LEARNING TO WRITE THE CANDIDACY EXAMINATION:

PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT

ACADEMIC GENRES AND AUTHORSHIP

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation contributes to the growing body of research on graduate students’ writing in specific disciplines. Two overlapping theories formed the study. Vygotsky’s activity considers how language mediates human activity to enhance cultural development; Bakhtin’s reaccentuating discusses the reciprocal and co-constructive nature of genres and authorship. This study explicates the significant aspects of the candidacy examination as a gateway experience into disciplinary enculturation as successful doctoral students learn to accomplish acceptable writing for this high-stakes examination.

This study employed qualitative case study methods to understand the experiences of a group of L1 (n=2) and L2 (n=6) doctoral students, who successfully completed candidacy examinations, and their advisors (n=5) in various fields of education. Primary data sources included semi-structured interviews with the students and their advisors as well as questionnaires, artifacts, such as handouts, and written work were also collected as secondary sources of information.

The data revealed that the students relied on their perceptions of good academic writing, social interactions with other community members, personal and professional goals for pursuing Ph.D. degrees, and their understandings of the purpose of the candidacy examination to complete their writing for this high-stakes examination.
Furthermore, for all the participants, writing pragmatically enhances “professional visibility,” and intrinsically serves as a vital tool for self-inquiry in academic enculturation. However, there were occasional mismatches between the professors and the students in their expectations for “the candidacy examination” genres and authorship.

These results suggest that social interactions help newcomers to achieve more “legitimate participation” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in academic communities than those who are not aware of the significance of social interactions in disciplinary enculturation. Detailed road maps do not appear to be necessary for successful doctoral students, but individualized scaffolding and explicit guidance from mentors can help them and especially other less successful doctoral students to see the “big picture” of their fields and to obtain necessary social interactions in order to attain fuller legitimate participation in their academic communities.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Learning to write in an academic discipline is an inevitable challenge for most doctoral students; and, given the high-stakes nature of the candidacy examination, it has some unique demands for Ph.D. students. My candidacy examination experience, for example, proved to be challenging, and yet, surprisingly rewarding. Coping with pressure from meeting deadlines, selecting pertinent literature “smartly,” and unfamiliarity with professors’ expectations proved to be intellectually, physically, and psychologically challenging. Although I spent three months, reading and negotiating with faculty, I never felt that I had done sufficient reading for my examination. That is, I never felt fully ready for the examination in spite of all of my preparation.

Surprisingly, it was fairly rewarding too, mixed with some bitter taste from stress. The examination required me to read the literature critically in order to develop my own arguments in my essays. In doing my reading, I adopted an interactive approach, including bottom-up and top-down strategies. For example, after reading book chapters or research articles, I would take note of the key issues and do a rough critique. I developed an “issue tree” to identify the current trends and issues on certain topics of the
field. The more reading I did, the more confident I felt about this procedure. This process pushed me to take a more authoritative stance and rewarded me with a greater sense of engagement, ownership, and empowerment in this knowledge (re)production process. Moreover, the examination helped me speed up the process of my disciplinary enculturation by enabling me to see the big picture of the academic field; that is, the current trends and issues in academic literacies, especially in the area of the scholarship on written composition.

Clearly, candidacy examinations are one of the most stressful and challenging periods for doctoral students. Based on conversations with faculty and students who have completed candidacy examinations, it became clear to me that this type of examination offers students an opportunity to understand the significant ideas in their fields in order to understand and even contribute to disciplinary conversations. However, even most native-speakers-of-English Ph.D. students that I have met in graduate school do find it fairly demanding, despite the advantage of writing in their first language. My own experience as an L2 writer as well as the gate keeping aspects of the candidacy examination led me to wonder how other non-native-speakers-of-English Ph.D. students cope with the demands of this high-stakes examination. Specifically, this research study investigated how both native-speakers-of-English (L1) and non-native-speakers-of-English (L2) Ph.D. students, who have successfully completed candidacy examinations prior to their participation in this study, learned to write for the candidacy examination.

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1 My candidacy examination required me to review relevant literature not only to reproduce knowledge as a consumer, summarizing the claims in previous studies, but also to produce my own perspective based on the results from synthesizing previous studies.

2 L1 refers to English as the first language and L2, a second language.
By examining their personal histories\(^3\), studying the role of writing in this enculturation process, and investigating how doctoral students appropriated genres and developed a sense of authorship over disciplinary-based ideas and issues, I sought to understand the significant aspects of this gateway experience in the scholarly lives of doctoral students in the field of education.

**Essential Role of Reading and Writing Text in Academic Settings**

Casanave (2002) pinpoints four major reasons why reading and writing text plays an essential role in academic settings: text represents an academic field’s legitimate end products of knowledge-building research activities; text embodies the habitual ways of knowledge-making as well as knowledge representation in a given academic discipline; text serves as the essential media for constructing knowledge as well as products of such processes; and through writing participants are socialized into their academic fields. In short, to achieve academic success, one needs to be able to (re)produce and represent the habitual ways of knowledge-construction socially, linguistically, and politically in their academic disciplines. Casanave also notes that the major tasks for doctoral students include the need to establish a coherent academic personae, to understand and produce texts from the multivocalic and layered practices in both their academic and personal lives, and to assimilate the unified sets of academic rules of different disciplines. In other words, doctoral students need to be aware of their agency in reproducing and producing legitimate knowledge in their fields.

\(^{3}\) Personal histories here include personal, interpersonal, institutional, social and cultural experience that participants had brought into their writing of candidacy examination.
The Problem

To demystify the demands of academic writing tasks in order to help students achieve academic success, previous academic writing studies (e.g. Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988, 1991; Herrington, 1985; McCarthy, 1987; Myers, 1985) have tended to be text-based, isolating academic writing from multicultural, social and political contexts. Later studies attempted to diverge from the “reductive and monolithic” approaches (Prior, 1998) to assume a social, multicultural, and contextualized turn in studying academic writing. However, Casanave (2002) claims that researchers (e.g. Casanave, 1990; Connor & Kramer, 1995; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995) cannot resist a strong desire for coherent and orderly appropriation of academic writing and often end up under reporting detail and reducing the complexity of academic writing. Consequently, Casanave (2002) and Prior (1998) both emphasize the need to study writing beyond text, given that writing is an activity not to be isolated from the nontextual aspects of writing tasks. To do so, they encourage researchers to investigate the social, multicultural, and political aspects of writing as a literate activity, an approach that I adopted for this dissertation.

Recently, there has been growing attention to the academic literacy demands that doctoral students, including both native speakers and non-native speakers of English, face in order to acquire their Ph.D. degrees. These studies (e.g. Berkenkotter, Huckin &

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4 Based on the Bakhtinian notion of multivoicedness, our words are derived from the collective thoughts of other people of all “cultures” to some level before we internalize them. Thus, I perceive the context of communication to be multicultural, rather than “monocultural.”
Ackerman, 1988; Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1990; Prior, 1998) often focus on the process of how Ph.D. students become qualified members of their disciplines while neglecting the details and high-stakes context of candidacy examination.

**Purpose of the Study**

This dissertation project aims to describe, analyze, and interpret the “productive forces” and “products” of “writing as a literate activity” (Prior, 1998), among eight doctoral students as they learned to write candidacy examinations within various fields of education. Although candidacy examinations are required for doctoral programs in the United States, no previous studies have been conducted on this area of doctoral education. However, based on my own observation, academic writing seems to be an inevitable struggle for both L1 and L2 doctoral students. Situated in the contexts of specific doctoral programs in a college of education, this research focused on the histories that eight successful student participants (two L1 and six L2 students) brought to their writing for the candidacy examination, the role of “writing candidacy examinations” in “socializing” (Casanave, 1990) these students into their academic communities, and the academic genre(s) and authorship that were necessary for the candidacy examination. In addition, I interviewed their advisors regarding their expectations and perceptions of the examination process.

**Rationale and Research Questions of this Study**

From the perspective of a conventional discourse community, disciplines are unified rules to be transmitted from instructors to students as passive learners. More recently, however, sociohistorical theorists have proposed the need to perceive disciplines as “open networks, forged through relational activity that intermingles personal,
interpersonal, institutional, and sociocultural histories” (Minick, Stone & Forman, 1993, quoted in Prior, 1998, p. 25). To capture the productive forces and the process of writing the candidacy examination as a “socially literate and goal-oriented activity” (Prior, 1998), I relied on the key notions of Vygotsky’s (1978; 1981; 1986) general genetic law of cultural development, activity theory, semiotic mediation, and use of history as the major conceptual framework. Vygotsky believed that well-organized interpersonal interactions could sooner or later stimulate intrapersonal development. The internalization process is not a one-way transfer approach, according to Leont’ev (1981); the whole process is an appropriation process. Vygotsky’s key concepts of semiotic mediation portray how language mediates human activity. Furthermore, Vygotsky’s activity theory and “use of history” provide the means for examining the individual plane and the social plane as an interacting system as well as the process by which culture shapes cognition across “the sociohistorical,” “the individual,” and “the interactive” planes and time (Scribner, 1985).

To study the doctoral students’ (re)production of the genres and authorship for the candidacy examination, I relied on Bakhtin’s notions of reaccentuating. According to Bakhtin, a responsive utterance, the most fundamental unit of analysis of speech communication is dialogic due to responses to the imagined and the anticipated addressee, the constant negotiation between the centripetal and centrifugal forces, and the struggling formation of internally persuasive discourse, liberating itself from the authority of the other’s discourse in order to produce authorship or ownership in one’s discourse. However, a speech genre, which is not a form of language, but is required in

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5 The notion of reproduction, for example genres and authorship, in this dissertation study refers to the centripetal forces, using Bakhtinian concept, on genres and authorship, in their fields, and in contrast the notion of production refers to the centrifugal forces.
the production of each utterance, is characterized by specific type of situations for communication. Genres shape our ways of communication, so achieving successful communication in academic communities requires an effective command of appropriate genre forms, which are “the definite and relatively stable typical forms of construction of the whole [lived experience]” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 78). Moreover, Bakhtin’s notions of centripetal and centrifugal forces, authoritative discourse, and internally persuasive discourse are helpful in understanding and attending to the reciprocal and co-constructive nature of authorship. We can claim ownership or authorship of our thought or words after we have appropriately internalized the other’s discourse through evaluative interactions with an understanding that we can never be the “only” owners or authors of our words. For example, critique of and personal perspectives toward previous studies in a specific field can demonstrate our authorship or ownership of our own thinking. However, even as we do so, our ideas built from the words of others.

The functional systems of the methodological model, described in the following section, represent the theoretical rationale of this study on the “writing activity” of the candidacy examination.

Methodological Model

Functional systems represent dynamic psychological systems in which diverse internal and external processes are coordinated and integrated (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1998). I examined personal histories, (re)production of academic genres and authorship, and the role of the activity of “writing the candidacy examination” in socializing a group of Ph.D. students into specific disciplinary communities across academic programs within a college of education at a Midwestern university. Relying on Vygotsky’s
concepts on the general genetic law of cultural development, semiotic mediation, activity theory, and use of history, Figure 1, represents the constitution of functional systems of productive forces and process of “writing the candidacy examination” as a sociohistorical activity.

A: case study participants (the professors and the students)
B: mediated tools (including technical and psychological resources)
C: historical activities
D: local academic fields
E: wider academic fields

Figure 1. The constitution of functional systems of productive forces and process of “writing the candidacy examination” as a sociohistorical activity.

6 “Local academic fields” represent the academic departments and the institution that the participants were situated for their doctoral programs, and “wider academic fields” represent the disciplinary communities that the participants were associated with.
In fact, as shown in Figure 1, there are two pentagons: an outer pentagon (\(\triangle ABCDE\)) and a central pentagon. Figure 1, which focuses on the outer pentagon, illustrates the productive forces as well as the process of the (re)production of the writing of the candidacy examination across academic programs. The five dotted lines of the outer pentagon represent how five kinds of media of the functional systems in “writing the candidacy examination” dynamically interact with one another. Next, the outer pentagon identifies five kinds of media of the functional systems in constituting the writing activity of the candidacy examination: case study participants (the professors and the students), mediated tools (technical and psychological resources), historical activities, local academic fields, and wider academic fields. Case study participants refer to the professor and the student participants of this study; the students successfully completed their candidacy examination before their participation in this study. Mediated tools, which include technical and psychological resources, according to Vygotsky, “regulate” our ways of interacting with the physical and social world by (re)shaping and (re)defining our thought and tasks. I intended to investigate what mediated resources the students found helpful in successfully completing the examination. Historical activities refer to any personal, interpersonal, institutional and sociohistorical interaction with the world within the scope of their writing activities of the examination. Local academic fields refer to the academic departments and the institution that the students were situated for their doctoral programs. Wider academic fields refer to the disciplinary communities that the case-study participants were associated with.
Figure 2, the pentagon\(^7\) (\(\triangle abcde\)) below, which is the constitution of functional systems of the (re)production of genres and authorship for the writing for the candidacy examination as a sociohistorical activity, relying on Bakhtian notions of “reaccentuating,” represents the productive forces and the process in (re)producing the required genres and authorship for the examination.

\(^7\) Figure 2 represents the central pentagon (\(\triangle abcde\)) within the outer pentagon\(\triangle ABCDE\), as mentioned and showed in Figure 1 earlier, which shows the dynamics of the writing activity. This central pentagon aims to capture the dynamics of the (re)production of genres and authorship necessary for the candidacy examination, but to reduce the messy representation due to the dotted lines and arrowheads, I listed the outer and the central pentagon separately, as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, before combining them in figure three. However, it is important to note that the dynamic interrelations of both pentagons are inseparable.
a: content (the intertextual status of students’ writing for the candidacy examination)
b: linguistic and discursive forms (style and construction of the candidacy examination genres and authorship)
c: literate activities (students’ production of writing for the candidacy examination)
d: contexts (students’ personal, interpersonal, institutional, and sociohistorical interactions during the candidacy examination)
e: anticipated responses and outcomes (the expectations of students’ committee members for the candidacy examination)

Figure 2. The constitution of functional systems of the (re)production of genres and authorship in the writing for the candidacy examination as a sociohistorical activity

The central pentagon (⌂ abcde) aims to explicate the “unsettling” (Prior, 1998) (re)production of the academic genres and authorship, derived from the flow of “writing the candidacy examination” as a sociohistorical activity. The “unsettling” quality is indicated by the divergent lines within the pentagon (straight lines represent centripetal forces and dotted lines with arrowheads represent centrifugal forces). The central pentagon (⌂ abcde) identifies five types of media: content (the intertextual status of
students’ writing for the candidacy examination); linguistic and discursive forms (style and construction of the candidacy examination genres and authorship); literate activities (directly related to students’ production of writing for the candidacy examination); contexts (students’ personal, interpersonal, institutional, and sociohistorical interactions during the candidacy examination); and anticipated responses and outcomes (the expectations of students’ committee members for the candidacy examination).

These elements of the inner pentagon overlap to some extent with those of the outer pentagon (⌂ ABCDE). Content particularly refers to the intertextual status of students’ writing for the candidacy examination. Linguistic and discursive forms refer to the style and construction of the forms of genres and authorship or ownership, necessary for writing the examination of this study. These forms are subject to change due to the impact from the extensive variables, such as gender, class, politics, religion, and so forth.

Literate activities include reading and writing, talking and listening, sensing and acting, and the use of tools and resources both social and material for writing the examination.

Contexts refer to the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and sociohistorical interaction, which are “socially forged conditions of mutual awareness through which our private understanding can be realized with others” (Brandt, 1986, p. 152). In this study, the historical contexts that I studied for writing the candidacy examination included the “histories” of the academic fields, the college of education, the university, the advisors of the students for the candidacy examination, and the examination processes. Anticipated
responses and outcomes refer to how the students interpreted and perceived their addressees’ expectations for genres and authorship—how these students understood and produced necessary genres and authorship for writing candidacy examinations.

Due to the close connection among personal histories, the (re)production of academic genres and authorship, and writing activities, it is important to note that the functional systems of the outer pentagon (_ABCDE), and those of the central pentagon (abcde), as shown in Figure 3, interact with one another dynamically. However, the outer pentagon mainly represents the interpersonal as social aspects of the writing activity, while the central pentagon primarily represents the intrapersonal or individual aspects of the process of becoming qualified members in their fields.

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8 The addressees here refer to participants’ advisors and other committee members of the candidacy examination.
A: case study participants (the professors and the students)
B: mediated tools (including technical and psychological resources)
C: historical activities
D: local academic fields
E: wider academic fields

a: content (the intertextual status of students’ writing for the candidacy examination)
b: linguistic and discursive forms (style and construction of the candidacy examination genres and authorship)
c: literate activities (immediately related to students’ production of writing for the candidacy examination)
d: contexts (students’ personal, interpersonal, institutional, and sociohistorical interactions during the candidacy examination)
e: anticipated responses and outcomes (the expectations of students’ committee members of the candidacy examination)

Figure 3. The constitution of functional systems of “writing the candidacy examination” as a sociohistorical activity
Figure 3 represents the conceptual framework of the four major research questions, data collection, and data analysis of this dissertation study, which examined the personal histories that the students brought to their writing activities for the examination, the role that writing activity plays in the academic enculturation process, and the (re)production of the genesis and development of academic genres and authorship in this context. Theoretically, this study primarily relied on the key notions of Vygotsky’s activity (Vygotsky, 1978) and Bakhtin’s “reaccentuating” (Bakhtin, 1986). The following are the research questions of this study.

1. What personal, interpersonal, institutional, and social and cultural histories, especially in terms of academic writing backgrounds and graduate experiences, did these participants bring to the writing activity of the candidacy examination? What influence did these factors contribute to their writing for the candidacy examination?

2. What role did writing activity play in the process of becoming qualified members from respective academic programs in a college of education at a Mid-western university? How did the activity of writing for the candidacy examination facilitate the (re)production of academic genres and authorship for the student participants to successfully complete the candidacy examination?

3. What academic genres did the students need to (re)produce for the candidacy examination? Why were they required? How did the
students and the professors interpret the necessary academic genres for the candidacy examination? Was there a match or mismatch between their interpretations?

The first two questions investigated how personal histories, especially academic writing and graduate school experiences, facilitated the (re)production of academic genres and authorship necessary for the candidacy examination in a college of education and the role that writing activity played in this enculturation process. The conceptualization of these two questions relied on Vygotsky’s general genetic law of cultural development, activity theory, semiotic mediation, and use of history. The third and fourth questions focus on the (re)production of necessary academic genres and authorship for the candidacy examination and the match or mismatch between the students and the professors in their interpretations of the required genres and authorship for this high-stakes academic writing. The conceptualization of these two questions relied on Bakhtin’s “reaccentuating” (Bakhtin, 1986).

The first question investigated the personal histories of the students, focusing on academic writing and graduate school experiences, they brought to the writing activities of the candidacy examination and the influence of these histories on their writing. The second question examined the role of writing activity in socializing or mediating the
students into their disciplines. As mentioned earlier, the dotted lines represent the
dynamic and evolving “histories” in movement, indicating the interactions between the
five media of the outer pentagon (△ABCDE), the case study participants (the professors
and the students), mediated tools (technical and psychological resources), historical
activities, local academic fields, and wider academic fields. Given that writing, as a
sociohistorical activity, is beyond text (e.g. Prior, 1998); personal histories need to be
included in the writing activity. External, social, (multi)cultural, and political experiences
do serve as “productive forces” to contribute to the process and the end products of the
candidacy examination. Thus, it is critical to examine the interactions between and
influence from case study participants (the professors and the students), mediated tools
(technical and psychological resources), historical activities, local academic fields, and
wider academic fields in the student participants’ writing for the candidacy examination.
Next, writing represents disciplinary wisdom and offers opportunities to “mediate” (e.g.
Vygotsky, 1978) newcomers to become qualified community members and to enable
senior members continue their disciplinary communication with both newcomers and old-
timers. To achieve a better understanding of disciplinary enculturation, examining the
genesis and development of the genres and authorship for the candidacy examination can
determine how much can students’ experiences from “writing the candidacy
examination” contribute to their “process of becoming” (Prior, 1998). Therefore, an
examination of the role of writing in socializing or mediating students into their fields
could necessarily include the examination of students’ (re)production of the required
genres and authorship in this context. As noted earlier, an examination of the interpersonal process of writing activities should not be separated from that of the intrapersonal process of writing activities.

The third and fourth research questions investigated the required academic genres and authorship for “writing the candidacy examination.” The media of the central pentagon (⌂ abcde) represent Bakhtinian notions of “reaccentuating” and are under the influence of Vygotskian notions of activity. The dotted lines, constituting the central pentagon (⌂ abcde), represent the dynamic nature of centrifugal forces, while the solid straight lines represent the centripetal forces, which stem from the interaction between content, linguistic and discursive forms, literate activities, contexts, and anticipated responses and outcomes. It is important to note that all the media of the outer pentagon (⌂ ABCDE) mutually reflect one another in the evolving histories of the central pentagon (⌂ abcde) in the (re)production of academic genres and authorship for the writing for the candidacy examination. That is, the discussion of each of the media of the central pentagon, focusing on the necessary genres and authorship for the examination, cannot be separated from those of the outer pentagon, because they interacted and were interrelated with one another in the genesis and development of the required genres and authorship for the examination. To describe, analyze, and explain the (re)production of academic genres and authorship for the examination, it is essential to discuss the histories of the writing activity of the candidacy examination are “phenomena in process” (Vygotsky, 1978). Understanding the genesis and development of the required genres and authorship requires an investigation of histories of the writing activity of the candidacy examination.
writing activity of this examination. Bakhtin described how interpersonal development might lead to intrapersonal development through mastering and participating in “social genres” as follows.

The notion of semiotic mediation involved in the socialization of mind needs to be enriched by explicating the implications of social speech types, the major implications being that by participating in and mastering social speech types, such as speech genres on the interpsychological plane, intrapsychological functioning is shaped (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 71).

In the sociohistorical perspective, Vygotsky’s activity theory examines the history of how language mediates human activity, focusing on the intermental processes and development. Bakhtin’s theory on “reaccentuating” can be used to investigate the construction of multiple historical meaning, derived from language-in-practice, examining the intramental process and development. In the present study, the examination of the writing activity of the candidacy examination, as a holistic unit of analysis of a sociohistorical theory, provided an understanding of the process of how students (re)produced necessary academic genres and authorship for completing the candidacy examination by tracing how they carried out the “socially formulated goal-oriented actions” with assistance particularly from “semiotic tools.” However, the examination of the (re)production of academic genres and authorship offers the possibility to capture the multiplicity of writing the candidacy examination as a historical “literate activity”, by investigating how students (re)produced knowledge in “writing the candidacy examination” as part of their enculturation process.
**Assumptions of this study**

The focus of this study was to explicate the enculturation process that the students experienced when learning to write the candidacy examination. To understand this process, this project examined how social, multicultural, political, and linguistic factors shaped the process and products of the candidacy examinations by two L1 and six L2 Ph.D. students, including one bilingual student, (N=8) across academic programs in a college of education at a Mid-western university.

This study utilized qualitative research methods, which integrated both a sociohistorical approach and a case-study approach in conceptualizing methods of data collection and data analysis. Merriam (1998) notes that “a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 21). She also points out that case studies are useful tools for clarifying processes of a given phenomenon and for advancing a field’s knowledge base (p. 41). The investigation of real-life situations creates a rich, thick, and holistic description, interpretation, or evaluation of a given phenomenon. Therefore, case studies are an appropriate research tool to enhance the investigator’s understanding of educational problems, programs, and processes and to improve teaching practices (Merriam, 1998, p. 43). In this study, the candidacy examination was “the phenomenon in process” to be examined, and the primary focus was on the process of the (re)production of the expected academic genre(s) and authorship by the student participants.
Given the conceptual framework, primarily relying on Vygotsky’s activity as well as Bakhtin’s “reaccentuating,” the data collection of this research included artifacts (including course syllabi, handouts, and students’ written drafts of their candidacy examination with or without faculty’s feedback on them), questionnaires, and audiotapes of semi-structured interviews of the students and the professors, who were advisors to the students during the candidacy examination.

Four assumptions shape the focus of this study.

1) Writing is a sociohistorical activity, which includes linguistic, social, cultural, and political factors from writers’ personal and academic lives. To examine the productive forces and end products of writing activities, it is necessary to investigate how participants’ personal histories, culturally, socially, and politically shape the (re)production of academic genres and authorship, necessary for completing the candidacy examination successfully.

2) Writing not only represents disciplinary wisdom, but is also a sociohistorical or literate activity. Thus, the activity of “writing the candidacy examination” plays a critical role in socializing students into their disciplines or academic communities.

3) To study the process of disciplinary enculturation, from a Vygotskian perspective, it is essential to trace the genesis and development of the expected academic genres of the students’ writing for the candidacy examination across the sociohistorical, the individual, and the interactive planes and across time.

4) The investigation of authorship in the contexts of academic writing needs to go beyond the level of appropriating source texts. Within the scope of academic
writing, authorship is the contribution, especially novel thought, which one makes to accomplish a piece of academic writing. Establishing authorship requires one to be not only a knowledge consumer, but also a knowledge producer. Making sense of the discipline-based language, concepts, and practices can be challenging for students. However, doctoral students cannot establish their academic personae (part of the critical tasks for most doctoral students to achieve disciplinary enculturation) successfully without actively participating in knowledge production (Casanave, 2002).

**The Significance of this Study**

This study intended to illuminate the undocumented process of how doctoral students successfully completed their candidacy examinations. Through examinations and analyses of the experiences of five professors and eight students, I intend to: illustrate how the perspectives of these participants can account for the impact of personal histories on the activities of “writing the candidacy examination,” explain the role of writing for this high-stakes examination in socializing the students into their academic communities, and trace genesis and development of the necessary genres and authorship for writing this examination.

Equally important, the results of this study suggest that the factor of using English as a second or foreign language has turned out to be more an issue of degree than an issue of variety (Belcher, 2002, personal communication). Originally, I had planned to compare the enculturation process of the L2 student participants with that of their L1 colleagues. However, the results of data analysis indicated that while using English as a second language seemed to create more cognitive loads for L2 speakers, compared to
their L1 peers, it was of less significance than the more central issue of the differing expectations of students and professors in (re)producing legitimate academic writing for the candidacy examination.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

This study originated with a concern over how doctoral students learn to successfully write their candidacy examination in their respective fields successfully. This literature review will focus on the major research questions as described in the previous chapter. The first section, “Boundaries of discourse community and the practice of community discourse,” considers issues related to current debate on the study of academic writing.

The second section reviews the key notions of sociohistorical theories applicable to studying academic enculturation. This study explicates the significance of writing as a socially formulated and goal-oriented activity in socializing or mediating doctoral students into their respective fields, traces the genesis and development of academic genres and authorship or ownership for passing the candidacy examination, and investigates the interrelation between this activity and the (re)production of genres and authorship, Theoretically, this dissertation study relied on the key concepts of Vygotsky’s activity theory and those of Bakhtin’s reaccentuating. Yet, these key concepts are too “laminated” (Prior, 1998) to be completely independent from one another. My review of the literature revealed that until now only Prior (1991, 1994, 1998) adopted this
sociohistoric perspective to study the writing tasks of doctoral students. Thus, this section reviews the key concepts of Vygotsky’s general genetic law of cultural development, semiotic mediation, use of history, and activity theory and those of Bakhtin’s utterance, meaning and addressivity, language, social language and speech, speech genres, dialogicality, and internally persuasive voices.

The remainder of the review covers the following topics: the importance of genre knowledge for writing the candidacy examination, authorship in writing, and mediating effects of culture and language. Finally, it is the objectives of this research study.

**Boundaries of Discourse Community and Practice of Community Discourse**

To demystify academic discourse, the theory of discourse community, proposed by Bizzell (1982, 1986) and Nystrand (1982), extended Hymes’s (1974) theory of speech communities to textual production and reception. Yet, what “discourse community” means is fairly vague. The “shadowy” version of discourse community tends to be revealed in the “network of citations and references” (Harris, 1997, p. 101). As Linda Brodkey (1987) argued, “…an academic community [is a] literate community manifested so much at conferences as bibliographies and libraries, a community whose members know one another better as writers and speakers” (p. 12).

Bizzell (1992) claims that the importance of academic community lies in its “high tolerance for frequent debate over what the community knows” (p. 139). Argument is a critical part of academic discourse, and to be able to play and even win this “game” (Casanave, 2002; Rose, 1989) with “intellectual freedom” (Bizzell, 1992, p. 140), academic community members have to be taught and learn the acceptable ways of writing and interpreting texts to acquire academic “like-mindedness” (Swales, 1990).
In order to understand the development of academic literacy and to promote writing across the curriculum, writing scholars (e.g., Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988, 1993, 1995; Herrington, 1985; McCarthy, 1987; Myers, 1985) have applied Hymes’ notions of “speech community” to “discourse community.” Yet, these studies, situated in different disciplines, have somewhat promoted the perspective of the monolithic nature of academic community discourse, as shown in the following two studies.

McCarthy (1987) followed “Dave”, a biology/pre-med college student, for twenty-one months, to trace his progress of initiation into different academic classrooms, including freshman composition, Introduction to Poetry, and Cell-biology. She found that the contexts of school writing were not fixed, that they varied from classroom to classroom; hence, Dave had to discern the different writing requirements of these various classroom discourses. McCarthy emphasized that an “explicit training of the interpretive and linguistic conventions of the community” should be particularly beneficial for newly enrolled students to attain academic success.

Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman (1988) studied how a first-year doctoral student, “Nate,” in a Rhetoric program at Carnegie Mellon University attempted to attain his membership in the academic community and learned new ways of understanding and producing texts. Relying on text analyses of five papers that Nate wrote for one professor over the year, this study concluded that the growth of the accepted (declarative) knowledge was faster than the acquisition of the relatively lengthy and difficult procedural knowledge. This is based on the authors’ assumption that to achieve academic
success, to become an “insider” within a given discipline, students not only have to acquire “understanding of appropriate linguistic and rhetorical conventions,” but also need to be familiar with “the conversations of an academic community” (p. 39).

Prior (1998) argues that most of the previous studies on academic writing tended to be text-based and structuralistic, disregarding the social, (multi)cultural, and political factors that do contribute to the process of writing. Given this shortcoming, many of the previous studies (e.g. Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988; McCarthy, 1987) were criticized for suggesting that newcomers need to undergo assimilation in order to become “insiders” by “implying” a fixed set of academic rules to appropriate newcomers to become qualified members in their disciplines. This dichotomy of discourse community as insiders and outsiders has polarized this academic discourse. This notion of a rule-ordered academic discourse community and fixed codes has been criticized by a growing number of theorists and researchers (e.g., Casanave, 1990; 1993; 2002; Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Harris, 1989; 1997; Prior, 1991, 1994; 1995; 1998).

Bizzell (1992) argues that the “deceptive” (p. 130) growth in academic literacy can only attain superficial significance in knowledge-making. She assumes that “real knowledge” is what academic discourse should attain. She interprets knowledge based on Freirian theory in Education for Critical Consciousness.

Knowing, whatever its level, is not the act by which a subject transformed into an object docilely and passively accepts the contents others give or impose on him or her. Knowledge, on the contrary, necessitates the curious presence of subject confronted with the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant searching. It implies invention and reinvention. It claims from each person a critical reflection of the very act of knowing. It must be a reflection which
recognizes the knowing process, and in this recognition becomes aware of the “raison detre” behind the knowing and the conditioning to which what process is subject. (p. 100-1)

The Freirian model of teaching and learning suggests that “in a situation of knowing, teachers and students must take on the role of conscious subjects mediated by the knowable object that they seek to know” (Bizzell, 1992, p. 137). In such a circumstance, writing plays a critical role in shaping this process of inquiry or even writing itself should be deemed as this “intellectual activity,” (p. 148).

Casanave’s dissertation (1990) was one of the first ethnographic studies that investigated the role of writing in socializing a group of first-year doctoral students into the discipline of sociology and revealed that the “one-way” academic enculturation aimed to “assimilate” students into “one kind of sociology” at the expense of the cultural diversity that the students brought to the program. For example, Virginia, who was one of the three case study participants and from a Puerto Rican family, found the “authoritarian” academic enculturation at a prestigious West Coast research university gradually deprived her of “everyday language” to communicate with and alienated her from other non-sociologists in her life, including her family. As a consequence, she chose to leave her doctoral program. Casanave proposes a “pluralistic approach” or a “negotiated approach” rather than a “one-way” approach in dealing with the tension between academic enculturation and cultural diversity.

Furthermore, Prior (1994) argues that the notion of community should go beyond “safe house” (Pratt, 1991), a “unified domain governed by an abstract set of shared rules.” Rather, he suggests “a socially differentiated and stratified domain of
evolving practice-in-the-world” (p. 387). That is, Prior suggests an expansion of the boundaries of the notion of community by including “person” into this “evolving” academic “dialogue” (Bizzell, 1992). According to Lave and Wenger (1991), “community of practice” is an “intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage” (p. 98), and they suggest that learning is best understood as “the historical production, transformation, and change of persons” through participation.

Based on the implications from his three studies on academic writing tasks, Prior (1995) proposes a sociohistoric, triangulated, and ethnographic approach in examining how “academic writing tasks are cued, produced, and received by particular people in particular settings.” (p. 49) The qualitative data of his first study in a curriculum seminar in education, examining a professor’s responses, included students’ final drafts with the professor’s comments and grades on them, semi-structured interviews with the professor about his goals and expectations for the seminar, and students’ papers and questionnaires regarding students’ backgrounds and their perceptions of writing tasks in that seminar. These text documents and self-reported data were not sufficient to explicate how this professor responded and evaluated students’ writing. As a result, his second study (1991) in a graduate seminar in a second language program aimed to “explore the intellectual and social history of classroom interaction,” (Prior, 1995, p. 51) and had a more ethnographic and more contextualized research design by adding the following: classroom observation, collection of class documents (the syllabus, students texts, and handouts), semi-structured interviews with students about their writing for the seminar, and tex-based interviews with the professor. However, this approach was still not able to
capture the multiplicity of writing tasks. Consequently, Piror’s third study (1994) explored the sociohistoric notion of disciplinarity in a case study by examining the negotiations between a professor and students on a sociology student’s dissertation prospectus in a graduate seminar. He further revised his methodology by adding selected text-based interviews with students after they received responses from the professor, drafts and process logs, and audiotaping the seminar sessions. Prior (1995, p. 54-5) emphasizes that the value of an ethnographic and especially sociohistoric approach for studying academic literacies resides in the fact that such an approach allows for a relatively close examination of the complex particularity and situatedness of each writing setting as a typical dimension that should not be ignored.

According to Piror’s work (1994, 1995, 1998), I agree that, to learn how new members succeed in their enculturation process within specific disciplines, we not only need to know what academic writing tasks are, but, more importantly, how writing mediates or socializes students into their disciplines. Thus, text-based data at best can only present a static picture of how a monolithic and one-way enculturation into academic disciplines at the expense of the dynamic productive forces, which stem from the given social contexts in constructing academic discourse. However, to examine “the process of disciplinarity,” “the process of becoming,” or “the process of participating academic communities,” Prior (1998) suggests that the sociohistoric approach can help reveal the resources for accomplishing writing as well as writing processes in the context of a specific writing activity. This study adopted a sociohistoric approach by primarily relying on the theoretical perspectives of Vygotsky’s general genetic law of cultural development, semiotic mediation, use of history, and activity theory and those of
Bakhtin’s utterance, meaning and addressivity, language, social language and speech, speech genres, dialogicality, and internally persuasive voices, as described in the following section.

Key Notions of Sociohiostorical Theories Applicable to Studying Academic Enculturation

The Social Origins of Higher Mental Functioning

Vygotsky’s general genetic law of cultural development, influenced by the French psychiatrist and psychologist Pierre Janet (Wertsch, 1989), claims that higher mental functioning has its origins in social sources.

Any function in the child’s cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears on the social plane, and then on the psychological plane. First, it appears between people as an interpsychological category, and then within the child as an intrapsychological category. This is equally true with regard to voluntary attention, logical memory, the formation of concepts, and the development of volition...It goes without saying that internalization transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions. Social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationship (p. 163).

From this perspective, as learners participate in a broad range of activities and internalize the effects of working together, they acquire new strategies and knowledge of the world and culture. Contemporary critics of a sociohistoric perspective argue that it is a “transfer of knowledge model” (e.g., Cobb et al., 1993). However, Leont’ev suggested, “the process of internalization is not the transferal of an external activity to a preexisting internal ‘plane of consciousness’; it is the process in which this plane is formed” (Wertsch & Stone, 1985, p. 163).
In contrast with the view, in which learning is external and development is internal, Vygotsky was concerned with the unity and interdependence of learning and development. Piaget assumed that “maturation is viewed as precondition of learning, but ever a result of it” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 80). In contrast, Vygotsky proposed that

Learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate openly when the child is interacting with people in his environment and with his peers...Learning is not development; however, properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning. Thus, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions (p. 60).

In connection with the genetic law of cultural development, the “zone of the proximal development (ZPD)” has received a great deal of attention in the West (Cole, 1985). The zone is defined as the distance between a child’s “actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving” and the higher level of “potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers ” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Hence, it is critical for teachers to distinguish two developmental levels and to adjust instruction to children’s potential levels using verbal directions and modeling to guide children through activities in order to improve their cognitive processes. However, in terms of assessment, Vygotsky emphasizes that measuring the level of potential development is as important as measuring the actual developmental level. In short, “the only good learning is that which is in advance of development” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89).
Semiotic Mediation

The ways in which tools ("technical tools") and signs ("psychological tools") mediate human action are concerns in Vygotsky’s work (Wertsch, 1989). Wertsch (1985) and Minick (1987) have noted that this notion of mediation played an important role in shaping Vygotsky’s theory of higher mental functioning before the end of his life. Vygotsky assumed that tools and signs shape our ways of interaction with the physical and social world and, most importantly, these mediation means reshape and redefine our task and the mental functioning involved (Wertsch, 1989). Thus, to understand higher psychological functioning, it is essential “to examine the structure and function of the various mediational means employed” (p. 18) both on the social and individual planes.

Vygotsky’s focus is on “semiotic mediation” (Wertsch, 1985), which is derived from his main interests in psychological tools as opposed to technical tools. Semiotic mediation is key to all aspects of knowledge construction. Wertsch (1989) identified “three fundamental components of semiotic mediation: (1) an account of the historical, social, institutional, and cultural setting of a society; (2) an analysis of the semiotic mediation that reflects and constitutes this setting; and (3) an account of the intrapsychological correlates that derive from mastering the forms of semiotic mediation” (p. 20). For Vygotsky, semiotic mechanisms mediate social and individual functioning and connect the external and the internal, the social and the individual (Wertsch & Stone, 1985). Vygotsky (1981) listed a number of semiotic means include: “language; various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes; diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; all sorts of conventional
signs, and so on” (p. 137). Other tools increasingly recognized in sociohistoric discourse—the paintbrush, the computer, calendars, and symbol systems (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1998) are central to the individual process of knowledge construction.


He believed that in mastering nature we master ourselves. For it is the internalization of overt action that makes thought, and particularly the internalization of external dialogue that brings the powerful tool of language to bear on the stream of thought. Man, if you will, is shaped by the tools and instruments that he comes to use, and neither the mind nor intellect alone prevails; the tools and aids that do are the developing streams of internalized language and conceptual thought that sometimes run parallel and sometimes merge, each affecting the other (p. Vi).

Semiotic mediation exists on both the intermental and intramental planes, and the transition from the former to the latter is possible (Wertsch, 1989); that is, knowledge is not internalized directly, but mediated through psychological tools. Leont’ev (1981), Vygotsky’s colleague, used the term “appropriation” to characterize this process, which is not only the process of collaboration, but also the product of collaboration (Palinscar, 1995). The psychological tools are not invented by individuals alone, but they are “products of sociohistoric evolution to which individuals have access by being actively engaged in the practices of their communities” (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1998, p. 193); that is, the psychological tools are “carriers of sociohistoric patterns and knowledge” (Wertsch, 1994, p. 204).
The Use of History

For Vygotsky, studying something historically meant to study “phenomena in movement” (Vygotsky, 1966, p. 105; quoted in Scribner, 1985, p. 120). Vygotsky held that historical laws were the key to study the development of higher mental functioning. Scribner (1985) claimed that Vygotsky’s argument to “look into cultural history for hypotheses about the origin and transformation of higher mental functional systems” might be interpreted as “an attempt to weave three strands of history—general history, child history, and the history of mental functions—into one explanatory account of the formation of specifically human aspects of human nature” (p. 138). At the first level, general history, Vygotsky focused on the symbolic communicative sphere in which people produce new “cultural” means for regulating their behavior. He called these forms of behavior “specifically cultural forms” (Scribner, 1985). Scribner points out that Vygotsky assumed that in order to study the origin and development of cultural forms of behavior, historical development is what one must first be explained (Scribner, 1985). “Historical laws of development, as they apply to human mental life, are therefore laws of development of cultural forms of behavior and the other way around: Cultural forms appear slowly, each new stage building on a preceding one, so that everything cultural is in its very nature, an historic phenomenon” (Scribner, 1985, p. 123).

At the second level, the individual history or the child’s history, Vygotsky held that biological or natural processes regulated the growth of lower psychological functions, such as “forms of memory, perception, and practical tool-using intelligence”; however, “social and cultural processes regulate the child’s acquisition of speech and
other sign systems, and the development of special higher psychological functions, ‘such as voluntary attention and logical memory’ (Vygotsky, 1966, p. 35; quoted in Scribner, 1985, p. 124).

At the third level, the development of higher psychological functions, Vygotsky argued that these functions have their own history or origin and their own stages of development (Scribner, 1985, p. 133). For example, he estates that “These functions, which from the point of view of phylogenesis are [products of] the historical development of the human personality possess also from the point of view of ontogenesis, their own particular historical development” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 64, quoted in Scribner, 1985, p. 133).

Vygotsky’s notion of cultural development as a historical process offers a possibility to study cultural development across three planes, sociohistoric, interactional, and individual as well as to analyze changes on the three planes across time.

Activity theory

The concept of activity is the unit of analysis for the sociohistoric approach (Wertsch, 1981) as well as the key, for Soviet psychologists, “to understanding the relationship between consciousness and the objective world” (Rubinshtein, quoted in Wertsch, 1981, p. 11-12). Vygotsky argued that in order to understand higher psychological functioning it was essential to examine the dynamic processes, rather than “fossilized” behaviors (Rogoff, 1981, p. 156). The focus of Vygotsky’s theory is mainly on how language and speech mediate human activity—”how humans come to master sign systems and then use those sign systems to organize their activity” (Wertsch, 1981, p. 13).
Leont’ev, who conducted the most thorough philosophical analysis of the concept of activity, formulated the concept of activity as a unit of analysis with three levels—activity, action and operation. The level of activity, the highest level of analysis within the theory is linked to the concept of motive, because without motive there can be no activity (Leont’ev, 1981). Motives specify what is to be “maximized” in a setting (Wertsch, 1985) and arise out of the system of relations individuals maintain with other individuals and the world. Actions are the sub goals, which stratify the motive. Operations are the means whereby an action is carried out under specific constraints (Cole, 1985, p. 152).

In formulating the concept of activity as a unit of analysis, Leont’ev united the key concept of sociohistoric approach and developed a six-part theory of activity (Wertsch, 1981). The first feature of the theory is that “activity is analyzed at three levels; each level is defined by different criteria.” According to Leont’ev, “activities are distinguished on the basis of their motive, the object toward which they are oriented; actions on the basis of their goals; and operations, on the basis of the conditions under which they are carried out” (Wertsch, 1981, p. 18).

The second feature emphasizes the importance of the notion of “goal”, one aspect of the first feature. It suggests that similar actions, without sharing the same goal, cannot be viewed in the same way (Wertsch, 1981).
The third feature involves the claim that activity is mediated. “Vygotsky always claimed that speech was the most widely used and important means employed by humans to organize social interaction, to regulate others and to regulate self” (Wertsch, 1981, p. 25). Vygotsky focused on semiotic mediation and argued that through “the use of signs” shape and redefine human thought, actions and tasks (Wertsch, 1981).

The fourth feature emphasizes the developmental and genetic interpretation and is closely related to Vygotsky’s use of history. Vygotsky assumed that “behavior can be understood only as the history of behavior” (Blonsky, 1921, quoted in Wertsch, 1981, p. 27); that is, understanding human mental functioning can be only achieved by examining its origins and development.

The fifth feature stresses human activity and the means that mediate it have arisen through social interaction (Wertsch, 1981, p. 29). This feature is connected with the general genetic law of cultural development, which holds that human mental activity develops through social interaction with adults or more capable peers.

The sixth feature expands the notion of internalization. “The notion of internalization is concerned with the ontogenesis of the ability to carry out socially formulated goal-oriented actions with the help of mediating devices” (Wertsch, 1981, p. 32).
These six features of the activity theory provide a means of examining the individual and the social as an interacting system and at the process by which culture shapes cognition, across three planes (Erickson, 1982)—the historical (feature 4), the interactional (feature 1, 2, 3, 5) and the individual (feature 6)— and across time (Kirschner, 1993, p. 64).

Wertsch (1991) claimed that Vygotsky’s investigation of the general genetic law of higher mental functioning and semiotic mediation constitutes a foundation for a sociohistoric approach toward mediated action. Since learning happens through participating in social activities, interacting with more capable peers or adults can stimulate intrapersonal development, and acquiring the sociohistoric knowledge and coping strategies, educators should aim their curriculum and instructional goals at students’ potential levels of development. It is every teacher’s goal to assist his or her students to achieve the zone of proximal development. In a Vygotskian perspective, semiotic mediation, they key to all knowledge construction, connects the social with the individual, the external with the internal. In both aspects, social interaction is essential in nurturing intrapersonal development. Yet, the limitation of his analysis lies in the fact that his analysis focused on the intermental functioning between teachers and children, rather than on children’s intramental functioning. Thus, what he did was limited in spelling out “how specific historical, cultural and institutional settings are tied to various forms of mediated action” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 46). However, Bakhtin’s key notions of speech genres, which explicated how “interpersonal” development might lead to “intrapersonal” development, will be discussed below.
Utterance

Most of Bakhtin’s contemporary scholars of language concerned themselves with linguistic forms and meaning independent of actual conditions of use, whereas he chose utterance, “the real unit of speech communication”, instead of “word” or “sentence” which, without being spoken by anyone, according to Bakhtin, belongs to nobody.

The sentence, like the word, is a signifying unit of language. [Yet, it has] a finality of meaning and a finality of grammatical form, but this finality of meaning is abstract by nature and this is precisely why it is so clear-cut: this is the finality of an element, but not of the whole. The sentence as a unit of language has no author. Like the word, it belongs to nobody, and only by functioning as a whole utterance does it become an expression of the position of someone speaking individually in a concrete situation of speech communication (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 84).

Utterances have two major features. First, “any utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication. It is the active position of the speaker in one referentially semantic sphere or another” (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 84). That is, the “referentially semantic assignments (plan) of the speech subject (or author)” determines the types of linguistic means and speech genres. Secondly, the expressive aspect of the utterance, that is, “the speaker’s subjective emotional evaluation of the referentially semantic content of his utterance” determines its composition and style (p. 85). Utterances are not neutral, given that a speaker’s evaluative attitude toward whichever subject of her or his speech determines the choice of lexical, grammatical, and compositional means of the utterance (p. 85). Although the expressive aspect of the utterance determines the individual style of the utterance, Bakhtin claimed that we couldn’t view this aspect “as a phenomenon of language as a system” (p. 85). This is attributed to the fact that a sentence or a word is neutral and does not acquire its expressive aspect until it has been spoken in a
contextualized speech communication. That is, speech only exists in the form of an
utterance, which belongs to a particular speaking individual within a specific context.
Yet, Clark and Holoquist claimed (1984) that Bakhtin’s focus on utterance does not
exclude the existence of constancy and systematicity in speech, but Bakhtin viewed the
utterances as the site where constancy and systematicity negotiate with individual,
situated performance.

Meaning & Addressivity

Bakhtin speaks of meaning as constructed on the border between self and other. Every concrete act of understanding is active: it assimilates the word to be understood into its own conceptual system filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and is indissolubly merged with the response, with a motivated agreement or disagreement. To some extent, primacy belongs to the response, as the activating principle: it creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 282).

Bakhtin viewed meaning as “an active process rather than a static entity” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 52), which only exists when two or more voices come into contact, the voices of a listener and speaker. For Bakhtin, the notion of voice is the “speaking personality, the speaking consciousness” (Holoquist and Emerson, 1981, p. 434), closely tied to the notion of utterance. A voice cannot exist in isolation from the other voices (Wertsch, 1991). This reflects his emphasis on the importance of attending to the role of the others, the addressees, who are not passive listeners, but active participants in speech communication. This addressivity is the response that “a genre assumed by a particular utterance always responds to other forms of utterances within the different dialogic transactions among the myriad public discourses of social life” (Kent, 1998, p. 42).

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Addressivity apparently does not exist in language, but in speech. Bakhtin’s notion of
addressivity is grounded in his observation that “any utterance is a link in the chain of
speech communication.”

Furthermore, Bakhtin’s notion of addressees is not limited to the speakers in the
immediate speech situation. Instead, “[T]his addressee can be an immediate participant-
interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some
particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic
group, contemporaries, like-minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, a
superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign, and so forth, And it can also be
an indefinite, unconcretized other” (1986, p. 95).

Ultimately, every utterance contains not only the speaker’s voice(s), but also
those of the listeners. In the formulation of an utterance, even a monologue in
philosophy, a voice responds, explicitly or implicitly, to the previous utterances and in
some way anticipates those from the (potential) addressees. That is, our thought “is born
and shaped in the process of interaction and struggle with others’ thought, and this cannot
but be reflected in the forms that verbally express our thought as well...” (Bakhtin, 1991,
p. 86).

Language

Wertsch (1991) stated that Bakhtin’s notion of utterance deals with speech events
(individual utterances produced by unique voices), whereas his notion of language deals
with categories or types of speech events (types of utterances produced by types of
voices). Bakhtin’s account of language, in addition to the notion of voice as well as dialogicality, deals with “the struggle between system and performance that is played out in the utterance” (p. 57).

Bakhtin (1981) defines centripetal impulses as all of those “forces that serve to unify and centralize the verbal-ideological world” (p. 270). For example, an utterance works to bring unity to the heteroglossic “contradiction-ridden” (p. 272) tensions within it. A unitary language is the expression of centralizing and normative influence upon its many sources and forms. In contrast, those centrifugal forces bring disunification, decentralization and chaos. Within an utterance are the contradictions, the conflicting, heteroglossic voices and intents. Both centripetal and centrifugal forces are constantly in tension. By countering each other, they struggle for balance.

Social Language and speech

Social language is “a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (e.g., professional, age group) within a given social system at a given time” (Holoquist and Emerson, 1981, p. 430). Examination of social languages or social speech include, as Bakhtin (1981) mentioned, “social dialect, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities of various circle sand of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day” (p. 262). Bakhtin assumed that in the production of an utterance a social language is used to shape “what the speaker’s individual voice can say” (Wertsch, 1991, p. 59). This process of producing an utterance through social languages involves “a specific kind of dialogicality or multivoicedness” that Bakhtin termed “ventriloquation” (Bakhtin, 1981). A word in
any language is half someone else’s. It becomes ‘one’s own’ only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own “accent,” when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, a word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists on other people’s “tongues,” in other people’s concrete contexts, serving other people’s intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one’s own (p. 293-4).

Speech Genres

According to Bakhtin (1986), the production of utterance requires a speech genre, which is not a form of language and has a certain type of coherent expression inhere in it. “Genres correspond to typical situations of speech communication, typical themes, and, consequently, also to particular contacts between the meanings of words and actual concrete reality under certain typical circumstances” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 87). In contrast to social languages, which are distinguished by the social stratum of the speakers, speech genres are characterized by specific kinds of situations of speech communication.

We speak only in definite speech genres, that is, all our utterances have definite and relatively stable typical forms of construction of the whole. Our repertoire of oral (and written) speech genres is rich. We use them confidently and skillfully in practice, and it is quite possible for us not even to suspect their existence in theory. Like Moliere’s Monsieur Jourdain who, when speaking in prose, had no idea that was what he was doing, we speak in diverse genres without suspecting that they exist (p. 78).

In Bakhtin’s view, without “a practical command of the generic forms” (Bakhtin, 1991, p. 84), we cannot achieve effective communication, since not only grammatical (syntactic) forms, but speech genres determine our ways of communication. For example,
although L1 doctoral students have an advantage from using English, their native language, in academic writing, the process of acquiring new genres to accomplish writing tasks for courses and the candidacy examination can make many of them feel as if they were learning to appropriate academic writing as a foreign language.

**Dialogicality**

Bakhtin’s concern with dialogicality is ubiquitous in his writings (Wertsch, 1991, p. 54). Bakhtin (1986) maintained that all utterances are filled with dialogic overtones (p. 102).

To understand another person’s utterance means to orient one with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. The greater their number and weight, the deeper and more substantial our understanding will be...All understanding is dialogic in nature. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. (Voloshinov, as quoted in Wertsch, 1991, p. 54)

**Internally Persuasive Voices**

With meaning derived from assimilating others’ discourse, which is a negotiation between self and response, in some cases the self may struggle with an alien word. The word carries with itself its own worldview and it may oppose the voices that already inhabit the self. Authoritative discourse, powerful, privileged and monologic language, which is “given” and may originally from parents, teachers or accepted doctrines. “It is not a free appropriation and assimilation of the word itself that authoritative discourse seeks to elicit from us; rather, it demands our unconditional allegiance” (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 78). Authoritative discourse does not merge with other words and demands acceptance
or rejection in its totality. In contrast, the internally persuasive discourse breaks down and is gradually assimilated and “tightly interwoven with one’s own word” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345).

Such discourse is of decisive significance in the evolution of an individual consciousness: consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself; the process of distinguishing between one’s own and another’s discourse, between one’s own and another’s thought, is activated rather late in development. When thought begins to work in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way, what first occurs is a separation between internally persuasive discourse and authoritarian enforced discourse, along with a rejection of those congeries of discourses that do not matter to us, that do not touch us...The semantic structure of an internally persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever-newer ways to mean. (Bakhtin, 1994, p. 79)

This adds to Vygotsky’s theory of internalization, from interpsychological to intrapsychological by indicating that the self is not just a passive receiver. One’s own discourse and voice, originally from the other’s words, sooner or later begin to liberate themselves from the authoritative discourse.

Dialogicality is the key notion of Bakhtin’s theory of speech genres. The role of the other plays an essential role in the meaning making of communicative interaction. Meaning derives from the “responsive utterances,” which are originally from the other’s words, and the process of anticipating and attending to the “active listener”.

“Understanding is dialogic”, because the unifying and stratifying forces can never rest in peace.
Importance of Genre Knowledge for Writing Candidacy Examination

Genre knowledge refers to an individual’s repertoire of communicative typification centered on recurrent social activities (e.g., Bazerman, 1988; 1994; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Prior, 1998; Swales, 1990). Thus, genre means situational appropriateness for disciplinary communication, represented mainly through using text, as shown in the study by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995), as described earlier. Likewise, Bakhtin’s theory of speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986), which uses “utterance”, instead of “word” or “sentence,” as the real unit of speech communication, describes the confluence of centripetal and centrifugal forces dialogically. However, Bakhtin believes that we never produce genres, but utterances, which jointly construct the active understanding and responses of the recipients in specific situations of communication. In contrast, most of the current genre theories tend to emphasize the commonness, at the expense of the complexities, embracing a unified community discourse, in conceptualizing sociohistoric activities structuralistically (Casanave, 2002; Prior, 1998).

The primary focus of current genre studies, include research articles (Swales, 1990), bibliographic essays and critiques (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995), and literate activities in constructing writing for masters and doctoral theses and seminar papers (Prior, 1998). Yet, both Prior (1998) and Casanave (2002) claim that to capture “the complexities of lived experience,” (Wenger, 1998, p. 162) genre studies do need to examine both textual and contextual resources that speakers and recipients use as well as what practices surround the writing activity.
To investigate the genesis and development of genres within a graduate Geography seminar using a case study method, Prior (1998) focused on how the professor “indexed, contextualized, and constituted” (p. 97) the literate activities, with an emphasis on topical alignments, served to index discourse and contextualize writing activities. The analyses of topic alignments related to the required writing task of the study offered an opportunity to present the process of how genres, in Prior’s terms “semiotic genres,” got (co) constructed, evidently showing the image of utterances—the fusion of the centrifugal and centripetal forces. In this case, the instructor “mixed centrifugal representation of writing tasks with fairly centripetal representation of disciplinarity” (p. 96).

**Authorship in Writing**

The saying that you are what and how you cite (Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman, 1995) indicates a common agreement in academic setting that authorship arises after one has appropriated necessary source texts for her or his academic writing (Greene, 1995). Authorship arises when one uses critical thinking skills to appropriate the major writing tasks. Greene (1995) studied a group of beginning college writer’s approaches to argumentative writing, investigating why some students could assume the roles of authors, but others could not. The four-week data collection of this study took place in a beginning writing class. The data included course documents, audiotaped interviews with the course instructor in order to understand the instructor’s goals for the learning and assignments of this course, audiotaped interviews (retrospective accounts of their writing process) with six students with cued questions, and field notes. In his
writing-up of this study, Greene only focused his discussion on two students; one, Vuong, whose writing represented the other four and the other, Jesus, whose writing was different from all the other participants’ writing. Vuong’s final draft of the course assignment revealed that he was reluctant to confront the authority; that is, he chose to focus his writing on what the authors of the course readings talk about cultural literacy, rather than his own opinions about these issues related to this given topical focus. The fact that Jesus’s writing, in contrast, had his own voice on “cultural literacy” and “diversity” shows that he was aware of his need to internalize the course readings.

To attend to the reciprocal and multiculturally co-constitutive nature of production and reception of authorship (Bakhtin, 1986; Phelps, 1990; Prior, 1998), Prior (1998) adopted Bakhtin’s concepts of centripetal and centrifugal forces in (re)producing discourse, authoritative discourse, and internally persuasive discourse to construct a case study. Prior considered how a doctoral student, Moira, in a Sociology seminar established authorship by examining the textual exchange between her and her advisor, West, and investigated how and which of West’s words showed up in Moira’s drafts. Moira at first appeared to be a passive co-author of her single-authored papers, accepting almost all feedback from West with hardly any resistance. Looking beyond the surface level of the changes in her drafts, mediated authorship could still be evident. However, Moira eventually became a more active participant in this process by attending to technical activities of data management and the other activities within West’s research project and Sociology community.
In sum, writing as literate activities is not located in the acts of reading and writing only, but in the “cultural forms of lived experience,” supported and activated by texts (Prior, 1998, p. 142). According to Bakhtin (1986), our thought and ideas are originally from others’ discourse and voice, and we cannot claim ownership or authorship of our words until we have appropriately assimilated, internalized, or evaluatively interacted with others’ discourse. Thus, in the contexts of writing activities, we will never be the only authors of our writing; we have partners to co-construct meaning and mediate authorship.

**Mediating Effects of Culture and Language**

Culture represents our “whole” (Geertz, 1973) lived experience. Culture is dynamic, subjective, contextualized and subject to change. Geertz (explains) that “man is an animal in webs of significance he himself has spun,” and he “take[s] culture to be those webs and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in searching of meaning” (p. 5). Human activities aim mostly to interpret and construct “webs” recursively. Humans are purposive agents and have reasons for their activities and can (re)produce necessary conditions to carry out activities. Thus, “…while an educated person is culturally produced… the educated person also culturally produces cultural forms” (Levison, et al., 1996, p. 14). That is, we own our agency in cultural (re)production related to our whole lived experience.

Language is an important cultural tool and mediating structure, offering us opportunities to be knowledge (re)producers. Language not only constitutes the most important content and instrument of socialization (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 133;
Language, culture, socialization, and learning are intimately interrelated. Whorf stated that the way a man interprets his world is programmed by the language he speaks; that is, one’s mind registers and structures external reality only in accordance with the program. Consequently, the way one perceives, interprets, and (re)constructs webs in one language is different from the way s/he does in another language. This phenomenon is evident in cross-cultural studies on writing (e.g., Cai, 1993; Kaplan, 1966; Li, 1996; Metalene, 1985). However, quite a number of linguists and psychologists have criticized this Whorfian Hypothesis by indicating that many bilinguals have no problems switching between grammars and lexical of languages they speak (Connor, 1997, p. 29). Furthermore, psychologists Hunt and Agnoli (1991) considered that “the Whorfian hypothesis should be considered a hypothesis about language performance rather than a linguistic hypothesis about language competence” (quoted from Connor, 1997, p. 29).

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the subgroup differences when discussing findings from cross-cultural studies (Kubota, 1999). For instance, in general, Western cultures encourage critical thinking as a social practice (Atkinson, 1999), but, in contrast, many Asian cultures, like Chinese, Taiwanese, or Japanese cultures honor conformity. L2 literacy teachers tend to rely on the belief that the cultural values of Asian students on conformity, as reflected in their prior education, can be a possible cause of their students’ trouble with organization for academic writing. However, Kubota (1999) and Matsuda (2001) have claimed that it is not necessarily true that most Asian or at least Japanese students do not have their “discursive” voices.
Objectives of this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the personal histories that the student participants had brought into their writing activity of the candidacy examination, the role of writing activity in this process of becoming, and the genesis and development of academic genres and authorship or ownership, required of the candidacy examination, through a focus on the “productive forces,” the process, linguistically, socially, (multi)culturally, and politically, and the written products of candidacy examination by the student participants from various academic programs in a college of education. The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To describe the personal histories of the student participants, with a major focus on writing background and graduate school experience, found in the writing activities of the candidacy examination.

2. To analyze the role of writing in socializing or mediating the student participants into their disciplinary communities through learning to write the candidacy examination.

3. To interpret the necessary academic genres that the student participants needed to (re)produce for passing their candidacy examination successfully and the match or mismatch, if any, between the interpretation of the student participants and the professor participants on the required genres.

4. To interpret authorship that the student participants needed to (re)produce for passing the candidacy examination successfully and the match or mismatch between the interpretation of the student participants and the professor participants on the required authorship.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study’s objective — to consider particular expectations and experiences of the writing of the candidacy examination from multiple points of view and to locate these experiences within layers of institutional contexts — strongly suggested a qualitative case-study approach (Merriam, 1997).

This chapter explains the site selection, sampling, and general procedures of data collection and analyses, descriptions of data sources and focus of data analyses for each of the four research questions, trustworthiness (validity), and ethics of this study.

Design of the study

Site Selection

This study was conducted on the main campus of a major Mid-western research university. To make sure the content focus of the selected disciplines was doable for myself as a researcher as well as a L2 doctoral student from the background of English education, I intended to look into academic programs within a college of education. First, it was beneficial from being an insider from education. Secondly, the requirements for passing candidacy examinations are black boxes in academic settings due to its political nature. Thus, participating in a research project on candidacy examination could be
intimidating for some faculty and doctoral students. However, since people from the academic programs of education normally assume their primary mission in (re) producing better education for their own community as well as the others, the college of education was proved to be a friendly site for me to pursue, compared to the other academic programs.

**Sampling**

Given the focus of this dissertation project, I had recruited eight Ph.D. students, two L1 and six L2 students, one of them is a bilingual person, and five professors, who are advisors to the student participants. Given the parameters of language proficiency as well as social, cultural, and political understanding and backgrounds, I was hoping to compare and contrast their personal histories, (re) production of the necessary academic genres and authorship during their candidacy examinations as well as the role of writing in their process of becoming qualified members.

I contacted the professors who are enthusiastic and have a strong drive and passion in mentoring students and in upgrading education through electronic mails (see Appendix A) from the programs within a college of education of a mid-western university to see if they would be interested in participating this research or able to recommend me some professors who share the same passion and drive for education to participate or recommend me strong students for this study. This referral strategy helped me recruit enthusiastic professor for this study and through the recommendation of these professors I recruited eight strong and enthusiastic student participants.

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10 One of these eight student participants had finished her Ph.D. and is teaching as an assistant professor.
Another criteria for both student and professor participants was their willingness to be interviewed to share with me about their academic writing experiences. It took each of the professor participants about an hour for the interview, but it took the student participants from one and half an hours to three hours for the interview and the questionnaire.

Initially, I was planning longer interviews, which would take both student and professor participants about four hours for participating this study, thirty minutes or so for filling out a questionnaire, two hours or so for the first interviews and another one and half hours or so for the second interview. Yet, with these extensive interviews, I had great difficulty recruiting participants, so I reduced the interview time to one hour for each of the professors. The student participants were generous with their time and I really appreciate it. Some of them talked faster than the others, so their interview time ranged from one and half an hour to three hours.

In addition to these, student participants gave me copies of their final drafts for their candidacy examinations and some courses writing, course syllabi, and handouts.

The following tables (see Table 1) provides a broad picture of the five professor participants in this study, including their titles, gender, focus of their doctoral studies, and major field(s).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ph.D. or Ed.D.</th>
<th>Major field(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor F</td>
<td>Associate Dean; Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
<td>Cultural Studies in Education; feminism; and pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor D</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Applied Statistics; Research design; Measurement; and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor C</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Children’s Literature</td>
<td>Children’s Literature in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor M</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Mathematics Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor A</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>English Education; Young Adult Literature; and Literary Criticism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Summaries of profiles of five professor participants.

The following table (see Table 2) provides a broad picture of the eight student participants in this study, including gender, their native language, focus of undergraduate studies, focus of their master degree, major academic field(s) and stage of their studies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Undergraduate Study</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Academic Field</th>
<th>Stage of Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instruction</td>
<td>Children’s Literature in Education</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English &amp; Secondary Education</td>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 11 R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tgalog</td>
<td>Liberal Studies</td>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>Cultural Studies in Education</td>
<td>PhD candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Educational Psychology</td>
<td>Higher Education; Cultural Studies in Education</td>
<td>PhD; Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Biology &amp; Biology Education</td>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>Qualitative Research, Measurement, and Evaluation in Education</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Brazilian</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Environmental Communication, Education, and Interpretation</td>
<td>Qualitative Research, Measurement, and Evaluation in Education</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Taiwanese</td>
<td>Mechanical Engineering</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Cultural Studies in Education</td>
<td>PhD Candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Summaries of profiles of eight student participants.

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11 Student R is a bilingual person, who came to the United States when he was twelve. He had been in ESL classes, but he was in AP classes in high school and taught advanced English classes as a high school teacher.
Table 3 General Summary of Data Sources and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
<th>General focus of analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>“histories” perceptions on academic genres perceptions on authorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>interpretations of personal “histories” interpretations of academic genres interpretations of authorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class documents (e.g., course syllabi, handouts, Writing from previous courses and candidacy Examinations with or without written feedback From faculty, etc)</td>
<td>and the expected academic genres the genesis and development of academic genres the genesis and development of authorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection

Table 3 shows a general summary of data sources and data analysis. My data collection for this study included interviews with the professor participants and the student participants, the questionnaire data, the final drafts of the candidacy examinations, course writing, and class documents from student participants.

I contacted thirty-two professors through email (see Appendix A), including a brief introduction of this study (see Appendix B). Six of them responded and recommended me some of their students, but some students could not participate in this study and as a result. It turned out that only five professors and eight doctoral students were willing to participate. Yet, I was planning to recruit two L1 students and two L2
students and their advisors for this study. I interviewed each of the professor participants, and each of the student participants. The interview with each professor participant lasted for an hour and the interview time with the student participants ranged from one and one half hours to three hours. At the interviews with students, I also collected writing and class documents, as mentioned earlier, from them.

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire for the student participants provided general information of their academic writing and graduate school experience as well as demographic information.

**Class Documents and Writing**

Only two participants provided me with class documents, including course syllabi, albeit all of them did give me copies of their final drafts for the candidacy examination and course writing. I am not interested in detailed text analysis, since I am not familiar with the content of the fields that most student participants are associated with. The analysis of their questions of the candidacy examination to helped me understand their professor’s expectation in light of genres, authorship, and use of citations for this candidacy examination.

**Interview Process**

I conducted semi-structured interviews to each of the participants (see Appendix F & G for interview questions). At the beginning of the interview, each of the participants to sign the consent forms (see Appendix C & D). I audiotaped the interview with their verbal consent, too. During the interviews with professors, I focused on their perception...
on the candidacy examination and the major tasks for doctoral students. Yet, one-hour
time limit forced me to drop the section of course writing. By contrast, during my
interviews with the student participants, the students allowed me to finish all the
interview questions. During the interviews, authorship and genres were new to many
students, so I needed to explain to them with examples. Yet, I did emphasize those were
my interpretations, and they did not need to agree with me.

After the interviews, I transcribed the tapes as soon as possible. I usually needed
to listen to the tapes once before I started transcribing them. After the transcription, I
recalled the interview process and took field notes to reflect my experience and my
concern of this study. I sorted and categorized the interview transcriptions to help me find
emergent patterns and issues, based on the major research questions.

Data Analyses

The goal of this qualitative study, combining a case study and a sociohistorical
approach, was to describe and interpret the phenomenon, the candidacy examination.
This study practiced as “situated and mediated activity” as proposed by Prior for
conducting qualitative sociocultural research (1998, p. 307). As a consequence, I pursued
data collection, analyses and the written representation by adopting an activity
perspective. The data collection of this study, as shown in Table 3.3, including a
questionnaire, class documents, and semi-structured interviews, was triangulated in order
to capture and examine the multiplicity of language-in-use—intertextuality and
intersubjectivity. The questionnaire provided the information of the writing experience of
the student, which was part of the “contexts” of the writing activity. I conducted semi-
structured interviews to investigate the perceptions of the participants on (1) the influence of personal histories on writing activities; (2) the role of writing activity in this academic enculturation process; and (3) the genres and authorship necessary for accomplishing the writing for courses and candidacy examinations successfully.

With my own personal situatedness, I analyzed data holistically and analytically, rather than reductively. Being holistic means that I reviewed all the data sets mainly to understand the content of the collected data as well as to search for a general picture composed of possible emergent patterns, issues, or themes related to the major research questions of this study. In addition, I examined the data sets more closely to interpret and analyze the stories behind the issues from the general picture from the previous holistic reading and analytic reading. I used the primary research questions as the core of this analysis and pay great attention to any of the emergent patterns related to the research questions.

To describe the process of a group of doctoral students (re) producing academic literacies when learning to write candidacy examinations, being interpretive and hermeneutic was essential for data collection and data analyses. Holistic and analytic analysis was recurrent and ongoing in analyzing data sets.

**Trustworthiness (Validity)**

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is equivalent to what validity means in positivist research. To establish trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) advocated four relevant criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability, parallel to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in quantitative research. And, to establish trustworthiness for this study, I did the following:
1. Persistent reflection, semi-structured interviews, and text analyses.

2. Progressive subjectivity through my own journal logs to record research activities and my own reflective thinking.

3. Triangulation of data collection, including collection of writing documents, semi-structured interviews, survey, field notes, and audiotaping.

4. Audit trail. I kept a detailed research log and make all documents and artifacts related to the study readily accessible to outside audit.

5. Member checks.

**Ethics**

I did what I could to protect their rights “in terms of their dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and avoidance of harm.” (Punch, 1986) I did the following to protect their rights:

1. Informed consent. I sought approval of my application of conducting this study from human subjects committee review from OSU Human Subjects Review committee. In both interviews, collection of texts from participants, survey, and audiotaping, I asked for permission from both faculty, if they participate, and students. The interviewees’ names were kept anonymous by using pseudonyms and codes.

2. Confidentiality. I would not reveal students’ comments on faculty in terms of their academic writing to jeopardize their position as students in this type of power relationship. And, during the study, I filed all
data in a safe place at my own apartment and I will destroy them when this study is done.

3. Stress Control. During the stressful periods of candidacy examinations, I did not conduct data collection from students until they are done with their candidacy examinations, to avoid creating necessary stress in their writing examinations.

4. Building rapport between the researcher and the researched.

5. Reciprocity. If I receive a grant or more for this proposed study, after paying all the cost for conducting this study, I will pay participants with rest of the funding accordingly. If not, I will offer gift certificate from one of the major bookstores. Moreover, I will be happy to help participants with their academic writing as much as I can during and after this process. More importantly, I will share with them the results of this study, which I assume can be very beneficial for them, who are very likely future professors, in advancing their knowledge base about academic writing. As a result, this will also benefit these
future professors in mentoring to their own future doctoral students in
learning appropriate academic writing.

6. Researcher Bias. Thick description can help take care of the concern of
researcher bias.
CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL DOCTORAL STUDENTS:
LEARNING TO WRITE LEGITIMATELY IN
RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF EDUCATION

Introduction

To study the enculturation process during the candidacy examination, I consider the academic departments that the participants were associated with as local disciplinary “communities.” Thus, the department of social and cultural foundation and the department of curriculum and teacher education in a college of education at a midwestern university represented the institutional context in which the students, who were the major “actors” had inspiring social interaction, especially with their advisors, and mediated tools, such as coursework, to socialize them into their respective fields.

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12 Casanave (1990) investigated how writing socialized a group of first-year doctoral students into the discipline of sociology. She described the sociology department as a community in socializing student in several senses. First, the community is where people live and work. Second, she perceives the required courses as mediated tools that helped students to learn the disciplinary language, concepts, and practices by coping with the same demands from taking the same courses. Another aspect of community, Casanave stated, “involves the actors—who is who within specified contexts, who associates with whom, and what ‘types’ of people they are” (p.108). I utilized these three senses of “community” to explicate the contexts of the candidacy examination.
Through the academic departments and their connection to the wider disciplinary communities, the students learned the significant ideas, disciplinary language and the practices of their academic fields.

Through interviewing, surveying, and listening to “the actors” of this study—five professors and eight doctoral students—I learned about their intellectual biographies, their candidacy-examination experiences, their perception of the role of writing in academic enculturation, and their interpretations of the necessary genres and sense of authorship, developed as they wrote for the candidacy examination. This chapter presents their viewpoints and experiences as professors and students, as qualified community members or as members-to-be. Several conclusions have been drawn from the data at different points in time on reading and rereading their viewpoints and experiences through my own evolving experiences and knowledge as a doctoral student, as a researcher, and as an educator.

This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, in order to arrive at a deep and comprehensive understanding of the writing contexts of each student participant during the candidacy examination, I describe the context of “the local disciplinary community.” This includes the institutional context of the candidacy examination, that is, the stated official interpretation of this examination, and the social and academic connections among the professors and the students. Using the four major research questions, my presentation of each case study focuses on the histories, that is, the experiences that the students had brought to their writing, the role of writing in the academic enculturation in their respective fields, the expectation for the candidacy examination, and expected authorship for writing the candidacy examination.
In the second section, I analyze and interpret the results, across five professor case studies and eight student case studies, primarily focusing on the four major research questions of this study to address how the students appropriated both general and field-specific legitimate writing for the candidacy examination.

**The Institutional Context for the Candidacy Examination**

Specifically, “the general examination” and “the candidacy examination” were used interchangeably in this study, because most of the professors and the students used these two names interchangeably in the interviews. Based on the interviews with the professors and my personal observation, it appears to me that the general examination aimed to test the breadth and depth of students’ comprehension of the field and allied areas of the study. However, the *Graduate School Handbook of the Ohio State University* (2001), indicates that the candidacy examination, formerly the general examination, is a test of a student’s comprehension of the field as well as allied areas of study, capacity as an independent researcher, and ability of clearly expressing ideas as a thinker although a student’s doctoral program may emphasize comprehensive knowledge of the field or it “may stress the research and background knowledge associated with the Dissertation” (quoted in p. 53). The following Table 4 indicates a general profile of the professors and their academic connection with the students.
Table 4 The Academic Connection between the Professor/Advisor participants and the Student Participants.

**Professor Case Stories**

Each of the professor cases begins by addressing histories, that is, their experiences of the general examination as doctoral students and their interpretations of good academic writing. Then, I discuss their perception of the role of writing in academic enculturation. Third, I address their expectation for the candidacy examination, focusing on genres. Finally, this section considers their understandings of how students’ authorship develops as they write the candidacy examination.
Case 1: Professor F

Histories

Professor F is a female full professor from the department of social and cultural foundation. She took her general examination three decades ago. As a doctoral student, getting a dissertation proposal accepted had higher priority than passing a general examination. As a professor, her students face a somewhat different challenge—getting dissertation proposals accepted is somewhat informal, but accomplishing the candidacy examination is critical.

Straight-ahead writing, clear and well organized, is what Professor F expects for the candidacy examination. Strongly influenced by deconstructivism, Professor F likes writing “that is aware of producing itself, reflects on it, and has layers of thought” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). She is suspicious of the transparent writing, the narrative, which is not “reflexive about its own investment” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). However, she does not expect self-reflexive writing from her students when writing for courses and candidacy examinations.

Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation

Professor F believes that one needs to write in order to survive in academia. Moreover, writing is an essential tool for self-inquiry. “I very much agree with Laura Richardson that writing is a method of inquiry” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). She believes that writing can help students to move in their thinking and learning. Therefore, talking as a teacher, she hopes students develop their writing skills continuously.
Professor F, describing herself as an interdisciplinary person, teaches qualitative research methods and she has strong interests in women’s studies and pedagogy. As a matter of fact, both education and women’s studies are interdisciplinary fields. Since she teaches research methods, she also sees herself in the human sciences, which is another interdisciplinary area, blending sociology, anthropology, history, and literary criticism. Education is not really a discipline, but an applied field with all of the disciplines, so it is really not easy for one, like Professor F, to identify situated disciplines.

However, to establish “professional visibility” in her academic fields, Professor F suggested doing conference presentations, which, if possible, can lead to articles in the best journals; writing books; doing good teaching; and mentoring doctoral students. “You go to conferences, and you present work that gets some attention. And, then you publish that work in, the best possible journals. And at some point, you write; you collect all of that and write a book. And, that gets you even more attention. And, then you do good teaching. And, you send your doctoral students out all over the world. And, that gives you a certain kind of professional visibility” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). She describes a rather clear agenda for beginning scholars. In fact, this clear agenda could be especially beneficial for doctoral students, who may not be aware of these academic rules.

The four basic tasks, according to Professor F, which doctoral students need to undertake in order to achieve their Ph.D. in the program, more or less, requires sophisticated writing skills. First, they need to get themselves accepted by advisors and get them funded. This means that students need to have solid academic backgrounds to attract professors and the ability to write clearly and to think critically. Students also need
to successfully engage in rigorous coursework and to “keep becoming increasingly sophisticated in their thinking and writing” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). The third task is the candidacy examination. By the end of coursework, students need to pull a committee together, and their emergent sense of their dissertation study would help the committee to organize the examination. Students can use their course work to put the committee together and to delineate a research direction. A very good candidacy examination is a process, in which a student becomes a colleague, who is assumed to think, to write, to talk, to defend one’s argument, and to make contribution to the literature. The dissertation is the fourth and final task.

**Expectation for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor F assumes that it would be unfair to expect original thinking from students at the stage of the candidacy examination. When reading students’ writing for the examination, she expects good command of English and writing conventions, the ability to synthesize across a smart selection of the pertinent literature, and the skills of developing one’s own arguments. First of all, the papers should be free of any type of mechanical errors or any misuse of the language. Secondly, she would like to see students’ “ability to synthesize across a rich selection of the pertinent literature” (Professor F, interview 3/11/03). Thirdly, after going through the listed references, she would like to find students’ arguments in their writing. In short, she expects a well-organized, well-supported, critical review of literature written in good-quality English, including a statement of the purpose of the writing early in the paper, on a focused area of the field.
Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination

The purpose of candidacy examinations, according to Professor F, is to have students demonstrate their ability to synthesize across the pertinent literature of a given area in the field, mostly based on their coursework. She emphasized that this synthesis hardly requires expertise, which she interprets as one’s ability to “help people think and act in a better way to address problems and situations.” Expecting expertise at the stage of candidacy examinations is premature to her, but it would be reasonable to expect this original thinking at the stage of dissertations. She does believe however that candidacy examinations could lay the groundwork for students to develop expertise, and they can start developing expertise in dissertation projects.

However, she interprets authorship in a very simple way, “Who wrote it?” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). She assumes that students should not copy too much out of the books as opposed to use of quotations in the right places. She is suspicious of “ownership” and “voice” that writers can claim for their products, because she considers that writing is a social construction and that everything we speak or write comes from “our historical moment and ideology dominant and counter dominant ideologies” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). Our thought and words, according to Bakhtin, are not really brand new, but they are originally derived from the other people’s words.

Nevertheless, Professor F did agree that candidacy examinations can certainly help students develop authority by finding one’s own voice in writing, since the candidacy examination expects one to be able to produce one’s own arguments. Selecting fine citations across pertinent literature is one approach to establish authority.

“…negotiating citational authority is part of that. That’s like a fine line, you want enough,
but not too much. And, they need to be integrated. They can’t just be stuck in there, but it’s also a matter of taste” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). Professor F does not want students to be exhaustive in the citations for the examination, but hopes they will cite smartly across their coursework based on their questions.

Additionally, Professor F assumes that students can establish authority in writing the candidacy examination if they can start applying their knowledge, learned from course reading and writing, by making authoritative and provocative arguments in a context of a specific research project. As an example, Professor F quoted what she considers a powerful statement from a Korean student’s writing for the examination in her own book as an example of how students can establish authority at this stage. “And, she’s trying to be so ethical, respectful, and reciprocal in the ways she’s working with these women as I was in my work. But that question was very haunting to me…And I found that’s a very powerful statement and I used that in my own work” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03).

Their research projects shared similar characteristics, and Professor F assumes this Korean student’s authority came from her ability to put her solid knowledge base and understanding of the ethics and responsibilities of feminist research to work in the context of her research project.
Case 2: Professor D

Histories

Professor D is a male middle-age professor in the department of social and cultural foundation with research/scholarship emphasis on applied research and evaluation methodology with content focus on educational assessment of students and programs, survey methodology, alternative assessment strategies, and educational change. Professor D did his general examination more than three decades ago, which included three four-hour days doing the monitored examination, without any materials and resources. He had to write from memory. However, Professor D lamented that this is not how his profession operates. He had never gone through a similar experience in his career, that is, sitting down to recall all the information based on memory to addresses a problem. As a consequence, at the general examination, he tells students that they can use any resources as long as they synthesize and write up the information themselves.

Professor D admitted that he is a rather compulsive editor, so he usually makes a number of comments and notes when he reads papers. “I want to be able to see that they can undertake problems and work it through in a sense of understanding to be able to present that in a reasonable fashion, so that readers can understand what they did and would be able to evaluate that using rubrics of some sort to look at that writing” (Professor D, interview, 3/4/03). At one level, he expects students to have good-quality English, not a lot of typos, a lot of common faults, or a lot of grammatical problems. At another level, he wants to see students organize their ideas in order to make them flow logically without having readers struggle to figure out the specific organization of their
writings for comprehension. More importantly, he wants to see good content that demonstrates students’ problem-solving skills, based on their understanding of and applications of concepts.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

Professor D reported that writing plays vital role in the enculturation of his profession. To become a qualified member in his fields, according to Professor D, one would need to publish in referee outlets. He described that a traditional way to get established is to conduct research studies and write up research reports in the form of technical reports or in a more user-friendly or public consumption outlet. Professor D stated that publishing in high-quality outlets could be one way to achieve authority or expertise in the field, because the other people, who work on similar studies, would need to cite them. Second, one can be recognized as a reviewer, an editor, or one can be asked to review manuscripts when he or she starts to get a reputation as someone with expertise in certain areas of the field. To increase professional recognition, one can secure grant, and other people who read these grants would see the quality of his or her work and ideas.

Given the importance of writing in establishing one’s professional visibility in applied statistics, Professor D believes in the importance of getting students to write about what they have learned by giving me an example task from his survey research course. “…they can take a problem, address the problem and write perhaps a procedure section, write perhaps a data analysis section, write perhaps an interpretation section as practice…”(Professor D, interview, 3/4/03). He intended to guide students how to “behave” as a professional by providing writing assignments that required students to practice analyzing and writing research reports. Moreover, he considers that working
with people, who have done this type of work before, could be one way to learn to be a professional in the field and that reading what other people have done would be another approach to enhance one’s knowledge base in methodology as well as in academic writing.

**Expectation for the candidacy examination**

Interestingly, his candidacy examination questions required his students to analyze data sets and write up the research reports for lay people. After seeing the level of these students’ technical knowledge and technical skills in his courses, he believes that they need to learn to deal with this challenge—after they graduate they need to translate the results of their sophisticated analysis into a language that non-experts can understand.

Professor D has rubrics for his course writing, but not one for the candidacy examination. He explained that his “general” high expectations could encourage students to do their best, rather than simply meeting his rubrics and “staying there.” He would like to see if students “can master, convey professional arguments to address the dimensions that I ask about” (Professor D, interview, 3/4/03). He takes on the role of a journal editor or a journal reviewer. “…Did they make a convincing argument to me? Did they defend their positions?” (Professor F, interview, 3/4/03). However, there could be some little things that students could forget or could have done a better job due to their status as novices; he tries not to let little things bother his perspectives in reading their writing for the examination.
**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor D explained that the authority or expertise of students’ writing for the candidacy examination comes from “how well you express yourself, how well you understand concepts, [and] how well you can synthesize and integrate these ideas” (Professor F, interview 3/4/03). Interestingly, his interpretation of authority and expertise for the candidacy examination, which overlaps with most of his interpretation of good academic writing, as described earlier, is similar to the institutional interpretation of this examination at this mid-western university. However, writing for lay people created an atypical genre for writing a candidacy examination. As a consequence, students would not need as many citations as they normally would for their course writing, since lay people are not concerned about citations. However, students would need to integrate and express information in the language to let their lay readers know that they have the knowledge base without relying on citations as part of their professional skills.

**Case 3: Professor C**

**Histories**

Professor C, who is a well-known author of fiction for children in this country, is a fairly low-key soft-spoken female professor in the section of Drama, Language Arts, Children’s Literature, and Reading within the department of curriculum and teacher education. Professor C took her generals examination, a sit-in situation, some two decades ago. Professor C described that taking this examination was scary and stressful, because she could only write from her memory. It was not common for professors and students to negotiate on the questions to the degree that happens now in the department.
that she is teaching, so that sometimes there were unexpected questions. “I always think
when I help people do this, they should just calm down, because it could be lot worse”
(Professor C, interview, 3/10/03). The candidacy examination, by its high-stakes nature,
can be one of the most stressful stages of most people’s doctoral programs. She believes
that if one cannot try to relax, it could be hard for one to face and to deal with the
intensive intellectual and physical challenges. Professor C stated that sometimes she and
other committee members would suggest student to do sit-down examinations if students
who are perfectionist and are not able to leave their writing alone, that is, not able to
complete their revisions. Sometimes, people would choose to do sit-down examinations
to speed up the process of this candidacy examination.

Professor C’s interpretation of good academic writing for the candidacy
examinations and her favorable comments on Student L’s, one of her advisees, writing
reveals her perceptions about good academic writing. Good academic writing needs to
include good mechanics and a well-constructed writing, and furthermore, one’s use of
citations that reflect one’s knowledge base of the field, so knowing which work is more
important than the others and the rationale behind that judgment is a key part of the
examination. The writing ought to be coherent, well supported, and clear.

I should also say I once had a notion that if I were teaching graduate
students at the Ph.D. level, I wouldn’t need to worry about things about
mechanics, and construction of writing. I thought I wouldn’t have to, but
I was wrong. I just wonder what people think what apostrophes are for.
And anyway, that figures out my notions of what good writers should be,
in command of the conventions of writing, not just in the field, but in the
language. (Professor C, interview 3/10/03)
Professor C wants to see evidence that the student is a good writer with good command of writing conventions and, more importantly, has a solid knowledge base of the field by being able to connect their thought to the literature.

**Role of Writing**

Professor C pointed out two overlapping roles of writing in this enculturation process. First, to become an academic, one needs to contribute to the field by writing publications; thus, doctoral students need to learn how to get into this process, figuring out what to write a decent piece and how to display their writing to the field. This explains why they have set up a program that requires people to write for the candidacy examination, the dissertation proposal, and the dissertation. Secondly, writing is certainly one way to sharpen one’s thinking to a deeper extent, compared to just thinking or talking about a given topic; that is, writing is a powerful tool for self-inquiry. Many students may find writing papers burdensome, but writing helps students to figure out what they have been learning through writing, for instance, a position paper.

Moreover, writing plays an essential role in acquiring a Ph.D. from her program. The major tasks, Professor C mentioned, which doctoral students need to undertake in their program, require a fair amount of skillful writing. These tasks include coursework, including required and elective courses, the candidacy examination, and finally the dissertation proposal and the dissertation.

**Expectation for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor C reported that she negotiates with students about what type of papers for the candidacy examination. These papers can take the form of a research proposal to draft students’ proposal ideas, a draft for real publications, a syllabus for Children’s
Literature courses with an extended rationale, and a synthesis paper, analyzing and synthesizing questions and issues. However, literature review would need to be in students’ writing, regardless of the specific genre that students write for their candidacy examination. Furthermore, clear, coherent, and understandable content in students’ responses to their candidacy examination questions is what Professor C would look for.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor C has two different sets of standards for the use of citations for two different kinds of candidacy examinations. For those who write four-hour monitored examinations, she expects them to be aware whose work comes first, rather than just memorizing the publishing years although usually if people are familiar with the material, they remember the year. Those who do take-home examinations need to be responsible for using their citations as bibliographical references, as in a published piece. The precise nature of different questions creates different expectation. Those who work on a paper for a real publication would need to include original thought along with various backgrounds citations. Professor C makes her expectation clear to her students. Professor C would let students know what citations need to be in their writing. She hopes to “steer them into the direction that I think they ought to be going” (Professor C, interview, 3/10/03), since learning to write for this high-stakes examination is a very important learning experiences for students. In other words, the format of the examination— sit-down or take-home—shapes how Professor C’s students authorize their arguments.
Case 4: Professor M

Histories

Professor M, who is a male Educational Psychologist with specific research interests in mathematics learning and instruction, is an assistant professor in the department of curriculum and teacher education. As a doctoral student, his sit-down comprehensive examination had less the articulation of ideas that needed to be made clear, but was not judged as much as take-home candidacy examinations. Compared to sit-down examinations, which require students to write from their memory within hours, take-home examinations allow students to review and synthesize necessary information for their writing and give students much more time to complete writing. With more time and distance, students can accomplish more articulated reviews and arguments for their take-home writing.

When I asked Professor M what his interpretation of good academic writing was, he told me “Synthesis of ideas in the development of new ideas” (Professor M, interview, 2/26/03). Good academic writing includes good command of English and of writing conventions, but, more importantly, synthesis of the ideas from the related previous studies, and one’s own perspectives or arguments based on the review of the literature of the topics that one is pursuing.

Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation

According to Professor M, writing plays an essential role for one to become a qualified member in the field, enabling one to learn what counts as academically acceptable writing in his field and pushing one to synthesize what he or she has learned from reading the field. Based on his firm beliefs that course writing should prepare
students for their candidacy examination and that practice makes progress from his own experiences. The writing assignments for his courses require students to write analysis of each study that students choose to review, “pulling apart the pieces, analyzing, and synthesizing” (Professor M, interview, 2/26/03). He believes that writing helps one understand reading, because, before one can organize ideas out of reading in a logical order, one needs to fully understand the content of reading, pushing one to critically evaluate ideas. One’s critical evaluations create new ideas and arguments.

Professor M believes that writing is critical to successful academic enculturation. “Through writing, we not only learn how to write for academic fields, but through writing, we synthesize the knowledge for ourselves” (Professor M, interview 2/26/03). The process of writing, Professor M believes, can enhance our understanding of previous research or theories of the field. In addition to course writing, he encourages his students to submit proposals to conferences for presentations and to journals for publications, although he did not see getting publications as a requirement for beginning professors. To ensure that his doctoral students can achieve successful academic appropriation, he works closely with his advisees on their writing for conference presentations and for journal publications.

**Expectation for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor M asked Student W, one of Professor M’s advisees, to write a research proposal for his candidacy examination, similar to what students need to do for his courses.

I ask students to develop, for each of my courses, a research proposal, so that usually begins with a broad introductory section, then a review of research, and the introductory certainly has theoretical perspectives in it, a review of
research, which is to develop an argument for methods that they propose in their research study. So that’s what I try to focus on in my courses and that’s what I ask in the general. It’s really a research-proposed study, developed from analysis and synthesis of the research articles. (Professor M, interview, 2/26/03)

Professor M expects students to write an introduction to argue for the need of their proposed study, a review of the previous research, followed by a review of the literature on the specific issues that one intends to pursue in the proposal, and the research methods to be used for the proposed study.

Regarding what counts as good writing for the candidacy examination, Professor M briefly stated that he expects to see writing that includes the major authors, critiques of the previous studies, and one’s own perspectives on the focused issues.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

In terms of authorship for the candidacy examination, Professor M used Student W’s writing as an example to explain how authorship can be established in this context. He commented that although at this stage students tend to show certain levels of competence, they certainly have not reached full authority. “I am not certain if he did that. That’s something that began here, but he needs to continue establishing this in his writing for his proposal” (Professor M, interview, 2/26/03). Professor M considers Student W’s development as an authority by first explaining that he has reached some level of competency, as shown in his synthesis of the literature review, which is appropriate to the examination, but he also looks forward to seeing Student W’s authority continue to develop over time. This step, Professor M believes, includes a longer process.
Specifically regarding the use of citations, which, in a way, demonstrates one’s authorship for writing the candidacy examination, he expects students to explicate the research methods of the cited studies before the argument for the proposed studies for writing for the examination as well as for his courses. Students can learn his expectation on citations through coursework and through independent studies.

**Case 5: Professor A**

**Histories**

Professor A, who was born in Austria and grew up in Australia, using German as L1 and English as L2, is a female associate professor in the department of curriculum and teacher education. She completed her undergraduate degree in English and history and her master degree in English, literature, and language in Australia and had her Ph.D. degree in language education, second language acquisition, and applied linguistics in the United States. Her research interests include cross-cultural features of written discourse (comparative rhetoric), the impact of teachers revisiting content-area knowledge and discipline-specific knowledge, teacher change and teacher learning over time, recent literary theory and young adult literature, and alternative assessment in literature.

Professor A wrote three papers for her general examination for three publications as an initiation into the academy, based on her committee’s encouragement. In this process, she stated that she had to prove that she could independently do the reading and writing for her examination without feedback from her committee, although she was
aware that she could ask her committee members questions if she needed advice.

According to Professor A, the way her committee enculturated her reflects how she works with her advisees.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

According to Professor A, writing plays a critical role in this enculturation process. It has both a pragmatic purpose, such as establishing one’s professional visibility, and also functions as a very valuable cognitive mode in enabling one to manufacture knowledge.

Writing is critical. If you don’t write, you won’t get tenured. If you won’t write, you won’t become visible. If you don’t write, you can’t get the grants. That pragmatic level, it’s critical. Also it’s critical in other ways. Writing is a way to help you formulate and confirm your knowledge, because in the process of writing, you think about your learning and thinking. It has a practical purpose, in establishing your presence in the field, and it also has a very valuable cognitive contribution to knowledge getting and knowledge gaining, and knowledge consolidation.

(Professor A, interview 4/2/03)

In short, pragmatically, one needs to write to be tenured and to be promoted; cognitively, writing helps one to develop knowledge. She mentioned that one, after getting tenure and promotion, still needs to remain consistently productive in publishing scholarly products, in the form of books and journal articles.

Furthermore, writing is critical for one to complete the required tasks, which include course work, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation, to acquire a Ph.D. in her program. Professor A believes that the candidacy examination is a critical point in academic enculturation, because students need to write to demonstrate their solid knowledge base of the focused areas that they are interested in the field, “knowing what has been researched and what has not, knowing what needs to be pursued and what is
peripheral” (Professor A, interview, 4/2/03). Additionally, students need to make their
own arguments in order to develop ownership of their thought in writing, which is
required for their dissertation writing.

**Expectations for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor A noted that in general the candidacy examination asks students to write
a series of essays, maybe 25-30 pages, doubled spaced, APA style. The essay also needs
to demonstrate students’ deep and comprehensive discussion of the knowledge of the
field. “If you can’t write an introduction, development, and conclusion across thirty pages,
you shouldn’t be doing this” (Professor A, interview, 4/2/03). Basically, one’s writing for
the candidacy examination is to prove that candidates are able to summarize, analyze,
synthesize and make argument based on the current discussions on certain areas of the
field. Professor A indicated that summarizing, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating the
literature and writing it up is the least that one should know by the time when one comes
to the stage of candidacy examination. If one cannot handle writing at this level, it would
be really difficult to accomplish a dissertation. This could be part of the hidden
curriculum of doctoral programs as Professor A lamented at the beginning of this
interview. People usually assume critical thinking and writing abilities should develop
naturally after accomplishing tons of reading and writing tasks in the program. Professor
A has rather high expectation for the candidacy examination. “Maybe in my mind, this
way of writing is a kind of thinking, multilevel thinking; good scholarship is complex
thinking. It’s not neutral. It’s not simplistic, so these things signal to me a way a person
thinks. It’s not just writing per se. It’s what the writing reflects about the way the mind is
working” (Professor A, interview, 4/2/03). Professor A expects students’ writing to show
that they are capable of scholarly thinking, but she lamented that she only shares her expectations for this high-stakes examination with students who “asked.” This implies that students need to learn to become active “actors” on the “stage” of academic enculturation in order to achieve successful performance.

Regarding evaluative criteria, Professor A sees this candidacy examination as a gateway to the next stage, the dissertation. “So, in my mind, I think to myself that one has to be realistic. If you allow one to go through candidacy exam, you have to assume that you are going to support them through dissertation. It’s not just an end point. It’s also a beginning point. Two sides of a coin. You have to be clear about that” (Professor A, interview, 4/2/03). Professor A looks for the literature for one layer, and for another, she goes back to consider students’ potentials from what she knows about them. Are the students capable of growing, since at this stage, students are still novices? The fact that some students fail the examination would indicate the following: very scrappy information, clear evidence of no reading, no analysis, and very weak interpretation, synthesis, and evaluation of the information. In short, this failure indicates that students do not make much effort in scholarly “thinking,” regarding the published works in their fields, and are not qualified to move to the dissertation stage yet, if at all.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Professor A understands that developing authorship is a developmental issue. Usually, in writing for the candidacy examination, one writes for teacher examiners (Britton et al. 1975), showing and telling them about what he or she knows about the specific areas of the field. However, to Professor A, reviews of literature will be
meaningless if one cannot make his or her own arguments to show the committee that he or she is ready to move to the dissertation stage, which requires one to take a stand and defend it.

**Student Case Studies**

Each student case study includes four major sections. The section begins by addressing “histories,” that is, the graduate-school and academic writing experiences, focusing on the most challenging tasks in the doctoral program, interpretations of good academic writing, and the major difficulties in writing the candidacy examination. The second section considers the students’ perceptions of the role of writing in academic enculturation. The third section addresses the students’ expectations for the candidacy examination by considering their perceptions of the required genres and of faculty’s expectations for the genres and the grading criteria for the candidacy examination. The final section focuses on the expected authorship for writing the candidacy examination by considering how students established authorship or ownership in their writing for the candidacy examination and how students perceived faculty’s expectations for authorship or ownership or the use of citations for the candidacy examination.

**Case 1: Student L**

**Histories**

Student L, who is one of Professor C’s advisees, is currently an athletic fourth-grade English teacher, working on her data collection for her dissertation. This is her 27th year teaching in elementary schools. Student L did her undergraduate study in elementary education and her master in curriculum and instruction, and is doing her Ph.D. in the department of curriculum and teacher education with a specific focus on
children’s literature. She did her candidacy examination in the summer of 2002 and had her dissertation proposal accepted in the autumn quarter, since one of the questions for her candidacy examination was actually her draft of her dissertation proposal. After some revisions, her dissertation proposal was ready to go and she was ready for data collection very shortly after that.

After teaching for some 26 years in elementary schools, Student L intends to teach within a college setting as a teacher trainer and researcher as her plan for the next stage of her career. Based on her long-term teaching experiences in elementary schools and a credential from getting a Ph.D. degree, she certainly will be an enthusiastic teacher trainer.

**Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program**

The most challenging task for Student L to achieve this Ph.D. degree was meeting her residency requirement. With her family responsibility, especially financially, it had been really difficult to be away from her teaching job for a year, although she did really appreciate this opportunity to focus most of her time on her study and teaching. “…that year was like that incredible gift to myself. I did my residency last year and I loved it. I loved everything about it” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03). Before doing her residency, Student L had been away from academic culture for a long time, so she considers it incredible to change her daily schedule to be able to focus on her coursework and do the work that she did as her teaching assistantship.
Interpretations of Good Academic Writing

Student L learned about some rules for producing good academic writing in high school, but there’s no explicit instruction on writing according to her. One of the required courses from her department included writing styles that faculty members would expect from doctoral students’ writing. Student L mentioned in the interview that this helped her to figure out that her committee members expected APA (American Psychological Association) writing style and “effective” academic writing for the candidacy examination. Student L indicated that the characteristics of “effective” academic writing should include clarity, conciseness, good organization, and good mechanics especially in the use of language. She did not change her perceptions of the characteristics of good academic writing after her study in the doctoral program; however, she has been more critical in her thinking with a stronger knowledge base, especially in her field. She indicated that she is always a word person, good at writing and loves to read.

The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination

However, organizing the sheer volume of the materials for producing cohesive writing for her candidacy examination was one of the major difficulties in this process. She made notes to help “weld” through everything in her writing. She had mental outlines or organization for her course writing prior to this candidacy examination; that is, she could write all the way through without stopping. Due to the cognitive load from the
huge volume of the materials that she needed to synthesize, she wrote differently; she
needed to jump all over the places, “writing a piece in this section, and then it reminded
me something else and I go and write in that section” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03).

Prior to her candidacy examination, she negotiated the questions with her
committee members and had really helpful independent studies from them for preparing
herself for this examination, but after the start of this examination, there was no
communication between her and her committee members. She did have a friend who
could listen to her and provided her important emotional and moral support.

Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation

Student L sees herself in education with specific interests and focus on children’s
literature, particularly in gender issues. To establish expertise in her field, Student L,
speaking for herself, perceived that coursework was very invaluable, because reading can
help one to establish necessary knowledge base of the “significant ideas” in the field in
order to become a qualified member, by developing necessary social relationships with
the other people, who are in the same field, as network development. She also indicated
that discussions with the other doctoral students and faculty had been important in this
enculturation process.

Moreover, writing means a great deal to Student L both personally and
pragmatically in this academic enculturation. “I have found that the process of writing
forces me to clarify my thoughts. It forces me to develop some kind of understanding”
(Student L, interview, 3/11/03). Writing to Student L represents means for self-inquiry to
clarify her thought as a personal purpose and for publications as a pragmatic purpose in
order to establish herself in the field. “The other thing, talking about establishing your
expertise, writing eventually makes publications. You need to publish” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03). She claimed that writing publications brings one professional recognition and promotion, and as a result, writing is essential in this process of becoming qualified or even expert members in academic fields. “Publish or perish. I think it starts here. I know the big and real pressure [of publications] if when you’re out there” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03). Student L believes that good writing and frequent publications of good-quality research on specific “niche” in the field in well-respected journals are how experts establish authority on certain topics in her field.

Expectations for the Candidacy Examination

Student L, based on her experiences from previous courses, assumed that APA (American Psychological Association) writing style was what she needed to stick to for writing her candidacy examination, so she had the APA publication manual next to her all the time for making sure that her format was correct. In terms of organization of her writing for the examination, Student L structured her thought based on the nature of the questions and the way that each of her questions was specifically structured.

As she wrote for the examination, Student L focused on proving herself by doing more quoting than she would normally do and on answering the questions by trying to cover every aspect of the questions. Additionally, she believed that good writing for the candidacy examination should include one’s reflective thoughts on his or her knowledge, broad enough and deep enough, and well-developed writing ability.

Nevertheless, Student L indicated that a strong knowledge base of the field enables one to acquire the “language of the discipline,” which represents part of the language of the expertise of the field. “I think we can’t claim any kind of expertise
without a real strong firm knowledge base and so, in a sense, I was proving that I have that knowledge base…” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03). In order to prove to her committee members that she was ready to move on to her dissertation stage, Student L assumed that the “fine” selection of quotations and her “voices” in her writing for the examination could demonstrate her understanding of the disciplinary discourse and scholarships on certain topics in her field. That is, her response papers not only included “fine” selection of the major works, but also her perspectives on certain “significant” issues in her field.

Yet, Student L considers that publishing response papers for the candidacy examination is not a realistic goal, due to the facts that time is limited for writing and that certain nature of the questions for candidacy examination limits the possibility for producing publications.

However, regarding evaluative criteria, Student L indicated that she was not clear how her committee members determined who passed or not passed. “But truly doing into it, I had no idea how I was going to be evaluated, but I just trusted my committee members. I knew that they wouldn’t encourage me to do this if they thought I wasn’t ready” (Student L, interview, 3/11/03). The grading criteria are still a mystery to Student L.

Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination

Student L indicated that, in a sense, she did establish authorship to some level for the candidacy examination, but in another sense, she was not able to do so.

I think I did and I did not. I did in my response papers to some of the questions. I think my voice is very strong in my proposal, because it’s such a personal thing. I think my voice is strong in my third question,
which was more a literary analysis. It’s my analysis. But, for my first question, I don’t think my voice is strong, because of the nature of the question.
(Student L, interview, 3/11/03)

Student L used “voices” to represent her “authorial ownership” in the response papers for the examination. The nature of the examination questions determined how strong Student L could bring “personal voices” to her response papers. Out of three response papers for the examination, Student L assumed that, in a sense, her voices in the response papers of a literary analysis and of her dissertation proposal were stronger than the paper for her first question. Compared to the first question, which was a literature review, her “literary analysis” for the second question and her arguments for the need and her “design” of her dissertation study demonstrated more of her “talk.” However, she reported that her primary goal for her candidacy examination was to prove how much reading that she had done for writing the response papers; that is, she intended to demonstrate that she was fairly “engaged” with the published scholarships in her respective field through “citational negotiation.” She perceived the use of citations as one way to establish her “authority” in her writing for the examination. Thus, she believed that her review of literature for the first question also demonstrated “authority” to some level, in a different sense.

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13 Based on the Bakhtinian notions of “appropriation,” once one has appropriated the authoritative discourse, which is related to centripetal forces, his or her internally persuasive discourse, which is related to centrifugal forces, arises. As one “reaccentuates” the others’ words, practices, and “worlds,” his or her “personal” perspectives not only “appropriate” himself or herself, but also (re)shape and (re)define practices of his or her disciplinary community—that is, internally persuasive discourse to some level can redefine authoritative discourse, and the centrifugal forces can reshape the centripetal forces during the enculturation process. Thus, one can claim “authority” to some level as he or she “produces” personal “arguments” on certain issues in the field, although originally thinking can claim much more authority than “personal arguments.”
Furthermore, Student L reported that committee members suggested some key “works” to her for answering the questions from the independent studies prior to the examination. She perceived their expectations through their suggested key works for the examination, although she did not feel compelled to cite them for her writing. Despite the need to prove herself, Student L reported that she only cited the works that had profound things to say for her writing, rather than just “throwing out their names there” to “satisfy” her committee members’ expectations. In other words, her selection of citations was more her own choice, rather than the influence from her committee members.

Interestingly, Student L claimed that she used more quotations as she wrote the response papers for the candidacy examination than she normally did for course writing and journal articles in order to prove that she knew what knowledge was “legitimate” and what knowledge is “peripheral.” However, while working with one of her professors on a journal article, Student L learned that too many quotations could bury her voice.

**Case 2: Student M**

**Histories**

Student M, thirty years old, is one of Professor A’s advisees and a Ph.D. candidate in the department of curriculum and teacher education. Tall, polite, somewhat shy, but articulate in sharing his opinions with others, he did his undergraduate study in English and his master in English and secondary education and had taught high school English for four years before he came back to graduate school for his doctoral degree. He had been working on the campus’s center for writing as the assistant director for a number of years, and he is interested pursuing a career in a college or university setting, as a teacher trainer for pre-service and in-service high school English teachers.
Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program

To earn a Ph.D. degree from his program, in general, Student M considers the major tasks as coursework, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation. He believes that coursework enables students to acquire the necessary knowledge base of the field; that the candidacy examination enables students to prove that they know the conversations of the specific areas in the field deeply and comprehensively and that they are ready for conducting their dissertation studies; and that the dissertation enables students to become independent scholars in the field.

Nevertheless, the most challenging tasks for Student M in achieving this Ph.D. degree are settling with his dissertation topic. Student M’s committee members did not think that developing his dissertation proposal as part of the candidacy examination would be a good idea, due to the time limit of this examination. He had guidance from a circle of professors in coping with the intellectual stress and emotional anxiety with helpful feedback and support.

Interpretations of Good Academic Writing

Given his experiences as a student and teacher of English, Student M is very comfortable and confident with his own writing. The rules that he had learned for writing research papers in high school had a profound influence on his perceptions of good academic writing, which include clarity of objective, a clearly stated thesis, a good organization, and sufficient evidence to support controlling ideas of the writing. When he was in college and in his master program in English, he continued to practice these rules, which are typical for writing conventional research papers. However, he became somewhat “at a loss” when he first came to the Ph.D. program, where students are
encouraged to include their personal voices and personality into their writing. “I felt I could do that to a point in my undergraduate and master program, but I was not sure that was the best thing to do…you look for proof, you look for evidence, but you don’t necessarily step into the paper yourself” (Student M, interview, 4/21/03). It took Student M some days to get used to and enjoy this “new academic writing.”

The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination

However, the major challenge of writing his candidacy examination was organizing his materials in order to figure out a clear focus for writing, especially the response paper for his first question, which was a literature review of rhetoric of composition over a fifty-year period. He did not like formal outlines, but he did have a general and tentative outline for the whole paper and next he developed “idea lists”, which were similar to grocery lists. Student M reported that in order to “see” the focus of the sections of his papers, he brainstormed and made a list of the ideas mentally before and during his writing. He constantly moved chunks of his writing around, and revising all the time until he was not able to squeeze any more ideas in his papers.

Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation

Student M is in the department of curriculum and teacher education and his focused area is mainly on pre-service English education teachers, working with Med [Master of Education] students as they go through their year-long certification program at this mid-western university. To establish authority in the field, Student M notes that one needs to have plenty of experiences in working with students for a long time.
Additionally, one needs to conduct research, writes publications, especially reader-friendly work, and presents at conferences, in order to enter the current conversations of the discipline.

Specifically, based on his observations and his experiences in working with faculty who are well-known in their respective fields, Student M pointed out that by doing careful and comprehensive research and reader-friendly writing to report their findings, experts establish themselves.

People like Dr. C and Dr. N, a lot of their authorities comes from the fact that they do really careful research and they are very comprehensive, very thorough in what they do. I think that gives them some authority that gets them to the stage of writing. When they do write, their work was really accessible and very easy for readers to understand it...You can really understand what is it that they have done and it’s easy for you to follow their line of thinking. (Student M, interview, 4/21/03)

Student M pinpointed that some people can conduct great research, but may not be able to report their work in a reader-friendly language to make it accessible to readers; however, some people may not have much to write about their research, because their work may not be comprehensive and significant enough.

Student M commented that writing is important in academic enculturation. Mostly professors know about students through reading their writing, and students learn about the current conversations in the field through reading current research articles and publications. Furthermore, students may learn about the legitimate ways of writing in the field through attending to how people crafting their arguments in publications.
Expectations for Wiring the Candidacy Examination

When writing for the candidacy examination, Student M was not really aware if there were any specific “genres” that his committee members would expect from his writing, because he focused on collecting enough resources to do enough reading and engaging relevant scholarships, especially for responding to his first question. Student M recalled that the first question clearly required a literature review, based on the nature of this question and the feedback from his advisor, Professor A, but the professors assigned no specific “genres” to the second and third question. Therefore he responded to those questions as he would for his course writing. Student M claimed that he wrote synthesis papers in the “form” of expository writing for most of his course writing. He considered the genre as “half-synthesis and half expository.” He applied this “genre” of “half-synthesis and half-expository” to respond to his examination questions, except for the first one. “If I was reading someone else’s for the first time, could I make sense of what this person was trying to say?” (Student M, interview, 4/21/03) His main concern was if his writing was good enough in terms of transition, organization, and content; and he constantly revised his writing at the end of the day and at the start of the following day until he could not squeeze in any more ideas.

According to the nature of the first question and to the explicitly stated genre expectation from Student M’s advisor—she would expect to see a deep and comprehensive review of literature of rhetoric and composition—literature review is clearly the required genre for his first question. However, prior to the exam, he did not receive any instruction in terms of “genres” beyond references to be included in his writing. As a result, Student M wrote up his responses using the same approach that he
normally did for his course writing. In general, Student M reported that his committee members never described to him their evaluative criteria and their feedback to his writing was mainly content-based.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Student M is satisfied with his writing, given that he had successfully completed the candidacy examination with his committee’s blessings. The approval from his committee members assured him that he is ready to pursue his dissertation as an “independent researcher” in his field. Moreover, comprehensive and critical reviews of literature on certain areas in his field helped him develop the knowledge that he needed for his dissertation as well as for participating the current conversations in his field.

Student M negotiated the candidacy examination questions with his committee members, so that his voices, which represented his authorial ownership, could be embedded in the construction of his questions. For his first question, for example, Student M was concerned that his voices might be buried by the massive review of the literature, although his ways of organizing the review might allow him to reveal some of his own voices. “At least, in term of those exam questions, most papers that I wrote, the introduction and the conclusion are always the places where I feel my voices come through really clearly, because I see that’s the opportunity that I set the table for the reader and then try to wrap things up in some cohesive way at the end” (Student M, interview, 4/21/03). The beginning and the end of each of the body paragraphs were where Student M perceived his voices were stronger than the rest of the paragraph. In addition, he commented that the introduction and the conclusion paragraphs of his responses were the “places” where he could trace his voices.
Moreover, there were some forms of authorship in Student M’s attempts to include the key “works” in the field in order to demonstrate that he knows about the field and to take a stand on agreements and disagreements. In “constructing” his voices in the responses for the examination, Student M revealed his practice of agency, as shown in his decisions regarding what to include, what not to include, and how to organize the materials for writing.

Furthermore, the nature of his candidacy examination questions revealed the different expectations of his committee members regarding his use of citations. For his first question, for example, he did a comprehensive review of literature of rhetoric and composition for the past five decades and he assumed that he might need more citations for this given question than the other two questions, which were more focused in specific areas. Moreover, on some occasions, his committee members pointed out that he might want to include certain citations to help him answer the questions. To demonstrate that he knew about the key works in the field, Student M did include the suggested citations, but necessarily that he agreed with the viewpoints of all of the suggested works by his committee members.

Case 3: Student R

Histories

Student R, a thirty-year-old Filipino\(^{14}\), came to the United States at the age of twelve. He is multilingual, fluent in English, Spanish, and Tagalog. He is one of Professor F’s advisees. He once was placed in the ESL (English as a second language) class during junior high, but by high school he was taking AP English classes and

\(^{14}\) Student R prefers “Philipino” to “Philippine American” in identifying himself.
eventually he taught advanced freshman English classes as a public school teacher. He did his undergraduate work in liberal studies, focusing on literature and history, and he has a master degree in educational administration while working full-time in the office of Student Affairs.

“I want to learn. I want to be transformed. I want to take myself to the next level” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). As this comment suggests that he hopes to grow intellectually and politically. Student R wants to teach and do research at the university level, so he sees this Ph.D. degree as a necessary credential for achieving his career as well as personal goal. The graduate program allows him to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct his knowledge base and serves as a stepping-stone to achieve his life goal.

**Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program**

Concerning the major tasks of his doctoral program, Student R noted that one needs to take required courses and then constructs one’s program based on his personal interests, career goals, and his advisor’s recommendation and approval. He came here to his program with a particular project in mind, so that he took particular courses in order to expand his ideas. His advisor is not an expert in what he wants to pursue, but she supports him to make sure that he goes through his graduate studies with the most rigorous training, and an open mind. Student R believes that he has received an excellent graduate training at this university.

Cultural difference or the lack of recognition of the cultural differences has been one the most challenging task for Student R, who was originally from California, in pursuing his doctoral education. He considers the lack of racial/ethnic diversity was difficult.
I think that [lack of diversity] plays out even in the academic field, because issues that I raise here seem very alien and foreign to them, to many professors. In having discussions, they just think I’m this weird person talking about all these different things, because I come from a different perspective, coming from a different place, coming from different experiences.
(Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

However, Student R tried to turn these experiences into a positive challenge as he learned to adjust and to acculturate in a new setting like this. He says that after he completes his studies, there is a good chance that he may teach at a research university similar to his graduate school, so he chose to learn to cope with the demands of his graduate program. Finding a support mechanism was essential for him to survive graduate school. Specifically, he found a support group in his first-year doctoral program. “It was good that most of us were coming from a very critical perspective, so we shared very similar views in terms of being in the academy, why we are continuing our political work, and why in a place like this we need to bond together to share and learn and challenge each other” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). He “hung out” with people who were writing their dissertations, who are doing their candidacy examination, or who were first-year students like him. This kind of “informal mentorship” within support communities has been important to his success and he wants to provide the same support to new students of his program and his own students in the future.

Interpretation of Good Academic Writing

After working for three years in the Student Affairs office and teaching English for another four years, his perception of good academic writing is high. The fact that his high school teachers encouraged students to submit their writing to contests might have

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created his high expectation for good academic writing. In this doctoral program, he has learned that rather than possessing simple formula, the genres of academic writing are exploding.

When I got into the graduate school doctoral program; I realize that there were so many different ways of writing for academics. Looking at history, sociology, literature, and college of education. I mean there is poetry now for academic writing, drama. It has opened up. Now we can do this work, because of the explosion of the genres of academic writing. ...There is also an explosion in terms of what is considered as good academic writing. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

Student R likes to read academic writing that does not bore him. By the same token, he wants his writing to be able to inspire, transform, and touch readers mentally, emotionally, and psychologically, while challenging them to think differently.

When asked if he had been given any specific rules for good academic writing, Student R indicated that APA, MLA, Chicago styles offer some tips for correct academic writing. He has also found help from taking writing courses and proposal development classes. More importantly, journal articles and books provide good writing models for him to get papers published; yet he intends to explore and develop good writing models for himself in his journey of transformation. “But the bottom line for me, yes, I follow them, but I also don’t follow them. It has to negotiate within you. I want to write for myself ultimately” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). He claimed that exploring and developing good writing models for his writing might be a life-long journey.

**The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination**

However, part of the key difficulty of the candidacy examination that Student R faced was isolation, although it is necessary for one to be alone in order to collect thoughts for writing the examination. Student R reported that he is a very social person
and needs friends to be around all the time. During the examination, he made sure that he had dinner with friends whom he cares about, went running to be in nature and went to the gym.

The intellectual challenge of Student R to have at least one or two pieces of his writing from the candidacy examination published formed nagging concern throughout the examination. He needed to ask himself frequently if his writing was good enough, theoretically savvy, and if he was analyzing well. At the same time, his issues regarding insecurity emerged. “…graduate school is a place where your insecurity gets so drawn out. You know, you can be a super, super confident person in your professional world and somehow you are in graduate school and you become so insecure. So, my issues of insecurity came out. So, that’s another major difficulty” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). He rewarded himself with little gifts when he thought he did a good job in reading and writing for his examination. For example, he could eat ice cream when he finished writing for three straight hours; he could go running if he read journal articles and took notes.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

Student R is in the department of social and cultural foundation, an interdisciplinary program, which “combines multiple disciplines and challenges those disciplines to make sure that scholarship is done in the broadest and most rigorous way possible” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). He indicated that he focused specifically on postcolonial studies in terms of race, ethnic and gender studies. Thus, he likes to consider things in multiple and interdisciplinary perspectives.
Student R described the conventional approach to establish expertise would include writing a literature review, doing the candidacy examination, taking particular courses which lead to one’s degree, and reading the publications in one’s academic fields. However, he claimed that he works within and against the traditional way of establishing expertise in his field, which includes knowing the canon and the body of work.

[The canon and the body of works represent] the fore mothers and fore fathers of the fields…And I resist the idea that in order for me to be legitimate, in order for me to become an expert, I have to know all these people. If we think about it, knowledge is so broad. We are at a time period where we are becoming more and more conscious of different intellectual productions particularly from women, ethnic minorities, and the third world. I think knowledge has to become broader. I think we are becoming more and more conscious of that. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

He resists the idea of an expert within the U.S. Western centric sense. He wants to draw knowledge from different “sectors,” not only confined to academic professional writing, but also from artistic, political, activist, and all sorts of sectors. Interestingly, as an education scholar, he wants to “delegitimize” “expertise,” which is based on a form and principles of positivistic science. He knows what the requirements are in order to achieve his degree, but even when he does, he also chooses to challenge the requirements by including other materials that he can read for his writing.

In talking about how one can become qualified in his academic field, Student R explained that different factors come into play. First, our personal desire can determine how we want ourselves to be qualified. Second, the framework of the job market, such as
positions being offered by universities or institutions, can “define” the qualifications in a sense. Third, advisors and committee can determine if the candidate is qualified to take generals and if their dissertation are top-grade.

Student R believes that there are four roles that writing the candidacy examination in order for academic enculturation to be assured.

One, as a synthesis of your courses, of the different ideas through those courses. It can also play as a trajectory in a sense. Through your courses it can put your thinking into other spaces. Like from here, you can move to the next level, to the other discourses. So, synthesis, trajectory, it can also play the role of problematizer; in a sense that it can help you problematize certain things. You know, so the knowledge that you have as a result of the courses you have taken, and the literature you have reviewed, you can critique…So you can problematize using your generals or your candidacy exams. And probably, the fourth role writing can play is that it can also be a personal release. In a sense that you can release your thoughts, your ideas, and ultimately feel that you have accomplished something. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

In addition, Student R described, three popular writing styles that one can utilize to establish expertise in writing the examination, helped him to become one of the qualified members.

From the bell hooks style, I would say, that I try to bring my personal experiences into my writing. From the traditional style, I cite a lot of people. Make sure you have the fore mothers and fore fathers of the field cited. That’s just the politics of it. For your candidacy exam, it’s a must that you’re required to show that you know your field. That’s the whole expertise thing. And, in terms of influences from someone like Professor F, I make sure that if there are people who have influenced me, I quote them. And I use them in my writing. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

Candidacy examination for him is a not just one of the major tasks in his doctoral program; he thought of the candidacy examination, as an opportunity for him to write and to have feedback from his committee members that he trusts and admires.
Interestingly, from his writing for the candidacy examination, he has learned to do outlines, which he did not do for course writing, in order to cope with the cognitive loads of working on different questions simultaneously. Moreover, he had to “learn to enjoy both the pleasure and pain of writing” (Student R. Interview, 3/13/03). He considered that writing, as a self-inquiry can be “sadomasochistic,” “painful” at the same time so pleasurable. In addition, he had learned quite a bit about himself, for example, discovering that he was capable of accomplishing a great deal of work within a month, so his writing process was “more writing an auto ethnography” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03).

**Expectations for Writing the Candidacy Examination**

With his goal to get some, if not all, of the writing for his candidacy examination published, Student R patterned his writing for this examination based on journal writing. With a particular project in mind, he hopes to use his writing at least in three ways.

One, for example, for my generals—getting that done for my candidacy, getting them for publications, getting them for my dissertation—at least three. And before that, I wanted to make sure that my courses and my final papers for those courses will lead to my generals, for publications and dissertation, so that I don’t have to write over and over and over. I can use one thing to do a lot of things. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

He does not plan to stay in graduate for a long time, and he wants to contribute to the disciplinary conversations as soon as possible and as academically as possible. Therefore, the “genres” that he had for his writing were based on the journals, in which he would like his papers to be published. Student R reported all of his responses were literature reviews on certain topics in his field. However, despite this high expectation, Student R admitted that realistically the most basic expectation of the writing for candidacy
examinations are syntheses across courses that one has taken. In other words, “the genre of candidacy examination is to ensure you have acquired and processed a body of knowledge” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). Given these, he indicated that writing for this examination is more or less a longer essay of what is normally expected for course writing.

Given the fact that Student R has read articles and books written by his committee members, that he has taken courses from them, and that he had negotiated his questions based on his dissertation proposal with them, he is very familiar with their areas of expertise as well as their writing. Therefore, he had clear ideas regarding whom his committee members might want him to cite or read. He knew their high expectations. Surprisingly, page limit was the only thing that Student R could recall as a request from one of his committee members. He did receive, however, very positive validation from his committee members that assured him that he could do academic work.

I was able to bring arguments, which are new and different. One of my Committee members said that I did a very lovely job and in rereading it, she notices that it affirmed how lovely it was, so I thought it was really nice. Another committee member said, “You responded exactly what I was thinking, and I would have written something similar to what you wrote.” So for me, that’s very, very affirming that here is a tenured faculty member telling me that I wrote exactly how she would respond. (Student R, interview, 3/13/03)

This validation, a positive feedback, from the tenured faculty members that he respects, admires, and trusts as scholars, as thinkers, as intellectuals, and really as teachers has meant much more to him than getting his papers published.
**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

As described earlier, Student R is against the notion of expertise or authority, so he used ownership to respond to my questions under this section. Student R indicated that the candidacy examination basically only expects one to synthesize and make arguments across course work, but being able to contribute to the academic conversation is like taking the next step. In his case, the fact that two of his papers for candidacy examination are to be published and two are in the process of review suggests he has some level of authorship in his writing. He demonstrated his authority in his writing for all his examinations questions by expanding his personal experiences, doing the citation style, and writing in rigorous jargon way, that is a “Professor F” style as portrayed.

The dose of authorship as shown in Student R’s writing has gone beyond the expectation of his committee members. One of his committee members told him that when she was reading his response to her questions, she was writing down and putting post-it as people that she should read. “Because I was bringing in other material. I knew what I was basically expected and I think from her comments says to me that I went beyond them” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03).

**Case 4: Student J**

**Histories**

Student J was one of Professor F’s advisees. She is a thirty-three-year-old Korean woman, currently teaching in another state as an assistant professor. She did her undergraduate study in educational psychology in Korea and completed her master degree in educational psychology and a Ph.D. degree in Higher Education in the United States. She came to this country to study with her husband and had a baby while writing
her master thesis. She was very supportive of this research study and was willing to share her story with me. Despite that I had lost our first two-and-half-hour telephone interview, she understood the frustration and was willing to tell me her story for the second time. Certainly after one practice, I had learned to ask better questions in the second interview and had more interesting data to share with those who may be interested in the story of her “academic transformation.”

She had experienced bad racist and culture shock experiences during her master program. Thus, having a baby made her decide to have a break after getting her master degree. However, staying at home for two years made her realize that she could not be a stay-at-home mom, so Student J decided to resume her dream of getting a doctoral degree in order to become an expert in a given field. As soon as her academic study had challenged her to “redefine” her identity, she started the process of “academic transformation,” contemplating who she was, what ideas she wanted to pursue, what she wanted to contribute to the academic world, and so forth. As a consequence of this transformation, she had revised her goal of pursuing this “Ph.D. thing,” from seeing it as a credential as an expert to getting the credential to enable her to tell “her people’s stories.” In a sense, she intends to “construct” and in some way to “deconstruct” “knowledge” in order to raise her people voices as well as to find a new way to talk about the “new legitimate knowledge,” so that she and her people’s existence, experiences, and contributions will not get erased by the dominance of western knowledge.
Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program

To achieve a Ph.D. degree in education, according to Student J, in the broadest terms, one needs to accomplish coursework, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation successfully. When taking courses, Student J suggested that students need to learn to design their coursework in a way that they can really achieve their own goals by knowing rules of classes they need to take, that is, what their professors want they to do, and figuring out their end goals. Without knowing what they want for themselves throughout the academic program, coursework could very likely “bury” them. Student J sees the candidacy examination as the time for students prove if they are qualified to move on to do independent research by synthesizing what they have learned from courses as well as well crafting their own agency. Finally, the dissertation requires students to use what they have learned to construct their own knowledge.

Not any of her coursework, candidacy examination, or the dissertation had really been the most challenging tasks for Student J in pursuing her doctoral education as long as the tasks were detached from her identity, her sense of who she was.

“All the tasks were just the tasks that I needed to accomplish…that didn’t really hurt. No, because that didn’t really touch upon a sense of whom I was. The way that I looked at it was, I really didn’t see any connection between academic work and a sense of whom I was, meaning my identity. Those two things were detached, disconnected” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03). What had challenged Student J most was not really a specific task per se, but her struggles for relocating and redefining her academic identity and self. Student J described that the ways of conceptualizing knowledge that she had learned from the courses in critical theories, feminist theories, and postcolonial theories pushed
her to realize how she has been embedded in the knowledge system, including writing a
term paper. After that, everything had become difficult for her, because she saw herself in
those tasks. For example, after her “academic transformation,” she had a course
instructor, who was open-minded in different ways of approaching knowledge, but he
only considered certain writing styles as “academic” writing and accepted “certain”
literature for that class.

For instance, you couldn’t bring Korean folk story into your research paper
saying that has certain value in its theorizing practice…I mean. So, in that
class, particularly, I really struggled because the class that I first took after
my transformation of my academic self. I needed exactly what kind style
he wanted to see in our final paper and writing the paper to me as the
criteria that he purports were very difficult because I pretended. I needed
to pretend that I was somebody else. (Student J, interview, 3/14/03)

After her academic transformation, Student J became strongly aware of her agency in
designing her own doctoral program. She wanted to commit her time, effort, and energy
to gain knowledge, rather than to please course instructors.

Fortunately, she had found a group of peers, third world students, sharing similar
theoretical backgrounds and intellectual goals, which supported one another throughout
their Ph.D. studies. As a group, they voiced their frustrations and anger by doing
presentations at local conferences, symposiums, and national conferences.

**Interpretation of Good Academic Writing**

Before she started her doctoral program, her training in educational psychology
enabled her to understand good academic writing as factual, objective, and scientific,
logical, and with grammatically correct English. After the start of the Ph.D. program, she
assumed that good academic writing really depends on the reader’s evaluation, as there
are no universal criteria for good academic writing. “We have to use certain rules that our readers are going to use when we write. As a writer, we know who our readers will be. It’s kind of about the negotiation process” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03). She noted that writing dissertation process, for example, requires one to negotiate with committee members. Doctoral students may have different criteria to write good dissertations from those of committee members. As a result, writers need to figure out the limitations and possibilities of “bending” the rules for accomplishing “acceptable” academic writing.

Student J described that when writing for publications; she needs to understand the journal guidelines or the rules of the editors. She incorporates those criteria along with her own to satisfy all the evaluative criteria of different audience, and as a result, she can produce different types of writing in different contexts.

In a sense, Student J believes that listed references at the end of publications can demonstrate how solid one’s knowledge base of the field is. Second, she insists that one needs to have her own framework or ways of analyzing the phenomenon. “…in a simple way, you have to have your own voice or ways of explaining where your voice comes from” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03). She considers that this explanation is how one produces communicative writing. Student J reported that writers need to expect their own readers as they write. For example, she would not write for a group who believe in European-centric epistemology; meanwhile, her writing would not be comprehensible for them, because they cannot accept her epistemology. “And, of course, you have to pay the price…Your knowledge will not be appropriated by everyone” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03).
The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination

Doing her candidacy examination, which served as a major turning point for her to develop and practice agency, had been one of the most challenging tasks that J had ever encountered in her doctoral program. Fortunately, her candidacy examination committee members offered her genuine support and trust in her “search for agency.” Student J reported that she did not choose to practice her agency in her writing during her coursework until this examination. Agency is the academic growth that her committee members expected to see, particularly in her writing for the candidacy examination. According to Student J’s self-report, that her committee members approved her “subjective” and “personal” writing for the candidacy examination suggests her practice of agency in differentiating the boundary of what is academic knowledge versus not, is considered academically legitimate. “It was through the process of my own decision-making process--can I put this one in my writing, or not? Then, by going through the process of decision making, in a way of excluding and including certain voices and certain experiences and certain types of knowledge, I became the agent of knowledge” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03). Student J stated that the process of developing her agency during her candidacy examination was somewhat difficult, because she was not certain how much she could “stretch” her personal writing style as academic writing for this high-stakes examination.

Her candidacy examination was one of the free moments that she could experiment her “personal” writing styles and practice her agency in interacting with the literature she had been learning prior to the examination. She enjoyed writing the candidacy examination. However, in order to redefine her academic identity and relocate
her academic voice, she underwent serious struggles over her concern about how much her own academic self would be approved by her committee and her fear of being “totally complicit within the western academia” (Student J, interview, 3/14/03), and “selling out her soul,” giving up her identity as a Korean woman. From her understanding of the scholarships of and her coursework experiences with all her committee members, she knew indirectly that they expected her to do some experiments with her writing for representing her academic self. In short, she had the trust and support from her committee.

Organizing all the information that she had found for writing her examination was hard for Student J, although this difficulty was similar to what she had faced in writing her course papers. Since there were no specific instructions from her committee members on organization, she chose to organize her responses to her candidacy examination in a way similar to her course writing. The process of including and excluding “references” for the response papers for the examination did not stop until the end of Student J’s writing, because of Student J’s constant reading. The more she read, the more references that she wanted to include in her writing. Due the strict time limit, she coped with this situation by doing annotated bibliography to make it easier for her to incorporate necessary references into her writing.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

Student J sees herself as an interdisciplinary person. She has backgrounds from educational psychology, higher education and educational administration, cultural studies, and now is teaching in human relations and multicultural education, working with teacher education curriculum and policy. Student J chose to explicate the role of writing in the general context of education. Student J believes that to establish expertise in education,
one needs coursework to learn the literature of the field(s) and at the same time to learn how to interact with the literature, by understanding, analyzing, and even critiquing previous studies, the “legitimate” knowledge, of the discipline. Next, the candidacy examination is for one to show his or her ability of interacting with the literature analytically and deeply. Finally, the dissertation is the time for one to show if he or she could use that body of knowledge to create voices through his or her own research. She reported that expertise or authority comes from one’s being able to create, raise, and negotiate his or her voice, practicing one’s own agency, working within and against visible and invisible rules of the fields to “influence and affect the rules within the discipline” (Student J, 3/14/03).

Specifically, Student J reported that without writing in academia, one couldn’t practice agency at all. As a consequence, student J said that one has to learn how to write to communicate his or her own knowledge in order to achieve his or her goal out of this enculturation process. She suggested that one can learn how to accomplish academically acceptable writing by practicing different types of genres for academic writing.

Writing has evidently played a critical role in her transformational enculturation process. Student J’s wrote proposals with her peers, who are third-world graduate students, to present their different perspectives on the political aspects of knowledge construction. Moreover, she wrote her candidacy examination to develop and practice her agency, learning the limits and freedom that she could have as she wrote academically acceptable papers and asserted her “academic self” in her response papers. The institutional stamp approval from her committee members for the candidacy examination
had assured Student J that “her self” or her “voices” presented in the writing for the candidacy examination was considered “legitimate” at the stage of the candidacy examination during this enculturation process.

**Expectation for the Candidacy Examination**

For her candidacy examination, Student J aimed to compose an “appropriate” academic writing and to practice her agency as she critically reviewed the literature of her field. Student J lamented there has been only certain types of writing considered as legitimate academic writing, despite that there are thousands of ways for one to express oneself in a specific social context.

Thinking about how you are going to represent our conversation in peer dissertation. In fact, you can just transcribe and then put them as raw materials, and then, maybe the readers will make their own interpretations. But, they will not be considered as legitimate as your dissertation writing. Things have been changing, but up to this point, there are only certain ways of writing that would be accepted as academic writing. (Student J, interview, 3/14/03)

Student J wanted to see how much she could explore or experiment the format of her response papers for the examination to represent herself as a writer and the “knower” in her own way in relation to the literature. As mentioned earlier, she was somewhat encouraged and supported by her committee members to experiment her writing, particularly the format, for her candidacy examination, despite that she did have concern about how creative that she could be in this writing. However, that her committee members approved her writing for this examination suggests that the format of her writing was accepted as one of the “legitimate genres” for the candidacy examination.
Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination

As stated earlier, the goal of Student J’s writing for the candidacy examination was to redefine or relocate her academic self and identity through critically reviewing the literature and experimenting her writing to some level. She did successfully achieve her goal. For example, her advisor actually quoted part of Student J’s candidacy examination in her book, as they were working on similar projects at the time. Her advisor indicated that by the time of candidacy examination, after thorough and long reading of theories and research, students could earn their authority when they are able to apply what they have learned from coursework to a specific research.

Now how did she comes to have so much authority in her writing in a qualifying exam that her own professor quoted from the student’s qualifying exam in the professor’s own writing? I would say it’s because she’s extremely well read in terms of the ethics and responsibilities of feminist research. She thought long and hard on those topics. But, she’s wrestling within the politics and ethics of doing research with this particular Korean women and she’s living with that wrestling, a daring experience for her, so she was able to put all this methodological and theoretical writing to work in a context of her project. And that’s where you can say the rubber hits the ground and she was coming out of these wonderful statements. (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03)

Professor F’s comments, in this case, imply that the candidacy examination and, more importantly, a specific research project allow student to utilize their reading and academic thinking in writing to produce authoritative or provocative voices, which reveal some level of original thinking or authorship.

Student J’s committee members of her candidacy examinations did not tell her explicitly what their evaluative criteria was. Nevertheless, based on her understanding of their scholarships and experiences with them from courses taken from them and informal chatting, she was aware the committee would like to see her agency in the writing, as
described earlier. Her interpretation of agency was her decision-making in addressing “legitimate” academic knowledge through critically reviewing the pertinent literature in writing for responding to the candidacy examination questions. In short, she had been encouraged explicitly to create, raise and craft her voice in her responses for the examination as a way to establish her authorship.

**Case 5: Student Y**

**Histories**

Student Y, who is one of Professor D’s advisees, 28, comes from Turkey. She did her undergraduate study in biology and biology education, back in Turkey and had a master in science education in the United States. Currently, Student Y is a Ph.D. candidate in the department of social and cultural foundation. Turkish is her first language; she has been learning English since sixth grade and the medium of instruction for her undergraduate study was in English. After using English for academic purposes for a long time, she reported in the questionnaire that she no longer feels comfortable writing academic papers in her first language, especially when using statistical terminology.

Furthermore, Student Y likes learning and hopes to teach and learn in her future career in order to explore the areas that she is interested. As a self-admitted perfectionist, Student Y believed that expertise needed to be at “a perfect level.” “Expertise to me is anything really at the perfect level, so I have set really high standards for myself. Then, I use them to measure my writing or any of the products that I complete. With this high standard, I was never satisfied. That’s the first thing that I’d like to say to you that I have never been satisfied” (Student Y, interview, 2/27/03).
Interpretation of Good Academic Writing

In the questionnaire, Student Y clearly indicated that good academic writing in both English and Turkish should include the following: original and communicative ideas with strong and updated literature and absolute clarity, effective use of grammar and words, coherence, and a strong awareness of audience.

The Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program

With respect to the major tasks in her Ph.D. program, Student Y described that one needs to accomplish necessary coursework, the candidacy examination, the dissertation proposal defense, and the dissertation. Her advisor hopes that she would present at conferences and make publications before her study ends. Among these tasks, Student Y claimed that the candidacy examination had been the most challenging task for her in her Ph.D. program. Essentially, her trouble with this examination stemmed from her high standards. According to her advisor, she is an exceptional student, strong in the knowledge base of her field, research skills, and writing. Student Y reported that she needs to read everything that she could possibly related to her topics before she could sit down to write. Moreover, Student Y considered herself as an anxious type of person, and, as mentioned earlier, she has really high standards for herself, in her opinion, even higher than the average standards that her committee members would hold for most students. As a matter of fact, what made her nervous about her examination was not really any of the questions per se, but the pressure in dealing with high-stakes tasks. Despite that her experiences of writing and doing data analyses enabled her to complete the writing that her committee members expected, she still worried. For example, she had nightmares in which she found herself too nervous to speak in English during her oral defense.
Knowing her anxiety, Student Y’s advisor tried to assure her that she was ready for the examination. However, after she had finished her first question, Student Y realized that she could deal with the examination, which was not the most difficult task that she had ever had. This self-assurance helped her manage stress and anxiety.

The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination

As described in the previous section, anxiety was the major difficulty that Student Y needed to cope with as she wrote for her candidacy examination, yet, based on her and her advisor’s reports, she and her committee members were very satisfied with her writing for the candidacy examination. However, Student Y pointed out that dealing with the transition between paragraphs is challenging for her. “Generally, combining the paragraphs with each other is a really difficult process in any of writing, because I need to see all the ideas flow clearly. I need to see the connection between the paragraphs. I don’t know if it’s because a non-native speaker of English. When I write this stuff, it is really difficult to handle it” (Student Y, interview, 2/27/03). In fact, both of the L1 students of this study reported the same challenge. Student L and Student M pointed out that synthesizing and organizing the sheer amount of materials for their literature reviews for the candidacy examinations had been rather demanding. However, in the questionnaire, the fact that Student Y reported that she has language transfer between English and Turkish as she writes might suggest that using a second language could possibly slow down her cognitive process as she reads and writes in English. Like Student L and Student R, Student Y described that she mentally organized her essays as
she read and planned for her writing, but she reported that she needed to physically lay out all the papers that she would include for her writing, enabling her to move back and forth in the process of writing.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

Student Y, who is in the department of social and cultural foundation with the emphasis on applied statistics, believed that to become a qualified member in her field one needs to establish a solid theoretical background, to be well-organized, and to use the acceptable academic language in her field for writing papers. Student Y is planning to become a qualified member in her field and to work as an academic professional in Turkey after she completes her studies. She reported that she needs the following:

[I need] to have really good theoretical backgrounds of all the stuff that I need for teaching or doing research. Another thing is that I need to have the practical skills. For example, in my field, we need to do data analyses. I need to have skills for data Analysis. Another thing is that I need to have publications and experiences at conferences. (Student Y, interview, 2/27/03)

In order to achieve these “sub-goals,” she tried to turn her course projects into proposals to be submitted for conference presentations and familiarize herself with recent studies in her field to prepare for publications. In other words, becoming a qualified member in her field requires publishing, recent research, and updated research.

Specifically, Student Y pinpointed that learning to “produce” acceptable academic writing in the field is a requirement to survive an academic life. “Writing is really important, because you need to express your ideas. When you write this paper, you need to show you have a lot of things to the person you’re submitting the paper to. Your theoretical knowledge, how are you going to organize it, like the layout of it, or how the
appearance of it, the grammatical skills, all of it” (Student Y, interview, 2/27/03). She implied that good academic writing could help members to be recognized in the field; however, to produce good academic writing, one needs strong theoretical backgrounds, good organization skills, good command of writing conventions, and language skills. She also suggested that writing is a necessary tool for self-inquiry and expressing thought in an organized manner. Interestingly, Student Y’s course writing and candidacy examination helped her to “pursue expertise” in her field. Student Y’s course writing enabled her to establish her knowledge base in theories and skills for conducting research and data analysis. Yet, her writing for the candidacy examination rewarded her with the confidence that Student Y needed and offered her an opportunity to enhance her organization skills.

**Expectation for the Candidacy Examination**

When writing for her candidacy examination, Student Y was not aware of any specific types of “genres” that her committee would expect from her writing for this examination. But, after taking many courses from her committee members and getting their feedback for her conference papers, she was aware of the grading criteria of her committee members. In other words, she responded to most of her questions mainly by organizing her writing in the way that instructors had expected for most of her course writing. However, she did not write to “satisfy” her committee’s expectations, but to meet her own expectations for this high-stake examination.

In our interview, she specifically described the kind of writing required for her candidacy examination. She mentioned using a typical funnel approach for writing a research report by first indicating the conversations of the field on certain topics and
gradually shifting the focus of her writing to the gap, which represents the “niche” in the field as well as the focus of her research project. That is, she utilized the “genre” of research reports in writing her responses for the candidacy examination. However, for her advisor’s question, that she needed to write that research report for lay people as the audience of the paper made her to be easy on the technical terms in her writing.

Expected Authorship or Use of Citations

Due to her high standards for “expertise,” Student Y did not feel comfortable to include her own “ideas” on certain issues in her field in order to establish authorship to some extent in her writing for the candidacy examination.

I generally don’t feel good about doing that, because in one of my candidacy examination questions, a committee member wanted me to present my ideas. I didn’t feel confident about it, and since I don’t have the theoretical backgrounds and practical skills in that…When coming to present your own ideas, it becomes so tricky for me. Because, I set such high standards for myself, I don’t see myself as an authority in presenting ideas in one of the topics. (Student Y, interview, 2/27/03)

She implied that more theoretical and practical experiences in the field might make it easier for her to speak out her mind more freely.

Student Y indicated that she had a huge reading list from her advisor and some other suggested “readings” from her other committee members and that had helped her to establish a stronger knowledge base than before. Nevertheless, consciously, she did not aim to please her committee members’ expectations in light of her use of citations, but focused more on meeting her high standards for writing this candidacy examination in her own way. “…regarding the expectation of the use of citations, I wasn’t trying to please my committee members, generally, to meet my own expectation, I guess” (Student
Y, interview, 2/27/03). The fact that to satisfy her intellectual curiosity and high standards for her projects, Student Y believes that she needs to read everything possibly related to her topics implies her standards might be higher than those of her committee members. As a result, she might suggest that if she could meet her own standards, she should be able to meet her committee members’ expectations for the examination.

Case 6: Student C

Histories

Student C, 32, is a very optimistic, social, and easygoing Brazilian. She did her undergraduate study in biology in Brazil and came to the United States for her graduate study. She had a master of science degree in environmental communication, education, and interpretation, and was currently a Ph.D. candidate in the department of social and cultural foundation. She had completed her candidacy examination in the autumn of 2002 and was working on her dissertation proposal. Her native language is Portuguese; she started learning English when she was five.

Student C intends to do research in Brazil after her degree. Another goal that Student C has set for herself is enhancing her ability in managing stress for a balanced life. This goal came from her experiences in dealing with the switch of mentors at the beginning of her doctoral program. When doing her master degree, she did not plan ahead. However, her first advisor had designed a great doctoral program that had integrated environmental education for her in the department of social and cultural foundations, but this mentor left the program shortly after the start of Student C’s doctoral study. As a result of her first advisor’s absence, Student C needed to adjust her goal in pursuing environmental education in a doctoral program, which has a strong emphasis on statistics.
Student C was pursuing case studies with the awareness that she needed certain levels of competence in statistics, but Student C indicated that she would never be as strong in statistics as her peers in this program. After undergoing this emotional struggle with a tremendous amount of stress, whether to stay or to leave, and deciding on the nature of her study and future career, Student C had made up her mind to stay in the department of social and cultural foundation as well to learn to cope with stress, using a positive spin in order to pursue a life with less stress.

**The Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program**

As discussed earlier, one of the most challenging tasks for Student C in acquiring her Ph.D. degree was the loss of her first advisor. Student C had been pursuing environmental education by conducting case studies in the department of social and cultural foundation. As a result of her first mentor’s absence, Student C lost the major backbone of her Ph.D. program. Fortunately, Student C’s second advisor has been “taking good care” of her by offering her a research assistantship to support her financially as well as offering her practical research experiences, by supporting Student C’s desire to include committee members outside of their department, and by providing her necessary academic training, such as experiences in conferences presentations. In addition to the support and trust from her current advisor, Student C learned to manage her stress properly by honestly facing the reality that her first advisor had left and by adjusting to the demands of her Ph.D. program.
Interpretation of Good Academic Writing

Like Student Y, Student C made a list of the characteristics of good academic writing as part of her responses in the questionnaire. She believes that, by and large, good academic writing should include the following: clear organization, conciseness, sufficient evidence to support controlling ideas, good command of language use, and objectivity.

The Major difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination

In addition to time and stress management, understanding the major trends and issues of her field and organizing information for writing were the major difficulties that Student C had when writing for her candidacy examination. Her independent studies with the committee members that focused and disciplined her in preparing for the examination by offering Student C clear direction for pursuing literature reviews of specific areas in her field. In addition, she met with her peers to discuss the content of the question assigned by her advisor and had two friends read her examination papers to check her grammar, and a close friend of hers offered “sweet” emotional support by checking on Student C all the time to keep her on task. Writing for eight weeks was a long and stressful journey. When working on the last question, Student C began to feel stressed out and worn out. The fact that her peers and advisors tried to cheer her up by asking her to go to movies or buying pizzas had motivated and encouraged her to finish writing the last paper. Getting started is usually the somewhat difficult part for writing. To start writing, Student C interviewed her mother and asked her to tell Student C some stories, which she used to set up the vignettes for the beginning of her last question.
Role of Writing

To establish expertise in her field, which is situated in social and cultural foundation with an emphasis on program evaluation, Student C reported that one needs a strong knowledge base in research methods for data collection and as much practical experiences as possible in order to design an evaluation plan to diagnose the program or organization for evaluation. However, with respect to how experts write to establish authority or expertise in the field, Student C pinpointed that journal guidelines were how writers need to follow in order to publish their papers and that authority or expertise found in published or unpublished papers came from research findings, which relied on critical syntheses of literature or comprehensive data analyses.

Student C considers that writing is essential for one to survive the academic world. As she explained, “If you don’t write, you are not out there” (Student C, interview, 2/28/03). Similar to Professor A’s comment on this, Student C believes that if one does not write, he or she can get visible in the field. She perceived that the candidacy examination was a time for her to learn to do so. She assumed that the candidacy examination is for students to prove themselves that they are ready to conduct independent research. As a matter of fact, writing her candidacy examination enabled her to learn the big picture in her field and develop her writing style, which needs to be informative technically and interesting for readers. However, course writing enabled her to learn “pieces of the big picture” in her field, or in her own words, “the big picture of the small parts” (Student C, interview, 2/28/03). Hence, writing activity has played an essential role in Student C’s process of becoming a qualified member. Her writing for the candidacy examination enabled her to develop and practice her agency through learning
the disciplinary conversations, the disciplinary discourse, and the acceptable writing styles, which were appropriate at the stage of the candidacy examination during this disciplinary enculturation. In other words, her “disciplinary participation” through writing for this critical examination could be peripheral, but “legitimate” at this stage as a newcomer in her field.

**Expectations for the Candidacy Examination**

During the examination, Student C was not really aware of any specific “genres” or ways of organizations that her committee members expected from her writing. Based on her experiences from the independent studies with her committee members, she assumed that her papers for the candidacy examination needed to be “academic.” She believes that the characteristics of “academic” writing should include her personal voices or perspectives through critical synthesis of the literature, use of citations, good organization, and good mechanics. However, when writing the examination paper for lay audience, she noted that she avoided using technical terms or jargons in order to make her writing reader-friendly. Lay audience usually has little or no statistical backgrounds, and as a result, they are not familiar with the statistical terminology. To convince lay audience, according to her advisor, Professor D, Student C would need to translate the technical language that she normally used for writing technical reports or course projects into a more accessible language to her readers to comprehend the results of her data analysis.

Yet, because she intended to write technically informing and interesting papers, she included vignettes at the beginning of her last response paper. “This academic writing is very technical. Academic papers seem to be very dry in our area…I would like my
writing to be technical to convey the technical message, but it needs to be fun, to be something that people want to read. You give people the scientific information and at the same time you can interest people” (Student C, interview, 2/28/03). She utilized her last question to develop this writing style by including a vignette, which was a short story that would introduce the technical information, as an introduction to each of the subsections of the question. In fact, her committee members approved her writing styles for this high-stakes candidacy examination. Her “interesting” writing style has been labeled “legitimate.” However, she indicated that she was not clear about her committee members’ evaluative criteria for this examination.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

As mentioned earlier, writing for the candidacy examination enabled Student C to learn the current trends and issues of her field and to develop and practice agency that she desired for her writing by talking about herself or people around her or things in her life. “…it allowed me to see the big picture and the little pieces in my field. Also I wanted to develop a writing style for myself and I have that clear” (Student C, interview, 2/28/03). She was aware that she could establish authorship by practicing agency, deciding what approaches to adopt for data analyses and writing her responses, which reflected her understanding of the “appropriate” disciplinary discourse and conversations in her field, for the candidacy examination. “I want to be present by talking about my mother. How personal can you get? You can get more personal by talking about yourself” (Student C, interview, 2/28/03). She intended to include her “presence” or “voices” in her writing by talking about her “personal life experiences” or by including metaphors, stories, images, or pictures to share with her audience, since she indicated that she is very “visual.” That
the members of her candidacy examination committee did accept her “personal” writing style for the candidacy examination suggests that Student C had developed a level of authorship in terms of content and format in her writing for the candidacy examination.

However, Student C reported that she perceived the expectations of her committee members for her use of citations as she took independent studies from them. The suggested references by her committee members helped Student C’s to “see” the big picture of the fields and, as a result, had positive influence on her choice of citations.

Case 7: Student P

Histories

Student P, who is one of Professor F’s advisees, is a male Taiwanese Ph.D. candidate from the department of social and cultural foundation, currently teaching at a Teacher’s College in Northern Taiwan. He did his undergraduate study in mechanical engineering and had a master degree in sociology in Taiwan. He was not sure how to identify his academic fields, but he indicated that “curriculum” is officially his focused area and that he would be interested in submitting papers to the journals in anthropology or sociology for publications.

The Most Challenging Tasks in the Doctoral Program

Student P reported that the major tasks in his doctoral program included coursework, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation for achieving this Ph.D. degree. His major difficulties in achieving his Ph.D. degree included time management for course writing, course reading, and teaching computer workshops to other Ph.D. students. Financial pressure troubled him as well. To ease this pressure, he tried to cut down his expenses as much as he could. Writing a good paper to meet his standards takes
a long time. Thus, in his first year, usually after the first three weeks of each quarter, he would start working on his course writing assignments by deciding a topic for writing and searching and doing necessary reading for writing. To complete his course papers on time required that he had less time for course reading, and as a result, he could not participate class discussion as much as he would like. However, he had help from an old friend to check his use of English in writing.

**Interpretation of Good Academic Writing**

Because he wrote his master thesis in Mandarin, Student P pointed out that the characteristics of producing good academic writing in Mandarin and English were similar. He perceived that good academic writing should include stating the major arguments in the first three paragraphs of the paper and carefully defending the stated position for the rest of the paper.

**The Major Difficulties of Writing the Candidacy Examination**

That there were few professors, who could serve on his candidacy examination committee, and that he misunderstood his last question of the examination created the major difficulties for him in successfully completing the examination. It was not easy, but he did successfully convince two professors outside of College of Education to serve on his committee. Furthermore, he did not realize until there were sixty hours left before the deadline that his last question was a proposal for a possible dissertation study that he would like to pursue.

I did a worse job for the last question, for his question was about a proposal. But, when I first got this question, I didn’t notice this. I divided and read his question in different paragraphs. I answered the question by responding to every single sentence before I decided what and how to write this paper. After I was in the middle of it, I found it’s hard to
integrate the main ideas of this paper. Then I realized why he gave me such a question. After a while, I found that there was a sequence in this question. That is, this sequence was for writing a proposal. I had written 16, 17 pages already, so I re-edited all the writing that I had done. There were some 8,9 pages to be done. At that time, I only had some 60 hours before the deadline… (Student P, interview, 3/15/03)

Student P had two weeks for each question. It had been seven weeks after the start of his examination as he wrote his last question. He was exhausted and fairly stressed out. After he had realized that he misunderstood the last question and that there were only sixty hours left, he asked if his advisor could not extend the due date. She disagreed. “Writing ten pages within sixty hours was quite impossible, so I felt very reluctant to continue writing. But, after I had a talk with two Chinese neighbors, I was willing to try my best to finish the writing” (Student P, interview, 3/15/03). The warm encouragement and kind support from his neighbors melted some of Student P’s frustration. He reported that completing his writing for that specific question was not hard, but he just felt fairly exhausted. After all, he did finish it on time despite that he was not satisfied with the quality of his writing for this question.

**Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation**

Pragmatically, Student P believes that writing is an important tool, which enables one to attain a stable job and eventually to achieve certain position in the “power structure” in order to help improve the other people’s lives. “To me, writing is a tool for getting a stable job. To me getting a job is important, so writing is very important” (Student P, interview, 3/15/03). He indicated that in higher education, in addition to teaching, writing for publications is required to renew one’s teaching contract and attain tenure. “However, to achieve the goals of getting a secure job and promotion, writing
may not be the only approach. But, if you can write well, then, writing can help you acquire certain positions to achieve certain life goals, especially in improving people’s lives” (Student P, interview, 3/15/03). Student P believes that good writing ability can help one achieve certain positions in the power structure and holding this kind of positions can allow one to carry out helpful projects to improve other people’s lives. Student P believes that in this academic enculturation, helping other people is a more meaningful goal than getting promotion only for the sake of promotion and that good writing ability can help one achieve this goal.

**Expectations for the Candidacy Examination**

Student P had four take-home questions for his candidacy examination including a research proposal, two were reviews of literature, and a critique, which required him to revise a course paper to make it publishable as a journal article. In fact, he did meet with two committee members to talk about his interests and the possible dissertation research in order for professors to decide what content they would expect from his writing. He indicated that the key challenge for the examination was organizing the expected information. “I think every professor when assigning the questions had told me what to write in terms of content” (Student P, interview, 3/15/03). He coped with this challenge by learning a new writing habit. Normally he would not know his controlling ideas until the end of his writing, but, in the context of his writing for the candidacy examination, he clearly indicated his thesis statement in the first few paragraphs. In addition, a friend helped proofread his final writing for this examination.
Student P explained that his committee members, except the one who gave him the question to write a research proposal, did not assign any specific “genres” to their questions for his examination. For the first question, which required him to revise a course paper to make it publishable, he worked on the clarification of his controlling ideas by stating them in the first few paragraphs of the writing as well as on organization to make the paper more coherent. One of the committee members had spent a long time trying to figure out what possible dissertation topics that Student P would pursue later; as a consequence of a long talk, despite no specific instructions on genre from this professor, Student P decided to write a literature review for this question. For another question, Student P relied on the nature of the question and previous experiences with the professor. In his review of literature, he compared and contrasted practice and theories, put all theories together in a reasonable order, and indicated relevant phenomena. However, like the other students, he did not know what the grading criteria of his committee members were the examination, and he did not receive any feedback from them after the examination, as he needed to rush back to Taiwan right after the oral defense.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Regarding Student P’s perceptions of his committee members’ expectations for his use of citations to cover the content for the examination, two committee members gave Student P reading lists and the other two professors were open to what information that Student P would include in his writing. Yet, Student P’s course experiences with one of these two open-minded professors and from taking a related course from a different professor helped him figure out what this professor might expect in terms of content.
However, his advisor, Professor F, was not someone who would provide students with reading lists. That sometimes during his course work, she had suggested he look up “someone’s” work, gave Student P some ideas on how to prepare for her question, but he mainly read what interested him.

When writing the candidacy examination, Student P was primarily concerned if his interpretations of the theories that he utilized in his project were correct in order to support his arguments. He indicated that his authorship mainly came from his theoretical interpretations and his selection and use of citations although he lamented that his citation list for the fourth question was limited and a little messy.

**Case 8: Student W**

**Histories**

Student W, one of Professor M’s advisees, is a hard-working, polite, and friendly Chinese. He did his undergraduate study in scientific English and M.A. in applied linguistics in China and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the department of curriculum and teacher education. He had taught in college for eight years and was an associate professor in China prior to his Ph.D. Study. He began learning English in junior high school, focusing mostly on daily conversation and reading, and he started learning to write in English in high school, including personal letters and essays for making argument. Starting with his undergraduate study, he has been learning to use English for academic purposes, and using English textbooks for math and physics to enhance familiarity with the terminology in these subjects.
The Most Challenging Tasks in The Doctoral Program

Student W pointed out that coursework, the general [examination], and the dissertation were the major tasks for one to achieve a Ph.D. in his program. Student W reported that dissertation proposal writing, which needs to be practical and doable, has been the most challenging task for him of the doctoral program. In fact, compared to the dissertation proposal writing, he did not consider his candidacy examination to be a difficult task. He did have support from his two co-advisors in designing the methodology of his proposal.

Albeit accomplishing publications is not an official requirement for his doctoral program, Student W intends to publish in order to prepare himself for competitive academic job market in the States. He said that learning to write publications had been challenging. Professor M, whom Student W worked for on a research project, has been guiding him in conducting studies, making conference presentations, and preparing journal publications.

Interpretation of Good Academic Writing

Student W, who is interested in writing both in Mandarin and English, assumes that if one is a good writer in Mandarin and has a good command in English, he or she should be a good writer in English. In other words, he perceived the characteristics of good academic writing in English as similar to those in Mandarin. Before the start of this Ph. D. program, he assumed that good academic writing would require strong coherence and cohesiveness, error-free mechanics, and sufficient evidence for supporting controlling ideas by citing and quoting other people’s work; only later did he come to
realize the value of citing scholarly work. After the start of his doctoral study, especially
after working for Professor M, he has learned that he needs to understand and integrate
previous scholarships to ensure that he could do so if he wants to publish his papers.
Professor M usually would ask if he is certain about the comprehensiveness of his review
of related works.

Major Difficulties in Writing for the Candidacy Examination

Getting the books and some other resources that he might need for writing the
candidacy examination was the major difficulty. He negotiated the examination questions
with his committee members, but when he received the questions, some of them turned
out to be somewhat different from what he had understood. Due to the time limit for
accomplishing each of his questions, as soon as he found out that he needed some more
materials for writing in addition to what he had at hand, he would check out or reserve
the books immediately.

Role of Writing in Academic Enculturation

According to Student W, he is in a section of the department of curriculum and
teacher education, which incorporates technology, special education, and early and
middle childhood education, but he had also done some studies with his advisor,
Professor M, in math education. As a consequence of this complex combination, he was
not certain which program he was in. However, given his interests in educational
psychology, specifically in self-efficacy, he indicated that he might be in the field of
educational psychology. Nevertheless, according to Professor M, Student W is officially
in the program of curriculum and teacher education, pursuing general education with an
emphasis on learning theories and the psychology of learning.
Student W perceived that getting publications was the major approach for one to become a qualified member in the academic fields. Influenced by this belief, Student W was trying to pursue a mixed-method dissertation for getting publications out of this study. However, in addition to publications, Student W believed that establishing expertise in his field would require one to have a solid knowledge base of his major field as well as the other pertinent fields.

Student W assumed that writing was an important means for one to become qualified or even to get established as an expert on certain topics in his field. “I see writing as a necessary means. Before writing, you need to read the other people’s writing and you need to think about what your readers expect from your writing.” (Student W, interview, 2/26/03). To accomplish good writing, Student W believes that writers need to be aware of possible expectations from readers, who could be one’s advisor, future reviewers, journal editors, and even future readers of the published writing. If one’s writing cannot satisfy readers’ expectation within the academic power structure, very possibly one’s readers, especially advisors, future reviewers, or journal editors, will not “accept” one’s writing—that is, his or her writing is not considered “appropriate” or “legitimate” in the field.

Expectations for the Candidacy Examination

The committee members of Student W did not tell him what specific “genres” that he needed for his writing for the examination. However, he understood the expected “genres” for his writing for this important examination by relying on the nature of the questions and his personal communication with the committee members. “Professor M told me that I needed to review the literature on certain topics from different perspectives,
rather than simply relying on a single theory, say sociocultural theory” (Student W, 2/25/03). His advisor explained to him that for the candidacy examination Student W needed to demonstrate his knowledge base of the other theories before expressing his theoretical “situatedness.” When synthesizing other people’s studies, his advisor expected him to report the research methods and findings “in detail.” “He told me to be detailed, more detailed than what I have seen in other people’s papers, describing who the subjects are, the number of participants, what the research methods are, and so on” (Student W, 2/25/03). Interestingly, Professor M’s request for “details” reflected his emphasis of the importance of understanding the research methods and findings of the previous study as a newcomer, like Student W, attempts to contribute to the disciplinary conversations.

In addition, a committee member suggested that Student W’s review of the literature should include not only the work of those who hold similar viewpoints to his, but also those whose viewpoints are contradictory to his. However, based on the nature of the questions and verbal communication prior to the examination, Student W wrote a research report, two literature reviews on certain topics in his field, and a research proposal for his examination.

**Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Initially, Student W was not aware of authorship that he could establish in his writing for the candidacy examination until my interview with him. “I had never thought about authorship until you mentioned that on the phone earlier” (Student W, interview, 2/25/03). Yet, after some thoughts, he indicated that his selection and use of citations and application of theories to his research projects could reveal his authorship in his writing for the candidacy examination, despite that he admitted that his voices, which represented
his viewpoints, were very dim in writing. As described earlier in the case of Student J, one’s decision in excluding or including demonstrates one’s knowledge base of the field, and applying theories to specific research projects allows students to utilize their reading and academic thinking to produce authoritative perspectives.

Although there was no explicit instruction regarding citations from his committee members for the candidacy examination, Student W did receive some feedback from them on his reading list for the examination. Student W incorporated the suggested reading from his committee into his writing for the examination, but not necessarily he agreed with the perspectives of all of the suggested references from his committee members.

**Cross Case Analysis**

In this section, I present a cross-case analysis by looking across five professor case studies and eight student case studies in order to understand a larger and more integrated picture of how the students produce legitimate academic writing in the context of the candidacy examination. I was particularly interested in the variations in the activity setting of this examination, which helped each student to develop some level of “legitimate” academic writing as well as sense of authorship as an active agent, who constructs, deconstructs, and reconstructs the “authoritative knowledge” as a “novice scholar” in the field during the candidacy examination. To do so, I organized this section around the research questions.

To address the first research question, “What personal, interpersonal, institutional, and social and cultural, especially in terms of writing backgrounds and graduate-school experiences, did the students bring to their writing for the candidacy examination?” I
examined the students’ interpretations of good academic writing and their experiences with the candidacy examination, as doctoral students. I also considered the professors’ experiences with their own doctoral examinations to examine how their experiences may have contributed indirectly to the students’ learning to write for the examination legitimately. I also addressed these students’ interpretations of their most challenging tasks in the doctoral program, their major difficulties when writing the candidacy examination, and guidance they relied on to deal with the challenging tasks in their programs and the difficulties of such high-stakes examination.

To answer the second question, regarding the role of writing in the process of becoming qualified candidates in various academic programs, I examined the students’ perspectives on the development and practices of authority or expertise in their academic fields, the major tasks to be completed in order to achieve a Ph.D. degree from their programs, and the role of writing in this enculturation process.

To answer the third question, “What academic genres did participants need to (re)produce in order to complete candidacy examinations?” I examined the students’ perspectives on the required genres. Specifically, I wondered why they were required, how the students and teachers interpreted the necessary genres for the candidacy examination, and whether they held differing interpretations of what genres to be used for the examination.

To answer the fourth question, regarding how the students established authorship or authorial ownership during their candidacy examinations, I examined the students’ perspectives on how authorship was established and some of the challenges students faced in doing so.
The personal, interpersonal, institutional, and social and cultural histories student participants brought to their writing

My original intention was to investigate the students’ academic writing backgrounds and graduate-school experiences that students brought to their writing for the candidacy examination. Inspired by Prior’s (1998) notion of writing as a literate activity and Vygotsky’s (1978; 1981) notions of general genetic law of cultural development, activity theory, semiotic mediation, and use of history, I agree that writing is a literate activity consisting of socially-formulated, goal-oriented actions and tool-mediated learning. Thus, writing activity includes linguistic, socio-cultural, and political factors, derived from participants’ personal and academic “life history” (Ivanic, 1998). Accordingly, I considered how the students’ personal, interpersonal, socio-cultural, academic, and political histories contributed to their writing for the candidacy examination. I also considered their advisors’ mentorship, very likely influenced by their own general examination experiences and interpretations of good academic writing, as a significant factor in shaping the students’ own writing experiences during the candidacy examination. Hence, to answer this research question, I examined their advisors’ experiences with their general examinations, as doctoral students, and their interpretations of good academic writing.

For student case studies, I focused my discussion on their personal and professional goals, interpretations of good academic writing, their most challenging tasks within respective programs, and major difficulties in writing the candidacy examination.
**Professor Case studies**

I recruited two professors from the department of social and cultural foundation and three professors from the department of curriculum and teacher education. Table 5 indicates which school the professors are associated with, their academic status, gender, and their mother tongues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Academic status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Professor F</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor D</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Summaries of the Profiles of Professor Participants

**“The General Examination” Experiences**

Three professors, who were Professor D, Professor C, and Professor M, had taken monitored, sit-down, comprehensive examinations as their general examinations, and Professor F and Professor A wrote take-home papers. These experiences seemed to have some influence on their working with students for the candidacy examination. For example, Professor D lamented that the experiences of relying mainly on his memory to accomplish the general examination, without any resources, did not align with how he now does scholarship. Working alone without any resources was not how his profession...
has been operating. As a consequence, he makes it clear to his students that they can use any materials or resources as long as they make sure that they synthesize and write up the information themselves for the candidacy examination.

Likewise, Professor C’s experiences of writing the stressful four-hour monitored examinations for three days some thirty years ago has significant influence on her mentorship, specifically for the candidacy examination. Professor C believes that learning to write this candidacy examination is a very important lesson for students, and she does her best to steer students in the right direction for the examination. For instance, she negotiates with her students regarding the types of papers and the literature that they need to write for the examination.

Interpretations of Good Academic Writing

Most of the professors described effective academic writing in similar ways. The characteristics of this good academic writing include good mechanics, coherence, clarity, and more importantly, good content, and good arguments based on students’ comprehensive and deep understanding and synthesis across the pertinent literature.

Some of the professors’ experiences from their own general examinations did influence their approach in conducting the candidacy examination to their students, leading them to ensure that students’ experiences out of this writing could be meaningful and satisfying for their learning. Their pictures of good academic writing—good mechanics, good-quality English, coherence, clarity, good content, which includes synthesis across a fine selection of pertinent literature, showing deep and comprehensive understanding, and students’ own arguments, based on the synthesis—is similar.
Through this examination, all professors hope that students can prove themselves as good writers and critical thinkers, showing a solid knowledge base of certain areas of their field(s).

**Case Study Students**

Five students are from the department of social and cultural foundation, and the other three students are from the department of curriculum and teacher education. Table 6 below, shows the departments that they are associated with, their gender, mother tongues, and academic status. One participant has finished her Ph.D. last year and is currently teaching as an assistant professor in another state and the others are currently Ph.D. candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Academic Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>F</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Y</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Portugese</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>Ph.D. Candidate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Summaries of the Profiles of Student Participants.
Personal and Professional Goals for Pursuing a Ph.D.

All eight students are interested in personal growth and teaching at a college or university setting. To do so, getting a doctoral degree is a necessary credential. Student L and Student M would like to be teacher educators. Both Student R and Student J, who has finished her Ph.D. degree and is currently teaching at a university, are interested in getting this credential to tell their people’s stories and to construct and to deconstruct, in some way, the legitimate knowledge of their fields as well as to find a new way to talk about the new legitimate knowledge. In other words, they believe that earning the Ph.D. degree will equip them with knowledge of “the intellectual traditions, practices, and values” (Casanave, 2002, p. 28) of their fields as well as a credential to qualify them to (de)construct and (re)define this “legitimacy” (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Interpretations of good academic writing

Six students, including Student L, Student M, Student J, Student Y, Student C, and Student W, perceive that good academic writing should be clear, coherent, grammatically and correct following good academic writing conventions, and demonstrate sufficient evidence to support the controlling ideas of the writing. Student R did not point out these directly, but given that his standards of good writing are to get published, I believe, he would not doubt that these are the most basic standards for good academic writing. In addition, to accomplish good academic writing, Student Y, Student J, and Student W emphasized the importance of being aware of the possible readers or audience of one’s writing. Their emphasis of attending to the possible audience of their writing addresses Bakhtin’s (1986) concern about “addressevisity” speech.
communication. He believed that “speakers” need to deal with “anticipated responses and outcomes” from “listeners.” Likewise, in writing, writers need to pay attention to possible readers’ responses in order to achieve successful communication.

However, some students deemed that objectivity is part of the characteristics of good academic writing due to their disciplinary influence. Situated in a “positivist” discipline, Student C considered objectivity as one of the essential features of good academic writing. Student J, influenced by her training in educational psychology, and Student M, influenced by the rules for writing research reports from high school, college, and his master program, agreed that good academic writing needed to be detached and objective, without including “I” in writing before the start of their doctoral programs. However, after the start of the doctoral programs, Student J and Student M were introduced to and accepted “personal” writing by including their “presence” through including “I” and personal life experiences in their writing. However, interestingly Student C did indicate that she preferred “personal” academic writing by including her life experiences, for example, in her fourth response paper for the candidacy examination.

Moreover, Student R, Student J, and Student P along with their advisor, Professor F, from the department of social and cultural foundation seemed to share the same mission in pursuing their academic careers—that is, original thinking, which reveals one’s authority, is to help improve other people’s lives. Here is how their advisor Professor F described how to establish authority in the field. “…to be able to inspire, transform, and touch readers mentally, emotionally, and psychologically, challenging them to think differently” (Professor F, interview, 3/11). Student R, Student J, and Student P indicated

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15 Ivanic (2001) reported that writing is fairly “personal” and reflects people’s life experiences.
that good academic writing should offer readers new perspectives. Specifically, Student R indicated that some traditional academic writing is boring, so he hopes to use his writing to help people to think and act differently.

However, Student Y, Student P, and Student W indicated that the rules of good academic writing in English are pretty similar to those in their L1, Turkish or Mandarin. Student W believes that if one has good command of language in both L1 and L2, and very possibly, this person can be good at academic writing in both languages. For example, Student P, who did his master in sociology in Taiwan and wrote a thesis in Mandarin, reported that the way that he pursued his academic writing in English in his doctoral program is pretty similar to the way that he writes academic writing in Mandarin.

It seemed that high school writing experiences has profoundly influenced four of the students, especially in terms of the rules for good academic writing. Student L has been aware that she is a good reader and writer, and she had had learned some essential rules for academic writing from a writing course in her high school. Learning how to write a research report from a writing class in high school had profound influence on Student M’s writing until the start of his doctoral program. In addition, the fact that high-school teachers encouraged students to submit entries for contests might have enhanced Student R’s high standards for good academic writing. Moreover, Student W learned writing personal letters and essays for making arguments in high school as well.

Some students did change their interpretations of good academic writing after the start of their Ph.D. programs. For example, two students, Student M and Student J, indicated that they had learned to include the personal pronoun “I” in their writing;
moreover, Student R had been aware of the many possible genres for academic writing. Specifically, Student M reported that at the start of his doctoral program he was at a loss in dealing with the encouragement of embedding “himself” into his academic writing after his long-term practice of the conventional academic writing. “I felt I could do that to a point in my undergrad and master program, but I was not sure that was the best thing to do...you look for proof, you look for evidence, but you don’t necessarily step into the paper yourself”(Student M, interview, 4/21/03). However, it didn’t take long for him to get used to and enjoy this new academic writing. Student J, due to her training in educational psychology, had believed that good academic writing needed to be “factual, objective, scientific, logic, and clear.” After the start of her doctoral study and more specifically, after her personal and political “transformation,” Student J saw writing as a negotiation process with the readers of her writing and the different types of writing as the result of different negotiations. Furthermore, Student R, who has been a good academic writer, who has published poetry, fiction, and prose, noted that since the start of his doctoral study academic genres had been exploding and given this, he suggested that our notions of what counts as good academic writing or not will explode, if it is not exploding yet.

**Most challenging tasks in the Ph.D. programs**

Two students, Student M and Student W, noted that dissertation proposals had been the most challenging tasks out of their doctoral programs. Student M indicated that settling with a dissertation topic that would interest and prepare him for his future career after this study had been a long-term challenge for him. His candidacy examination committee assumed that developing his dissertation proposal as one of the questions
would not be a good idea. Therefore, for an extended period of time, after the candidacy examination, he had to develop an appropriate dissertation topic. Student M pointed out that he had been fortunate to have guidance, feedback, and support from a number of professors, including his advisor, Professor A, in coping with challenges derived from this process.

Designing a doable and practical dissertation proposal, which could lead to a successfully dissertation and to future publications, had been one of the most challenging task for Student W in his doctoral education. For designing the methodology for his dissertation proposal, Student W had support from his two co-advisors, including Professor M. Moreover, given his intention of accomplishing some publications to prepare himself for the competitive job market in the United States, Student W has made getting publications as one of his own required tasks before he finishes his doctoral study, although officially publications are not required in his program. His intention of getting publications from his dissertation project certainly enhance his standards for writing the proposal, and as a result, makes his proposal writing more challenging. Professor M, whom that Student W used to work for on research projects, has been guiding Student W in conference presentations and publications writing, mentoring him in playing this academic “game.”

Meeting the residency requirement was Student L’s major challenge in her doctoral program. Meeting this requirement meant that Student L needed to be away from her teaching for a year; thus, she faced financial pressure. In addition to the emotional support from her advisor, Professor C, Student L had a teaching assistantship from her department, but she still needed to get a considerable loan to make ends meet.
Student Y reported that the candidacy examination had been the most challenging task for her. In fact, although none of the candidacy examination questions were particularly difficult for her, coping with stress from her high expectation was quite challenging. Interestingly, her standards seemed to be higher than those of her committee members for the candidacy examination. In spite of her advisor’s continuous confirmation of her readiness for the candidacy examination and her exceptional performance in her coursework, Student Y had perceived the candidacy examination as a monster. Her advisor’s intellectual guidance, and more importantly, his encouragement and emotional support brought assurance that Student Y needed most for preparing herself for this examination, for Student Y did not believe that she really could handle the questions until she had finished the first question.

Student R and Student J had support groups to help them cope with their own challenges from the doctoral program. Student R found the cultural difference between California and Ohio and “the lack of recognition of the cultural difference” were his major challenges in the doctoral program. He tried to cope with this challenge by adjusting his own attitude. In addition, he also turned to a support group in his first year doctoral program, which had offered him “informal mentorship,” as he phrased this support helped him survive graduate school, including learning how to do the candidacy examination, write a dissertation, and so forth.

Student J’s major challenge in her doctoral program came from her attempts to develop and practice her agency in (re)producing knowledge, rather than doing a simple task for the sake of the examination. After taking certain courses, she underwent an academic transformation, in which she needed to relocate and redefine her academic
identity and voices. Initially she intended to pursue a doctoral degree to become an expert in a specific profession. But after her academic “transformation,” she has tried to focus her time, energy, and effort in gaining knowledge that would be meaningful for her own learning and growth, rather than just for satisfying her professors. Her academic identities evolved as she has learned from and participated in the practice of her fields (Lave, 1996, 1997; Wenger, 1998; quoted in Casanave, 2002). For her emotional support, she joined a group of third world students, who shared similar theoretical backgrounds and intellectual goals and supported one another throughout their doctoral studies. They presented at local conferences, symposiums, and national conferences to voice their frustrations and anger.

Student C’s major challenge was dealing with the stress from the absence of her first advisor, who had designed a unique doctoral program for meeting Student C’s research interests and training, but left the university shortly after the start of Student C’s doctoral program. Student C underwent difficult and stressful struggles before she came to her decision to stay in the program. Her second advisor has been a great mentor, offering her a research assistantship to support her financially, supporting Student C’s desire to include committee members outside of their department, and providing her with necessary academic training and practical research experiences. In addition, Student C attempted to manage stress by honestly accepting the fact that her first advisor had left and she needed to adjust her own Ph.D. program with support from her current advisor and the other committee members.
The major challenges that Student P had faced in his doctoral program included time management for course writing and reading; teaching computer workshops to other doctoral students; and financial pressures. Within a ten-week term, Student P used to struggle to balance his time and energy for finishing course reading, shortly after the start of each quarter in his first year, and accomplishing a satisfactory course writing to his own standards. Without doing course reading, he could not participate class discussions. Without spending certain amount of time to prepare and work for his writing, he could not accomplish a satisfactory paper on time. Reluctantly, Student P needed to sacrifice his course reading in order to accomplish his course writing. Student P did not feel comfortable talking about his teaching issues. However, to take care of his financial burden, Student P tried to cut down his expenditure as much as possible.

Major difficulties in writing for the candidacy examination & coping strategies

A common difficulty for all the students, except Student P and Student W, reported that organizing the sheer volume of their materials for literature reviews. Student L and Student R, who relied on mental outlines for their course writing, indicated that they needed to learn to make written outlines for their candidacy examinations and to learn new writing habits. Student L indicated that although she usually wrote from beginning to the end without stopping for course writing, due to the overwhelming cognitive load from the huge volume of materials for her candidacy examination, she “jumped” all over the places. Working on section A, for example, might remind her to add something to section C. Given what Student R intended to achieve from his examination, he had to force himself to learn to make outlines by listing basic ideas and
key words for writing to “save” him from being lost in the arguments, yet he did not have a complete outline until he finished writing his paper. As he explained, “My outlines informed my papers. My papers informed my outlines” (Student R, interview, 3/13/03). This experience convinced him that the process of writing is a “recursive” journey.

Student M found difficulty in organizing his materials for writing, especially for his first question, a literature review, covering fifty years of research and theory in the field of rhetoric and composition. He did not like formal outlines; instead, he used “idea lists,” similar to “grocery lists,” which people use for grocery shopping, to outline each section that he was planning to write. He constantly moved “chunks” of his writing to ensure transitions in his writing. Furthermore, Student J, due to her constant reading, dealt with her organizational issues with an annotated bibliography, which made it easier for her to incorporate references into writing. Student Y did her organization in her mind and laid out the material needed for her writing as she wrote in order to be able to move back and forth in the process of writing.

Insecurity had been another source of difficulties that Student R, Student Y, and Student J faced in writing for their examinations. Student R noted that his issues of insecurity came up during his candidacy examination because of isolation and the intellectual challenges. Student R mentioned that it was necessary to be alone to concentrate on the intellectual challenges, but as a social person, it was difficult for him. He made sure that he saw people by dining with friends whom he cares about, running outdoors, and working out at the gym. During his writing process, his expectations to publish part of his writing for the candidacy examination afterwards created certain
nagging questions, which made him question himself frequently, Was his writing theoretically savvy? Was his analysis and writing good enough? He gave himself little gifts, for example, some ice cream or running after he had finished his reading or writing.

Based on Student Y’s self-report that she is an anxious type of persons and that she had high standards for her academic performance, it was not surprising that she was feeling insecure when facing and dealing with this high-stakes examination. Her advisor’s support and encouragement and her self-assurance after finishing writing her first question helped her cope with her insecurity. Student J felt insecure about her writing for the candidacy examination, Would it meet with the approval of her committee as legitimate academic writing? Her understanding of the scholarship of her committee members and her experiences of taking courses from them enabled her understand her committee’s unspoken expectations.

Four students, including Student Y, Student C, Student P, and Student W, had issues with their time management for writing this examination. Although Student Y usually needs to read all the materials that she can before writing, during the candidacy examination, she prioritized her reading material, due to time limits. Student C reported that she tended to procrastinate when she was overwhelmed by stress. Her “angel friend,” Student Y, would check on her writing progress frequently and offer her emotional support and encouragement. When Student C finally started working on the last question, it had been some six weeks after the beginning of this examination. She was worn out, terribly stressed out, and could not help procrastinating again. Student Y and her advisor Professor D tried to cheer her up by going to movies and getting pizzas, and it worked. Student P did not realize that his last question was a research proposal until there were
only sixty hours before the deadline. Like Student C, he was worn out, overwhelmed by stress, and somewhat reluctant to finish up the writing until he had a talk with his Chinese neighbors. He had not slept for those two and half days until he submitted his writing. Getting sufficient materials for writing was Student W’s concern. The questions that he had received for the candidacy examination were different from the questions he understood that he had negotiated. This meant that he had to do more library work.

In sum, both the professors and the students indicated “good” academic writing should be “effective” writing for academic purposes— that is, the writing should be clear, coherent, grammatically correct, well-supported, and well-organized in order to “clearly” demonstrate a writer’s knowledge base of the pertinent literature. However, in addition to synthesis of published scholarship, all the professors emphasized that good academic writing should also include critical thinking, the development of arguments, and original thought to contribute in the conversations in the fields. As will become obvious later in this report, because such demands were not always made explicit to students, to some level, they became the source of tension and some frustration. However, that the “unspoken” expectations of the professors for contributing “disciplinary authorship” or “original thinking” to the disciplinary conversations might be attributed to their concern that doctoral students are still “novices,” or “apprentices” as in Lave and Wenger’s report (1991), which described that newcomers usually start with “peripheral” participation during the beginning period of their enculturation.

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16 Professor F, Professor M, and Profess A indicated that expecting “expertise” or “originally thinking” from doctoral students at the stage of the candidacy examination might be unrealistic, since their were still “novices,” who were to appropriate the disciplinary discourse and language in their fields at this stage.
The histories that the students had brought to their writing of the candidacy examinations included the following:

- the general examination experiences of their advisors and the other committee members, as doctoral students;
- their perception of good academic writing influenced by their professors’ interpretation of good academic writing, which the students encountered while completing reading and writing tasks from course work and independent studies prior to the examination;
- achieving the Ph.D. degree in order to teach at a college or university level to fulfill their individual goals;
- their understanding of the significance and purpose of the candidacy examination.

The general examination experiences of their advisors, directly or indirectly influenced the purpose or goal for the candidacy examination, because they had not learned schemata of effective writing for this high-stakes examination. Six of the students simply wrote the examination as they had written for course writing, although they spent more time and effort on the examination than for their courses. In other words, they relied on their concept of good academic writing appropriate for the level of their doctoral courses. Their interpretations of good academic writing had being constructed through accomplishing reading and writing tasks for courses and independent studies from their committee members\(^{17}\). Thus, it is not clear if their advisors needed to be more overt and

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\(^{17}\) The committee members could represent the authoritative discourse that the students needed to appropriate before their internally persuasive discourse arose. In an implicit sense, the students’ arguments or perspectives could reveal that “centrifugal forces” could influence the dynamics of “centripetal forces,” which, in this context of the candidacy examination, could be the “literature” of the disciplinary fields. In other words, the coursework and the independent studies could represent the “centripetal forces” or contain
direct regarding evaluative criteria for the examination, although all professors expected their students to develop and practice agency for this high-stakes examination. More importantly, their individual goals of achieving the Ph.D. degree and their understanding of the significance and purpose of their candidacy examinations motivated and encouraged the students to accomplish their writing tasks in their own ways. However, in some cases the students’ attempts to develop and practice agency made them aware that they were taking some risks, due to their role as a student, still learning and “struggling” about what counts as “legitimacy” in their fields.

**The role of writing the candidacy examination in socializing the students into their respective fields**

To study the writing of the candidacy examination as a socially situated literate activity and as a “phenomenon in movement,” I relied on the Vygotskian notions of the general genetic law of cultural development, activity, semiotic mediation, and the use of history. Vygotsky believed that language mediates internalization, a process by which “the individual” and “the social” interact with each other across time to foster learning that one needs in order to write appropriately to survive academia (e.g. Casanave, 1990; 2002; Prior, 1998). Furthermore, I agree that writing can socialize newcomers into academic fields and offer channels for communication among members of the fields (Casanave, 1990). Yet, to investigate if learning to write for the candidacy examination could help socialize the students participants into their respective fields, researchers cannot solely rely on text analysis (Casanave, 2002, Prior, 1998), for writing is a “social”

the “authoritative discourse” in their fields, and after the students appropriated the “authoritative discourse,” they were able to produce disciplinary arguments to some level, which could indicate the rise of the “internally persuasive discourse,” and change of the dynamics of the “centripetal forces,” or the “authoritative discourse” in a quiet manner.
construction (e.g. Miller, 1994; Ivanic, 2001). Text-based writing studies tend to isolate academic writing from multicultural, social, and political contexts (Casanave, 1993; Prior, 1998). Capturing the dynamics of writing, as a “social” activity requires me to investigate the interactions among case-study students’, mediated tools\(^\text{18}\), historical activities\(^\text{19}\), academic fields\(^\text{20}\), and socio-historical phenomena of practice\(^\text{21}\). Therefore, for both case study professors and case study students, I focused on identifying their academic fields, the expected tasks to establish expertise in the academic fields, the major tasks of their Ph.D. programs, and their perceptions of the role of writing in the process of academic enculturation. Furthermore, I assume that the participants’ reflections on their understanding of the expected tasks for achieving expertise in the fields and for accomplishing major tasks in their doctoral programs could lead to more comprehensive understanding of the role of writing in academic enculturation.

\(^{18}\) Mediated tools include technical material and psychological resource that the participants used to accomplish their writing for the candidacy examination.

\(^{19}\) Historical activities refer to any personal, interpersonal, institutional, and socio-cultural interactions that participants had for writing the candidacy examination.

\(^{20}\) Academic fields in this context refer to both the primary and any other relevant academic fields that participants were pursuing and participants’ understanding of the required tasks that one needed to undertake in order to get qualified or establish expertise or authority on certain topics in the fields.

\(^{21}\) Socio-political phenomena of practice refer to the existing academic knowledge of the fields.
**Professor Cases**

**Academic field(s)**

Table 7 below lists the academic departments and the major fields that five Professor Participants are associated with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Major field(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor F</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>cultural studies in education; feminism; pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor D</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>applied statistics; research design; measurement; evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor C</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>children’s literature in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor M</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>math education; educational psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor A</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>English education; literature instruction; young adults literature; literary theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 Summaries of Academic Fields of Professor Participants

**Establishing Expertise in Academic Field(s)**

To achieve academic legitimacy, all five professor participants revealed that newcomers need a broad knowledge base of the literature and research methods of specific fields and the ability to conduct research in order to be recognized and valued by other people in the fields and at one’s institution. The expected knowledge base of the literature and research methods, in a sense, could represent the “authoritative discourse” or the “centripetal forces” in the fields. In another sense, a strong knowledge base about
the fields as well as the ability to conduct good-quality research could represent the “psychological tools” to mediate the “learning” of newcomers as well as “senior” members in the fields.

For example, Professor M described that students need a solid knowledge base of the literature and research methods; an ability to conduct research as new inquiry; and experiences in many types of academic writing of a specific field. In other words, at least, one needs to be able to synthesize the results of the previous studies and to conduct new research in order to contribute to the disciplinary conversations.

To explain how to establish “visibility” in most academic fields, Professor F and Professor A focused on the end products that one needed to accomplish. Professor F suggested conference presentations, which could lead to papers published for the best possible journals, writing a book, doing good teaching, mentoring students, and sending doctoral students all over the world. Professor A indicated that establishing expertise means that one’s work is valued by the other people in the fields and at one’s institution by getting tenure and promotion. Before and after getting tenure and promotion, she insisted that one needs to be productive in conducting research, getting grants, writing for

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22 Novice and senior members need to acquire a solid knowledge base about the fields and the ability to conduct good-quality research to contribute to disciplinary conversations in order to “enhance” or “upgrade” their “learning.” First, the new members need them to appropriate the “authoritative discourse” in order to contribute the “internally persuasive discourse” to the fields. Second, enculturation process is continuous due to the constant interactions between the “centripetal forces” and the “centrifugal forces” in the fields, and, as a result, senior members need to continue to “broaden” their knowledge base in terms of the literature of the fields and update their ability in conducting research to contribute to the dynamics of the fields. Thus, the broad knowledge base of the literature of the fields and the ability to conduct research to contribute to the disciplinary conversations can function as “psychological” tools in mediating the continuous learning of all the members in the fields.

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publications, and doing conference presentations. She might imply that academic enculturation is continuous, since new “voices”23 almost constantly (re)shape and (re)define disciplinary conversations, especially in this era of information explosion.

Professor D, who is a professor in the field of applied statistics, indicated that one needs a strong knowledge base of methodological procedures and techniques, experiences in applying techniques, and consultation experiences to assist those who may be unfamiliar with statistical procedures, but need statistical assistance for their work. In the field of children’s literature in education, according to Professor C stated that one needs experiences with children, a broad knowledge of the material of children’s literature, and a strong knowledge base of the literature that would include how children interact with books and how books are used in educational settings as well as a knowledge base in literary criticism.

**Major tasks in the doctoral program**

Three professors, Professor F, Professor C, and Professor A, talking about their program goals in general terms, indicated that both required and selective courses, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation are the three most basic tasks that students need to undertake in order to achieve a Ph.D. degree from their programs. Essentially, a solid knowledge base of the fields, critical thinking and writing ability are what students need to achieve when accomplishing these three major tasks.

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23 New voices represent the “centrifugal” forces.
Professor F emphasized that even before the examination stage if students want to work with specific advisors, students need to have solid academic backgrounds and the ability to think critically and to write clearly. Moreover, students need to continue to become increasingly sophisticated thinkers and writers during the stages of the doctoral program.

Specifically, Professor D stated that they have an individualized program to meet students’ individual needs. In general, students need to take courses of the cognate area, which are outside of the methodological skills, and courses of methodology that would focus students on one of the three areas of their program: the research design of statistics; the area of program evaluation; and the area of educational measurement. Students would need some experiences in each of the three areas, but need to choose one as the concentrated area. Professor D pointed out that their program would encourage students to have experiences in writing proposals, conducting research studies, conducting data analysis, writing up the work they would perform, some type of consultation experiences, submitting proposals for conference presentations, conference presentations, taking a problem and doing a serious investigation either through internship or through a graduate assistantship or through an experiences that the program would set up for students, and some teaching experiences, if possible.

Professor M, focusing his response specifically on Student W’s case, pointed out that the major tasks that Student W needed to undertake before he finished his doctoral study would include developing a solid knowledge base of learning theories from
different perspectives and research methods, especially quantitative research methods; and developing the ability to synthesize the literature and produce his own arguments to contribute to the field, perhaps even in his dissertation project.

**Role of writing in the enculturation process**

All of the professors assumed that one must publish in order to survive academia, and four of them, except Professor D, clearly pointed out that writing is an essential tool for self-inquiry. For example, Professor A indicated that in a pragmatic sense, writing establishes one’s professional visibility and that writing is a very valuable cognitive mode for enhancing one’s knowledge in gaining and making knowledge. Professor M and Professor C stated that writing, for instance, in synthesis or position papers, enables students to better understand what they have been learning. Professor D pointed out that one can acquire the appropriate way of writing research reports by working with people who have research experiences and by reading published research reports to upgrade one’s knowledge base in methodology and in writing research reports. In short, pragmatically and cognitively, all the professors considered that writing could serve as a “powerful” “psychological tool” in “mediating” academic enculturation.
## Student Cases

### Academic field(s)

Table 8 summarizes the academic departments and major fields of interests that eight student participants are associated with.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Participants</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Major Field of interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student L</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>children’s literature; gender issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student M</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>English education; secondary teacher certification; the teaching and study of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student R</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>history; post colonial studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student J</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>cultural studies in education; higher education &amp; administration; educational psychology; human relations &amp; multicultural education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Y</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>applied statistics; research design; measurement; evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>environmental education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student P</td>
<td>Social and Cultural Foundation</td>
<td>curriculum; sociology; anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student W</td>
<td>Curriculum and Teacher Education</td>
<td>math education; educational psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Summaries of Academic Fields of Student Participants

### Establishing Expertise in Academic Field(s)

All student participants assumed that a Ph.D. degree, a solid knowledge base of one’s fields, and publications helped one to establish expertise on certain topics in academic fields. Relying on Bakhtinian notions of speech genres, the students’ perceptions on the need of a solid knowledge base about one’s field represent in their academic enculturation indicated that they were aware of the need to appropriate the
authoritative discourse and centripetal forces in their fields. Moreover, acquiring a Ph.D. degree and publications\textsuperscript{24} might suggest that the students’ understanding of the significance of the “centrifugal forces” and the “internally persuasive discourse,” in addition to the importance of “appropriating” the “centripetal forces” and the “authoritative discourse,” in their disciplinary enculturation. For example, Student R, Student J, and Student P believed that conducting helpful projects to inspire people to “think” and “act” differently is a fairly meaningful approach that also resonated with the belief of their advisor, Professor F. Attempting to develop and practice agency to establish expertise, Student R and Student J aim to tell their people’s stories in order to help them regain or (re)construct social justice by working within and against the legitimate rules of the fields.

**Major tasks in the doctoral program**

All the students reported coursework, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation were the major tasks in their doctoral programs. Student R and Student J suggested the need to design course work based on one’s academic goals and guidance from advisors and the other committee members. Student J insisted that figuring out one’s goal for pursuing this Ph.D. degree could be critical in preventing him or her from

\textsuperscript{24} Completing a dissertation, which is one of the most important requirements for acquiring a Ph.D. degree, and achieving publications require “members” to contribute “original thinking,” which represents the “production” of the “centrifugal forces” and the rise of “internally persuasive discourse,” to some level to the disciplinary conversations in the fields.
being buried by the coursework. In addition, Student M and Student J pointed out that the candidacy examination was a qualifying examination to have students prove themselves if they are ready to work on their dissertations as independent research.

**Role of writing in academic enculturation**

Seven student participants, except Student C, clearly pinpointed that writing was vital in this academic enculturation, based on the fact that everyone needed to publish to get recognized and promoted for tenure and that writing was an essential tool for self-inquiry. Moreover, two students, Student R and Student C, commented that writing was a “painful pleasure,” for writing pushed them to think hard and helped them to learn a great deal about themselves and their academic fields.

In sum, all the professors and the students indicated that, to establish expertise in the fields, one needs a solid knowledge base about the fields in terms of theories, research methods, and practices. That is, one is expected to “appropriate” the “authoritative discourse” to “produce” the “internally persuasive discourse,” in order to contribute the “centrifugal forces” to the disciplinary talks by (re)shaping and (re)defining the “centripetal forces” in the fields. All the professors emphasized the importance of original thought to contribute to the conversations in the fields, but only three student participants mentioned their awareness of this type of contributions, especially as part of the candidacy examination. To establish professional visibility, the professors suggested conference presentations, publications including journal articles and books, and good teaching. The students assumed that achieving the Ph.D. degree and publications were essential for one to establish expertise in the field. All of the participants, directly or
indirectly, pointed out the practical and cognitive purposes of writing; that is, they all agreed that one needs to write to enhance professional visibility and as a cognitive tool, to upgrade intellectual growth.

**Expectations for the Candidacy Examination**

To study disciplinary enculturation process, I adopted primarily the Vygotskian notion of activity and the Bakhtinian notion of speech genres, to investigate of the genesis and development of expected “academic” “genres” for the candidacy examination by examining the connection between content, linguistic and discursive forms, literate activities, contexts, and anticipated responses and outcomes. Not all writing styles are to be accepted as legitimate academic writing, so I was interested in learning what “genres” were considered “legitimate” for the candidacy examination. I examined the professors’ expectations for the genres for the candidacy examination. Moreover, in student case studies, I examined their interpretations of the required genres for this examination, their perceptions for the genres that their committee members would expect to see in their writing, and the evaluative criteria of their committee members for the candidacy examination. I was curious to see if there would be a match or mismatch between the interpretations of the students of the candidacy examination genres and those of their advisors for this high-stakes examination.

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25 Linguistic and discursive forms indicate the style and construction of the expected “genres” for the candidacy examination.
26 Literate activities refer to the activities that are associated with the writing for the candidacy examination, for example, reading and writing, talking and listening, sending and acting, and use of mediated tools for writing the examination.
27 “…socially forged conditions of mutual awareness through which our private understanding can be realized with others” (Brandt, 1986, p. 152).
28 Anticipated responses and outcomes refer to student participants’ interpretation of their committee’s expectations for the genres and evaluative criteria for the candidacy examination.
Professor Cases

All of the professors considered that a critical literature review was a “must” when students write for the candidacy examination. For example, Professor M asked Student W to write a research proposal, which required a review of literature, for his question. Yet, Professor C reported that she assigned different genres for the candidacy examination, but a literature review was always included. Albeit Professor D requested students to write their research reports with lay people as the audience, he reported that students needed to write reviews of literature and present information in a language, which did not have as much technical jargon as their course writing might have had.

Furthermore, all the professors assumed that the candidacy examination is a qualifying examination, during which students need to prove their ability and readiness to conduct independent research. As a consequence, to become doctoral candidates, students need to demonstrate their ability in synthesizing across the pertinent literature of their fields and produce their own arguments based on their synthesis. Making arguments, which would be the next step after knowing and synthesizing the literature of the fields, might not mean that students could “explicitly” contribute to the conversations of the field as “novice scholars,” but yet some professors hoped that their students would begin to appropriate the skills and knowledge to do so in the future.

For example, the professors of this study did not expect “originally thinking,” which represent the “official” contribution to the disciplinary conversations in the fields, from their students at the stage of the candidacy examination, but “arguments” or “perspectives” on certain topics in the fields. As mentioned earlier, the students’ arguments to some level could still contribute to the “centripetal forces” in the fields, although arguments are much less explicit than original thinking in contributing to the “conversations.” That Student J’s advisor quoted part of her candidacy examination in her book could be one example of the possible contribution from “novice scholars” to the “centripetal forces” in the fields.
Student Cases

Based on the nature of the examination questions, each of the students was aware that he or she needed to include a critical review of the literature on certain topics in the fields in their papers for the candidacy examination. Yet, three of them, Student M, Student P, and Student C, reported that they were not aware of any specific “type” of writing or “genre” that their committee members expected for their candidacy examinations. All students, except Student R and Student J, wrote their papers by using the “genres” learned during their regular course writing. For example, Student M indicated that most of his course writing required the papers, which were half-expository and half-synthesis—that is, they were synthesis papers in the “form” of expository writing. He utilized this “genre” in writing his responses for the candidacy examination, except for his first question, which was clearly a literature review, based on the nature of the question and the professor’s instruction. Student Y relied on the scoring rubrics that her advisor, Professor D, used for course writing to write her research report for lay audience without using heavy technical jargon in order to respond to one of the examination questions. Student C wrote her papers as “general academic papers” or “long essays,” which included her personal arguments, critical synthesis of the literature, use of citations, good mechanics, and good organization. Likewise, Student P followed the general rules for course writing, which included stating the purpose of the writing in the first three paragraphs and carefully defending his argument or position for writing his responses for the examination.
However, three students, Student L, Student R, and Student J reported that they were aware of their professors’ general expectations for the candidacy examination—that is, critical reviews of literature and their own arguments on certain topics in the fields. There is no doubt that these three students would assume that their response papers for the candidacy examination should be “effective” academic writing, based on their understanding of the “official” approach in contributing to the “dynamics” in the fields.

For example, an introductory core course from her program helped Student L realized professors’ expectations for “good” academic writing. The facts that Student R had read all the publications by his committee members and that he negotiated the questions with them for the candidacy examination helped him aware of the expectations of his committee members toward the “legitimate” writing for this examination. Student J learned about fundamental expectations of her committee members for the candidacy examination from her understanding of their scholarships, experiences with them from coursework, and personal interactions with them. The other students, who were not aware of the specific expectations of their committee members for their writing for the examinations, approached their writing by covering the required content and writing the response papers as they usually had for course writing.

However, none of the students was aware of the grading criteria of their committee members for the candidacy examination. Student R and Student C reported that page limits were the only criteria that one of their committee members suggested prior to the examination, and they did not really attend to the limits. However, they both

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30 “Originally thinking” is the “official” approach for one to contribute to the “dynamics,” which represent the dynamic interactions between the centripetal forces and the centrifugal forces, in the fields.
completed the examinations successfully, and interestingly, none of the students had worried that he or she would have trouble completing the examination. Moreover, all of the students, except Student R, Student J, and Student Y, seemed to follow their own perceptions of “effective” or “good” academic writing for their candidacy examinations, as described earlier. In general, they perceived that “good” academic writing should include “good content,” “good” organization, “good” mechanics, and “appropriate” use of citations are the other characteristics for “effective” academic writing.

Two of them, Student L and Student R, were to publish some or all of their writing of the candidacy examination. However, both of them indicated that the basic expectation of the writing for the candidacy examination was synthesis across one’s course work and that given the time limit of the examinations and the nature of certain questions, getting papers published might not be a realistic goal.

In sum, all of the students agreed that their writing for the candidacy examinations should include critical literature reviews, regardless of the different types of candidacy examination questions, although the professors revealed that in addition to the literature reviews in certain areas in their fields, they expected that the students would include “arguments” in their writing. Only three students, Student R, Student J, and Student L were aware of their committee members’ expectations that students needed to address their “voices” in the writing for the examination. Interestingly, Student R and Student J

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31 In the context of the candidacy examination, good content includes primarily comprehensive and critical reviews of the pertinent literature in their fields and their perspectives on the results of the reviews.  
32 Although the professors did not expect “original thinking” from their students at this early stage of their academic enculturation, they did expect “arguments” from the students in order to somewhat “push” them to “produce” their “internally persuasive discourse” in order to learn the “appropriate participation” in the fields.
learned these expectations for “arguments” through their understanding of their professors’ scholarships and the experiences of taking courses and especially independent studies from their professors. Nevertheless, the other five students “constructed” their writing by relying on their experiences with the professors through courses and independent studies as well as their general perception of good academic writing. In short, these five students wrote for their candidacy examinations as they would do for their course writing.

Interestingly, none of the students was aware of their professors’ grading criteria for the examinations; thus, six of them, except Student R and Student J, did their writing by relying on their perceptions of good academic writing for their regular course writing as the gauge. Student J intended to write “personal” writing for this high-stakes examination as she developed and practiced her agency during the examination. However, Student R and Student L aimed their writing of this examination for future publications, and they expected to publish some or all their papers. Given the limits of time and the precise nature of certain questions, Student L and Student R agreed that achieving publications was not usually a realistic “gauge” or goal for the candidacy examination.

Expected Authorship for the Candidacy Examination

To investigate how the students developed sense of authorship at all or how they used citations for the candidacy examination, I relied on interview questions rather than text analysis. Thus, my findings are based on the students’ memories of their examinations, with some cases completed months prior to my interviews. For professor

33 That all of the students in this study had completed their candidacy examinations successfully suggests that their participation was “legitimate” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) at the stage of the candidacy examination, but their understanding of the candidacy examination genres might suggest that some the students’ participation could be more “legitimate” than the others.
case studies, my examination focused on their perceptions about the way newcomers established their sense of authorship in their fields. I also interviewed them specifically about the use of citations in students’ writing for the candidacy examination.

Professor Cases

How Writers Establish Expertise or Authorship in Academic Fields

Contributing to the fields through achieving publications requires critical and original thought in addition to a strong knowledge base of the fields. Four professors, Professor D, Professor C, Professor F, and Professor A indicated that getting published was one way to achieve expertise or authority in the fields. For instance, Professor A emphasized the importance of “distinctiveness in one’s writing” and knowing where to publish to establish authority among peers. For example, it is probably preferred to publish papers in referee journals and books in academic presses in order to establish oneself as an authority in an academic field. That two professors, Professor M and Professor A, did emphasize the importance of a solid knowledge base of the fields might be attributed to their concern that these students were still “novices” at the stage of the candidacy examination. Specifically, Professor A pinpointed that showing respectfulness toward and understanding of contribution from previous studies was one way to establish one’s “authority.” Lave and Wenger (1991) reported that new apprentices would need to develop a holistic sense of the practices of their community and establish social relations with other community members at the beginning of the “appropriation.” After the students had appropriated their “authoritative discourse” or “disciplinary discourse” and
engaged in the “social relations” with other community members through “citational negotiation,” for instance, their “internally persuasive discourse”\(^{34}\) could reveal their “authority” to some level.

Moreover, three professors, Professor F, Professor M, and Professor A, stated original thinking was a critical approach for one to establish expertise. For example, Professor F explained the significance of contributing one’s own perspectives\(^{35}\) to help people think and act in better ways in order to address problems, situations, or even solutions in the world. Professor M emphasized the importance of conducting new research and building one’s own perspectives based on the results of analysis and synthesis of previous studies on certain topics to contribute to the conversations in the fields. However, it was not apparent that any of the professors believed that students could or should use the occasion of the candidacy examination to establish “expertise” in specific areas in the fields; this might be attributed to the “novice” status of the students in the fields at the stage of the candidacy examination, as described earlier.

**Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Synthesizing across course work with a critical mind is the most basic expectation that most advisors had for their students for the candidacy examination. Original thinking was not required for the candidacy examination, but it was certainly encouraged. Three Professors, Professor F, Professor M, and Professor A, assumed that expecting expertise or authorship from students at the stage of the candidacy examination might be premature. They interpreted expertise as one’s ability to contribute original thinking to

\(^{34}\) Their internally persuasive discourse, which represented part of the centrifugal forces to some level, could change the dynamics of the centripetal forces in the fields.

\(^{35}\) One’s original thinking, which represents part of the centrifugal forces that could (re)shape and (re)define the centripetal forces in the fields, could inspire other people to perceive their lives “differently.”
help inspire other people in the fields. For example, Professor M indicated that at this stage students needed to show certain level of competence, but not authority yet. Interestingly, Professor F interpreted authorship as “authorial ownership,” “Who wrote it?” As a result, Professor F expected synthesis and “some sort of arguments” from most students’ writing for the candidacy examination, but not original thought. However, Professor F and Professor D considered that students could establish their “authority” by making provocative arguments, “putting knowledge to use in a specific research context,” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03). In other words, the five professors did not expect their students to construct expertise, which required originally thinking to contribute to their disciplinary conversations, for the candidacy examination. However, two of them did indicate that students could establish “authorship” or “authority” through “making provocative arguments” as they applied what they had learned from coursework to a specific research.

Student Cases

How writers establish expertise or authority in the field

The students perceived that establishing expertise in their fields required conducting good-quality studies and producing good-quality writing for publications. In other words, establishing “expertise” in the fields requires one to contribute “original thought,” which may appear after one has appropriated the “authoritative discourse,” to the disciplinary “discussions” through “great” research that are recognized and valued by other community members and through “appropriate” academic writing, which could be “accepted” as journal articles or books. For example, all of the students, except Student R and Student J, mentioned, that one could establish expertise through conducting good-
quality research. Moreover, five student participants, Student M, Student R, Student Y, Student J, and Student P, specifically indicated the importance of knowing the major theories and scholars of the fields. In sum, to accomplish good-quality studies, the need of possessing a solid knowledge base and a strong understanding of the research methods in the fields suggests the importance for one to be aware of the “authoritative discourse” in the fields. Additionally, the requirement of critical thinking ability for comprehensively analyzing and synthesizing the pertinent literature indicates the significance of developing and practicing “internally persuasive discourse” in the process of “finding one’s own place in an academic fields.”

Good writing skills is another “must.” Student L, Student Y, and Student M pointed out that good writing could enable one to establish “expertise” in the fields, because “publication writing” can enhance one’s professional “visibility” on certain topics in the fields. Three students, Student J, Student C, and Student W commented that journal guidelines could be one of the ways that experts write for publications. Interestingly, that journal guidelines represent part of the authoritative discourse in the fields may suggest the students’ perceptions of the importance of the “authoritative discourse” or the “centripetal forces” in their academic enculturation.

In addition, Student J and Student R emphasized the need to establish one’s voices as well as practice and develop agency in writing. Student R and Student J intended to tell their people’s stories to the world in the ways that “respected” their cultures. To do so, they indicated that to some level they might need to “construct” and “deconstruct” the “traditional” way of establishing expertise in their field by bringing “different” “voices” from different sectors to challenge the conventional requirements,
which are usually based on the “U.S. Western centric sense.” For instance, Student R pointed out that three writing styles with different focus enabled him to establish “expertise” to some level by satisfying different audience or meeting different purposes. He claimed that the “bell hook” style enabled him to establish authority by bringing personal experiences into writing; the traditional style enabled him to establish authority by utilizing extensive citations about the field; and the “Professor F” style enabled him to establish authority by writing in a “rigorous jargon” way.

In addition, only Student R and Student J pointed out that use of citations could be a way to establish expertise in the fields. Citational negotiation can demonstrate one’s understanding of the “authoritative discourse” or the “centripetal forces” in the fields as well as one’s “social relations with other community members” (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Establish Authorship for the Candidacy Examination

Reviewing relevant literature, including one’s interpretations, practices of one’s agency, and use of citations suggested how the students might develop authorship in writing for their candidacy examinations. Five students, Student L, Student M, Student R, Student Y, and Student P pinpointed that reviews of the pertinent literature could be one way to establish their authorship in writing for their candidacy examinations. Through their selection of the pertinent literature for the reviews, these students proved to their committee members that they knew what was “legitimate” and what was “peripheral” in the disciplinary conversations of the fields.

Five of the students, Student L, Student M, Student R, Student J, and Student C, reported that finding and including their voices or developing and practicing agency in their writing for the examinations was a source of their authorship. Their voices could
stem from their selection of reading materials, use of citations, writing styles, ways of organization, negotiation of the examination questions, and personal perspectives in their reviews on certain topics for their candidacy examination. In other words, their voices combined their understanding of the “authoritative discourse” and their practice of the “internally persuasive discourse” in certain areas in their fields.

Furthermore, three males students, Student M, Student R, and Student P, specifically mentioned that use of citations could help one establish authorship, showing that they did know the field, as they wrote for their candidacy examinations.

Establish authorship in course writing

A “fine” selection of citations across the pertinent literature on certain topics and development or practice of one’s agency showed some students authorship to some level in course writing. Three students, Student L, Student M, and Student W, stated that a fine selection of citations could help them establish authorship in course writing, but Student L pointed out that too many quotations could bury her voice in the writing.

Additionally, Student R and Student J emphasized that developing and practicing agency in selecting materials for course writing could establish one’s authorship. Specifically, Student R indicated that the key to his survival and to his interests is to find his own “style” that makes him happy and comfortable. Likewise, Student J pointed out that if she could not have the space to construct knowledge based on her interests and the purpose of her academic program, she could not voice out her “self” like in some course writing, and as a consequence, writing would not enhance her learning in any way. In other words, successful academic enculturation needs one’s understanding of the
“authoritative discourse” as well as one’s practice of the “internally persuasive discourse,” or the centripetal forces in the fields would become static and “boring” if the centrifugal forces disappear in disciplinary communities.

**Professors’ Expectations for Authorship for the Candidacy Examination**

Most students, except Student R and Student J, were not aware of their professors’ expectations regarding authorship. Student R’s and Student J’s brief comments on their professors’ expectations for authorship were based on their own effort to seek out and understand how their committee members developed authorship in their published works. I would interpret this “reality” in different senses. In a sense, this lack of “explicit” instructions on authorship might suggest that the advisor did not take seriously what Greene (1995) has referred to as the interpretation of ideas and integration of sources to make one’s own argument— that is, skills and strategies Greene argues that college undergraduate ought to be taught in writing courses. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) found this low-demand peripheral participation was common among new apprentices. Some of the professors, including Professor F, Professor M, and Professor A, considered their students as “novice scholars,” and as a result, expecting original thinking at this stage might be unrealistic. As a consequence, all of the professors did not really expect “expertise,” which included original thinking to contribute to disciplinary conversations, but they did expect “arguments” or “personal perspectives” from the students in the reviews of literature on certain topics in their fields for the candidacy examination. In another sense, the professors might intend their students to develop and practice their “agency,” learning to act at least as an “independent” scholar in their fields. For example, Professor A explained that the candidacy examination is a critical point that
students needed to prove that they are ready to move from coursework to their
dissertation stage as an independent researcher. In doing so, the students might be
expected to behave as “independent” novices, who needed to learn to be independent, but
were not evaluated by the “official standards” for the “old-timers” in the fields yet—that
is, original thinking that qualified members “produce” to contribute to the dynamic
conversations in the fields.

However, all the student participants, except Student R, indicated that suggested
“readings” from their committee members either through independent studies or meetings
with them prior to the examinations helped them to start with certain landmark pieces as
well as to learn the expectations of their committee members, to some extent, for the use
of citations. Interestingly, Student M and Student W incorporated the suggested
references from their professors, but they might have different viewpoints from those of
the suggested references. Furthermore, two students, Student L and Student Y, found the
references from their professors helpful, but they claimed that their selection of citations
was used more to meet their own expectations than those of their committee members. As
noted earlier, Student R went beyond his committee’s expectations and took the initiative
to not only conduct scholarly research, but to publish and possibly all of the papers for
this examination. In short, although all the students were aware of the importance of
attending to expectations of the committee members, who represent the authoritative

36 All the students successfully completed their candidacy examinations and their “participation” was
considered “legitimate.” However, based on the feedback from his committee members as well as the fact
that he was able to publish two and possibly four response papers for the examination, the “participation”
of Student R might be more “legitimate” than the others in this study. By the time of his candidacy
examination, very likely, he had a pretty clear picture of his field, for he was able go beyond the
expectations of his committee members by bringing different materials and arguments to his writing. As a
result, he might not need as much guidance as the other students, regarding suggested readings.
discourse in their fields, five out of the eight students were concerned about satisfying their own expectations for their candidacy examinations as part of their practice of agency (their internally persuasive discourse) with little concern about successfully completing the examinations.

In Sum, all the professors and the students emphasized a strong knowledge base about the fields through reviewing relevant scholarships— in essence, this was essential for writers to establish expertise on certain topics in academic fields. All the professors, except Professor D, indicated that original thinking was critical to contribute to disciplinary conversations in the fields, and this was demonstrated by critical reviews and an ability to recognize gaps in the current conversations in the fields. Moreover, all the students had recognized the importance of a critical thinking ability in order to “find one’s place” in the fields. Six of them mentioned the need of conducting good-quality research and two of them emphasized the importance of practicing one’s agency in writing as a way to establish expertise. In addition, three students pointed out that good writing skills helped to establish one in the fields, and three students mentioned about following journal guidelines was a popular way of writing acceptable journal papers.

Regarding establishing authorship or authority in the writing for the candidacy examination, the professors expected synthesis of the literature reviews on certain topics in the fields and “arguments” based on the reviews. Three professors commented that expecting original thinking at the stage of candidacy examination would be premature, because the basic expectation for the candidacy examination is synthesis across students’ coursework. However, all the professors pointed out that students would need to address their own arguments based on the result of their synthesis of literature reviews. For
example, one professor stated that making provocative arguments, which could
demonstrate students’ ability in putting knowledge into use in the context of a specific
research study, could reveal students’ authority in their writing for this examination.
Original thinking, which is one step beyond synthesis, reveals one’s authority on certain
topics in the fields. By contrast, the students assumed that they could establish authority
in their writing for the candidacy examination by reviewing the relevant literature on
certain topics in the fields, including their “perspectives,” practices of agency, and
citational negotiation. Five students pointed out that critical literature reviews helped
them establish authority in their writing for the examination. Five student participants
claimed that another way could be practicing one’s agency, for example, in negotiating
examination questions, in selecting materials for writing, ways of organization, including
personal voices or perspectives in their reviews, and so forth. Three students mentioned
that one’s “smart” use of citations could reveal one’s knowledge base of the fields and
produce certain amount of authority in their papers, but one student reported that too
many quotations could bury one’s voices in writing.

In terms of students’ perceptions of their committee members’ expectations for
authorship for the candidacy examination, only two students were aware of their
unspoken expectations through reading professors’ published works and experiences
from taking courses or independent studies from their professors. Seven students found
the suggested references from professors helped them to start their process of reviewing
the literature in specific areas in the fields. Two students reported that they included the
suggested references, but not necessarily they agreed with all of the viewpoints of the
suggested “readings.” However, another two students stated that their selection of
citations was to meet their own expectations for their candidacy examinations, rather than to “satisfy” their professors’ expectations. In short, although the professors did suggest helpful references to guide students’ reviews of the major scholarships on certain topics in the fields, most of the students, six out of eight, were not aware of their committee members’ expectations for authorship for this high-stakes examination.

Conclusion

This chapter began with the stories of each professor participant and each student participant and a cross case examination based on the four major research questions. First, I explicated the “life histories” that the students brought to their writing for the examinations by considering the professors’ experiences with candidacy examinations, as doctoral students, and interpretations of good academic writing as well as the students’ professional goals, interpretations of good academic writing, most challenging tasks in their doctoral programs, and major difficulties for accomplishing their writing for this examination.

Second, to describe the role that writing played in the process of becoming “legitimate,” in light of these students’ learning to write the candidacy examination, I considered the academic fields of all of the participants, their perceptions of how one could establish expertise in the fields, their perceptions of the major tasks of their doctoral programs, and their interpretations of the role of writing in this disciplinary becoming.
Third, to explicate the candidacy examination “genres,” I considered interpretations of all of the participants for the required genres for the examination, and the students’ perceptions of their committee members’ expectations for the candidacy examination genres.

Finally, to explicate the expected authorship or use of citations in the writing for this examination, I considered the professors’ perceptions of the ways that experts write in their fields and their expectations of students’ authorship or use of citations in their writing for the candidacy examination. I also considered the students’ perceptions of the ways that experts write in their fields, their perceptions of the ways that they could write to establish authorship for their candidacy examination and course writing as well as their perceptions of their professors’ expectations for authorship or use of citations for the candidacy examination.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter includes conclusions and recommendations drawn from data presented and analyzed in the previous chapter. I have employed the key notions of Vygotsky’s activity and Bakhtin’s reaccentuating as well as a case-study methods to understand the productive forces and products of the writing activity for the candidacy examination. The primary actors of this study were five professor participants and eight successful doctoral student participants in various fields in a college of education at a mid-western university. In Chapter 4, I examined each case study professor and student individually and then looked at the patterns across cases to understand the themes, issues, and questions that emerged from my analyses. In this chapter, I will try to interpret the interrelationships of the themes, issues, and questions stemming from the data analyses in order to understand the role of writing in this disciplinary enculturation and the legitimate genres and expected authorship for the candidacy examination. Accordingly, Chapter 5 requires that I refer again to Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3, which are presented in chapter 1, in order to describe how the complex conjunctions of contexts shaped the students’ disciplinary enculturation as they wrote for their candidacy examinations.
The Candidacy Examination as a Goal-oriented Tool-mediated Activity

The findings of this study suggest that the writing activity of the candidacy examination is indeed complex and “laminated” (Prior, 1998), due to the close interrelationships among the personal histories, writing activities, and the (re)production of genres and authorship. In the context of the candidacy examination, the histories that the student participants brought to this activity included their perceptions of good academic writing; social interaction with other community members; guidance from their advisors\(^ {37} \); their personal and professional goals for pursuing the Ph.D. degree; and their understandings of the purpose or goal of this candidacy examination. Accordingly, the doctoral students’ perceptions of good academic writing were being continuously constructed and reconstructed, based on their social interactions as well as their own efforts to write successfully. The social interaction included learning their professors’ expectations and evaluative criteria for course projects; discussions with professors and peers within their university and professional communities; and reading other people’s writing, including books, journal articles, conference presentation, and unpublished papers.

The more social interactions that students attained, the more legitimate their understanding of written scholarships in the fields became. For example, Student R used his candidacy examination as an opportunity to read extensively to explore his fields to help satisfy his intellectual curiosity and personal growth. Subsequently, Student R published two of and very possibly all four of his papers written for the candidacy examination.

\(^{37}\) The students’ mentors in this study primarily refer to their advisors with the awareness that the other committee members of the candidacy examination did, more or less, contribute to the students’ writing for candidacy examinations.
examination, suggesting that his writing had been regarded as legitimate contributions to his field. This is, at least, one significant and successful step beyond his professors’ typical expectations for the candidacy examination as essentially synthesis papers focused on students’ course work. Student R’s accomplishment exemplifies how the writing activity for the candidacy examination can mediate students’ personal and professional growth.

The findings suggest that advisors’ guidance played an essential role in steering doctoral students in productive directions for accomplishing their candidacy examinations, and, even more importantly, in guiding them to their broader academic and personal goals. Within the context of this study, detailed road maps to prevent the newcomers from being lost did not appear to be necessary, because all the students of this study were successful doctoral candidates and highly recommended by their advisors. However, individualized scaffolding to motivate, to coach, and to encourage advisees to achieve more sophisticated intellectual growth is essential in this academic enculturation. Students at the stage of the candidacy examination, according to the professors I interviewed, are novice members in their fields; that is, most of the doctoral students’ disciplinary participation was considered legitimate, but peripheral (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, it is essential that their mentors see the need to guide them to see the big picture as well as to establish social relations with other community members.

The results also indicate that the clearer the personal and professional goals of doctoral students were, the more motivated and goal-oriented they were. The fact that all of the students intended to pursue faculty positions in a college or university setting nourished their motivations to try their best in writing for the candidacy examinations.
For instance, Student R came to his doctoral program with an exact project on his mind and a clear goal that he had hoped to achieve. He had planned his course work, the candidacy examination, his dissertation, and possible publications for a successful transition from a student to an authority on certain topics in his field. Student J, after her academic transformation, had redefined her goals for pursuing a Ph.D. degree. Thus, she was eager to learn and develop her academic capabilities in order to achieve legitimate academic credential to tell her people’s stories. Specifically, she sought to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct the “legitimate code” for making knowledge in order to upgrade social justice to include the voices of fuller range of ideas and experiences. With their agency, during the candidacy examinations Student R and Student J tried their best to enjoy and appreciate wrestling with the intellectual challenges as well as the painful pleasure of this writing activity.

The findings of this study also suggest that the students’ understanding of the goal and purpose of their candidacy examinations had a profound influence on their approach to write up this examination. Student L, Student C, Student R, and Student J were aware of their agency in this writing activity, so it seemed that their practice of agency enabled them to enjoy this activity more than the other students. This awareness of agency certainly had an impact on their construction of authorship in their writing as well.

That the L2 doctoral students reported some constraints due to limited vocabulary suggests that writing the examination was somewhat more challenging for L2 students than for L1 students (Silva, 1997). Although L2 students did not always perceive using English as a second language as major difficulty for completing candidacy examinations, Student Y did indicate that language transfer did slow her down as she organized and
wrote research reports for courses and for the candidacy examination. Additionally, Student C and Student P did receive help from L1 friends to ensure that their response papers for the examinations were free of any misuse of English. Comparatively, the findings suggest that L1 students might face one less challenge than their L2 peers in reading, organizing, and writing their responses for their candidacy examinations. However, one of Belcher’s (1994) case study students, “Keoungmee,” in spite of her linguistic limitation, successfully completed her dissertation, contributed new “voices” to her field, and started her career as an assistant professor. Keoungmee’s case suggests that linguistic constraint may not necessarily prevent L2 students from achieving disciplinary enculturation. Despite the fact that some L2 students needed more time and language resources, all the L1 and L2 students of this study acquired “legitimacy” by completing their candidacy examinations. Further study of L2 doctoral students’ efforts to successfully pass candidacy examinations and to write dissertations is needed in order to construct a fuller picture of their challenges when facing the high stakes of academic enculturation.

The Role of Writing in the Process of Legitimate Peripheral Participation

All the Professors and the students indicated that one needed to acquire a strong knowledge base about the literature of the fields in order to establish recognition in the fields. This suggests that one needs to appropriate the authoritative discourse of the fields before he or she is able to develop internally persuasive discourse or voices to contribute the dynamics of the disciplinary conversations. Although all the professors emphasized
Writing plays an essential role in disciplinary enculturation (Casanave, 1990), for text is considered the most legitimate end product for academic purposes (Casanave, 2002). Pragmatically, writing helps scholars to establish professional visibility through conference presentations, publications, and grant writing. Equally important, writing is a vital tool for learning the central issues, practices, and rules of evidence for various disciplines (Prior, 1998). Most of the participants appreciated both the intrinsic and extrinsic purposes of writing. However, during the interviews, talking about the role of writing in their academic enculturation seemed to burden most of the students, because, according to some students, they rarely or never thought about such issues until the interviews. All the professor participants, except Professor D, clearly pointed out the critical role of writing in helping students understand and develop ideas to become professionals in their fields. For instance, Professor M indicated that writing “pushes” one to achieve a better understanding from reading the significant research studies in the field. As a result, to help students understand their readings, the writing assignments of each of his courses require students to analyze each of the studies that students choose to review, “pulling apart the pieces, analyzing, and synthesizing” (Professor M, interview, 2/26/03). Professor M believed that students needed to fully understand their readings before they are able to analyze and synthesize ideas from
readings for writing. Writing is a powerful “tool.” Writing activity not only enhances one’s learning and intellectual growth, but also helps him or her to become “recognized” and “legitimate” in the academic fields.

**Expectations for the Candidacy Examination**

The professors perceived the candidacy examination as a qualifying examination for students to prove their readiness for conducting independent research. In particular, the professors wanted to see evidence of students’ strong knowledge base about the fields and critical thinking abilities to develop “novel” arguments. Their most basic expectation was synthesis across students’ coursework with analysis in order to defend their arguments. Additionally, the professors expected that students’ academic writing for the examination need to be “effective.” For example, Professor F indicated that, at one level, students’ responses for the candidacy examination should be free of any mechanical errors and misuse of the language. At another level, she wants to see students’ “ability to synthesize across a rich selection of the pertinent literature” (Professor F, interview, 3/11/03), based on their coursework. She did not expect originally thinking at this stage, but “arguments” from students’ responses for this examination.

Interestingly, the findings of this study demonstrate occasional mismatches between the professors and the students in their expectations for the candidacy examination genres. All the students understood that they needed to include critical literature reviews in their response papers for the examination, but only three out of eight

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38 One needs to “contribute” to the “dynamics” of the disciplinary “discussions” to some level in order to become “legitimate” in the fields. Writing activity clearly helps “novice” members to understand the disciplinary discourse and conversations, which represent the authoritative discourse or the centripetal forces, in the fields, and can eventually “push” “newcomers” to “produce” their “internally persuasive discourse” to “reshape” the dynamics of the “centripetal forces” in their respective fields.
student participants — Student L, Student J, and Student R — were clearly aware of the need to include their arguments in their response papers. Specifically, Student R and Student J learned their professors’ expectations for addressing and developing their own arguments in their response papers through their understanding of their professors’ scholarships and through their experiences of taking courses and independent studies from them. However, the other five students wrote their responses for their examinations by relying on the “nature” of their examination questions or by using the genres or the ways of organization for course writing. For example, Student M reported that the genre for his course writing was a combination of expository and synthesis paper, and this was the “genre” that he utilized to respond to two of his candidacy examination questions.

Based on the nature of his first question as well as feedback from his advisor, Professor A, Student M understood that he needed to write a literature review for this specific question. Course writing experiences were clearly a critical resource for most student participants for writing this examination, but relying on course writing did not always match the professors’ expectations.

Moreover, only three student participants were aware of their professors’ expectations that they needed to develop their own arguments based on their own synthesis of the literature. Why? For the most part, the professors did not discuss their expectations for this high-stakes examination, suggesting that their expectations regarding academic writing were assumed to be clear from course writing that they assigned. In any case, the students tended to rely on their sense of effective academic
writing based on course writing, rather than on the more specific demands of their academic fields; consequently, they were somewhat mystified by their professors’ expectations for the candidacy examination.

Furthermore, the results of this study suggest that although the professors did not talk about their expectations overtly, they did have much higher expectations for this high-stakes writing they did than for course writing. For example, for course writing, the professors expected synthesis papers, but rarely comprehensive literature reviews and certainly not original arguments or novel perspectives or stances. Although the students did take writing their responses for candidacy examinations more seriously and spent more time than for course writing, relying on course writing experiences did not always help most of the students to match up their professors’ unspoken expectations that they develop their own arguments as part of their own synthesis of the literature reviews for the examinations. Previous studies of graduate education suggest similar problem with such mismatched expectations. Belcher (1994) looks at the role of the relationships between three doctoral students and their advisors and suggests that a match or mismatch between professors’ and students’ understanding of their communities of practice, for instance, different goals for writing research papers and different research audience expectations, can determine if the students will succeed in disciplinary enculturation. Casanave (1990; 1992) reports similar findings in her dissertation study. Virginia chose to leave her doctoral program after the first year, due to the mismatch between most of her professors’ and her expectations toward disciplinary socialization.
Accordingly, social interactions can help newcomers to demystify professors’ unspoken expectation for their writing for the candidacy examination. Some of the students understood the expected genres and had learned this expectation from reading the publications of their exam committee members or from taking courses or independent studies from their committee members. Hence, social interactions can make profound contribution to help students to accomplish legitimate writing for the candidacy examination. In another sense, the professors represent the “authoritative discourse” or part of the “centripetal forces” in the fields; understanding the “authoritative discourse” helped the students, for example, Student J and Student R, to achieve “legitimacy” in their academic enculturation at the stage of the candidacy examination.

The Expected Authorship or Authority, Use of citations, and Agency

In this study, the professors perceived the primary goal of doctoral programs as guiding students in developing and practicing their agency in order to pursue their academic careers. This expectation, in a sense, may explain why the professors did not explicitly discuss their expectations for the candidacy examination unless the students chose to ask about it. However, none of the students asked about the writing per se for this examination; and none of the professors expressed their explicit expectations regarding authorship.

During the interviews, all the professors indicated that establishing authority in their respective fields requires original thought, but three of them indicated that expecting original thinking from their doctoral students at the stage of candidacy examinations could be premature. This suggests that these professors expected “peripheral legitimate
participation” from their students, whom they regarded as novice members in their fields at the stage of candidacy examinations. Thus, all of the professors only expected arguments,” instead of “original thought” from their students’ writing. The professors consistently indicated that perhaps the dissertation could be a more reasonable stage to expect original thought from students.

Yet, as shown, students can claim their authority or authorship when making provocative arguments by using their knowledge in a specific research context or when making a fine selection of citations across the pertinent literature (Belcher, 1994; Bloch & Chi, 1995; Greene, 1995; Prior, 1997). For instance, Professor F suggests that, in order to demonstrate one’s comprehensive knowledge base and deep understanding about the fields, students need to be extremely well read and “think really hard and long enough on their readings.” Using Bakhtinian notions of “reaccentuating,” the professors’ interpretations and expectations, regarding authority and authorship, for the candidacy examination suggest that students need to appropriate the authoritative discourse in order to “produce” their “internally persuasive discourse.” With respect to use of citations, most students had learned their professors’ expectations through taking courses and particularly independent studies from them for preparing the candidacy examination.

Again, more explicit guidance from the professors or more communication between the students and the professors specifically for their writing for candidacy examinations may bridge the occasional mismatches between the students and the professors, with respect to authorship or authority. The findings suggest that some professors, pointed out that they might mention their expectations in terms of content to be covered, but they did not explicitly explain how authoritative arguments are developed.
or grounded in citations (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1988). Some of the professors had an unspoken assumption that students need to and will develop the required academic writing skills to survive in academia naturally by taking courses, reading other people’s publications, getting involved in research studies, conducting research studies, and writing up research results. Yet, if the students need additional help for writing per se, they just need to ask their professors directly. According to the results of this study, developing “legitimate” writing skills for this high-stakes examination seems to have been taken for granted by the professors. The findings suggest that the professors offered somewhat vague direction regarding authorship: the students were expected to (re)produce “legitimate” academic writing for this high-stakes examination, which does not necessarily require original thinking from students yet, but original thought would be highly appreciated. Clearly, professors’ explicit directions, regarding authorship, for writing this high-stakes examination and for establishing expertise in the fields could help students to (re)produce acceptable academic writing in differing contexts.

The case studies of two L2 students, Student R and Student J, showed strong evidence that appropriate practice of agency produces authority. Both of them had high expectations for their writing for this examination. Student R aimed to publish, at least two of his response papers to prove to himself that he was considered “legitimate” in his fields, and to contribute to the disciplinary conversations. Student J did not have suitable opportunities to practice such agency in her writing, so she intended to use the activity of writing for the candidacy examination to help redefine her academic identity and figure out the limits of legitimate academic writing for this high-stakes examination by
“experimenting” with her “personal” writing. Both Student R and Student J had coherent understandings of the scholarships of their professors; thus, indirectly they understood the expectations of their committee members, especially in regards to addressing and developing “voices” to legitimize their academic writing. However, Student J, who felt confident for her candidacy examination, was concerned about how creative she could be in (re)producing legitimate academic writing styles to represent her own analyses and interpretations. The fact that, at the time of this study, Student R had two response papers published and two were in the process of review and that Professor F quoted part of Student J’ candidacy examination in her book demonstrated that as students they did develop a strong sense of authority or authorship in their response papers. Most of the other students, including two L1 students, were still hoping to attain such an accomplishment in their academic lives.

**Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research**

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of this study. However, due to the limited number of the student and the professor participants, confined to the academic fields in education, and the case study design of this study, the findings of this study will only be applicable to the participants of this study albeit some of the results can yield helpful implications for doctoral students, doctoral education, and future studies. The fact that this study only recruited students, who had successfully completely the candidacy examination prior to the beginning of this study, indicates that these case studies represent the best-case scenarios of how doctoral students “acquired” the “legitimate” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) “cultural forms of lived experiences” (Prior,
1998, p. 162). Another limitation should be addressed in future studies. The candidacy examination committee had four committee members, who more or less had contributed to the dynamics of the writing activity of the candidacy examination. The fact that I only recruited and interviewed the advisors of the student participants suggests the need to use other committee members to triangulate the data analysis more completely. Finally, I did not pursue analysis of the professors’ exam questions or the text analysis of the written drafts of the students, as demonstrated by Prior (1998), but I would suggest such analysis in order to acquire fuller understanding about the nature of the writing task and to explore how contexts shape written resources.

This study adopted a case-study design; the sample sizes for both professors and doctoral students were small. Future studies might include gender difference, students from a wide range of academic fields, and all committee members, suggesting the need for more participants. Moreover, to investigate the difference of between L1 and L2 students, I would recommend recruiting the same number of participants, increasing time for interviews, and conducting detailed text analysis of their course writing and writing for the candidacy examination. However, collaboration between a researcher and an insider in particular academic disciplines is recommended if the researcher is not familiar with the conventions and norms for writing successfully. Yet, with help from an insider, a deeper and fuller study would be possible in order to achieve more detailed description, analysis, and interpretation of students’ writing for the candidacy examination.

The scope of this study was confined to eight successful doctoral students; however, for less successful students, the need for explicit mentoring may be a significant issue for future studies to explore. To avoid political tension given the high-
stakes nature of the candidacy examination, I recommend that researchers consider studying an academic community, in which students are introduced and prepared to accomplish “acceptable” academic writing in comparison to another academic communities, in which students have limited access to mentoring.

**Recommendations For Doctoral Education**

Achieving a Ph.D. degree may be one of the most challenging tasks in one’s life, yet clear personal and professional goals can motivate students not only to survive the doctoral program, but also to achieve their goals successfully. This study demonstrates that a strong personal goal enables doctoral students to be high achievers, who are more likely to do coursework, candidacy examination, and a dissertation rigorously. By contrast, without specific goals, students are likely to be buried by coursework or to find the exam especially burdensome and purposeless. Equally important, a match between professors’ and students’ conceptualizations of their community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) may indicate a stronger opportunity for students to succeed in disciplinary enculturation. Thus, doctoral students need to be clearly aware of mentors’ conceptualizations of local and wider community discourse when “designing” personal and professional goals.

Taking courses and independent studies from potential committee members enables students to understand these professors’ expectations for and interpretations of the “legitimate participation” in academic enculturation, particularly at the stage of the candidacy examination. Understanding their scholarships can help students avoid unnecessary tension or conflicts regarding theoretical or political issues. Maintaining a close connection with these mentors may help students to establish clear schemata in
achieving “legitimacy,” something that seemed to be missing from the doctoral education for most of my student participants. Mentors’ guidance, based on their scholarships and experiences in advising doctoral students, can offer students supportive scaffolding in the journey of learning the “acceptable participation” in the fields and exploring the academic careers that they would possibly pursue during or after acquiring their degrees. In short, students can win this academic “game” (Casanave, 2002) if they can understand the rules of this game (what to do and how to do it) for writing course assignments, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation. Moreover, they may develop and practice their “agency” by “working within and against” the “legitimate” knowledge, to some level, as demonstrated by Student R and Student J.

Writing is vital in academia. One needs to write in order to increase professional visibility, and writing can foster intellectual growth (Casanave, 2002; Prior, 1998). To become a “qualified” academic writer in the fields, students need to practice writing in order to make progress. Paying close attention to published academic writing, including books, journal articles, or technical reports, not only helps students to understand the scholarship, but also enables them to learn the “legitimate genres” in the fields. Professors assume that students need to have a good command of language use as well as academic writing conventions in order to achieve effective academic writing. Therefore, L2 students, who use English as a second language in academic writing, would need to write even more frequently and seek resources to develop English language skills as much as possible. Although L2 students may tap into the useful writing
resources such as turning to L1 speakers, writing workshops, writing centers or even resources through internet for help, recommended by Student J, perhaps most importantly they ought to be encouraged to publish their written work.

To accomplish successful writing for the candidacy examination, an understanding of committee members’ expectations regarding content, genres, and authorship may be helpful. Different professors from different academic communities, whether local or more distant, may have different expectations. However, students can learn their expectations by reading the published works of committee members, taking courses and independent studies from them, and pursuing discussions with peers who have experiences of writing this examination. Or, students can try to address these concerns with their mentors. In the context of this study, most professors do not discuss their expectations, regarding genres and authorship for the candidacy examination. Expressing their perspectives on these issues may not only clarify their understandings about academic writing, but may also improve their teaching. Moreover, some academics have suggested that specific writing should be required by graduate programs (Rose & McClafferty, 2001).

Doctoral education aims to guide students with rigorous training through coursework, the candidacy examination, and the dissertation to become independent researchers. In order to attain successful academic enculturation, it is critical for students to develop and practice agency. Insecurity may be a popular issue for many doctoral students, especially at the stage of the candidacy examination. Seeking emotional support from friends, family, and mentors can be beneficial for doctoral students to deal with
difficulties from isolation and stress from the challenge of intensive analysis and synthesis for writing. However, faculty may also offer more than moral support — writing is not only a technical skill, but it can be intellectually engaging.

It is the responsibility of the professor, especially the advisor, to design the most rigorous candidacy examination for doctoral students, based on students’ intellectual interests and professors’ goals in academic enculturation. The findings of this study suggest that advisors’ guidance can play an essential role in guiding students onto the path to achieve their academic and personal goals. The candidacy examination plays a critical role in students’ doctoral program; that is, students are at the end of their coursework and after this examination, they will move on to the dissertation stage to conduct independent research with minimal supervision. A standardized road map may not be necessary for every doctoral student, but explicit and individualized scaffolding could motivate and support students to enhance their growth academically and intellectually through pursuing rigorous coursework, practical research experiences, conference presentations, and publications. Clearly, writing plays a crucial role in such professional and academic activities.

A clear understanding of professors’ expectations for writing, especially in light of content, genres, and authorship, assumed to be relevant in this high-stakes examination will be beneficial for doctoral students, especially those who struggle with academic writing. With respect to the evaluative criteria of the professor, there may be considerable differences between course writing and writing for the candidacy
examination. Hence, in addition to professors’ explicit explanations of the purpose of the candidacy examination, explicit discussions regarding content, genre, authorship, and use of citations may help doctoral students to succeed in this important examination.
APPENDIX A: SAMPLE OF MAIL MERGE LETTER TO PROFESSORS OF A COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (details of these letters can be varied to fit specific circumstances.)

Name
Title
Address
Date
Dear Professor last name,

I am writing to invite you to participate a dissertation study, titled “Learning to Write Candidacy examinations: Talk about Academic Genres and Authorship.” I also would like you to invite you to recommend strong doctoral students from your program who HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS and may be willing to participate this study.

I’m a doctoral student from English Education under the School of Teaching and Learning in College of Education at the Ohio State University, who specializes in Composition Studies and Second Language Writing. To better prepare both native and non-native speakers of English in achieving membership in their disciplines, I would like to study the role of candidacy examinations as an enculturation process for students from the academic programs of the college of education.

I have attached a description of this research (See the enclosed attachment). If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to email me at lin8007@cs.com or call me at 261-0601.

I will email shortly to follow up this letter. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Betty Lin
Lin8007@cs.com
261-0601
557 Riverview Dr. B2,
Columbus, OH. 43202.
APPENDIX B: BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

Learning to Write Candidacy examinations: Talk about Academic Genres and Authorship

1. Background
Candidacy examinations are required of all PhD programs in the States and are one of the most stressful challenges for PhD students. Learning to write in an academic discipline is an inevitable challenge for doctoral students. This proposed research aims to study how both native-speaker-of-English (L1) and non-native-speaker-of-English (L2) PhD students (WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS) learned to write candidacy examinations, by examining their personal histories, studying the role of writing in the enculturation process, and by investigating how doctoral students appropriate genre(s), and authorship over disciplinary based ideas and issues.

2. Design
This study will utilize a qualitative research method, which combines the sociohistorical approach as well as a case study approach in conceptualizing the methods of data collection and analyses for this study. In this study, a candidacy examination is the phenomenon to be examined, and the primary focus is on the process of the (re) production of genre(s) and authorships of a group of L1 and L2 (N=4) doctoral students WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS from academic programs of a college of education within a Mid-Western university, learning to write their candidacy examinations. The data of this study will include collecting questionnaires from doctoral students and faculty, class documents from students, semi-structured and text-based interviews with both students and faculty.

3. Purpose
This proposed research aims to study how both native-speaker-of-English (L1) and non-native-speaker-of-English (L2) PhD students WHO HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED CANDIDACY EXAMINATIONS learned to write candidacy examinations and hopefully the findings will enable researchers and teachers to learn more about the process of how L2 students become qualified members of their disciplines by comparing their enculturation process with that of their L1 colleagues. Hopefully, this study can raise the awareness of both PhD students, their professors across disciplines, L1
APPENDIX C : STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Purpose of the study

I am writing to invite you to participate in my dissertation study, titled “Learning to Write Candidacy examinations: Talk about Academic Genres and Authorship.” This study will investigate the purposes of writing in the candidacy examination process as well as in becoming an expert in your field. This research may be helpful in understanding some of the challenges related to writing candidacy examinations for both native and non-native speakers of English. In this study, I plan to investigate what personal histories (mainly from personal writing backgrounds and graduate experiences) influence students’ learning to write the candidacy examination; the match or mismatch between doctoral students’ and their faculty’s interpretations of successful writing for the candidacy examination; and how doctoral students establish expertise in their writing. You are invited as potential participants for this study because you have successfully completed your candidacy examinations—You were recommended to me by your advisor.

What the study involves

If you decide to participate, I plan to gather the following document:

• any syllabi from your past coursework;
• any handouts from your courses in the past;
• any written drafts including final drafts for courses, if any, and drafts of your candidacy examinations with or without faculty’s feedback or marks on them;

I also would like you to fill-out a questionnaire, mailed to you, which will take about 30 minutes and then participate in one interview, which will take about one hour or so, about your academic writing backgrounds, and short member checks afterwards.

• Document collection: Collection of course syllabi, handouts and writing for courses and candidacy examinations will not take much of your time.
• Questionnaire: I have an initial questionnaire to establish basic information about your academic writing background and it may take you about thirty minutes to complete.
Interview: I will request an audiotaped interview, which may take about one hour or so to collect your interpretation on the role of writing in your PhD program and your perception on your faculty’s interpretation on the necessary genres and the importance of authorship for academic writing. And, short member checks afterwards are to double check with you about the validity of the writing of the data collected from you, regarding your learning to write candidacy examination.

Investigating high stakes tests such as candidacy examinations, particularly identifiability, may cause participants some stress, but several precaution will be used to reduce stress. First, in any written reports or publications of this study, no one will be identified by name nor the university will be identified. In all cases, precaution will be used to assure anonymity. Participants may not be identifiable to a general audience, but they may be identified to other participants from this college of education or to others who are aware of their written work. However, every precaution will be made to avoid this identification. To minimize the identifiable risks, professors’ comments on any of their students’ papers written for candidacy examinations or courses will not be revealed to students and any of student participants’ interview and questionnaire responses will not be released to any of their professors. Member checks will be conducted with all participants, and upon the completion of any written report of this study, participants will be permitted to review and comment on data treatment. Finally, all the documents and the raw questionnaires and interview data will only be seen by the researchers. The data will be kept for five years for analyses of the research questions. The data will not be used for other purposes, nor will they be released to anyone else.

You are free to discontinue participation without any penalty.

If you have any questions about this research and/or research participants’ rights, please call Betty Lin at 261-0601 or email me at lin8007@cs.com.

You are making a decision whether you will participate this study or not. You signature indicates that you have read the information above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without obligation after signing this form.

_____________________________________       __________________
(signature)                                           (date)

(signature of investigator)
APPENDIX D: PROFESSOR INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Purpose of the study

I am writing to invite you to participate in a dissertation study, titled “Learning to Write Candidacy examinations: Talk about Academic Genres and Authorship.” This study will investigate the purposes of writing in the candidacy examination process as well as in becoming an expert in your field. This research may be helpful in understanding some of the challenges related to writing candidacy examinations for both native and non-native speakers of English. In this study, I plan to investigate what personal histories (mainly from personal writing backgrounds and graduate experiences) influence students’ learning to write candidacy examinations; the match or mismatch between doctoral students’ and their faculty’s interpretations of successful writing for the candidacy examination; and how doctoral students establish expertise in their writing. You are invited as potential participants for this study because you are a professor, who is highly interested in mentoring doctoral students in an academic field in a college of Education as well as interested in my dissertation study.

What the study involves

If you decide to participate, I would like you to participate in one interview, which will take about one hour, focusing on the demands of writing the candidacy examination. I will request one audiotaped interview, which may take about one hour. It is to collect your interpretations on the role of writing in your own PhD program as a doctoral student and in your PhD program as a professor now and your perceptions on students’ genesis and development of necessary genres and authorship in their writing for courses and candidacy examinations, and your interpretation on the necessary genres and the importance of authorship for academic writing in your discipline. And, short member checks afterwards are to double check with you about the validity of the writing of the data collected from you, regarding your students’ learning to write candidacy examination.

Investigating high-stakes tests such as the candidacy examination, particularly identifiability, may cause participants some stress, but several precaution will be used to reduce stress. First, in any written reports or publications of this study, no one will be identified by name nor the university will be identified. In all cases, precaution will be used to assure anonymity. Participants may not be identifiable to a general audience, but they may be identified to other participants from this college of education or to others.
who are aware of their written work. However, every precaution will be made to avoid this identification. To minimize the identifiable risks, professors’ comments on any of their students’ papers written for candidacy examinations or courses will not be revealed to students and any of student participants’ interview and questionnaire responses will not be released to any of their professors. Member checks will be conducted with all participants, and upon the completion of any written report of this study, participants will be permitted to review and comment on data treatment. Finally, all the documents and the raw questionnaires and interview data will only be seen by the researcher. The data will be kept for five years for analyses of the research questions. The data will not be used for other purposes, not will it be released to anyone else.

You are free to discontinue participation at any time without any penalty. If you have any questions about this research and/or research participants’ rights, please call Betty Lin at 261-0601 or email me at lin.333@osu.edu.

You are making a decision whether you will participate this study or not. You signature indicates that you have read the information above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time without obligation after signing this form.

_____________________________________                                 __________________
(signature)                                                                                           (date)

(signature of investigator)
APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I. Writing background and graduate school experiences

Current Quarter: Win/Spr/Sum  2002 (please circle one quarter)
Name:_________________________
Native language_________________         Home country_______________
Dept.____________________
Years you attended college/ university: 19_____ to 19_______, what degree_________
Major and minor, if any, in college/university:________________________
Years you worked on your Masters 19__________ to 19________________
What degree_____________; what  major _____________________
Years you worked on your PhD 19__________ to 19____________
Years you worked: 19________ to 19________  Field of work ___________________

   1. In school, including K-12 and graduate schools, have you been told what
good writing means in your native language? Have you been given any rules to
follow in order to produce good writing for academic essays? Stories? Reports?
Business letters? Or else (please indicate)? Who gave them to you and when you
learned them?

   2. In your own words, how do you interpret good writing for academic purposes in your
native language? That is, in your own opinion, what are the characteristics of good
academic writing in your native language?

   3. Do you enjoy writing in your native language? Yes? A little/sometimes? Or no? And,
why is that?
II. Writing in English

1. When did you start studying English?
2. When did you start learning to write in English?
3. Did you ever use English textbooks in your regular classes at school in your own country?
   _____ yes               _____ no
4. If yes, in what classes (e.g., sociology) and at what level (e.g., junior in college)
   Class(es)____________________                         Level __________________
   Class(es)____________________                         Level __________________
   Class(es)____________________                         Level __________________
   Class(es)____________________                         Level __________________

5. In school, including K-12 and graduate schools, have you been told what good writing in English means? Have you been given any rules to follow in order to produce good writing for academic essays? Stories? Reports? Business letters? Or else (please indicate)? Who gave them to you and when did you learn them?

6. In your own words, how would interpret good writing for academic purposes in English before the start of your PhD program? That is, in your own opinion, what were the characteristics of good academic writing in English before working on your PhD?

7. After the start of your PhD program, in your own opinion, how do you interpret good academic writing? That is, what have been the characteristics of good academic writing for courses or publications in English?

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Program Goals & Major tasks for doctoral students

1. What are the goals for students in pursuing a PhD in your doctoral program?
2. What are your personal goals in pursuing this PhD?
3. In your opinion, what are the major tasks that doctoral students need to undertake in order to achieve a PhD in your program?
4. In your experiences as a PhD student, so far, what have you found most challenging? Why? How have you coped with them? What guidance have your faculty provided in coping with your struggles or in solving problems?
5. In your opinion, what are the major tasks that one needs to undertake in order to become a qualified member in your discipline, (e.g., foreign language education, Reading, or English Education)?
6. So far, what tasks have you found most challenging for you in this enculturation process? What advice and support have you had from your faculty or peers or the other sources?
7. Related to the previous question, in your opinion, how can one establish expertise in your field/discipline?

Writing for coursework

1. Overall, what role did you see writing play in your courses?
2. When writing for your courses, what were the things that you normally paid most attention to? Were you aware if there were any specific genres required for your course writing? How did you know your writing was successful?
3. What major difficulties did you experience when writing for your courses? Why? How did you cope with these challenges?
4. How do writers in your field establish themselves as experts or authorities on certain topics? How, if at all, have you learned to do so in your own writing? To what extent, did writing in your graduate course enable you to write as an expert with authority in your field?
5. How did you perceive instructors’ expectations regarding citations for their course writing? To what extent, had their expectations influenced your selection of citations?
6. What guidance had you normally received from instructors in accomplishing writing tasks for courses?
7. What evaluation criteria did instructors normally use to respond to students’ writing for their courses? To what extent, had their evaluation criteria influenced your writing? Were the criteria made explicit to you? Can you give me an example?

8. Do you think that your writing for courses, overall, have prepared you for your candidacy examination and even dissertation writing?

9. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of your writing for ____ (a course, e.g., ED T&L 903)? (prompts: content, use of language, rhetorical aspects, or styles) Very satisfied? Satisfied, but there’s room for improvement? Unsatisfied, more to work more on them to meet your instructor’s expectations? Why?

Writing candidacy examinations

8. Any specific goals?
What are the goals and purpose of candidacy examinations in your program?

9. When writing for candidacy examinations, what were the things that you paid most attention to? Were you aware if there were any specific genres or ways of presenting your ideas, required for this writing? How do you interpret good writing for candidacy examinations?

10. What major difficulties had you experienced in accomplishing writing for your candidacy examinations? How did you cope with these challenges?

11. Had you noticed that you could establish authority in your writing for candidacy examinations? If yes, how did you establish your expertise?

12. How did you perceive faculty’s expectations regarding citations for writing candidacy examinations? To what extent, had their expectations influenced your selection of citations?

13. What guidance did you receive from faculty in accomplishing writing tasks for candidacy examinations?

14. To what extent, did faculty make their evaluation criteria explicit? What evaluation criteria did faculty use in responding to your writing for the candidacy examination? To what extent, had their evaluation criteria influenced your writing?

15. Overall, to what extent, do you think that your writing for the candidacy examination, overall, have prepared you for writing your dissertation?

16. Overall, to what extent, do you think that your writing for the candidacy examination helped you become a scholar or expert in your field?

17. So far, how do you see the role that writing plays in your enculturation process?

18. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of your writing for ____ (a professor, e.g., Professor Smith)? (prompts: content, use of language, rhetorical aspects, or styles) Very satisfied? Satisfied, but there’s room for improvement? Unsatisfied, more to work more on them to meet your instructor’s expectations? Why?
APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FACULTY

I. Program Goals & Major tasks for doctoral students

1. What are the goals for students in pursuing a PhD in your doctoral program?
2. In your opinion, what are the major tasks that your doctoral students need successfully undertake in order to achieve a PhD in your program?
3. In your opinion, what are the major tasks that one needs to undertake in order to become a qualified member in your discipline, (e.g., qualified educator in the community of foreign language education, Reading, or English Education)?
4. Related to the previous question, how does one establish expertise in your field/discipline?
5. In your past experiences as a PhD student, what tasks did you find most challenging in your PhD program? Why? How did you cope with them?
6. What difficulties do you usually find doctoral students struggle with? Why?
7. What guidance do you normally offer to help them with their struggles?
8. What advice or direction do you usually share with your doctoral students to cope with their difficulties?

II. Writing for coursework

9. Overall, what role do you see writing play in achieving your course goals?
10. When reading students’ writing for your courses, what are the things that you normally look for? How do you interpret good writing in the context of coursework?
11. What difficulties do doctoral students have when writing for your courses? Why?
12. How can one student establish expertise in the writing for your courses? Can you give me an example?
13. What are your expectations regarding students’ citations in their writing for your courses? Are students aware of your expectations on citations?
14. What guidance do you normally offer them in accomplishing the writing tasks for your courses?
15. What evaluation criteria do you typically use to respond to students’ writing for your courses? Do you typically share these criteria with them? Why?
16. In your judgment, should writing for courses, overall, prepare students for their candidacy examinations and even dissertations?

17. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of _________(student’s) writing for your course(s)? (prompts: content, use of language, rhetorical aspects, or styles) Very satisfied? Satisfied, but there’s room for improvement? Unsatisfied, more to work more on them to meet your own expectations? Why?

III. Writing candidacy examinations

a. What are the goals and purpose of candidacy examinations in your program?

b. When reading students’ writing for candidacy examinations, what are the things that you typically look for? Do you expect them to write in genres (e.g. literature review.) How would you decide good writing for candidacy examinations?

c. What difficulties do doctoral students have when writing candidacy examinations? Why?

d. How can a student establish expertise in the writing for candidacy examinations? Can you give me an example of how a student can establish authority in their writing for candidacy examinations?

e. What are you expectations regarding students’ citations in their examinations?

f. What guidance do you typically offer to students for writing their examinations?

g. What evaluation criteria do you normally use in responding to students’ writing for candidacy examinations? Are your students aware of your evaluation criteria?

h. Do you think the writing of candidacy examinations prepares students for their dissertations? Why?

i. In your opinion, how do you see the writing for candidacy examinations help students to become experts in their fields? Why?

j. Overall, how satisfied are you with _________(student’s) writing for your candidacy examination question? (prompts: content, use of language, rhetorical aspects, or styles) Very satisfied? Satisfied, but there’s room for improvement? Unsatisfied, more to work more on them to meet your own expectations? Why?
LIST OF REFERENCES


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