

Connecting through Composition:
Critical Intersections in Middle School Multimodal Writing

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my mom.

Abstract

Classroom writing practices exist in a complex social environment where students present identities to each other through the texts they create and their interactions (Pandya, Z., 2015; Dyson, 2018; Snaza & Lensmire, 2006). Recognizing this complexity, writing practices in schools have changed over time. Practices have shifted from a traditional focus on technical skills of writing, to a writing workshop model, emphasizing student choice of topics and opportunities to share. Critical writing pedagogy emerged in response to the workshop model's perspective of students bringing a single identity to a neutral writing process. However, traditional writing practices are pervasive in schools and there is a need for research that draws attention to classrooms where teachers implement critical writing pedagogy (Furman, 2017). This yearlong critical ethnographic study describes seventh grade students' writing processes at the intersection of critical writing pedagogy and multimodality, and considers how students' social identities as writers and peer relations around writing are mediated by literacy practices within the classroom.

Drawing on mediated discourse analysis (MDA) (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Norris & Jones, 2005) to examine moment-to-moment actions and interactions, this study traces a routine journal writing practice where students regularly enter into critical dialogue. An analysis focused on resemiotization (Norris & Jones, 2005) highlights how students' learning and interactions shift throughout this classroom practice. In addition, this study utilizes trajectories and timescales (Scollon & Scollon, 2004) to look at how two literacy events draw on this journal practice in similar ways while unfolding differently in

relation to the specific surroundings of each moment. Finally, this study draws on MDA's view of agency to consider the ways the classroom teacher navigates intersecting discourses in order to implement these critical and multimodal writing practices in the classroom.

This work has implications for how we view writing practices and students as they engage in composing and sharing. It calls for a view of students as writers who are making choices about when and how they write and engage in dialogue based on the complex surroundings of a moment. This view shifts attention away from an idea that students either have or lack abilities and instead focuses on the possibilities of teachers to create and reflect on spaces where students choose to engage in meaningful writing and dialogue.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A Ritual

Each year, on an October weekend, my grandmothers, my mother, and I came together for the final steps of bringing students' work together in a quilt for my students' classroom. Upon completion, the quilt hung on a wall in the back of the classroom, brightly colored squares side-by-side with a bold border holding them in a frame-like position. Each square held a student-created image of literacy with their signature. The squares highlighted a variety of perspectives and artistic abilities: Stick figures hovering around an open book. Thought bubbles filled with question marks and exclamation points. A detailed image of a mother and son curled around a paper. The front cover of *Harry Potter*. This process started my first year of teaching, and continued for the next eight years.

The yearly ritual started with a task for students to become language and literacy detectives, exploring the ways language and text were used in the worlds that surrounded them. After keeping a log of the ways they saw people using language around them, they each chose a symbol to represent what language meant for them. I cut one square of fabric for each student, and on their square, each student carefully created a symbol with fabric markers. As students finished, I placed a check by their names on a list, piled the completed squares up, and took them to my parents' house for the weekend. My grandma Anna, my grandma Doreen, and my mother, Karen, met me in the kitchen at the center of the farm where I grew up. The coffee cups were filled and a plate full of brownies and

lemon bars waited on the counter as we each took our station in the quilt-making process. We prepared to publish the students' squares. I stood by the ironing board. My grandmothers each held a pile of quilt squares and pins. My mom placed herself at the sewing machine where she could direct us in the process and zip the pieces of fabric together. Before the quilt was complete, we each added our own square. My Grandma Anna added a square with letters and a pen, my Grandma Doreen added music notes, and my mom created an image of herself listening to NPR. At the end of the weekend, I returned to the classroom with the squares pieced together into a quilt of students' literacy examples.

While the metaphor of a quilt is often used to talk about bringing things together, this quilt was a concrete component of our classroom community each year. During parent-teacher conferences it rested on the wall, so students could point to their own square, but each day it served a different purpose. Students would take turns sitting on it during free reading and writing time. Others would curl under it on a bad day. Sometimes it was a place to look while brainstorming ideas. As I changed school districts, grade levels, curriculum, and students, I continued this process of piecing my students' squares together with the women in my family. As a teacher, this process was a physical act that anchored my plans at the beginning of the school year and an introduction to the process of writing.

Connected

As a devout student of Nancy Atwell's writing workshop, I believed the quilt was a starting point to create a writing and reading classroom that "allow(ed) children to

express and share numerous and varied interest in each other and the world,” (Lensmire, 2000, p. 92). I intended students to feel invited to bring themselves to the classroom through their process of investigating language in their lives and creating an individual representation on a square of fabric. It was a way for them to take their various experiences into this particular shared space. And, I recognized the ways schools did not always acknowledge all experiences and ways of knowing. I pushed administrators to allow students to be in my classroom, instead of placing them in what was often their second or third pull-out reading intervention course. In this sense, I was living out the workshop approach’s emphasis on a “commitment to taking students’ experiences and meanings seriously” (Lensmire, 2000, p. 62).

When these images were stitched together, each of the students’ interests, as well as my own, were physically connected to represent the way our learning would intersect as our lives came in contact with each other. This connectedness would also be realized through the actual reading and writing we did together. My intent in this message was clear on the first quilt my students and I co-constructed, where the center square held the quote from Virginia Woolf: “Literature is common ground; let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves.” As I worked to engage students in their connectedness, both through literature and the stitching together of their individual squares, I was also interested in the differences that they brought together. The quilt represented the way I wanted students to bring their lives to the classroom, so that we could connect with each other and “*actively seek to understand* what others are saying,” (Lensmire, 2000, p. 101). This attempt to bring students’ lives together was based in the

belief that experiencing our differences was an essential part of our learning.

While I looked forward to my students' creations for each year's quilt, I also looked forward to the process of physically creating the quilts with my grandmothers and mother. As I look to my own history of these quilts in the classroom, I recognize the ways I was calling on an experience that contributed to my own literacy practices that were intricately connected to the women in my family. Quilts marked special occasions. For weddings and graduations, it was expected that we would receive a new quilt, a pattern that represented something about who we were. Each bed or couch in our house was covered with a handmade quilt. And, as the women in my life instructed me, they were meant to be used. At home, quilts were for beds and table runners. They were pulled outside for softball games and picnics and wrapped around us when we were sick. It was a continuous way of being that was tangible and connected to who I was.

I was proud of the stitchwork that accompanied the quilts. I felt loved and connected with the blankets I moved with me from farmhouse to farmhouse to college to a small town where I first started teaching. In the classroom, the quilts highlighted our collective composing processes and allowed me to bring my own personal way of life and unique literacies into the space. While I attempted to model my own vulnerability in bringing myself to the classroom, I also opened up the possibility of complex histories intersecting with one another.

Complexity

As my grandmothers, my mom, and I came together to create these quilts, I brought the histories that shaped who I was and will continue to be as an educator. In the

same way, I brought my own world of language to the quilt as my grandmothers and my mother contributed their own interpretations of literacy into their own squares. Each year I made my square representing teaching in some way, but having my grandmothers and my mother physically in the quilt was equally important. Growing up, I witnessed their histories as workers: my grandma Anna, a teacher in a one-room school house, my Grandma Doreen, a piano teacher, my mother, an administrative assistant at a non-profit organization, and all women who worked on farms. In each case, they played a role of caretaker and nurturer. They engaged in physical work, whether it was in a bean field or a classroom, and showed up every day, no matter what else was going on. As a classroom teacher, I was continually mirroring these practices. In the ritual of the classroom quilt, I was bringing their crafting skills, a comfort item from my past, and a practice that was often associated with being a woman into my classroom. While this part of my identity was always part of my identity as a teacher, I did not arrive in schools knowing how to connect to all students or how to build connections between students, as the metaphor might suggest. I struggled to both bring in everything about who I was and fulfill my desires to feel connected to all students (Thandeka, p. 108-109). To recognize this tension between my experiences and my desire to be connected as imagined on the quilt, is also a recognition of my own history as a white, female taking up the role of a teacher in diverse classrooms.

Bringing students' stories together, full of lived experiences and histories of their own, was more complicated than stitching fabric together. In my first teaching job, I found myself in a rural, racially homogenous, predominantly upper middle class district,

similar in many ways to the community that I grew up in. Yet, it was here that I found myself in tense moments with other educators and students. I struggled to support students who stood out because of obvious economic differences, and I did not know how to fully engage with the parents and students who were angry that I wrote a letter to the editor in opposition of our school mascot, the Indians. When I shifted to work in an urban, racially and economically diverse school, there were moments of tension, as well. While I could not always point to the starting point of tensions between students, I recognized moments when they shared explicit questions about their differences through writing and texts, like Sharon Flake's *The Skin I'm In* which left students feeling frustrated and misunderstood. I felt underprepared as I realized I needed to learn more about how my identity came into contact with students' many identities in education.

In both school spaces, I was aware of "how difficult it is to disrupt" (Kamler, 2001, p. 154) the lines that often separate people and also looked for ways students connected through writing. I did not always know how to engage students across their differences and I did not know how to ease tension between students, although I witnessed the ways they were often experts at navigating tensions and complex expectations themselves. I felt frustration on the days when the writing process did not go well, when students did not engage critically with their work and the work of their classmates, or when I simply said the wrong thing to a student. To be in the space of a classroom, my students and I had moments that were not congruent with our histories and multiple identities. While our squares could sit neatly next to each other in a pattern, I recognized the difficulty in asking myself and students to cross lines of histories and

power structures to be together with our words on paper. If it was difficult for me, who had the authority as a teacher figure to fully engage in the “plural and common understanding,” (Lensmire, 2000, p. 105) across all of our differences, it is certainly asking a lot of students. I carried both this tension and moments that seemed to transcend it with me as I entered graduate school.

Possibility

While I recognize the tensions that came up in our classroom, the quilt was a reminder that we were working toward a way of learning from each other. This text hanging on the wall of my classroom was a symbol of an imagined space that brings the complexity of students and teachers together and a place where I asked myself and students “to write disruptively” in our classroom (Kamler, 2001, p. 137). Lensmire (2000) reminds us that “For Dewey, deliberation is a playing out, a rehearsal, of what would happen if we pursued this or that path” (p. 98). Looking back, I see the quilt as a rehearsal for our classroom to explore how to bring our stories together and how we might challenge narratives from society that insisted we should not easily be working together and learning from each other. Each year this was an assignment that all of the students completed and many of them did so with joy. As students shared their drafts of images and ideas, they laughed and encouraged each other. On the day I returned with the fully pieced-together quilt, we gathered around and celebrated our work together.

In this way, the quilt was an opening invitation to create “stories that imagine others as possible sources of learning, meaning, value, friendship, and love” (Lensmire, 2000, p. 110). We were connected, by thread and fabric to everyone else in the

classroom. In fact, the quilt would not have been possible without all of the squares, so we were forced to acknowledge each other. Not only were the other students sources of stories, they were necessary to complete part of our classroom. That symbol was a starting point in imagining that we needed each other. It was also a reminder that my history and changing identity were part of who I was in the space.

In another way, the quilt offered a “counter-narrative work which challenge(d) dominant representations and storylines” (Kamler, 2001, p. 173). While I was reminded that I was supposed to follow a curriculum calendar and my students were told they needed to hit specific, standardized targets to be seen as successful, we created something beautiful that went out of the curricular pacing and dividing lines. The “honors” students shared the same space as the “reading recovery” students, our diversity of gender, sexuality, race, and class was in one place, and they worked on creating images of language in their life instead of a required vocabulary packet. Our refusal to remain separated by curriculum and difference was an attempt to disrupt narratives that dictated how we are viewed and how we are expected to interact.

Though I wasn't fully aware of it at the time, the quilt also points to a desire to complicate the way my students experienced what literacy looks like and the form it takes. I asked students to acknowledge the way literacy moved in their own lives. Some of their images easily took on a multi-faceted view of literacy: the student who drew a parent in the garden and my grandmother creating her music notes pushed our accepted form of literacy beyond the essays of a traditional classroom. In the process, we were taking up an understanding that there are multiple ways of representing information

(Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001), and that these ways might be written, spoken, danced, spray painted, needle-pointed, or otherwise signified. As students interviewed, wrote, designed, and drew their squares, we were engaging in multiple literacy practices and stages of a collaborative writing process. The acts of entering a process through multiple modes of language was a gentle opening for students to bring their stories and selves into the classroom, seeming to make space for students to enter the writing process. I bring these experiences and questions of writing through connections, complexity, and possibility with me as I enter this research.

Statement of the Issue

Writing practices in schools have changed over time, shifting from a traditional focus on technical skills of writing, to a writing workshop model, emphasizing student choice of writing topics and opportunities to share with peers. Critical writing pedagogy emerged in response to the writing workshop model's perspective of students bringing a single identity to a neutral writing process (Kamler, 2001; Lensmire, 2000; Heffernan & Lewison, 2003). Insights from critical writing pedagogy point to the ways social status and power within peer relationships can create divisions, perpetuate oppressive discourses, and influence students' participation in literacy practices (Finders, 1997; Lensmire 2000; Dyson 2018; Lewis, 1993; Haddix, Everson, & Hodge, 2015; Winn, 2018; Pandya, Z., 2015). While writing pedagogy continues to change, traditional methods of teaching writing, including writing workshop, are still pervasive in classrooms.

As a classroom teacher, I experienced the challenges of implementing writing

processes and critical writing pedagogy. I believed that making space for students to write together improved their literacy skills and had the potential to connect students through shared stories. At the same time, I recognized that the writing process was complicated and often influenced by institutional policies and practices that teachers were expected to implement. With questions surrounding this complexity, I entered graduate school. Sociocultural theories and critical writing pedagogy began to give me language to consider this complexity through students' writing, their interactions, and the view they had of themselves and others in the classroom.

Throughout graduate school, I was drawn to spaces where students were engaged in writing processes while also exploring their identities as writers in a community together. In working with the local writing project site, I have been able to be in a variety of classrooms. As I connected with teachers, I discovered those who were open to having another person in their classroom and interested in sharing their own teaching practices. For this research, I was brought back to the focal teacher, Ms. Hughes, and her seventh grade English Language Arts classroom where I witnessed students fully engaged in writing practices as students and teacher continually questioned what influenced their perspectives. I also recognized this space as a place where students utilized different modes to enter the text and express who they are. This combination of time for students to engage in the writing process, an intentionally critical view of that writing, and an ongoing use of multimodal processes were important to me. In this research, I examine the literacy practices in a classroom where these three things come together and the ways students present their identities through those practices. The purpose of this study is to 1)

describe students' writing processes across modes in a critical writing workshop classroom and 2) to understand how students' social identities as writers and peer relations around writing are mediated by literacy practices across modes. It is my hope that this research points to practices that open up possibilities for students to make connections across social spaces and between interactions as they engage in their composing processes. Through this research, I utilize research methods that allow for a complex view of the classroom and environment surrounding interactions. In doing so, I want to make space for more identities to be honored within a writing classroom.

In order to understand these practices and the experience of the students in the classroom, I ask the following research questions: 1) How do students appropriate language from multiple contexts within a classroom's implementation of critical and multimodal writing practices? 2) How do students perform social identities within critical and multimodal practices? and 3) How do students and teachers connect within a diverse community of writers over time?

Research Design

This yearlong critical ethnographic study takes place in a racially and socioeconomically diverse seventh grade English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Over the course of the year, I utilized ethnographic methods, including collecting fieldnotes and student writing samples, and recording class discussions and interviews with students and the teacher. The participants included the teacher, Ms. Hughes, and students from one section of her seventh grade ELA classes. While I observed the entire class, there were five focal students in the study. These participants and the setting are described in

detail in chapter three. Over time, the use of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) (Scollon & Scollon, 2003; Norris & Jones, 2005) strategies allowed me to focus on key social actions and actors that are connected to the research questions. After establishing the key social actions, I focused on social practices, timescales, mediational means, and histories of participation to understand complex moments of interaction around the processes of writing and sharing.

Rationale and Significance

This work draws attention to the ways students learn through their critical practices of writing and sharing. If critical writing pedagogies are to expand, there is a practical need for more research that draws attention to classrooms where teachers do implement critical writing pedagogy within the curricular constraints of education, and that shares students' experiences with these writing processes (Wohlwend, 2009; Luke, 1991; Street, 1984). Research shows that one way teachers engage in critical literacy is through the implementation of multimodal learning practices, but there is a lack of research that connects critical writing pedagogy to specific moments of learning in multimodal writing processes in classrooms. This research connects these aspects of writing pedagogy and new insights on how students bring their identities from outside of school to their writing processes in school (Ito et al., 2013; Vasudevan, 2011; Jocius, 2018; Garcia, et al., 2014).

On a theoretical level, there is a need to look carefully at the complex moments of student interactions around writing that lead to creation of text, shared ideas, and shifting perspectives. The use of MDA in conjunction with ethnographic data from a

year in an ELA classroom allows for a new view of the learning that occurs as students engage in writing and sharing processes together.

Additionally, this work is at the intersection of policies surrounding literacy education. Like many teachers, the teacher in this research has experienced a shift in focusing on standardized and scripted curriculum. In response, this research offers a look at how a teacher and students navigate expectations that come from a school, district, state, and federal policies, shaping what is taught and how it is taught in classrooms. Policies that support this work need to make space for educators to build time in their curriculum to implement current topics and evolving modes within the ELA classroom.

Situating the Researcher

As indicated in my history of teaching, I see my position in this research as complicated and layered. In addressing the limitations of ethnographic work, I aim to write in a way that “leads readers to an ever fuller understanding of the people and issues addressed” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 206), while recognizing “the impossible differences within what is said, what is intended, what is signified, what is repressed, what is taken, and what remains” (Britzman, 2003, p. 244). My connections to this classroom are layered in ways that can complicate and assist my understanding of the space.

I chose to be in a middle school Language Arts classroom and bring my own nine years of middle school teaching to the space. In addition, this research occurred in a classroom where the teacher and I have a history of teaching together. This relationship

supported our ability to continually communicate throughout the research process. As I brought my history of teaching and *insider* knowledge of this teacher and her classroom, I also continually recognized my *outsider* experiences as a researcher and a graduate student.

Throughout the research process, I also reflexively considered my positionality in relation to the students in the space. I entered an urban classroom with students from racially and socioeconomically diverse backgrounds. Their experiences represent a variety of religions, sexual orientations, and families with differing levels of education. I came to the space as a straight, white, middleclass female from a rural setting and a family of educators. Influenced by poststructuralist and feminist authors (Britzman, 2003; Kumashiro, 2002; hooks, 1994), I attempt to acknowledge the risks of misrepresenting the experiences and interactions in the classroom. I reflected on possible simplification or sensationalization (Soep, 2014) of moments and events, returning to the data and to participants for ongoing triangulation, member checks, and clarification. Throughout this process, I returned to Britzman's (2003) call to "question the belief in representation even as one must practice representation as a way to intervene critically in the constitutive constraints of discourse" (p. 253).

Recognizing the challenge of representation, this research aims to present complex and multi-dimensional perspectives of the students in this classroom. The examples of social and pedagogical moments in the chapters highlight the resources students find in each other as they share their own complex and diverse identities through their composing, presenting, and listening with each other. In this way, I am committed to

making visible moments in the classroom that highlight the powerful work of students as composers and the ways classrooms might open up opportunities to draw on that work.

Social Practices of Writing

The following chapters provide a lens to view the ways students in the research site make connections across social spaces and between interactions as they engage in their composing processes. In the following chapter (two), I describe the theoretical frameworks of this study and provide a review of connected literature. Specifically, I draw on critical sociocultural theories of identity, pointing to the ways constructions of literacy are connected to identity. From there, I examine and explore how research around multimodality and critical writing pedagogy intersects with this work and provides a close look at access for students to engage in writing processes while honoring the complex intersection of many sociocultural experiences. In chapter three, I explain how I apply the theory and method of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) in this study. I focus on how MDA provides a way to examine specific moments in the classroom while connecting to the social histories of participation over time, keeping the complexity of each moment. Drawing on MDA, chapter four describes the social practice of permeable journaling from the focal classroom, considering the mediated action, the histories of social actors with the action, and how meaning is changed over time. This chapter begins with an overview of the practice of permeable journaling in the classroom. It then moves into a close look at one day of this practice and how students' learning changes through resemiotization in the process. Chapter five builds on this analysis to show how participants utilize actions and tools from the permeable journaling practice in other

writing processes within the classroom. Specifically, it looks at two literacy events and the way they unfold differently as two moments across time and space. Chapter six recognizes that practices alone did not guarantee students would engage critically in writing practices, so looks to how the teacher played a role in implementing the critical and multimodal pedagogy. Specifically drawing on MDA's understanding of agency, this chapter considers the ways the classroom teacher navigates intersecting discourses in order to implement these critical and multimodal writing practices in the classroom. Chapter seven concludes by considering the implications and possible future research related to this topic.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Section and Review of the Literature

This chapter describes the theoretical frameworks and current literature that influence my view of literacy practices and identity in a writing classroom. With an interest in understanding how students connect through critical and multimodal writing practices, I identify theories that help me consider writing as a social practice, the complex environment surrounding writing, and the actions students take through writing. I place this study at the intersection of sociocultural theory, multimodal literacies, and critical writing pedagogy.

I begin this chapter with an overview of sociocultural theories that view writing as a social, contextual, and dialogic process (Vygotsky, 1978; Street, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 2005; Bakhtin, 1994). Within this discussion, I draw on mediated discourse (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Norris & Jones, 2005) to understand how identities and social interactions are taken up within social interactions. From there, I look to theories and studies related to multimodality to understand the role of multiple modes of meaning making in a writing classroom (Palmeri, 2012; New London Group, 2000). I then turn to critical writing pedagogy to understand the complexity of identity within writing process pedagogy (Lensmire, 2000; Kamler, 2001). In the end, I assert the continued need to examine the critical social work of students in their writing practices, drawing on the intersection of these frameworks.

Sociocultural View of Literacy and Identity

In this study, I draw on sociocultural theories of literacy and identity, which

theorize literacy as a socially situated practice occurring through interactions in communities (Vygotsky, 1978; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1995; Bakhtin, 1994). Describing this view, Enciso and Ryan (2014) explain, literacy “develops within social practices, across locations, and is expressed and refined through participants’ references to specific social histories” (Enciso & Ryan, 2014, p. 133). This understanding of literacy draws on the work of Vygotsky (1978), recognizing that learning is constructed and understood by the community where the practice takes place (Vygotsky, 1978). As a result, literacy practices are developed through the contextual surroundings, social interactions of participants, and the histories participants bring to the space.

The importance of considering writing a social practice is taken up by Scribner and Cole (1981) who develop an argument that calls for a contextual understanding of writing processes. They critique a limited view of literacy practices and call for an understanding of the ever-changing and contextual qualities of literacy. Within their argument, they trace literacy practices of the Vai people of Liberia, recognizing how what was considered literate for the community was dependent on the social, economic, and contextual needs of the people. Ultimately, they call for a wider view of the “values, uses, and consequences” of writing as a social practice (p. 137).

Street’s (1984) conception of literacy as a practice recognizes literacy happens in action through social exchanges. By recognizing the social and contextual nature of literacy, Street (1984) clarifies how writing is not a collection of “neutral, technical skills” (p. 1), but rather practices associated with social and cultural expectations and histories. As such, literacy takes up a form of ideological practices, “implicated in power

relations and embedded in specific cultural meaning” (p. 1). This view of literacy is in contrast to “autonomous” views of literacy, which Street (1984) defines as “logical” functions of language around specific uses, without consideration of context or ideologies surrounding literacies. Autonomous views of literacy have been critiqued by sociocultural perspectives for presenting a narrow definition of literacy while sociocultural theories highlight a broader view of literacy practices (Luke, 1991; Heath, 1983). For example, autonomous views of literacy may position students based on their ability to achieve a particular form of literacy without recognizing other literacy skills developed within their own communities and diverse social worlds (Luke, 1991; Wohlwend, 2009a; Moni, van Kraayenord, & Baker, 2003; Olson, 2007; Rex, et al., 2010; Young, 2000).

Street’s (1984) recognition of the ideological nature of literacy practices points to an understanding of how power is present as literacy exists in particular spaces like classrooms and schools. After critiques of sociocultural theory not addressing these ideological and political issues, Lewis Enciso, and Moje (2007) responded with their view of critical sociocultural theory, as described in their book, *Reframing Sociocultural Research on Literacy: Identity, Agency, and Power*. The authors align with a view of learning as a social practice in a community, but call for further consideration of how identity, agency, and power are examined. They note that there are many strands of sociocultural theory, but they all “share a view of human action as mediated by language and other symbol systems within particular cultural contexts” (p. 5). In this understanding, identity is taken up through action related to specific contexts with

particular relationships and materials available. Their research then gives “greater emphasis than usual to the institutional, historical, and cultural contexts within which individuals are constituted and which include as well as exclude particular relationships and meanings” (p. 5). This allows for a consideration of the way power is produced and shifts in communities by people as they engage with discourses, materials, and relationships in a space. I draw on this perspective in this dissertation to understand the identities and relationships as they are created through actions in complex environments of classrooms where power exists.

Noting the diverse range of research on literacy and identity, Moje and Luke (2009) warn that particular views of both literacy and identity can shape the way researchers address literacy topics in the classroom. Lewis and Del Valle (2009) describe how identity, as it relates to literacy research within sociocultural theory, has been taken up in three waves since the 1970’s. Understanding the three waves provides “research possibilities that could reasonably emerge from each construct of identity in order to show how particular identity constructions can shape research on literacy and what we understand about the impact of identity on literacy practices” (p. 319).

Through this description (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009), the first wave of literacy research utilizes a relatively stable view of identity. In doing so, the research focuses on cultural differences between home and school, such as Delpit’s (1988) work focusing on how White, middle class teachers need to provide the language of power to Black and working-class students. The second wave of identity in literacy research highlights how adolescents mediate identities in social settings. In this understanding, identity is

negotiated and performative in particular settings. This research crosses out-of-school and school contexts, pointing out the way students might perform identities that resist, take up, or change the values of a specific context. A third wave view of identity in literacy research also sees identity as fluid, but focuses on a hybrid and spatial identity within “local and global flows of activity” (p. 317). Research connected to a hybrid identity considers how students may take up identities from multiple sites and times in relation to a particular text or culture. As a result, these studies show how identity is taken up in particular times and places that hold complex surroundings. The work of Leander (2004) pushes this perspective to consider how moment-to-moment interactions are connected to longer histories and practices over time and space.

In my own research, the description of a third wave view of identity (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009) resonates with my interest in the complex social, historical, and cultural environment that surrounds moment-to-moment interactions in students’ writing practices. Connected to critical sociocultural theory, the following descriptions of discourse, habitus, and agency, provide an understanding of a view of identity aligned with this study.

Discourse. Gee’s description of (D)iscourses is helpful in understanding the way power is produced and enacted. Gee describes these discourses as “socially recognized ways of using words or other semiotic codes” (Gee, 2011, p. 3). These semiotic interactions are constructed over time and place, creating meaning for individuals in relation to their social surroundings (Rogers, 2011). Adding to this understanding, this study draws on mediated discourse (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Norris & Jones, 2005) for

its emphasis on discourse and action. Within this study, a focus on action will bring attention to what Norris and Jones (2005) refer to as *discourse in action*. Under their description, “the relationship between discourse and action is dynamic and contingent” and located where multiple practices and identities come together. Discourses interdiscursively cycle through social practices, shaping the space while also being shaped by the space (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 9). Importantly, Norris & Jones (2005) note that this relationship of discourse and action creates tension as social actors come together to use these discourses and available tools.

Within this framework, writing is seen as an action that occurs with mediational means available to a specific context where tension exists. Drawing connections to the work of Vygotsky (1978), Wertsch (1995) explains that the key focus of sociocultural research is its emphasis on social action, which always contains an agent and mediational means (p. 10). In addition, mediational means are embedded in historical, cultural, and social aspects that also include power, which are appropriated by social actors. Also, mediational means are partial in each moment, as they could always be applied to and used, more or less, in other moments. Similarly, mediational means are given meaning through their connections to other purposes and social actors. According to Norris and Jones (2005) this mediated action occurs when, “mediational means, social actors, and the sociocultural environment intersect” (p. 5).

Wertsch (2005) provides two interpretations of Vygotsky’s meaning of mediation to understand how mediational means influence meaning making. Wertsch (2005) describes one interpretation of Vygotsky’s use of mediation as *explicit mediation*,

referring to material signs, which are intentionally and explicitly used as stimuli to meaning (p. 56). This interpretation focuses on thoughts changing through external, material tools. Wertsch's (2005) second interpretation of Vygotsky's use of mediation is *implicit mediation*, referencing internal speech. In this process, internal thought and external means are in a dialectical process, rather than simply a product of an external mediational means (p. 59). Within this study, I am interested in the mediational means students take up within their composing processes and the way those tools provides space for their agentic moves as writers and social actors.

Action Intuition and Historical Body. Aligned with a focus on action, Norris & Jones (2005) explain that social actions are not only “what social actors are doing,” but also “who they are” (p. 99). Bourdieu's (1981) concept of habitus, along with Nishida's (1966) concepts of *historical body* and *action intuition* informs an understanding of how discourses influence students over time. Within the social world, continual exposure to actions and material become transcribed on our bodies and in our habitus (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 141). As social actors live out habitus, they reinscribe and legitimize a particular way of being. Scollon (2001a) explains that when social actors share an action that is accepted within a group, without thought, habitus is revealed. This type of exchange occurs in a moment when social actors' historical, material experiences are shared and taken as given. This process results in actions becoming shared linked practices within a group of people for that moment. As linkages of practices become recognized, they may become something that social actors no longer notice. It is engrained in the experience in a way that it goes unnoticed, and these unnoticed actions form what is constituted as the

identity of social actors in mediated discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001b, p. 153).

In order to address the psychological process of discourses becoming sedimented into practice, Scollon & Scollon (2003) connect habitus to Nishida's (1966) terms *historical-body* and *action-intuition* to bring a bridge between the psychological and sociocultural perspectives that are often avoided during references to habitus. Nishida (1966) explains that a moment in the world always exists in multiple ways. An individual Self mirrors the world "into its own Self" (p. 172) at a moment within the world (as it is existing in these multiple ways). As the mirroring is internalized in an individual, the Self experiences a desire to act from its own perspective of that world, a process Nishida refers to as *poesis*. This desire of *poesis* leads to "changing the composition of things" (p. 167) in the world so that an individual mirrors the world, while taking up his or her own perspective of the world. Nishida (1966) refers to this internal process leading to external action as *action-intuition*. The dialectical process of individuals acting to form the world and the world forming the individuals is represented in the external *historical-body* of a moment. In this temporal moment, the past has already entered the environment, but also forms the moment in the present. Understanding the processes of habitus, action intuition, and historical body allows for an understanding of complex moments linkages of historical, social, and cultural actions within an intersection. Within this study, an understanding of Bourdieu's habitus and Nishida's (1966) action-intuition and historical body inform how students' different histories of literacy practices, as well as histories of social identities, will come together in the classroom.

Agency. Understanding a sociocultural view of discourses and habitus opens up

an understanding of agency, recognizing students' "opportunities to make and remake themselves, their identities, their discursive toolkits, and their relationships on the basis of the new ideas, practices, or discourses learned through their participation in a learning activity" (Moje & Lewis, 2007). Mediated discourse analysis (MDA) looks at agency as the choices that students make within the mediational means available to them. As a discourse from a particular time or place is taken up in a new moment, it becomes a mediational means for action in that moment. Social actors can create a specific outcome by collapsing time and space into one moment with emphasis on particular discourses at a given moment, eliminating other discourses that were part of the history. The different mediational means allow for the distribution of certain agentic actions at a specific site of engagement. Thus, agency is always related to the means available to the social actor. Related to this study, this view of agency points to the way students make choices about the identities they present in interactions with peers and literacy practices through the actions they take within the means made available. At the same time, this understanding of agency "makes visible sociopolitical tensions that create and constrain social roles" for students (Finders, p. 9). Recognizing the available or unavailable means for students' literacy practices could point to the possibilities and constraints of students' agency.

Following this description of discourse, habitus, and agency, identity is seen as relational, contextual, multiple, and action-oriented. While recognizing tension that exists in students' composing processes, this view also provides a lens to view the way students take agentic action through literacy practices and social interactions. Bakhtin's (1981) social approach to language-in-use adds an understanding of the performative aspect of

identity in classrooms.

Language-in-Use. Bakhtin explains all language and text is dialogic, drawing on meanings from the use of the word in the past and anticipating the way it will be heard. As such, language is always socially shaped by multiple voices through heteroglossia, which describes the way language is changing and taking up multiple meanings as it is used. As Bakhtin explains, language “exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one’s own” (p. 77). Bakhtin (1981) describes this use of language as a form of assimilation where, “words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate” (89). Recognizing that language is dialogic and heteroglossic also recognizes that it exists within ideological meanings. This is helpful in understanding how authors or speakers (students in classrooms) take up language as they are choosing from particular social perspectives. This heteroglossic nature of language allows for an understanding of how differences in meaning making can come up in the classroom.

Bakhtin (1981) also highlights the way language is developed in relation to an audience, where “there are always authoritative utterances that set the tone” (68). Bakhtin acknowledges that certain ways of using language carry with them a power of authority. In this understanding, as students make choices about what they will say, there may be a consideration of the power of certain audiences over others. In a process of deciding which audience to please, students may feel internal tension. This view of authority and audience shows the way students’ expressions in a classroom might be

influenced by hierarchies of power and could be placed at a point of tension as students make decisions about who their audience will be.

Adding a Bakhtinian perspective to a description of identity highlights the performative nature of language-in-use and how the ideological discourses coming together can create points of tension for students. Drawing attention to the complex social surroundings of students' literacy and identity making actions, I turn to resemiotization as a way to view the agentic moves students make in the writing process.

Resemiotization

These frameworks take into consideration the “contextualized, relational processes of students' textual consumption and production” (Wynhoff Olson et al., 2018, p. 60). Research around student composition looks at how students make meaning from different materials, connected to the concepts of intertextuality, recontextualization, and resemiotization.

Van Leeuwen (2008) utilizes the concept of recontextualization, drawing on the work of anthropologists and sociologists who have shown “that representation is ultimately based on practice, or ‘what people do’” (p. 4). While he focuses on action broadly, Van Leeuwen's analysis zooms in on discourse in its multiple modes to understand the process of resemiotization of discourse as it's representing action. For Bernstein (1990), recontextualization signals the relocation of discourse. Within this process, discourse is decontextualized to change positions or to be repositioned.

This aligns with Iedema's (2003) conception of resemiotization, drawing attention to how meaning is changed as mediational means are translated across social and

contextual sites. McIlvenny and Pirkko (2005) explain this concept allows for a consideration of “1) tracing how semiotics are translated from one into the other as social processes unfold as well as for 2) asking why these semiotics (rather than others) are mobilized to do certain things at certain times” (Iedema as cited in McIlvenny & Pirkko, p. 67).

Across recent research around writing there is an interest in the way students make meaning from bringing different materials together (Wynhoff Olsen, et al., 2017; Bloome & Beauchemin, 2016; Cimasko & Shin, 2017; Hull & Katz, 2006). For example, Wynhoff Olsen, et al. (2017) utilize an intertextual lens, which focuses on “the insertion of one text into another” (p. 60). Like other research that has looked at intertextuality around writing, there is an interest in how students use others’ writing in their own text creation. Similar to a focus on recontextualization, they are interested in how students make meaning from multiple text sources in their argument writing; there is less of a focus on the change of meaning from one mode to another. The authors were interested in understanding how students used these sources to widen or close gaps within their community of writers. They traced the students’ textual connections to the transformative categories of deletion, addition, relexicalization, and reordering (p. 69). In this way, the authors understood the social work students were doing as they drew on multiple texts in their argument writing. Ultimately, Olsen, et al. (2017) suggest intertextual analysis provides a complex understanding of students’ social participation in writing processes and points to the importance of writing communities.

Bloome and Beauchemin (2016) explore languaging and personhood to explore

information as it is recontextualized to make meaning in a moment. They use the term languaging as a verb to honor the evolving meaning-in-the-making quality of language, and personhood refers to the way students and teachers were engaging with each other in the classroom, reflecting either dialogic or disconnected interactions (p. 158). In this study, they examine the languaging available to students in a moment as they construct personhood in relation to an assignment. With a focus on building an understanding between the way meaning is made through available resources, the article adds a consideration of how time and space have an influence on how we engage in our personhood.

These studies highlight the social interactions and productive actions that students take in moments of composing as they draw on available resources in their writing classrooms. Aligned with sociocultural perspectives, Newkirk (1997) suggests that the complex views coming together in a social world can create a “productive tension” (p. 54) which becomes a resource as students create new meaning through resemiotization. It is with this idea that I turn to Scollon & Scollon (2004), who suggest focusing on moments where resemiotization occurs, as they offer the greatest possibility for change to happen (p. 18). Within my own research I look to resemiotization to understand the change and growth that happens as students utilize the resources available within their complex sociocultural environments.

Aligned with the view of literacy as a social practice and identity as relational, multiple, and dialogic, I turn to multimodal theory and critical writing pedagogy. Both lenses draw on sociocultural theory to provide insight into how researchers view the

social interactions of students, their use of resources from the classroom space, and their production of identities and composition.

Multimodality and New Literacy Studies

As Palmeri (2012) notes, a multimodal view of literacy practices acknowledges the “representation of a concept from one medium or modality to another –from drawing to report, from puppet to play” (p. 42). Aligned with social semiotics (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), new literacy studies acknowledge writing and reading have always been multimodal as people use multiple signs and symbols to make meaning in these processes. As the definition of literacy expanded, The New London Group (1996) introduced a multiliteracies approach, recognizing how different modes bring new ways of making meaning across sign systems. According to Rowsell and Walsh (2011), “Terms such as ‘new literacies’ (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), ‘multiliteracies’ (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), and ‘multimodality’ (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001) have been used for some time to conceptualize the way new communication practices are impacting literacy and learning” (p. 54). Pedagogically, the New London Group (2000) stresses the importance of having access to multiple modes or sign systems and a critical engagement with the new literacies that develop around multiple literacies in order to allow those different ways of making meaning to be visible (p. 67).

As a recognition of continually expanding notions of literacy has grown, there is a large amount of research related to multimodal literacy (Mills, 2016). I am particularly interested in the way these studies look to the agency of students composing across modes, their participation in projects that go beyond the classroom, and the access for

students to critically engage with texts. As Rowsell and Decoste (2013) note, multimodality theory has “opened up new possibilities for investigating aspects of school English that allow more room for analyzing unchartered skills and identity mediation” (p. 249).

Design and creation. Drawing on multimodality through a view of design, Kress (2003) focused on how multiple modes and new media provide opportunities for engagement with text creation and use. Kress and Selander (2012) explained, “Design is the planning of something new to happen, either seen from the perspective of the designer-as-producer, or from the designer-as-user, point of view” (p. 266). A design perspective recognizes how multimodality provides more ways to make and remake text, leading to more choice in creation. Ultimately, Kress and Selander (2012) suggest this leaves more space for agency for students. While a narrow vision of text required competence with a particular form of sign-making, opening the modes of meaning-making through multimodal ensembles allows for more students to share ideas in multiple ways (p. 267).

In a recent article, Mirra, Morrell, and Filipiak (2018), note the importance of the work of the New London Group and call for extending this work to continue to understand the role of multiliteracies and a critical perspective in an ever-changing multimodal world. They seek to extend the New London Group’s work by focusing on students as inventors with the capacity to create new forms of composition. Similar to Kress and Selander’s (2012) perspective of design, this work focuses on how utilizing the multiple modes available to students through new media, allows for students to be

producers of “an imagined social future” (Kress & Selander, 2012, p. 267). Throughout their description, Mirra et al. (2018) emphasize how to pedagogically engage with this type of practice through critical discussion of “advances in critical theorizing” (p. 15) through poststructural and feminist discourses, critical consideration of knowledge production in a “postfactual democracy” (p. 15), a recognition that not all students have equal access to digital production and distribution, and a recognition of the digital inventing that students are doing. In the end, they call for more work that focuses on student creation, such as research around youth participatory action (Filipiak & Miller, 2014) and connected learning (Ito, et al., 2013).

At the same time, focusing on design, aligned with the New London Group, has been critiqued for its emphasis on the objects that are created, without acknowledging the complexities of the process of creation across modes. Leander and Boldt (2018) are concerned “that teachers and students are most idealized – or at least recognized – when they are unproblematically rational, unified and driven in a clearly goal-directed way” (p. 35). They explain how “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies” focuses on the role of the teacher within a learning practice; in this framework, the overt instruction and critical framing of the teacher is necessary to lead students to a particularly designed outcome. Ultimately, this leads to a focus on the development of metalanguages that are shared from the teacher to the students. Leander and Boldt (2018) critique this perspective for the way it does not account for the complex process of learning as it exists as humans enter assemblages where there is difference and desire. They look to the work of Deleuze and Guattari to explain the importance of relations of difference which “enables them to

increase the power and intensity of their specific being and that may happen through or against or in spite of the teacher's agenda" (p. 35). Ultimately, they call for a recognition of the limitations of a design perspective and consideration of how desire and difference might recognize the role of the ever-changing assemblages that occur in the complex classroom. Within this study, this perspective is helpful in understanding the complex moments where students engage in writing and dialogue together.

Agency. With a focus on agency, Vasudevan (2011) considers the relationships between students through an application of multimodality to literacy studies of youth, offering a way to consider how youth position themselves and their identities differently across modes. As youth participate in a variety of communities, understanding the different ways they adjust their identities to the different spaces creates an in-depth understanding of the sociocultural shaping of identities. Vasudevan (2011) emphasizes making space for students to bring in multiple identities through the use of multiple modes and provides an extension of looking at how multiple modes provide students with more opportunities for engagement across their literacy practices.

Also focusing on the agency of youth, Hull and Katz (2006) were interested in the agentic choices two writers, Randy and Dara, made as they presented themselves through the digital stories they constructed. They focused on the way the social and cultural surroundings shaped the environment where digital writers were constructing their narratives and noted the way Randy and Dara appropriated and shifted their available means to create a new meaning and new identities. In doing so, they were also using a variety of skills that attend to aspects of their composing processes. In the end, Hull and

Katz (2006) note the importance of the out-of-school environment that allowed for students to create these narratives.

With an interest in students' appropriation of text, Wohlwend (2009) pays attention to parts of pop culture that make their way into permeable curriculum (p. 58) to examine how girls appropriate these scripts. Wohlwend (2009) emphasizes that children are more able to problematize media expectations than sometimes is seen (p. 60). She argues space for popular culture can also allow for "teacher supported opportunities" to disrupt the narrative within popular culture (Wohlwend, 2009, p. 77). Within this study, Wohlwend (2009) recognizes the constraints and boundaries within a classroom, but also recognizes the way providing space for students to play with the text makes them more likely to shift roles within the text (p. 68). Ultimately, Wohlwend (2009) calls for time for students to explore the popular culture they bring to their writing, examine its message, and reimagine a role with the popular culture in their own lives.

Critical engagement. Through an examination of texts and a focus on production, studies like Wohlwend's (2009) draw on multimodality while calling for critical engagement (Heffernan & Lewison, 2003; 2006, Ranker, 2015; Dyson, 2018). The opportunity to engage with texts critically is apparent in Jocius's (2016) recent article focusing on middle school students' experience with the Neighborhood Stories project, where students create multimodal stories of their neighborhoods. Within the project, the multimodality allowed students to share things that might not otherwise have been shared through a focus on both form and function of multimodal composing. In doing so, students were creating texts and responding to social issues because they had

new ways to “critically examine how texts can serve to reinforce or negate social concerns” (p. 18). Jocius calls these “transformative multimodal practices” because they went beyond simply changing the form. By considering both form and function, Jocius points out, students are learning about utilizing multimodal tools in response to social issues in ways that they can bring to the ever-changing multimodal tools that will be in front of them.

Critical Writing Pedagogy

I turn now to critical writing pedagogy, as another lens to view the interactions students have as they engage in writing practices together. Responding to writing workshop theory in the early 2000’s, critical writing pedagogy draws from sociocultural, poststructuralist, feminist, and critical perspectives to explore pedagogical possibilities to address social boundaries and the depiction of voice that influence students’ experiences in a writing classroom. As Lensmire (2000) notes, writing workshop offers important additions to pedagogy through the focus on student choice and opportunities for students to share. However, critical writing pedagogy problematizes a lack of attention on sociocultural factors that impact students’ interactions within writing practices. By highlighting writing process pedagogy with critical considerations of student interactions, research from critical writing pedagogy provides an important lens to consider students’ identity in interactions within a writing classroom. Aligned with sociocultural theory’s perspective of identity, as described earlier, critical writing pedagogy emerged in response to the writing workshop’s perspective of students bringing a single identity to a neutral writing process. Specifically, insights from critical writing pedagogy point to the

ways social status and power within peer relationships can create divisions, perpetuate oppressive discourses, and influence students' participation in literacy practices (Finders, 1997; Lensmire, 2000; Dyson, 1993; Lewis, 1997; Pandya, et al., 2015; Fecho, 2012; Winn, 2018). With this consideration, it also looks to how students engage with writing practices that honor their identities. As Winn (2018) points out, in looking at research from 100 writers and poets, "none of my participants cultivated their love of writing, reading, or speaking in the context of a K-12 literacy classroom" (p. 221). This disconnect between writers experiences in schools, calls attention to the need to understand writing practices in the classroom. In this section, I look to research that defined critical writing pedagogy in the early 2000's and how this research has been taken up in more recent years.

Social work

Critical writing pedagogy authors bring a sociocultural perspective of composing practices and identity with an interest in the multiple sources that influence students' actions as writers. Aligned with sociocultural theory, critical writing pedagogy recognizes the way students are writing in a particular space through social interactions. In theorizing the writing process of young students, Dyson (1993) describes students using language as "a way of accomplishing social work" (p. 9). The sociocultural view found across critical writing pedagogy points to the explicit social work that students are doing in their classrooms as composers. Dyson (1993) places the social work of students within the context of social boundaries that are established by students and the teacher, based on their different backgrounds and experiences. As a result, students in Dyson's (1993)

study used talk to “articulate who they were relative to others” (p. 53) within and around the established social boundaries. Talk provided a way for students to accomplish their social goals of positioning themselves in relation to others, creating cohesion, and socially regulating each other. Within the social work of composing, students specifically organized themselves to do social work through jointly constructed selves, performed identities, and regulation through controlled stories (Dyson, 1993).

Similarly, in her research, Finders (1997) focuses on the social work which occurred for two groups of girls (the Tough Cookies and the Social Queens) through literacy practices that allowed the girls to present certain kinds of selves that provided them with a form of power (p. 24). While the girls in both groups were constructed by the larger culture, they were also constructing their own participation with literacy practices available in the structures of the classroom (p. 18). Specifically, Finders (1997) looks to the way the Social Queens and the Tough Cookies presented certain selves through performance of literacy practices.

Dyson’s (1997) work extended the idea of social work through a close look at students’ appropriation of text as a tool to regulate the social world in *Writing Superheroes*. Much of Dyson’s work around appropriation is drawn on through the multimodal theoretical framework, as well. In this book, Dyson (1997) looks specifically at the appropriation of super heroes in the classroom and recognizes the ways students make authorial choices about what they would like to bring from the commercial world into their social world. Within this appropriation, text is used as a marker of representation and a mediator of meaning. By composing and speaking with reference to

cultural commodities such as superheroes, students are able to create a connection to their classmates with whom they may not otherwise be connected (Dyson, 1997, p. 81). Across her work, Dyson (1993;1997) emphasizes the importance of creating a permeable curriculum by opening space for multiple modes of literacy in the classroom, allowing students to make meaning in a variety of ways.

Similarly, Lensmire (2000) notes the way students navigate complex sociocultural environments in order to create their own meaning. Lensmire (2000) explains how one student did this through “words, character names, rhymes, story lines, and themes form oral and written sources” familiar to herself and others (p. 78). In this example of appropriation, Lensmire (2000) traces the way the student shifted a story for her own purpose by taking up these words and adapting them for her own use.

Social struggle

While the literature provides examples of students bringing worlds together, it also explores how the social boundaries within the writing classroom can create social struggles and conflicts for students, while reiterating the boundaries of other discourses. Lensmire (1994; 2000), Finders (1997), and Kamler (2001) are concerned with how stories that reiterate oppressive discourses might be ignored in the context of writing process work.

For Lensmire (2000) these divisions reflect an oppressive society that places value on some people over others and reappears in the classroom (p. 66). Lensmire (2000) goes on to explain that students can experience conflict among their peers, between the teacher and student, and with their own inner voice in making a decision

about what role they should play (p. 72). deciding to bring some parts of their worlds into the practice and leave other parts out.

Dyson (1997) problematizes the way appropriation can lead to increasing boundaries and reiterating the status quo. Similar to Lensmire's (2000) view, as appropriation is used for students to connect, it also offers a way of displaying boundaries and affiliations (Dyson, 1993). Text on the stage became a place where there were fracture lines of ideologies (p. 138). Sometimes these boundaries also display issues of race, class, and gender. Such positioning could perpetuate assumptions and boundaries, rather than open up space for connections.

Voice

An important aspect of critical writing pedagogy that engages with the idea of students' struggle for representation comes through with Lensmire (2000) and Kamler's (2001) view of voice. Both Lensmire (2000) and Kamler (2001) critique writing workshop's notion that voice is *true* to an individual self, which can be exposed through stories. Like sociocultural and critical theories of student identity, Lensmire (2000) and Kamler (2001) both view students' identity as multiple and shifting within a social environment. They extend this understanding through their depiction of voice in writing process.

Recognizing the struggle that can arise in student writing, Lensmire (2000) critiques writing process's notion of identity as singular and stable. Lensmire also critiques critical pedagogy for not offering a way to engage with the struggle that is part of students sharing their ideas together. In recognizing that voice is an unstable, active

process, Lensmire (2000) offers a consideration of voice as project through appropriation, social struggle, and becoming. In this description, appropriation, as discussed earlier, recognizes that students are always using language that is exposed to them in their surroundings, pointing to the social nature of how students compose and an understanding that students have multiple possibilities for voices in different situations (p. 80). This understanding leads to a recognition of the social struggle students may experience as they work “to please or satisfy their audience” (p. 81). As students consider their audience, their compositions do not necessarily represent *the identity* of themselves, but rather one socialized self in a social environment that would not necessarily meet the needs of all of their different audiences. In this way, Lensmire describes the social struggle they experience as they choose which audience to please at what time. Finally, voice as project recognizes a process of becoming where students are making room for growth to continue shifting what they know, by recognizing that their voice is not complete, but in process (Lensmire, 2000, p. 89). Growth can happen when students are in an environment where they learn and change in response to the multiple voices that surround their experiences.

Like Lensmire (2000), Kamler (2001) critiques a notion of voice that calls for an authentic and personal writing. Differing from Lensmire’s (2000) description of an alternative view of voice as project, Kamler (2001) focuses on a metaphor of story to emphasize the textual orientation of stories related to a specific context and the always partial view of voice (p. 33). While her view of voice is similar to Lensmire’s (2000), she pushes for leaving out the word “voice” and changing to a more textual image through

the use of the metaphor as story. Kamler (2001) asserts that if writers recognize the sociocultural construction of text through story, they may also recognize the conflicting discourses that make up a perspective of self that is portrayed through a written text. For Kamler (2001), this type of reflexivity is something that has been missing from other writing process pedagogies (p. 33).

This textual view of voice offers the potential for writers to remake meaning. In this view, writers use available signs, make a new meaning, and offer that new meaning for others (p. 54). Drawing on Kress's work, the emphasis on selecting signs within an available context, allows for a view of transformation, "not simply as imitation or repetition but as remaking" (Kamler, 2001, p. 52). This view gives a sense of agency to writers who have the opportunity to shift their own subjectivity and, in the process, their identity. Looking at both Kamler (2001) and Lensmire's (2000) descriptions of voice clarifies how writing process pedagogy may be limiting for some students' experience in writing and how it could reinforce situations that lead to conflict, rather than growth.

Connection, Growth, and Transgression

In recognition of these complexities, critical writing pedagogy offers pedagogical alternatives and extensions to create opportunities for connection between students within writing classrooms.

For Lensmire (2000), recognizing the complexity of the classroom offers the potential to move toward Dewey's view of community. Lensmire (2000) points out that many classrooms meet Dewey's first concern for a community, which involves a space with varied and numerous perspectives (p. 90). However, Lensmire (2000) explains it

does not meet the second aspect of community, related to how people interact across groups (p. 91). As indicated earlier and across the texts, hierarchies of social groups still exist in the classroom and harm may still occur for students as these groups shift (Lensmire, 2000, p. 95).

In response to this concern, Lensmire (2000) compares the writing workshop to Bakhtin's carnival. In this comparison, Lensmire (2000) points out "writing workshop approaches have the potential to contribute to the creation of more human and just forms of life in school and society" (p. 27) through a commitment for students to be in dialogic interactions. As multiple perspectives are taken up and shared to make new meaning, writing workshops offer the potential for students to grow. Ultimately, Lensmire (2000) encourages a pedagogy that gives students a view of alternative narratives and an opportunity to engage in those narratives with each other to "move with power and responsibility" (p. 89).

Across these texts, there is a call for dialogic space. According to Dyson (1997), within a dialogic space, students bring the complex "social and ideological dynamics of their lives" (p. 163) together for personal and community growth. An open stage as an accessible, dialogic space has the potential to bring students together across difference by creating common understandings through appropriation and offering a space to make adjustments to narratives. Dyson (1997) witnessed the way dialogic discussions about the choices connected to text offered an opportunity for the class to reconnect and shift meanings around shared values (p. 139).

Reflection

In order for change to come as students' share their perspectives, the authors suggest a focus on reflective processes. For Kamler (2001), reflection leads to an opportunity for students to rewrite themselves. This rewriting happens as writers recognize and use available designs, make a new meaning from those available designs, and become part of a system of available designs for others, broadening possibilities and remaking their own self. Kamler (2001) critiques writing workshop pedagogy for not offering alternative narratives, and she pushes for a critical pedagogy that allows reflection of the societal influences on narratives. Throughout her book, Kamler (2001) provides examples of ways that this type of rewriting of self as subjectivity is "defined, contested, and remade" (p. 61) through reflection. For Kamler (2001), "we can think of transformative moments as textually based relocations, brought into being by the act of writing self-conscious critique and reflection" (p. 166).

Teacher influence

Within these classrooms, the research also point out that teachers need to be advocates for students, nudging their learning to be inclusive of new ideas. If teachers offer students a space to share their stories, they must be willing to "stand with students" for the purpose of transformation (p. 106) and teachers need to provide students with models of text that offer alternative storylines (Lensmire, 2000, p. 107). Dyson (1997) follows this idea, pointing out that while students should be allowed to enter the curriculum, teachers also need to "respond to and build on what each other knows and can do" (p. 184).

New Research in Critical Writing Pedagogy

In looking to current research on critical writing pedagogy, there are connections to themes from within critical writing pedagogy, such as appropriation of text, use of multimodality as an access point, and the social struggle within classroom discussions. However, there has been little research that explicitly extends the work around the critiques offered by critical writing pedagogy. Furman (2017) notes that despite the prevalence of narrative writing across elementary and secondary writing, there has been little research in the last twenty years which critiques the potential conflict and struggle that emerges with the genre (p. 3). Similarly, Scarbrough and Allen (2015) note that little research has taken up pedagogical moves that can address the critiques of a workshop model. While much research suggests an awareness of student tension in social interactions, little research has been done to directly engage in the complex social environment and connected interactions around writing process pedagogy and a depiction of student voice.

Lensmire and Snaza (2006) revisited the question of voice as it continues to be a metaphor used to describe students' agency. In their article, they revisit the critiques of voice as used in writing process pedagogy and explore how Kamler (2000) and Elbow (1994) have taken it up. In the end, they call for a recognition of the importance of production as it takes place as well as what happens when the writing is shared. It calls for an understating of the embodied and moment-to-moment action of producing writing.

Fecho (2011;2012) considers the challenge of providing space for students to engage in dialogic conversations and writing practices. Drawing on Bakhtin, Fecho points out both the ways that dialogue might exist in writing classrooms and moments

when it is restricted through classroom expectations. Following other critical writing pedagogy authors, Fecho draws attention to the role that teachers play in providing a space for dialogue.

This emphasis on the complexity of social status within the classroom was taken up by Christianakis (2010) as she applies a sociocultural perspective of learning related to communal and dialogic features of students' literacy learning (p. 423). Drawing on the work of Dyson (1993; 1997) and Lensmire (2000), Christianakis (2010) calls for more research that addresses the complexity of social dynamics in the classroom, specifically as peer status intersects with gender and race in the classroom (p. 427-428). Unique to this study, Christianakis (2010) identifies three aspects of interaction in the writing classroom that are used as process-oriented writing approaches: peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and collaborative peer writing. Christianakis (2010) built on previous research by looking at the way students engage in classroom discussion and the social conflict that can occur within the specific types of approaches. Ultimately, this article calls for a continual look at social interactions in classrooms. Similarly, within her work on social class sensitive pedagogy, Jones (2006) also reflects on the work of these authors to critically examine the writing process and suggests a continued need to critically examine peer relations and teacher-student relations as they "empower some and marginalize others" (p. 133).

Drawing on Kamler (2001), Lewison and Heffernan (2008) notice the way students create new texts that draw on real and fictional experiences to explore and critique issues of injustices. They point out, as Lensmire (2001) does, that the critical

work of writing for change often needs support from teachers and classmates (p. 459). The dialogic and collective space within a critical writing pedagogy allowed for students to have that support. Finally, they point out that delving into the local topics can be as important as “writing for big transformations” as students write for social justice (p. 460). Across their work, Lewison and Heffernan focus on ways to concretely engage in work with appropriation by leading students in a critical awareness of their co-construction process.

More recently, Scarbrough and Allen (2015) address the critique made by Lensmire (2000) and Kamler (2001) that the emphasis on “voice” leaves out the social complexities such as status, race, class, gender, and authority and the ways these come into existence as students write in a community (Scarbrough & Allen, 2015, p. 477). Scarbrough and Allen (2015) note that Kamler and Lensmire address these issues through the use of dialogue in a community to challenge assumptions evident in writing, but recognize that there is a continued need for further research in this area (p. 477).

In response to this tension, the authors reflect on how teachers in this study created a space for spontaneous discussions. Scarbrough & Allen (2015) noted the way the teachers addressed conflict through creating a strong discursive community (p. 482), offering a specific purpose and real audience (p. 483), modeling their own dilemmas in making decisions connected to audiences (p. 486), and allowing tensions and conflict to be identified in the classroom (p. 487). The student interactions also brought out ways that students were working to sort out their different roles in the social nature of the classroom (p. 498). In the end, this article calls for more research that identifies how

teachers strike “a balance between constraints that help maintain a safe and inviting classroom community and the risky invitations to youth writers and speakers that run students headlong into the sociocultural perspectives enacted in diverse forms –and the stakes of voicing them” (p. 502).

As mentioned earlier, Furman (2017) is also interested in the way students are invited to participate in writing processes and the identities they are able to present in those processes. She does a self-study of her own first and second grade writing classroom. She focuses on questions about the role of narrative writing in the classroom and frames her questions about how we invite students to be or to share as they are writing in the classroom. In the end, she calls for opportunities for students to enter the writing through a variety of modes and genres.

Connected to access, Haas Dyson (2018) recently returned to her focus on appropriation. In her article, she looks at how students from her research appropriated popular culture in powerful ways, following classroom spaces that allow students to utilize that knowledge and classrooms that shut it down. She acknowledges the space where students have opportunities for “collective and critical exploration” (p. 45) of topics important to students’ lives. Dyson Haas revisits her term permeable curriculum, identifying barriers to making connected pedagogical choices, and imagines what the lack of access could mean for students. She brings attention back to the need for critical conversations around student writing and the possibilities for students to learn and connection from their shared stories.

Extending the view of what critical writing pedagogy might look like, Winn

(2018), calls for a paradigm shift that focuses on a restorative justice lens to view writing practices in the English Language Arts classroom. In this description, Winn (2018) proposes questions to think about potential harm that could be done in the space of classrooms and looks to restorative justice for a framework for pedagogical stances. With this perspective, Winn (2018) calls for pedagogical stances including, history matters, race matters, justice matters, and language matters (p. 219). These stances explicitly name and reflect an engagement with some of the social struggles described earlier by critical writing pedagogy.

Place of This Study

Sociocultural theories describe the nature of literacy and identity as it is shaped within complex social environments (Vygotsky, 1978; Street, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1995; Bakhtin, 1994). In this study, I draw on these theories to understand students' social interactions and production within a critical and multimodal writing process. Within a sociocultural frame, mediated discourse studies, multimodal approaches to literacy, and critical writing pedagogy provide a frame to view students' writing practices.

Importantly, studies in both multimodality and critical writing pedagogy are interested in opportunities for students to be producers of information, and they share a goal of working toward a democratic space (Lensmire, 2000; Kamler, 2001; Morrell, et al., 2018; Mirra, 2018). Additionally, they both point out a need for more research that addresses the complexity of social interactions in classrooms. At the same time, they offer differing perspectives on processes of composing. Studies of multimodality are

specifically interested in students' use of multiple modes as they critically engage in meaning making, their agentic moves with multimodal tools, and space for civic engagement with the world beyond the classroom (Jocius, 2016; Ranker, 2015). There is a focus on interest-driven projects that students engage with through active participation (Ito, et al., 2013; Garcia, et al., 2014).

While also focusing on the importance of critical engagement around text production, research from critical writing pedagogy explicitly problematizes the way writing process pedagogy, a depiction of voice, and critical pedagogy do not fully account for the complexity of sociocultural environments during production (Lensmire, 2000; 2006; Kamler, 2001). As mentioned earlier, there is also little research that has extended the texts of critical writing pedagogy in the last twenty years and has not been paired with the work of research around multimodality (Furman, 2017). Bringing perspectives from both of these fields together fills a gap in current research on student writing and offers opportunities to continue to explore the potential connection and growth that can occur in writing processes in classrooms. This intersection of research provides a lens to understand classroom practices where students are engaging in critical and multimodal writing processes and to explore the social interactions that exist in such spaces. In the chapters that follow, I explore how students engage in moment-to-moment interactions of a multimodal and critical writing practice, the ways they extend the practice across time and space throughout the year, and the navigation of a teacher implementing this process at the site of competing discourses.

Chapter 3

Methodology

I entered graduate school with an interest in the way students interacted in the writing process. Learning about sociocultural theories of literacy and critical writing pedagogy heightened my interest in understanding the complex environment surrounding writing pedagogies. As I continued my studies, I learned there was a dearth of current research on critical writing pedagogy (personal communication, Timothy Lensmire), leading me to questions about how teachers and students were engaging in critical writing practices in the classroom. This chapter describes the research questions that came out of this process. I then discuss the design of this critical ethnographic study, beginning with a rationale for this research approach. From there, I describe the classroom site and the focal participants. Next, I provide an overview of data collection and my data analysis, including a description of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) as a theoretical frame and primary tool for analysis. I conclude the chapter with consideration of my researcher positionality.

The purpose of this study is to 1) describe students' writing processes across modes in a critical writing workshop classroom, and 2) to understand how students' social identities as writers and peer relationships around writing are mediated by literacy practices across modes. In an effort to maintain the complexity of these moments, I draw on methods from critical ethnography (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) and mediated discourse analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004; Norris & Jones, 2005) to answer the following research questions: 1) How do students perform identities through literacy

practices across various modes in a writing classroom? 2) How do students interact in peer relationships through the process of writing across modes? 3) How do students take up, perform, and appropriate language from multiple contexts within a classroom's implementation of multimodal writing process?

Qualitative Inquiry

I turned to qualitative research with a desire to acknowledge the complex and “socially constructed nature of reality” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8) within the context of a classroom and research. Recognizing the complexity of representation, I have been continually concerned with Britzman's (2003) notion of the “impossible differences within what is said, what is intended, what is signified, what is repressed, what is taken, and what remains” (p. 244). In response to this concern, I both attempt to name the ways my descriptions are never complete while also attempting to provide “multileveled forms of representation” (Lather, 2007, p. 111).

Aligned with this perspective, I am drawn to qualitative inquiry's goals of layered and thick description (Patton, 2002), and naming research processes and positionality. With these concerns in mind, I also came to the research site believing that “when we understand the processes by which a life or a small town or classroom takes on its particular character, we understand something of value” (Peshkin, 1993, p. 24). I find qualitative inquiry gives me tools to explore the experiences, practices, and interactions of students in a writing classroom while acknowledging the challenges of representation.

Research Design

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography and mediated discourse analysis (MDA) work well for this study as they emphasize the contextual factors of a classroom, as well as the way histories of different participants come together in moments at the research site. Within this study, ethnographic methods support an understanding of the context related to students' identities in writing processes. According to Tsui (2008), ethnographic studies provide "rich insights into classroom discourse as a meditational tool, not only for learning, but also for the negotiation and (co)-construction of identity, power, and social relationships" (p. 393) which fits well with the questions of this study. Additionally, ethnographic methodology's focus on time in the field support a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and historical influences that come together in the classroom. Ethnographic methods, including participant observations, video recordings of classroom discussions, audio recordings of semi-structured interviews, and artifact collection contribute to my understanding of the students' lived experience in a writing process classroom (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011).

Approaching ethnography with a critical lens recognizes the way power circulates in classrooms and in research sites (Madison, 2005). In addressing this facet of an ethnographic research project, I continually engage in reflexivity, call on critical sociocultural theory to explore patterns, and employ means of analysis that acknowledge the complex layers of a social context through my use of MDA.

Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA)

Throughout this study, MDA was important in the ways it helped me consider multiple factors coming together in classroom interactions. As I identified key social

practices and events that were important to my research questions, I turned to MDA for language and processes that helped deepen my own understanding. In this section, I describe the primary goals and connected terms of MDA as they relate to my own research process.

MDA focuses on social action, a historical and anticipatory view of meaning, and a sociocultural view of communication (Scollon, 2001b, p. 8). Ultimately, by understanding the complex makeup of action, MDA presents the possibility for social actors to “understand the potential of our own everyday actions to create positive social change” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 14), a concept that resonated with my hopes for the possibility of research.

Maintaining complexity. As its first goal, MDA maintains the complexity of a moment of analysis by focusing on *social action*. MDA places action as its focus, seeing “discourse as one of many available tools with which people take action, either along with discourse or separate from it, striving to preserve the complexity of the social situation” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p.4). Fillietaz (2005) notes that many forms of discourse analysis place context as background to the analysis of action, which can result in a misrepresentation of the multiple mediational means that influence action (p. 100). By focusing on action, MDA allows research to emphasize the full context of actions in a moment, based on an individual’s accumulated experiences and the available mediational means for the specific, sociocultural experience. As already mentioned, focusing on the

full context of a moment aligns with my desire to represent the complexity of action in a classroom.

Trajectories of action. Based on theories across disciplines, MDA also has a goal of connecting discourses in lived-out moments to other discourses. Through the historical and anticipatory *trajectories of action*, MDA makes an explicit connection between meaning in a moment and its extensions of meaning from the past and into the future anticipations. In addition, MDA extends meaning of a social interaction to macro discourses that intersect with the action in a moment. This recognition calls attention to the way practices within a classroom connect to larger Discourses in the school and larger community. This concern for the trajectories of action is taken up within MDA's nexus of practice (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, Scollon, 2001b, Norris & Jones, 2005).

Scollon (2001a) explains that the *nexus of practice* is “a network of linked practices,” (p. 147) which help to show “the relationship between discourse and practice” (Scollon, 2001b, p. 146). As actions and links of practices regularly occur and become recognized socially, a nexus of practices is created. MDA places emphasis on the ways that histories of participants, discourses, and interaction orders mutually produced by social actors come together in a nexus of practice, allowing for a complex view of how an action is connected to other actions and interests.

Within a nexus of practice, there are also *sites of engagement*. Scollon (2001) draws attention to the site of engagement, as “a real time window (...) opened through an intersection of social practices and mediational means that make action the focal point of attention of the relevant participants” (p. 4). Sites of engagement take up different

meaning for different social actors, happening at a specific moment. Depending on the participants and relationships to mediational means, different people might have different sites of engagement. Within my research, I look to specific sites of engagement for analysis.

Sociocultural view of communication. MDA also focuses on a sociocultural understanding of communication, recognizing the ways that meaning is shared in interactions through mediational means. Related to the histories of action, MDA considers how discourses in place are constructed through intertextual and dialogic processes (Scollon, 2001b, p. 8). Meaning is recognized as being enacted through recursive processes of taking meaning in and adding to the meaning across actors and *mediational means* within an action. This shows how mediated action is located in a network of mediational means and actions, which are historically and socially influenced (Scollon, 2001b, p. 21). As new mediational means are added, the actions inevitably change (Wertsch, de Rio, & Alvarez, 1995, p. 23). This view of communication is connected to MDA's view of agency.

Following the work of Blommaert and Burke, MDA looks at *agency* of action in connection to the discourses, historical bodies, and interaction order that surround a nexus of practice (as cited in Scollon, 2005, p. 174-175). According to Norris and Jones (2005), agency exists where there is tension between what an individual is choosing to do and what mediational means and actions are available for that person to take up within their habitus at a specific site (p. 170). Thus, agency is always related to the means available to the social actor. This perspective is helpful in thinking about possibilities for

practices and actions within a classroom space.

Future-oriented action. Finally, MDA focuses on social change by connecting action in people's everyday lives to larger *timescales*, opening up options for action in the future (de Saint George, 2005, p. 192). MDA is concerned with research participants gaining an understanding of the potential to create positive change by recognizing the different discourses, historical bodies, and interaction orders that come together in a moment of interaction. By uncovering the complexity of action within a nexus of practice, MDA focuses "on projects that help people to see beyond abstract notions of power and to start noticing the moment to moment workings of power in their everyday actions" (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 11). This study points to continual shifts in the teacher, researcher, and students' perspectives through their engagement in literacy practices. The spaces where shifts occur point to continued opportunities for learning about writing and sharing practices.

The Research Setting and Participants

East Hills Middle School. The focal site of this research study was a diverse middle school in a suburb of a large, midwestern city. The school was one of three middle schools in the district, dividing the district into three sections from west to east. There was a stark contrast in demographics across the three middle schools. Of the three middle schools, East Hills Middle School had the most students of color (78%), the largest percentage of students who qualified for free and reduced lunch (73%), and the largest population of students who were English Language Learners (18%). Across the district, West Hills Middle School had a majority of white students (67%), a much

smaller number of students receiving free and reduced lunch (23.2%), and fewer English Language Learners (2.2%). Following this line, Center Valley Middle School was directly between the two schools and reflected demographics between the two sides of the city, with 43.4% students of color, 36.4% of students receiving free and reduced lunch, and 5% English Learners. The boundary lines of the schools created a stratification mirroring many districts in the United States (Anyon, 2014; Milner, 2015). These demographic differences resulted in different perceptions by community members and some parents, creating a characterization of the East side of town having more challenging schools than the west side. This perception was further developed by each school's state assessment scores. 45% of students at East Hills Middle School were considered proficient while 61% of students at Center Valley and 67% of students at West Hills Middle School were considered proficient.

Table 1: School and District Demographics

	West Middle School	Central Middle School	East Middle School
Free and reduced lunch	23 %	36.4%	73%
Students of color	33%	43.4%	78%
Students receiving ELL services	2.2%	5%	18%

*Information from the State Department of Education Site

Despite these differences, the expectations for common summative assessments were consistent across the district in the form of summative assignments and percentage of grades. An emphasis on summative assessments meant that 70% of students' grades

came from summative scores while 30% came from formative assessments. The summative assessments were created at district level teams and all students in the grade across the district had to complete those summative assessments. Because of the emphasis on the weight of summative assessments, both students and teachers were aware of the importance of doing well on the district-wide summative assessments.

East Hills Middle School was made up of students in grades 6, 7, and 8, with two teams of students at each grade level. Each team had approximately 125 students in it, making the number of students at the school approximately 750, though there were some transient students throughout the year. The students in one team rotated through six core subject areas, including English Language Arts, Science, Math, Social Studies, Reading, and Physical Education.

Language Arts 7. This study took place in a seventh grade English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. Like many middle school Language Arts classes, the stated goals included a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. While addressing the four elements, the class also centered critical literacy perspectives and use of multimodal writing processes, especially around digital technology with the students' chrome books and a variety of texts. Additionally, students in the classroom wrote at a high rate, something I talk more about in chapter four. These features aligned with the purpose of my study.

The class began the year with community building themes around shared texts and procedures. Throughout the year, students did daily journal writing, drawing on multimodal writing prompts, which was an important part of the class framework. On top

of the daily writing, the class worked through units that met the district essential standards, and expanded to include additional topics like poetry slam and extensions on media literacy. The class had some clear structures and some practices that allowed for more student choice and movement. For example, most days, the class followed a structure of 1) journal writing and sharing; 2) a mini lesson focused on a particular strategy related to an overarching unit; 3) work time (individually or in groups); and 4) a check in before students left. The structure was clearly established at the beginning of the year, along with the expectations that students were ready to start as soon as class started. At the same time, desks were placed in groups of three and students were allowed to sit wherever they wanted each day. There were also freedoms around the use of technology in the space. The school had a one-to-one computer program and within the class, students were encouraged to have their computers accessible and “google it” when they did not know information. In this way, the class had some consistent constraints on how time was used, but also had some freedoms in the way that students could make choices within the constraints.

I began my time in the classroom for full days, observing students in all five of the sections that Ms. Hughes taught. By October, I narrowed my time to observing two sections that ran back-to-back. I eventually focused my research on one section, although I observed two sections for most of the year. The focal class was labeled *Honors Language Arts*. For the most part, the class activities and goals mirrored the other sections. There were some additional assignments and the pace was faster at times, but the overarching units, themes, and processes were shared across all sections.

Honors Language Arts. Each team of seventh grade had one section of Honors Language Arts. Students were selected to be in the Honors class by the previous year's teacher, grades, and common writing samples. The focal teacher, Ms. Hughes, had worked to increase the diversity of the honors class over the years. While the overall population of the school was diverse, the honors classes had historically been disproportionately made up of primarily white, female students. The course I observed was fairly consistent with the demographics of the school, although it did have more girls than boys. The school recently offered a new course within a program called Quest which was associated with a district-wide gifted education program. The Quest language arts class was on the other seventh grade team. Ms. Hughes noted that as more students of color were added to the Honors courses, this class was developed and pointed out the high percentage of white students in the class. Requirements to get into the Quest program included a high test score and a teacher recommendation. Ms. Hughes felt the class was another segregating factor as it added another advanced course where the students were disproportionately white.

The Teacher. The focal teacher of the class was Ms. Hughes, a white woman with 25 years of teaching experience. When I asked Ms. Hughes about doing research in her classroom, she was excited about the idea, but met me with a list of questions about what to expect in the process, with particular concern about the privacy of students. We talked through her questions as I shared my process of research, including steps to protect the students. When we agreed that it would be a good fit, I asked her what she would like to be called. She chose Ms. Hughes because of her common use of Langston Hughes

poems throughout her class and the way she felt students connected to his work.

I was excited to be in Ms. Hughes's class. Having worked with her in the past I knew she was dedicated to ongoing professional development in her learning and was specifically interested in working toward social justice and incorporating technology in her pedagogy. She attended many workshops presented by the local writing project site, book studies focused on diversity in education, and the NCTE conference as often as she could. This ongoing professional development left her reflective of her own teaching and continually questioning the curriculum. Ms. Hughes reflected on these workshops and made changes to her practice over time. As a result, her curriculum was often shifting to match her new learning and the ever-changing context surrounding the class.

One area of professional development for Ms. Hughes was technology. She often tried new digital tools after attending a conference. During the year of this research, she won a state award for her implementation of technology in the classroom. She was continually trying new digital tools and encouraged students to see the computers they each had as a tool, often encouraging them to "google" things they did not know.

Ms. Hughes's belief in social justice appeared in the content she chose, her reflexive stance, and the expectations she had for students. Within Ms. Hughes's critical framing was an awareness of her own identity as a white woman. She openly talked about race and acknowledged her whiteness in the classroom. In an interview, she explained, "we have to acknowledge race because it has influenced their experience... and mine. It's important I recognize I'm a white woman and that has an impact on how I teach and what they are doing. At least I am aware of that" (Personal communication, June 7, 2016).

In terms of content, she was continually looking for contemporary resources. When the district was buying new text books, she argued for the release of funds to purchase individual books rather than a set of textbooks with predetermined stories. As part of her social justice stance, Ms. Hughes believed in the importance of having high expectations for all students. At times she pushed students with intensity, and at the same time students in her classroom typically met her expectations.

Ms. Hughes's high expectations and passion for critical work could also be cause for tension in her teaching. She would question and even critique choices by the principal or other teachers that did not align with her own perspective. She was frustrated by teachers who were not interested in taking a similar stance and would push them to shift their own pedagogy. The combination of her clear skills and her intensity made her a respected teacher and also one who sometimes had tension with other teachers.

Ms. Hughes could also come off as harsh in her teaching. At times, she would yell to get students' attention and called students out for being insensitive to their classmates. Early on in the year, students were quiet and serious in her room. As the year progressed, there was more laughter and a more relaxed flow. While students at the beginning of the year called her class "hard," over time, they referred to the class as a favorite or the one where they worked hard and noted that Ms. Hughes really cared for them. On the final day of class, one student openly shared, "I thought Ms. Hughes was *too* much, but it turns out I really learned in this class. *A lot*" (Fieldnotes, June 1, 2016).

Students

The focal class was made up of 22 students, with some students exiting and others

entering the class throughout the year. Of the 22 students, 12 identified as female and 10 as male. They were racially diverse, self-identifying as White, Black, Biracial, Multiracial, Native American, Somali American, Latino/a, and Asian American.

Table 2: Class Participants

Pseudonym	Race	Gender
Aakash	Biracial	Male
Joy	Native American	Female
Umar	Black	Male
*Jeremiah	Multiracial	Male
Raina	Black	Female
Samuel	Latino	Male
Rubio	Latino	Male
*Zee	Biracial	Female
Harrison	Black	Male
Emma	Latina	female
*Jill	White	female
*Becky	White	female
Jenna	White	female
Sebastion	Latino	male
Hope	Asian American	female
John	Asian American	male
Thanna	Somali	female
Chris	White	male
*Decca	Somali	female
Siri	Biracial	female
Matthew	Latino	male
Melly	Latina	female
Joined the Class Partway Through the Year		
Maya	Indian	female
Sarah	White	female

From this class, there were five focal students. The focal students were selected based on students' consent forms, their involvement in class, and their interactions with

each other. All of the students in the focal class turned in their consent forms. However, I gave students the option of selecting how they were willing to be involved, including being interviewed, sharing their writing samples, and being video and audio recorded. All of the focal students agreed to all of these options. As a whole, the boys in the class did not give permission for all aspects of data collection as much as the girls.

The focal participants represented a cross-section of social interactions in the class. Both Jeremiah and Zee presented themselves as preferring to share their individual ideas and did not depend on any particular group for consistent support in the class. Jill, Becky, and Decca consistently sat in a group together. Jill and Becky would often arrive to class early, so they could ensure their spots near each other. They regularly depended on the support of their group before sharing with the wider class. While Decca was part of this trio and enjoyed her engagement with the other two girls, she was also content alone. She was confident and often shared her opinions without checking with others, but also enjoyed being a part of the trio of girls.

Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a warm and welcoming presence in the classroom. He explained, “My role in the class is to make people laugh” and “I like to make people feel comfortable.” (Personal communication, June 2, 2016). Mirroring his own description, Jeremiah often engaged in class discussions, interacting with whomever he happened to be sitting by, and regularly found time to joke with Ms. Hughes. His personality was exemplified in two class projects. Early in the year, students were put into pairs and asked to interview each other. Jeremiah was paired with a very shy student, Jenna. While Jenna spoke very little in class and expressed her discomfort with being noticed or even

talked to, she was laughing and engaging with Jeremiah within a few minutes of beginning the project. Later, Jenna told me she was even surprised by her own involvement in the project.

Near the end of the year, Jeremiah was given the role of emcee for their class poetry slam. The instructions for the role included introducing each poet and the title of their poem. Independently of these instructions, Jeremiah interviewed each student to find out a little bit more about their poems, so that he could give a personal introduction to each classmate. On the day of the poetry slam, he added a unique introduction for each student, leading his classmates to laugh and clap at each entrance. He would exclaim, “She talks strong, and her words are stronger in this poem. Give it up for Zee!” or “Featuring her poem about family, Decca’s work is going to hit you with its feelings” Following their poems he would add phrases like, “That was better than mine. Now, I feel bad about my own writing!” While he was friendly toward everybody, he did not have one person or group he connected with consistently. There were a few days during the year where he described himself as out of sorts and decided to sit on his own and disengage. Overall, he was present and communicated regularly while also being independent.

Through his engagement in class discussions and during interviews, Jeremiah talked openly about layers of his identity. He often talked about the importance of his mother, sisters, and grandmother, with whom he sometimes lived. He identified as multiracial, but explained to me that people often saw him as Black, first. His family relationships and the way he felt people viewed him were often part of his writing. He

was a confident student and writer. When I asked about how he saw himself as a writer, he explained, “I am a writer. I like to write stories and those journal entries, and now I like to write poetry too.”

Becky. Although reserved in the answers she shared with the whole class, Becky was often interacting with friends. She arrived at class early to ensure she could sit in a group with friends, usually Decca and Jill. In class, she felt much more comfortable sharing in her small group, so she would often ask another group member to share her ideas with the larger class. As a result, it was hard to tell when her ideas were being shared with the large group. She was very concerned about her grades and would often seek my approval or the approval of her classmates before turning in a project or sharing an answer. Becky often seemed nervous in class, but at the end of the year described the class as helping her to open up and share more of her ideas.

As she picked her pseudonym, Becky succinctly provided a description of her assumptions of how others saw her. When I asked her why she picked Becky, she said, “Because that’s a typical white girl name.” I asked her to say more, and she explained, “People see me and they picture a typical white girl with Ugg boots, drinking a Starbucks. But I’ve only had Starbucks like once in my life and I definitely don’t own Uggs” (Personal communication, June 1, 2016). This awareness resonated with her conversations and her writing. Becky often made observations about the way people were interacting and presenting themselves, and in the process, pointed out nuanced observations. These observations did not often leave the small group unless she was put on the spot to share an idea. Throughout interviews, Becky came back to questions about

how people saw her and who she was. She said this sometimes got in the way of her writing and her sharing. She explained, “I’m the quiet, shy person in the corner,” and in a self-description assignment, she wrote the words, “Flower on the outside; explosion on the inside” (Artifact). Near the end of the year, she wrote a poem about her grandmother and shared it with the class. She later told me she was proud of the poem, and said, “I guess that’s when I felt like a writer” (Personal communication, June 1).

Decca. Decca was a leader in the class. She would often wait until other people had shared ideas before adding a carefully worded comment. She was thoughtful about her assignments and enjoyed helping her classmates when they had questions. She explained, “I would describe myself as confident and brave. I’m the person that’s outgoing, so people usually know my name from other people” (Personal communication, June 1, 2016). In interviews, Decca shared that people often came to her for advice. During class, I noted other students would look for her approval if they were unsure of their own work. She often sat in the same group with Becky and Jill, but was also very comfortable with the rest of the class. She moved easily from being serious about an assignment to laughing with her friends about a shared memory.

Decca’s identity as a Somali American girl was important to her, and she would often talk about and write about her identity. She shared her experiences of racism and islamophobia and the way that she responded to those encounters with clarity and maturity. Her classmates listened to her intensely and others would talk about what they learned from Decca’s perspective.

When I asked her to describe herself as a writer, she shifted to third person,

explaining, “As a writer, Decca can be passionate. She puts anger in her work too, and emotion in it, so other people can feel it, too. Sometimes she can be serious and sometimes she can be fun” (Personal communication, June 1, 2016). Her passion was apparent in her performance of her poetry slam piece, something that her classmates highly praised, and she described as a moment of pride. Decca would note that her father was a writer and that she had a history of writing at home.

Jill. Social time and grades were important to Jill. She explained, “I’m a focused, well-prepared seventh grader that just wants to get good grades” (Personal communication, May 24, 2016). When I asked about her role in the class, she explained, “As a student (my role) is to learn and project what I learn to other classmates, so they can learn too.” This role fit well in a school setting as Jill was liked by teachers and students, often recognized for her academic work. For Jill, the juxtaposition between her social life and school life was something she brought up regularly. She explained, “When I’m home with friends, I can be silly. When I’m in school, everything is more controlled.”

Within Language Arts, Jill liked to do anything that was connected to art, so was excited about days they could write about images and the fieldtrip to the art museum early in the year. She found the pace of the class to move faster than she wanted to and thought that there was too much homework. While she felt proud to be in honors class, there were time when she wondered aloud if she should be in the Honors section. Her frustration with homework was connected to her busy schedule. She enjoyed practicing for show choir, her church group was important, and she wanted to be involved in sports.

She said this schedule made it challenging for her to keep up with the class. Nervous about people's perspectives and about timing in class, she preferred to stick with her small group, although she commented that she felt sure that nobody would say anything bad in Language Arts.

Despite being in Honors Language Arts, Jill explained, "I don't really write at home. I only write at school. I would describe myself as a determined writer because once there's an assignment, I usually work on it until it's good or great, and I get mad if it's not good." For Jill, the writing and class topics came into contact with her identity as a "good student" in other classes. She described a lot of the classroom conversations as "really deep and personal". For Jill, this aspect made some of the work challenging.

Zee. A prolific and creative writer, Zee contributed to class discussions as often as she could, getting frustrated if she felt like she didn't have enough time to share her ideas. She spoke out about being an activist, and would frequently offer an opposing view on ideas. Early in the year, Zee described herself as misunderstood by classmates, in general, and found that she felt more connected to online communities, explaining, "Basically, I'm kind of labeled as an outcast. If I go online, I can go into a huge community of people that are like me, that I can hang out with" (Personal communication, December 9, 2015).

Over time, she described the class as a safe environment. When I asked about how she felt in Language Arts, she explained, "I think people treat each other with respect and they don't like judge them by what they're saying. So, I think that's good that our classroom has that." Zee would ask to sit alone, but also liked to share her ideas in large

group discussions and was an active participant in small groups.

She discussed the importance of being able to explore identity and commented on the ways she felt her own identity was complicated. She was absent fairly often but worked to make up any missing work. She frequently wore her GSA (Gay and Straight Alliance) sweatshirt and talked about how the group played an important role for her in school.

Writing was a big part of Zee's life. She was active in online writing communities where she said her confidence grew as a writer and she felt she could be herself. She described writing in her life, saying, "well actually I feel like writing is kind of what helps me control my feelings. I tend to instead of being angry at people, I tend to take like my anger out into my journal, so that helps me process an idea mentally (Personal communication, December 9, 2015)." Within Language Arts, she wrote lengthy responses and often asked to share her ideas with me. Her writing was thoughtful and often more advanced than many of her classmates' writing.

Methods of Data Collection

My ethnographic data collection began by observing the classroom two to five times per week. I began by observing the full day in the classroom. In October, I narrowed down my observations to two hours per day. I documented these observations through field notes, attempting "to understand and describe (the) social world of the classroom" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 2). I created thick descriptions (Patton, 2002), capturing actions of participants and descriptions of the physical class environment. These field notes also included initial impressions, the "personal sense of

what is significant or unexpected” (p. 24), personal reactions of those in the setting, routine actions in the setting, and a broad view of incidents (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Routine actions included descriptions of classroom norms, changes to norms, and I documented moments that seemed different from other moments. Over time, my fieldnotes became more focused on specific events and moments that connected to themes I saw in the classroom. After leaving the classroom, I would flesh out my fieldnotes and jottings. Between September and early June, I spent 85 days in the class. I also attended three fieldtrips with the class, to a local play, a local museum, and a neighborhood park. I also documented multiple days when I connected with students at lunch and before school.

In addition to field notes, I audio recorded class discussions, and video-taped key classroom events. I was often concerned that the recording was a distraction. I began audio recording with a small recorder, but changed to using my computer for most recordings. Because students each had their own computer open throughout each class period, I found it less distracting to use my own computer, as well. Many of these recordings were of classroom discussions about their daily writing and small group conversations. I also recorded small group conversations. I utilized an iPad and my phone to video record key moments. These recordings included events like students presenting their work (poetry slam and other readings) and when guests were in the classroom (guest artist, Wing Young Huie). I also captured some small group and partner work on video tape and took photographs of classroom arrangements and students working together.

In addition to capturing the daily life of the classroom, I took notes during planning meetings with Ms. Hughes and guest artist, Huie. There were three planning meetings I had with Ms. Hughes, one before school started (8/24/15), one over winter break (12/22/15), and one near the end of the year (3/25/16). In these meetings, Ms. Hughes and I checked in about my presence in the classroom and she explained plans for the next portion of class. I also captured planning meetings between Huie and Ms. Hughes on 9/9/15, 10/14/15, 10/19/15, and 2/24/16. These meetings reflected the ongoing collaboration between the guest artist and Ms. Hughes. Across these meetings, I was able to hear the educators' rationale, planning, and goals for students' learning. Because the visits were throughout the year, these discussions were always related to overarching goals and practices of the class.

I conducted interviews with the focal students, the teacher, and the principal. I had two semi-structured interviews with the focal teacher, one in March and one in June, just after school ended. I had between two and three semi-structured interviews with each of the focal students. I had one semi-structured interview with the principal at the beginning of the year. The questions for the teacher focused on classroom practices, decisions in her teaching, her perspective on class events and student-conversations. The interviews for the students included questions about their role in the classroom, their identity as writers, their perceptions of class interactions and practices, and reflections on specific key events. The interview protocols can be found as Appendices. I audio recorded these interviews and transcribed them.

In addition, I collected course artifacts. Ms. Hughes relied heavily on googledocs

for materials that she used, which meant that assignment descriptions, example writing, lesson plans, and slideshows were all shared on googledocs. Student writing samples were also primarily shared on googledocs. Due to the nature of the class, I collected a variety of digital texts created by students as projects or responses. These included flipgrid videos, audio recordings of stories they wrote and recorded and photographs they took for various projects.

Data Analysis

Memos. In addition to ongoing fieldnotes, I wrote memos to capture ongoing themes as they occurred. I wrote initial memos to explore general themes I saw across classroom events (Emerson, et al., 2011, p. 187). These memos covered a range of topics, including the use of summative and formative assessments in the classroom, the use of technology across students' contexts, and aspects of peer supported learning in the classroom. Reflective memos highlighted considerations of my own role in the classroom while analytic memos reflected connections I was making between events I was seeing in the classroom and literature I was reading related to the research questions.

Transcription. I initially transcribed student and teacher interviews. As I narrowed my focus to key events, such as journal writing, I transcribed video and audio recordings of class discussions related to the key events. I utilized fieldnotes and memos to determine which days and events I wanted to revisit. From those days, I would transcribe key classroom discussion and interactions, often listening to recordings multiple times.

After initial memo writing and transcriptions, my data analysis relied on three strategies; I moved from open-coding, to mediated discourse analysis (MDA), to writing. The process was recursive as I would often move from the writing back to the data and questions from MDA to clarify my ideas.

Open Coding. Throughout the year, I engaged in open-coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), looking across fieldnotes and interviews for themes across the course. Drawing on a list of conceptual patterns from open coding, I honed in on themes that were recurrent, resonate and significant to the research question, narrowing the themes down over time. Originally, I traced themes related to how students engaged in multimodal practices, such as flipgrid, voicethread, and googledocs. I also traced themes around student conversations that highlighted moments of tension, connection, or disruption through rituals in the classroom like journal writing. Additionally, I traced moments that seemed to create open access for students, such as discussions about how to access the internet outside of school. I returned to these themes, looking across interviews, fieldnotes, and artifacts to confirm or disconfirm them over time.

Writing. Like McManimon (2014), writing was a crucial part of my process. After looking at data and utilizing MDA, I engaged in writing in several steps. I mapped ideas in a series of graphic organizers before moving to detailed outlines. These outlines were written by hand before moving to flesh out drafts of chapters. I reread these sections for clarity, making sure the data was accurately presented and connected. At this point, I would often return to the data, and theories, clarify my ideas, and tweak my writing to

correspond to new understandings. In this way, my overarching process was recursive, moving from coding data, to utilizing processes from MDA, to writing, and returning back to the data.

Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA)

As already described, MDA was an important method of analysis in my research. Scollon and Scollon (2004) present a *Fieldguide for Nexus Analysis* that outlines three analytical stages of MDA, including engaging the nexus, navigating the nexus of practice, and changing the nexus of practice (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 201). Each stage in the fieldguide provides a set of questions to understand actions in a moment. While I used these questions as a guide rather than a concrete linear process, I found the analytical processes outlined in the fieldguide deepened my understanding of particular moments.

Engaging the nexus of practice. The initial step, engaging the nexus of practice, focuses on looking “for those mediated actions and participants” (Scollon and Scollon, 2004, p. 3). Scollon and Scollon (2004) present lenses to create a zone of identification and recognize the nexus of practice. These steps include establishing the social issue, finding the social actors, observing the interaction order, and determining the significant cycles of discourse. As a participant observer participating in the process of writing field notes, memos, and jottings, I identified social actors and mediated actions that connected to the research questions. For example, in chapter four, I describe the practice of permeable journaling from the classroom. In navigating the nexus of practice, I

recognized this practice contained a series of mediated actions that were important to many social actors (the teacher and students) in the classroom. Identifying the interaction order considers the way participants engage in action as it is related to the socially normative organization surrounding a person (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 6).

Throughout the year, my fieldnotes provided an understanding of the interaction order that occurred within the classroom. Interviews helped me understand students' experiences within that interaction order, as well. Cycles of discourse refer to discourses which intersect with the historical bodies and the interaction orders of participants to create that action (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 6).

Navigating the Nexus of Practice. The second stage, called navigating the nexus of practice, centers around analyzing data in order to map the cycles of the “people, places, discourses, objects, and concepts circulating the nexus of practice” (Scollon & Scollon, 2005, p. 8). Norris and Jones (2005) describe four stages of navigating the nexus of practice, including 1) analysis of social actors; 2) analysis of discourses and other mediational means; 3) analysis of trajectories and timescales; and 4) a motive analysis, or analysis of how action is distributed.

While navigating the nexus of practice, I drew on the work of a variety of researchers who utilize MDA to address different aspects of the nexus. Across the chapters, I utilize questions from Scollon and Scollon's (2004) fieldguide, but moved with other resources, as well. I draw on questions from Wohlwend (2005) as I analyzed Discourses and the distribution of actions in chapter four. Additionally, I looked to

questions from de St. George (2005) as I considered the role of trajectories and timescales in chapter five. Norris and Jones's (2005) description of agency guided my analysis of how action is distributed in chapter six. Examples of each stage of analysis and corresponding data are found in the table below.

Table 3: Stages of Navigating the Nexus of Practice and Data Examples

Stage in Navigating the Nexus of Practice	Data	Example Questions	Example data
Analysis of social actors	Interviews Class discussion transcripts Artifacts Fieldnotes	How did these participants come to be placed at this moment in in this way to enable or carry out this action? (Scollon and Scollon, 2005)	Chapter 5: As social actors, focal students saw practices as part of their role. Students asked for time to talk because "that's what we do." (fieldnotes, April 5, 2016).
Analysis of discourse and other mediational means	Fieldnotes Interviews Artifacts	What is the history of this object as mediational means for this action? (Scollon and Scollon, 2005)	Chapter 4: Drawing on fieldnotes, there was documentation of the consistent flow of permeable journaling and the mediational means that made up that practice.
Analysis of trajectories and timescales	Interviews Fieldnotes Class discussion transcripts	Which social practices for meaning-making seem routine? (Wohlwend, 2005) What are the material-physical timescales on which these cycles operate? (Scollon & Scollon, 2005)	Chapter 4: Routines were established that students returned to. "It was really easy over time. Like, if you keep doing it again and again, it get easier." (Jeremiah, Interview, June 2, 2016).
Analysis of	Interviews	How do	Chapter 6:Ms.

<p>motives or how action is distributed</p>	<p>Fieldnotes Artifacts</p>	<p>participants ascribe and allocate motives for their actions among the elements of a nexus analysis? (Scollon and Scollon, 2005)</p> <p>What is the tension between the agenda of the individual and the agenda embedded in meditational means made available in the sociocultural setting? (Norris and Jones, 2005, p. 170).</p>	<p>Hughes made choices within the context of the class in the moment. She explained, “sometimes in class I’m doing something because I have this experience and this is what I have to do right now. I see this need. That’s not quantitative. It’s not definable.”(Personal communication, June 7, 2016).</p>
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These stages of navigating the nexus of practice allow a complex understanding of the histories, actions, and discourses that come together in a moment of action. In the end, this framework, the questions, and the analysis that followed, have allowed me to consider the way students engaged in critical and multimodal practices in the classroom, the way these practices and students experiences shifted across time and space, and the complex navigation of teachers and students as they brought their identities to these practices.

Changing the Nexus of Practice. The final step in nexus analysis is changing the nexus of practice. As Norris and Jones (2005) explain, “From the moment researchers enter the nexus of practice, they are changing it in some way” (p. 203). Throughout the

time in the field, a researcher's presence, reflection, and the attention is drawn to small changes that lead to resemiotization. In this classroom, I follow how students' understanding, ideas, and engagement shift within literacy practices. MDA focuses on social change looks to "reveal how changes in the smallest everyday actions change in a community's nexus of practice" (Wohlwend, 2013, p. 56). This research shows how everyday actions in the classroom such as journal writing, small group discussions, and writing with art have the potential to influence students' engagement with writing and their interactions with each other.

Researcher Positionality

MDA recognizes the researcher as a social actor in the nexus of practice, influencing the actions and trajectories of actions. Identifying the researcher's role within MDA is an important reflexive component of the research process. Just as the participants' actions carry their own histories, the researcher, as a participant in the research site also brings a set of histories. MDA acknowledges how the histories of the researcher and the researched come together in the research site.

In the same way that my research questions involved understanding the complex layers of how students and educators come together in moments of interaction, my role as a participant observer also had complex layers. The history I brought and my identity as a researcher, teacher, and participant intersected with the experiences of students and the teacher. I entered my site with concerns about presenting students with all of the necessary information about the study, the ways I would continually reflect on my own role, and the complicated task of representing students and the teacher. In this section I

describe my role as a researcher, the complexity of addressing my concerns, and my efforts to do so throughout the research process.

Researcher role. The students made it clear that I was a social actor in the space by being there, and they chose to engage with me in a variety of ways. I saw this in the contrast between moments when I entered the room focused on my identity as a researcher and moments when I recognized my role as a real person interacting with middle school students on a regular basis.

As part of my process for informed consent, I prepared a slideshow to present the study to the class. During one of my first days in the site, I shared the purpose of the research study, explained why I valued their input, and passed out the consent and assent forms. When I asked if they had any questions, the class was still and silent. I noticed one student had his head on his desk. I read the moment as a lack of interest in my presence.

This moment was in contrast to how they responded to me halfway through the year when I shared more personal information. By February, I had been in the classroom multiple days a week for over five months. At this time, it had also become apparent that I was pregnant. After several students approached me and asked their own questions, the classroom teacher and I decided it would be best for me to share the news with the whole class. As soon as I shared the announcement, the students broke out into applause and several put their hands in the air to ask questions and offer advice based on their experience with siblings. By this time, I was both a researcher in the room and somebody many of them had started to trust. My presence was part of their classroom and I was more than just a random person from the University. I had individual and small group

conversations with many of them about their writing and their experiences in the class. To pretend that they did not notice me and my changing body would be insincere to them and my own reflective process. While they heard my explanation for research early on, my role and my purpose became clear as they recognized me as part of the space.

With this recognition, my role was complicated and full of layers I was continually sorting through. As a participant observer, I tried to be present in the moments of the classroom. I took fieldnotes on my computer. In the beginning, I kept some distance sitting near the edge of the classroom. As a former classroom teacher, my instinct was to jump up to answer a question or help a student with potential technology challenges. Early on, I countered this instinct by staying close to my computer, taking notes. Over time, students and Ms. Hughes pulled me more directly into conversations and asked for explicit help. In these moments, I was a participant and observer. I was careful about how I inserted myself in conversations and interactions, but also recognized that I was an extra adult who could be helpful in meeting the daily needs of students in the classroom and did so in ways that I felt I could without overstepping my role.

I also tried to avoid being seen as an authority to students, but as already mentioned, carried my history as a teacher and current role as researcher from a local University. As a result, students saw me in these different roles and engaged in correspondingly different ways. Some students rarely interacted with me beyond being in the classroom, while others asked me to share their ideas and looked for me to connect with their small groups. After an interview with Jeremiah early in the year, he would often ask to talk to me. Throughout the year, he would comment, “Remind me to tell you

how I felt about that,” when we were talking about a specific project in class, as if he recognized I was there to capture his perspective.

As students became comfortable, I had moments of taking up the role of “quasi-friend” (Rabinow, 1977). Sometimes during work time students would ask me to come to their group, either in the role of a teacher, so they could ask for help, or in the role of an available audience, so they could share some of their writing with me. At times, students would also ask me for clarification because they weren’t listening during instructions and separated me from a teacher who might scold them for asking and also saw me as somebody who would know what to do. I tried to be helpful when I could without disrupting the general flow of the class.

With Ms. Hughes, I was often in between roles of colleague and researcher connected to our history. We met as teachers in the same building. We taught together for several years, at times aligning our curriculum and at other times pushing each other as our own beliefs and teaching styles parted. Within our history was both mutual respect and differences in our pedagogy. Ms. Hughes would often ask if I noticed particular interactions or events that happened in the classroom. She would also run ideas past me about her next units and plans. I engaged in these conversations while trying not to overstate my own perspective and respect her position. My hope was not to change how things were happening in the class, but also be somebody who was helpful in some ways to a person who let me spend time in her classroom for an entire year.

Representation. My concerns for representing Ms. Hughes are connected to beliefs I bring to this study about educators and the history I have with Ms. Hughes. I

came to this research study wanting to explore students' experiences in a classroom where the teacher was thoughtful about writing pedagogy, multimodality, and a critical perspective. In this sense, I wanted to be in *this* classroom because there were features of Ms. Hughes's ideology that aligned with my own concerns for a justice-oriented pedagogy around writing. At the same time, I also recognize that teaching always involves layers of "wobble" (Garcia & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015) as teachers try new strategies and navigate meeting the needs of a variety of students in front of them. In this way, I try to present the real and complicated pedagogy as it occurs within the wobble of education while also recognizing the pedagogical moves that can support students as writers.

Out of our history came a tension that I felt in representing Ms. Hughes. I wanted to represent the work that Ms. Hughes did honestly and respectfully while continually recognizing the history I brought to the space. In some ways our difference in pedagogical style gave me a lens to "make the familiar strange". Ultimately, I was genuinely interested in understanding the experiences that students were having in Ms. Hughes's room, the practices she and students took up, and the way the students engaged in and around those practices.

I also had concerns about the way I represented students. Throughout the year, the focal students shared their insights about writing, their experiences in school, and general reflections of their view of the world. In this dissertation, I tell stories that include their actions and writing that only show a glimpse of who each of these students are. My goal in representing the students is to share some of the insights that I learned from them in

their process while also acknowledging the partial understanding (Rabinov, 1997) I am providing. I also recognize that my identity as a middle class, heterosexual, white woman, who has also been a classroom teacher, shapes my perspective and is always informed by the way I live in the world. Throughout this dissertation, I work to maintain this complexity by continually recognizing the way that the teacher and students are not seen in their entirety and reflect on the way that my decisions of representation are always layered with my own perspective.

Chapter 4

Permeable Journaling: The Time and Space of a Dialogic Writing Practice

The desks are in their typical groups of three, forming small pods throughout the seventh-grade classroom. They are facing each other so that students can talk to one another in the groups and also see the screen projected at the front of the room. We have finished watching a YouTube video focusing on the young activist, Malala Yousafzai. Students have completed writing their personal responses and sharing in small groups when Ms. Hughes asks for volunteers to share with the large group. I move to a seat near the edge of the room and wait for the conversation to unfold, a part of this daily ritual I've come to expect and look forward to. I am aware of the way I move with the students from the writing prompt, to their writing, to the sharing each day.

As Ms. Hughes invites students to talk with the large group, Mariah points to her group member, Zee, indicating she should share. Ms. Hughes makes one of her signature gestures, nodding in her direction, and Zee looks at her journal as she reads, "I believe education is important and that youth should be able to take a stand in their education."

Students shift their eyes from Zee to Jeremiah as he raises his hand and responds, "Well, it's hard to take a stand in education sometimes."

Ms. Hughes tilts her head to the side, and asks him to both say more and to share his belief statement. Jeremiah looks at the laptop opened on his desk and reads from his googledoc: "I believe people should all have education. That's what I wrote, but sometimes education might not be...it might not, I'm not sure..."

Sebastian is sitting with Jeremiah and jumps in, clarifying, "He thinks it's not always fair."

Ms. Hughes moves across the room closer to where Jeremiah's group is. She asks students to put their hands up and either raise one finger in the air if they agree with the statement, "Yes, education is fair" or two fingers if they agree with the statement, "No, education is not fair." The class is divided, with a few students who do not raise their hands at all. Ms. Hughes asks students to share why they feel the way they do. In response, a few boys immediately raise their hands. The organization of how students are sitting becomes strikingly apparent in this moment. Students choose where to sit in class and the room has recently become divided by gender, as a few boys in one half of the room raise their hands and the girls on the other half do not.

Jeremiah speaks up again, adding, "I mean, there are things like girls get to do easier pushups in PE. People think that boys can handle it and that boys are more trouble. That's not fair."

Michael agrees from another table of boys, saying more quietly, but with energy, "yeah – we get picked on."

A few feet away from their group, Zee starts to respond, stops herself briefly, and then twists in her chair to look at Jeremiah. Ms. Hughes looks in her direction as she blurts out, "Malala is talking about how girls don't even get an education." She emphasizes the word girls.

Jeremiah nods his head as Zee talks and he offers in response: “yeah, I hear that.” He pauses for a moment and then adds, “but the gym thing is true, and, it’s more about race than boys or girls, anyway.” He says this as he puts his hands up as if he’s weighing two different options.

More students start to talk at the same time. A few moments pass when Ms. Hughes jumps in to say, “So, we’re saying a lot here, aren’t we?” She continues, “And I’m just going to say this - there are mostly white women in education, as teachers here, right? What might that mean for education here?” There is another moment of more voices all at once. Ms. Hughes looks at the clock before waving her hands back and forth and bringing the class back together.

She walks back toward the front of the room and shifts the conversation, saying, “Ok. This is all important. We are going to get into some of our other work today, but this is real and we can keep thinking, right?”

Zee raises her hand again and Ms. Hughes says, “Last comment for now – Zee.”

“But she is talking about girls’ education.”

Ms. Hughes smiles as she moves to the next slide.

(Field Note, November 4, 2015)

Journaling as a Textual Chronotope

This field note represents one part of a daily process which the seventh-grade students and Ms. Hughes referred to as journaling. In this moment, students are in dialogue around a shared text and their written responses. Standing alone, this conversation highlights students’ diversity of ideas and navigation of those differences as they come together in the classroom. Recognizing that this discussion was one part of a process that happened on a regular basis in this classroom, I also see the ways the histories of students’ identities and practices in the classroom came together in this conversation.

This field note shows an important interaction among students, text, and the teacher, but also represents the type of conversation I heard on a regular basis in this particular classroom. Like many middle school classrooms, Ms. Hughes had a set of routines and practices that students expected to occur each day. As a participant observer,

I witnessed the unfolding of these routines and the ways that students participated in them. I found myself looking forward to the beginning of class and the ways that students seemed to shift into the opening routine of journaling with an ease and ownership. Each day, as students moved from opening their computers, to reading a prompt, to writing, and to sharing, I traced their involvement in the process in notes on my own computer. Ms. Hughes and her students participated in the journaling routine as a process that was explicitly taught and used on a daily basis throughout the year.

I was drawn to this practice for the ways students engaged in writing, participated in dialogic conversations, and critically reflected on the assumptions found in shared text and conversations across the year in the form of a classroom routine. As I began looking closely at this process, I found myself referencing elements of Dyson's (1997) term, textual space, alongside Bakhtin's (1994) use of the chronotope, to make sense of the different parts of this literacy practice and how students engaged in the process over time.

Dyson (1997) describes a textual space as "a space between (children's) desires and their realities, their own viewpoints and those of others, and a space where words could simultaneously create coherence and disruption" (p. 19). This description captures the way students produced text, entered dialogue, and brought a critical reflection to the process of journaling in Ms. Hughes's classroom. Dyson's description begins with an emphasis on children sharing "their own viewpoints" with each other. In Ms. Hughes's classroom, the sharing began with students' engagement in the writing process of journaling on a daily basis. Similar to the engagement described by writing process educators like Nancy Atwell (1998) and Donald Graves (1994), Zee, Jeremiah, and their

classmates produced text on a daily basis in their journals, as a space for them to bring their ideas.

From the point of production, Dyson (1997) indicates that textual space is also one of listening, where the hearing of other viewpoints is equally important. Similarly, the students in Ms. Hughes's class experienced a dialogic space during journaling where "writers bring multiple voices to the work" (Fecho, 2011, p.7) and respond to each other's differences. Through small group and large group sharing, the students in Ms. Hughes's class, acknowledged each other's ideas on a daily basis. As Dyson goes on to explain a textual space, she also traces the ways students reflect within these intersections with the support of their teacher. Along with other critical writing pedagogy scholars, Dyson recognizes that when students and teachers reflect together on their texts and their social worlds, they can learn from each other in a community, in order to both share in understanding, but also to disrupt assumptions that might otherwise lead to divisions within student relationships (Finders, 1997; Lensmire, 2000; Lewis, 1997). For Ms. Hughes's class, the journal writing process became a place where students "reflect on issues and interrogate them while employing multiple literacies" (Winn & Johnson, 2011, p.22). At times, students connected with each other and shared conclusions, and at other times disrupted assumptions in the space by asking each other questions, referencing the text, and sharing contrasting experiences. By the specific texts that Ms. Hughes placed at the center of the writing, the community norms of the space, and the frameworks for writing and discussion, students in the class came to a textual space of their own within their daily journaling.

In looking at the textual space of journaling, I was also drawn to the way it was shaped as a ritualized process over time. While examining the literacy practices of an elementary classroom, Lewis (2001) points out that “researchers would do well to examine the daily rituals that establish cultural meaning in school” (p. 71). As this ritual continued to come up in interviews with students and the teacher, I was specifically interested in how the ongoing practice of journaling was an important part of students’ experience with writing during the daily process and beyond the journaling. One of the focal students, Jeremiah, recognized this as an important process for his experience in the class, explaining, “I opened up there (during the journaling) because it was such a nice environment, and it was easy to talk to people. It was really easy over time. Like, if you keep doing it again and again, it get easier.” (Interview, June 2, 2016). Jeremiah acknowledged the importance of doing this process over and over again, and connected this process to how it made the environment a place where he could “open up” and “talk to people”. For Jeremiah and other students, the familiarity of the journaling made it a space where they felt comfortable with their writing and sharing.

While thinking about the influence of this rhythmic pattern on the process, I found Bakhtin’s use of chronotope helpful in highlighting the way the textual space was shaped in a moment of time and also repeated over time. Bakhtin (1994) uses chronotope to describe the “spatio-temporal matrix which shapes any narrative text” (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 247). In describing the chronotope, Bakhtin offers a way to consider how time plays a role in defining particular forms of narrative. As Lemke (2005) explains, Bakhtin’s chronotopes represent, “the first insight that space and time were themselves narrative,

and so semiotic resources which could be flexibility and creatively manipulated and deployed and were not simply givens, backdrops to plot and action” (p. 117). Within Ms. Hughes’s class, time began to take on its own narration of actions and expectations within the journaling process. The daily experience that students had with the process became an important part of how students engaged in the journaling. Within the textual space of the journaling, the chronotope helps name what became the routinization and expectations of the process in the classroom.

Reflecting on my time in Ms. Hughes’s class, I find bringing Dyson’s (1997) concept of textual space and Bahktin’s (1994) notion of chronotope together provide a helpful framework to consider the complex actions and interactions within the journaling process. Defining this process as a textual chronotope helps me consider how the writing and critical social interactions of the space occurred in a routinized process over time. Using these terms together, I examine how the different components of the journaling came together in particular moments and also multiple times over the course of the year.

Mapping a Textual Chronotope

Preserving Complexity

As described in chapter three, mediated discourse analysis (MDA) strives to “preserve the complexity of the social context” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 4) between meaning in a moment and its extensions of meaning from the past and into the future. This emphasis on understanding the complex nature of a social action as it connects to histories, actions, materials, social actors, and trajectories makes it a good fit for analyzing the journaling process in Ms. Hughes’s classroom. Within MDA, the focus of

analysis is on “particular practices (that) are linked in real time to form a nexus of practice” where students “build their social identities” (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 99). Over the course of my year in the classroom, I engaged in the process of writing field notes, memos, and jottings, while listening to interviews and recordings from the classroom to draw a circumference around a nexus of practice in the classroom. During this process, I identified a variety of mediated actions that came together to build social practices in the classroom, and documented the students’ and teacher’s participation in these actions. From here, I found myself focused on the daily practice of journaling as described, in the ways that it illuminated discourses that were central to the classroom as a whole, connected to the other practices in the classroom, and became a practice that both the teacher and students continually referred to. With this in mind, I utilize MDA to look at the literacy practice of journaling as it is “made up of multiple mediated actions that appropriate available materials, identities, and discourses” (Wohlwend, 2014, p. 1) in the classroom.

In this chapter, I draw on questions from Scollon and Scollon’s (2004) nexus analysis, as well as Wohlwend’s (2013) questions for tracking discourse in action. These questions provide a way to analyze the journaling with the methodological and theoretical framing of MDA. Within this process, the analysis focuses on the timescales and histories of participation, discourses and identities of social actors, and resemiotization within the social practice.

The goal of this chapter is to describe the textual chronotope of journaling in the classroom in order to understand the process, how it allows students to experience a

textual space, and how the routinization of the process plays a role in those interactions. In order to understanding the complexity of this moment and utilize MDA as a methodological process, this chapter layers multiple aspects of the journaling process together. In doing so, there are times when I zoom out to the process over time and times when I zoom in to look at the particular day described in the field note above. Each of the different layers influence the overall understanding of the nexus of practice. In the end, these components come together to provide a view of the journaling process, who has access to the process, and what it means for the social actors (the students and teacher) in the classroom.

Out of this analysis, I describe the process of journaling, consider the ways students bring their identities to the space, and explore how students experience critical shifts of understanding across the process. I begin the next section by introducing terms I use to describe the journaling process as a nexus of practice. Within this section I describe the process of journaling, including the actions and mediational means that make up the social action. Then, I trace the histories of practice, showing how the journaling came to exist in the space and how it repeats over time. From there, I follow the discourses of the community to understand what identities are expected in the space. After mapping the histories, discourses, and identities, I zoom into the resemiotization that occurs on one day of journaling to understand how the multiple viewpoints come together within the textual chronotope to create shift and growth for students. This also offers a consideration of how this space offers trajectories for other exchanges beyond this daily process of writing and sharing.

Defining the Process

While journaling is a term that is used in a variety of ways across educational spaces, I believe it is important to define it in the way it is used in Ms. Hughes's classroom, as it is a unique process. In this section, I describe the terms I use to define the process and give an overview of the actions and mediational means that make up the social practice of permeable journaling in Ms. Hughes's classroom.

Journaling

Journal writing has been a popular activity in schools since the 1960's, taking on a variety of forms. Fulwiler's (1987) *Journal Book* outlines features of journals often used in writing classrooms. The description includes language features such as colloquial diction, first person pronouns, informal punctuation, rhythms of everyday speech, and experimentation (Fulwiler, 1987, p. 2). It goes on to describe a variety of cognitive activities that might be included in journal writing, such as observations, speculation, self-awareness, digression, synthesis, revision, and information (p.3). It also provides a list of formal features, including frequent entries, long entries, self-sponsored entries, and chronology of entries (p. 4). In many ways, the journal process that is central to this chapter aligns with these components of a journal. Students engage in a daily process of writing, they use many of the language features described, such as first-person pronouns, they make cognitive moves like observing and synthesizing information, and they date their journals and label them.

At the same time, the practice that I am describing in this chapter brought about writing, conversations, and content that looked different from other journal writing that I

have seen or read about. The journal writing in Ms. Hughes's class reflects components of what Fecho (2011) describes as dialogic writing, in that it represents "an intersection of academic and personal writing, allows writers to bring multiple voices to the work, involves thought, reflection, and engagement across time and is located in space, and creates opportunities for substantive and ongoing meaning making" (p. 7). The journal writing was personal in that students often drew on their own experiences, but also connected to academic frameworks in the way that students were often given sentence starters to respond to specific texts. As described earlier, it is the way that it occurred over time and provided multiple opportunities to make meaning that make this an important process for this research.

Permeable

The language of permeability comes from Dyson's (1993) work on understanding children's access to literacy practices. Along with other critical writing pedagogy authors (Finders, 1997; Lensmire, 2000; Kamler, 2001), Dyson (1993; 1997) is interested in the ways that classrooms make space for students to bring their outside worlds in contact with the world of writing curriculum in schools. Dyson describes curriculum that allows students to bring language and experiences from multiple worlds together in their social lives at school as permeable curriculum. In her descriptions of elementary writing classrooms, she documents the ways that students make agentic moves to permeate school curriculum themselves. Drawing on Dyson's work, I describe the journal writing of this classroom as permeable journaling to show the way it makes space for students bring their many worlds together, and also the way that students make agentic moves

themselves to bring their perspectives to the classroom.

In many ways, this journal process illuminates important aspects of the writing community in Ms. Hughes's classroom through its multimodal quality, its emphasis on identity, and the way students applied it to other moments both in the classroom and beyond the classroom. In an effort to acknowledge the framework as connected to earlier versions of journal writing and also the features that make it unique, I refer to it as permeable journaling.

The Mediated Actions & Mediational Means

Within MDA, a social practice is “a set of mediated actions that become categorized as a recognized way of behaving and interacting” (Wohlwend, 2014, 7). Social practices are made up of mediated actions that utilize a set of mediational means in a particular time at a specific place. The challenge for an analyst is that when looking at one moment, there are different histories and trajectories of actions, mediational means, and discourses and identities that come together with different histories themselves. Drawing on my fieldnotes, interviews, and artifacts from the class, I documented the consistent flow of this practice, and using MDA, broke it down to actions and mediational means that made up the practice that became a daily process for different students. This section describes those actions and mediational means, moving from setting up the journals, to using a mentor text, to writing, to sharing in small groups, and sharing in a large group. This flow of activities established the routine of permeable journaling in Ms. Hughes's class.

Setting up the journals. The first action in this practice is setting up the journals.

Each day, students swiftly pulled their laptops out of their carrying cases, put them on their desks, and opened up the screen. With seemingly little effort, they logged in and pulled open a googledoc that was their journal for the seventh-grade Language Arts. Following instructions that were described at the beginning of the year, students labeled their entry with the date and the title that was projected on the screen at the front of the classroom.

Mentor texts. After setting up their journals, students were introduced to a mentor text for their writing. The mentor texts for this journal process included a variety of modes and topics. Whether it was an image, a podcast, a video, or a poem, students were given time to examine the text. Depending on the type of text that was being shown, students had different ways of “reading” the text. For example, if it was a poem, students read it out loud or physically acted it out together. If it was a YouTube video, they watched it while taking notes. If it was a story, they listened and followed along on a copy of the printed text. For students like Decca, these different modes were important for her access to writing. In an end-of-year interview, she explained her perspective of these different texts, explaining, “Ms. Hughes would go in different forms and different ways to tell us information, so we could use it and connect to it.” (Interview, June 2, 2016). The different types of text gave Decca a way to enter the writing on a daily basis.

In addition to providing access through different modes, the mentor text was also intentionally chosen based on content. Across all journals, Ms. Hughes emphasized “finding something that students could relate to and also acknowledge what was going on in the world” (Interview, June 2, 2016). Sometimes it offered a connection to the topic

that students were using for the rest of the class. Other times, it provided a language framework for students to follow. It often drew on real-world current events, and Ms. Hughes often described how these texts were not neutral in the same way that students' experiences were not neutral. These texts often mirrored Heffernan's (2004) social-issue texts, which "focused on difference, marginalization, and social action, presenting 'complex social problems' without 'happily ever after' endings" (p. 1). Ms. Hughes talked about the importance of bringing these topics to her classroom and often had conversations with administrators and other educators about why she felt this was important.

Writing. The next step in the process was students writing in response to the text. In responding to texts, students relied on a google folder and set of googledocs that were shared with them, titled Journal Resource Folder (Artifacts, September 2015). This resource had a set of processes for responding to different types of text. For example, if students were listening to a podcast, there was a googledoc they could turn to labeled "Responding to a Podcast". The corresponding googledoc offered sentence starters students could use as they responded to the podcast in their writing. Students were introduced to these resources and could use them as they wanted to throughout the year. While each framework for response was unique, they provided sentence-starters and processes for thinking about the text that was in front of them.

The purpose of this time was to give students a focused writing time every day. During this time, students navigated between screens and resources. I often noted that students had their own journal googledoc open and the Resource googledoc for

responding. Students were often looking between their journal, the writing resource for the day, and the projected screen which contained the mentor text. During this time, it was also apparent that all students were engaged in the writing. Once students started typing there were often five to ten minutes of steady typing as students responded to the text. While there were often moments of many voices in this classroom, the writing time was also often quiet, with the exception of the clicking of keyboards.

Sharing. After writing their responses, students shared their journals in two ways. First, they shared in small groups. The expectation for this time was that students turned to their neighbors to share what they had written. Across my interviews with students and with the teacher, this space was important for their experience with their journals and the class as a whole. Students in the class chose where they sat and this became an important point for students as they described how they shared. For example, Becky noted, “We shared because we knew who we were sharing with first. They would make us feel ok, but they would also be honest.” (Interview, December 10, 2015). While there were other projects that students joined groups they did not choose, choosing to sit where they wanted continued to be important to students and Ms. Hughes throughout the year. Students transitioned from writing to sharing in their small groups quickly. While there were times when students talked about other topics, they also utilized this time as a way to share their thoughts about the text on a regular basis.

From the small group sharing, students shifted into a large group conversation, often following a 30-second warning from Ms. Hughes. There were variations of this process each day, as well, but the expectation was that ideas from the small groups would

be shared out with the large group. Sometimes, Ms. Hughes would ask each group to share one idea; sometimes names were drawn with the expectation that they would share something they wrote or something their neighbor wrote; other times, Ms. Hughes would open the conversation to whomever wanted to share. While there was an option to pass, it was not often used and Ms. Hughes encouraged students to share during this time. Most days, many students wanted to share and on several days the conversation seemed cut short in the same way it did on the highlighted field note of November 4, so that students could get to the other activities or assignments they were working on for that day.

This basic process became the ritual of permeable journaling that students utilized on a daily basis. Looking at the histories of this practice over time shows how this process was enacted across the school year. The following section describes the importance of the ritualization of this process, as described by a chronotope in the next section.

A Social Practice Over Time

Social Histories of Practice

This moment is what I now find to be the usual hum of clicking as students look between their computers and the projected screen.

Students type quickly without stopping, seeming to be in a zone of writing.

(Field Note, March 16, 2016)

As mentioned earlier, Bakhtin's (1994) chronotope suggests that within certain types of narrative, a particular sequence and timing can be expected. In Ms. Hughes's classroom, the permeable journaling became a routinized practice in the classroom,

providing an expected process and sequence of events. In MDA terms, Scollon & Scollon (2004) describe the expected timeframe of rhythmic patterns as timescales. The timescale offers a sense of how often something happens, while the chronotope provides a sense of what is expected within a specific cycle. Looking at the textual space of journaling as a chronotope can be paired with timescales to explore how the chronotope of textual journaling is “embedded in and potentially cumulative towards larger timescales and processes” (Lemke, 2005, p. 112). The permeable journaling represents an episode (lasting from ten – twenty-five minutes) which occurred in one class period every day, five days a week, throughout the school year. The expectations for what occurred within the chronotope of permeable journaling became clear over the course of the year I spent in the classroom.

In looking across the year, it is possible to trace how certain mediational means, actions, and discourses repeated over time within this chronotope, influencing the expectations of what happens. At the same time, a nexus analysis of one particular day shows how those histories come into play with the particular circumstances of one instance during a particular episode to make a unique outcome each day for each social actor. Table 1 provides a tracing of the histories of practice, mediational means, and discourses that circulated the space of permeable journaling on a variety of days throughout the year. By looking at the six different days, it is possible to see how this process was repeated in episodes over time that gave a sense of what was expected in the chronotope of permeable journaling. This chart could be extended to include many more days that also matched the similar process of permeable journaling. This chart highlights

how permeable journaling provides a set of expectations for students to anticipate in the classroom on various days from September through April. While the mentor text mode and content shifted each day, the basic process was consistent over time, providing students a sense of what to expect. As indicated in Table 1, this process had a history of use in the class. It was explicitly taught at the beginning of the year and tools were provided to ensure that students knew what tools to use and how to use them. As a result, the process was reinscribed over time.

The history of this practice also connected to the future trajectories of students. In multiple interviews, Ms. Hughes described the purpose of the journal toward a potential future for students. She explained: “I think the journal gives them confidence because they can write about anything. It makes them know they’re writers. But I think with that, it’s not just the journals, but the audience. It’s a way of giving voice to ideas. It’s not just your writing. You’re sharing your ideas and then it matters.” (Interview, June 7, 2016). In this response, Ms. Hughes talks about the comfort that students might feel in this process over time, but also the way that the time can provide a trajectory for students to imagine themselves as writers and sharers in the future. The history of participation allows for this trajectory of identities. More than simply going through the steps, there is a history of production that becomes important for students’ identities as writers which is described more fully in the next sections.

Table 4: Tracing Histories of Practice, Mediational Means, and Discourses in Permeable Journaling

Date	Journal Response	Histories of Practice	Mediational Means	Cultural Meanings and Discourses
9/24	QUOTE <i>The Skin I'm In</i> by Sharon Flake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following process • Setting up the journals with little prompting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quote from book • Journal template on googledocs • Journal resource page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and sharing are personal • Text provides evidence • Digital tools are meant to be used
11/4	LISTENING & VIEWING YouTube: Malala Yousafzai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following process • Setting up the journals on their own - Jeremiah rolling his eyes and responding to directions for setting up journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youtube Video • Journal Template on GoogleDocs • Journal Resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and sharing are personal • Audience provides meaning and interaction • Text provides evidence • Meaning is questioned • Protocols are followed
1/7	POEM <i>You and I, Aqui and Alli</i> by Jorge Argueta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following process • Students setting up journals and writing, unprompted • Students telling Ms. Hughes what the text should say 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem text • Journal googledoc • Journal resource page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text provides evidence • Writing is personal and expressive: humor and laughter • Meaning is questioned
2/18	POEM <i>Kid in the Park</i> by Langston Hughes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following process • Students continue typing while Ms. Hughes leaves the room • Students look between resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poem text • Journal GoogleDocs • Journal Resource sheet • Physical space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text provides evidence • Audience provides meaning and interaction • Writing is personal and

		without being instructed		expressive: humor and laughter • Meaning is questioned
2/22	LISTENING This American Life podcast: Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow process • Setting up journals on their own, without prompting • Long conversation with many connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A podcast from This American Life • Googledocs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is personal and expressive: Connections • Meaning is questioned: in text
4/28	VIEWING Wing Young Huie image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow process • Students comment that the “I see” has become easier in their PERCEIVE responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An image • Perceive prompts • Google Journal documents • References to movies they have seen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols are followed • Writing is personal and expressive: Connections

Looking at this chart provides a way to visualize the practice over time, but answering questions about the histories of these practices can tell us more about what the repetition of this practice meant for students. In her process for tracking literacy practices in a nexus of practice, Wohlwend (2014) asks a series of questions to understand the social histories of practice in a nexus of practice. Utilizing these questions provides an understanding of the chronotope of permeable journaling in terms of how the histories of practice influence meaning-making in the process. In considering social histories of practice, Wohlwend (2014) asks the questions: What social practices for meaning-making seem routine (natural, expected) and necessary for participation? How do social actors wield these routine practices? How do these actions and semiotic practices fit into cycles of histories and anticipated futures of social practices in this culture? While the

chronotope of permeable journaling provides expectations over time, a look at one day shows how these histories shift with each episode on a timescale.

Presenting Routines

Ms. Hughes explains that they will be watching a video clip about Malala and filling out their chart, focusing on what they hear, question, and believe. At this explanation of the chart, Jeremiah rolls his eyes in an exaggerated movement.

Ms. Hughes responds, "I know you know what to do, Jeremiah, but some people need a reminder." He makes another exaggerated motion, gesturing his arm across the room as if to ask who needed such a reminder and shook his head. Ms. Hughes shakes her head back in his direction and starts the video.

(Field Note, November 4, 2015)

Looking across the different days in table 1 shows the way students utilized social actions in what became an expected way. In the fieldnote on November 4, 2015, Jeremiah shows his knowledge of the expected actions (to set up a journal and respond to a text) within the social practice of permeable journaling by rolling his eyes at the suggestion of needing a reminder for the action. He both acknowledged that he knew what to do and indicated that all students in the classroom would likely know this process as he extended his arm out to the rest of the class. These processes were necessary for participation, within the culture, but there was also an ownership in this moment. Jeremiah's actions point to the way he took this pattern on himself as a transcription in his habitus over time (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 138) by taking up the actions himself and wielding them in the way

that he wanted to use them.

In this moment, Jeremiah is using the expected process to participate and also to assert his own knowledge of the process. As Jeremiah took up this action and indicated it as the expected step, he both reinscribed and legitimized participation in this process. He uses it in a way that indicates it is useful for himself, and in doing so, suggests that it should be useful to other members of the classroom community. The other students follow this process and chuckle at his response, indicating their involvement of the process, as well, offering value to the process and acknowledging Jeremiah's knowledge of the processes. Ms. Hughes affirms Jeremiah's knowledge by engaging in a way that acknowledged she heard him and also lightly joked with him about his knowledge on the subject. This type of gentle bantering was common in Ms. Hughes's class at this point in the year and particularly present during the process of permeable journaling where students seemed most familiar with the process. At the same time, she indicated that others should follow the pattern, too.

As focal students of this field note, Zee and Jeremiah also took up the expected routines of writing and sharing. They both engaged in the processes of writing, small group sharing, and large group sharing. The nuances that they brought to each step of this process meet the expected histories of practice, and are also connected to the discourses that circulate the space and time of permeable journaling. These discourses are described in the next section.

Cultural Meanings and Discourses.

"I don't really know why. I guess it just seems like a nice time to share and um, I

mean you don't have to think too hard because you just, you know, wrote it, and you're sitting with people who you know, so then you share it."

- Jeremiah

(Interview, January 6, 2016).

In recognizing how meaning is socially created, MDA traces how discourses circulate in the space and create a sense of which identities belong in the space. In permeable journaling, these discourses influence the expectations of participants and were continually shaped and reshaped by the actions students took. Wohlwend (2014) offers a set of questions to consider cultural meanings in a community of practice and discourse. These questions consider which identities have access to a space based on the discourses that are circulating through the nexus of practice. Looking across the days in table 1 show these discourses over time, while looking at the day of November 4, 2015, shows how these discourses appear within the process during one episode. These discourses are described in this section.

Participants follow protocols. Looking at the histories of practice through field notes and interviews shows that students engaged in the protocol of permeable journaling on a regular basis, and their engagement perpetuated the expectation that they would participate as social actors. Over the course of the year, students held each other accountable. At the beginning of the year, Ms. Hughes regularly reminded students of the process and would tell them, regularly "You're all writers. You have ideas to share here." (Field Notes, September 24; November 3). With this statement, there was an implied message that engaging in the process was one way for students to be those writers and to

share those ideas. Even on days when Ms. Hughes would step out of the room, students would continue following the protocol on their own (although I recognize my own presence as an adult in the room). On November 4, similar to other days, students moved through the process with little disruption to the expected process. Jeremiah's reference to his knowledge of the process also speaks to their engagement.

At the same time, there were often extensions to the protocol in the ways that students shared, extending beyond the parameters that were described as the basic process. These extensions come up in other discourses of the space, like how writing is personal and how meaning is questioned. The process was pushed to extend past the protocol in the ways students wrote and shared. These extensions beyond the basic process also became expectations of the process in the space.

Text is used as evidence. Another expected behavior in the classroom involved the way that students sited text. During both writing and sharing, students used the text to support their opinions. Within the framework of the protocol, this is expected by the sentence starters like "I hear" and "I connect to". At the same time, students continually chose to utilize this expectation for their own purposes. On the November 4th conversation, the use of text is important for Zee, who contrasts Jeremiah's stance that education is not fair. Zee utilizes the text to make her point that the entire issue that is the focus of the mentor text is about girls' education. Students were encouraged to reference the text in follow up questions that Ms. Hughes would ask, like "What makes you say that?", but students like Zee also utilized this technique to make their own opinions clear.

Writing is personal and expressive. Across conversations that happened during

permeable journaling, the use of protocols and the referencing of text seemed balanced by a clear sense that personal connections and expressive writing were honored and expected in the space. The personal was given space through writing prompts that started with phrases like “I connect” and “I believe”. This type of writing and sharing was extended as students shared more personal stories and experiences over time.

On the day of November 4, Jeremiah references his personal experience with education in gym class and the shift he makes to talking about how race and gender are both aspects of whether or not education is equitable. Students’ level of personal sharing varied from making connections to popular culture that was important in their lives, to talking about their political perspectives, to talking about how religion influenced a particular response. This personal sharing extended from the writing to the talking in small groups to the sharing in the large group. Students indicated they were aware of the personal nature of writing and sharing and valued its place in the class. When I asked Jeremiah to describe the conversations he had with his classmates during the small group sharing, he explained “Most of the time, we talk exactly about what we wrote. I think because it’s so easy to share what we connect to. We don’t always get to do that.” (Interview, January 6, 2016). While the idea of letting students share connections is often referenced in education, the permeable journaling was a concrete way for students to engage with those connections on a regular basis.

Students also engaged with writing that was expressive and often referenced their emotions. There were several days when students cried as they shared their response and students often laughed together about their writing. Students expressed that using their

emotional response was helpful in their writing process. For example, Zee connected to this idea in a group interview where she explained that when she was unsure of what to write in this class, she “listened to her heart” (Interview, April 28, 2016). The permeable journaling process offered space for personal and expressive writing with sentence starters that encouraged students to make connections and prompts that were connected to social issues. Additionally, the students’ participation in this type of writing reiterated its value in the community of the classroom.

Meaning is questioned. Just as protocols are followed and text becomes a resource, the space also allows for expansion by an expectation of questioning meaning. Students frequently questioned each other and the text. On November 4’s discussion, Jeremiah questioned the key points of the text by calling into question the fairness of education in a way that extended the argument that was made by Malala in the video. Then, Zee turns the conversation to question Jeremiah’s point, utilizing the text as evidence. Both students were comfortable in this process and felt they were able to say things they wanted to say in the discussion. While Zee was able to have a “last comment” in the conversation, Jeremiah acknowledged that he heard her point, saying “I hear that” and has the space to voice his contrasting opinion.

The question of whether texts have a correct answer came up explicitly on February 18, 2016, as students were discussing Langston Hugh’s poem, *Lonely Little Question Mark*. After several students had shared their perspectives on the poem, Zee expressed a concern about having a different opinion. In the following transcript of the conversation Zee first shares her own question about the meaning of a poem. From there,

she considers what she might do in a space where questioning the meaning might not be an option.

Zee: So maybe I was wrong?

Ms. No one can tell us what this really means. What did you think?

Hughes: Maybe, you can wonder many things, and can't really get the answers.

Zee: So, he's that lonely little question mark who questions everything, but can't really get the answer, right? Does that make sense? Do you think

Ms. H: that makes sense?

Yeah, I do.

Zee: Ok then. You will come across some teachers in your lifetime who will tell you that this poem only means one thing. I have a problem with

Ms. being that teacher or professor because I don't think, unless you are

Hughes: Langston Hughes personally, you actually know what that means, right? We can all find lines and we can all think we know what that means and to me, that's legitimate. I don't think anybody, Mr. Hughes in exception, really knows.

But what if you're in a class where the teacher says there's a right answer. Should we just tell them that?

Zee:

Sometimes we have to, you have to figure out the system, right? In this room, you figured out what happens, so you kind of know what to do.

Ms. H: So, if you figure out what a teacher wants, you have to navigate through this class.

(Audio Recording, February 18,

2016)

By contrasting the space of permeable journaling to a “class where the teacher says there's a right answer,” Zee is acknowledging her understanding of this classroom being a space where students do engage in multiple meanings around shared text.

Writing has a real audience. The content of the conversations over time point to

the ways writing in the permeable journaling is always connected to the sharing. The connection within the process is connected to the idea that writing has a real audience. Ms. Hughes explained: “I want it to be a community which sounds cheesy, but I want them to be able to share. I think letting them choose where to sit and be in small groups is important for that.” (interview, June 7). The emphasis that Ms. Hughes places on sharing comes through her perspective, the process that includes both writing and sharing, and the ways that students engage in all components of the permeable journaling on a regular basis.

Access and Production

As students engage in the nexus of practice, Wohlwend (2014) explains that these “tacit expectations influence what seems possible, affecting future actions with artifacts and potential identities in the cycles that flow into and emanate from a single action” (p. 2). With this in mind, Wohlwend’s third set of questions consider who has access to participate in a space. In her description of these questions, she considers how particular identities are allowed to present ideas within the discourses, mediational means, and actions that are available. Specifically, she presents the questions: Who gets access? Which identities get access to the materials needed for this mediated action? How? And Who produces what?

Within this classroom, the teacher created the structure of the process, the mentor texts, and the resource sheets that students often referenced. From there, it was clear that students were producing text within the framework of the classroom on a daily basis. The clearest indication that students had access to this process was that students wrote

regularly. Rarely did I note a student who was not participating in the writing or engaging in the discussions at some level. Their production and use is also documented in the amount of writing that students produced over the course of the year. Research around writing suggests that middle school students receive little instruction in writing and are doing little writing across subject areas (Graham, et al. 2014; Ray, et al., 2016). Despite this trend, on average, each student in the classroom created approximately 55 pages of single spaced, typed writing in their google journaling. The focal students followed this trend in their journals (Decca = 52; Jill = 51; Becky = 53; Zee = 56; Jeremiah = 56). This unusual amount of writing indicates that students were participating in the practice of writing regularly, indicating the access they each had to the process of writing. While this does not indicate a perfect end product, it does point to the way that students were able to engage in the act of writing. As Snaza and Lensmire (2006) point out, it is helpful to consider the conditions that surround complex moments when students produce text.

As Wohlwend's questions suggest, another way to consider access is to think about the identities that students present within their writing and discussion. Looking at the interactions between Jeremiah and Zee on November 4 gives a sense of what identities they brought to the process, based on the discourses available to them. In the same way that the actions have histories, each social actor also brings particular histories that influence the identities they present in the conversation.

I return to the original vignette, to consider some of the ways Jeremiah and Zee were presenting identities in their writing and discussion.

Ms. Hughes tilts her head to the side, and asks him to both say more and to share

his belief statement. Jeremiah looks at the laptop opened on his desk and reads from his googledoc: “I believe people should all have education. That’s what I wrote, but sometimes education might not be...it might not, I’m not sure...”

Sebastian is sitting with Jeremiah and jumps in, clarifying, “He thinks it’s not always fair.”

Ms. Hughes moves across the room closer to where Jeremiah’s group is. She asks students to put their hands up and either raise one finger in the air if they agree with the statement, “Yes, education is fair” or two fingers if they agree with the statement, “No, education is not fair.” The class is divided, with a few students who do not raise their hands at all. Ms. Hughes asks students to share why they feel the way they do. In response, a few boys immediately raise their hands. The organization of how students are sitting becomes strikingly apparent in this moment. Students choose where to sit in class and the room has recently become divided by gender, as a few boys in one half of the room raise their hands and the girls on the other half do not.

Jeremiah speaks up again, adding, “I mean, there are things like girls get to do easier pushups in PE. People think that boys can handle it and that boys are more trouble. That’s not fair.”

Michael agrees from another table of boys, saying more quietly, but with energy, “yeah – we get picked on.”

A few feet away from their group, Zee starts to respond, stops herself briefly, and then twists in her chair to look at Jeremiah. Ms. Hughes looks in her direction as she blurts out, “Malala is talking about how girls don’t even get an education.” She emphasizes the word girls.

Jeremiah nods his head as Zee talks and he offers in response: “yeah, I hear that.” He pauses for a moment and then adds, “but the gym thing is true, and, it’s more about race than boys or girls, anyway.” He says this as he puts his hands up as if he’s weighing two different options.

(Field Note, November 4, 2015)

For Jeremiah, he relied on the discourses of questioning meaning and sharing personal connections as he participated in the writing and the conversation. Specifically, Jeremiah focuses on questioning whether or not education is fair and relies on his personal experiences in his response. Jeremiah’s history of participation in this class provides important context for the perspective he brings to this conversation and how he responded to Zee. Jeremiah often asked students questions about their own lives. He

would often partner with students who might otherwise be alone. At the end of the year, he was an emcee for the class poetry slam and found a personal and kind way to introduce every student in his class. In the conversation on November 4, when Jeremiah said to Zee “I hear you,” his history of participation indicates that he truly was hearing her perspective, while also sharing his own experience.

His own history related to narratives that extend beyond and also into the classroom also give some context for his focus on the idea that “It’s more about race than boys or girls, anyway.” Jeremiah was one of only three Black males in this section of Language Arts, which was the Honors Language Arts class. Like other school districts, Jeremiah’s school had a history of disproportionately disciplining Black males, while they were also underrepresented in honors courses. For Jeremiah, experiences of injustices that have happened to him because of his race and gender were deeply tied to his experience in education, which complicate the conversation in ways that may not have been apparent in the conversation.

Equally important, Zee relies on discourses in the class to bring out her perspective, as well. She continually relies on referencing the text to make her position clear, as well as questioning the meaning that her classmates choose to focus on in this conversation. Zee also had a history of experiences that she brought to this discussion. Zee often expressed her interest in and frustration around topics related to both gender and sexuality. She was active in the school’s GLBTQI club, wearing her club sweatshirt on a regular basis, and often questioned people when they talked about gender in normative categories. Within this moment, Zee was using the text available, while also

bringing her experience and understanding to the forefront of her point-of-view.

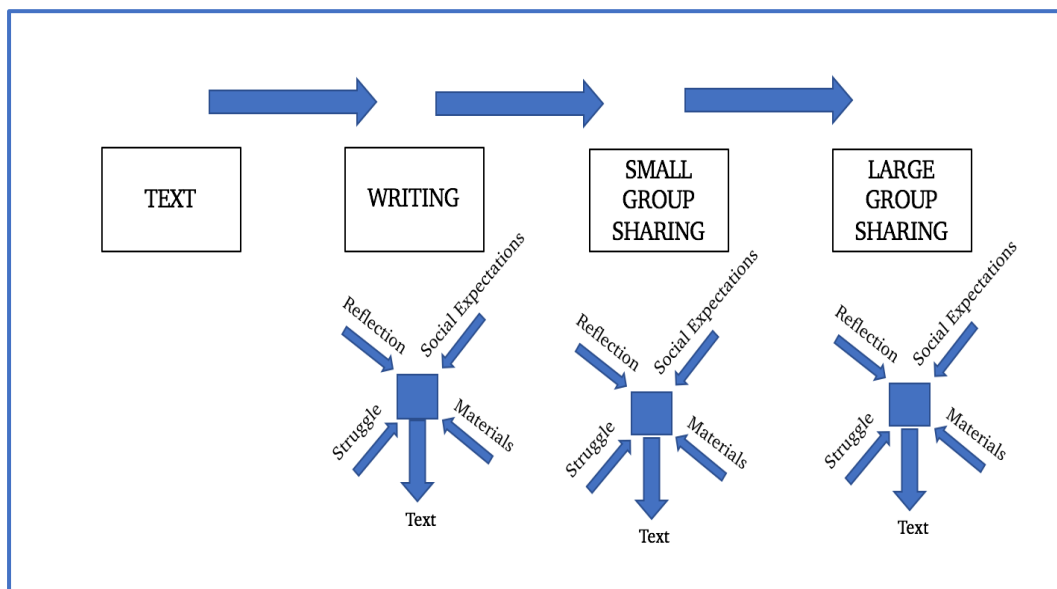
Both Jeremiah and Zee brought particular perspectives and identities to the permeable journaling within the text. It is at this intersection that the dialogic nature of a textual space is possible and opens the possibility for students to make shifts in their own understanding. Lensmire (2000) talks about the importance of students moving from sharing differences to engaging with those differences in a way that allows for growth and new learning. In the next section, we turn to the moments of change within the permeable journaling.

Moments of Dialogue and Resemiotization

In order to understand how the process of permeable journaling influences the meaning making and shifts in understanding for students, I turn to moments of resemitotization within this process. Norris and Jones (2005) recommend mapping moments of resemitotization within a nexus of practice to understand how particular semiotics are translated in specific moments for social actors to make meaning (p. 67). For the purpose of this analysis, I look closely at the resemitotization of permeable journaling that occurs at three points: when students write their response, when they share their response with a small group, and when they share their response in the large group. In looking at these moments of resemitotization, I draw on the information mapped from Wohlwend's (2013) questions and questions from Scollon and Scollon's (2004) nexus analysis to understand how text is created at each moment of resemitotization. From there, I trace how the meaning shifts through the different modes within the permeable journaling.

Figure 1 shows how text is produced in each moment of resemiotization within permeable journaling.

Figure 1: Resemiotization in Permeable Journaling



This figure shows four key points in the process of permeable journaling, as described (text, writing, small group sharing, and large group sharing). Under each moment of resemiotization, the arrows indicate the different factors that influence the text created by social actors at that moment, whether it is written text or ideas shared in discussion. The different factors draw on the histories of practice and discourses already mapped in the nexus of practice.

At each point of resemiotization, the materials reflect the mediational means I have mapped, such as the mentor text, which are described as materials in this figure. The social expectations in each moment of resemiotization are connected to the discourses that were mapped in the space, indicating certain ways of being within the permeable

journaling. The struggle in each moment comes into play as the different identities of social actors come into contact with each other. The struggle refers to tension that social actors may feel from the different goals presented by other social actors in the space. These goals reflect on the particular identities that other individual actors bring to the space (Dyson, 1997). The reflection aspect of each moment of resemiotization connects to the way social actors “must reflect on and consciously choose signs that will help them organize and articulate their inner thoughts” as they create text (Dyson, 1997, p. 17). Looking at each of these moments of resemiotization allows an exploration of the sociocultural influences on a particular moment, the individual text produced, and ultimately the shift of meaning across the resemiotization within the process of permeable journaling. The following sections describe the resemiotization at each moment and give a description of the change over time.

Writing

In order to follow the process of resemiotization, I follow the writing and sharing of Jeremiah and Zee on November 4. I begin by looking at the writing they each created in their journals in response to the mentor text. In this moment they are utilizing materials, discourses that provide social expectations, the potential of conflicting identities which can cause struggle, and their own reflection to make meaning and share it with their classmates.

Table 5: Resemiotization through Writing

Focal Student	Journal Written Response
Jeremiah	<p>I hear...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● she wanted girls to go to school ● full of passion ● Prayers of people ● she has the right to speak ● Malala is incredible ● shot in the head ● Malala fund ● Educate children ● 32 million girls not in school <p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I believe that they didn't want her to be smart ● I believe she has the right to be educated <p>I question...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● why would they ever shoot a child ● why didn't anyone do something about it.
Zee	<p>I hear...</p> <p>“I'm getting better day by day”</p> <p>“I have the right of education”</p> <p>“I have the right to play.”</p> <p>“I have the right to sing.”</p> <p>“I want every girl and every child to be educated.”</p> <p>I believe...</p> <p>Everyone should have the right to be educated.</p> <p>Everyone should have the right to do what they want.</p> <p>Not everyone should have guns.</p> <p>I question...</p> <p>Why did they shoot her for being a girl and going to school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Why do girls have to not go to school in that country?

Based on the format of the journal entries for this day, it's clear that students are utilizing materials including resources around how to respond to particular texts, and the mentor text that is provided for them. Connected to these materials, both Zee and Jeremiah seem to be following the expected process of responding to the sentences starters of “I hear,” “I believe,” and “I question”. While their writing alone doesn't name a potential struggle or their internal reflection, we do see the text they produced and the

differences between their texts, showing their individual perspectives at the beginning of the process of permeable journaling on one day.

In looking at what Zee and Jeremiah produced there are similarities that call on these shared texts and processes, and nuances to the differences that point to students' own experiences and the reflection that they apply to those processes. The sense that Malala should have the right to go to school is clear across the responses from both Zee and Jeremiah. This is noted in the text that students put in "I heard" and in the "I believe" statements across the text.

There are also differences in the recordings. In the "I hear" section, Jeremiah focuses on a third person perspective recording of what happens, Zee focuses on direct quotes using the quotation marks to indicate what Malala actually said in the video. Similarly, during the "I believe" section, Jeremiah describes "they believe" for Malala, while Zee explains what the experience means for "everybody", extending the message to move beyond the mentor text. While using the same text and protocols, students responded in ways that separate their answers.

In this first moment of resmiotization, Zee and Jeremiah, along with their classmates, are taking in a text, their tools for responding to a text, their social surroundings, and creating writing to articulate some of their own ideas and responses to the text. While they begin by answering basic prompts, it is the starting point for their engagement with the text and the creation of their own text.

Table 6: Resemiotization through Dialogue

Small Group Interaction	Description
Mariah and Zee	Mariah pointed to Zee, indicating she should share. As Ms. Hughes nodded to her, she read from her journal, “I believe education is important and that youth should be able to take a stand through their education.” (Field note, November 4, 2016)
Jeremiah and Sebastian	I moved closer to a group, to listen to Jeremiah and Sebastian talk about their ideas. They read through their list of “I believe statements.” Sebastian mentioned that he believed everybody should have education, but it doesn’t always happen. Jeremiah commented that he agreed and said, “That’s good. That’s a good idea.” (Field note, November 4, 2016).

Within the small group conversations, there are similar influences in the students’ conversations. Unlike the journal entries, I cannot look at the written text of each student, but I can draw on the interactions I heard and the references to the small group conversation that were made in the large group. Similar to the writing stage of resemitization, students are still using the mentor text of the Malala video and engaging in the process that has become habitual in the classroom.

Within this moment of resemitization, it is important to note the way that the students called attention to each other’s ideas. This speaks to the ways that students are utilizing each other’s ideas to make sense of their own ideas. When students were sharing with the large group, Mariah indicated that Zee should share what she had said, placing value on her language. Similarly, in the small group, Jeremiah explicitly said that he agreed with his group member, Sebastian, noting that his idea was “good”. The way that students comment on each other’s ideas in this moment shows the ways that they are

listening to each other and respect each other's ideas. In these glimpses, we see an agreement within the small groups about their responses to the text and its implications. These indications also indicate an expansion of ideas through their peers. As Mariah hears Zee's response and values it, she is taking it in and adding to her own understanding. Similarly, as Jeremiah hears Sebastian's idea about education being unfair, he takes it up and eventually shares it with the larger group. In both cases, the students allow an expansion of their own ideas based on the ideas of their classmates.

Large group discussion and resemiotization through dialogue

In the final stage of resemiotization, I return to the large group conversation as it was described in the fieldnote at the beginning of this chapter. In this moment, we see students drawing on some of the same materials as in the first two moments of resemiotization, including the mentor text, the prompts, and the protocols of the classroom. They are also referencing their small group conversations (Mariah points to Zee and Jeremiah quoting Sebastian), and acknowledging their now extended audience (Zee and Jeremiah exchanging and expanding ideas).

Once again, students are calling on the protocols of the classroom. They are beginning by sharing their "I believe" statements. In this moment, they are also drawing on some of the discourses in the space that extend the conversation. For example, Jeremiah and some of the other boys in the class take up their personal experiences in this moment to describe why they feel like education is actually not fair, a conversation that starts by calling out gender differences around things like gym class expectations.

In response, Zee uses a common move in the classroom of referring to the text to

respond to Jeremiah's points. She calls attention back to the point that the video is talking about inequality for girls. In responding to Zee's comment, Jeremiah acknowledges Zee's comments and makes another move to shift the idea from just a gender inequality to an issue about race, as well. In both of these moves, Zee and Jeremiah are using processes that have become part of the discourses of this space over time. Jeremiah and Sebastian offer a question or critique about the text in wondering if education is fair at all. Zee is questioning their response by going back to the text. These moments happen without initial prompting from the teacher, but are acknowledged and given value by Ms. Hughes as she says, "So, we are saying a lot here, aren't we?"

Expanding Meaning Through A Social Practice

At each stage of resemiotization students were pulling in multiple resources from their sociocultural environment. Looking across the resemiotization within the permeable journaling shows the ways students' text and therefore meaning-making expanded and shifted over time. Within this process, we see the shift from text, to writing, to small group, to large group. Table 4 traces the mediational means at each level of resemiotization and the shifting meaning that students experienced over the process of permeable journaling.

Table 7: Shifting Meaning through Resemiotization

	Writing	Small Group Share	Large Group Share
Mediational Means	Text Classroom Discourses Classroom routines	Text Classroom Discourses Classroom routines	Text Classroom Discourses Classroom routines

		Small Group social responses	Small Group social responses Large group social responses
Shift in Meaning for Zee	“Everyone should have the right to be educated.”	Education is important and youth should be able to take a stand.	The text focused on Malala fighting for girls’ rights to an education.
Shift in Meaning for Jeremiah	“I believe she has the right to be educated.”	Education is not always fair.	Both race and gender influence education equality.

The discourses and the mediational means of each step contributed to the overarching whole of the permeable journaling. For Zee, her text shifted from a focus on everybody having the right to be educated, to students taking a stand in education, to girls deserving the right to be educated. In each step, Zee is utilizing the text of Malala’s video, but she is also taking in the responses of her peers as she shifts the focus of her meaning-making. In some ways, her perspective becomes more focused as she realizes that her classmates are ignoring one of Malala’s key perspectives in the video, which is that girls do not always have an equal opportunity to education.

For Jeremiah, his text shifted from a focus on Malala as an individual who should have the right to education, to thinking about how education is not fair based on his conversation with Sebastian, to thinking that education is not fair because of both race and education. In the last stage of this episode of permeable journaling, Jeremiah also recognizes Zee’s point about Malala’s interest in girls being educated, even as he sticks to his idea that race and gender play a role in education in complicated ways.

In the end, Zee and Jeremiah may not have changed their final perspectives over

the course of the conversation, but looking across the permeable journaling from where they started to engage with their ideas to how they shared and heard their classmates, there is a noticeable shifting of perspectives and influences. Their engagement in taking in their surroundings and shifting their meanings at these three different moments within permeable journaling points to the way the discourses and practices of the space and time provided openings for students to adjust and grow.

The Textual Space of Permeable Journaling

Utilizing MDA to look at the process of permeable journaling providing a way to map the histories of participation, the cycles of discourse, the access of identities, and the resmiotization within the process of permeable journaling in Ms. Hughes's classroom. Viewing this process as a textual chronotope highlights the ways it is a process built with parameters that provide structure while also a space with openings for students to permeate the process with their own perspectives. Throughout the process of permeable journaling, there are parameters that give structure, expectations, and resources to the writing and sharing. The expected process gives students a sense of what to expect in the process, how much time will be given for the processes, and what topics to engage with. These parameters give specific language to students for how they can utilize in order to respond to text. The parameters of permeable journaling are also paired with space for students to move beyond the process with extended ideas and connections or to make shifts within the process. The opening occurs on a physical level as students get to choose where they sit in the space of the classroom. While there is always a mentor text, the text is in a variety of modes, so that students can access it in a variety of ways. Within the

conversations, students also utilize the discourses of the space to shift the direction of the conversation. Ultimately, these parameters and openings work together to create a space for students to grow through the process. In the next chapter, I look to the ways students shift the processes from the permeable journaling to other writing and sharing spaces and times.

Chapter 5

A Data Diptych: Extending Habits of Writing and Dialogue

The Diptych

On a January day, guest artist, Wing Young Huie, stood at the front of the seventh-grade classroom and spelled, “D-I-P-T-Y-C-H. Diptych. Has anybody here ever heard of a diptych?” He went on to give his definition of the word, explaining, “So, a diptych, in the art world, is when you pair two images together, side-by-side, and they have some kind of relationship but the relationship may not be clear” (Video transcription, January 21, 2016).

As students began to look at pairs of pictures projected on the screen, Huie asked, “How do you put images together in an interesting way? It might be obvious. It might be obvious to you. It may not be obvious to other people. Because everyone is going to see different things, and that’s important” (Video transcription, January 21, 2016).

A Data Diptych



I begin this chapter by providing a data diptych. This diptych represents two moments, which I call literacy episodes (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), from within the 2015-2016 school year. I use the term episode to describe each exchange, drawing on Lemke’s (2000) work around timescales. Within this work, Lemke refers to an episode as approximately fifteen minutes of interaction around a particular topic, such as a conversation. These two episodes have a layered relationship with each other, as they both occurred within the same year and are connected to similar themes, goals, and

practices that are present in the focal classroom. Paired together, these moments highlight the relationships between the two literacy moments in the classroom and the unique aspects of them as they occur at particular moments in time. I begin this chapter by sharing, through image and written text, a diptych of these two literacy episodes.

The Diptychs

During the Museum Moment, students were on a fieldtrip, responding to a painting. During the Artist Exchange, students were in the classroom, working with a guest artist, responding to two of his images projected on the screen.

Figure 2: A Visual Diptych: The Museum Moment & The Artist Exchange.

The Museum Moment	The Artist Exchange
	

A Written Diptych: The Museum Moment & The Artist Exchange.

The Museum Moment	The Artist Exchange
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<p>A group of approximately 15 students are looking up toward a painting. Some are sprawled out on their sides, while others sit in cross-cross position. The students each have a clipboard and a pencil. Attached to the clipboard is a hand-out with questions about the art. A docent is standing to the side of the art. She holds a handout in one hand and lifts the other toward the painting. She scans the group as she talks. Ms. Hughes is pacing near the edge of the group on the other side of the painting.</p>	<p>The front row of lights is off, so the classroom is somewhat dim. The desks are pushed to the back of the room, leaving an open space where students are sitting on the floor and looking up to two images projected on the screen. Sitting with their legs crossed, the students have their laptops open, and a googledoc on the screen. Both guest artist and photographer, Wing Young Huie, and Ms. Hughes stand in the front of the room, near the projector. They are holding zines of photos taken Huie which match the pictures being projected.</p>
<p>They are looking up toward the Kehinde Wiley painting, <i>Passing/Posing</i> 15, 2002. The painting is of a young black man, wearing an orange hooded sweatshirt and jeans. One hand is tucked</p>	<p>They are looking toward the two images projected on the screen next to each other. In the photo on the left, there is a young African American boy sitting on a swing holding a basketball. In the</p>

<p>in at his side and the other hand is making a sign with his fingers. He is looking at the camera with one eye, his head turned to the side. The background is an elegant pattern of cream swirls on light brown.</p> <p>The docent asks a question, glancing down at the paper she is holding. A student raises his hand. The docent calls on him and he answers before she goes to the next question. After a similar series of questions, Ms. Hughes steps forward and interjects her own question. For a moment, the volume raises as several students talk at once. Then, they shift toward writing on their clipboards.</p> <p>Fieldnotes, October 20, 2015</p>	<p>photo on the right, there is a middle aged, white officer facing the camera. Both seem to be looking toward the direction of the camera.</p> <p>Huie looks to the students and invites them to write, saying, “Write down what you see in these two photos. How are they different? How are they the same? What do you notice?”</p> <p>The students begin typing on their laptops. As they type, they look up at the screen. Some hold the zines, which have the same images, close to their faces. They alternate between looking and typing on their open laptops.</p> <p>Fieldnote, January 21, 2016</p>
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Connecting Moments Through Time

In chapter four, I looked at how the process of permeable journaling provided opportunities for students to shift their learning by focusing on moments of resemiotization in practices of writing and being in dialogue with classmates in small and

large group conversations. In this chapter, I look to moments that mirrored, connected to, or extended the practice of permeable journal writing in the classroom. I traced these moments by looking across field notes, interview transcriptions, and video transcriptions. In looking at these moments, I was interested in how students extended the practice of permeable to expand as writers who “respond to and build on what each other knows” (Dyson, p. 184) across time and space.

Identifying Literacy Extensions.

As chapter four described, students were accustomed to writing and responding to multimodal text on a daily basis through the process of permeable journaling. Chapter four also explains how students took up these practices on a regular basis, as it entered their historical body and action-intuition (Nishida, 1966). Across my data, I recognized multiple assignments and processes that drew on the practice of permeable journaling. These actions were often utilized in the ways Ms. Hughes designed instruction, and students would also insist on engaging in the actions. For example, on multiple days, I would see students ask for the pair-share “like with the journals” (Field Notes, October 14, 2015; December 1, 2015) or demand time to talk because “that’s what we do.” (Field Notes, April 5, 2016). In this way, the practice of permeable journaling created “the historical outcomes of social practices embodied in cultural tools and appropriated in the habitus of individuals and the homologous habitus of the group” (Scollon, 2001a, p. 153).

In considering how this practice was extended, I find it helpful to turn to Dewey’s (2008) use of plasticity. Dewey (2008) explains that habits such as students’ ongoing use of permeable journaling provide an opportunity for growth through plasticity. Dewey’s

(2008) use of plasticity explains, “Above all, the intellectual element in a habit fixes the relation of the habit to varied and elastic use, and hence to continued growth” (p. 29). It is the feature of elasticity that is important in the idea of plasticity. Because plasticity of habits requires us to take knowledge from a situation and imagine new application to another situation, it provides space for growth. Recognizing that students were engaging in the practice of permeable journaling in different ways, Dewey’s concept of plasticity helps me consider how students utilize practices in ways that extend their learning and gives me a lens to view the shifting use of literacy practices over time.

While I began writing this chapter with the intent of focusing on one of these moments of extension, a return to the words of guest artist, Wing Young Huie, shifted my framing. I was drawn to Wing’s description of a diptych and the responses the students had as they were viewing and creating diptychs together. Huie noted the value of placing images together to explore their relationship, and as seventh grade student Decca noted in response to the diptychs they created, “sometimes putting the two things together means you can see something else” (Group Interview, April 19, 2016). As I returned to the way students engaged in these two literacy episodes around art, writing, and sharing with each other, I found myself thinking about the relationship that these two episodes had with each other across time, as part of the course. As a result, I turned to Huie’s use of the diptych to place the moments in relationship with each other. This shift to focusing on two moments across time brings a complexity to understanding how they relate to the class overall, to each other, and ultimately to the shifts in students’ learning over time. In looking at the differences between these moments, I also recognized Gee and Green’s

(1998) point that “In contrasting what members display as learning, knowing, and understanding across different interactions with different situational contexts, a fuller picture may be obtained” (p. 143).”

In order to place these two moments in relationship with each other, I utilize MDA’s timescales and trajectories to consider how “actions and discourses acquire their meaning from the positions they occupy within a historical sequence of events” (p. 155). In this way, MDA acknowledges how multiple events within a shared frame of time are both connected through overarching discourses, goals, and practices, while also having unique characteristics based on the way particular trajectories of social actors and actions come together in specific moments. By placing these moments in a diptych and utilizing MDA’s concepts of timescales and trajectories, I am able to have a layered understanding of how they are related to the larger timescale of the class and the histories of practice from that class, each other as moments within this frame, and individual moments that influence learning in different ways. Utilizing a diptych framework with the analytical tools of timescales and trajectories gives me the ability to look at the ways the practice of permeable journaling is recontextualized in different extensions throughout the class. Because these two events also occurred within distinctly different locations, I also note the way these settings bring their own histories and discourses, as well.

Looking Across Time

In this chapter, I utilize MDA to “see something else” (Decca, Group interview, April 19, 2016), by tracing how the “historical trajectories of people, places, discourse,

ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some ways as these trajectories emanate from the moment of social action” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p 161). I begin by naming the different timescales that surround the two literacy episodes. From there, I draw on de Saint-Georges’s (2005) use of MDA to consider how the two literacy episodes (the Museum Moment and the Artist Exchange) exist within a historical sequence, where they “have a history and project a future” as they move “on their own timescales and trajectories” (p. 156) by analyzing the trajectories across time. Similar to de Saint-George, I consider the anticipatory trajectories by an analysis of lessons and planning meetings prior to the moments. From there, I trace the trajectories in the moment when the anticipatory discourses are recontextualized into action and follow the way the trajectories emanate into the future beyond the specific moments. In this process, I look at how the practice is called on by educators and students, the different ways students engage with the practice in the moment, and how the moment of actions and trajectories coming together resonates in the future. By looking at the two events, across time, I am able to trace the way similar practices play out differently in multiple moments.

Timescales

MDA draws on Lemke’s (2000) work around timescales to consider how time plays a role in social actions. With this emphasis on time, MDA considers the “various rhythmic patterns that constrain mediated actions and aims at making explicit how locally negotiated actions are embedded in long-term ‘timescales’ that link actors, objects, language, and practices both with history and with future states” (Scollon, 2002, as cited

in Filliettaz, 2005, p. 101). This emphasis on time places action in larger discourses in the environment and allows for a consideration of how time mediates action. In this chapter, the use of timescales around the two literacy episodes (the museum moment and the artist exchange) helps me to understand how they are linked within a larger frame of time, while also existing in their own unique timescales.

Drawing on Lemke's work, Scollon and Scollon (2004) point to recognizing the cycles of time surrounding the elements one is mapping and the ways they are "constructed by the participants in the action" (p. 15). Scollon and Scollon (2004) also note that each of these elements are on their own timescale while they might have intersecting timescales. Using Scollon and Scollon's (2004) framework of timescales, the chart below traces the timescales surrounding the Museum Moment and the Artist Exchange. Looking at these events within timescales helps to situate them as events that are connected over time, but also points to the way they have particular influences from the moments and space where they occurred. They both take place within a solar timescale of the year of the class and share overarching goals, practices, and themes from the course. At the same time, the episodes exist as a period of time within unique events of particular lunar cycles made up of a unit of study lasting between two weeks and a month. The highlighted section of the episode is the timeframe that is featured in the data diptych throughout this chapter. The Museum Moment episode is a fifteen-minute period within a 90 minute visit to the space of the museum. The Artist Exchange episode is a fifteen-minute conversation that exists within a 50 minute class period when Wing, the guest artist, was visiting.

Table 8: Timescales of the Museum Moment and Artist Exchange

Cycle of Time	Museum Moment	Artist Exchange
Utterance	Ms. Hughes steps toward students.	Students share out a comment from their pair-share with the entire class.
Exchange	Ms. Hughes interrupts docent to ask students a followup question.	Student share a response from their pair share with the entire group.
Episode	The docent and students exchange questions and answers in a pattern of the docent asking a question and one student responding. Ms. Hughes interrupts the questions.	Students write in response to an image, pair share with a neighbor in groups of two, and share answers out-loud with the entire class.
Event	90 minute long visit in the museum. Docents and teachers accompany groups of approximately 15 students at three works of art.	Hour-long class with guest artist visiting. Two sections of ELA students respond to diptychs in a zine created by Huie.
Lunar	Part of students looking at identity through <i>The Skin I'm In</i>	Part of a series of visits by guest artist, discussing intersection of multimodal writing and art
Solar	Yearlong course focused on identity, writing, and multimodal text	Yearlong course focused on identity, writing, and multimodal text

Shared Solar Timescale

Of particular importance in putting these two episodes in conversation is the way that they are part of a shared solar timescale because the discourses of that shared timescale are present in both of the episodes, including common themes from the course. Over the year, Ms. Hughes emphasized the goals of the class to be that students improve as writers, listeners, and community members. Throughout her interviews, it is evident that Ms. Hughes believes students should engage in writing and listening to each other. As described in chapter three about the permeable journaling, Ms. Hughes focuses on building a safe community where students can share ideas. This becomes clear as she explains, “But I think that’s the building safety. A. They know how to say it or write it and B. they feel comfortable with the group they share it with.” (Interview, June 7, 2016). In this interview, Ms. Hughes is describing the importance of building a safe space for students to write, giving them the tools to do the writing, and providing an audience to share the writing.

The emphasis on these components of class comes through themes around identity and dialogue across the units in the course. As described in chapter four, related to course themes, the conversations in this process often gave students opportunities to share their different perspectives and connect their identities in different ways. It is on this timescale where students experienced permeable journal writing across the year. Students also saw themselves as experts in this process and something that they were used to doing. Throughout the curriculum, students moved from reading *Seedfolks*, to *The Skin I’m In*, to writing memoirs, writing poetry, doing research on topics of personal

interest, and exploring media literacy. The journal process was present across all of these units. Each of these focus areas explicitly talked about identity and the intersection of people's different perspectives. Throughout the different units, students were also encouraged to engage with and use multimodal text which Ms. Hughes saw as relevant to contemporary learning and an opportunity for students to gain access.

Lunar Timescale

The two episodes that are the focus of this chapter were within different lunar events that shared the aspects of the solar timescale but had individual nuances. The Museum Moment occurred at the end of October within a unit based on Sharon Flake's *The Skin I'm In*. The unit provided an opportunity for students to engage in conversations around identity related to race, class, and gender. The visit to the museum occurred in the middle of this book and related to these themes. The Artist Exchange occurred in January and was part of four days focused on looking at the images in the zines and the ways they connected to identity and community. It is important to note that the guest artist, also visited the class multiple times and this was in the middle of those visits.

Event Timescale

As Scollon and Scollon (2004) suggest, the two events provide a way to consider the "relationships or linkages among or across timescales" (p. 15). The two events each occurred on one portion of one day of class. The museum moment was 90 minutes spent within the space of a museum on a day that was a fieldtrip. Within this event, there were students from school, teachers from the entire seventh grade team, and museum docents involved. The artist exchange occurred as part of an hour long class in the students'

regular school day. The students were in a typical group of their own class, along with another seventh grade class, making the group have about 40 students. The students, the classroom teacher, and the guest artist were social actors in the event.

At an event level, the contrasting aspects of the episodes stand out. Within this context, I draw attention to the way the space was a different aspect between the two events. The museum moment occurred at a space off of the school site, making it very different from their usual setting. The students were also working with a docent, a white woman, who they had never met before. This is in contrast to the artist exchange where students were in their typical classroom setting and interacting with a guest artist who they had worked with three previous times. Additionally, each room of the museum had a person whose purpose was to ensure that students did not touch the art. These museum employees stood silently until a student got too close to a piece of art, sending a clear message about how bodies were to be controlled in the space. Having these people within the space where the events took place was quite different than the classroom, where each person was familiar to them. As I move into a trajectory analysis, these layers play a role in understanding students' complex experiences with literacy practice and their relationship across timescales.

Episode

The focus of this chapter includes the two episodes described in the diptych, the museum moment and the artist exchange. Both episodes are approximately 15 minutes and focused on a specific conversation between students and a facilitator. As described earlier, these two episodes highlight literacy practices that are connected to the larger

timescale of the class and are made up of anticipatory trajectories, which emanate into the future. In the following section, I explore these two episodes as sites of engagement that are “connected to one another through actions and anticipatory discourses” (de Saint-Georges, 2005, p. 155). Lemke also describes the timeframe of an episode, which occurs within dialogue and usually lasts only seconds or minutes. On a smaller level, Lemke describes an utterance as a single action, connected to the utterance of another person within an exchange. In looking at the museum moment and artists exchange there are both utterances and exchanges within the two episodes.

Anticipatory Trajectories: Planning within time and space

de Saint-George explains that “One of the ways in which actors in the world construct events across time and space is by first projecting those events and then trying to find ways to realize them” (de Saint-George, p .157). As de Saint-George explains, much of our life is spent anticipating and imagining what might happen. The same is true for educators as they develop lesson plans, objectives, and agendas for their students on a daily basis. These lesson plans take shape when they come into contact with students and materials on the day of the planned lesson. As the lesson plan takes form in action, it is recontextualized by the different trajectories of social actors, including the educators and students, coming together.

Looking at the anticipatory trajectories of these two literacy episodes provides an understanding of how they fit into the timescale of the class year, carrying connections to the overarching course, and provides a frame to compare how each design is recontextualized into action. For the purpose of this chapter, the anticipatory trajectories

for the museum moment and artist exchange are couched in lesson plans, discussions between the educators, and statements about the goals of the art. These particular plans are built from the perspective of the teacher, museum staff, and visiting artist. As a result, there are museum and education discourses throughout the anticipation. Importantly, this perspective does not include a detailed description of the other anticipatory trajectories that are also part of the action in the two episodes, but does provide a framework for understanding some of the similarities across the two episodes.

Design

de Saint-George (2005) draws on the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) who “see anticipatory discourses with the faculty of ‘design’ of individuals-which is to say their ability to draw on available semiotic modes and resources to conceptualize, project and imagine how a given semiotic structure should be produced” (As cited in de Saint-Georges, p. 161, 2005). Considering the anticipatory discourses that lead up to action helps to contextualize the way mediated actions come together in a moment. In this way, design helps situate “discourses in the context of a given communication situation” (Van Leeuwen & Kress, 2001, p. 5). Van Leeuwen and Kress (2001) suggest that design contains discourses, modes, and interactions. It is important to point out that a focus on design has been critiqued in multimodal theory, as it does not allow for a focus on how actions play out in complex moments between students, instead focusing on the goals for a final objective (Leander and Boldt 2018). Looking at the lesson plans from the lens of design is helpful in this chapter because the analysis will be extended to consider how the actions in the moment are different from these anticipatory plans. In this way,

looking at the design of two lessons will highlight how similarities in plans may play out differently in actual moments of interaction, but it is only one part of the analysis which will also focus on the complex layers of social actors coming together in a moment of interaction. For this particular chapter, the designs of both episodes in the form of lesson plans has similar features, as evident in the discourses, modes, and interactions that are present.

By looking at the discourses, modes, and interactions that are developed in the design of both episodes, it is also easy to draw connections to practices that are connected to the students' history, as a whole in the class. In designing these two episodes, there are connections to permeable journaling in the ways that the lesson plans indicate opportunities for students to observe multimodal text, write in response to the text, and share their interpretations of the text.

Discourses

Aligned with MDA, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) describe the discourse of design as “socially constructed knowledge of reality” (p. 4) that are developed in specific context and realized in different modes. These discourses are tied to the interactions and modes of the design, which also draw on the discourses. Because they are all connected, they will be described in some ways in the next two sections, as well. In considering the design of the two moments, there are similar discourses present in the lesson plans, planning meeting notes, and descriptions the art that is central to each episode. The discourses point to a socially constructed view of identity, a multimodal view of literacy, and discourses of educational interactions, which align closely with the overarching goals

and themes of the course. The discourses point to a socially constructed view of identity, a multimodal view of literacy, and discourses of educational interactions, which align closely with the overarching goals and themes of the course.

Discourses of identity. Throughout the lesson plans there are similar goals for how students will take up and see the concept of identity. In both cases, identity is seen as being formed in a variety of social influences. This is apparent in the lesson plan for the museum visit. In the plan, it defines identity as “our sense of who we are. It is formed by a combination of many factors, including social ties such as our connections to a family, an ethnic group, a religion, a community, a school, or a nation. Our personal experiences also affect our identity. So do our values and beliefs.” The definition includes a variety of influences and, by using the word “sense”, indicates that it is not predetermined or already established.

This definition aligns with the way identity is viewed in the planning of the classroom experience. In notes from a planning meeting, Huie explains, “students will take a picture of something that gives some idea or insight into their life, what someone sees when you leave the school” (Meeting notes, October 19, 2015). On the actual lesson plan, it says the assignment is to “take a photo of something you see that tells a story or expresses something about your life, a family member, a friend, prized possession, your bedroom, pet, what you eat, something you like”. Once again, the emphasis is on the idea that there are multiple tools that influence students’ identity as it is presented outward at a particular moment within a specific context.

Discourses of dialogue. The discourses of identity and multimodal literacy come

together to create a discourse of dialogue around the multimodal images. Fecho (2011) explains one aspect of dialogic writing to “allow writers to bring multiple voices to the work” (p. 27). The description of the museum exhibit explains, “This compelling and thought-provoking exhibition of art by a multinational and ethnically varied array of contemporary artists celebrates people and diversity.” In the written description of the images in the classroom, the artist writes, “The most interesting photos to me reflect the complexities of life: loaded with suggestion but open-ended in what they suggest. I embrace ambiguity.” In both cases, the images are created with an emphasis on people and their varied experiences. They also both suggest that viewers should engage (“thought-provoking and compelling” and “loaded with suggestion but open-ended in what they suggest”) in their own response to the images. Connected to the view of identity, the art provides opportunities for multiple voices “within and without the writer” (Fecho, 2011, p. 8). There is a message that the students who will be viewing the art should be bringing their own response to what these images say about who people are and how identity is expressed.

Discourse of literacy practices. Much like the permeable journaling, both lesson plans focus on multimodal processing, utilizing writing, talking, and visual images. Ms. Hughes expresses the importance of this, explaining “It’s a way for student to enter the conversation” (Interview, June 6, 2016). The students were equally aware of this move to use multiple modes. As Decca described in her interview, “She (Ms. Hughes) always taught us in different ways to make our brains really click” (Interview, June X).

Modes

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), it is helpful to consider how the design points to “a particular way of combining modes”. Both days anticipate actions including reading visual images, writing in response to those images, and engaging in dialogue with peers in response to those images. The museum visit focuses on looking at a painting while the classroom visit focuses on digital photography that is both projected on the screen and available in the zines students were holding. Both emphasize, as written in the goals for the museum visit, “Students will learn that both art and writing are based on communicating ideas.

Both days anticipate actions including reading visual images, writing in response to those images, and engaging in dialogue with peers in response to those images. The museum visit focuses on looking at a painting while the classroom visit focuses on digital photography that is both projected on the screen and available in the zines students were holding. Both emphasize, as written in the goals for the museum visit, “Students will learn that both art and writing are based on communicating ideas.”

The anticipated modes of interaction can be seen clearly in the use of verbs across the lesson plans. Throughout the museum visit, the verbs of “notice,” “look,” and “write” are used. Similarly, in the classroom plans, the verbs “talk,” “write,” and “take a photo” are used. In both instances, the use of the verbs rely on multimodal interactions, viewing the images and noticing what is there, writing in response. The verbs from the classroom have more of a focus on the talking aspect for students and creating is more apparent.

The particular pieces of art that are related to the multimodal opportunity for engagement are also important in these episodes. In the museum, the art is

Passing/Posing 15, by Kehinde Wiley. Within the picture, there is an image of an African American man in front of a lavish background. The description next to the image explains, “Wiley presents young black males as figures of power and privilege. His goal, essentially, is to show that the mugshot is not the only way men of color can be portrayed” (artifact). This image intentionally brings up questions of race, identity, and presentation. Similarly, in the Guest Artist episode, the two images that are featured in the diptych include an image of a young African American boy in a swing in a picture next to a white police officer in the other picture. This diptych was brought to the students at a moment when the shooting of black young men by white police officers was in the attention of media. In considering context, it is important to note that a local police shooting occurred in the year of this study, drawing the attention of students to the topic of police shootings. These two images point to the intentional use of multimodal text and the discourses of race that are present in both images.

Interactions

Kress and Van Leeuwen explain that within design, “particular interactions of social actors exist where the discourses are embedded.” The anticipation in both the museum visit and the classroom experience is that there will be ongoing interactions between the social actors and the art. In both cases, there are different social actors present who are interacting with each other. However, there is a lack of detail about how students will respond to those questions. In this sense, the lesson plans are relying on “scripts” of the practice of engaging in conversation, a script that is also a common educational discourse. While it is clear that students will be engaging in questions around

particular pieces of art, it is unclear how they will be answering those questions, who they will be responding to, and what amount of time will be used for each question. There is a blueprint for questions and general time, but not pauses, student responses, time both is and is not accounted for in these blue prints. As we look at the production of the design, we begin to see how these interactions and the unwritten scripts play out.

Literacy Practices in Action Across Time and Space

So far, this chapter has acknowledged the timescales that surround both the Museum Moment and the Artish Exchange, and the anticipatory trajectories of the lessons that led up to each moment. I now turn to how these histories and trajectories come together in the particular time and space of each moment where, “many practices are engaged and multiple agendas interact to construct a unique site of engagement” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 163).

Table 9 and table 10 are video transcriptions of each literacy episode. The tables break down the episodes by mediated actions and are indicated by time stamps. Next to the actions, the tables describe the social actors involved and historical trajectories they are drawing on. While I cannot know all of the trajectories for each social actor, I am able to connect to trajectories from the anticipatory lesson plans and the common practices and discourses of the class. These actions and trajectories are the focus of the tables in order to connect the episodes across time. In describing these episodes, I am interested in the actions social actors take, what trajectories are at play, and how those trajectories are shifted at the moment of action. Within this analysis, I found some questions from Green and Gee (1998) to be helpful in thinking about how I was looking at trajectories.

Specifically, I looked at the questions: What sort of connections are made to previous processes and practices? Which processes, practices, and discourses do members draw on from previous events/situations?

In putting a parameter on which trajectories to follow in the action, I focus on particular trajectories that are connected across the experiences of students and facilitators. The trajectories from the lesson plan design are important as they show the design of the episodes, as formed by the facilitators and institutional expectations related to each site. Students' histories of permeable journaling are also important as these two episodes are extensions of this practice. In looking at the two moments of action, there are also trajectories related to the space of the museum and the classroom. These trajectories are connected to descriptions of the timescales, which point to aspects of the space (such as the museum guards or the consistency of the guest artist). These trajectories also consider the different responses of the facilitators, which could be connected to some unknown experiences as well as institutional expectations for the docent, teacher, and guest artist. After the tables, I describe the way the histories intersect in the two episodes.

Table 9: Museum Moment Literacy Episode

Time	Mediated Action	Social Actors	Historical Trajectories
10:36:15	Students find a place to sit in front of the image. Docent waits for students to look toward image.	Docent Students	Lesson plan
10:40:45	Docent asks questions, looking toward paper with questions. She asks a question, followed by a student raising their hand and answering the question. She then moves on to another	Docent Students	Lesson plan, institutional discourses (of

	question. Other students sit quietly.		questioning and responding)
10:45:01	Ms. Hughes walks toward the image. She looks toward students and interrupts docent: “What do we do? What’s going on? You actually try to make that expression. How do you feel when you do that?”	Ms. Hughes Students	Educator experiences, permeable journaling
10:45:12	Multiple students all respond at once. M. H. says, “And you don’t have the only answer. What might be going on here? Write about it.”	Ms. H Students	Educator experiences, permeable journaling
10:45:30	Students writing on clipboards and looking at image.	Students	Institutional discourses of questioning Permeable journaling
10:48:00	Time to move to the next exhibit.	Docent Ms. Hughes Students	Institutional discourses of time

Table 10: Artist Exchange Literacy Episode

Time	Mediated Action	Social Actors	Historical Trajectories
8:32:15	Wing displays picture of two images. Students have laptops open and zines in their hands. Wing says, “ok writing. What do you see that in this diptych. What’s different? What’s the same?”	Wing Students	Lesson plan Educator experience
8:33:10	Students write on computers, looking up toward image. Students looking through zines and up at screen.	Students	Permeable journaling
8:37:00	Wing tells students to talk to partners about what they see and what they wrote.	Wing Students	Educator experiences Permeable journaling
8:37:10	Students sharing in pairs. There are many voices sharing at once. Wing adds another minute for writing.	Students	Permeable journaling

8:41:00	Wing calls students to large group conversation. Asks each pair to share one thing they discussed.	Wing	Educator experience
8:41:15	Pairs share responses with large group. Students comment on gaze, stance, race of two, looking vs being watched	Students, Ms. Hughes Wing	Permeable journaling
8:42:16	A lot of voices all respond at once. Continue sharing responses	Students	Permeable journaling Classroom practices
8:44:00	Wing and Ms. Hughes note that there are a lot of ways to put pictures together. Shift to the assignment for the next day.	Wing Ms. Hughes	Educator experience Lesson plan

Histories in Action

In looking at the Museum Moment, the docent utilized a question and answer process and pacing of time related to discourses and practices connected to the museum. The teacher, Ms. Hughes, was calling on her history with the practice of permeable journaling and her interaction with students. For the beginning half of the interaction, the students were not calling on the discourses and practices from their classroom, but were choosing to be silent. Ultimately, these discourses resulted in a tension between the actions of the students in the museum moment. Alternatively, during the Artist Exchange, the artist was calling on the practice of permeable journaling and practices from his own history of working with students across settings. Once again, the teacher was calling on her practices of permeability and a flexibility with time. The students were also calling on their practices of participation in their classroom related to permeable journaling. In this episode, the students' engagement within the discussion is present throughout the

exchange.

The Museum Moment	The Artist Exchange
<p>In the Museum Moment, the histories of the museum docent, the classroom teacher, the lesson plan design, and the students are intersecting in their discussion around an image. The framework of the lesson plan as written in the design is central to the process of enacting this design. The docent relies heavily on the discussion questions in the lesson plan, reading them in nearly the same order they are typed, moving from one to the next.</p> <p>As the docent moves through the frame of the lesson design with the students, there are unspoken discourses of pedagogy that are enacted as questions are being asked. The docent asks a specific question and waits for a student to raise his or her hand and answer. In</p>	<p>In the Artist Exchange, students' histories of writing in response to images came together with Huie's history of working with students, the history of the lesson plan, and Ms. Hughes's history in the classroom. Huie and Ms. Hughes followed the lesson plan, with a focus on the objectives, but they depended on their own histories of engagement with students and the ways students were responding in the moment to make shifts to the lesson.</p> <p>As Huie displayed two images together and asked students what they noticed, his questions and exchange with students pointed to his history of working with students and the history of the lesson plan that he co-developed with Ms. Hughes. He followed the basic</p>

<p>response, individual students provide single answers to the questions. While this process does not align with their experience in their ELA class, this process aligns with a dominant question and response pattern in classrooms (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoron, Zeiser, Long, 2003).</p> <p>The moves in the interaction are also dependent on discourses of time that are at play. The museum has particular time constraints for each group to move from one place to the next. These are also described in the lesson plan and followed in the interaction. Additionally, the class section has a timeline for the overarching day of the fieldtrip. During the 12-minute episode, the docent was working through a number of questions and students were trying to answer questions on the handout, which they had to write by</p>	<p>prompt that was discussed in the development of the lesson plan, but as somebody who routinely speaks in front of students about images, he also drew on his history of interactions. As students moved from writing, to pair-share, Huie and Ms. Hughes talked to student pairs. When the large group discussion began, Huie asked each pair to share with the large group, not something that was explicitly described in the lesson plan, but a pedagogical choice that aligned with Ms. Hughes's history of practices. After hearing a students' response with the large group, Huie would engage in that response before asking if anybody else had something to add.</p> <p>Throughout the episode, students were responding in ways similar to their responses during daily permeable journaling. They engaged in writing on</p>
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<p>hand.</p> <p>Many of the students are silent and writing little during this process, shifting away from their experiences during permeable journaling where they are often all writing and talking. The art and questions were similar to other questions and topics they often talked about. We do not know all of the discourses the students were drawing on, but there was a difference in the space, as well as the questioning in this moment.</p> <p>These discourses intersect with Ms. Hughes's history of her own pedagogical practices and knowledge of her students' histories. When Ms. Hughes sees that students are not engaging, she interrupts both the docent's questions and the students' silence and tells students to call upon the routines that they use in class. In response to Ms.</p>	<p>their chrome books, sharing with partners, and sharing out-loud. They were also in a space that was familiar to them and where they had engaged in these similar conversations multiple times.</p> <p>As facilitators, both Huie and Ms. Hughes also relied on the basic components of the lesson plan, but did not follow an allotted time frame, adjusting as the conversation took place. Throughout the episode, time was given structure in response to what students were doing. After Huie directed students to write about the images, the class spent the next four minutes writing. Huie explicitly told them how long they would have to write, but looked up and added time as needed. At 8:37, Huie told the students to share with their neighbors, and students spent the next five minutes</p>
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<p>Hughes’s interjection, the students shift slightly into a more common response from their classroom, adding multiple voices instead of one at a time.</p> <p>Ms. Hughes also called on her history of hearing her students engage in a different type of conversation. She both knew what her students did on a daily basis and felt that they were not being given the chance to share their ideas in the process. Before her interruption, only two students shared a response to the art.</p> <p>At a later point, Ms. Hughes explained to me, “They can do better. They can say more. Some people think they don’t have more to say, but they do” (Interview, June 6, 2016). In this description, she is explaining the competing discourses about students’ abilities to discuss their ideas with a level of complexity. For Ms. Hughes., this was</p>	<p>sharing what they wrote with their neighbors. During this exchange there was a moment when many people were talking, making the room quite loud and adding a moment of laughter. The time was constrained by the schedule of the school day, but within the hour with students, Huie, Ms. Hughes, and the students moved flexibly within the time. Within the fifteen minutes, students heard from a variety of classmates about their perspectives and experiences related to the image. In meeting with Huie, he noted that the amount of sustained writing and dialogue in this particular class and the amount of students who participate throughout the practices is different than other spaces he visits (fieldnotes, October 19, 2015).</p> <p>As the lesson plan was recontextualized into action, the steps</p>
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<p>an opportunity for students to share with each other that was missed.</p> <p>As the lesson plan was recontextualized into action, discourses of time and spaces limited students participation in dialogue with each other. Ms. Hughes called on her own history of interacting with students to shift the flow of the conversation, but with limited time, students moved on to the next part of the museum.</p>	<p>from the lesson plan were enacted with the adjustments to time and discussion frameworks. Throughout the episode, Wing, Ms. Hughes, and the students drew on their histories and discourses from the class about writing and sharing practices.</p>
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Emanations of Extended Literacy Practices

The Museum Moment and Artist Exchange episodes were pieces of the yearlong experience students had in their seventh grade English language arts class. The timescales surrounding the episodes and the anticipatory trajectories of episodes show how they were designed as extensions of permeable journaling with a connection to overarching class goals and themes. As the lesson plans were recontextualized into action, social actors drew on available mediational means, histories, and discourses to participate. Looking at the action in terms of trajectories shows how the episodes came to be enacted at particular moments. As Scollon and Scollon (2004) suggest, these episodes are where “trajectories emanate from the moment of social action” (p. 16). In order to understand

how the literacy episodes emanate in the students' experiences, I look at the ways the episodes appeared in ongoing lesson plans, student interviews, and teacher interviews. It is over this extended time that I gain understanding about how these two episodes played different roles for the students and their learning, changing trajectories in different ways.

Beyond the Episode

The Museum Moment happened in October, but was not something that students brought up often after the initial fieldtrip. The students enjoyed their time at the museum, but did not draw on it in follow-up interviews or assignments. The Artist Exchange became a moment that students referenced in their ongoing interviews and was extended into other assignments in the classroom.

The Museum Moment	The Artist Exchange
<p>The visit to the museum was most prevalent in the data I had collected on the day of the museum fieldtrip. While it may have influenced students in other ways, it rarely appeared in data beyond the actual visit.</p> <p>While still at the museum, I spoke with Zee, Becky, and Jeremiah about their time at the museum. When I asked Zee about her time at the museum, she said,</p>	<p>The episode that was featured with the guest artist emanated in a variety of more explicit ways. It extended into students' interviews about the class, it directly related to other lessons, and it became part of a creation that the students made together.</p> <p>One of the ways that students provided feedback on their overall experience in the class was through the</p>

“This is a nice space for writing. I think I could really write in a space like this” (Interview, October 20, 2015). This response connected to the importance of students’ experiencing new space, a goal Ms. Hughes mentioned for the field trip. At the same time, Zee did not reference the class discussions around the art or even the particular piece we looked at within this episode.

An interview with Jeremiah as he looked at another image highlighted his own interest in the space, as well. He explained he was enjoying the free time to look at a picture that “just kind of caught my eye” (interview, October 20, 2015). Jeremiah had also been one of the students to respond to the docent’s questions. When I asked about that episode he said, “yeah, that picture was cool too” (interview, October 20, 2015).

use of Flipgrid, an online video recording tool. Over the course of these videos, students expressed the meaning in this project. These quotes speak to the ways this day was important to them. In response to the time with Huie visiting, Becky explained, “And I feel that you don’t know somebody even if you think you do because everybody has a story to their life. I believe that all pictures have a meaning if you look at it for a while. I will remember, don’t judge someone on how they look or act and actually get to know them.” Becky easily articulated a meaning beyond the images themselves.

Jill also explained, “I believe that Wing Young Huie coming here changed my experiences to express myself and show what I feel. I believe he showed me that every picture has a meaning to it. It’s not just a picture.” Again, Jill

<p>Throughout earlier interviews, Jill emphasized that her favorite writing was in response to art that was projected. When I asked her about visiting the museum on the day of the field trip she said, “I mean, you know I like to look at art, so yeah, um, I like that.” She also talked about the fieldtrip as a time to hang out with friends. “I can sit by friends on the bus and at lunch and so that’s fun” (Interview, October 20, 2015). The social aspect of a fieldtrip was an important part for Jill. This theme came out in the way it resonated later. In a group interview in April with Decca, Becky, and Jill, I asked them again about the visit to the museum.</p> <p>Decca: I kind of forgot about that.</p> <p>Sophia: Remember the bus ride? (Giggles)</p> <p>Becky: I don’t</p> <p>Sophia: the bus ride?</p>	<p>describes her own understanding growing in this process.</p> <p>Decca also described her experience, saying, “That whole project, it was all really sort of deep, but really just about us listening to each other and why we do that, so I felt like I could open up but that also I should like listen to others.” In response to this episode and the event that surrounded it, all three students described the way it influenced their perception of images, their way of encountering people, and how to express themselves.</p> <p>In describing this process, Ms. Hughes also explained the success of the project because “students, in many ways, were the teacher or the facilitator. It was completely student focused. Their opinions were of the utmost importance” (Interview, March 15,</p>
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<p>Becky: I forgot about all of it, but I guess I kind of remember the museum now.</p> <p>(Group Interview, April 19, 2016)</p> <p>The social opportunity was important to them, but the museum portion of the fieldtrip, itself, was, as the students pointed out, forgotten.</p> <p>For Ms. Hughes, the museum became part of the class in a couple of different ways. The museum educator gave Ms. Hughes a book of the images from the exhibit that she brought back to her classroom. The pictures and their backgrounds were in the book and the book was positioned at the front of the classroom. Past this episode, Ms. Hughes expressed her frustration in the questions that were and were not being asked in front of this image. During the break, Ms. Hughes talked to the museum educator to</p>	<p>2016). She also saw how the moment was explicitly connected to other parts of the class. She considered important components to making the work happen including the daily journaling, connecting with Wing ahead of time, and talking about insecurities and community with the entire class early on in the year (Interview, March 15, 2016).</p> <p>This experience expanded to related lessons, which also created artifacts for the classroom. From the initial viewing of the diptychs within Zines created by Huie, the students brought pictures from their own lives into the classroom to make their own zines with their classmates. This extended process is described in more detail below. Once these zines were created, they became artifacts in the classroom. The student-designed zines</p>
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<p>say that her students “could handle more questions” than the ones that were being asked (fieldnote, October 20, 2015). Like the students’ responses, the visit is not referenced in the following days in the class or taken up as part of the written assignments.</p> <p>As I looked through my fieldnotes and interviews, I did not find other mentions of it in any other interviews by any of the focal students.</p>	<p>were placed on the desks throughout the remainder of the year. In this way, the episode of looking at images was extended again as students brought their own images into the classroom.</p> <p>At multiple points in my fieldnotes I note that students come into the class and look through the zines on their own. Throughout interviews, students mentioned this process as a memorable component of the class.</p>
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Emanating through an Extended Lesson

Part of the trajectory of the Artist Exchange episode was influenced in the way this moment became connected to other lesson plans, allowing students to move from the role of responder of text to creator of text. At the end of the Artist Exchange episode, Huie and Ms. Hughes gave students an assignment for the next day. At the end of the class, Huie explained, “Here’s your assignment. What you’re going to do tonight is take a photograph of something you see that gives some kind of idea or insight about your life, but you are not in the photograph. No selfie. So, you can do a chaltalk with someone, a family member, a friend. You can photograph something like a prize possession, your

bedroom, what you eat, something about your life and the people that surround you. That make sense? That gives some idea or insight into your life. You are photographing what you see when you leave the school. Make sense?" (Video transcription, January 21, 2016).

The following day, the students brought their pictures back to class and uploaded them into a shared googledoc. Because the school had a one-to-one computer ratio, the computers had cameras, and students could take the computers home, they all had access to a camera. Using the diptychs Huie had shared as a mentor text, the class worked together to decide which pictures would be interesting together. Ms. Hughes and Huie co-lead the conversation while I navigated the projected images, arranging them according to the students' suggestions. This was a new process for all involved, leading to adjustments throughout the process.

On a third day connected to this process, students were paired up according to the pictures; they found the person who shared the diptych with their own image. During this day, Ms. Hughes led the process on her own. Students engaged in the process of looking closely at their own photo and at their partners' photos. After writing in response to each, they interviewed each other and talked about the connections and differences across their images. After interviewing each other, each student created a dialogue poem that represented the ways their images came together. Students added their poems to the googledoc with the diptych images from their own lives. From there, Ms. Hughes printed out zines for the students, featuring their diptych images matched with diptych poetry.

The snapshots below are taken from Decca's journal as she responded to her

image and Zee's image and began to draft her dialogue poem. While the writing in the zines did not necessarily represent the strongest example of writing for the students, the process did become something that resonated in their experiences and something they articulated as influencing their identities as writers and students engaged in dialogue.

01.26.16 Perceive

<p>Adjectives and Verbs. I see the photo on the left has many different pictures and there is a t-shirt. I see the photo on the right has an Eiffel tower. The photo on the right also has a necklace. The photo on the left has color. The photo on the right doesn't have color. The photos are similar because they have an item and a photo in the background. The photo on the right has a necklace that has a Z. The photo on the left has black butler. She is a fan of many bands, shows, and maybe places.</p>	<p>Why do you think that person take that photo? I think the person took that photo because they really loved a cartoon character. I think she was a fan.</p>
<p>I can connect to this because ever since I was a kid I've always wanted to go to Paris. I think the photo on the left was a person being a fan, and that's what it reminds me of. I think because they loved anime and that's what it looks like. I think the person on the right really loves to travel.</p>	<p>I question if the person on the left really loves anime? I already knew she was a Black Butler fan, and she likes to draw.</p>

01.27.16 Dialogue Poems.

I am a traveler
I am a band fan

I want to be there
I want to be anywhere

I feel passionate about this
I feel passionate about this

I give every detail
I get straight to the point

My mother gave me this
I bought this
/

Sullivan (2000) explains, “our habits constitute our knowledge of the world and, as such, provide us with efficacy and agency in it” (p. 27). The two literacy episodes of this chapter draw on permeable journaling practices that are part of the habitus of the class. Yet, the two episodes exist when trajectories came together in two unique moments and spaces, leading to different actions from the facilitators and students.

This chapter has considered how two episodes, which draw on similar classroom practices, create differing actions at moments that exist at a particular time and space. By placing emphasis on the way the experiences of the students and facilitators exist in relation to a particular time and space, which is also connected to the social actors' histories, this chapter aligns with Bloome and Beauchemin's (2016) perspective that

“there can be no separation of people from the timescapes (chronotopes) in which they are engaged” (p. 159). As the students and facilitators took action within these episodes, they made choices about how they were engaging that were connected to their own histories, the moment of the action, and the place of the action.

Table eleven provides a summary of the findings by describing the actions, anticipatory trajectories, connections to histories, and the emanating trajectories of the two episodes highlighted in this chapter.

Table 11: Looking across episodes

	The Museum Moment	The Artist Exchange
The Action	During the Museum Moment, students were on a fieldtrip, responding to a painting. A docent was leading the discussion, until Ms. Hughes joined in.	During the Artist Exchange, students were in the classroom, working with a guest artist, responding to two of his images projected on the screen. Ms. Hughes was present and would occasionally add to the conversation or ask a follow-up question.
Anticipatory Trajectories	The students will respond to the painting, <i>Passing/Posing 15</i> , by Kehinde Wiley. Students will use questions to reflect on what they notice and connect to. Students will write in response to the art. Students will engage in multimodal thinking and learning.	The students will respond to two images by Wing Young Huie. Students will use questions to reflect on what they notice and connect to. Students will write in response to the art. Students will engage in multimodal thinking and learning.

Connections to Histories	In looking at the Museum Moment, the docent utilized a question and answer process and pacing of time related to discourses and practices connected to the museum. The teacher, Ms. Hughes, was calling on her history with the practice of permeable journaling and her interaction with students. For the beginning half of the interaction, the students were not calling on the discourses and practices from their classroom, but were choosing to be silent. Ultimately, these discourses resulted in a tension between the actions of the students with the docent and the actions between the students with the teacher.	During the Artist Exchange, the artist was calling on the practice of permeable journaling and practices from his own history of working with students across settings. Once again, the teacher was calling on her practices of permeability and a flexibility with time. The students were also calling on their practices of participation in their classroom related to permeable journaling. In this episode, the students' engagement within the discussion is present throughout the exchange.
The Emanating Trajectories	The Museum Moment happened in October, but was not something that students brought up often after the initial fieldtrip. The students enjoyed their time at the museum, but did not draw on it in follow-up interviews or assignments.	The Artist Exchange became a moment that students referenced in their ongoing interviews and was extended into other assignments in the classroom.

In looking at the way these two episodes were enacted, it is worth noting that they drew on similar practices that were familiar to the students and facilitators. They also had

similar goals and processes in the lesson plans, which point to similar designs. The differences appeared in how the facilitators and students acted within the particular time and space of each episode. Looking at the differences in the two episodes points to pedagogical factors that could influence students' engagement in similar factors, while highlighting the complexity of moment-to-moment action.

The time and space for writing was very different in the two episodes. At the museum, the students had a worksheet where they were to answer questions, but they were expected to answer these questions as they were listening to and answering questions from the docent. Unlike their typical practice or the practice that was utilized during the artist visit, there was not time for students to write in response to their image on their own. These moments affirm the importance of providing time for students to engage in writing and time for students to be in dialogue with their peers.

Similarly, time became an important factor in students' discussions. The Museum Moment did not have built in time for students to engage in a pair-share before responding to answers from the docent. As a result, few students were vocalizing their responses to the image and, as Ms. Hughes's frustration indicated, the level of depth of responses did not provide as many or as nuanced answers as when the students were interacting with the guest artist. Within these timeframes students are given different time to respond and, therefore, respond differently.

The space was also different in that students had a different history in the two spaces, and there were different adults present. As described earlier, the students had a longer history of working with the guest artist. It is notable that he was a person of color

and openly talked about his racialized identity, something that students commented on when praising his role in the classroom. In the museum, the docent was a White woman who the students did not have a history of working with. While they were used to working with Ms. Hughes, they had not interacted with the docent on a regular basis. There were also museum employees who were positioned to keep students from touching the art.

The way teachers engage with time speaks to their own plasticity of processes. During the museum moment, there is a fixed amount of time with fixed questions that are asked. The docent followed the expected plans by moving from one question to the next and encouraging the students to shift to the next painting when time ran out. She was drawing on discourses of the space and the plans that were laid out for the day, but also meant there was no room to change and shift as students engaged with the painting. In the classroom with the artist, the time shifted as students were writing and responding and questions moved with the responses of the students. This speaks to the discourses of the space as well as the history of Wing with other students, with Ms. Hughes. When Ms. Hughes tried to interrupt the sequencing of questions to draw more from students, there was little time left for interaction. The time structure of the museum and predetermined lesson confined the opportunity for growth of experience. For both Wing and Ms. Hughes, they adjusted the timeframes for students responding throughout the episode. At times, Wing would look to Ms. Hughes and myself with a quick question about whether or not we would move on. Ms. Hughes would also turn to Wing and say, “sound ok?” In the shifting flow beyond the scripted lesson plan, both Wing and Ms. Hughes were

showing plasticity of their habits as educators. Time also played a role in the way that one lesson was directly connected to extended opportunities for students to create new text in response to the text they viewed. This extension required time and space for students to shift into the role of creator.

Sullivan (2000) also explains, “Our habits constitute our knowledge of the world and, as such, provide us with efficacy and agency in it” (p. 27). For the students in this moment, they are making choices about how to engage or not with this art. Their agency looked different in both moments, though both episodes provided an opportunity for them to call on their habits of viewing and responding to art with each other. In the Museum Moment, students’ actions of responding when spoken to, writing less, and not referring to the moment in the future, show some of the choices students made about their engagement during the interaction. This is in contrast to their involvement with the writing, discussion, and long-term responses to the Artist Exchange. Through the extended time for writing, discussing, and multimodal creating, students engaged in an extension of their permeable journal processes. As Jill explained, “Wing and that project changed my experience” (Flipgrid response).

It also calls attention to the importance of researchers looking across multiple moments within a research setting. If a researcher would have only looked at the Museum Moment, there may have been a different perspective of the abilities of the youth to engage in complex conversations around art. By looking across episodes, the agency of the students is highlighted. While there are many layers to the trajectories coming together, the students’ experiences indicate some of the moves that can support students

in extending their experiences with literacy practices. During the next chapter, I look at the ways Ms. Hughes made similar moves throughout her class, the competing discourses she felt around these moves, and how she navigated those tensions.

Chapter 6

Tracing Teacher Agency: Toward Critical and Multimodal Writing Pedagogy

After teaching the third section of Language Arts in the day, Ms. Hughes, guest artist, Wing Young Huie, and I sit in the booth at an Indian restaurant a few blocks from school. On this November day, we utilize the prep hour combined with lunch to meet here and reflect on how the collaborative project bringing art and literacy together is going. We talk about ideas students share, reactions they have, and the interactions we observe in these early stages of the collaboration between Huie and Ms. Hughes

As our pile of used plates from the buffet line begins to grow higher, Huie offers, “The students are really engaged. They care.”

Ms. Hughes pauses, shifts on her side of the table, and responds, “Well, that’s part of the reason I wanted you to be here-in the class. Your work is relevant to them. They can connect to it with each other and with you.”

Huie pauses and then adds, “but it’s more than just the images and my questions. Not every place where I do this looks the same.”

Ms. Hughes offers, “I think they are responding to you. And I think it’s an ongoing process that starts at the beginning of their year. Schools aren’t always set up for this. You have to work around and through things that might get in the way to make a space where students can take up personal and challenging topics-where they feel comfortable sharing and listening.”

Huie nods as we push our plates to the center of the table and stood up, ready to return to school for two more sections of language arts.

(Field Note, November 17, 2015)

Teaching in a Critical Writing Pedagogy Classroom

This moment was one of several conversations between teaching artist, Wing Young Huie, Ms. Hughes, and myself as we considered what was working, what would be changed, and how students were making sense of the materials we shared with them through a collaborative project. Within the conversation, Huie and Ms. Hughes reflected on students' experiences and the way the work took place in a school setting where students, teachers, and guest artists navigate tensions around the work.

The conversation was focused on a yearlong collaboration between Huie and Ms. Hughes as they worked together to create opportunities for students to connect across differences through the lenses of art and literacy. For this project to take place, Ms. Hughes worked with local artist, Wing Young Huie, to develop the project over the course of the year in her classroom. Each element of the year-long partnership expanded the possibilities for the seventh graders' learning and connected to other elements of the partnership.

The first time Huie visited the classroom, he shared his work and led students through a process of interviewing and photographing each other. Later in the year, Huie and Ms. Hughes shifted to a project titled *What do you See?* which I refer to as the *WDYS* project. This chapter focuses on the specific implementation of the *What Do You See* project (Huie, 2016) and the extensions that Ms. Hughes made to the project. The basic parts involved students taking pictures from their lives and sharing them with classmates. Once students shared the images, Ms. Hughes extended the work in a new

project. The class paired the images they took into groups of two, creating a series of diptychs to mirror the format that Huie had shared from his own photography. From there, students interviewed the person who owned the picture that corresponded to their own. Together, they created dialogue poems combining the two images. These poems and images were put together in a class zine.

I was drawn to the *WDYS* project for the type of learning that students experienced in the process. As the students brought their lives into the classroom through images, entered dialogue with a classmate, and composed new text that brought their stories together, students engaged in Dyson's (1997) call for work to "create coherence and disruption" (p. 9). Within this process, I was also drawn to the ongoing planning, reflecting, and adjusting that Ms. Hughes did throughout the project. As Ms. Hughes alluded to in her conversation with Huie, this collaboration took effort and careful planning.

In chapters four and five I looked at writing practices where students engage in critical and multimodal writing processes. As I explained in my introduction, I believe these practices have the potential to create space where students can "use their writing to invite others to the table they set" (Winn, 2018, p. 220), growing in understanding of each other. In tracing moments where these exchanges happen between students, this chapter recognizes that practices alone do not necessarily ensure the students will engage in critical dialogue; they are also enacted within the nuanced participation of students and the teacher in the classroom. In this chapter, I am focusing on the moves Ms. Hughes made in order to understand both her role in the project of the classroom and the

navigation which allowed her to work around and through things to support the enactment of the project.

A Teacher's Role

In focusing on Ms. Hughes's moves within this project, I turned to critical writing pedagogy to understand the importance of teachers' roles within classrooms focused on student writing. Authors who point to teachers' critical engagement with literacy practice (Dyson, 2016; Mirra, 2018; Garcia, et al., 2014; Lensmire, 2000; Fecho, 2012) point out the reflexive role of teachers in creating a learning environment where all students are included. They emphasize the need to recognize how power exists in the classroom through stories that students share with each other, and suggest teachers provide alternative narratives for students to consider new storylines. Recognizing the hierarchies of power in the writing classroom, Lensmire (2000) notes that if teachers offer a space for students to share their stories, they must also be willing to "stand with students" (p. 106). This involves the action of teachers "lend(ing) their knowledge and power to certain students" (106) to ensure students are not marginalized by their peers. Similarly, Dyson (1997) recognizes these hierarchies and suggests that educators engage in a pedagogy of responsibility which focuses on an "ethic of inclusion and a sensitivity to exclusion" (p. 180). While naming the importance of context, Pandya (2015) also names that students need opportunities to "reiterate and re-narrate" stories of their identities to recognize the multiple and complex identities students bring to their writing. Recognizing critical writing pedagogy authors make a call for teachers to take an active role in their pedagogy, I became interested in the ways Ms. Hughes made moves aligned to critical

writing pedagogy and her process in making these moves.

Critical writing pedagogy recognizes that teachers' actions are often occurring within conflicting discourses and tensions (Fecho, 2011, p. 97). Dyson (1997) explains that teachers "negotiate ideological tensions, as well as social borders" (p. 167) as they work to bring responsible pedagogy into the classroom. Ms. Hughes acknowledged this tension in her conversation with Huie. Recognizing this complexity, I turned toward Ms. Hughes's moves within the class and her process toward making these moves in order to understand her role within a classroom as she implemented a critical and multimodal writing pedagogy.

Mapping Teacher Action and Agency

In an effort to understand the actions Ms. Hughes took and the navigation she made in her classroom, I turned to MDA's use of action and agency. Within MDA, Norris and Jones (2005) point out that human action is a "product of the 'tension' between the agenda of the individual and the agenda embedded in mediational means made available in the sociocultural setting" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 170). This view recognizes that social actors take action in relation to what mediational means, actions, and discourses are made available for them to take up at a specific site. This perspective is helpful in understanding what actions Ms. Hughes took in her classroom and what factors (mediational means) surrounded those actions. This view of agency supports that teachers act within the sociocultural setting of their classrooms, but this frame also notes that teachers do play a role in these actions. As Lasky (2005) writes, while teachers are "active agents (...), their actions are mediated by the structural elements of their setting

such as the resources available to them, the norms of their school, and externally mandated policies” (p. 900-901).

With this view of action, mediated discourse analysis suggests that agency exists as social actors “position themselves in various relationships to their actions” (Norris & Jones, p. 170, 2005). Scollon and Scollon’s (2004) *Nexus Analysis* offers methods for analyzing mediated action, including tracing a social actor’s characterization of actions to understand how he or she positions themselves in relationship to their actions.

These positions toward actions are also connected to the identity that Ms. Hughes takes up as a teacher. Norris and Jones (2005) explain that actions are not only “what social actors are doing” but also “who they are” (p. 99). Ms. Hughes takes up actions in her class that speak to an understanding of her identity as a teacher.

Throughout my time in Ms. Hughes’s classroom, I was aware of her intentionality in her pedagogical choices and the surrounding tensions. I recognized that she was continually making moves to support students as they engaged in critical and multimodal writing processes. As I looked across my fieldnotes, I wanted to highlight experiences that were referenced as important throughout my fieldnotes, teacher interviews, and student interviews. Once I identified a series of projects that highlighted Ms. Hughes’s actions toward a critical writing pedagogy, I began to define the actions that she consistently took. After I developed a better understanding of the moves that Ms. Hughes made throughout the year that pointed to her focus on a critical and multimodal writing pedagogy, I focused on the *WDYS* project.

As mentioned earlier, I chose to focus on the *WDYS* project as it resonated with

other practices in the class and aligned with common moves that Ms. Hughes took. In focusing on this project, I wanted to understand Ms. Hughes's action and agency. This process began with understanding how Ms. Hughes characterized her beliefs, goals, and actions in her teaching. Along with Mirra (2018), I believe that "although teachers often enact practices in their classrooms that diverge from their stated beliefs (Raymond, 1997), it nevertheless remains important to explore how teachers conceptualize the purpose of their discipline and how these purposes may be reflected or contradicted in their classroom practice" (p. 90). While Ms. Hughes's teaching had moments of shifting and moments when some of her practices seemed to contradict her overarching belief, it is valuable to name the way she worked toward critical practices in the classroom and acknowledge the times when this work was successful. Thus, in the beginning stages of analysis, I relied on interviews for an analysis of her own beliefs and teaching. One interview was conducted immediately following the completion of the project, focusing on Ms. Hughes's process of developing and teaching the project. The second interview was the final interview I conducted with Ms. Hughes; in this interview, she looked back on her year. Following MDA, I used these interviews to trace three things: 1. the actions Ms. Hughes identified as important to the *WDYS* project; 2. the mediational means that created tension around the project; and 3. her characterization of her actions as it led to the way she positioned herself toward the actions that she took. While there is value in recognizing Ms. Hughes's own perspective about how to implement a critical writing pedagogy and the navigation she encountered, I also turned to my fieldnotes and student interviews for the ways her own characterization aligned with events in the classroom

and perceptions of the students.

The goal of this chapter is to describe the agentic moves Ms. Hughes makes as she implements a critical and multimodal pedagogy in the classroom. In utilizing MDA, I begin by mapping the way she made similar actions throughout the year and define the types of actions she takes in her implementation of a critical and multimodal writing pedagogy. Then, I zoom into the WDYS project to trace her specific moves and the tensions surrounding those moves. students' responses to class events and practices. Throughout this analysis, I am looking between interviews with Ms. Hughes, my fieldnotes, and interviews with students. This understanding leads to a closer look at her characterization of her actions in order to understand her agency within the sociocultural setting of her classroom.

Defining Moves Toward Critical and Multimodal Pedagogy

As previously described, I began my analysis by returning to my fieldnotes in order to define the way Ms. Hughes continually worked toward a critical and multimodal pedagogy. As I followed actions Ms. Hughes took throughout the year and reflected on her moves, I found Luke's (1994) genres of power helpful in my own understanding of the way the moves she made had common characteristics that pointed to key aspects of her pedagogy. Drawing from Luke's (1994) work, I refer to her moves as diachronic moves. In considering critical literacy curriculum, Luke (1994) points to the way power is "utterly sociologically contingent" (p. 333) and calls for an approach to literacy which sees text as "a social strategy historically in a network of power relations in particular institutional sites and cultural fields" (p. 333). In this way, Luke argues for a "diachronic

social analysis of education” which recognizes how experiences with text are always shifting, needing pedagogical moves that are also responsive to the surrounding site.

Aligned with this concept, Ms. Hughes’s moves were intentional, contextual, and reflexive. These moves were intentional in the ways she thoughtfully planned for class with consideration to the topics that she addressed and provided frames for students to examine and critical social narratives and expectations that were embedded in a variety of texts. This intentional planning was also apparent in the permeable journal described in chapter four. Her moves were also contextual in the ways she considered the historical and social contexts of the students in her class at a particular moment. Across the year, Ms. Hughes decided to focus on topics that were connected to students’ real-life experiences whether it was a current topic in the news or an opportunity for them to bring in images from their own lives. Ms. Hughes was reflexive as she engaged in moment-to-moment decisions to meet students’ needs. Ms. Hughes would often talk to me in-person, text me, or email me to reflect on what was happening in the class and what moves she might make next to support students. In looking at her class, Ms. Hughes explained, “sometimes in class I’m doing something because I have this experience and this is what I have to do right now. I see this need. That’s not quantitative. It’s not definable. What works for one class isn’t going to work for another class. That’s being reflective. Part of it is knowing when to push and when to just let it go. And it’s hard” (Personal communication, June 7, 2016).

Table 12 shows three events that occurred at three different points during the 2015-2016 school year. Each of the three examples came up as important days in my

fieldnotes and by student and teacher interviews. They also highlight the intentional, contextual, and reflexive moves Ms. Hughes made as she brought critical and multimodal writing pedagogy to the classroom.

Table 12: Diachronic moves

Date / Process	Intentional	Contextual	Reflexive
September 3, 2015 Internet accessibility for chrome books	Lesson plan dedicated to students learning how to get internet access for their chrome books outside of school.	Many students in the district do not have internet at home, but they have chromebooks, which require internet. Recognition that students have found places where they can access it.	Students are resourceful. Ask them about the resources they already use and provide space to help them share with each other.
January 26 and 27, 2016 What Do You See Project	Format for students to share images in context of larger lesson and mentor texts. Ensuring students have a way to take a phot.	Students create images from their own lives as text	Allow students to lead the sharing and connecting of images
June 1, 2016 Media Literacy and news images of Baltimore shooting	Ms. Hughes had a desire to share relevant information without being too challenging for students by providing a frame for discussion, meaning-making and asking questions.	Recognition of shooting of young black men in America	Combination of space for students to explore the topic while allowing a framework that did not require personal sharing.

Actions in the *What Do You See* Project

In focusing on Ms. Hughes's agency, I begin by looking at action. For this chapter, I am focusing on the actions Ms. Hughes took during the *WDYS* project. As mentioned earlier, for this analysis, I am drawing from two interviews. In the first interview, Ms. Hughes is reflecting on the project immediately following its implementation. In the second interview, she is looking back over the year.

In her interviews Ms. Hughes articulates the actions that she took in supporting the *What do you see* project and multiple aspects of the setting that created tension around implementing the project. Naming both the actions and the tensions within the sociocultural setting provide the first step in being able to understand mediating factors in the moves that Ms. Hughes made. In Ms. Hughes's description, she does not list every action she took, but the focus of this chapter is on understanding how she characterizes her own actions, so it is helpful to begin by looking at what she describes as important actions.

Table thirteen identifies actions and practices that Ms. Hughes identified as things she did to facilitate the *WDYS* project. As Ms. Hughes describes the moves she made to support the project, she names practices that were developed at different times during the year. However, Ms. Hughes recognizes that events from the past connect to the experience that students are having in a particular moment. In MDA terms, this is a recognition of the way trajectories from the past and into the future come together in a moment of action.

Within Ms. Hughes's interview, I traced the actions she attributes to the project. I

then compared these descriptions to my own fieldnotes. Table thirteen shows the name of a practice, the description Ms. Hughes provided, and observations I witnessed that aligned with those descriptions. Many of these practices are also described in chapters four and five as they are part of the overarching practices of the classroom. Ms. Hughes listed a series of things that could be divided into a number of other actions. For this reason, I refer to them as practices.

The challenging part of identifying these actions, is that they are always made up of a series of smaller actions. Each could be described at a great level; my goal in this section is to give an understanding of what actions Ms. Hughes considered important in her teaching and to provide context for what those actions looked like in her teaching.

Table 13: Practices in the WDYS project

Practices	Description (as described in an email interview)	Observations (as observed through fieldnotes and classroom observations)
Building community	<p>talking about insecurities and community to start the school year (personal communication, March 15, 2017)</p> <p>It gave them a chance to gain support from their peers while learning about their peers. That's the thing-they need to be able to tell their stories but also know what's going on around their stories. (personal communication, March 15, 2017)</p>	<p>Discussion of community (fieldnotes, 9/10/15)</p> <p>Discussion of insecurities (fieldnotes,)</p>
Establishing writing and sharing routine	journaling...work with Perceive and poems (personal communication, March 15, 2017)	<p>Explanation of Journal Writing (fieldnotes, 9/18/2015)</p> <p>Daily Journal Writing</p>

		(fieldnotes, daily) Daily Journal Sharing (fieldnotes, daily)
Connecting to outside resources	grant / talking to Wing (personal communication, March 15, 2017)	Meetings with Wing (fieldnotes, October 12)
Connecting with school resources	working with media center to secure ipads, color printing (personal communication, March 15, 2017) reaching out to teachers who have students in ‘pullout’ classes (personal communication, March 15, 2017)	Meetings with Media Center Specialist Meetings with other teachers
Utilizing materials and space	thinking about space and resources...chromebooks/notebooks paper, chalk, place to hang photos, room large enough, choices to sit on the floor (personal communication, March 15, 2017)	Meeting with Wing (fieldnotes, October 12) Meeting with Media Center Specialist

Building Community

The first thing Ms. Hughes identified was “talking about insecurities and community at the beginning of the year” (Personal communication, March 15, 2017) in order for students to begin telling their stories to each other. Both of these concepts are common for many teachers, and something that Ms. Hughes brought up as an important part of her class during interviews throughout the year. They are also not simple terms that can easily be put into action. Ms. Hughes recognized this complexity; she continually reflected on her efforts to build community through pedagogical actions and curriculum choices.

For Ms. Hughes, building community involved reading a variety of shared texts

that openly addressed conflict in the community (*The Skin I'm In*, by Sharon Flake and *Seedfolks*, by Paul Fleischman). It was important to her that this text was introduced at the beginning of the year, so that students could use the examples in the text as a reference point for how they wanted to interact in the classroom. It also included intentional discussions about insecurities in how these come up as we engage in dialogue. Ms. Hughes dedicated a day in her classroom to define insecurities, discuss insecurities that characters in the books had, and then reflect on how we all have insecurities. From there, Ms. Hughes built on the conversation about the importance of being in community and how communities support each other as insecurities came up. But, these actions that worked together over time were essential for specific event to happen, as well.

At the time of this interview, Ms. Hughes focused on the concrete steps of utilizing specific books and the journal writing practice. In our last interview she expands how community is built, naming something I observed on many occasions. She explains, "It's about setting everything up carefully and connecting it. So, starting with the books and naming this is what we see happening. This is what happens when we work together. And then, it's giving them something to stand on, so they know they have the basics. Give them safety before you expand out." Later, she explains the two components of this process, saying, "1. They know how to say it or write it and B. they feel comfortable with the group they share it." (Personal communication, June 7, 2016).

In this explanation, Ms. Hughes explains the process of starting with a shared text and learning to talk about it together and write about. With each class period, Ms. Hughes

offered students concrete ways to respond to the text and let them know that they could take those starting places and expand from that point. For Ms. Hughes this safety net was part of the safety that was built for students. The students confirmed that the class was a community where they felt safe although they included other actions to the process. Jeremiah explained how in the class, “you have to be careful, but really it’s also better. Because Ms. Hughes will call you out if you’re just being a jerk, but then you know people are like going to be a certain way. They aren’t going to be mean because you just can’t.”

Establishing Writing and Sharing Routines

The second thing Ms. Hughes noted as an important action was establishing writing and sharing routines. These practices are fully described in chapter 4 and the students identify these practices as an important component of the course. Again, these practices occurred over time, but Ms. Hughes saw them as a contributing factor at the site of the WDYS project.

Connecting to Resources

The next two actions that Ms. Hughes note involve her ability to connect with resources. She described her actions related to reaching out to Huie and about a local grant which paid for him to come into her class as a guest artist. During the 2015 Summer, I witnessed Ms. Hughes reach out to Huie and her building principal to begin the process of bringing the guest artist into her classroom. She also asked me for advice about how to describe the importance of his work and invited me to meetings focused on the grant that provided funding for the artist. Again, this was a series of actions that led to

this project. I witnessed the way Ms. Hughes became familiar with Huie's work over time. She continually discussed the ways the topics he brought out connected to goals in her classroom and the importance of having community members in the class.

It was also important to Ms. Hughes to be inclusive of students and teachers in her building. She reached out to teachers who were in charge of pull-out classes to invite them into her room during the project, emphasizing that everybody did better if everybody was involved. As Ms. Hughes, Huie, and I met, she considered what additional resources were needed for the project and worked with people in her school to make them happen. For example, she worked with the Media Center specialist to print images created by the students, so they could appear in the hallway, and to print the zines that were created by the students. She also worked with technology support throughout the process. Ms. Hughes recognized that these actions were necessary to bring the project together.

Utilizing Space and Materials

Related to making connections at school, Ms. Hughes also worked to utilize materials and space that would support the project. When students created images in early in the year (November 5, 12, and 17, 2015) and zines later in the year (January 26 and 27, 2016), it was important to create artifacts students could see, touch, and bring home. She emphasized that this was important in making the work part of the overarching class.

In this interview, Ms. Hughes was continuously working across time to connect elements of the class while also focusing on the particular aspects that created the action of a moment. These actions point, in many ways, to the intentionality of her practice as

she carefully sought out and utilized resources both in the moment and across time. As a classroom teacher, the tangible actions were important to ensure the overall process took place. As an observer of these actions, I witnessed the ongoing ways that the actions were also continually contextual and reflexive. Ms. Hughes struggled to name her own role in the actions of the class. At the end of the year, in reference to feedback from a district coach and myself as a participant observer, she explained, “just her (the coach) reminding me that kids do some of this because of how I set it up. I’m putting it together gradually, but I don’t think until two years ago, I don’t think I got that my class runs this way because I do some things” (Personal communication, June 7, 2016).

Identifying Tension

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Hughes’s actions were produced as various mediational means came together within the setting of the class. Just as Dyson (1997) notes the navigation teachers need to make in implementing responsible pedagogy, Ms. Hughes notes the tensions she feels around her actions toward implementing her curriculum, naming different aspects of her teaching that came together as she enacted the project. In her interview, Ms. Hughes names influencing factors that she drew on to implement the *WDYS* project and things that were challenges in trying to bring this project together. These became some of the mediational means that came together as she enacted the project through actions.

Influences

In the following excerpt she describes the things that supported her implementation of this project.

I think my desire and ability to make these things happen comes from ongoing **interests and beliefs** and my **personal professional development (NWP events, Connected Learning, the reading I do)**. I would say it also comes from **experience**. This work is possible when you allow students to be responsible for their learning and foster the belief that everyone can bring something to the group/situation. I really think it's **a belief** in the class as a community. (Personal communication, March 15, 2016).

The **reading teacher** that I work with, however, has similar beliefs and has been encouraging with this project. She also does group type projects that focus on students' voice. I would also say **the social studies teacher I work with** does the same thing and includes a lot of writing and speaking in her class. (Personal communication, March 15, 2016)

Professional Development. Ms. Hughes participated in a variety of professional development opportunities that were focused on writing processes, the incorporation of multimodal tools, and her identity as a teacher. With the local National Writing Project site, she attended a weeklong summer workshop on building writing processes and multiple Saturday workshops, ranging in topics from incorporating digital tools to meeting the needs of English Language Learner students. During the Summer of 2014, Ms. Hughes participated in a Writing Project book club that focused on *Teaching in the Connected Learning* (Garcia, et al., 2014) and the Connected Learning MOOC from the National Writing Project. As a result of her participation, she presented her understanding of the Connected Learning principles at a Fall Workshop, which focused on how to bring Connected Learning to classrooms. During this presentation, she focused on connected learning principles of peer supported learning and interest driven learning, emphasizing her shift in letting students be leaders in their own learning. During the summer of 2015, Ms. Hughes extended her learning by attending a three-day course at a local museum,

which focused on bringing art and writing together in the classroom. She also made personal goals to read a large number of young adult literature books each year, connecting to how students might experience those novels. When she names professional development as a factor in the actions she takes, it is helpful to understand the breadth and depth of professional development she continually utilized.

Something that came out across discussions with Ms. Hughes was professional development focused on recognizing her identity as a white female teacher. She regularly joined book groups that explored whiteness and race in education. She took every class that the district offered on understanding race in education, and she would often ask for recommendations for books related to whiteness and engaged. In an interview at the end of the year, she noted that this influenced her teaching and also was a source for ongoing tension, as she sometimes questioned how her own race was interfering with the decisions she made in her classroom.

Experience. Ms. Hughes also names her experience as one of the factors that influences her teaching. Ms. Hughes had been teaching for 20 years. With each year, she drew on previous years, but also continually shifted her teaching. At the end of the year, she explained, “This is my practice too. I’m never done learning to teach, but I’ve been practicing for a long time.” Ms. Hughes recognized that her experience was helpful because of the way it was continually evolving and shifting with new experiences.

Colleagues. Ms. Hughes also noted that her colleagues were a factor in her planning. She often turned to two of the teachers on her team for feedback on her ideas and opportunities to connect across the curriculum.

Interests and Beliefs. Ms. Hughes also names her interests and beliefs as something that influences her decisions. This acknowledgement shows how Ms. Hughes connects the actions that she takes in the class to her identity as a teacher. A primary belief that Ms. Hughes lists is the importance of the class community and the sense that students have the capacity to do the work of literacy.

Challenges

In her interview, Ms. Hughes contrasted these influences with the challenges she felt in bringing this pedagogy and curriculum into her course.

These influences are in contrast to the challenges that come along with such work. I think this work is challenging when one is teaching in a time when **testing** is used more than teacher's experience and knowledge. It's challenging when I work with a **colleague** who teaches in a completely different manner. When I lose eight or more days a year to testing out of my class, **time** does become a factor. The school year has been shortened (days) and minutes were added to each day. This is all about contracts and not about the time that will help students. I think the expectations that get in the way have been addressed. **The expectations** to raise test scores are placed without realizing that not all learning can be measured with statistics and test scores. Sometimes learning is a process that matures over time. A project like this may be the seed that grows as the students continue their schooling. As for other colleagues, I'll admit that I've isolated myself from most other LA colleagues in the building because we teach differently. (Interview, 86-97)

Testing and time. Ms. Hughes described testing and time as competing factors with some of her desires for the class and the *WDYS* project. For Ms. Hughes, the testing comes specifically into contact with the idea of her experience as an educator being trusted. Further, testing becomes the force that takes time away from other projects that she wants to do in the class.

Expectations. The tests also lead to expectations that add to competing tensions that Ms. Hughes feels in her classroom. As Ms. Hughes explains that “test scores are placed

without realizing that not all learning can be measured with statistics and test scores,” she names the tension she feels between the goals of her students’ learning and the expectation the district places on test scores.

Colleagues. Although Ms. Hughes talks about the value of having supportive colleagues. She also notes that colleagues can add tension when their goals do not align. In other interviews and conversations Ms. Hughes talked about how this has become more of an issue in recent years when people are required to meet and plan together with certain people instead of an emphasis on more organic collaboration.

Intersecting Tension

By naming these different forces, it is clear to see the tension that surrounds the work of the WDYS project and other projects that attempt to do the same sort of work with students. In this interview, Ms. Hughes distinguishes the factors that supported her actions from those that challenged her work. The tension that resulted is similar to tension that other educators might experience, but was not always binary in the way they came together. A clear example of navigating these tensions came up in the process of planning this project. At one point, Ms. Hughes considered using the WDYS framework with a unit she taught on fables. Ultimately, she decided against it, but the influence of time and established curriculum were factors that she leaned toward in that moment. In this interview, she points to the actions that came out of the ongoing tension of intersecting factors in her classroom.

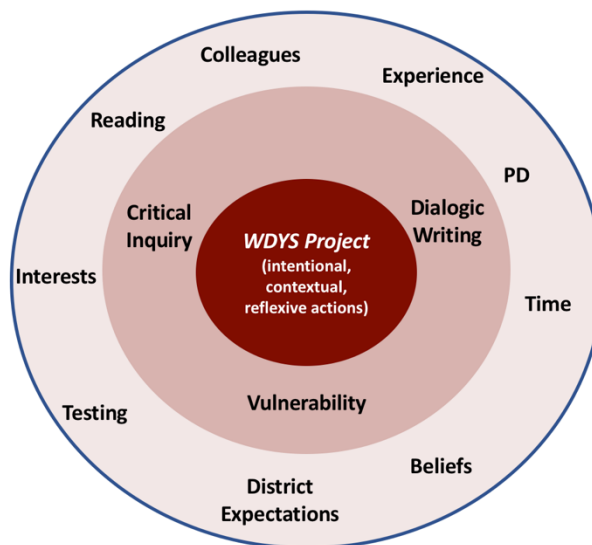
Identifying Agency

For MDA, agency occurs as social actors position themselves toward their actions. Scollon and Scollon (2004) suggest drawing on a social actor's characterization of their action to understand how they are positioning themselves toward their action. In this section, I trace how Ms. Hughes positioned herself toward actions by looking at her characterizations in her interviews.

Figure 1 highlights the interconnectedness of the sociocultural setting, the actions a social actor takes, and the way the social actor positions herself toward her actions. The center circle is the action at the center of this chapter; this includes the actions that Ms. Hughes took within the *WDYS* project, as she described them. The outside circle represents the sociocultural setting of the action. In this case, the outside circle includes the mediational means in the classroom that influenced Ms. Hughes's actions toward a critical and multimodal writing pedagogy. While these are not all of the mediational means present at the time of the *WDYS* project, these are mediating factors that Ms. Hughes identified as intersecting factors around her teaching, from her own perspective. The middle circle points to the way Ms. Hughes positioned herself toward the actions she took. In MDA terms, this positioning is where agency is located for social actors, at the intersection of their actions being produced within the sociocultural setting (Norris & Jones, 2005). The interconnected nature across these concentric circles is also clear in the way that she often describes her actions similarly to the influences on her actions and the beliefs behind those actions. The goal of this section is to understand Ms. Hughes's position toward her action in order to better understand how she describes her own

agency.

Figure 3: Agency in a Sociocultural Setting



Positions Toward Action

In tracing Ms. Hughes’s position toward the actions she took in the *WDYS* project, I looked to interviews, focusing on the two interviews I named earlier: one immediately following the project (March 15, 2016) and one at the end of the year (June 7, 2016). Aligned with MDA, I recognize the interviews *as action* Ms. Hughes is taking to explain her position. In this section, I describe her position toward her navigation; later, I show how these characterizations align with my fieldnotes and the interviews of students. Across my reading, I recognized how Ms. Hughes primarily focused on describing how components of the project aligned with overarching goals for her course. There were consistently phrases like “the purpose is to” and “the project was about...” which indicated that the goals of the project were connected to the goals that were part of the

curriculum over the course of the year. After identifying lines where Ms. Hughes characterized her actions, I reread the statements, looking for common themes. Across her descriptions, I recognized three themes. These themes became the purposes I traced and include: 1. Vulnerability in the classroom; 2. Dialogic Writing; and 3. Critical Inquiry.

Vulnerability in the classroom. Across Ms. Hughes's interviews and in her actions, Ms. Hughes placed an emphasis on making the classroom a space where it is comfortable to be vulnerable, beginning with her own vulnerability as a teacher. Across my fieldnotes and in her interview, Ms. Hughes's ability to be vulnerable herself is clear in her teaching. She shared stories of her own mistakes, her own writing, and cried in front of the class. In an interview, she described this vulnerability as part of her subject area, noting, "You have to be vulnerable in my subject area. I mean like again - those books. You're starting to talk about race right away. You start the year talking about race and gender and identity. And then we write about our own experiences. It is vulnerable." (Personal communication, June 7, 2016).

In an effort to acknowledge the importance of vulnerability, Ms. Hughes worked to create "safe-to" environments where learners take risks together, rather than "safe-from" environments intended to suppress potential discomfort caused by the shifts that vulnerable learning requires" (Fecho, Collier, Friese, & Wilson, as cited in Garcia & O'Donnell, 2015). It is the "safe-to" environment that allows students to be vulnerable in their writing, talking, and listening which Ms. Hughes continually emphasizes. This is particularly apparent in her statement that "This work is possible when you allow

students to be responsible for their learning and foster the belief that everyone can bring something to the group/situation. I really think it's a belief in the class as a community” (Personal communication, March 15, 2016). In Ms. Hughes’s belief statement she is naming that she believes in the importance of letting her students take up their own responsibility by believing that they are capable.

While Ms. Hughes has strict expectations for how students talk to each other, she also believes that the students are the community and that they have the potential to be responsible themselves. In this way, she stands with students by having high expectations while also bringing her own vulnerability to let things come up in class through a trust in students. Kumashiro (2002) highlights vulnerability as a goal of teachers as he highlights factors of teaching and learning “such as paradox, uncertainty, and discomfort” (p. 200).

Ms. Hughes’s vulnerability also appeared in the classroom with her awareness and open discussion of her identity as a White woman in education. Across interviews and in discussions with students, she would acknowledge her position as a White woman and name that it made her perspective both different from some of her students and also automatically connected to a history of other White teachers the students may have had. Allowing for these things in her classroom becomes a place of her own vulnerability which, in turn, allows for her goal of students being vulnerable in the classroom.

Dialogic writing. Connected to a position toward vulnerability, Ms. Hughes continually positions herself toward dialogic writing. According to Fecho (2011), dialogic writing “represents an intersection of academic and personal writing, allows writers to bring multiple voices to the work, involves thought, reflection, and engagement

across time and is located in space, and creates opportunities for substantive and ongoing meaning making” (p. 7). In answering questions about her implementation of the *WDYS* project, Ms. Hughes gives specific language to highlight important aspects of the project, which reflect the key components of dialogic writing. In addition to her own articulation of these components, fieldnotes from classroom observations and student interviews reiterate the appearance of these beliefs in Ms. Hughes’s implementation.

Ms. Hughes articulates an importance on bringing students’ academic and personal writing together by drawing the connection between the skills of the project and emphasizing the importance of bringing personal information into the walls of school, stating that students (and all people) “want to share something about their life when given a safe environment” (personal communication, March 15, 2016). In this statement, Ms. Hughes explains that the project is relevant because people are social and want to share with each other.

The emphasis on sharing also connects to the idea of bringing multiple voices together in writing, acknowledging both the importance of students sharing ideas with each other. As Ms. Hughes describes her rationale for why students in her class consistently participate in writing activities, she explains through the voice of a student: “I’m doing this because it builds a conversation. I’m doing this because somebody is going to hear what I have to say, and I’m doing this because there is no wrong answer.” (Interview, June 7, 2016). Ms. Hughes is acknowledging that the sharing and listening to each other is important to students in a real and practical way. Throughout the project and in her interview, Ms. Hughes emphasized students were learning through sharing and

listening to others. In the same way that her belief in “the class as a community” is about providing a space for students and teachers to be vulnerable, it is necessary to “foster the belief that everyone can bring something to the group/situation” because dialogic writing is core to Ms. Hughes’s perspective on student learning.

Critical inquiry. Ms. Hughes’s focus on dialogic writing and vulnerability both lend themselves to a position toward critical inquiry, supporting an examination of the contextual factors that surround experiences and text. Throughout her interview Ms. Hughes’s position toward her actions aligns with Street’s understanding of literacy to be an ideological practice, “implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meaning and practices” (p. 1), in the ways she encourages students to question text and understand the relationship between power and text. Ms. Hughes honors students’ questions as she explains, “I would say students are thinking when they shout out because they can’t hold it in anymore and they question me. They question text. They question each other. That’s where that group of kids is so important.” (Interview, June 7, 2016). This questioning was apparent across my fieldnotes as students did ask questions of each other and Ms. Hughes on a regular basis.

Within the *WDYS* project, Ms. Hughes described the importance of students bringing their own experience to the text in the project and recognizing that their own use of text contains power, as well. In describing the importance of the project, she said, “This project is a way for students to share about themselves using writing and speaking skills, and to know there is power in their text too. Literacy is powerful because it’s from real life and they have something to say, but they need to know that, first” (Personal

communication, March 15, 2016).

Table 14: Discourses of Dialogic Writing ,Vulnerability, and Critical Inquiry

Position	Discourses Used
Vulnerability	<p><i>Risk Taking Environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking about insecurities and community (56) - Ongoing self-reflection of race and identity <p><i>Belief in Students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This work is possible when you allow students to be responsible for their learning and foster the belief that everyone can bring something to the group/situation. I really think it's a belief in the class as a community (73-76)
Creating a space for dialogic writing	<p><i>Intersection of Academic and Personal Writing</i></p> <p>I think these skills make the class more cohesive while focusing on the core ELA principles (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking) of my classroom. (7-8)</p> <p>As for bringing their personal experiences into school, I don't think that was a challenge because each student wants to share something about their life when given a safe environment. All people do. (26-28)</p> <p><i>Multiple Voices</i></p> <p>It gave them a chance to gain support from their peers while learning about their peers. (4/5)</p> <p>Students, in many ways, were the teacher/the facilitator. (31)</p> <p><i>Thought, Reflection, and Awareness</i></p> <p>I would say it was successful because it built awareness and self-esteem in each participant while building a community of speakers, listeners, and writers. (15/16)</p> <p>I think the main purpose of the project is to give kids a voice and to make students feel comfortable being individuals. (41/42)</p> <p><i>Opportunities for Substantive and Ongoing Meaning Making</i></p> <p>This project was about students understanding their perceptions and beliefs about others in order to understand themselves. (20/21)</p>
Critical Inquiry	<p><i>Question Text</i></p> <p>I would say students are thinking when they shout out because they can't hold it in and they question me. They question text. They ask each other. That's where that group of kids is so</p>

	<p>important.” (June 7, 2016).</p> <p><i>Understanding relationship between power and text</i></p> <p>“This project is a way for students to share about themselves using writing and speaking skills, and to know there is power in their text too. Literacy is powerful because it’s from real life and they have something to say, but they need to know that, first” (Personal communication, March 15, 2016).</p> <p>This is why media literacy is so important. They need to explore where they are in text and what it means. (June 7, 2016).</p>
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Students’ perspectives

This analysis of Ms. Hughes’s positioning toward her action is focused on how Ms. Hughes described her own actions, but students articulated the way their own experiences with the *WDYS* project aligned with Ms. Hughes’s positioning. Students reflected on their involvement with this project through a formal survey following Huie’s visits, a flipgrid digital response to his visits, and ongoing interviews. The survey followed a pattern of asking students a question and giving them the choice of choosing “yes,” “sometimes,” or “no”. At the end of the survey there was room for student comments. Below, I utilize this data to show how students’ experiences resonated with Ms. Hughes’s positioning.

Vulnerability. Students expressed the way that the *WDYS* project and working with Huie supported their ability to be vulnerable in the class and the way that they felt during the project. At the end of the survey, there was room for students to leave comments. One student explained, “I felt safer in my own way of expressing myself and art” (anonymous survey feedback). This response highlights the way students felt safe and were able to share in the space of the project.

Dialogic writing. Some of the survey questions aligned with the concepts of dialogic writing. Connected to the idea of ongoing meaning making, the survey asked, “Was this an engaging and meaningful experience for you?” In response to this question, 65% of students answered “yes”, 25% of students responded “sometimes” and 10% of students responded “NO”. These numbers indicate that for most students this goal was met.

The survey also addressed thoughtful feedback and awareness, asking, “Did this make it easier for you to express yourself?” In this case, 75% of students selected “Yes” and the remaining 25% of students selected “sometimes”. Once again, most students’ experiences aligned with the goals that Ms. Hughes outlined.

Finally, in an interview, Decca expressed the way the project allowed space for multiple perspectives, saying, “It was cool because you can see what people enjoy differently and how they like stuff and what they might like to do, and it’s kind of cool to see that” (Personal communication, June 1, 2016). Decca’s response indicates that Ms. Hughes’s positioning toward dialogic writing was met for her.

Critical perspective. In the anonymous survey, there was also evidence of students engaging in a critical perspective. One student explained, “he (Huie) really made me think about the issues with society now and what I can do to fix it” (anonymous survey results). Similarly, in a small group discussion, Zee responded to the *WDYS*, “we talked about things that aren’t usually talked about in school. And I could see myself in those things.” (Personal communication, January 26, 2016). In these responses, students are pointing to the way the project connected their learning about current contextual

issues and their own experiences.

Toward Diachronic Actions

As Ms. Hughes described her actions, she positioned herself toward her actions in ways that acknowledged the overarching goals of the class and the project. She positioned herself toward vulnerability, dialogic writing, and critical inquiry at the intersection of competing factors coming together in the *WDYS* project. This positioning resulted in her agentic moves to take actions in the project. This project and her actions exemplified the diachronic moves Ms. Hughes made throughout the course as she worked to implement a critical and multimodal writing pedagogy.

Implications

Critical writing pedagogy points out that teachers' role in the classroom matters and that enacting it requires navigation of competing tensions. The students in Ms. Hughes's class also acknowledged Ms. Hughes's role in their own learning. At the end of the year, Decca explained, "In Language Arts, mmmm, I think I would describe it as me molding myself to become a better writer and better person overall. Because, in that class, Ms. Hughes, she's a very good teacher. I could remember her because she just really cared about her students so much because she always taught us in different ways to make our brains really click and we actually need to do this because we will use it in life. Yeah, I really liked the seventh grade because I was becoming something." (Personal communication, June 1, 2016).

The diachronic moves that Ms. Hughes made throughout her curriculum were

important to students' experiences as learners and her implementation of critical and multimodal writing pedagogy. The results indicate that Ms. Hughes's emphasis on dialogic writing, vulnerability, and critical inquiry are key aspects of her position toward the actions she took. While these positions can take form in a variety of ways, connecting these positions to actions in the classroom provides the language for teachers to explain their actions and an opportunity for researchers and teacher-educators to extend the support for teachers who value these perspectives.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

“Writing is never a simple isolated event; instead it is a highly complex social act.”

(Park, 2005, p. 22)

The purpose of this study was to describe students’ writing processes across modes in a critical writing workshop classroom and to understand how students’ social identities as writers and peer relations around writing are mediated by literacy practices. As described in my introduction, my journey into this research began with a belief that there is value in students’ sharing and learning together through the process of writing; I believed (and continue to believe) experiencing our differences and connecting across those differences is an essential part of our learning. At the same time, I recognized the complexity of bringing students’ histories together in a classroom, where each student and teacher navigate competing tensions and audiences as they write and share part of their experiences and identities. In the end, I turned to this research as a way of looking for the possibility of practices where students and teachers are working toward a way of learning from each other within a writing process.

This study is influenced by sociocultural theorists who view literacy practices as social, contextual, and dialogic (Vygotsky, 1978; Street, 1984; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1995; Bakhtin, 1994). Aligned with sociocultural theory, I draw on theories of multimodality (The New London Group, 1996; Palmeri, 2012; Mills, 2016), recognizing new and shifting ways of meaning making through different modes. Critical writing pedagogy (Lensmire, 2000; Kamler, 2001; Zaher Pandaya et al., 2015; Dyson, 2018) is

important to this study as it brings a critical consideration of students' interactions in the writing process and the way identity is presented within writing process pedagogy. The research questions that guide this study are: 1) How do students appropriate language from multiple contexts within a classroom's implementation of critical and multimodal writing practices? 2) How do students perform social identities within critical and multimodal practices? and 3) How do students and teachers connect within a diverse community of writers over time?

In my depiction of building connections in the writing process, I drew on Dyson's (1997) concept of textual space as "a space between (children's) desires and their realities, their own viewpoints and those of others, and a space where words could simultaneously create coherence and disruption" (p. 19). This concept helped capture the way students in my focal site were creating text, entering dialogue, and engaging in critical reflection of their work together. At the same time, I saw these events and practices as they were related to tensions that surround students' production. As Parks (2005) points out, writing "develops thought and ideas through connection with others in the community, of which conflict is an integral part" (p. 158). Drawing on mediated discourse analysis (MDA) allowed me to place moments where I saw textual space as situated in complex social, cultural, and historical action coming together. By uncovering the complexity of action within a nexus of practice, MDA focuses "on projects that help people to see beyond abstract notions of power and to start noticing the moment to moment workings of power in their everyday actions" (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 11).

In this final chapter, I discuss how my work contributes to existing research

around writing practices in a middle school classroom, student interactions within those practices, and teacher agency in implementing practices. As I describe the findings and implications of the data I have presented in this dissertation, I return to my research questions and the classroom quilts that I shared in the introduction. In looking at the data from each chapter, I see the connection I desired through the quilts in the classroom, the complexity I recognized in trying to build a community of writers, and the possibility for expanding opportunities for students as writers. Returning to this metaphor, I review the findings of my research and then describe the implications of this study.

Summary of Findings

A Practice of Connection

I began my research by looking for spaces where students were connecting and engaging in critical dialogue through their writing. Drawing on Dyson's (1997) call for textual space along with Bakhtin's use of chronotope, chapter four describes a process of permeable journaling from the focal classroom. I documented this routine practice and the ways students engaged in dialogue and critical reflection through their writing and sharing. Utilizing questions from MDA, I analyzed permeable journaling in the classroom in order to understand the process, how it allowed students to experience a textual space, and how the routinization of the process played a role in those interactions. Looking at the histories, discourses, and identities connected to this practice led me to examine the resemiotization that occurred on one day of journaling. This analysis pointed to how students were appropriating from multiple sources in the classroom and an understanding of how the multiple viewpoints came together within the textual

chronotope to create shift and growth for students.

As a result of this analysis, I found that students engaged in the process of writing within permeable journaling at a high rate and produced a large amount of writing. On a practical level, it is worth paying attention to spaces where students engage in the practice of writing at such rates. A 2013 large scale survey of the teaching of writing in middle schools found that middle school students “spend little time writing or being instructed on how to write” (Graham, et al., 2014, p. 1041). A study in 2016 found similar results, emphasizing a need for students to have more time to engage in the process of writing in middle schools (Ray, et al., 2016). This study points to possible practices through permeable journaling that can support students as they engage in writing, a first and necessary starting point in supporting students as writers. The use of MDA acknowledges the multimodal resources that were integrated into the practice, opportunities for students to write and share on a daily basis, and consistent discourses that provided structure for students to call upon in their writing and sharing.

Through this analysis, I focused on how students drew on the discourses of the space (expressive writing, classroom protocols, meaning being questioned), the material resources available to them (such as texts and sentence frames), and their peers as they created meaning. As text was created, students came into contact with tension between competing perspectives and goals that were represented through the different identities coming together. Ultimately, students reflected on the available means and presented their own responses. From there, the lens of resemiotization (Norris & Jones, 2005) showed how focal students, Zee and Jeremiah, shifted their perspectives as they moved

through the actions of engaging in writing, to small group time, to large group discussion. Utilizing MDA with a focus on resemiotization highlights an understanding of the complex process of students composing while also showing how students engaged in dialogic interactions with their peers in the classroom, and ultimately the growth that students make through their practice of permeable journaling.

While some studies focus on the intertextuality students bring together through different material texts (Olsen, et al., 2017; Manak, 2011), a view of resemiotization also looks at how discourses of a space and social struggle are a part of the process of making and shifting meaning, adding an important layer to this research. Pandya (2015) notes the importance of recognizing the navigating students do as they work to present a coherent identity through their writing. By utilizing MDA and resemiotization within the analysis, this chapter highlights the complex process of composing and sharing writing by acknowledging the struggle that students may experience at multiple points in their writing processes with a variety of audiences.

This view of resemiotization also looks at the specific growth that students experiences as they took in multiple texts and perspectives to make shifts in their own understanding. At the core of permeable journaling, I was interested in the ways students were interacting together. Not only were students' different perspectives present in the space, they were also drawing on each other's perspectives. Noting the way Jeremiah and Zee called on their classmates' perspectives points to the presence of dialogic interactions in the class. While dialogue is valued in literacy practices, there is a need to increase opportunities for students to share ideas with each other through dialogue (Alexander,

2006; Wegerif, 2013; Jesson & Rosedale, 2016). This study aligns with Jesson and Rosedale's (2016) call for understanding instructional spaces which "allow dialogicity in ways that draw on the layers of voices which operate at the intersection of texts, student discussion, and individual intertextual histories" (p. 175).

Complexity in Composing

In chapter five, I utilized a data dyptich format to place two literacy episodes in conversation with each other, bringing an understanding of how the events relate to the class overall, to each other, and ultimately to the shifts in student learning over time. Aligned with Green and Gee (1998), "In contrasting what members display as learning, knowing, and understanding across different interactions with different situational contexts, a fuller picture may be obtained" (p. 143)." As a result, findings showed how discourses and actions related to permeable journaling were extended and adapted to the two literacy events described: the artist exchange and the museum moment.

Looking at the two literacy events through MDA pointed to the similar histories and mediational means that were connected to both literacy events. In both the museum moment and the artist exchange, students were responding to visual art and following a protocol that they practiced regularly through the classroom practice of permeable journaling.

The differences in the events were seen through the discourses that were unique to the two different spaces and the way facilitators and students engaged with those discourses. When the guest artist was present for the artist exchange, students were in the same space as their regular process of journaling; while the discourses shifted with an

added person, the space provided a familiar surrounding where they moved into the room in the same way they did on most days. The artist had also been a guest in the classroom at multiple points throughout the year. For the museum moment, the students were in a space where many of them had not been before. The rules about how to sit and engage were not guaranteed to correspond to their daily experiences in the classroom.

Additionally, each room had a person whose purpose was to ensure that students did not touch the art. These museum employees stood silently until a student got too close to a piece of art, sending a clear message about how bodies were to be controlled in the space.

The discourses were also connected to how the facilitators interacted with the students. Relying on the schedule of the museum, the docent moved from one question to the next, leaving little time for students to write and pair-share before moving on to another question. Counter to this process, the guest artist and teacher in the artist exchange were relying on a flexible frame of time in the classroom. This difference highlights the importance of providing time for students to engage in writing and time for students to be in dialogue with their peers in small groups before moving to a large group. This difference also highlighted a difference in the way facilitators moved flexibly with time. Drawing on Dewey's concept of plasticity points to a need for educators to move in response to moments, rather than stay with an established plan.

Examining this data dyptich through the lens of timescales and trajectories also points out that the events emanated very differently in the ways they extended beyond the initial moment. While the museum moment did not show up across other classroom events or student interviews, the artist exchange was continually referenced by students

and integrated into other literacy practices in the class.

In looking at this data dyptich, I see how students chose to interact differently in the two different literacy events, pointing to their agency. If researchers or teachers looked to either of these moments in isolation, the findings from the museum moment may indicate that students did not have the skills or strategies available to engage with the art through dialogue or written response. Looking at the two events together shows how the students were, in fact, very capable of engaging in writing and dialogue around art work. However, they made choices about how they were engaging and presenting their identities in the two different moments. As these two moments offered similar experiences, students made choices within their available means about how they were participating. In doing so, they were responding to the space and time of the events and making a choice about how they presented themselves. As researchers and educators, these findings indicate a need to continually look at how students engage across different spaces and times to consider what mediating factors are influencing the choices students are making in how they are participating within particular moments.

Complexity in Teaching

Chapters four and five looked at writing practices where students engage in critical and multimodal writing processes. Chapter six recognizes that practices alone did not necessarily ensure the students would engage in critical dialogue; they were enacted within the nuanced participation of students and the teacher in the classroom. Specifically, this chapter acknowledges teachers play a role in implementing critical writing pedagogy and need to navigate competing tensions as they work toward this

implementation (Lensmire, 2000; Dyson 2016; Mirra, 2018; Garcia, et al., 2014).

I began chapter six with a description of how Ms. Hughes characterizes the beliefs she has about her teaching and how those beliefs translated into action. In looking to Ms. Hughes's descriptions, students' experiences in the classroom, and fieldnotes of classroom events over time, I named how Ms. Hughes works toward a critical writing pedagogy through contextual, intentional, and reflexive practices. Along with Mirra (2018), I believe that "Although teachers often enact practices in their classrooms that diverge from their stated beliefs (Raymond, 1997), it nevertheless remains important to explore how teachers conceptualize the purpose of their discipline and how these purposes may be reflected or contradicted in their classroom practice" (p. 90). While Ms. Hughes's teaching had moments of shifting and moments when some of her practices seemed to contradict her overarching belief, it is valuable to name the way she worked toward critical practices in the classroom and acknowledge the times when this work was successful. In doing so, it opens a possibility to explore how teachers engage in this work as they navigate the complex and competing tensions that often prevent teachers from moving toward a critical pedagogy.

In order to understand Ms. Hughes's navigation, I turn to MDA's definition of agency, which recognizes action is a "product of the 'tension' between the agenda of the individual and the agenda embedded in mediational means made available in the sociocultural setting" (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 170). Within this perspective, agency exists as social actors "position themselves in various relationships to their actions" (Norris & Jones, p. 170, 2005). Following mediated discourse analysis (MDA), I looked

to a specific project to understand the action Ms. Hughes took, the tensions she felt around that implementation, and ultimately her position toward her action.

To begin understanding the agentic moves Ms. Hughes made, I traced the actions that she took in a literacy practice that aligned with critical writing pedagogy. Findings showed that building community, establishing writing and sharing routines, connecting to outside resources and school resources, and utilizing materials and space were important actions that Ms. Hughes took in implementing the *What Do You See* project. In looking at this project, she also named tensions around her implement from her experiences and institution including professional development, experience, colleagues, interests and beliefs, testing, time, district expectations, and colleagues. These tensions would not be particularly surprising for many teachers and are often listed as problems for teachers implementing critical practices (Garcia, et al., 2014). However, these findings allowed for an understanding of how Ms. Hughes agentially navigated the tensions.

Following MDA, the next step was to trace how Ms. Hughes positioned herself toward the actions to understand her agency. Looking to Ms. Hughes's characterizations, descriptions from students, and observations in my fieldnotes indicated she positioned herself toward vulnerability in the classroom, dialogic writing, and critical inquiry. These positions allowed Ms. Hughes to enact actions that aligned with her desire to incorporate critical writing pedagogy as she navigated tensions that surrounded this work. Ultimately, this chapter acknowledges the way teachers make moves to incorporate pedagogy that aligns with their beliefs despite the "ideological tensions, as well as social borders" (Dyson, 1997, p. 167).

By tracing Ms. Hughes's actions, tensions around those actions, and positions toward her actions, MDA presents a complex view of the work teachers do as they implement critical writing pedagogy. Honoring this complexity sheds light on the many layers that influence how practices are taken up. In doing so, MDA provides a way for researchers and teachers to pay attention to the positions that allow teachers to make agentic moves in implementing practices aligned with specific beliefs. This awareness could be expanded to look at how these positions are supported through professional development and reflective practices. Additionally, this research could be expanded to consider how naming the tensions and navigation of tensions might provide language for teachers as they make these moves within education.

Teacher Identity. While this chapter named the ways Ms. Hughes moved through tensions that surrounded her implementation of a literacy event aligned with critical pedagogy, ongoing tension existed through recognition of her own identity in relation to her students', as well. At different points in our conversations, Ms. Hughes named that she was a White teacher asking many students of color to share their personal stories. She recognized that by asking students to write and share she was in a position of power and there were always risks of how they were presenting themselves to each other. At times she questioned if she asked questions that were too probing or put students in a position to share more than they should. As a White female researcher in the space, I also recognized the potential problems in me being another audience member for the students' stories. Similarly, Pandaya, et al. (2015) caution teachers and researchers that transnational and immigrant children may not feel safe sharing stories at school as they

orchestrate multiple identities, including those of teachers as audience members. Ultimately, they call for a recognition of students' navigation, flexible assignments, and "many opportunities (for children) to narrate themselves (...) and chances to reiterate and re-narrate," recognizing that identities are not stable (p. 25). This tension was not resolved for Ms. Hughes or myself, but something that we named to ourselves and the students throughout the year. This research begins with naming the ongoing tensions that exist for classrooms where students are composing together.

Possibility for Disruption

Like bell hooks (1994), I believe, "the classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility" (p. 107). For this research, I wanted to be in a classroom where the students and teacher were working toward a possibility of learning from each other in the process of writing. While acknowledging the complexities that make teaching and learning in schools imperfect, I witnessed the seventh graders and Ms. Hughes engage in practices where they were trying out their writing and their identities as they brought their ideas together. The moments I describe in my data chapters, and many others that I witnessed during my year in the classroom, highlighted how students were listening to each other, considering multiple sources, bringing critical questions to the group, and presenting their identities to each other throughout their writing process. They were prolific writers, they showcased flexible thinking, and they grew in their shifting ideas. In doing so, they disrupted expectations for how middle school students are perceived and how writing is taken up in schools. Looking at the literacy practices, the complexity surrounding the practices, and the navigation of the teachers and students in this

classroom draws attention to the possibility of writing practices as a way for students to build connections and grow. As a result, this research offers implications for the teaching of writing in schools and how we view students as writers.

Implications

Based on the interpretations of this yearlong ethnography, I have identified implications for teaching practices and research related to the teaching of writing. I frame these implications in connection to a question that I have continued to hear in my work with educators across school districts and contexts. While providing professional development on the teaching of writing to nearly thirty school districts, there is one question that continually rises to the surface: *What do I do about the students who can't or won't write?*

While I see problems in this question, I also recognize its place in a system of education and a need for research that can problematize this question and, in response, offer new ways to view student writers and writing practices. My research around the critical and multimodal writing practices in one classroom will contribute to the field of education by providing a new lens to view students as writers and writing practices with a renewed recognition of the complex identities related to writing and classroom communities.

Viewing Students as Writers

My research argues that as educators, we must view students as writers who are making choices about when and how they write and engage in dialogue based on the complex surroundings of a moment. This view shifts attention away from an idea that

students either have or lack abilities and instead focuses on the possibilities of teachers to create and reflect on spaces where students choose to engage in meaningful writing and dialogue.

As chapter five highlighted through a data dyptich, limiting views of student writers to one specific time, space, and practice presents a narrow view of their abilities and the choices students are actively making. By looking at multiple literacy episodes across time and space, this data showed how students engaged in writing and dialogue differently in both moments. While looking at one moment may have suggested students were not capable of writing, the data dyptich provided evidence that students were making choices about when and how they wanted to participate in writing and dialogue in particular ways. For researchers, this points to the importance of engaging in data collection and analysis over time, considering multiple points of interaction and the complex surroundings of one literacy event.

Similarly, for schools and education systems, this research points to how a limited view of students as writers is created on different levels. In classrooms, teachers may be viewing students within a series of similar literacy practices that reflect a consistent set of expectations, discourses, and resources. A standardized writing assignment or test could also present a limited snapshot of student writing that indicates they cannot or will not write based on one encounter. The findings from this research show that making a judgement about students as writers based on one type of interaction does not provide a full picture of students' abilities or their agency, yet it is often how students are perceived in schools.

The data dyptich suggests we should, instead, view students' writing in multiple contexts, consider what discourses are present and mediational means are available to students at a particular moment, and imagine how we might shift our pedagogy to provide multiple ways for students to engage with writing when they are not. With this in mind, my research suggests a reframing of the question that is often asked, to say instead: *Why are my students choosing not to engage in this moment? What discourses, resources, and practices could support students or discourage students from engaging?* This question shifts the problem from being placed on the student to a place where we can consider how to make changes that will benefit the students as writers and members of a classroom community.

This is not to say that if students are moved to a new setting or a new practice is introduced, all students will instantly be successful. Rather, this research calls for an understanding of the histories, mediational means, and discourses that come together in a complex moment of interaction, and to acknowledge how these factors could position students to resist writing or empower them to engage in ways that extend their writing, sharing, and learning.

The data dyptich highlights the nuance of this understanding. Students were utilizing similar practices and resources that were available in both interactions, and the students named that these were helpful scaffolds for their processes as writers. For example, Decca explained the importance of utilizing different modes, featuring current topics, and having resources available when she said, "(Ms. Hughes) just really cared about her students so much because she always taught us in different ways to make our

brains really click and we actually need to do this because we will use it in life” (Personal communication, June 1, 2016).

Despite the use of these practices in both cases, the students resisted participating in the museum, making it clear that the role of the relationships between the facilitators and the students, as well as discourses of the space impacted students’ engagement. Noticing the differences in these two episodes points to the complexity of teaching writing, but also provides insight into how we can continue to shift our understandings of how students are engaging with writing.

Identity and Moments of Connection

This study also contributes to research by highlighting the connection between students’ multiple identities within the writing process and the creation of dialogic spaces in the classroom. As described, critical writing pedagogy emerged in response to the writing workshop model’s perspective of students bringing a single identity to a neutral writing process, pointing to the ways social status and power within peer relationships can create divisions, perpetuate oppressive discourses, and influence students’ participation in literacy practices (Pandya, 2015; Lensmire, 2000; Dyson, 2016; Lewis, 1997). Yet, as writing pedagogy continues to change, traditional methods of teaching writing are still pervasive in classrooms and there is an ongoing need to address how identity is part of the writing process. This study provides an example of a writing practice where students engaged in bringing their multiple identities together in dialogue to create an opportunity for growth. I argue there is a need for such examples which provide evidence of these interactions in classrooms and point to the specific way

students draw on their complex surroundings in these moments.

Recognizing the way students are bringing multiple identities to writing and making choices about how they are going to present those identities to their audiences draws attention to the potential conflict and struggle that students may feel as they write. A recognition of this struggle is, in part, an answer to the question about why students might be resisting writing. In chapter four, I traced the practice of permeable journaling as a process where students engaged in writing and sharing. This data highlights pedagogy that engages in critical questions about representation and differing points of views, so that students felt comfortable bringing multiple identities to the space. Again, this perspective shifts attention away from the “problem” of students who are not writing and shifts it to an understanding of the complex factors that influence a student’s choice about whether or not to engage in writing at a particular moment.

Beyond being a point of access for students to engage in writing, this became a space where students felt safe sharing and engaging in dialogue with each other. Aligned with Greene’s (1995) description of a Democratic space, the practice was “marked by an emerging solidarity, a sharing of certain beliefs, and a dialogue about others, (where) it must remain open to newcomers, those too long thrust aside” (p. 39). It is not difficult to see that there is a need for people to engage in such dialogic conversations and opportunities for growth. Friedrich, Bear, and Fox (2018) note, “we live in an era where public discourse has become increasingly polarized, and ‘echo chambers’ of narrow views populate people’s social media feeds” (p. 2). In classrooms, this division can also mean that students are positioned to be isolated or harmed by oppressive discourses.

There is value in identifying spaces where students are engaged in dialogue and working toward a Democratic space together.

Further, chapter four provides a way to consider the complexity of students' identities coming together through the lens of MDA and resemiotization. By looking at the resemiotization that occurred through Zee and Jeremiah's interactions, this chapter highlighted the ways both students drew on multiple resources available, including the discourses of the space and resources available to them as they developed ideas and shifted those ideas as they took in new information from their classmates. Tracing the students' shifts through resemiotization, once again, highlights the many factors that influenced the students' participation in a dialogic conversation. In the end, Decca explained the value of this space, explaining "In Language Arts, mmmm, I think I would describe it as me molding myself to become a better writer and better person overall. (...) Yeah, I really liked the seventh grade because I was becoming something." (Personal communication, June 1, 2016).

Finally, chapter six highlighted that as teachers work to implement a critical pedagogy that invites students into the space of the classroom, they need to navigate competing tensions around their teaching. Without suggesting there is one right way to engage in critical writing pedagogy, this chapter highlights the navigation that teachers do and the different resources they rely on as they work toward implementing a critical writing pedagogy. As preservice and practicing teacher educators understanding this navigation and resources that support teachers is a valuable part of our work.

Shaking the Sky

Over the course of the school year, I was privileged to watch Ms. Hughes and the seventh-grade students compose and share their way through academic goals, stories from their lives, and ongoing connections in the space of a classroom community. Every day was not a perfect lesson and each writing prompt did not produce perfect compositions. However, through giggles, questioning each other, a belief in each other, small group sharing, and large group conversations, I was able to witness and learn from the moments of connection they created.

On an October day, the journal prompt for the class was responding to a page from Sandra Cisneros's, *House on Mango Street*:

I want to be
like the waves on the sea,
like the clouds in the wind,
but I'm me.
One day I'll jump
out of my skin.
I'll shake the sky
like a hundred violins"

Although they were writing individually, each of the focal students chose to write about the same line: "I'll shake the sky like a hundred violins". As I look to their combined responses, I see the possibility of the way we bring literacy practices to the classroom and

the creations students make.

As violins vibrate, the skies will shake in a triumphant way

because she is showing people who she is;

She is free

to break out of her shell and be herself,

wanting to change the world and

impact other people

(Decca, Jeremiah, Becky, Zee, Jill)

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Appendix A

Interview Protocol Form – Semi-Structured Interview

Student Interviews

Interviewee: Stephanie Rollag Yoon

Interviewer Name:

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate our note-taking, I will be audio recording our conversation.

For students: Today, we are going to be talking about your experiences with the writing process. If you have any questions, you can ask them at any time.

Questions

1. What do you usually think of when you think about writing? For school? Outside of school?
2. What is writing like for you in class? (all classes)
 - a. What's challenging?
 - b. What works well?
3. What is writing like when you have a guest artist, like Wing Young Huie?
4. What types of writing do you do outside of school?
5. How would you describe yourself as a writer?
6. What influences the topics you write about?
7. What is it like for you to participate in the writing process or writing workshop with your classmates?
 - a. What's challenging?
 - b. What works well?
8. What is the purpose of your writing?
9. How would you describe your relationship with other students in the class?
10. How would you describe your relationship with the teacher in this class?
11. What are you most proud of this year from Language Arts?

Appendix B

Interview Protocol Form – Semi-Structured Interview

Teacher Interviews

Interviewee: Stephanie Rollag Yoon

Interviewer Name:

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate our note-taking, I will be audio recording our conversation.

For teachers: Today, we are going to be talking about your experiences with teaching the writing process. If you have any questions, you can ask them at any time.

1. How would you describe your role at your school? In your classroom?
2. What are your goals for students throughout the year?
3. How would you describe the writing process in your classroom?
4. What types of writing do students engage with in your classroom? What modes do students write in?
5. What are the goals you have for your students as they participate in the writing process?
6. What are some benefits and challenges of using the writing process with students?
7. What do you notice about how students interact with each other in the writing process? How would you describe the relationships between students?
8. How would you describe your relationship with students?
9. How does writing with different modes influence students' writing processes?
10. What did you look most forward to in your class?
11. What were the challenges that you faced in teaching this class?