "the thick boundary made in their typical classroom practices thinned out; the membrane between their bodies and ideas became permeable, because ideas moved into networks of relations that mattered to them" (Sheehy, 2010, p. 102). Thin places allow for students to choose their object of study and to connect that object within or outside of the classroom. The Novella allowed students to shape the writing and its connection to other worlds— primarily their out-of-school worlds that were steeped in negotiating violence, familial relationships, and decision-making for achieving the material promises of the "American Dream." The Novella shifted the power relations around writing. No longer did Mr. Z. structure the boundaries of writing, students did, upon themselves and one another:

It's definitely unusual. The engagement of [the Novella] is really interesting to me because it's working with students who I would say don't consider themselves writers or are always saying I can't do this, I don't know how to write. My Inside students, my fourth period, which are harder to engage in the work, tend to be the students who are more excited or more vocal about their excitement and put their friends on blast, 'ah it was due last week but obviously you didn't do it'...that kind of pressure and kind of want for the Novella has been real interesting to me. (Final Post-Interview)

The Novella is a collaborative short novel. Each Friday one student is selected from a hat of names to write a one-page (or more) chapter. The chapter is written outside of class and is expected to further the storyline created by the previous writers— although the writer can change the trajectory of the story and kill off or add new characters. Each student is required to participate and has one week to complete their chapter. Mr. Z. offers his editorial eye and what he terms a spicing up of their chapter if the student prefers. The Novella is read each Friday during the last ten minutes of class and the author gets to choose a reader from volunteers. Initially, Mr. Z simply had the students read the chapters, but over the course of the Novella, Mr. Z added literary mini-lessons such as mapping out the plot and character development, understanding point of view, and creating powerful dialogue.

One component of the Novella that drew in many students was the fact that Mr. Z loosely regulated the content. Mr. Z was atypical in his monitoring of student work and allowed students to write and research topics on gang life and urban violence. Despite Mr. Z's openness to students exploring these topics, many students regulated themselves based on their understandings of what was conceived as acceptable objects of study within schools. Cecilia, a self-identified generational gang member,⁹ who often carried newspaper articles about recent gang shootings, some of which included her family members, expressed this sense of restriction despite permission from Mr. Z to write regarding having a hangover for a class assignment. "No, cause this is school and I don't want to get into trouble" (Mr. Z, Observation 10). Yet within the Novella students did not self-regulate and took Mr. Z's permission wholeheartedly. Students attempted to push the boundaries of acceptable language use and content within the Novella. Mr. Z repeatedly told students they could use generally unacceptable words and topics for the school space, such as curse words, gang discourse and violence. Mr. Z's only restriction was that students could not include actual names or easily identifiable portraits of students in the class or school, or neighborhood gang culture such as actual blocks, gang names or colors. The inclusion of normally unsanctioned topics allowed for students to see their outside lives—discourse and topics of interest—inside the classroom. Mr. Z felt allowing the students to choose the content shifted their outside lives in a new relation to the school:

I didn't limit, like, what gets brought to the class or what becomes a part of the class. I think the reason goes back to like education not serving for what some of the students want to learn about or have questions about so, if it becomes taboo, like, 'No, don't talk about it!' then there is no way to vent or get ideas for solutions...even I don't have answers of why gangs exists. (Mr. Z, Observation 9)

Mr. Z. saw the students' use of gang content in the Novella as an opportunity for exploration of their social world and an opportunity to write out their world and see it in more complexity. Mr. Z often used his memory as a Latino youth as a resource for his decision-making. His belief that students' outside lives were considered taboo was based on his experience as a student:

I had thought about it before starting the year, like what I would allow in my classroom, from my experience in Hamilton and other young folk that I talk to what they are allowed to talk about in school and not. School can be limiting and also [makes] things that are normal in some students' lives taboo. I think that is a problem in itself, so even though I am not fully comfortable with kids talking about, like, killing each other, if it's not done in a way that is hostile to each other [when] it can also be done in a way that is productive. (Mr. Z, Observation 9)

⁹ Generational gang members are members of a gang through familial expectations. Their parents and extended family members are in the gang and being in the gang is not up for negotiation, it is an expected way of being in the world. Cecilia wore red everyday and often shared her familial ties to gangs, including stories and newspaper articles about the shootings of her cousin and brother days apart from each other.

Although Mr. Z believed he gave this opportunity in all of his classroom assignments, only through the Novella did students really engage and believe that the writing could explore any content of their choosing. In conversations with Mr. Z after my observations had ended, he stated that students had begun to critique their Novella as being too centered on violence and retaliation. According to Mr. Z, students began to push for more complex story writing—they had begun to tire of the endless cycle of death.

The ownership over the Novella was a distinct shift from the writing that occurred normally in class. Unlike other assignments, students kept tabs on the Novella. Students pressured Mr. Z to be timely in giving feedback and his typing up of their chapter. Mr. Z recounted one such incident with Emiliano, a student who generally disliked writing. “Emiliano just turned it in at second period and then I see him in the hallway third period...and he is like ‘Hey Mr. Z did you type up my Novella yet, is it ready?’” (Mr. Z, Final Post-interview). When chapters were due, the students pressured the current author to write the chapter in a timely manner and pointed out to Mr. Z if the chapter was late. Students who were slow to write their chapter received a mixture of chastisement and encouragement by classmates. In their eagerness to maintain the writing of the Novella, they urged Mr. Z to pick another author or let them write another chapter if the person designated to write the chapter missed the deadline. “Mr. Z, she is messing up the whole damn Novella. It has been two weeks already. Can we just pick someone else!” (Student, Observation 18).

The reading of the Novella was just as important as the writing. Students ensured that the reading of the Novella was included on Friday’s agenda. They were eager to give their vocal performance and wildly waved their hands to be given a chance to read. Authors of the chapter sat pensively, eagerly awaiting feedback on the chapter they wrote. The readings of chapters often ended in a ruckus of applause and pleas for an opportunity to have it read a second time with a different group of volunteers. Regularly students would bring in peers from other classes to show off their chapter and implore Mr. Z to confirm that it was indeed their writing.

Students felt a sense of ownership over their writing and thus often attempted to negotiate the creative license of the next writer to shift the storyline, kill off or add new characters. This was most evident during an after school session when Adrianna stayed after to receive help from Mr. Z to write her chapter. Mr. Z was occupied with a number of students either trying to obtain make-up work or discussing their behavior in class. Finally, Adrianna became impatient and engaged the dual role students had given me, part-student, part-second teacher, and requested that I assist her in writing her chapter of the Novella. I was willing to help, but also cautious of writing the actual content. After several minutes of trying to gather Adrianna’s ideas for the chapter, I finally suggested that she dictate the story and I would write on the whiteboard. As we began to “write,” Jonathan and Asia, two students who had already written their chapter of the Novella and stayed after class to influence Adrianna’s chapter, began to chime in and insist on certain plot twists. Asia was avid that her characters do not get killed off, insinuating that if Adrianna kills off her characters she may risk her social relationship with Asia and the other young ladies within the classroom. The Novella is not just a writing assignment—it is also a social product that produces new relations and threatens existing relations amongst students.

Mr. Z realized the growing dialogue and came over to assist me in assuring Adrianna that she had full control over the content of her chapter. Mr. Z was already aware of the negotiations taking place around the Novella. The intense feedback and pressure during Adrianna’s attempt to write her chapter was not evident in the peer-feedback sessions Mr. Z included as part of his official teaching of writing. Unlike the engagement and strongly expressed opinions of Asia and

Jonathan around the Novella, peer feedback sessions during official class time often became socializing moments in which students exchanged the latest gossip and rumors. However, students viewed the Novella as a document worth protecting, and thus the writing was central to the feedback sessions. When Asia and Jonathan were encouraged to leave the room or focus on another object, they refused. Not only did students attempt to influence the next author, but they also asked to read the Novella of Mr. Z's third and fourth period class to compare the writing and storyline, with the intention of ensuring that their Novella was better written.

The sense of ownership and pride was evident through the monitoring of not only the writing of the Novella, but also the retention of the copies of each chapter. I once borrowed a chapter from a student in order to review the storyline before a new chapter was read in class. I placed the student's copy with my items, thinking of the chapter as one of the many other sheets of paper given out in Mr. Z's class. The student who loaned me the copy, hesitantly, but seriously, asked for her copy back. In fact, students not only guarded their copies of the chapter they wrote, but also the chapters written by other students. Students who had been moved out of Mr. Z's class for various reasons returned to get copies of the new chapters written. The Novella was the only assignment monitored by the students in so many aspects.

The jungle classroom and production: basket writing and the return to old space

Mr. Z had a clear imagination of his classroom and the space of writing within it, yet once in the classroom, he had difficulty maintaining the space he had envisioned while in the credential program and the mini-institute. Mr. Z. had imagined a high level of engagement not just for one student at a time, on for one particular assignment, but every writing assignment. "With the novella I was really surprised to see the engagement and power, and students giving each other ideas and drive the storyline, but that was done just for one student at a time" (Mr. Z, Final Post-interview).

Writing in Mr. Z's class was consistent. Students went through several prewriting exercises (such as the mapping that Mr. Z learned in the institute), two drafts, and then the writing was submitted to the basket. This writing cycle Mr. Z termed "basket writing" or writing that was done for the sake of being able to say a standard was completed and writing was produced for a grade, or the ultimate goal, to help students practice so that they could pass both the CELDT and the district writing test. Most of the work that he collected he read and gave minimal comments but none of the work was ever reviewed for deeper learner or discussion on writing.

Mr. Z imagined students writing for authentic purposes: "I imagined that I would have all students writing for writing and not for the basket"(Final Post-interview). He also foresaw students having control over their writing, including the way it is evaluated. "I imagine[d] giving them the autonomy to say I don't want to focus on editing, I want you to just tell me if my message is clear...this is my writing. This class is going to be for me, for my writing" (Post-interview 1). Despite this imagining, Mr. Z admits that he felt uncomfortable actually letting students spend time on a piece of writing. He imagines that a whole class period dedicated to writing will result in chaos. "I sometimes get nervous when I plan and think, ok, for the period of one hour we are just going to do this type of writing and sharing and in my head I imagine everything that can go wrong and maybe I get nervous and say, no way, I need to add more and so I tack on 2 or 3 extra assignments in case something goes wrong" (Mr. Z, Final Post-Interview).

Mr. Z. admitted that the lessons were meant to be a back up plan for when chaos occurred yet in the midst of teaching he pushed the students along even when the class was appropriately engaged in the writing. “While I am in the process sometimes I don’t gauge it correctly and say ‘ok this is going wrong,’ so I just push the next assignment and then the next one” (Final post-interview).

I consider Mr. Z’s imagination of chaos equivalent to the jungle classroom. The jungle classroom is a continuation of the “wilderness” depicted in people of color. The need to calm the wildness in people of color was often the reasoning used for appropriating space and initiating mechanisms of control. Generally the students in a jungle classroom are out of control, acting as if they were a part of the wilderness, primal. Much like the material in Charles Mills’ (1997) *The Racial Contract* or Jake Kosek’s (2006) *Understories*, race and civility have been used in an American discourse of which people of color, primary African American and Latino, are too wild to be civilized and must be carefully watched. Kosek notes in his book *Understories*:

The yoke between people and landscape continues to be a defining factor, an intrinsic characteristic, and a natural tendency that binds race, nature, and place. The rooting of identity in a stable relation to place...points to the ways its formation is deeply infused with normative notions of space and difference, leading to the treatment of diaspora, nomad and refugees as people infected with social pathologies...people have come to understand themselves and to be understood by others in relationship to particular notion and histories of the landscape. (p. 112)

Leander’s (2004) classroom study within a high school academy demonstrates how chaos and students of color are linked in the imagination. White students in the academy attributed the sense of chaos to the addition of seven black students who always sat together. The white students were careful not to cite race as a key factor of their perception. “This anxiety and anger was often coded and not indexed as about culture or race, rather it was often linked to the level of noise during interaction or simply to the number of students in the class” (p. 133.). Yet the white students failed to note that they, too, sat together in class or that those students who were truly disruptive were shunned by the other African American students. The work of the conceived space relies on ideology. The pathology of black and brown bodies is an ideology that re-inscribes privilege and marks people of color as the Other. Mr. Z is not immune to the imagination of the wild person of color image. In fact his dress, demeanor and sense that he had to overplan were all in an attempt to ensure that the “wilderness” of the students, who were visibly marked as deviant and potential future gangbangers rather than contributing citizens and future college students, would not overtake the classroom. “If it doesn’t work in my classroom once, I am more cautious. I am always planning double” (Mr. Z, Final Post-interview).

This need to maintain the classroom not only came from a public imagination of the wild body but also from Mr. Z’s memory of the schooling experience of his brother— who struggled to take up the role of a successful student, flirted with gang life and saw little reason for taking school seriously— much like the students in Mr. Z’s classroom. Despite Mr. Z never experiencing chaos with his students, and his intellectual understanding of white privilege and that black and brown bodies being imagined as wild and deviant is a product of white privilege (Mills, 1997), Mr. Z still responded by having his students do more than was feasible or even productive, constantly pushing them towards a position of less “wild” by increasing the pressure to succeed academically. “Sometimes I feel like I rush my students, partly because I tell them I

am trying to get them to do what is on the list, because they get tested monthly...the curriculum I have to cover because they get tested monthly and I am trying to get them to do well on these tests so they don't stay in Inside" (Mr. Z, Final Post-interview).

Mr. Z is a link in the vicious cycle of a fear of students of color, which leads to fewer opportunities for them to engage in rigorous and expansive educational spaces— spaces of privilege. The lack of opportunity dominoes into fewer success stories, which then is used as evidence of minorities' inability to live up to the American Dream.

The jungle classroom imaginary has political power. It supports the need for scripted curriculum and less student choice. I believe it is also keeps new teachers, and veterans, from implementing authentic writing practices in their classroom. At the end of the mini-institute, Mr. Z was prepared to institute small steps to create an environment where students could engage in authentic writing, yet despite his perspective, his imagination of the jungle classroom impeded his efforts. Most unfortunate is that Mr. Z sees the answer to this problem in "basket writing." Basket Writing was the writing Mr. Z assigned and had students complete simply for the end goal of submitting it into the metal basket he used to collect completed student work. In an interview Mr. Z explained why he relied on basket writing:

Honestly I am too caught up in the day to day that I haven't reflected on where they were and where they are...I am not taking the time to do that. It also relieves me of some of the stress.... One of the things I am not too good at is looking at what we have and assessing. I'm into producing, hoping that more means better. (Mr. Z, Final, Post-interview)

Mr. Z imagined a rich writing classroom in which students felt addicted to writing. Yet his spatial imagination outside of the classroom was deeply impacted once in the classroom. The classroom filled with black and brown students appearing as a commonplace imaginary of academically deficient wild students created caution and hesitancy in Mr. Z's instruction. Mr. Z found his imagination clouded by the curricular pressures of national and school discourse; he struggled to see the students as more than just "Insiders" who lacked academic prowess. His social justice stance framed learning as a loosening of authoritative control where he imagined letting his students go outside in the hallway to write or to take a nap; yet even though his placement at the outer perimeter of his school allowed him to put students outside of his room to write, Mr. Z used the outside space for isolating disruptive students. When asked why he did not allow students to write outside, he imagined conflicts brewing among students:

A big concern of mine is to do that and then not be able to be there to defuse anything or to not be able to have the outside folk not distract the other classes. 'Cause the six back portables tend to have two intervention groups there. (Mr. Z, Final Post-Interview)

The outside space was not appropriate for students to write but it was an appropriate space for disciplining students. Mr. Z not only worried about constant chaos, his response alluded to the implicit understanding at the site that the portable was a marked space for students in intervention. The portables, like the students, were geographically on the outside of the main learning space of the school.

The type of space Mr. Z imagined producing was visible for 15 minutes on Fridays, The ever-present message of being an outsider was written out within the Novella. The Novella allowed students free rein and all objects of study were valid. A point worth noting is that across

the space-time of the classroom students began to tire of their study of gang violence, pushing for authors to create a more complex telling of urban students' lives, producing a new standard for gang discourse within the classroom. The temporary shifting of space and the implications of the mini-institute can provide educational researchers with information on how to better prepare teachers to survive the thick space in order to arrive at the thin space and most importantly, how to cope with the need to continually regenerate short-lived thin spaces. I consider these issues in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 Implications and Conclusion

This study focused on seven participants that attended the four-day, preservice mini-institute on writing instruction and the attempts of one participant to implement writing in his classroom— a small scale in research context. Despite the small scale of the study, there were key learnings that educational researchers can build upon. The mini-institute was able to provide pre-service teachers a writing experience with the explicit goal of developing a more complex understanding of writing instruction and to reclaim genres of writing that are less represented in traditional schooling, such as fiction writing. Participants tapped into their former student identities which allowed them to critique their assumptions about teaching writing and the issues their students may face while engaging in writing. Although language is central to the debate on English instruction, of which writing is implicit albeit less of a focus, issues of race are not exempt in writing instruction. Race and education have a long torrid history and despite urban teacher education programs, more conversation, inquiry and reflection are needed to make visible teacher beliefs about students of color and their ability and the necessity to develop as writers.

The mini-institute had its own shortcomings, as with most professional development, there are areas of improvement. The institute incorporated a number of teaching practices in four days and despite the NWP tenet that every teacher has something to teach colleagues about teaching writing to students, the participants were never asked to share their knowledge. Although the participants were still technically not licensed teachers, they had taught for a whole semester before attending the mini-institute and some had more extensive experience teaching before entering their credential program. I discuss these implications further below.

Buffet when a small meal is more appropriate.

Participants in the mini-institute were exposed to more teaching practices than they could reasonably implement their first year of teaching. The vast number of strategies over a short period of time was appetizing, as participants eagerly engaged in writing that seemed unending and, as Mr. Z termed it, addicting. Yet the smorgasbord of practices allowed for breadth but not depth. Mr. Z had difficulty remember many of the practices. In fact, the practices that he remembered in fuller detail were the practices that included other modes, such as taste in the detailed writing, or the artwork produced in the monster and mapping exercises. The cramming of many strategies within a short period of time was most evident in the demonstration that was aimed at helping participants see how to embed writing across the curriculum. Participants were too polite to vocalize the limited understanding they gained, but the lack of time to process resounded in the room in silence when participants were unable to participate in the debriefing discussion. After several minutes of silence, the facilitator was prompted to give the teachers time to process their experience. Even after more time for processing, the discussion centered around two participants' experience of the demonstration rather than on how participants could implement the strategies experienced in their own teaching. What may have been useful— especially for building the capacity for new teachers to not only have students write but to understand the varied ways to engage students in revision— was an opportunity to pause and re-examine a lesson; for participants to go back and reflect on the learnings from day one and engage in inquiry.

One central tenet of the NWP is that teachers should teach each other. What is not stated but deeply linked to this tenet is that teachers must question their work in order to teach each other. Teacher inquiry is key. All writing project demonstrations, workshops and in-service are vetted for evidence of teacher inquiry: did the teacher actually use this practice in their classroom, is their student work evidence of the success and challenges of the project, what other contexts or considerations did the teacher take into account, how might teachers who chose to adopt this practice shift it to meet their specific context and student needs? The space for contemplating such questions was not available in the mini-institute, nor was there time for presenters to discuss the number of teaching cycles it took for them to develop a truly successful practice. The presentations hid the fact that what writing project teachers know is that every poor lesson is an opportunity for deeper inquiry and a chance to better understand writing and the needs of their students. The inquiry stance of the NWP requires teachers to be willing to take risks with the understanding that each attempt is a success, as teachers uncover the what I call the “much, much, more” it takes to really teach a lesson. Much, much, more is all the intangible things of a classroom that are difficult to communicate, not because they are invisible or so abstract, but because the much, much more changes, sometimes every day. Mr. Z. may have been able to identify ways in which to move students’ writing instead of resorting to producing and basketwriting.

Inquiry embraces the fact that teaching is messy and involves a number of missteps and returns to previously held notions and understandings. Furthermore, research finds that “teachers’ practice is more likely to change as they participate in professional communities that discuss new materials, methods, and strategies, and that support the risk taking and struggle involved in transforming practice” (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Helping new teachers develop a penchant for reflection is key to building their resilience, especially for teacher education programs that focus on developing teachers for high-need urban areas.

Conclusion

Teacher educators have already begun to ask how context plays a role in the way pre-service teachers conceptualize teaching. Less attention has been paid to how imagination influences pre-service teachers and their conceptualization of writing instruction. This study attempts to engage writing instruction and teacher imagination through the theoretical framework of spatial theory. Context is not abstract, it is the everyday practices, ideologies relationships and symbols within places. Classrooms are contexts. Observing pre-service teachers in a four-day institute focused on teaching writing provided a window to understand the ways in which the classroom as a produced space influences, both positively and negatively, pre-service teachers’ beliefs about writing instruction. Three important areas of focus have developed from this study:

1. Pre-service teachers need opportunities to write. Opportunities must include all genres.
2. More research is needed for interrogating teachers’ beliefs on students of color and their writing ability.
3. Inquiry, not just experience in writing, is necessary for pre-service teachers to develop strategies for combating the effects of urban, high-need school spaces.

This study also highlighted areas of learning that were not well supported within the institute: technology and writing and collaborative writing. Professional development models focused on technology within NWP are increasing as more sites widen the net to include digital writing. Given NWP's historical success with improving writing instruction across school contexts, it is my hope that pre-service teachers benefit as the learning spreads from inside NWP to larger teacher learning contexts.

The interaction in Chapter Four brought to the forefront an area of writing instruction that plagues education in general: collaborative work. Education is touted as a tool for helping individuals rise above their circumstances. This individualistic public view of education discourages collaborative work. Writing in schools is definitely impacted by this. Much like the expectation that students read alone (Sterponi, 2007), most writing in classrooms ask students to write alone. As the collaborative forms of writing, which call for multiple composers across global spaces continue to increase, so must the ways in which teacher construct opportunities for students to write. To create new opportunities, teachers must take into account the shifts in relationships that are inherent in moving from individualistic learning to collaborative learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Pre-Intercession Questionnaire

1. What knowledge would you like to gain in the area of writing instruction?
2. Which writing skills and abilities do you want your students to have by the end of the year?
3. How did you learn to write as a student in K-12? Which strategies or activities were most successful for you in learning to write? Least?

Post-Intercession Interview Guide

1. What did you find to be the most challenging for you in the intercession?
2. Has your thinking about writing changed?
3. Are there any strategies you learned in the intercession that you hope to use as a teacher?
4. What challenges do you feel you might encounter as a teacher of writing?
5. Was there any topic or activity that you imagined would come up or occur in the intercession? If so did it occur?

Post Observation Interview Guide

1. Did you imagine how this lesson would go before today? If so did the lesson occur as you imagined?
2. I noticed in your lesson plan that you wanted students to learn/practice _____ . Can you tell me if you felt this occurred and what students did during the lesson to lead you to this conclusion?
3. How developed are your students as writers?
4. Which writing strategies or skills would you like your students to develop?
5. Which part of the lesson felt challenging to you?
6. In this lesson did you apply any of the strategies or techniques you learned in the institute? If so can you tell me successful you felt it was?
7. Were there any constraints in planning this lesson due to the room, materials, or assumed expectations? In other words what considerations did you have to take into account when planning and implementing the lesson?
8. If you were to teach this lesson again what would you change? Why?

Exit Interview

1. I would like to take you back to the first day of the intercession. Think about your thoughts about writing, yourself as a writer and being a teacher of writing. How has your thinking about writing changed from then to now?
2. What part of your experience in the intercession do you believe is still influencing the way you teach writing?
3. Do you continue to discuss writing strategies with colleagues at your current placement or any of the other teachers who attended the intercession? If so how often?
4. In what way, if at all, did you find that the actual space of the classroom: the desk, chairs, materials, etc., had an impact on how you taught writing?
5. In teaching writing were you surprised at any of the choices you made?
6. Here are the student samples that you gave me during the last four months. Do you have any thoughts about them now in retrospect?
7. In your pre-questionnaire you responded that you hoped students had the following skills and abilities: _____? Which of these do you feel students have now?

8. Comparing your students writing ability from when I first started observing you, can you describe their writing development?

Appendix 2: Writing Across the Curriculum Assignment Sheets

What IS Writing in the Content Areas?

Learning Objectives: Teachers will learn and engage in practices in the content areas that promote thinking through writing or “writing to learn”

Language Objectives:

- Teachers will read and understand instructions in three content areas
- Teachers will write reflectively and write to learn in three content areas
- Teachers will speak to partners and with small groups around the lesson topic

Agenda:

- Quickwrite: When you think back on your own schooling experience, how were you asked to write in your content area courses? How did writing differ across content areas?
- Introduction
- Content Area Writing to Learn—A Simulation Activity
- Other ways to incorporate writing into your content area learning each day
- Discussion
- Q & A
- Reflection

Content Area Writing to Learn

Follow the schedule given to your group. For each area, do the assignment as given below. You may work as a group or individually unless specified. After you complete each subject area, you will be given time to complete a short reflection on what that activity was like for you on page 3 of this packet. Have fun and I can’t wait to hear about your good writing!

Science Assignment (Use p. 4 of this packet to record your data)

Experiment with the ramp and the trains—then write a **hypothesis** about the relationship between the **height** of the ramp, the **size** of the train and the **time** it takes for the train to get down the ramp. What other factors might also affect the time the train takes to get down the ramp?

Math Assignment (Use p. 5 of this packet for this assignment)

On each index card is written a shape. Turn over your index card and **list** as many **characteristics** about your shape as you can. When everyone in the group is done listing the characteristics of their shape, you will take turns describing your shape to your partners. If you aren’t sure what shape one of your partners is describing, ask them questions until you figure out the shape, then write down the information that helped you guess the shape. When everyone is done guessing shapes, use the information in your list to write a paragraph **describing** each shape.

History Assignment

Match the pictures on p. 6/7 of the packet to the correct amendment number in the Bill of Rights. In the box below each picture, write what right this amendment gives to the people or the states (be sure to include any parts of the amendment not included in the picture). Then, choose one amendment and write a paragraph about whether you think this amendment is important; why you agree or disagree with it, and how it has affected you personally or the United States as a country.

Student Writing Demonstration Reflection and Debrief

What was the experience like writing in the different content areas?

Station 1: Subject _____

Station 2: Subject _____

Station 3: Subject _____

Question for Reflection: What are some skills that you can see would be important to writing in each content area?

Chugging Down the Tracks: A Science Experience

A **hypothesis** is a scientific guess based on initial information. Today you will make a hypothesis based on your experience with the trains and the ramps. Use the boxes below to record notes on at least four different observations:

Train size: Ramp Height: Time for train to get down ramp: Other Observations:	Train size: Ramp Height: Time for train to get down ramp: Other Observations:
Train size: Ramp Height: Time for train to get down ramp: Other Observations:	Train size: Ramp Height: Time for train to get down ramp: Other Observations:

Based on your observations, write a hypothesis about how the height of the ramp, the size of the train and the time it takes for the train to get down the ramp are related. Then explain your thinking using the data above.

Bill of Rights Amendment Matching Activity

Amendment # _____ This amendment gives the people the right to	Amendment # _____ This amendment gives the states the right to	Amendment # _____ This amendment gives every individual the right to
-------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

Amendment # _____ This amendment protects individuals from	Amendment # _____ This amendment gives the individuals the right to	Amendment # _____ This amendment gives rights not stated in the Bill of Rights to
---------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Amendment # _____ This amendment gives the accused people the right to	Amendment # _____ This amendment protects individuals from	Amendment # _____ This amendment gives individuals the right to
---------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

Amendment # _____ This amendment gives people the right to

Other Resources and Ideas for Content Area Writing

Science

- Science Notebooks (Writing to Learn)
- Science Journals (Learning to Write: Students write expository paragraphs about science concepts)
- Found Poetry in Science Observation Report (Creative Writing)
- Saturation Report (Observation Learning to Write)

Math

- Math Journals

- Explanations of the process of solving equations
- Math CLOZE activities to target vocabulary
- Math Read-Alouds

Social Science

- Community Journals
- Writing from a particular historical perspective
- Writing from a kid's perspective in a particular historical time period
- Describing historical people/ pictures/ places making inferences about those places

Appendix 3: Creative Writing Worksheet

I Found It in My Name

by _____

In my name I found _____

but not _____.

I see _____

but not _____.

I have _____ and _____

but not _____ or _____.

In my name I found _____

but not _____.

I see _____

but not _____.

I found all of this in my name.

What can you find in yours?

Appendix 4: Mr. Z's Weekly Schedule

WEEK 5 9.20.10-9.24.10

ELA 7 Strategy

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
-Announcement/Group Activity -Present RootWords- Start Root-word homework -explain week long project of writing (autobiographical or fictional narrative)- show chain of thoughts [p179/384] ex 182/390	-read 3 journal samples -Freewrite #5 -share ideas/ begin first draft of writing- finish first draft H.W.	-Dialogue reading? -1 st Draft Feedback	-SSR #5 -2 nd Draft due- go through Revisions- Share out	-RootWord Quiz -Share out Novella Chapter -select new chapter writer -Begin Barrio Boy

INSIDE Period 1/7

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
-Announcement/Group Activity -Writing Unit Test for new unit	-read 3 journal samples -Freewrite #5 -explain week long project of writing (autobiographical or fictional narrative)- show chain of thoughts activity- prewrite activities	-share ideas/ begin first draft of writing (read Narrowing down topics 24W)- finish first draft H.W.	-SSR #5 -1 st Draft Feedback -Start 2 nd Draft	-RootWord Quiz -2 nd Draft due- Share out -Share out Novella Chapter -select new writer
-Reading Unit Test for new unit -Present Root Words - Start Root-word HW			*TESTING for CELT (no teaching)	*TESTING for CELT (no teaching)

Standards: 3.1/ 3.5 and writing 2.1

WEEK 12**ELA 7 Strategy**

MON	FRI	TUE	WED	THUR
-Library Visit -Share out Novella Chapter (P.O.V) -select new chapter writer -Grades/Passbacks -Oscar Grant Discussion	-Freewrite #12 -Pearson Poem	-Root Word Scramble -SSR#12	*No school Veterans Day	-RootWord Quiz -Tupac Poem Imitation -Share out Novella Chapter -select new chapter writer -Grades/Passbacks

INSIDE Period 1/7

MON	FRI	TUE	WED	THUR
-Library Visit -new reading strategy with imagery 183 -Video- Start reading story	-Start writing for Unit -Finish Story	-Root Word Scramble -SSR#12	*No School Veterans Day	Don't know yet (poetry that benchmark class is seeing?)
-Share out Novella Chapter -select new writer (P.O.V) -grades/passbacks -Oscar Grant Discussion	-Freewrite #12 -Computer lab activities	-Benchmark review 8 th grade -Poetry or Writing Cause and Effect paragraph	*No School Veterans Day	-RootWord Quiz -Share out Novella Chapter -select new writer -grades/passbacks

Grammar: Independent and subordinate clauses**Thursday:** Meet with R 2nd period