THE DYNAMICS OF LITERACY ACQUISITION AND LEARNING: FOCUSING ON GIFTED LEARNERS IN A LANGUAGE ARTS COLLABORATIVE CLASS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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ABSTRACT

This case-study research focuses on the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning in a language arts-art collaborative class addressing the curricular needs eighth-grade students identified as gifted and/or highly motivated. Basing the curricular design on the social situatedness of literacies, three teacher research participants developed a framework for exploring literacies first from student research participants’ personal perspectives, then extending observations and explorations to other diverse cultures. Data include written texts, art pieces, dialogic interviews, reflective journal entries, class discussions and observations, and audio/videotapes. All provide descriptive information that served as a basis for analyses addressing questions related to explaining the dynamics that impact doing writing. Conclusions indicate that curricular design based on relevant, purposeful questions provides cohesiveness, consequently promoting effective literacy instruction. Attention to instructional scaffolding with particular emphasis on teacher-student collaboration emerges as a fundamental framework for developing appropriately challenging differentiation in literacy acquisition and learning—beyond minimal proficiencies.
Dedicated to Robbie and Andrew
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.”  --Toni Morrison

(Address on receipt of the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for Literature)

Morrison’s words reveal language’s fundamental essence. “…[W]e do language”: we speak; we read; we write, and, in more modern applications, we technologize. On paper, the concept of doing language may seem simple, natural, and inherent in personal and sociological development; doing language appears to be a given. However, doing language, and, specific to this study, doing writing continue to defy explicit and definitive analysis and remain mystifying, elusive, and underconceptualized—particularly in educational classroom settings.

From the beginning, writing mystified many. A gift from the Muses, divine intervention, “…an invasion of internal (unconscious) forces into the conscious mind” (Ochse, 1990, p. 15), all served to explain this creative gift, this ability called writing. Many attributed this gift to a select few. Some, even today, marvel at writing’s existence at all. In “The Consequences of Literacy” (1988), Goody & Watt remark:
The notion of representing a sound by a graphic symbol is itself so stupefying a leap of the imagination that what is remarkable is not so much that it happened relatively late in human history, but rather that it ever happened at all. (p. 9)

Others (e.g., Goody and Watt, 1988; Olson, 1988) position writing on a continuum, implying that writing may be no more than a natural, evolutionary step in literacy development. Olson (1988) proclaims, “…; speech makes us human and literacy makes us civilized” (p. 175). From this perspective, acts of writing signal a specific stage of literacy—for individuals and societies alike—and represent humankind’s most definitive attribute, the use of symbols for meaning-making (Kellogg, 1994). Seemingly, inherent in this assumption is the presumption that the acquisition and learning of literacies may follow a hierarchical construct (see Goody and Watt, 1988; Olson, 1988), with orality situated at one pole of the continuum and—perhaps—technological literacies at the opposite position. Reading and writing—conventionally presented as the significant symbiotic dyad of literacy—presumably are situated somewhere between the extremes.

Elaborating more specifically on the significance of humankind’s reliance on symbols for communication (and with regards to this study, symbols used in writing), Kellogg (1994) acknowledges writing’s personal impact, varied representations, and social implications. He writes:

At the heart of human nature is the drive to make sense of our world. We do this moment by moment in interpreting our daily experiences. People construct personal, informal models of their experiences much as a scientist constructs public, formal models of phenomena. These models are comprised of the public physical world of written texts, works of art, and artifacts of all kinds. It is through symbols that we create, manipulate, and communicate to others that our experience is rendered meaningful. (p.5)
Key is the word *meaningful*. In *Creating Written Narratives: A Collaborative Study Analyzing Constraints and Motivators in Eighth Grade Writing Instruction* (Clady, 1999), students offer further insight into what writing means to them:

- Writing gives me the power to control. To play God. (p. 82)
- Writing gives me the power to express anything I want. (p. 82)
- I think writing allows me to put my ideas on paper, paving the way for new ideas. When I write my ideas down, they become cemented in my mind, allowing me to move on to newer, more creative ideas, or to build on ideas that I already have. (p. 83)
- I can do all the things that I ever wanted to do with a pen and some paper. (p. 83)
- I think writing stirs and wakes my imagination. I think it opens up parts of my mind I don’t usually use. It also helps me to let out all my ideas that build up inside my mind. It gives me something to do, and something to look forward to (i.e., finish writing a book, or one day getting something published). (p. 84)

Disavowing the empowerment students recognize in their creation of written texts, many school districts require scripted, “teacherproof” programs that may offer instructional consistency throughout a district, but do little to develop comprehension and higher level thinking and provide minimal attention to writing’s power to address creativity. Furthermore, states’ rigid adherences to standards of minimal proficiency silence students capable of high achievement. Federal programs fortify this victimization as *No Child Left Behind* focuses educators’ efforts on students in need of remediation, not necessarily differentiation. If academic literacy achievement continues to be assessed
myopically using a few, favored genres, “the measure of our lives” remains fixed—
resoundingly repeating an axiomatic mantra: No Child May Proceed Ahead.

It is from this concern that this study evolves. From a suburban middle-school
classroom, a language arts-art collaborative class of eighth-grade students and their
teachers set out to do language. Doing language began with examining and sharing their
home literacies, school literacies and messages from popular culture. Continuing their
efforts to try on new voices and genres, they journeyed to other times and other places
incorporating rhythms and sounds, sights and symbols, and fluid purposes in their
exploration of doing writing. With each widening circle of literacy, they continued-- not
merely concerned with making meaning of their lives, but also trying to comprehend how
others also constructed meaning with, in particular, the written word. With the freedom
to construct curriculum and community, together research participants collaborated on
coursework and reflections focusing on the question: What are the dynamics affecting
literacy acquisition and learning in a classroom of gifted students—and in the worlds
outside the classroom’s walls?

Rationale

I wish we could change the world by creating powerful writers for forever instead of just
indifferent writers for school. Mem Fox (Radical Reflections, 1993. p. 22)

Three basic beliefs underlie this study’s rationale. First, education is politically,
culturally, and socially situated. Secondly, within the educational parameters established
by politicians and others, room for collaborative construction of effective and meaningful
educational programs and practices still exists. Finally, a basic understanding of the
dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning—focusing on multicultural genres and expression—can provide a foundation for developing writing skills beyond minimal proficiency and can prepare students to communicate in a global community.

At present, educational standards reflect an adherence to achievement indicators related to minimal proficiency. School districts achieve the status of excellence when students reach levels of proficiency on state standardized tests. Current pedagogy promotes these minimal objectives—frequently discounting the needs and potentials of individual students, especially students identified as gifted. It may sound politically correct to espouse equality—measured by achieving standards of minimal proficiency—in education; it is far more imperative, however, to promote educational equity; i.e., to provide educational opportunities that offer challenging, appropriately differentiated curriculum for all—including students identified as gifted.

What seems to be lacking in traditional education (and of specific interest to this study of students identified as gifted) is wisdom about educating—particularly educating to help maximize educative effects. In “Wisdom as a Form of Giftedness” (Sternberg, 2000, p. 250), Sternberg cites the importance and impact of wisdom as a value-driven mediator that weighs and balances decisions affecting intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests. Although Sternberg’s theorizing focuses on facilitating students’
understandings of wisdom, his message offers applicability and directives to educators’ curricular concerns. More specifically, he delineates the “metacomponts” of wisdom as

a) Recognizing the existence of a problem,

b) Defining the nature of the problem,

c) Representing information about the problem,

d) Formulating a strategy for solving the problem,

e) Allocating resources to the solution of the problem,

f) Monitoring one’s solution of the problem, and

g) Evaluating feedback regarding that solution. (Sternberg, 2000, p. 255)

Mem Fox’s quote, cited at the beginning of this section, eloquently and concisely captures “the existence of a problem”—the nurturing of “indifferent writers for school.” It also alludes to the importance of expanding contextual understandings—increasing audience from “the school” to potentially infinite “forever” situations. “Powerful writers” remain a wish. Similarly, the power inherent in writing remains imperceptible in many educational settings.

In contrast to educators focusing on “creating powerful writers for forever,” language arts classrooms across America appear to focus on appropriation of genres and their related structural attributes, particularly genres recognized as indicators of literacy proficiencies as defined by state guidelines—guidelines establishing goals measured by minimal proficiencies. Focus on challenges and choices for gifted learners have not changed for the past ten years (Gifted Child Today, Summer 2004, p. 7). Consequently,
explicit genre instruction exists as a delivery of forms; letter writing, for example, consists of informing students of inside address, salutation, etc. Instruction stands as a reductive exercise. Genres’ intents and purposes, effective communicative skills, and a sense of meaning (from the students’ perspectives) related to the genres remain insignificant.

In addition, educators frequently disregard students’ previously acquired and developing unofficial literacy skills (See Fiering, 1981; Hubbard, 1988) and concepts: literacy practices and events outside of dominant discourse. Consequently, official academic literacies, specifically Standard English representations of particular genres and their related forms, dominate instruction and are the only literacies aligned with educational success. Joanne Kilgore Dowdy (in Delpit, 2002) offers personal insight into this pervasive perception:

…my mother always reminded us that we needed to learn to “curse in white.” By this she meant, or I believed that she meant, that we should always be aware that we had to play to a white audience. We could protest, we could show anger, but we had to remember that there was a white way, and that was the right way.

(p. 5)

This myopic perspective of literacy potentially minimizes educators’ powers to deliver effective, differentiated practices that may ultimately liberate students’ thinking about how genres impact and impart expression. This liberation of learning, essential for all effective educational practice, is also crucial to educating the identified gifted population. Presently, dialogue in this arena is nonexistent, designated as inconsequential and insignificant (Winebrenner, 2000).

This study assigns importance, significance and voice to adolescents. Initially situating literacy practices and events in the student researcher participants’ immediate
social spheres (i.e., home, school and popular culture), the study then extends to listening to the sounds and viewing the images of cultures around the world. It is an attempt to use literacy acquisition and learning (integrating tacit and subconscious understandings of literacy with “conscious knowledge gained from instruction, explanation, and analysis” involved in formal literacy instruction (Gee, 1993, p. 259) to achieve what Kellogg (1994) ascribes as literacy’s primary function, “the making of meaning” (p. 3).

Analyses of the dynamics between literacy acquisition and learning are problematic. How discernible is literacy acquisition’s presence in this study? What should literacy learning’s focus be for these learners? How will we be able to detect distinctions between literacy acquisition and learning? Answers, in part, may be framed in the study’s construction; as research participants venture from familiar literacies (i.e., home, school, and popular culture) to more divergent literacies (e.g., Asian), shifts from literacy acquisition to literacy learning may become more distinct. Adding genres further removed from students’ immediate literacy experiences potentially provides a perspective into students’ acquired skills and concepts as they attempt to incorporate new approaches to literacy learning.

The rationale for grounding instruction in multiple cultures is based on a two-fold premise:

- Analyses of genres practices and artistic expression in diverse cultures offer a comprehensive view of how peoples communicate, and, therefore, will form a foundation for understanding literacy, in general, and impact students’ own literacy practices and development, in particular; and
Focusing on various cultures helps students develop a respectful sense of the interrelatedness of all peoples and their related literacies.

From theory, research, collaboration, and personal convictions, this study has evolved. Loosely following Sternberg’s metacomponents of wisdom (2000), the three primary teacher researcher participants involved in this study recognized an existing problem: gifted language arts and art students were not receiving appropriately challenging curriculum. Defining the problem as the limitations of a one-course-fits-all approach to all students, the teacher research participants developed the Language Arts Collaborative Class. Framed in a strategy that allowed student researcher participants multiple opportunities to examine the dynamics involved in multiple literacies and their related contexts, participants proceeded on an exploration of collaborative research.

This is not a study to settle “The Genre Wars” and issues of intuitive versus explicit instruction; it is not a study about the writing process or merely a focus on genre appropriation. It is a collaborative framework, adhering to educational responsibilities and accountabilities while allowing for experimentation and play. It begins with home literacies and concludes with independent studies of specific student-selected cultural literacies. Monitoring and progression of the course itself continued daily within the constructivist classroom setting. Evaluation included data from interviews, surveys, discussions, observations, artifacts, and writing samples.

More importantly, evaluation reflects all participants’ perspectives. It is not enough to offer educators’ observations, perspectives and conclusions of these processes and products in this classroom community. Vital to understanding adolescents and their literacies is attempting to view their worlds as they see them. Most significant to the
study’s successes, however, is the participants’ construction of community as researchers studying literacy acquisition and learning, personally and collaboratively. Dillon and Moje (1998) add,

…what is the teenager’s world? Many who have studied literacy in secondary school settings over the last several years have constructed adolescents’ worlds in terms of our own, which tend to focus on academic uses of literacy. We have been so preoccupied with strategies, disciplinary concepts, teachers’ beliefs and practices, and the structure of written texts that we have failed to listen to teenagers talking about their worlds. We have failed to understand adolescents’ talk in light of larger social, cultural, and historical events and practices in their lives. (p. 193)

From entering the adolescents’ world, this study begins.

Statement of the Problem

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning in a language arts collaborative course that focuses on multiple genres and creative expression from a variety of cultures and historical periods. More specifically, the study searches for insights into how explicit instruction about genres, their apparent purposes and effects on written expression, and the intentional sensitization of these concerns may ultimately affect students’ own perceptions of communication through a variety of forms and mediums. It is not a study attempting to analyze how to achieve minimal writing proficiency as defined by state standards. It is a study about how genres and mediums both restrict and liberate thought and expression. It is a study seeking information about maximizing writing proficiencies. In addition, it focuses on the needs of a marginalized segment of the school population, students identified as gifted and highly motivated.
This qualitative study serves to describe and document the dynamics (cognitive, affective, and social) of these adolescents’ literacy acquisition, the research participants’ perceptions of literacies’ powers and attributes, and the central components collaborating to create pedagogy in a classroom community of students identified as gifted. As such, it offers insights into how—through collaborative scaffolding—students and teachers can attempt to maximize learning opportunities and develop potentials related to literacy skills and concepts, rather than aim for minimal proficiencies. Consequently, it provides data related to appropriate classroom differentiation, specifically addressing the needs of the district’s gifted population.

In general, the study concentrates on a fundamental question: *What dynamics affect literacy acquisition and learning?* From that generalized inquiry other related questions and issues emerge. These include:

- How do the research participants, i.e., the teachers and students involved in this study, conceptualize literacies and their cultural contexts?
- What are the research participants’ perceptions of this study’s focus literacies, their purposes and their powers?
- How do the student researcher participants use, create, and/or respond to these literacy practices and products?
- What do the analyses of the student researcher participants’ literacy products reveal about their understandings of various literacies and their uses?
- How do these experiences in literacy seemingly affect the student research participants’ sense of personal identity and social agency?
How do these classroom research community’s social dynamics affect the student researcher participants and their acquisition of literacy skills and concepts?

Definition of Terms

Research participant – For this study, research participant includes the teacher research participants and the student researcher participants.

Student research participant – All of the students, in general, involved in this language arts collaborative class, and, more specifically, the four case study students are considered student research participants.

Teacher research participants—The language arts, art and resource room teachers directly involved in the construction of the curricular design and delivery of this research form the category teacher research participants.

Literacy acquisition—Acquisition of literacy describes the subconscious assimilation of skills, concepts and their associated social understandings related to communicate successfully as a literate member of a particular culture (whether dominant or subculture status) (see Gee, 1989).

Literacy learning—Literacy learning is the result of explicit literacy instruction designed to elicit specific ways of being consciously literate within a specific social setting (see Gee, 1989).

Literacy practice—Reflecting an ethnographic perspective, literacy practices represent the dynamic and recursive action between the existing and developing social structures and specific acts of literacy (see Street, 1995).
Literacy events—Literacy events are recurring patterns of action focusing on uses and production of printed text.

Situated literacies—The concept of situated literacies encompasses the belief that ways of being literate become defined and redefined as contexts change.

Dialogic interviews—Interviews that are dialogic rely on dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee—with an attempt to minimize any inequality of implied power assigned to either participant.

Reflective journal—For this study, reflective journals are notebooks containing student research participants’ written responses to teacher- and student-solicited prompts and inquiries specifically about writing or, more generally, about literacy.

Unofficial literacy—Unofficial literacy encompasses all written and technological communicative skills, practices and purposes that reside outside of the literacy skills and/or applications and purposes of dominant culture.

Official literacy—Official literacy represents the written and technological communicative skills, practices and purposes that are used as standards of communication in a dominant culture.


Limitations of the Study

One primary limitation of this study is both purposeful and critical: the sampling itself. Recognizing a need to develop a differentiated writing curriculum for students identified as gifted and/or highly motivated, the teacher research participants attempted to
decrease variation among the students within the language arts collaborative class by limiting enrollment to include only students who fulfilled the following criteria:

1) Students who were nominated by either a seventh-grade art and/or language arts teacher who believed that the student would benefit from participation in the language arts collaborative class; and/or

2) Students who were identified as gifted as defined by the guidelines established by the State of Ohio; and

3) Students who would be enrolled in a foreign language. [This requirement was purely a logistical issue based on scheduling procedures.]

Using a maximum variation sampling of a restricted larger sample (students identified as gifted and highly motivated in language arts and/or art), the sampling narrowed. Ultimately, four students served as the student research participants for this study. Although necessary to this study’s purpose, this sampling negates the possibility of assessing any potential impact of the curricular decisions and instructional methods used in this class on students who differ from the selection criteria.

Additional limitations potentially include researchers’ biases. For the teacher research participants, biases may exist within the instructional framework and related curricular choices. What teacher research participants may perceive as causal relationships between instruction and students’ success, for example, may merely be correlational conclusions. Furthermore, no matter what attempts may be made to neutralize the power structure within this study’s setting, the reality is that there is a power structure in place: students receive grades, standardized tests measure students’ degree of writing competency, and advanced placement opportunities remain controlled
by the teacher. In addition, the students in this classroom have their own cultural context. Students may respond to other students’ cues to develop writing skills and related attitudes to please peers first, and adults second—or the opposite. Both responses limit the possibility of voicing authentic opinions and/or written responses. Paradoxically, however, the impact of the classroom culture may yield a more realistic view of the dynamics of this study’s conclusions, i.e., educational settings are socially situated and fluid, as are the literacies that influence them.

Significance of the Study

This study offers potential significance by focusing on teacher-student collaboration to design and deliver an appropriately challenging, language arts curriculum that addresses the needs and abilities of a frequently marginalized segment of the school population, middle school students identified as gifted. More specifically, the study seeks to establish distinctions between these students’ acquisition of literacy skills and concepts and students’ learning related to these skills and concepts. Finally, it provides an opportunity to appreciate and comprehend the complexities and dynamics involved in middle school education, in general, and in doing writing, in particular.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 2 of this study presents theories and research relevant to the understanding of writing’s function in the academic setting, the processes involved in individuals’ acquisition and learning of writing, and the social contexts within which
writers develop. An explanation of the approach for the study, information about the data gathering and analysis, and descriptions of the student research participants and teacher research participants form the basis of Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 the study’s results and interpretations of the results are provided, and Chapter 5 presents both the conclusions and possible implications of the study.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review studies and literature relevant to the understanding of the acquisition and learning of skills and concepts related to creating written text. First, the chapter presents seminal studies on writing within academic settings and related modes of writing instruction. Then, more recent research and theories document a positional shift in writing instruction, attributing more importance to the writers and their needs than to the written products they create. Finally, the chapter concludes with the theories and studies about literacy, in general, and the importance of understanding the social situatedness of writing acquisition and learning.

Writing within Academic Settings

The task of early writing researchers focused on substantiating claims through quantification as well as offering observations as qualifications. From this historically situated position of writing research, James Britton, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen’s work—*The Development of Writing Abilities* [11-18] (1975)—evolved. Exhibiting significance, the study documented data focusing on language and learners, answering the question “Would it be possible…to plot the
variables—to distinguish the forces of which any given piece of writing is the result?”
(Britton et al., 1975, p. 9). Particular attention was given to audience and function in
students’ writing. The hypothesis reads,

Our central hypothesis is that development at the secondary stage should
not be seen as progress in performing a single activity called ‘writing’, but
rather that it expresses itself as the acquisition of new kinds of abilities—
abilities which enable pupils to undertake successfully different kinds of writing.
(Britton et al., 1975, p. 12)

To address these foci, the research team first formed a set of categories which
represented, they believed, all the forms of written academic discourses and utterances
the eleven to eighteen-year-old students in sixty-five secondary schools would employ.
The research team and their assistants used the initial 2,122 writing samples to create the
theoretical model used for evaluation. In March of 1967, writing samples from 1,664
boys and girls representing eighty-five different classes and varying types of schools
throughout England were gathered. From this pool, a sample of 500 boys and girls
authoring “2122 pieces of writing from sixty-five secondary schools by school students in
the first, third, fifth and seventh years [grade levels], drawn from their work in all
subjects of the curriculum where extending writing was used” (p. 7) supplied the data for
analysis.

Believing that the systems would “overarch the disciplines,” the researchers
proceeded to analyze students’ writings for determinations of function and audience.
From these analyses, the team traced developmental states reflecting students’ needs to
modify writing to meet particular subject and discourse requirements. These
modifications or strategies are described as follows:
The strategies a writer uses must be the outcome of a series of interlocking choices that arises from the context within which he writes and the resources of experience, linguistic and non-linguistic, that he brings to the occasion. He is an individual with both unique and socially determined experience, attitudes and expectations; he may be writing voluntarily or, as almost universally the case in the school situation, he may be writing within the constraints of a prescribed task. This he either accepts and makes his own in the process of writing, or he perfunctorily fulfills his notion of what is demanded; and his choices are likely to vary from occasion to occasion and from task to task. (Britton et al., 1975, p. 9)

Framed in the belief that writing includes intent, Britton et al. developed a matrix for analyzing the expressive function of writing. Based on James Moffet’s scale of abstraction which positions writings’ intent on an “I/It” scale (see Britton et al., 1975), the continuum measures the relationship between the writer and his topic. From this abstraction, the team developed a three-term scale which delineated transactional, expressive, and poetic forms of writing, noting that expressive writing exemplified the position of centrality. The juxtapositioning is explained as follows:

An expressive utterance, for our purposes, is one in which the expressive function is dominant—whether we have in mind Sapir’s ‘patterns of reference and patterns of expression’, or the whole hierarchy of functions set out by Jackson…

[and]

…that which children writing in the early stages should be a form of written-down expressive speech, and what they read should also be, generally speaking, expressive. As their writing and reading progress side by side, they will move from this starting point into the three broadly differentiated kinds of writing—our major categories—and, in favourable circumstances, their mode of doing so will be a kind of shuttling between their speech resources on the one hand and the written forms they meet on the other. Thus, in developmental terms, the expressive is a kind of matrix from which differentiated forms of mature writing are developed. (Britton et al., 1975, p. 83)
In addition, the transaction category contained sub-categories: 1) informative—including recording, reporting, generalizing and theorizing; and 2) conative—addressing regulative and persuasive forms. Poetic writing stood as creative (Britton et al, 1975).

With regards to audience, the researchers proposed five main divisions and their respective sub-divisions: *self* (child to self); *teacher* (child to trusted adult, pupil to teacher—general, pupil to teacher—particular, pupil to examiner); *wider audience* (known expert to known layman, child to peer group, group members to working group); *unknown audience* (writer to readers or public); *additional categories* (virtual names audience, no discernible audience) (Britton et al., 1975). Additionally, the researchers acknowledge that *teacher* may indeed always be implied as part of the audience for academically assigned papers.

In general, Britton’s group searched for developmental dynamics and patterns across the sample of students. The results indicated that 63.4% of the writing was identified as transactional, 5.5% as expressive, and 17.6% as poetic. Within the transactional category, “classificatory writing predominates in the sample as a whole” (p. 165). In addition, the analysis of function demonstrates a progressive, chronological increase in range from 54% to 84% from year 1 to year 7 in the transactional category, a range of 6% to 4% in expressive, and a 15-23-23-7% pattern in the poetic category. Within sub-categories, significant statistics demonstrate a preponderance (55%) of students’ writings focused on analogic in year 7 and 22% in year 1 (the highest report total in year 2 within the transactional category). Also noteworthy are the conclusions that the
disciplines of history, geography, and science seem to use writing for similar purposes while English and religious education focus on other uses—with more opportunity for poetic and expressive writing (Britton et al., 1975).

Expectedly, the results regarding audience indicated that 95% of the students’ writings focus on the teacher as audience. In general, all conclusions reveal that academic writing tasks direct students’ compositional choices—focusing on providing particular information or knowledge to a limited audience—the teacher. The value of writing for self, as important to meaning-making and self-discovery, appears insignificant in this educational arena. For the research team, particular disappointment in the analysis was found in the use of expressive writing. Believing that “expressive writing, whether in participant or spectator role, may be at any stage the kind of writing best adapted to exploration and discovery” and “[i]t is language that externalizes our first stages in tackling a problem or coming to grips with an experience” (Britton et al., 1975, p. 197), the team’s assumption was negated. The results proved that this form of writing was not equally valued and/or encouraged within the classroom sites. Furthermore, it appears that the pressure to address the teacher as the audience and to create texts which represent analogic levels of writing inhibit the production of creative, poetic and expressive writings. In general, both product and process seem constrained; writing development and the opportunity to access and synthesize thoughts appear to suffer.

In addition to this exemplary research, Britton is also acknowledged for establishing the concepts of spectator and participant roles in writing and for “shaping at the point of utterance” (Britton, 1994, p.148). The roles of spectator and participant in writing, he affirms, are determined by the writer’s purpose in creating written texts. If,
for example, the writer is using language to accomplish a specific end, a purpose, then the writer follows a participant role; (s)he is participating within a shared communication. If, however, the writer is using words for self-expression—a more poetic approach, then the writer is assuming the spectator role (Kroll and Wells, 1987, ix). “Shaping at the point of utterance” refers to the journey one takes in speech from one word to the next in order to express oneself accurately and fully. In Britton’s words, applying this convention of speech to writing, implies that

…successful writers adapt that inventiveness and continue to rely on it rather than switching to some different mode of operating. Once a writer’s words appear on the page, I believe they act primarily as a stimulus to continuing—to further writing, that is—and not primarily as a stimulus to re-writing. (Britton, 1994, p. 148)

Within the community of family, Britton continued as researcher with his documentation of his interactions with his granddaughter, Laurie. Documenting Laurie’s journey through her play, work, and overall growth into literacy, Britton noted Laurie’s use of a “play face”—a non-verbal signal associated with primates and documented by a Dutch primatologist, van Hooff. From this play—signaling that she was not Laurie—to Laurie’s interactions with adults and their stories, Britton defines and defends Laurie’s literacy, acknowledging theories proposed by Bruner, Vygotsky, and Applebee as explanation. Revealing Laurie’s transition from drawing objects to her attempts at drawing speech, a transition deemed necessary to achievement in understanding literacies, Britton’s work continued—into his “retirement” (Britton, 1983).

As one of Britton’s colleagues, Applebee acknowledges Britton’s influence in shaping the “theoretical underpinning for our work in language education” (Applebee, 1999, p. 354). Applebee arrived in England during the final stages of Britton’s study, The
Development of Writing Abilities (11-18). Concluding that Britton’s work left the spectator role somewhat under-conceptualized, Applebee focused on the patterns of this role in literature. Thus, evolved his dissertation, The Child’s Concept of Story (1978). Piagetian in its framework, Applebee’s text offers insights into the dynamics among reading, writing and oral literacies—but not from a contextual perspective.

Applebee, in his own words, “turned back toward teachers and teaching” (Applebee, 1999, p. 355) and began research he believed would offer a baseline for reform, Writing in the Secondary School (Applebee, 1981). To some degree, replicating Britton’s work, Applebee used national surveys combined with case studies aimed to provide a thorough and rich understanding of what was going on in American English classes. Within this context, Applebee introduced Bruner’s (1975) and Cazden’s (1979) concept of scaffolding as a way to construct effective educational experiences which support novice learners through expert assistance (individualized or group-oriented)—eventually leading to the learner’s internalization of the skill or objective.

In “Instructional Scaffolding: Reading and Writing as Natural Language Activities” (Applebee & Langer, 1983), instructional scaffolding’s description is more definitive. The researchers offer:

- Teachers approaching instruction from this perspective [instructional scaffolding] must:
  a) determine the difficulties that a new task is likely to pose for particular students,
  b) select strategies that can be used to overcome the specific difficulties anticipated, and
  c) structure the activity as a whole to make those strategies explicit (through questioning modeling) at appropriate places in the task sequence. (p. 169)
Implied in these directives are attributes typified by effective, caring teachers. Underlying assumptions, however, remain: that the teacher has knowledge of the subject area, an understanding of her students, a range of teaching strategies from which to choose, and the organizational skills necessary for weaving these components into exemplary instruction.

Applebee and Langer (1983), generalizing on Halliday’s (1975) description of “natural language learning processes,” elaborate on the “appropriateness” of instructional scaffolding, offering five criteria for consideration:

1. Intentionality: The task has a clear overall purpose of driving any separate activity that may contribute to the whole. Eventual evaluation of students’ success can be cast in terms of what they intended to accomplish.

2. Appropriateness: Instructional tasks pose problems that can be solved with help but which students could not successfully complete on their own. The most appropriate tasks will be those that involve abilities that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, or in Vygotsky’s (1962) terms, abilities that are not so much “ripe” as “ripening.”

3. Structure: Modeling and questioning activities are structured around a model of appropriate approaches to the task and lead to a natural sequence of thought and language.
4. Collaboration: The teacher’s response to student work recasts and expands upon the students’ efforts without rejecting what they have accomplished on their own. The teacher’s primary role is collaborative rather than evaluative.

5. Internalization: External scaffolding for the activity is gradually withdrawn as the patterns are internalized by the students. (p. 170)

Langer and Applebee (1987) then collaborated on *How Writing Shapes Thinking*, suggesting that “all might not be right in the world of process-oriented writing instruction” (Applebee, 1999, p. 356). Recognizing a “disjuncture” between “teacher intentions and student experience” (p. 356) in the classrooms of “exemplary” educators, Langer and Applebee initially sought two goals:

1. to demonstrate that in fact writing has a powerful effect on learning (and therefore should be more widely incorporated into instruction); and

2. to provide some well-developed examples of how writing complements instruction and transforms learning in the classroom of successful teachers of a variety of subjects. (p. 356)

An extensive study, lasting more than three years, Langer and Applebee worked with twenty-three teachers and 526 high school students, collecting data through baseline interviews, planning sessions, classroom observations, interviews with students, photocopies of students’ work, teachers’ logs, and end-of-the year wrap-up sessions. In their initial research component, six high-school juniors completed three writing tasks (short-answer study, taking notes, and writing essays) after reading common material. Assessments included using think-aloud protocols, topic-specific knowledge measures (before each
read/study activity and again three days later), and passage-knowledge tests to assess writings strategies and the effects that writing had on knowledge of the material read.

Two other studies formed the remainder of this research project. Study Two involved 208 students from six ninth-grade and six eleventh-grade classes engaged in one of four study tasks (normal studying, note-taking, comprehension questions, and analytic writing). Langer’s measure of passage-specific knowledge was administered three times to these students (first, to establish prior knowledge; second, to test immediate recall/understanding of the passage read; third, one month later, to determine if the study tasks’ effect on knowledge differed significantly). Study Three compared behaviors and learning from 112 students’ (from four of the ninth and eleventh grade classes from Study Two) engagement in four different tasks: read and study, no writing, comprehension questions, summary writing and analytic writing. Langer’s measure of topic-specific knowledge was administered three times: one, prior to the study; second, one day after the study tasks; and, finally, five days after the initial task. Recall tasks were measured by the mean number of words per T-unit and holistic scores evaluating the gist of the passage. In addition, eight more students provided think-aloud protocol data (Langer & Applebee, 1987).

The research elicited the following conclusions:

- First, the more that content is manipulated, the more likely it is to be remembered and understood.

- Second, the effects of writing tasks are greatest for the particular information focused upon during the writing.
• Third, writing tasks differ in the breadth of information drawn upon and the depth of processing that they invoke.

• Finally, if content is familiar and relationships are well understood, writing may have no effect at all. (Langer & Applebee, 1987, pp. 130-131).

Applebee (1999) commented further on the findings. He concluded:

…we found that writing could improve learning—but only some kinds of learning. […] Rather than a set of neat models of successful uses of writing in the content areas, we emerged with a richer understanding of the ways in which teachers make sense of new activities, assimilating and transforming them to meet their own purposes. And looming large among the contextual constraints that emerged was evaluation—the definition of what counts as knowing. (p. 356)

Focusing on experimental studies conducted from 1963 through 1983, Hillocks’ (1984, 1986) meta-analysis offered another dimension to the rapidly growing bank of knowledge on writing instruction. Acknowledging the importance of experimental research—at a time when researchers clearly had begun to favor alternative design strategies, e.g., think-aloud protocols (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes & Flower, 1980), pause duration (Gould, 1980; Matsuhashi, 1981), planning notes (Nelson, 1988; Spivey & King, 1987), and retrospective reports (Burtis, Bereiter, Scardamalia, & Tetroe, 1983), Hillocks focused on examining studies that met the following criteria:

1) The study had to involve a treatment—some combination of conditions, instruction, practice and/or feedback over some period of time leading to a posttest.
2) [The] study had to make use of a scale of writing quality applied to samples of writing. This condition permits asking the following question in the meta-analysis, Which treatments appear to produce the greatest gains in writing quality?

3) [The] study had to exercise minimal control for teacher bias.

4) [The] study had to control for differences among groups of students. Reviewers also looked for evidence that treatments were assigned randomly.

5) Compositions must have been scored under conditions that help assure validity and reliability. The compositions must have been coded for scoring and precautions taken so that raters could not infer treatment. All studies included used some version of holistic, analytic, or primary trait scoring. (Hillocks, 1984, pp. 135)

Hillocks, and two other researchers, screened over 500 studies and, ultimately, included 60 studies that met their criteria; these studies employed 75 experimental treatments, involved 11,705 students (6,313 in experimental and 5,392 in control treatments), and covered elementary through college-level subjects (Hillocks, 1984, 1986). To provide systematic examination of the agreed-upon variables, the researchers divided the variables into categories: “duration, grade level, mode of instruction, focus of instruction, revision and feedback” (Hillocks, 1986, p. 112).

For purposes of this paper, modes of instruction (a variable Hillocks had also previously addressed in his 1981 study) are of concern because of their relationship to the concept of instructional scaffolding. Hillocks identified four instructional modes:
presentational, natural process, environmental and individualized. Each mode reflects related underlying assumptions about teaching and learning, e.g., whose and what knowledge is valued in instruction. A synopsis of these modes follows in Table 2.1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Underlying Assumptions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Presentational</td>
<td>Relatively clear and specific objectives; lecture and teacher-led discussions dealing with specified concepts; use of models and other related materials to aid in the explanation and illustration of concepts; specific assignments and exercises to imitate patterns or discussed rules; feedback primarily from teachers.</td>
<td>Teachers are the major “conveyors of knowledge”; Students are recipients; knowledge gained following through rules, formulas, examples etc. Referents of rules, etc., are mutually understood by participants; i.e., concepts will have the same meaning for both teachers and students. Finally, students’ writing understandings will transfer to other forms of writing—on their own.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Process</td>
<td>Has general objectives; promotes free writing about whatever subject(s) the students choose; students write for peer audience; feedback from peers is positive, in general; revision and reworking opportunities exist; students interact at high levels.</td>
<td>Teacher’s role is reactive; teachers are facilitators; writing ability is seen as inherent in all students (part of their genetic makeup); effective instruction, therefore, allows potential to develop; writing for peers encourages positive growth; structure, therefore, inhibits growth; knowledge about writing will evolve as students are working and through peer audience response; pupils will learn/invent their own forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>Has “clear and specific objectives” students will work collaboratively addressing specified writing processes using suggested materials and focusing on particular problems; specific activities with “high level of peer interaction” will center on specific tasks.</td>
<td>Teacher and students share power “with the teacher planning activities and selecting materials through which students interact with each other to generate ideas and learn identifiable writing skills” (p. 123); a function of teaching is to identify appropriate skills to be learned, teach these skills first orally then in writing; prewriting should be used to develop those skills; the understanding that those skills are often complex and require (frequently) help, feedback, and collaboration with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized</td>
<td>Instruction may take the form of tutorials, “programmed material,” or modifications of these. Focus is dependent upon the individual’s needs; instruction is individualized.</td>
<td>One-on-one instruction is most effective.</td>
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Figure 2.1: Modes of Instruction (Hillocks, 1986, pp. 119-128)
According to the interpretation of the data in this meta-analysis, *What works in writing instruction?* best is the environmental mode. Ironically and equally important is the data that suggests that the presentational mode --“the most common and widespread mode” (p. 246)—is the least effective (about 50 percent less effective than the environmental mode); the natural process mode sets between the two extremes, and the individualized mode is approximately the same (Hillocks, 1986).

Hillocks (1986) offers a multiple-tiered explanation. First, the environmental mode incorporates the resources of students, teachers, and classroom materials—creating a synergistic educational experience. Second, the instructor focuses on writing skills and concepts that will fulfill particular criteria and offer operationally definable objectives that result from collaborative, problem-solving activities. This mode–featuring student and teaching activity leading toward achievement of specified goals—emerged four times more effective than traditional teaching practices (presentational mode).

Hillocks (1986) also acknowledged the importance of the “focus of instruction” (p. 248) in the teaching of writing. Noting that emphasis on grammar has no significant effect on improving the quality of students’ writing, Hillocks also maintained that in certain circumstances “grammar and mechanics instruction has a deleterious effect on student writing” and may even result in “significant losses of overall quality” (p. 248). Positioned only slightly higher than grammar instruction is free writing; and sentence combining is twice as effective as that focus (p. 249). Systematic use of “scales, criteria,
and specific questions” (p. 249), modeling, and inquiry-based activities, however, provide students with excellent opportunities to internalize potential frameworks for approaching writing in a variety of contexts (Hillocks, 1986).

Hillocks analyses of the environmental mode—combined with the reportedly most effective foci of instruction—validate the five criteria of instructional scaffolding posited by Applebee and Langer (1983): “appropriateness,” “intentionality,” “structure,” “collaboration,” and “internalization” (p. 170). Proponents of change, these researchers voice similar directives.

Focusing on the Writer

*What works in writing instruction?* frames additional inquiries. Not only is the act of writing instruction of concern, so are the underlying personal and cultural beliefs that shape its construction. Social contexts and their accompanying political dynamics provide contentious arenas for continued debates and discussion.

Spanning continents as well as theoretical stances, debate and discussion continue—reflecting differences in the instruction of writing in North America as well as Australia and New Zealand. Based predominately on the role of genre in writing instruction, questions evolved: Should writing instruction focus on implicit or explicit teaching methods? Should pedagogies be invisible or visible? Are genres static or dynamic constructs? Where does writing’s power reside—in the individual or in society?

Problematizing these polarizations, Brooke and Jacobs (1997) submit:

Genre kills. It restricts, it reduces, it mutilates, it limits what our lived experience might say if we could choose how to present it.
But of course we’re lying. Genre doesn’t kill. It also gives birth, it midwives, it makes possible. It leads us on as writers into new discourse, new worlds, new interpretations.

Genre kills, but it also gives birth. A paradox. Genre both limits and enriches the writing of self. That’s the paradox: as writers our relationship with genre is one of negotiation. (pp. 215-216)

From Britton’s (1975) earlier studies, the concepts related to writing’s audience and function surface again—this time with a more explicit understanding of the role of culture and setting in the acquisition of writing. For some, attention to genres limits writings’ potential audiences and purposes. To Delpit (1988), this issue revolved around power, and, additionally, empowering. Echoing the tenets and principles promoted by the Sydney School, Delpit (1988) questions implicit teaching practices and proposes considerations of five principles focusing on classroom power:

1) Power is enacted in classrooms

2) There are codes of rules for participating in power—that is, there is a “culture of power.”

3) The rules of the culture [of the classroom] are a reflection of the culture of those who have power.

4) If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.

5) Those with power are frequently least aware of—or willing to acknowledge its existence. (p. 282)
Romano offers a position of contrast. In Blending Genre, Altering Style (Romano, 2000), Romano defines and defends expressive writing (as opposed to transactional—reports, essays, etc.) and poetic writing (commonly referred to as creative writing) as explained by Britton et al. (1975). Romano (2000) offers:

Expressive writing is personal and unpressed, relaxed and idiosyncratic. Code words and rhetorical shorthand communicate more meaning to the writer than they do to an outside audience. But then, expressive words aren’t meant for an outside reader. We use expressive writing when we are trying to explain or render information, make connections, generate ideas. Expressive writing is exploratory and new and focused on meaning. It might, therefore, be full of spelling errors, usage blunders, redundancies, incomplete scenes, partial thoughts, and faulty logic. That’s OK; the writer is seeking to think on the page. At any time, of course, when writers have cut loose expressively, the writing might suddenly become poetic or transactional, the writer’s voice and knowledge kicking in together, words popping on the page that work for an outside audience as well as the writer. (pp. 137-138)

What Romano offers students through this exploration in writing is the removal of constraints. Play, he commands, without penalty—with words that may serve as the probes of retrieval of ideas. He empowers students to discover authentic voices or imitate others, to make sense or nonsense. In Walter Percy’s terms, he enables Homo symbolificus’ performance of the trait that defines humanity—the creating of symbols—even if the symbol making may be, as Kohlers and Smythe report, dense and autographic (as cited in Kellogg, 1994).

Romano denies the social component; the writer has no responsibility to communicate with anyone other than herself, at this stage. This activity reduces the audience to one—the author. Cognitively, it frees the writer to travel to any creative plane—consciously or unconsciously.
Elbow (2000) refers to this writing as “private writing” (p. 257). He acknowledges that others refute the possibility of this concept of private writing, believing that no writing can—in essence—be private based on social constructivist positions. However, he maintains,

…if writers cannot seem to find any of their own thoughts or feelings as they write, if they feel that all writing belongs to teachers, if they feel that writing is always a matter of putting down what experts or authorities have said, if they feel unable to write anything different from what “everyone” feels and says and thinks, if they can’t notice any of their own signature in their experience or thinking of language, then it’s helpful to stress the lens that shows how all writing and language is inherently private. (Elbow, 2000, p. 263)

Elbow seemingly recognizes the importance of using a social lens in writing. He also claims that Vygotsky’s, Mead’s, Bakhtin’s, and Chomsky’s theories do not disrupt the importance of private writing, but rather support the concept. He states:

Vygotsky sees children learning language socially in dialogue with others, then naturally learning to use it privately with themselves—initially out loud and then gradually internally and silently, and eventually as thinking. […] This is an instance of the larger principle that children learn most things in a social setting and then internalize that social learning to a private or solitary realm. When Bakhtin champions dialogic rather than monologic language, he is championing a dialogic dimension of discourse that can exist in solitary or private language as well as public language. In short, Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and Mead will not serve as witnesses for the claim that private writing is unnatural. As Chomsky notes, “Communication is only one function of language, and by no means an essential one.” (Elbow, 2000, p. 267)

Acknowledging the importance (and existence) of private writing, theorists and researchers also confer influence and power to the social contexts from and in which writing evolves. These presences, composed of implicitly and explicitly defined communicative rules, offer their own instructional scaffolds—varying with each context’s values and discerned purposes for writing within each social sphere.
Naturalistic pedagogical methods employ one instructional mode representing a distinct educational philosophy and its related environment. Focusing on the child as learner, this facilitative environment parallels Hillocks’ natural process mode. Process writing moved the writing instruction pendulum from its emphasis on product to an appreciation of learners’ processing during writing experiences. Influenced by Graves’ (1983), Calkins’ (1983), and Atwell’s (1987) texts, the process writing movement reflected other qualitative data focusing on cognitive activities involved in writing instruction (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes & Flower (1980); Gould (1980); Matsuhashi (1981); Nelson (1988) and others. Process also recognized a social component (peer audiences were added to the traditional teacher audience) and instructional scaffolding through mini-lessons and writing conferences.

With process writing, teachers, instead of merely assigning prompts, reports, etc., offered students writing activities “often subdivided into stages such as prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing, usually with the caveat that the processes are recursive rather than linear, complex rather than simple” (Langer & Applebee, 1987, p.10). Formulaic, product-centered writing assignments diminished; students instead focused on using writing as a tool to make sense of their worlds, to foster self expression and to focus on thinking (Tobin & Newkirk, 1994)—reminiscent of Britton’s belief that expressive writing—that writing positioned closest to the individual writer—maintained immeasurable influence on individuals’ mediating understandings of themselves and their worlds.
Inherent in the tenets of the process approach to writing are several factors. First, students—and teachers—have some mutual sense of understanding the four steps of this process, and their recursive patterns. Second, students and teachers appreciate and value writing, and will, consequently, develop writing skills through an unstructured, natural approach to writing acquisition. Third, students’ varying needs will be acknowledged and accommodated within the learning environment.

In the Boothbay Writing Project, for example, the following seven needs guided writing instruction:

1. Writers need regular chunks of time.
2. Writers need their own topics.
3. Writers need to learn mechanics and context.
4. Writers need response.
5. Children need to know adults who write.
6. Writers need to read.
7. Writing teachers need to take responsibility for their knowledge and teaching. (Atwell, 1987, pp. 17-18)

Not specifically addressed in this list of needs is the necessity for explicit genre instruction. Some researchers conclude, however, that a degree of explicitness in writing instruction would be beneficial—under certain circumstances. For example, Freedman (1993) offers that explicit instruction of genres may be helpful “during editing, for a limited number of transparent and highly specific features (p. 226). In addition, she purports that explicit instruction may strengthen students’ reflections of their writing performance. Krashen (as cited in Freedman, 1993) offers further considerations implying that teachers should assist with format, organization, strategies for composing and rewriting and a limited number of rules regarding writing conventions.
Defending this mode of instruction, Freedman (1993) offers three underlying assumptions. First, the explicit teaching of genre is not necessary; students exhibit inherently sophisticated understandings of multiple genres through their exposure to the genres within their social settings. Second, explicit genre instruction is not possible; genres change and, consequently, the forms are fluid as well as complex—defying exact definitions. Finally, the explicit teaching of genre is not useful and may even be harmful; students may approach writing more expressively and more authentically if genres are not a major focus area; furthermore, teachers may incorrectly instruct students if their own understandings of genre are questionable.

Process writing offered educators a viable alternative to rigid writing instruction. Additionally, process writing seemed to demystify the gift of writing once attributed to divine intervention bestowed only upon a chosen few. Reflecting on the progress of writing instruction emanating from this approach, Calkins (1991) added,

We’ve come a long way in the teaching of writing. Not long ago the writing process, …, meant listing several topics and selecting one, producing a page full of leads, and then another page of freewriting, then revision, and editing a draft. Not long ago, the writing process was deskwork…. Writing is [now] lifework not deskwork. (p. 7)

Reflecting on the notion of “coming a long way,” Atwell (1998) reviewed and revised her concept of effective writing instruction and how it looks in the classroom.

Noting a need to reconceptualize process writing, she states,

Just as there are times when kids need a mirror, someone to reflect back their writing to them, there are times when they need an adult who will tell them what to do next or how to do it. Bottom line, what they need is a Teacher. (Atwell, 1998, p. 20)
Taylor (2000) describes Atwell’s new stance as being dual-factored. First, Atwell defines students’ expectations—explicitly. Second, Atwell demands that students demonstrate proficiency—as a level of excellence, not minimal state standard level. These two dynamics allow for collaboration between teacher(s) and students; in addition, it parallels instructional scaffolding as defined by Applebee and Langer (1983). Interestingly, Atwell’s pedagogy even expects “students to experiment with specific genres” (p. 25).

It is this very concept—genres—that ignited another movement in writing instruction. In direct contrast to the North American (process writing) perspective to writing instruction is the concept of explicit genre instruction first promoted by Australian and New Zealand educators. Based on linguistic theory proposed by Halliday and in critical response to the progressivist, whole language approaches to writing instruction, these educators advocated explicit instruction of particular genres—most notably genres grounded in scientific and social studies writing (Hicks, 1997). Direct instruction, the genrists argued, provided social empowerment; “gaining access to the powers of literacy” (Hicks, 1997, p. 466) through sequential acquisition of specific rhetorical forms translating into economic, cognitive, and social gains.

Promoted initially by the Sydney School of linguistic and pedagogical studies, explicit instruction conveys a basic premise: writing, in particular factual writing, equals power. Martin (as cited in Grabe & Kaplan, 1996) contends that factual writing in academic content areas assists students in gaining control of their own learning. Furthermore, mastering expository forms stands as an essential in writing acquisition; however, Martin also claims narrative and expressive writings’ importance—serving as
scaffolding to more *important* forms. Additionally, Martin proposes that elementary school students should participate in composing the following genres: recounts, procedures, descriptions, reports, explanations and expositions, evolving from simple narrative presentations to complex sequencing with multiple explanations. Derewianka (as cited in Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 136) offers similar suggestions. Derewianka lists recounts, instructions, narratives, information reports, explanations, and arguments as important forms of writing. These evolutionary lists imply an assumption—that narrative may be a more natural, more easily acquired form of expression.

To many, these proposals and suggestions may not parallel terminology commonly associated with genres. Typically, genres are exemplified as poems, narratives, songs, prayers, expositions, etc., characterized by specific structural criteria whose communicative powers evolve from a socially contextualized setting (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990). At least, that is an acceptable definition for genrists.

To North American educators, however, genres are fluid, unstable, dynamic, and interactive—mostly because they are products of differing cultures and subcultures. From a position of traditional acceptance, genres change and evolve—not in a linear, orderly fashion, but in a path irregularly cut and fashioned to get the words from one destination to another with their understanding in tact (Tynyanov, 1924). Influenced by Bakhtin, the process-oriented stance on genre reflects his supposition that genres are “flexible, plastic, and free” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 79). Bakhtin also offers that genres, when used as fluid forms, allow creativity to be expressed—after mastery of the generic forms.
In “Genre Development and Learning: Children Writing Stories, Science Reports, and Poems,” Kamberelis (1999) reports his quasi-experimental study and related conclusions based on the following two research questions:

- First, given institutionally constrained and tactical homologies across classroom literacy events and practices, what differences in the working knowledge of different genres (stories, science reports, poems) are demonstrated by kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade children in text production tasks?

- Second, what do children’s texts and metadiscourse about their texts reveal about how genre knowledge emerges during the early elementary years? (Kamberelis, 1999, p. 409)

Assuming that biological, social and cultural components factored in the dynamics of these literacy experiences, Kamberelis focused on textual analysis of fifty-four students (59% percent White, 28% African American, 13% Asian American) from working to middle-class backgrounds. The research teachers shared similar literacy philosophies, educational goals, and pedagogical practices. Variances among teachers were attributed to the different grade levels taught. Kamberelis and a research assistant, after participating in the classrooms throughout the year, collected data resulting from three writing sessions and accompanying writing tasks (i.e., narrative, science report, poem). These writing tasks paralleled classroom experiences and reflected the curriculum genres of the classroom (Kamberelis, 1999). Each session was on a different day and occurred in the spring of the school year. Elapsed time between sessions with any of the research participants ranged from 3 to 5 days. After the researchers described the writing task (one-on-one instruction in a quiet area), no other information or assistance was provided.
Time allotted was 20 to 30 minutes. After completion, students read their texts, talked about the text and the origination of ideas, and read it again. Data was audio taped and later transcribed.

In addition to the data analyzed from writing sessions, data collection included writing samples, records of students’ readings (assigned and self-selected from school and home), teachers’ reflective journals and lesson plans, classroom field notes, and interviews with students (researcher-led).

Analyses contained the following focus categories as “Measures of Genre Knowledge”:

- Textural Features—words per clause, verb tense, temporal connectives, logical connectives, text cohesion;
- Text Register—specialized narrative discourse, biological terminology, poetic devices;
- Text Structure—reflecting hierarchical organization of clauses, etc.
- Narrative text structure—setting, conflict, resolution, moral, etc.
- Informational text structure—topic, attributes, characteristic events, comparisons of categories, summary, optional extra information; and
- Poetic text structure—e.g., specific structures, rhythm, rhyme, meter, etc.

(Kamberelis, 1999, pp. 414-420)

Results from the analysis indicated that some students produced texts reflecting a knowledge of genre; others were “problematic” often exhibiting narrative qualities in all three genres; others represented a “hybrid” quality. In general, narrative did not pose a problem. Students exhibited an explicit knowledge of story, for the most part. One
example, however, did reflect a hybrid attempt at writing, beginning with “once upon a
time” and ending with a list—an indication of a primary form of writing (Newkirk, 1989).
Science reports were far from exemplary texts, frequently following narrative qualities,
and often orally identified as science by students’ inclusion of certain words or numbers.
Poems paralleled science examples offering an extensive range of sophisticated to cursory
understanding of this genre.

Kamberelis proposes that the results corroborate findings from Langer (1986),
Newkirk (1989), Pappas (1993) and others; these findings indicate that students do have a
considerable knowledge of narrative and some knowledge of informational and poetic
genres. Kamberelis concludes,

> It is thus important for young children to experience, explore and interrogate
> many high-quality examples of many different kinds of texts during the early
> years of elementary school. It is also important for teachers to know the
> structures, functions, positive potentials, and possible hegemonic effects of
different genres and social practices so that they can more effectively help
> children learn, analyze, interrogate, and creatively exploit these resources.
The more different kinds of genres that children learn to deploy, analyze, and
synthesize, the deeper and broader their potential for cognitive,
communicative, critical, and creative growth is likely to be. (p. 453)

From Kamberelis to Britton, advice from researchers and theorists abound.

Kamberelis (1999) advises educators to expose students to multiple genres for students’
“cognitive, communicative, critical and creative growth” (p. 453). Genrists insist that
explicit genre instruction (with an emphasis on official genres) equips students with the
potential for social mobility. Langer and Applebee (1983, 1999) offer many directives,
such as the utilization of instructional scaffolding and writing across subject areas to
promote understanding. Elbow (1994) claims that private writing is a key to writing
Hillocks (1984, 1986) purports that environmental mode, focusing on students’ and teachers’ collaborative construction of writings’ purposes and audiences, stands as the most effective educational writing environment.

All serve to inform educators. Perhaps, it may seem, all serve to tell public educators what to do. Applebee (1996) claims,

…we [no referent given] recognize that there are many conversations, not one. They offer us alternative perspectives, new ways of knowing and doing, not a single set of truths winnowed by time. They speak in the voices of women as well as men, people of color as well as whites, the poor and the marginalized as well as the privileged. (p. 42)

It is the “we” that may be the problem. If Applebee is referring to the academy we, he may be more accurate in assuming that educators throughout this country and others are hearing and are even privileged in this way. If he is assuming that students and their families are involved at all, he may be even further from reality.

Luke (1998) contends that the conversations themselves are problematic. He offers,

Many of us working from sociological and cultural perspectives on literacy education have tried to change the subject of the great debate, to shift it sideways. We have argued that there is no “right” way of teaching reading and writing, but that different curricular approaches—and their attendant textbooks, classroom events, assessment instruments, and adjunct materials—shape literacy as social practices differently. […] The matter, thus, is not one of finding the right and correct scientific methods of teaching literacy and “targeting” these at marginalized groups. Rather it is about reconstructing and realigning the “selective traditions” of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in ways that better address the knowledges, practices, and aspirations of communities most at risk in the face of the new technologies and economic conditions. (p. 306)

Luke (1998) continues to argue that the conversations need to be “with” the communities and not “about” the communities. Contexts and their situated literacies,
therefore, become the focus—not method. For situated conversations to be productive, however, “we” must also include the theorists and researchers whose insights have the capacity for profound effects.

We must also account for global contexts. Kress (1997) acknowledges today’s global instabilities and their potential impact on education. With “pluriculturalism” resulting from the erasure of countries’ borders—both geographically and through technology—the world will be facing a redefining of “values, beliefs, knowledge, structures of identities and practices” (Kress, 1997, p. 159). Instead of replicating knowledge, Kress claims, citizens will need to be proficient at design. With design as its focus, educational curricula must change. At the root of these changes is literacy, with writing serving a primary function.

In the beginning, Britton et al. (1975) offered a description of a writer; they stated,

He is an individual with both unique and socially determined experience, attitudes and expectations; he may be writing voluntarily or, as almost universally the case in the school situation, he may be writing within the constraints of a prescribed task. This he either accepts and makes his own in the process of writing, or he perfunctorily fulfills his notion of what is demanded….(p. 7)

Three decades have passed, and “we” still have not attended to this passage’s implied message; perhaps some have not yet heard or read it. The writer is described as a person “with unique and socially determined experience, attitudes and expectations,” yet presentational modes of teaching writing—with a univocal message-- continue to predominate in many classrooms in this Age of Proficiency, where official
genres reign. Educators may “get to” poetry, “if they have time.” Even then, topics may be limited—and discussion about the reasons for genres and their effects on the writers themselves appear nonexistent. Neither is there a sense of “we.”

*What works best in writing instruction?* The answers to this question totally depend on the situatedness of the writers, their purposes in writing and their audiences. In “Have We Lost Our Way?” Fox (2001) offers a foundation to guide discussion—in any context; she states,

> The ability to harness literacy in any situation gives the literate in society a solid sense of power, at least, if not power itself. I wish this good fortune on every child in every school in the world. I hope that, together, we can, without orthodoxies, provide children with the ability to harness literacy in any situation; to give them a solid sense of power now and in the future; to grant them more control over their own literacy and their own lives than they might otherwise have had; to provide them with confidence; to present them with nonviolent outlets for their feelings and opinions, to provide access to the means of solitary reflection; to enable them to become educated and informed; and finally, to provide them with the opportunity, at least, to be gainfully and happily and fairly employed. The best of whole language, the best of the genre movement, and the best of critical literacy will certainly help them to achieve these goals. (p. 112)

### The Many Voices of Literacies

Literacies vary not only in their social contexts, but also in the multitudes of ways they are defined. Scribner and Cole in *The Psychology of Literacy* (1981) describe literacy as

> …a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices, including, of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills associated with literacy. (p. 236)
Rassool (1999), acknowledging that “[l]iteracy …is embedded in a discourse about, for example knowledge and learning, about working and living in a society, about culture, about social development” (pp. 4-5), offers a variety of definitions—notably, not mutually exclusive explanations-- representing a multitude of literacies:

- **Literacy**, in general, described as “a set of technical skills, representing a quantifiable educational resource to be evaluated against economic outcomes”

- **Functional literacy**, characterized as learning of reading and writing skills in direct preparation for work and vocational apprenticeships

- **Basic literacy**, referring “to the acquisition of technical skills involving the decoding of written text and the writing of simple statements within the context of everyday life”

- **Empowerment/critique literacy**, “which is grounded in the shaping of a reflexive self-identity, self-definition and cultural transformation” reflecting Gramscian and Freirian perspectives

- **Critical literacy**, promoting “the skills, knowledges and attitudes necessary for exploring and exercising responsibilities and rights in a democratic society”

- **Social literacies**, including “prose literacy,” “document literacy,” and “quantitative literacy”

- **Cultural literacies**, emanating from “religious and ethnic-group-based cultural practices”
- **Vernacular, local or community literacies**, representing “different subcultures, communities, age and gender groups
- **Formal literacies**, representing societal institutions of power using “different, formalized genres”
- **Computer literacies**, demanding users to develop basic technological skills that would assist in accessing on-line information (pp. 6-12)

The Social Situatedness of Literacies

Scribner (in Kintgen, Kroll, and Rose, 1988) elaborates on the social situatedness of literacy, noting that literacies are neither universal nor static. She adds,

Most efforts at definitional determination are based on a conception of literacy as an attribute of individuals; they aim to describe constituents of literacy in terms of individual abilities. But the single most compelling fact about literacy is that it is a social achievement; individuals in societies without writing systems do not become literate. Literacy is an outcome of cultural transmission; the individual child or adult does not extract the meaning of written symbols through personal interaction with the physical objects that embody them. Literacy abilities are acquired by individuals only in the course of participation in socially organized activities with written language…. (p. 72)

Stating “People and societies are literate to the extent that they need to be,” Goodman (1996, p. 45) offers a provocative comment, implying that literacy serves distinctive and definitive functions influenced by the unique values of each society, culture, or subculture in which it is situated. In A History of Writing, Gaur (1984) concurs, “What kind of writing a society evolves, or chooses, depends largely if not wholly on the kind of society it is” (p. 15). Furthermore, she contends that “as we
advance further and further into the new age of information technology, the storage, preservation, and, ultimately, the dissemination of knowledge” (p. 7) will remove writing from its dominant discourse role.

Theoretically, the concept of situated literacies possesses the potential to radically alter pedagogical frameworks and related methods of instruction. Reconceptualizing past practices, this perspective of literacy contrasts markedly with UNESCO’s definitions of functional and basic literacy that held hegemonic control in traditional educational methods. Basically, these traditional concepts promoted literacy as

…a neutral set of technical decoding skills and functional writing skills existing autonomously outside culture and society. Thus they represented a technique to be learned and applied. These definitions also presented literacy as value-free because the onus was on the individual to learn to read and write; and, relatedly, her/his ability to learn to read write. (Rassool, 1999, p. 8)

Returning to Scribner and Cole’s (1981) definition of literacy that literacy is “…a set of socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it” (p. 236), theoretical considerations valuing situated literacies become even more apparent. First, the researchers acknowledge social powers—noting “socially organized practices” [italics added]. Inherent questions evolve; some include: In which social sphere (society, culture, sub-culture) are these practices embedded? Who decided and organized these practices? What practices exist? What power do these practices exert—social, economic, political? Who may be oppressed by not knowing/participating in these practices? Additionally, considerations regarding the symbol systems and their related technology demand attention. Issues focusing on access
to both systems and technology, reasons for producing and disseminating particular forms of information, and the effects of these considerations deserve critical attention.

With regard to the socially-embedded notions of literacy, Heath’s (1983) seminal studies of three Carolina Piedmont communities and Scribner and Cole’s (1981) research on the Vai people in Liberia reveal vast differences in literacy development. Recognizing community’s role as a dynamic factor in literacy practices, these ethnographic studies also supported literacies as mediational tools evolving to accommodate the inter- and intra-communications of cultures and sub-cultures.

In short, pedagogical considerations of literacy acquisition became decentralized. Schools continued to retain a prominent position in literacy development, but families and their cultures and sub-cultures have also become recognized as valid sites of literacy acquisition. Clarifying the concept of literacy acquisition, Gee (1989) offers,

*Acquisition* is a process of acquiring something subconsciously by exposure to models and a process of trial and error, without a process of formal teaching. It happens in natural settings which are meaningful and functional in the sense that the acquirers know that they need to acquire something in order to function and they in fact want to so function. This is how most people come to control their first language. (p. 20)

In today’s world, these “natural settings” include technology and their modes of literate expression. From instant messaging to web page construction, technology offers diverse ways of *doing* language. All of these technologies inform society—using “socially organized practices which make use of a symbol system” (Scribner and Cole, 1981, p. 236), providing additional modes of acquiring literacies.
Gee (1989) also proposed a conceptualization that marks a distinction between the terms literacy acquisition and literacy learning, defining literacy learning as,

Learning is a process that involves conscious knowledge gained through teaching, though not necessarily from someone officially designated a teacher. This teaching involves explanation and analysis, that is, breaking down the thing to be learned into its analytic parts. It inherently involves attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter. (p. 20)

Cultural pedagogy described this shift in framing learning in unofficial sites, referring “to the idea that education takes place in a variety of social sites including but not limited to schooling” (Steinberg and Kincheloe, 1997, p. 3). In Jocks and Burnouts: Social Categories and Identities in the High School, Eckert (1989) concurs,

One of the greatest errors in education is to assume that the larger social context of the school is irrelevant or even secondary to learning. the flourishing field of classroom ethnography indicates that educators have begun to take seriously the social interaction in the classroom as part of the educational process. (p. 179)

She continues that social contexts are rich sources, informing educators of ways to create more effective learning environments—environments constructed around classroom collaboration and strategies natural to the students. These strategies may involve incorporating literacy genres and mediums evidenced as meaningful to students, and then creating --through logical and purposeful scaffolding—connections to other literacies that may prove beneficial in other contexts. School and classroom environments, obviously, provide a logical context to consider in efforts to construct meaningful literacy instruction.
The Social Dynamics of Literacy

One of the earliest studies (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984) that illuminated the social dynamics involved in literacy acquisition revealed that young children scribbled in the written language that reflected their culture. This study was significant in a number of ways. First, the impact of the social sphere in which the children lived gained status as a factor contributing to literacy acquisition. Second, the scribbles revealed that students differentiated between writing and drawing—indicating a transition, a bridge towards more competent, meaningful, autocratic literacy forms.

Additional seminal research has been conducted by Dyson. In “Cultural Constellations and Childhood Identities: On Greek Gods, Cartoon Heroes, and the Social Lives of School Children,” Dyson’s (1996) ethnographic research reveals how social messages—appropriated from Saturday morning television shows—enter into literacy acquisition in a third-grade classroom. Theoretically grounded in Vygotsky—using language “to grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88), Bakhtin—“text embedded in social dialogue” (Dyson, 1993, p. 10), and Geertz—applying writing to create “an imaginary universe within which their acts are signs” (Geertz, 1973, p. 13), Dyson presents children’s dialogue as they negotiate both independent self and social self within the classroom society. Through the colliding boundaries imposed by official, peer, and home reference spheres, the dynamics involved in students’ developing communication through written texts as well as defining self become clearly evident.

Situated in an urban primary school in the San Francisco East Bay, this study focuses on the socially dependent dynamics of literacy—particularly in the emergent
writing activities of six African-American students in a second-third grade class loop. The site itself was located in an area that blended students from a “low-income, working-class community” with other students from a “primarily European American, middle class” environment (Dyson, 1996, p. 473). Two distinctly different cultures of students represented this population: the children of color form the low-income backgrounds, and the majority of White students from the middle-class backgrounds. Both factions interacting in the official literacy world contributed to the potential of yielding insights into the problems and powers inherent in gaining literacy skills and knowledge.

Dyson collected data from observations (one to five times per week, from two to five hours a week), written products, audiotapes of classroom composing events, and Author’s Theater classroom performances, field notes of students’ interactions during recess, and analyses from television programs (corresponding to students’ sources of literacy schemas). From these observations, Dyson analyzed students’ social goals and how written texts assisted in attaining those goals. In addition, she examined the texts’ contents, the social positioning of characters within the texts, and the role that gender played. Differences between the two groups on assignments during free writing are as follows:

- Approximately 64 percent of composing-time texts by second-grade boys were based on the popular media, and 51 percent drew specifically on superhero stories. But only 17 percent of the girls’ stories drew on the media; 5 percent were about superheroes.
During the third grade, 96 percent of African American boys’ chosen text topics came from the popular media, and 59 percent were about superheroes. In contrast, 42 percent of the European American boys’ texts were based on the popular media, and 19 percent were about superheroes.

A third (34 percent) of the African American girls’ third-grade texts were about the popular media, and almost a quarter (22 percent) were about superheroes. In contrast, 5 percent of the European American girls’ third-grade texts were about popular media, and only one percent about superheroes. (Dyson, 1996, p. 478)

Dyson (1996) concludes that the social powers inherent in these literacy events may be categorized in four major ways: “affiliating with others, resisting others, distancing oneself from them, or, more equitably, negotiating with them” (p. 476). These social dynamics frequently surfaced during Author’s Theater, an official literacy event. Questioning gender and racial stereotypes (e.g., one character “had to be White”) (p. 481) and negotiating attributes of genres (e.g., fighting without a story and explaining why this did not equal a narrative) occupied much of the class’s discussion. Providing direction and support, the teacher helped students to bridge the distance from amorphous stories to genres more characteristic of official school literacies (Dyson, 1996).

In contrast, in the same school one first-grade teacher excluded superheroes from literacy instruction. Dyson reports that as she walked by that particular classroom, she overheard two boys discussing “media characters.” Engaging the two in a discussion in an attempt to gain further clarification of these characters, she received, instead, a denial
of superheroes ever being a topic of conversation (Dyson, 1996, p. 474). Instead of using the students’ already present understandings of literacy and story, the teacher chose to ignore opportunities to build on prior knowledge.

Situating literacies within the chaos of adolescence, Finders (1996), in a yearlong ethnography, focused on how four adolescent girls viewed and used literacy within the school setting and in outside contexts. From the outset, Finders (1996) claims,

By documenting the perceptions and experiences of two self-labeled groups of “just regular girls,” I argue that literacy pedagogy must consider the tangles that constrict students’ performances in classrooms. The processes in operation in any classroom are knottier and rougher than much of the language of literacy learning currently suggests. (p.94)

Consequently, she chose to concentrate on relatively homogeneous subjects in order “to examine less visible dimensions of diversity” (Finders, 1996, p. 103).

Data collected from Angie and Tiffany (the social queens) and Cleo and Dottie (the tough cookies) elicited a range of significant results. Informing the study through audiotaped interviews (structured and unstructured), audiotaped observations from language arts classrooms, hard copies of written work, and field notes (from formal and informal sessions), and data accumulated from the participants’ sixth-grade through the end of their seventh-grade school years at a Midwestern junior high school, Finders collected extensive information. Emergent themes and patterns of both “backstage” and “center stage” literacy practices, domain analysis and a search for “tacit rules, rights, and responsibilities” (from the participants’ perspectives) provided framework for data analysis (Finders, 1996, p. 107).

Finders (1996) found that both the queens and the cookies used literacy to define and secure their social positions in the school. Identified as successful students, all four
girls, nevertheless, used literacy to separate themselves from not only the teachers but also different social circles. Finders contends, however, that this “literate underlife” is central to the development of the early adolescent female” (p. 109); it serves as a way to gain inclusion or maintain exclusion, to grant or deny social access and its related powers. Offering examples within the classroom, Finders cites Dottie’s refusal to allow her journal to be viewed by any other class member (part of a required assignment). Instead, she used a different colored pen and composed her own response. Outside the classroom proper, the exchanging of notes provided a form of literacy that signaled acceptance by the queens. Notes followed a particular format and could only be exchanged with someone of equal social status. One girl crossed this boundary, and the following response was created:

“Lauren, What’s ↑? ...Did you see what Claire wrote. Dah! She is so stupid. She doesn’t even know how to write right. Dah! “ (Finders, 1996, p.118).

Part of the note ritual included a particular way of folding it, another barrier to inclusion if not properly completed. Both groups adopted another literacy behavior, using it for the same reasons, yet still managing to define social positioning. Both carried particular books; for the queens, R. L Stein and Christopher Pike stood as the authors, and for the cookies, anything but those authors—which, Finders notes, they did read at home (Finders, 1996).

Situated in classrooms where process writing—and its associated freedoms—served as a framework for literacy acquisitions, the teacher participants in this study believed their classrooms were havens of safety, their assignments were opportunities for
free choice. Finders (1996) contends the opposite was true; she states, “Free choices” were not free from the webs of social relationships” (p. 124). She concludes,

Throughout this study, it becomes clearer that what remains missing in a student-centered pedagogy is the necessary addition of layers of critical reflection. Students, both male and female, all keenly aware of disparate positions of power, need opportunities to practice dealing with intellectual uncertainties and political tensions. Rather than continue to characterize a classroom as a safe haven, perhaps it would be more productive to openly articulate the complexities and consequences that accompany literacy learning. (p. 126)

Providing insight into the situatedness of literacies and their potential to contaminate effective literacy practices as well as to position participants into social groups is a study by Trevor Cairney (2000). Cairney’s premise is that literacy is used in multiple ways, the ways children’s literacy practices are supported vary greatly, models of literacy practice vary from site to site, attitudes toward literacy demonstrate considerable variations, and that family literacies influence children’s literacy practices. All of these factors, he maintains, in turn interact in how individuals can be considered literate in one context, and illiterate in others.

For five years, Cairney, his colleagues and students investigated the “match and mismatch” between the home and school cultures of Australian students in three elementary schools (within eight classrooms), across seven different subjects (grades 7 and 9) and related data collected from 130 “home-literacy events” (Cairney, 2000, p. 498). Data included interviews (students, teachers, parents and support staff), self-reporting of literacy practices (students, parents and teachers), observations (home, school and community sites; audio and videotaping), specific literacy events (audiotapes), and student achievement information (for comparative analyses).
The results indicated that students’ development of literacy practices evolved from social interaction. Cairney (2000) identified four “constructions of literacy” including:

- **Literacy as knowledge**—In these interactions, one participant (usually an adult) fulfilled the role of *monitor of knowledge*, while other participant(s) were accountable for reproducing knowledge… At home, literacy as knowledge…was found most frequently amongst families from non-English-speaking backgrounds, particularly when adults from these families assisted children with homework tasks.

- **Literacy as performance**—In these interactions, one or more participants (usually children) were held accountable (usually by adults) for demonstrating a certain level of proficiency in a literacy-related task, and in some instances the adult acted as arbiter of the quality of performance. The construction of literacy as performance was evident…in some recorded family interactions. …[T]his was most common in homework sessions.

- **Literacy as negotiated meaning making**—In these interactions the focus was on creating meaning. Each participant had the right to contribute to the exchange at will. The view of literacy as negotiated meaning making was also evident in audio-recorded literacy events in a small number of families.
• Literacy as “doing school”—Interactions in this one were common in all of the elementary school classrooms in this study, but were not noted in the secondary school. (pp. 499-502)

In general, Cairney concludes that multiple literacies—at home and at school—exist and that official school literacies continue to define a person’s measure of literacy achievement. Noting this hierarchical structure, Cairney aligns with Street (1995) who questions,

> Among all of the different literacies practiced in the community, the home, and the workplace, how is it that the variety associated with schooling has come to be the defining type, not only to set the standard for other varieties but to marginalize them, to rule them off the agenda of literacy debate? Non-school literacies have come to be seen as inferior attempts at the real thing, to be compensated for by enhanced schooling. (p. 106)

To summarize, research and theory that seek to characterize doing writing corroborate and contradict. Defying definitive analysis, doing writing still retains a measure of illusiveness and mystery. However, resolute efforts to describe writing processes and evaluate written texts continue to inform educators, provoking discussion and debate.

Beginning with the 1960s-70s, extensive research studies (Britton et al., 1975) revitalized interest in investigations in writing. Providing a foundational approach for analyzing doing writing—including related research language and terminology, Britton et al. exposed the complexities surrounding writing and its instruction. No longer perceived as a simple, one-dimensional process, writing escaped the restraints of mere quantification. Qualitative analyses, complete with their social situatedness, conveyed
additional relevant data, data informing researchers and educators of the interactive dynamics affecting the acquisition and learning of literacies—from oral literacies, to the reading and writing dyad, to technological literacies.

Writing’s dynamics continue to confound—with each additional piece of research, situated in different times and places. Framing this study are many researchers, some more prominently than others. Inspired by Fox’s (2001) to incorporate and synthesize many forms of instruction, this study also assigned importance to Hillocks’ (1984) conceptualization of environmental mode of instruction—attempting to balance structure and power. Paralleling this concept is Applebee and Langer’s (1983) framework, instructional scaffolding—characterized by intentionality, appropriateness, structure, collaboration, and internalization. Serving as a basis for comparative data analysis are Gee’s (1989) classifications of literacy acquisition and learning, all grounded in the dynamics of social situatedness as articulated by Heath (1983), Eckert (1989), Vygotsky (1978), and Dyson (1996).

Reflecting the decades of research and theories preceding this study, Chapter 3 presents the methods used to analyze the dynamics involved in literacy acquisition and learning at this specific time in this particular location with these research participants informing this study. First, the approach to the study is presented along with the context of the study. An explanation of the sampling, descriptions of each research participant immediately follow. The chapter concludes with sections on data gathering, research procedure, and data analysis.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Approach for the Study

In “Rethinking Observation: From Method to Context,” Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2000) consider the importance and dynamics of observation in all ethnographic studies. Acknowledging the “ethnographer’s ‘situation’” (class, gender, etc.), realizing that this situation affects observations, the naturalness of the setting, data collection, and interpretation of data, I also need to recognize my primary responsibility to the student participants as the gifted intervention specialist in this school. Within that framework, decisions involving research design and methods evolved.

Based on the premise that knowledge is socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), this research uses a case-study approach with four students providing maximum variation. The methodology follows the interpretive or constructive paradigm. Within that framework, all research participants provide voice through written texts, reflective journals, interviews, class discussions and conferences. The use of occasional member checks offers opportunities for clarification, corroboration, and/or negation of all or any part of recorded interpretations of any of the data sources.
Research Questions

*What dynamics affect literacy acquisition and learning?* serves as the foundational question for this research. Related questions, emerging from discussion among the teacher research participants prior to the onset of the research, provided additional framework for initial analyses. These include:

- How do the research participants, i.e., the teachers and students involved in this study, conceptualize literacies and their cultural contexts?
- What are the research participants’ perceptions of this study’s focus literacies, their purposes and their powers?
- How do the student researcher participants use, create, and/or respond to these literacy practices and products?
- What do the analyses of the student researcher participants’ literacy products reveal about their understandings of various literacies and their uses?
- How do these experiences in literacy seemingly affect the student research participants’ sense of personal identity and social agency?
- How do these classroom research community’s social dynamics affect the student researcher participants and their acquisition of literacy skills and concepts?
Context of the Study

This study takes place in a Midwestern middle school (sixth through eighth grade) with a total population of approximately 1,000 students. The school district has been ranked by the state as “effective,” meeting 18 out of 22 state indicators; the school itself also meets 18 out of 22 state indicators. One of four middle schools within this large, suburban school district, this school is located in a relatively affluent section of the suburb, surrounded by housing subdivisions, an elementary school and a high school. The city’s population is predominately middle to upper-middle class, White, and includes many college-educated, business and professional people. The city itself has been recognized as an ideal location for families.

In contrast with the demographic information describing the school’s geographical community, however, the school’s population is somewhat diverse. Figures documented in the state’s department of education report (2002-2003) indicate that the student population may be categorized as 17% African American, 2.5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.1% Hispanic, 3.5% multi-racial, 74.9% White, 19.3% economically disadvantaged, 5.1% limited English proficient, and 9.4% students with disabilities. This diversity results from the school district’s arrangement with an adjacent, urban community in a “Win-Win” agreement that provides tax monies from the urban area to be directed to the suburban district in exchange for educational services for the students living within specified zones (Report from the Ohio Department of Education).

The school’s teaching staff reflects minimal documented diversity, however. Out of a total of sixty-one teachers, all are White; sixteen are male. In addition, all have state authorized certification and/or licensure, and they average eighteen years experience. A
variety of teaching assignments—including ESL, learning disability inclusion, and gifted
teaching positions-- afford the students learning opportunities in course work ranging
from introduction to technology to accelerated mathematics classes to a variety of foreign
languages to the language arts collaborative class serving as the basis of this study.

Over 1,000 students (765 white, 128 African American, 20 Asian, and the
remainder not specified) in grades sixth through eight attend this school. Some students
accelerate coursework by attending foreign language classes or Honors Geometry I at the
area high schools. One wing focuses on learning and developmentally disabled students’
courses—offering core subjects and/or tutoring. Two teachers direct the learning
experiences for forty-eight ESL students from fourteen different countries. Ninety-nine
students have been identified disabled; approximately 250 students are identified gifted in
at least one area.

Diversity within the identified gifted group also exists. IQs, for identified gifted
students, range from 127 to maximum test levels. Socioeconomic status spans incomes
from near-poverty to over extremely high annual incomes. Parents’ occupations vary
from entertainers to CEOs. Students also vary, representing the many layers of the
school’s social strata. In general, the school’s social structure offers belonging for the
preps (aka “Beamers,” in reference to economic status associated with their parents’
BMWs), a relatively visible ESL population, a cohesive black population, a flamboyantly
attired skateboarding group, and a large, more nondescript sector of adolescents
searching for a sense of identity.

“Doing school” holds different meanings for these different groups; situated
literacies align similarly. To construct experiences that appropriately challenge these
students, the gifted intervention specialist must “know how to start their students on the exploration” (Barnes, Britton, and Torbe, 1990, p. 157). No matter what subject or content area, literacies are part of the instructional constructs affecting these students. Situated literacies is a natural foundation from which to build programming, including the curricular design for this study.

Programming for the 250 identified gifted students follows two directions: indirect and direct services. Indirect services involve coursework and programming within regular classroom instruction that allows for differentiation and open-ended responses focusing on creative and critical thinking. Direct services include instruction and learning experiences offered through an options approach: a list of possible activities, competitions, etc., established as appropriately challenging to this faction of the school population and/or constructed in collaboration with the gifted intervention specialist in the resource room.

This study differs from normal programming, combining direct service (through collaboration with other teachers) within the classroom setting. The specific class targeted in this study is a language arts collaborative class, taught primarily by one language arts teacher, one art teacher, and the gifted intervention specialist. Comprised of twenty-eight students who have demonstrated either high proficiency and/or are identified gifted in one of these subject areas, this class met everyday for language arts for one period for the entire year and was blocked (with the art class) for two periods during first semester only. The class provides a two-fold purpose: to meet all State and district standards in language arts and to provide acceleration and enrichment opportunities in both language arts and art—with a focus on multi-genres and mediums.
Sampling

Four students serve as the basis of this study. Their selection was purposive and followed a selection procedure characterized as “the researcher examines various interests in the phenomenon, selecting a case of some typicality, but leaning toward those cases that seem to offer opportunity to learn” (Stakes, 1994, p. 243). Selected from a larger, comparatively homogenous sampling—the language arts collaborative class—this core sample represents an attempt to achieve maximum variation within the larger class population of eighth grade students identified as gifted and or highly motivated in language arts and/or the arts.

The larger sample population consisted of twenty-eight, eighth grade students, twenty-one female and seven male students. Students enrolled in this class had previously been identified as gifted according to state guidelines, had been recognized as highly proficient in language arts or art, and had been nominated by their respective language arts or art teachers. They also declared their interest, at the course introductory meeting in the spring, in participation by signing a list documenting their consent for consideration of inclusion in this class. One additional criterion for inclusion, necessary for scheduling, was that students must be enrolled in a foreign language class. Approximately fifty students registered for consideration for inclusion. This study’s teacher research participants discussed the applicants’ academic characteristics and class behaviors, ranked their inclusion based on who would most benefit from this collaborative class, and determined the final selection. Students and parents received letters notifying them of the team’s decisions and placements.
Selection of the four case-study students, however, differed from selection of the larger class sampling in three basic ways. First, as the author of the study, I controlled both the criteria for selection and the process. Second, neither of the other teacher research participants nor the student research participants had knowledge of the specific criteria or the process; this information remained private until the written research ended. Third, after a discussion with the language arts collaborative class students about the selection (in general), the decision to maintain the privacy of who would be the four case-study students was upheld until all of the study’s projects and writings had been completed. The students defended their decision by stating that they felt that to reveal these names earlier would affect both those who were selected and those who were not; greater and more “honest” efforts from all could be expected if they did not know.

Criteria for comparisons to establish maximum variation included statistical data (e.g., standardized achievement and ability scores and grade-point averages), observed behavioral characteristics (e.g., assertive classroom behavior including class participation and degree and types of social interaction with peers) and documented written text generation (e.g., the length and quality of written responses to classroom assignments). Students ranked at the furthest points of variance, such as those who represented the highest and lowest percentile scores on achievement tests were coded as such. After all points of criteria were considered and lists compiled, I then chose the two male and two female students who contributed the most variance. Within the first three weeks of the study, the sampling was complete.
Issues of race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status did not factor in this selection. However, three of the four case-study students have at least one parent who represents a minority. In addition, socioeconomic status (middle class) seems relatively comparable among all class members.

The following descriptions provide more relevant, detailed information about each participant. Descriptions include information provided by the research participants as well as observations and statistical data. All of the research participants’ names are pseudonyms.

Teacher Research Participant #1

At the core of language arts instruction in this collaborative study was an eighth grade teacher, Mrs. Oldfeld. With a bachelor’s degree (as an English major and journalism minor) and a Master’s of Arts in Education (focusing on multicultural literature) from a large, Midwestern university, Mrs.Oldfeld’s inclusion in this study contributed knowledge from a strong educational foundation, eleven years of teaching language arts in the same school, and related work experiences in journalism. More importantly, her passion for writing itself motivates all who are fortunate enough to work with her in this subject area.

Mrs. Oldfeld cites several beliefs and strategies that underlie her instruction. These include 1) model good writing—from Steinbeck to students’ pieces; 2) provide recognition of students’ writing; 3) help students tap their imaginations and give them the freedom to use their imaginings; 4) teach students specific writing strategies and techniques that they may adapt to help them develop as writers; and 5) provide multi-
dimensional assessment that includes reflection, ownership, criteria, and collaboration. All of these markers may be frequently observed in the activities in her classrooms.

Described by one of her students as “patient,” Mrs. Oldfeld’s patience seems most evident as she allows students time to develop as writers. Focusing more on writers’ strengths than their areas of weakness, she uses rubrics that identify specific skill areas as focal areas yet continuously attends to the effects of the entirety of their written texts. In addition, flexible timelines accommodate students’ needs. For example, deadlines may be extended, students may rewrite pieces to attend to improvement areas, and alternative/modified assignments may be accepted as meeting certain academic criteria. These personal characteristics, as well as her attitude towards attending to her professional, academic responsibilities, all contribute to her success as a teacher and motivator.

Teacher Research Participant #2

As the principal art teacher involved in this study, Mrs. Powers holds a B.S. in Elementary Education with a minor in art education from a state university in the Midwest, and a M.A. in Art Education from another large, Midwestern university. Since her graduation she has taught, in addition to art, a self-contained first grade and reading for middle school students at this study’s site.

She describes her teaching style as evolving from “a traditional elementary style into a more collaborative, integrated style.” Directly impacting her teaching was her master’s work, a thesis based on a class of identified gifted students. From this study, she believes, her focus shifted to an understanding of the intrinsic factors most motivating
these students: “self-efficacy and freedom to make decisions about what they would study.” Involving students in instructional decisions (including creating, implementing, and evaluating lessons), therefore, stands as a central component of her course construction.

Within the framework of this study, Mrs. Powers set several goals, including

- To involve the students in the creating, implementing and evaluating of their lessons;
- To help students find the connections between visual art and literature through a variety of cultures;
- To help students find connections between their own visual art products and writings;
- To guide students’ awareness of the diverse and vast array of art and literature available to them in this global society; and
- To model collaboration and teamwork as a positive approach to teaching and learning.

Characteristically, Mrs. Powers’ classes reflect a high level of directed activity. Students seemingly understand that they are responsible to achieve at certain, clearly delineated standards and seem intent not to disappoint. Even so, she remains realistically flexible with deadlines—acknowledging that some projects may take more time than originally anticipated, students themselves may be experiencing personal problems that affect their production, etc. More interested that students have opportunities that help them feel successful rather than merely meet deadlines, she frequently allows for
multiple projects to be on-going within a given time period. Consequently, it is not uncommon for her students to receive recognition in local, state, and national competitions for their artistic creations.

Teacher Research Participant #3

As the author of this study, I acknowledge that my participation in this research is not without personal predispositions. Memories of counting the atoms in the classroom ceiling in elementary school, disagreeing with the teacher’s “correct” interpretations of Robert Frost’s poems in my high school College English class, and questioning the importance of knowing the diameter of a globe on a university exam all represent examples of my personal discontent with educational systems. I was not alone. I heard others’ questioning, witnessed classmates’ disengagement with learning, and practiced deconstructing and reconstructing ways (and the related whys) of doing education.

Over thirty years ago, I became interested in educational opportunities for the faction of the school population labeled “gifted and talented.” Even though I found the label both exclusionary and negative, I found those students to be some of the most needy in the classrooms. Recognized as outside of normal, frequently they sat alone. Sometimes they sat with other children, serving as tutors. Other times they constructed classroom bulletin boards, tackled additional assignments, or even became the champions and creators of classroom chaos.

After my Bachelor’s in Elementary Education and before my Master’s of Arts in Education, I returned to several colleges to participate in coursework leading to
certification in gifted education. From the twenty plus years I have taught these students, I have learned much. Mostly, I have learned that—with a balance of freedom and guidance—these students can achieve immeasurably.

It was in their writing that I noticed significant sophistication, not only in the area of sentence construction or vocabulary but also in the messages themselves. Beyond the minimal proficiency that was demanded of them by the state tests, these students wanted to have voice—not the academic voice they were asked to replicate, but a voice that emerged from their experiences, imaginings, and questions about life.

For the years that I worked daily in the classroom with these students, these experiences continued to confirm my conviction about how to construct effective writing opportunities for gifted middle school students. At the time of this study, my teaching responsibilities did not include daily classroom instruction; they did include, however, working with teachers to create instructional strategies that encourage these students to maximize their potential as much as possible.

This study serves to capture the excitement of learning, learning particularly focused on doing writing—an excitement all children, identified gifted or not, deserve to experience as they learn of their world and their places in it. It is an excitement that is currently endangered, threatened by educational approaches measured in quantifiable terms—not measured by doing language.

Student Research Participant #1—Eric

Studious, ethical, responsible, productive, analytical, and extremely capable all describe Eric. Unlike many middle school students, Eric remains consistent to a set of
constructive principles that he seemingly acquired early in his academic career. In
general, he approaches learning voraciously, seeking opportunities and challenges that
will help prepare him for college, a career, and life. Unaffected by much of popular or
peer culture, he remains true to his values, values that include a fierce independence of
thought and action, a personal integrity that disallows his reliance on others to help him
through academic projects or challenges, and a dedication to searching for the optimum
results given the parameters of any problem. This attitude appears intrinsic and more
typical of someone much older. It also sometimes confounds his life, costing him hours
of sleep.

His “Song to Self,” a poem written in the Native American study segment of this
class, expresses his determination. He writes,

    Destiny, fate
    The future holds what
    I make it out to be
    Life will not take me anywhere
    I will take myself where I go
    To fulfill my lifelong dream.

In addition to an ideal academic attitude, Eric’s standardized test scores also
reflect his high ability—providing one other factor influencing his selection as one of the
case studies. His verbal scores on the CAT rank him at 136; some discrepancy exists
with his writing achievement score on the IOWA, however, with an 83rd %-ile. This
atypical score may reflect one of Eric’s attributes that negatively impacts much of his
work: his inability to work quickly in a “command” context.
Within this sampling, Eric represents an extreme standard of academic excellence and seriousness, particularly in the subjects of science and math. Eric’s background includes extensive travels to Brazil, his mother’s homeland, and opportunities associated with typical, middle-class status. A member of a very cohesive, supportive, and multi-talented family, he reflects a quiet, secure confidence and is well liked by students and teachers. Previously described as shy in his elementary school years, he is seemingly emerging, sharing his ideas and expanding socially.

Student Research Participant #2—Christopher

Unlike Eric, Christopher has not yet carved a clear, social identity. Whereas the majority of the other students in this class are more than verbose, Christopher is not. Even in his speech, a quietness remains—in both mannerisms and volume. Nevertheless, he appears attentive and frequently divulges a subtle humorous side. Often remaining reserved and sometimes hesitant to speak in the classroom, he does, however, express himself quite well through his writing.

In his own words, he wants to be “a fantasy writer” and says that he likes “making life’s decisions for several other people” [his characters]. Additionally, he writes sensitively about his insights into others’ lives. In his exclusionary poem, he describes a student at lunch. In the first stanza, he writes,

All alone, in my own corner,

The seats surrounding me empty,

Lifting my sandwich to take a bite,
I glance around for others,
But they’re too far away to see.

He concludes,
In an emotionally harmed manner,
I weep away to my locker,
With no one on my mind,
For no one in the world
Has their mind on me.

Although his most recent verbal ability score on the CAT is above normal (117),
his achievement score in reading is the 69th %-ile. It is the lowest boy’s score in this
sampling, with the next lowest at 87. It is also somewhat inconsistent with what one
might expect of a student who seems to understand some of the powers of writing. In
earlier testing results, Christopher had been identified gifted in language arts; his latest
scores, however, do not corroborate those findings.

Selected as a case study because of his affinity for writing, for his less than
expected standardized test scores, and also for his social positioning as somewhat
marginalized, Christopher offers another layer of understanding of the dynamics of
literacy acquisition and learning. Similar to the other student research participants in
socioeconomic status, Christopher is also from a middle-class family. He is the only
student research participant, however, whose ethnicity is solely American.
Student Research Participant #3--Catalina

“Creative,” “enthusiastic,” and “different” are the three words Catalina used to describe herself as a writer in one of her journal entries. She also shared,

I am a lot of people to almost everybody. To teachers, I’m just another student but to my family I am a musician, daughter, niece, granddaughter, cousin, sister, horseback rider, swimmer, snowboarder. I am everything really. I teach my brother, and even though I’m just a normal 13-year-old girl, I can be anything I put my mind to.

In the classroom, Catalina is a constantly cheerful presence, full of energy, and definitely not a student who goes unnoticed. Frequently, she runs into the classroom, extends her arms to capture a friend, and enters into animated conversation with any one of a number of her peers. Outwardly, it appears as if she is taking none of “doing school” all that seriously—even though she seems to make an effort to complete assignments in a conscientious manner. Even so, she is probably more typical of what the public may expect from a middle school student.

Test scores corroborate this cursory observation. Her CAT scores rank her as normal with a 107 on the verbal component. Her writing achievement scores are much lower, almost one-half that of the next lowest score in the class, a 42nd %-ile in writing and a 69th %-ile in reading. It should be noted that Catalina’s inclusion in the class was based more on her artistic talents, than her academic talents; however, her proficiency scores in writing and reading were both labeled as “Advanced Proficient.”
Catalina helps provide maximum variation in this study for a few reasons. First, her academic record establishes her as more of an average student than a gifted student, even though she has been identified gifted in art. Second, her behavior indicates that she conforms to many of her peers (e.g., in her clothing selections and her fondness for Orlando Bloom) and could accurately be described as more social than academic. In this particular classroom, that attitude is somewhat atypical. In general, Catalina appears to be “in the moment,” enjoying life and not visibly impacted by a more global or distant view.

Like Eric and Christopher, Catalina is a member of a middle-class family. In addition, Catalina represents the school’s Hispanic student population; both of her parents’ families emigrated from Puerto Rico.

Student Research Participant #4—Namrata

Predominantly home schooled and relatively new to the area, Namrata presents still another perspective as the final student research participant selected for this study. She entered this existing class a few weeks into the year on the recommendation of another language arts teacher who recognized Namrata’s talents and potential.

“I perceive myself as a nervous person, when around people I don’t know, and socially outgoing, when around people I do know,” she states. Even though that trait is in direct contrast with Catalina, it does not seem atypical of most adolescents. What is unique about Namrata, however, is her perspective about writing itself. Continuing her self-description from her journal, she writes,
But…

When around no one but my inner soul, I am a writer. A plotter, a schemer. I can take idle keyboards, and put them to work until they melt with friction. I can take words, give them violent pinches, tugs, twists, and make them say something else completely.

In general, she does not seem to work at writing; she plays with writing. There is no question in her writing that the voice of Namrata is speaking, strong and clear.

Although there is no standardized test data measuring cognitive ability in her school folder, Namrata’s achievement scores are extremely high, ranging from the 97th to the 99th %-ile. Her academic performance parallels these scores. Even though she has been at the school a relatively short time, she has received much recognition as a superior student.

Namrata became an obvious choice as one of the four case study students, at first, because of her unique academic background based on home schooling. All of the students in the larger sample had known each other for at least one year, some were best friends, and all had also had experience “doing school” in this academic setting. Namrata entered alone, after the school year had already started, and immediately accepted the challenge that the class and its proposed curriculum offered. More importantly, however, Namrata’s passion for writing distinguishes her from her peers. Whereas the others may be writing out of academic responsibility, Namrata seems to write to fulfill her own personal needs.
With parents employed in professional careers, Namrata’s family also represents the middle class. Unlike the other student research participants, however, Namrata’s ethnicity is Indian and Mexican. She also is from a relatively large family, having four younger siblings.

Data Gathering

Based on the selection procedure stated by Stakes (1994), “the researcher examines various interests in the phenomenon, selecting a case of some typicality, but leaning toward those cases that seem to offer opportunity to learn (p. 243), four students served as focal participants. Selection was purposive to elicit maximum information and data from a group that initially may appear somewhat homogeneous. Thus, the core sample provided maximum variation within this class population.

To obtain insights and information from diverse sources, data consisted of multiple genres for varying purposes. Obvious sources include student research participants’ written texts and art pieces, reflective journal entries, and dialogic interview notes. Additional data, collected from notes from video and tape recordings, meeting and class observation notes, and evaluation forms, provided further documentation of research participants’ perceptions, analyses, conclusions and actions.

The remaining members of the classroom were not a source for discrete data, but potentially influenced the core sample through regular classroom activities and related specific research sources. In addition, data provided by the larger core sample may have provided comparative and/or contextual information. Class discussions, informal conversations, and conferences may have, therefore, shaped the responses that formed the data for analysis.
Research Procedure

Over an approximate eight-month period, student-research participants and teacher-research participants collaboratively constructed the year’s schedule of major literacy events based on defining literacies, their powers, and multiple forms. The following topics were offered for consideration:

- Home literacies
- Studies of literacies within the school setting (official and peer)
- Studies of literacies related to pop culture
- Studies of Hispanic genres and mediums, and related literature
- Studies of Native American genres and mediums, and related literature
- Studies of African genres and mediums, and related literature
- Studies of Asian genres, mediums, and related literature
- Studies of student-selected genres and mediums, and related literature

Instruction specifically related to these objectives remained the primary responsibility of the teacher-research participants. However, teacher-research participants worked in collaboration with student-research participants in attempts to strengthen students’ agency, to provide experiences for metacognitive awareness of literacy growth, and to develop literacy skills within this specific social setting.

Understanding that the language arts course of study also demands other focus areas (reflected in the State Academic Content Standards), instructional time dedicated to this research averaged two periods per week. Efforts to coordinate research experiences with
regular classroom instruction also stood as a priority so that students did not perceive a disconnect between the purposes of instruction in either area, possibly minimizing the effectiveness of these instructional opportunities.

Essentially, the procedure for this study paralleled an unofficial, on-going pilot study begun in this school in the previous school year. The pilot, however, focused more on the effect of genres in art and literature from other cultures than on specific instruction on literacies, their purposes, and powers. Upon reflection, teacher-research participants decided that the previous instruction and related assignments could be accurately described as segmented—without explicitly defined or discussed connections constructed between writing and reading experiences. This segmentation revealed a major weakness in the course design.

A debriefing meeting at the end of that school year revealed valuable information about the pilot, its strengths and its weaknesses. Surveys from the students documented the effects of the curriculum from their perspectives. In general, the results were positive; they had enjoyed learning about the various genres from other countries. In brief, their responses indicated that their approaches to writing had expanded, but no significant impact seemed to exist. Some of the more skilled, expressive writers understood a connection between the classroom experiences and their writing. Most did not. Explicit connections were missing.

The teachers agreed, theorizing that the curriculum for the next year’s language arts collaborative class needed to be unified under a broad, significant theme. The theme would be how people communicate and express themselves—across time and place: a study about the social situatedness of literacies, with a particular focus on writing.
The course, in general, followed a deliberate direction. Acknowledging the egocentric tendencies adolescents frequently exhibit, the teacher-research participants planned a curricular framework that began with students’ home literacies at the center. Studies then evolved systematically, including how people communicate in school (academic cultures), popular culture, and broadening to consider national and global spheres [See Figure 3.1]. Emphasis on these spheres’ interrelatedness and mutability served as recurring themes as the research participants traveled in and out of the artifacts and attitudes of these literacy zones.

![Figure 3.1: Dynamic Social Spheres of Literacy](image)
In general, the construction of instruction and its related activities and experiences followed an organizational format dictated by the teacher research participants. However, all of the participants discussed, negotiated and finalized the design of assignments, the decisions regarding grouping (individual, pairs, small group, whole class), the evaluation of class work, topics for journal entries and the timeline for completion of various projects and related artifacts.

Initially, the sequence included approximately four to six weeks for each topic of study. The delivery, in general, would conform to the following order: introduction of topic by teacher-research participant; participation in related/reinforcing activities and experiences; co-construction of interrelated writing and art products and presentations; collaborative creation of evaluation procedures; evaluation, debriefing and reflective writings in journals.

In reality, complications arose. A reassignment that added one more school to my job description, one student group’s success in a state competition that necessitated participation for one week at a national competition, schedule modifications created by a variety of school functions and assignments, and the normal interferences from sickness and personal business impacted both the organization of the study and the consistency of instructional delivery. Frequently, students would be working on the end of one project and the rumblings of new ones would begin. What had begun as a tightly formed organizational construct for the study became a reactive, curricular framework, a framework probably more accurately representing the dynamics and factors influencing education. The following timeline documents the actual sequence of the study and an overview of foci and their related instructional activities.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Instructional Focus and Related Instructional Activities</th>
<th>Data Collection Forms</th>
<th>Student Research Participants’ Roles/Data Sources</th>
<th>Teacher Research Participants’ Roles/Data Sources</th>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Introduction to home literacies: Small-Group Brainstorm on Ways People Communicate; Analyses and Comparisons of Home Literacies (artifacts and purposes) guided project</td>
<td>Interviews, journals, evaluations, class discussion notes, teacher-participant meeting notes, students’ written work, art pieces</td>
<td>Class-- home literacy discussion; reflective journal entries; initial interviews; baseline writing;</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—planning/discussion/analyses of products, journals, audiotaped interviews; informal discussions; rubrics; class observation notes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>School literacies: Team Scavenger Hunt of School Literacies, Observations from Classrooms; Whole-class discussions; “Elements of Design” Project (uniting art and language arts components)</td>
<td>Video, journals, evaluations, class discussion notes, teacher-participant meeting notes; students’ written work, interviews, language arts-art project</td>
<td>Scavenger Hunt—school genre entries; small-group elements of design projects, discussions and presentations; interviews</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—planning/discussion/analyses of products, journal entries, taped interviews; class observation notes; elements of design rubric; sharing of individual interactions with specific students</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Pop culture literacies: Analyses of Pop Culture Artifacts (class discussion), Stargirl (Spinelli) reading</td>
<td>Reflective journal entries; class discussion of popular culture genres and social isolation (Stargirl); exclusion poems</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—planning/discussion/ and analyses of products, class observation notes, journal entries, poem rubric</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Explicit genre/medium instruction Literacies Project (multi-genre focus), Incorporation of Home to Popular Culture Themes</td>
<td>Video, journals, teacher-participant meeting notes; students’ written work, interviews, art pieces, evaluations</td>
<td>Reflective journal entries; class and small-group discussions with related notes; taped interviews</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—discussion/planning for Hispanic Unit; discussion/analyses of multi-genre projects, rubrics, taped interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23- November</td>
<td>Hispanic Genres and Mediums: The Pearl (Steinbeck), Odes (Pablo Neruda), Papel Picados, Calacas, Excerpts from Seedfolk (P. Fleischman)</td>
<td>Video, journals, evaluations, teacher-participant meeting notes, students’ written work, art pieces</td>
<td>Nine-week Reflections paper; reflective journal entries; odes, poems and The Pearl essays; conferencing; art notes; discussions</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—discussion/planning/analyses of reflective journal entries, odes, poems and essays, classroom observation notes; related rubrics.</td>
</tr>
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Figure 3.2: Organizational Construct of the Study
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Genres and Mediums</th>
<th>Video, journals, teacher-participant meeting notes; students’ written work, interviews, art pieces</th>
<th>Reflective journal entries; class discussions; small group sand paintings; written texts—Songs to Selves, free-choice writing and related research; creation of Native American portraits, rubric co-construction; conferencing with teachers</th>
<th>Biweekly meetings—discussion/planning/conferencing of reflective journal entries, free-write genres, rubric construction, possible scaffolding and informal interviews.</th>
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<tr>
<td>November--December</td>
<td>Native American Genres and Mediums: Sand Paintings, Native American Portraits (Edward Curtis collection), Reference materials (students’ choice on relevant themes), Creation Tales, Song to Selves, Genre Choice, Free Write, Native American Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Asian Genres and Mediums: Sumi-e Painting, Character prints, Samurai Death Poetry, Harmony Poems, Asian Writing Folders, “Fortune Cookie/Photo” Short Stories, “The Inn of Lost Time” (L. Namoika), The Good Earth (P. Buck), “The Rules of the Game”—excerpt (A. Tan), Shogun—excerpt (J. Clavell)</td>
<td>Video, journals, evaluations, teacher-participant meeting notes, students’ written work, art pieces</td>
<td>Classroom discussions; peer conferencing and harmony poem exchange; death poetry; Asian narratives; related art products</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—discussion/planning/conferencing of reflective journal entries, classroom observation notes; member checks, rubric construction, possible scaffolding and informal interviews, videotaping, rubrics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February-March</td>
<td>African and African-American Genres and Mediums: Somali Students’ Presentation, Trickster Tales, Waiting for the Rain, Speeches (Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, The Glory Field—excerpt (Walter Dean Myers), African Drum Instruction</td>
<td>Video, journals, teacher-participant meeting notes; students’ written work, interviews, art pieces</td>
<td>Class Writing Survey; class discussions, response to literature writings</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—Planning/discussion/analyses of survey, writing products, class observation notes; reflection notes (during week-long absence of one teacher research participant); member checks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April-May</td>
<td>Independent Studies: Students’ Choices of Focus Cultures, Artifacts and their Related Attributes. Genres and Mediums to Reflect Cultures of Choice.</td>
<td>Video, journals, teacher-participant meeting notes; students’ written work, interviews, art pieces, evaluations, presentations.</td>
<td>Final Writing Survey; class discussions of unit’s foci, rubric construction, rough and final drafts</td>
<td>Biweekly meetings—discussions/planning/analyses of products; videotaping, exit interviews; member check, class observation notes, conferencing notes; survey analyses, rubric information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

In general, data analysis followed a constant comparison/grounded theory approach (see Strauss, 1987). Analyses of data forms focused on teacher research participants’ searching and researching student research participants’ (specifically, the four, case-study research participants’) written texts and creative art works, tapes, notes and transcripts for ways to characterize and categorize information—comparing data to predicted emergent themes related to the research’s questions and to identify additional, unanticipated emergent themes. A graphic representation of the teacher research participants’ data analysis process, focusing on Eric’s Exclusion Poem and relevant information from additional data sources, is constructed in Figure 3.3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Representative Text</th>
<th>Comments/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion Poem</td>
<td>Sitting, Staring, watching the cars, the businessmen, The city.</td>
<td>-Eric seems to be aware of positive and negative space in this poem. (understanding of effects of structure?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoping, Wishing, Wanting a part in it the bustle the activity</td>
<td>-Examples of repetition (two-word pairs, e.g., Sitting, Staring; and three-word combinations, e.g., a vagrant, an invalid, an insult). May be more learning than acquisition; situated very explicitly as beginning and end lines; repetition for effect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I dream, Of a business Of a contribution An asset to this society One of businessmen and executives</td>
<td>-Brief lines, almost choppy in rhythm, but rhythm is apparent; poetic device? -Beginning and end structures are similar. -Strong message—voice? -Empathy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>But in their eyes, What am I? a vagrant an invalid an insult</td>
<td>-More social message than imagery. -Captures idea of social exclusion—particularly in fourth and fifth stanzas [sense of social positioning]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People go about Caught up in their own world And I just sit there Watching Wishing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Journal</td>
<td>“Recently, I have been thinking about literary tools. Little things like where to put the period, or the comma. Not in a grammatical context, but for more effective communication. I found myself replacing several periods in my poem with commas because it put less emphasis on the following phrase. Likewise, I added another period so I could capitalize the next word and thus emphasize the phrase. I think that these are the subtleties that define good writing.</td>
<td>-Eric’s comments are structural not contextual. --Seems to understand what punctuation does to flow and emphasis (evidence of literacy learning—text’s structural effects). -No mention of context or content in journal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubric/Evaluation</td>
<td>On paper, “an insult” noted by Mrs. Oldfeld as “good”</td>
<td>Comment reinforces message, not structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Teacher</td>
<td>Eric commenting on self-concept, “I am someone. I am no one. Throughout our lives, we struggle to answer one question—“Who am I?” [emerging personal identity issue]</td>
<td>Supports message in poem. Voice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>Discuss relationship between poetic structure and poem’s message. Incorporate sensory imagery; extend idea of alliteration; continue punctuation ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Scaffolding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3: Data Analysis Process
From teacher research participants’ discussions and analyses of the case study participants’ written texts, journal entries, dialogic interviews, class discussions, conferences, and class observation notes, attention to themes and patterns related to student research participants’ literacy acquisition and learning became more definitive. Major themes and patterns form the basis of organization for sharing the results presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

Throughout this study’s duration, the research participants reflected on what it meant (in Toni Morrison’s terms) to “do language.” Specifically, in this chapter, the focus now turns to how the results from this research represent a measure of “doing language” during one academic year for these particular participants. In this section, results are shared first by presenting the situational contexts of this research’s literacy instruction, then by juxtaposing excerpts of the student research participants’ written texts, and finally by sharing research participants’ observations, analyses and responses to these experiences.

These results document more than the student research participants’ progress or proficiency in literacy learning and acquisition. These research results are not linear accounts of student research participants’ beginnings and endings; they are attempts to capture the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning. As such, these results also acknowledge the presence and effects of multi-factored and contextual issues particularly necessary to understand if the data is assumed to represent any degree of causal or correlational findings.
The data, predominately from the case-study student research participants’ written texts, creative artworks, classroom discussion/observation notes, surveys and reflective journals, serves as sources for analyzing emergent themes. Prominent emergent themes include 1) student research participants’ personal literacy acquisition and learning development; 2) teacher research participants’ analyses of scaffolding essential to support student research participants’ literacy learning; and 3) contextual factors affecting literacy learning and acquisition.

Crucial to contextualizing these analyses is the concept of entry points. It is from varying entry points that each student research participant has approached this class and its experiences, assignments and opportunities. It is from student research participants’ initial entry points that teacher research participants constructed what they believed would maximize student research participants’ efforts to communicate through written text.

Organization of these results is systematic. Descriptions and contexts of each assignment precede each section of the student research participants’ representative text excerpts and individual analyses of their works and reflections on processes related to their literacy acquisition and learning. Group analyses offer insights into collective and comparative reactions and development related to this research’s curricular approach. Analyses and evaluations by the teacher research participants focused, as well, on rubrics related to each assignment. Additional data related to analyses and evaluation surfaced during interviews and meetings and was also obtained from explicit and implicit statements recorded in student research participants’ reflective journals.
Student research participants’ written texts and responses remain completely unedited in the excerpt analyses as well as in the appendices. Misspellings, mechanical and grammatical errors, etc., reflect the student research participants’ authentic texts. In addition, when noted, full texts are offered in the appendix.

Description and Context of the Baseline Assignment

Frequently working with prompts to motivate students to create narratives, Mrs. Oldfeld began this study’s baseline lesson by presenting a page from Chris Van Allsburg’s The Mysteries of Harris Burdick (1984). The chosen illustration depicts a middle-aged man holding a chair above his head, ready to strike the large lump located under the carpet in his living room. Mrs. Oldfeld requested that students use the full period to compose a creative response to the prompt. Students understood that these pieces would represent baseline writings.

Approximately thirty-five minutes of the class period remained after the introduction to the assignment. Twenty-seven students (Namrata had not yet joined the class) sat at desks facing the front of the classroom. Outside the sun shone; inside the room, the sun’s heat was quite evident, as all students focused on creating their first formal piece of writing for this study. Attentive and diligent, doing language was continuing for them. For this research study, it marked a beginning.
### Student Research Participants’ Baseline Writings Excerpts

**[Unedited]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>With Love,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Eric  | My Dear Ellen,  
The weeks past and it happened again. This time it was  
under the rug in the study. I was up late, finishing the third chapter of my latest  
novel, there was a loud rustle and I turned around to discover a hump on the rug, a  
moved closer cautious, an it began to move. I grabbed the chair and went after it,  
but it just disappeared of the rug, but not before knocking over the lamp. I know  
how this must sound, Ellen, but you must believe me! I am not going mad. We  
must do something, there is more her than meets the eye.  
I wish you were here, Ellen, I get so lonely at times and perhaps you could see that  
it is not my mind playing tricks, that it is real. Please send my regards to Dr.  
Richards.                                                                                      | Christopher                                                                                   |
|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                               |
| Catalina | *Henry Glover was an old hermit of 58, whose wife had died some years ago and since then the towns people said he had gone nuts…*  
“Not again!” yelled Henry, as he walked into his living room.  
On the floor was a large lump near the lamp stand. Angered by the sight  
of the horrible lump, Henry grabed a chair and raised it above his head to smash  
the lump to pieces when a little voice cried out…  
“Don’t hit me! Please don’t hit me!” it pleaded.                                                            |                                                                                               |
| Namrata | Two small fingers paint the walls with a thick, sticky, syrup. The toddler scrubs  
her hands in a puddle of ketchup, and joyfully presses them to the honey-smear  
framing it in red…  
Does this sound familiar? It should, whether you remembered, witnessed,  
or heard of such an event. Maybe you, or the child who did this, got in trouble.  
But did they deserve it? Not really. Though playing “caveman” is not exactly  
acceptable, it is communication.                                                                 |                                                                                               |
| Christopher | Under the Rug  
Hank was a very lonely man, who just wanted to stay alone. He just wanted to  
be by himself so he could work on his novel in peace. Hank was a guy who at first  
sight you’d expect him to sit on his lawn and yell at the little kids who set foot on  
his property. No, Hank was more sophisticated; he worked on his book inside  
next to an open window.                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                               |

Figure 4.1: Student Research Participants’ Baseline Writing Excerpts
Baseline Writing Analyses

Eric

The first part of Eric’s response to the Van Allsburg illustration is composed of letters. Eric offers a conclusion after the letters that is more characteristic of a typical narrative ending, however.

Referring to this text in his journal, Eric offers that he “particularly liked [his] ideas for the Under the Rug story,” but he did not consider it his best piece of writing. In general, Mrs. Oldfeld and I concur. Although he received a full twenty points (see the related the rubric in Appendix E) and the comments “Great story. Your use of diary entries was very effective,” the work appears somewhat voiceless, with the voice for both characters sounding similar. The format differed from his classmates’ choices, making the piece comparatively creative. Also, the writing reveals some risk-taking in its format as well as its emotional tone (not usually characteristic of this student in the academic setting).

With regards to sentence structure and vocabulary, however, the text does not support Eric’s projected ability and achievement scores. Eric entered this class as the eighth grade’s male student with the highest ability and achievement scores on the previous standardized test. As a straight 4.0 grade-point student, his academic standing (as measured by previous teachers) also suggests that exemplary work should be expected. In general, errors in spelling and sentences (e.g., run-on sentences) occur, and
elaboration, plot and originality remain somewhat underdeveloped. In summary, the piece appears more correct than dynamic.

More entertaining at a cursory level than complex or challenging in its construction, this piece does not reflect evidence of a student engaging with a prompt at a level that inspires him to create more than a narrative that will yield an acceptable grade. Admittedly, none of the students had sufficient time to revise and edit these pieces. Consequently, some errors and lack of development may be due to time constraints and be more representative of carelessness than lack of knowing.

Catalina

Catalina’s response to the prompt is purely narrative. Distinctly different in tone and delivery from Eric’s, it paralleled the teachers’ expectations, in general; the work contains grammar and spelling errors, its plot development is rather simplistic, and its message is somewhat elementary.

At the biweekly teacher research participants’ meeting, an additional matter arose. The teachers’ concern rested with Catalina’s apparent love of writing (as noted in her reflective journal) combined with her lack of understanding of many common writing conventions. Surrounded by many significantly more proficient and creative writers in this class, Catalina’s concept of who she was as a writer could be challenged—and her love for writing could be discouraged in this context. Balancing her playful approach to using words to create stories and the demands of becoming more competent in writing’s mechanics and conventions appeared to be a key issue.

Apparent in her writing was playful engagement. This also surfaced in her journal responses. Writing appeared to be a form of entertainment for Catalina. It offered an
expressive outlet perhaps giving her some control in creating situations for her personal enjoyment. The teacher research participants also felt that Catalina’s story seemed to be written for her, no other extended audience.

Structuring additional instruction in mechanics and spelling and continuing to acknowledge Catalina’s creativity and positive attitude would serve as her approach to learning. At this time, plans to adapt rubrics to individualize instruction in some areas evolved.

Namrata

Entering the language arts collaborative class a few weeks into the school year, Namrata was not present for the original baseline writing. The first writing she composed in this class occurred a few days after the introduction of literacies, in general, and home literacies, in particular. The baseline excerpt reflects her first draft of an essay explaining how people communicate.

Unlike the baseline writing samples created by the other student research participants, Namrata’s written text reflects issues central to this study’s purpose. Still, the writing provides a sense of Namrata’s style, vocabulary, voice and conventional proficiencies. In general, the text reflects her playing with words, integrating rhetorical dialogue and using imagination to express her reflections in acceptable—but not perfect—ways. In general, Namrata’s writing reflects confidence, but, as the excerpt reveals, some “holes” exist—places where it is clear that Namrata has skipped some information that, if included, would provide her readers with a clearer understanding of her intent. For example, she refers to “playing ‘caveman’” in the second paragraph, yet she offers no direct reference to this activity in the first paragraph. Clearly, there is a
picture evoked by the imagery in the first paragraph that resembles a cave artist, but this picture may escape some readers. Therefore, it appears that Namrata may be considering her audience’s reference points as closely aligned with her own understandings—or, perhaps, she herself remains the audience for this piece.

Christopher

In the past, Christopher participated in writing enrichment opportunities at this school. During those times he frequently displayed an interest in the challenge of writing to prompts. This instructional format, therefore, was not a new experience for him.

“You did a great job of pulling the story together in two pages. The plot needs a little more conflict. 18/20.” So reads Mrs. Oldfeld’s evaluation of Christopher’s first writing. He responded by creating a new beginning. It reads:

He didn’t trust people, for they can’t be trusted. He disliked most other people, but only because of bad experiences from all the people he met.

Hank was alone in his house, jotting down ideas for his novel, and glaring at each person who passed by his window.

In this rewrite, Christopher’s voice becomes stronger, and, consequently, his narrative. Also, noticed in both excerpts is his basic understanding of tempo, incorporation of dialogue to move the plot, and a sense of story. In his journal, he revealed additional insight into the role writing plays in his life. He writes,

Writing affects my thinking in many ways. Sometimes the way I look at something has to do with what I have written or going to help me write.
What I love most about writing is causing tension, mystery, and surprise/suspense after building it up. I love writing when I choose what to write, but overall, I also love it because I think I accel at it.

Group Analysis of Baseline Writings

In general, none of these texts is exemplary; all demonstrate a degree of proficiency. All also present what may be considered “talking” writing, i.e., writing that incorporates the author’s voice directly through dialogue (evident in Eric’s, Catalina’s, and Christopher’s texts) and/or indirectly through the text’s narrative style (apparent in Namrata’s questioning at the end of her excerpt).

It may be more important to note, however, what is not present in these writings than to focus on the minor mechanical errors that are obviously evident. Not present are extensive and deliberate examples of figures of speech. For example, Christopher uses “pencil and paper,” which may be considered alliterative if it were not a common example of word pairing. Also, Namrata compares the toddler’s smearing ketchup to “playing caveman,” but does not develop the metaphor. An assumption may also be made that sentence length, rhythm, and type are more stream of consciousness than purposeful. In addition, parallel construction or sentence variation to build suspense, for example, may be more reflective of tacit than explicit understandings of literary tools.

In general, the teacher research participants realized that the students comprising this class represented significant potential. However, nothing in their baseline texts revealed extraordinary expression. Plans to develop instructional scaffolding (see Applebee & Langer, 1983) that reflected intentionality and purpose evolved. Primarily,
discussion about specific writing skills became the responsibility of Mrs. Oldfeld and me. However, Mrs. Powers countered with plans to develop a language arts-art lesson that would unite and reinforce aesthetic principles of design common to both subject areas: unity, rhythm, balance, contrast, emphasis, pattern, and movement. Dividing the class into groups of three, student research participants created definitions of the design principles and then applied them to both disciplines in oversized project books. This basic aesthetic scaffold, particularly interestingly because it evolved as a reaction to a sense of flatness in students’ written texts, served as a reference throughout the study, as students developed aesthetic approaches to their writing.

**Description and Context of the Home Literacies Unit**

To understand the impact of literacy acts and events (see Heath, 1983) practiced by families within their homes, the research participants set out to examine uses of literacy in their own home environments. Delpit (1998), acknowledging the importance of the language of home, offers,

> It is the language they [children] heard as their mothers nursed them and changed their diapers and played peek-a-boo with them. It is the language through which they first encountered love, nurturance, and joy. (p. 17)

Even though Delpit’s words specifically refer to Ebonics and African-American children, her assertion is generalizable. “Home” language, i.e., the literacy forms families use within their home, differ from each other—from family to family—and with
“outside” literacy forms. This theoretical stance framed the lesson and allowed the participants to validate their families’ modes of communication as unique and valuable.

Instruction on home literacies began with introducing students to basic information and findings from Heath’s *Ways with Words* (1983). Defined as how families communicate within their home environments and the values related to those forms of communication, home literacy became one of the foci for the month of September. Students received a “Sample Checklist,” developed by the teacher research participants, of some of the ways their families may communicate with each other and the world around them. The checklist included: lists, instructional notes, messages, monetary transactions, oral communication, music, newspapers, television, e-mail, body language, advertisements, visual communication, auditory communication, and maps. The checklist served as a “sacrificial draft,” i.e., a list that would/could be used as the basis for brainstorming diverse forms of communication. The observation and gathering of artifacts related to student research participants’ home literacies (with discretion and respect for privacy) served as this unit’s initial assignment.

Basically, the investigation into home literacies remained a relatively private event. Respecting students’ rights to share at their comfort levels, teachers asked for students to volunteer information. Surprisingly, notes surfaced as one of the primary forms of communication between parents and students. Very few students stretched their research to include non-standard or unconventional literacies although many included instant messaging, voice mail and e-mail. Results surfaced, however, in multi-genre representations of literacy usage at home, school and in neighborhoods) due at the end of October and evaluated by a rubric (see Appendix F) created by Mrs. Oldfeld.
# Student Research Participants’ Home Literacy Writing Excerpts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Interview (with Father)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Eric** | Q: What form of communication do you use most at home?  
A: We generally use verbal communication when everyone is present. Sometimes we leave short notes when convenient to do so.  
Q: Why do you use it?  
A: Verbal communication is the most efficient means of communication for normal interaction.  
Q: What form of communication do you consider most effective?  
A: For simple information exchange and direction, verbal communication works best, however, for imparting more important communication nothing beats a written note.  
Q: Why do you think so?  
A: Written notes give a permanent record of the communication and are not subject to poor memory habits. |

| **Catalina** | 7:30-- Major league baseball game six. (Florida marlins vs. the New York Yankees)  
Setting: living room in front of the TV  
**Jared:** Give it up, Catalina. You know the Yankees will win the World Series. So give it up. The Marlins stink. They won’t win.  
**Me:** Shoot! I don’t care what you say! The Marlins will win and I’m going to stick with them to the end, win or lose.  
**Dad:** It’s not possible for the Marlins to win. So just give it up.  
**Mom:** Will you two leave her alone, she might be rooting for the Marlins but that doesn’t mean that they will win! Hey, I root for the Yankees all the time even when you aren’t and you don’t make fun of me. |

Continued
| Namrata | “Yeah Mom?”
| “Did you finish all your homework?”
| “Uhhh…No.”
| “Are you watching TV?”
| “Er…Yes.”
| “Get upstairs RIGHT NOW and finish your homework!”
| “But Mom! It’s the back-to-back special! And it’s Friday!
| “I don’t care what episode it is OR what day it is. You are supposed to finish your homework before any TV. No upstairs. March.”
| “Yes, ma’am.” |

| Christopher | Mom’s note…
| Christopher, |
| Take dog out ✓ |
| Do piano ✓ |
| And HW ✓ |
| Clean room ✓ |
| _Mom |

I went ahead and did a few things and checked them off, knowing that maybe if I could get this all done, maybe that note would not be such a threat to me, after all, I get them everyday.
Eric

Eric’s interview represents his conversation with his father about their family’s communication patterns and communication, in general. Representative of Eric’s typical conversational tone at school (i.e., rather business-like and direct), the dialogue also seems characteristic of this son and father’s formal verbal interaction (i.e., analytical and rather scientific in nature) frequently observed in other educational experiences in the school’s gifted program. Interestingly, no unnecessary verbalizations or pauses were acknowledged, also customary of Eric’s straightforward approach to assignments and learning.

In addition to this interview’s documenting Eric’s concept of the form and purpose of interviewing as a genre, i.e., less dialogic than question and response, it also reveals the relationship between father and son. Positioned as the authority on the subject, Eric’s father provides definitive answers to his son’s inquiries. None of Eric’s follow-up questions challenges his father’s opinions; his father seems to stand as a source of information with responses being accepted in a matter-of-fact manner. In summary, Eric completed the assignment as instructed and may have benefited more from this assignment if he had been asked to react to the ideas and opinions his father shared with him on the concept of communication.

Catalina

Catalina’s home literacy sample presents a family conversation centered on a Marlins vs. Yankees World Series baseball game. It not only documents her family’s activity but
also the spirit of the verbal exchange. Representative of Catalina’s social pattern at school, the transcription reveals a spirited dialogue—complete with sibling teasing—while providing a glimpse of the family members’ relationships with each other. The text captures different participants’ voices, providing the text with the appearance of authenticity. Presenting the setting first, Catalina represents her family’s interaction by also structuring the conversation as an informal script. From this information, we may assume that she has some knowledge of this genre and its intent.

**Namrata**

Interestingly, Namrata’s writing sample is atypical of her writing responses, but seemingly typical of her home interactions. This writing sample is extremely brief, even somewhat underdeveloped, and provides very little detail (e.g., what television show she may have been watching). Namrata’s other class writings were replete with details; this assignment reflected a contrast. In addition, the format is merely back-to-back dialogue, without conversational tags to explain how the words were delivered and also without any other contextual details. It does, however, reveal the family’s social positioning, with the mother as the authority and Namrata as the respectful daughter.

**Christopher**

Supposedly representing a genre characteristic of Christopher’s home literacy, this sample provides minimal insight into how Christopher and his family interact. Obviously, he documents the importance of notes as a form of family communication, emphasizing their frequency in his comment “I get them everyday.” Also of interest is his
reference to the “threat” he associates with the note. Similar to the parental authority revealed in Eric’s and Namrata’s home literacy excerpts, Christopher’s writing captures his mother’s directives to him. His response, in a stream-of-consciousness style, may, however, indeed typify his specific intent—family verbal/textual interactions are power-driven.

Group Analysis of Home Literacy Writings

Expectedly, the four samples of home literacy provided by the student research participants document a variety of ways students communicated within their homes. Some of these forms of communication were formal. Others were more informal. All revealed the communicative dynamics within their homes. Even within their homes, literacies’ powers and purposes are clearly evident.

Acknowledging home literacies, however, remains integral to this study at several levels. First, recognizing these literacies as literacies of power (see Delpit, 1988; Dyson, 1993; Heath, 1983) in students’ literacy acquisition and learning (see Gee, 1989) assigns value to students’ initial literacy experiences. Second, focusing on home literacies provided additional knowledge and understanding of students’ entry points into their understandings (or lack of understandings) of academic literacies. For example, student research participants’ audiences in this literacy sphere are restricted and may share years of personal experiences with the student research participants. These shared experiences provide that audience with background information that, in some instances, can fill informational gaps that may confuse other audiences.
Of interest within the larger classroom context was the discussion about their respective home literacies. Christopher (and many others) shared their families’ dependence on short notes to each other, their frequent use of instant messaging and e-mail communication with their school friends, and a new appreciation for “the look”—frequently directed from parent to child. As a group, research participants also acknowledged a new appreciation for modes of communication we had previously disregarded, but now realized had potential, even communicating individuals’ moods—some students sharing, for example, the impact of songs associated with particular events. More than instruction, this experience provided a foundation sensitizing research participants to some literacies that could be accurately classified as unofficial, and others as official.

Description and Context of School Literacies Unit

To explore how research participants communicate within the school setting, student research participants engaged in a scavenger hunt. Beginning in the classroom setting, small groups (teacher-selected with three to four students per group) discussed genres and mediums of communication. For this study’s purpose, genre was defined as “a distinctive type or category of verbal or graphic composition characterized by a particular style, form or content,” e.g., oral presentation, essay, list, drawing, which represented a recurrent social interaction. Medium translated to “the material or technical means used for expression,” e.g., illuminated sign, television, paint, performance, etc.

Specific objectives included assessing students’ awareness of genres and mediums in the school setting, challenging students’ preconceptions of genres and mediums in the school, sensitizing students to both environmental and, seemingly, less
dominant literacies, and providing a foundation for discussion of the cultural dynamics framing literacies. The hunt was a beginning. Although the assignment would not be graded, students were expected to complete as much as possible before the next class period.

Before leaving the classroom, students discussed their approach to the scavenger hunt, centering on logistical issues. Some decided to divide the topics into equal segments and hunt independently. Others chose to stay together as a group, approaching each topic as a group, beginning with the first (or second) floor and continuing until the form was completed or class ended. Students had the remainder of the class period, approximately thirty-five minutes, to complete the search. Their results would serve as the basis of the next day’s class discussion, led by Mrs. Oldfeld.

**Student Research Participants’ School Literacy Writing Analyses**

**Eric**

In Eric’s group, Eric remained responsible for the first five topics on the literacy scavenger hunt. In general, his responses reveal some noteworthy observations. First, his responses to topics one through four reflect an authoritarian interpretation, i.e., that teachers distribute information through “lectures and notes,” writing on the board, etc., that the chalkboard and handouts are used to support this teacher information, that the American flag reflects respect for our country, and that the sticker codes on the books communicate an organizational format for disseminating information from school to “consumer.” In contrast, interestingly, he shares that students communicate most often with talking and facial expressions to “convey a feeling.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Eric’s Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the genre that is used most in your core classes. Describe how it is used in each class.</td>
<td>Verbal lectures and notes on handouts; [...] teacher writes on the board, gives out a handout, and talks about the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the medium is used most in your core classes. Describe how it is used in each class.</td>
<td>Chalk(board) and handouts; to support the information/lesson of the class and for reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Find an example of a literacy form that is larger than 3’ by 5’. State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description.</td>
<td>American flag; [...] represents a lot about the U.S.; [...] shows the school, staff’s and students’ patriotism; commons above the stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Find an example of a literacy form that is smaller than 2” by 2.” State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description.</td>
<td>Stickers on the books in the library. They say what genre the book is to help the “customer” choose a book. Small sticker with a picture and genre and color.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Specify the genre that is used most by students. Explain its purpose.</td>
<td>Talking to convey information/questions or notes to convey information, facial expressions (sometimes unintentionally) to convey a feeling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3: School Literacies—Eric

Catalina

Catalina’s responses are almost superficial, perhaps reflecting a disconnect with the purpose of this activity or an inability to notice more subtle communicative forms. Her observations span a narrow range—from school signs to traditional academic genres such as essays and oral presentations. Using few words, Catalina offers neither fluency nor elaboration, noting very little in her immediate academic environment that seems to impact literacy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Catalina’s Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the genre that is used most in your core classes. Describe how it is used in each class.</td>
<td>Essay, review questions. Used as assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Find an example of a literacy form that is larger than 3’ by 5’. State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description.</td>
<td>Marquee callboard—front door. Drama Club Call board. Meetings times, right of room 136.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Specify the genre that is used most by students. Explain its purpose.</td>
<td>Essay. To complete assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify the genre—within the school setting—that you think is least effective (most ignored) by students. Explain reasons why you believe this to be true.</td>
<td>[City name] banner above the lobby. Lunch expectations in the cafeteria. Students are too busy to notice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. List as many ways as possible that students use to communicate within the cafeteria. Divide into genres/mediums.</td>
<td>Yelling, fighting, food trading, in/outside sign, food line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. List as many ways as possible that students use to communicate within the classroom. Divide into genres/mediums.</td>
<td>Essays, oral presentations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4: School Literacies—Catalina

**Namrata**

At this time in the study, Namrata had been a student in this school for approximately one month. Although her responses are similar to Catalina’s (a member of her observation group), Namrata’s observations provide additional input. One insightful observation is her explanation for bulletin boards, display windows and student-made posters providing the most potential for impacting students: “Because they reflect students’ work.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Namrata’s Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Find an example of a literacy form that is larger than 3’ by 5’. State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description.</td>
<td>Drama Club callboard; immediately right of room 156; marquee callboard: lobby.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the genre-within the school setting—that you think is least effective (most ignored) by students. Explain reasons why you believe this to be true.</td>
<td>The <strong>[city name]</strong> Way banner above the lobby; lunchroom expectations signs in commons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify a genre—with the school setting—which you think has the most impact in conveying its message to students. Explain reasons why you believe this to be true.</td>
<td>Bulletin boards, display windows, student-made posters. Because they reflect students’ work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. List as many ways as possible that teachers/staff use to communicate within the office. Divide into genres/ mediums.</td>
<td>Office. Purple/yellow; pink slips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. List as many ways as possible that students use to communicate within the cafeteria. Divide into genres/ mediums.</td>
<td>U. Yelling, fighting, lunch trades Mouth/speech; fists/fighting; food/trades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.5: School Literacies—Namrata

Christopher

Christopher’s responses to the school literacy survey document traditional educational practices situating educators as authorities and students as consumers of knowledge. Citing oral presentations by teachers as the most often used genre in math, social studies, language arts and science classes, Christopher adds the importance of chalkboard notes as a supporting communicative conveyance. Noting the school’s attempt at influencing values, he also describes a physically imposing sign stating the
word for this month’s character development lessons. Also, he records that talking is the most common form of communication in the cafeteria acknowledging “it gets the point across.” His responses document nothing beyond relatively expected observations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Christopher’s Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the genre that is used most in your core classes. Describe how it is used in each class.</td>
<td>Oral presentations—our teachers talk a lot and explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the medium that is used most in your core classes. Describe how it is used in each class.</td>
<td>Chalk on chalkboard—all classes put notes, information, and assignments on it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Find an example of a literacy form that is larger than 3’ by 5’. State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description</td>
<td>Tolerance poster/words of the month. Message/purpose=express/influence (colorful in commons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Find an example of a literacy form that is smaller than 2” by 2”. State its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description.</td>
<td>Certain room numbers above doors. It tells the room #’s and is black and gray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Specify the genre that is used most by students. Explain its purpose.</td>
<td>Talking It is the most common form of communication and it gets the point across.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Name the genre that is most important for conveying messages to visitors to our school. Identify an example, its location, its message, its purpose and its physical description. Explain why you think it is most important.</td>
<td>Office—Framed message board. “All visitors must report to the office.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6: School Literacies—Christopher

Group Analysis of School Literacy Writings

As the student research participants’ responses document, variance among observations of academic literacy forms is minimal. Eric’s review reveals sensitivity to modes of communication that the other student research participants fail to acknowledge,
however. Beyond the basic concrete representations commonly associated with communication (e.g., writing, talking, graphics), Eric’s responses even include abstract symbols. Surprisingly omitted from all student research participants’ responses were notes from one student to another, messages from/on students’ clothing, and public address announcements—common communicative practices at this school.

Similar to the results from the home literacy unit, student research participants had opportunities to categorize effects and assign importance to varying literacy artifacts. What did surface was the dichotomy between the school’s messages and the students’ communication, noted particularly in Namrata’s response regarding the importance of the students’ showcase. Even though the lesson’s intent was to sensitize students to environmental print/icons, the results seemed to impact the teacher research participants more than the student research participants. In summary, the teachers realized the extent of the students’ inattention to what teachers perceived as explicit communicative practice.

Description and Context of the Popular Culture Unit

Shifting perspective once more, the language arts collaborative class returned to the media center for another whole-group discussion analyzing literacies of power in popular culture. First, we discussed the study’s ever-widening circles of literacy: we began with personal, home communication; then we expanded our focus to include school literacies; and next we entered a more secular literacy sphere—the sphere representing popular culture.

Seated in a circle of chairs, students focused on the images projected from the ELMO. Larger than actual size, images of two men—models promoting the sale of fall
jackets from a popular, local chain store—filled the view. One man was white, the other 
African-American. One posed in the forefront, occupying most of the advertisement’s 
space. He modeled a leather jacket. The other appeared much smaller, to the side, and 
wore a vinyl jacket. The former was a white man; the latter was African American. I 
asked the students what they saw. Their replies were quite literal: newspaper ad, men 
modeling jackets, the name of the store, the men looked happy, etc. I asked them if they 
noticed anything unusual about the men, their positions, what they were wearing. I 
waited—and waited. Eventually, one student stated the obvious: the graphic positioning 
of the African-American model as seemingly less significant than the white model. We 
shared other examples; repeatedly, the same circumstances—and potential underlying 
message—appeared.

From popular print media, we turned to television. Sharing a student essay 
critiquing a popular sitcom for its apparent sexism related to portrayals of adolescent 
girls, we discussed reactions to the paper. Ironically, many of the female students saw 
nothing wrong with the sitcom’s position. They agreed that the attractive, blonde 
adolescent girl appeared unintelligent, dishonest, unmotivated (except in efforts to 
impress boys), and provocatively attired. Their response, in general, was that it was only 
a television show. It was funny; that’s all. It was entertaining and not to be considered as 
representative of real life. Some, however, agreed with the essay’s author. The message 
from TV, they said, was that this was the role adolescent girls were to accept.

In addition to analyzing advertisements and television sitcoms, students also read 
Stargirl (Spinelli, 2000). Focusing on the theme of exclusion, students reacted to
Stargirl—capturing their feelings and thoughts in exclusion poems. Questions centered around the whys of exclusion, as social context became more visible.

The discussion served to introduce *Stargirl* (Spinelli, 2000), the first young adult literature book required of this class this year. At first, Mrs. Oldfeld (in a teacher research participants’ planning meeting) questioned if the boys should read it. Even though the narrator in *Stargirl* is male, her concern focused on the boys carrying around a book whose title seemed feminine. Our decision was that the book was to be used to examine popular culture and its effects in the school on acceptance and alienation. All should read it. The related assignment, created within regular language arts instruction time, was an exclusion poem. Excerpts follow in Figure 4.7.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric’s Excerpt</td>
<td>I dream, of a business of a contribution an asset to this society one of businessmen and executives But in their eyes, What am I? a vagrant an invalid an insult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina’s Excerpt</td>
<td>What it used to be Here now no horses graze, no children race the wind No trees sing, no more does the river sparkle. The air is silent, no birds fly over a sapphire sky. What it was. What it used to be Home to men and women, young and old A haven to children to laugh and play. A place where humans and animals were one is no more. What it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata’s Excerpt</td>
<td>And I look upon death, not as fear But a blessing. When I lay for eternity, Perhaps someone shall remember me. Maybe they will come to cry, Or glance my way like the passerby. I don’t know; I don’t care. They don’t care I’m a dead leaf On the ground; just there For them to trod upon, and forget In the fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher’s Excerpt</td>
<td>Sitting there, nibbling, emotionally hurt, I’m almost done eating, Soon I’ll be in class where other people are Will almost consider my existence, Bit it’s only a little better than this. In an emotionally harmed manner, I weep away to my locker, With no one on my mind, For no one in the world, Has their mind on me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.7: Student Research Participants’ Exclusion Poem Excerpts
Eric

Eric’s exclusion poem speaks of a powerless man who wishes to be part of the business world. Eric’s words capture a man’s unquestioning acceptance of his exclusion from a position of power—an almost paralyzed perspective preventing him from becoming successful. No reason for exclusion is given, only a definition of painful exclusion. However, Eric does use his poem to offer social commentary while, seemingly, assuming an empathetic stance regarding the poem’s subject.

Up to this time in the study, Eric had demonstrated no remarkable growth in writing skills or products. Words remain controlled and somewhat limited. Vocabulary appears normal for this class, yet rhythm and ideas provide some impact—as does his seemingly tacit awareness of positive and negative space. Eric questioned, in his journal writing, that he might have too many one-word lines. He makes no comments regarding the structure of the poem. Mrs. Oldfeld makes minimal comments, preferring to keep the writing experience open, exploratory and experimental—more non-threatening than critical. Her only comment on the paper was “good,” referring to Eric’s choice of “an insult” to describe the subject’s self-concept.

Catalina

In a nine-week reflection paper, Catalina stated,

I think the exclusion poem best shows my ability to communicate. This is because it really got me into my writing, got me feeling my subject. When I choose my topic for the poem, I was excited to share how I felt about the
subject through the Indian in the poem. I also thinks this is a good poem to see my ability because I really enjoyed this assignment.

Catalina’s comments capture her feelings about this writing. She notes her connection with “my subject,” her excitement in sharing her feelings “through the Indian,” and her enjoyment in this assignment. The resulting piece captures this emotional engagement. Her voice is strong-- clearly palpable in the poem.

In this work, Catalina commits to using a specific form (specifically, similarly structured stanzas), including repetition of phrases for effect, and incorporating sensory images to tell the story. The poem begins with “emerald trees” singing “with the wind,” and concludes with “No trees sing, no more does the river sparkle” and additional contrasting phrases. It is clearly her best piece of writing so far this year and provides textual and reflective evidence documenting new understandings in her writing.

Namrata

Namrata’s writings combine playfulness with courage. Seemingly based in a strong sense of self, she plays with words—their tones, sounds, and order—and creates unusual combinations. In “Lamentations of an Old Man,” Namrata, through the man’s voice, presents mental meanderings of a man as he approaches his death. Not a “tight” writing, she compares his life to a fallen leaf, a forgotten leaf, and one that will eventually be “trod upon.” The tone captures his loneliness. Some phrases are unusual (e.g., “I take in the scent of the spring-old greenery gone rusty”) and, therefore, questioned by Mrs. Oldfeld. But Namrata holds to her words, not changing any. No stanzas contain the same number of lines; all consist of short phrases that move the ideas
quickly—somewhat like spurts of ideas. Inverted word orders like “Stooped over am I,” and metaphors like “I’m a cloud, wispy and cold, there but not there” add to her creative approach. She is a refreshing writer, one willing to stretch beyond safe.

Christopher

Christopher’s poem is particularly poignant. Closer to a personal representation of exclusion than the other student research participants’ poems, he presents one student—alone in the corner of a school cafeteria. He begins with “All alone, in my own corner, The seats surround me empty,” and ends with the stanza noted in Figure 4.7. The artful twist of words “With no one on my mind, For no one in the world, Has their mind on me” presents evidence of Christopher’s ability to create expressive phrases and to capture emotion in text. This piece represents his strongest voice so far this school year.

Group Analysis of Exclusion Poems

Up to this point, student research participants’ responses to writing assignments remained relatively safe. These four poems capture the first signs of student research participants’ strong emotional connection to their work. Voice, consequently, appears stronger; message is more purposeful, and originality and elaboration more pronounced. No work appeared underdeveloped; messages seemed complete—with examples supporting the themes of exclusion in multiple ways. Free to approach their writings using any poetic form, they exhibit an understanding of how poetic structures serve to guide their words in expressing this unit’s theme: social exclusion. Seemingly, their connection to the topic grounds their writing; they clearly had something to say.
Using a rubric (See Appendix O) for the basis of these evaluations, the teacher research participants evaluated the poetry for voice, form, originality, mechanics/grammar/spelling, message related to exclusion, and idiosyncratic patterns.

Description and Context of the Multi-Genre Literacy Project

Also introduced at this time was a multi-genre project on literacy. Beginning with an essay on communication, students also included entries representative of home literacies, school literacies and a literary work conveying a description of someone or something unique to their neighborhoods. Mrs. Oldfeld, the creator of this project, required students to compose eight, theme-related pieces that represented at least five different genres. Students had approximately two weeks to complete the assignment.

Basing this instruction on concepts addressed in Blending Genre, Altering Style (Romano, 2000), Mrs. Oldfeld distributed a printed text explaining the project’s specific requirements: cover, neighborhood map, opening literacy essay, interview, character sketch poem, connectors, and ending. Additional text structures were to be student-selected.

Intentional scaffolding existed in many forms. First, shared readings from Romano’s text provided examples of how various text structures supported specific purposes. Discussion, following classroom question-and-answer interchanges, encouraged more explicit understandings, furthering literacy learning. In addition, brainstorming of possible genre practices and text structures provided students with a resource to prompt flexibility of expression. Examples of text models could also be found throughout many locations in Mrs. Oldfeld’s’ classroom. One more scaffold was
added: after a teacher research participants’ meeting, a decision was made to provide more scaffolding by designing (in collaboration with student research participants) evaluation rubrics (See Appendix P).

The multi-genre literacy project’s presence in this study provided research participants an opportunity to focus on research participants’ understandings of literacy (as communication, in general) at this particular point in the study. In the classroom, discussions on genre forms and their related purposes offered clarification and direction. Journal responses and dialogic interviews provided reflection and opportunity to express (and reaffirm) how genre switching also impacts both thinking and expression. Continuing with practices related to previous student research participants’ writings, the following excerpts remain unedited; complete texts (included in related Appendices, as noted) also stand as authentic student transcripts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>In a particular Calvin and Hobbes comic strip, Calvin’s father comes home to find a number of choking snowmen by the front door. He says, “Eggplant casserole tonight?” Calvin’s mother replies, “Why, yes.” In this strip, Calvin used his snowmen to communicate. The snowmen’s positions and facial expressions showed Calvin’s feelings toward eggplant casserole. Like Calvin, we all communicate in a wide variety of ways, some of them are strange, subtle, or very obvious, and sometimes without even realizing it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina</td>
<td>What would happen if there were no communication on earth? Life would cease to exist, as we know it today because all living things communicate. People have been communicating since the beginning of time. So, sometimes people take communication for granted; however, without even knowing it, people use many forms of communication everyday. For example, we communicate through our clothing, our type of music, our speech, what we write, even by prayer, and the list could go on and on!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata</td>
<td>When I was about nine years old, my stories stopped being ‘So-and-so did this and that. The End’ and became more involved, as with the books I now read. I especially liked to write historical fiction, because I liked the fixed rules for everything in the time gone past. I also expressed myself through embroidery and other hands-on crafts. I had a column published in an online newspaper during this time. […] My main communication is through speech, but it is mostly used with people I know, or what teachers when I am answering questions. Yet, silently, my voice, my stories, and my crafts still scream the same words, resounding off the walls unseen: ‘I am a communicator!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>The effect communication has had on me is extremely great. I would have never been able to get my point across or understand others. The whole world would be a mess if we didn’t communicate. Overall, analyzing my methods, I am effective in the area of communication. This includes vocal, writing, e-mail, gestures, and almost all other kinds. My forms of communication vary, but there are still hundreds of ways I have yet to find.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8: Student Research Participants’ Communication Essay Excerpts

120
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Eric       | Mystery Man  
His house is on the corner  
I see it all the time  
You’d think I’d catch a glimpse  
Of whoever lives inside.  
There’s no one in the yard  
The car is always parked  
There’s trees around the windows  
So you cannot peer inside.  
The garden’s neatly kept  
The leaves are always raked  
The driveway’s cleanly shoveled  
By the no one that lives there |
| Catalina   | Different  
McClain an unordinary teenager  
Whose favorite mode of communication is  
Acting…bizarre  
Strange  
So this is what we have lived with for 7 years.  
A crazy teenager who’s anything but normal  
Doing things no one would normally do  
Unordinary |
| Namrata    | Jungle Man  
Menacing aloes reach from his home,  
Birds of Paradise from green underbrush roam.  
Curling pines, old and twisted,  
Reflect off of old windows, webbed and misted.  
Broken stone for a front walk,  
Stone the color of powd’ry chalk.  
Home half-hidden from sight,  
Peeled pain and shattered glass give you a fright. |
| Christopher| This terrible child is the kind,  
That would take advantage of another,  
This terrible child is the kind,  
That I would like to smother.  
[…]  
The sun sets on the horizon,  
The kid finally had to go,  
But still the horrid facts come to mind,  
He will return here, same time, tomorrow. |

Figure 4.9: Student Research Participants’ Multi-Genre Project Poems—Excerpts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>In our daily lives at home, at school, and in the community, we use a variety of modes of communication. In our homes we see commercials, we read magazines, we talk and sometimes leave notes. In the community we send out letters, we red and write newspaper articles to spread information around. [...] Each venue almost has a different division of culture that requires us to use different forms of communication to convey our ideas best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina</td>
<td>So what did I learn from this whole project you ask? Well, you should have learned that without communication we wouldn’t be here. [...] Imagine not being able to tell others what you feel, just having those feelings locked up inside of you, building up wanting to escape but not being able to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata</td>
<td>We communicate through: Notes (visibly), Speech (verbally) Advertisements (visibly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>The ways we communicate are still being found out. Technology will grow, and with it, so will communication methods. [...] The end is coming, The end is approaching, The end of this book is near. The end is itching, Closer and closer, The end of this book is here. The End (is here)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.10—Student Research Participants’ Conclusions
Student Research Participants’ Multi-Genre Project Writing Analyses

Eric

Eric’s multi-genre literacy project presents his work in a professional portfolio. Original, computer-generated graphics (both aesthetically and substantively) complement written texts. Switching from one genre to another, he demonstrates mastery of all—first, by his thorough literacy essay; then an interview with his father about communication; followed by a written television commercial (complete with fine print), a flyer for a school orchestra concert, an example of morning announcements, his mystery man poem, a garage sale advertisement, and his conclusion. Tone, vocabulary, form and content appropriately change with each new genre. Most impressively, texts and graphics reflect depth of thought, creativity and insight into the topic—communication in our lives.

Catalina

Catalina’s literacy project is somewhat static in approach. Voice throughout all pieces—from essay to journal writing-- is the same. Rather than adapting vocabulary or establishing formal or informal tone, Catalina’s various entries differ only in form. Expressions like “band is cool” and use of first person frequent all writings. Her conceptualization of literacy appears centered around her; its global applications apparently remain overlooked. Evidence explicitly supporting this conclusion exists in her final essay paragraph. She states, “Now let me summarize the effect communication has had on me.” That theme maintains throughout this literacy project. Essentially, at this point of this research, Catalina’s approach is more egocentric than global, more limited than extensive.
Namrata

More spirited than formal academic in this project, Namrata continues her writings in the same playful mode that characterizes her previous assignments. Her introductory essay, written in first person, describes her conceptualizations of the importance of her life and others’ lives. The remainder of the project focuses more on vignettes, dialogues, and unifying question-and-answer sections that add humor (e.g., “What is the best way to get rid of telemarketers?”) and dimensionality. The project offers “chatter” about communication, but no in-depth analyses or serious elaborations.

Christopher

Incorporating more humor than serious considerations, Christopher’s multi-genre project cites e-mail, Internet postings and messages and phone conversations as his dominant modes of communication outside of school. One section, entitled “Ignoring Notes Notes Notes Notes Notes…with False Dialogue, Untruthful Words, Lying…” presents some intriguing considerations featuring the consequences of ignoring communication from parents and teachers. Humor also extends into the school section where he concludes with “I will now show you my report on this being done. It is over now….”

Group Analysis of Multi-Genre Project Writings

Initial analyses of student research participants’ multi-genre projects resulted from teacher research participants’ discussions of data from the related rubrics. Rubrics, completed by Mrs. Oldfeld, measured “effort, creativity, attention to detail” and the
aesthetics of presentations (see Appendix CC). Translating these categories into more explicit understandings of product objectives, Mrs. Oldfeld offered that effort involved sufficient and effective text elaboration, creativity represented flexibility of perspectives and genre choices, and attention to detail and the aesthetics of presentation surfaced in both awareness of specific genre text structures and the incorporation of the principles of design in both text and graphic work. Additional analyses, through further discussion, involved examining the multi-genre project for student research participants’ idiosyncratic patterns and approaches as well as acknowledging student research participants’ input from dialogic interviews and their reflective journals.

Basically, the multi-genre projects’ value to this research offered more insight into student research participants’ conceptualizations of literacies and their uses than it featured students’ development or progress in creating exemplary pieces of writing. With the exception of Eric’s essay, which offered a concise, well organized report on the importance of communication, few other entries document significant improvement of writing, originality of thought or in-depth elaboration. Conventionally, however, the writing demonstrates proficiency and, in general, maintains a generically acceptable academic voice.

Description and Context of the Hispanic Literacies Unit

The end of the nine weeks marked the beginning of the explorations of global literacies and cultures. To provide some insights into Hispanic cultures, the teacher research participants and a teacher volunteer (and parent of one of the students in the
language arts collaborative class) combined efforts to create a variety of experiences. Using a double block of class periods, research participants returned to the media center for our initial collaborative activity and presentation.

To begin, we read from *Seedfolks* (Fleischman, 1997): only two sections, however, “Gonzalo” and “Maricela.” Instead of explicit instruction about the diversity obscured in the term “Hispanic,” Fleischman revealed certain subtleties. Two major questions framed our discussion of the text: 1) What cultural markers do you find in these sections? 2) How do you know that Fleischman’s writing is accurate and authentic? Once again, the foci were more on what the students found and the encouragement of critical, analytical thinking.

Secondly, a teacher volunteer and parent of one of the student research participants, Mrs. Sanders, presented “Los Dias de Los Muertos”—a Power Point explaining The Days of the Dead holiday, contrasting it with Halloween, and sharing some cultural beliefs and customs related to this celebration. To validate this experience, we invited two of our school’s ESL Mexican students. Not only did they share their personal anecdotes about these celebrations in their homes, they also spoke of the differences between their education here and their education in Mexico.

Two activities evolved from the “Los Dias de Los Muertos” instruction. First, students in the language arts collaborative class would be creating their own calacas, complete with skeletal figures of students’ family members engaged in memorable activities. Second, students in the class presented thank you notes and books (written in Spanish) to the Mexican ESL students. From observation, the reactions reflected appreciation and acceptance.
Entry points further extending understandings into these cultures and their forms of communication continued in the next two sessions. To Pablo Neruda and Odes to Common Things, we turned. In an attempt to increase awareness of Neruda’s interpretation of odes, however, we first analyzed odes by Keats, Pindar, and Weibye. In groups, students read and discussed the odes, attempting to discern what makes an ode an ode. After approximately fifteen minutes of reading and discussion, they shared their thoughts. Some said that an ode contained a specific amount of stanzas. Others said that an ode was written so only a few could understand it. All confirmed that an ode was written to honor someone or something. One student said that odes were formal writing. Another said that they were humorous. No students noted odes’ structural shape.

Adding Neruda’s odes to the collection, our perceptions expanded. Fortunately, a staff member, one knowledgeable and fluent in Spanish, offered to read Neruda’s odes in Spanish. We arranged for these readings in tandem with students’ readings of the English translations. The focus for the reading in Spanish was to listen for the sounds of the poem, attend to its auditory lyrical quality. After the English reading, the staff member informed the class of the differences between the Spanish and the English translation. What meanings—however subtle—changed in translation? In what ways? Immediately after this presentation, students became creators of personal odes. With pens in hand, they filled the remaining twenty minutes and emerged with not only evidence of a basic understanding of odes’ purposes, but also some rather inventive evidence of a basic understanding of odes’ purposes, but also some rather inventive and intriguing texts. The student research participants’ odes excerpts follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ode Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Eric         | In a sea of gold  
It rises from the dark  
With its golden rays  
Of gentle warmth and light.  
It warms our hearts  
And sends sunshine into  
Every corner of our lives.  
[not completed] |
| Catalina     | Ode to Horses  
I have a love of horses,  
Their soft ears,  
Warm eyes that Make you melt.  
The feeling of freedom  
As they race the Eagle across the Open plain.  
Their hearts beat as one,  
As they…. [not completed] |
| Namrata      | [See Appendix DD for complete text.]  
Pages filled with boundless wealth; of shops and swords of knights and legends.  
Of Kings and queens, princesses and dragons, Of detectives and villains and more. |
| Christopher  | Maps  
Directional, informing papers  
Helping me on my busy way  
[...]  
Some states  
Canals  
Roads  
Boarders  
Houses…. |

Figure 4.11: Student Research Participants’ Ode Excerpts
Student Research Participants’ Ode Analyses

Eric

Eric did not complete his ode. During the time allowed in the class for the completion of this task, I observed him sitting quietly, writing nothing. He had told me numerous times that he has difficulty creating written text under pressure. One discussion on this topic included Eric’s mother, Eric and me. She cited this problem as one of her academic concerns for her son, particularly as his inability to generate text on command may impact his test taking (e.g., ACT, SAT, etc.) in upcoming years. The strategy that evolved from this discussion was that Eric would concentrate on creating ways to “jumpstart” his writing (e.g., create a log of beginnings that used analogies, included dialogue, featured short and explicit statements, etc.). We also had faith in the fact that the amount of texts he would be generating this year in this study would serve as a firm foundation for creating multiple approaches to beginning writings as well as minimizing his tendencies toward perfectionism, another possible impediment to text generation.

Catalina

Once again, time to process and create may have been an adversary in this experience; however, lack of time may have merely minimized the effect of time—resulting in another perspective of this student research participant’s writing development. The absence of adequate time to reflect and reconsider does preserve a snapshot of her initial approach to recording text. As such, we may perhaps gain insight into knowledge available at a highly conscious level: images and words readily accessible
for expression. If that assumption contains credibility, then her resulting ode reveals several interesting tendencies. First, Catalina’s “Ode to Horses” returns to one of her favorite topics, a common default for her quick writing. Next, Catalina begins with “I,” once more establishing her writing’s egocentric positioning. Third, she, to some degree, resorts to strong visual images to express feeling (e.g., the horses racing the eagle across the plain). Finally, although she does not structure coordinating stanzas containing parallel phrases, she does break stanzas into separate units of thought.

Namrata

In her nine-week reflection paper, Namrata wrote the following:

During these first nine weeks we have written several pieces of writing.

I think that the ode most closely reflects my ability to communicate through writing, because it was just jammed full of emphasis, and I really like writing that really emphasizes your feelings. It was as if my flow of feelings had been blocked for a long time, and then suddenly opened, creating a surge of strong feeling.

Not only is Namrata’s “Ode to Books” “jammed full of emphasis,” it also incorporates the tone of many of the odes shared in this class’s instruction. For example, she states, “Oh! Sweet bliss to have one thousand books lined up on the shelves”—wording not commonly expressed by middle schoolers. Hyperbolic and dramatic, she also relates how stories are “warmed with my warmth, my heart.” Weakened in one section that features books’ descriptions in a list format, the ode, nevertheless, documents
this student’s depth; she created the entire ode—all fifty-one lines—with the same time constraints as all of the other student research participants.

Christopher

In his “Ode to Maps,” Christopher begins with an explanation of maps’ functions, in general. The ode follows a “me-my” theme, relating maps’ importance to Christopher, not others. For example, “helping me,” “helping my path be revealed,” “opens my passages,” and “leads me away” are within four, contiguous lines. Immediately after this opening, Christopher then resorts to merely listing fourteen attributes frequently found on maps. The pattern then reverts to four lines of phrases—once again referring to “me.” Although the poem asserts the importance of maps to this writer, it does not honor maps. From this writing, therefore, the teacher research participants remarked that Christopher may have somewhat missed this genre’s intent or, at least, failed to apply the intent to his own writing. More explicit instruction may be needed to clarify the assignment and its expectations.

Group Analysis of Odes

This direct instruction on odes and its related writing exercise yielded significant information. Texts ranged from incomplete to completely successful (as defined by student and teacher research participants) at multiple levels. What students extracted from the discussion and examples, what they applied to their writing, and how they felt about what they wrote demonstrated extreme variation. Two seemed somewhat paralyzed, one defaulted to listing, and the fourth created what she felt was a cathartic written expression.
Notably, however, all constructed odes in a long, linear structure, nothing explicitly discussed in the instruction sessions. In addition, odes seemed to parallel list-making, as several students incorporated lists of attributes in their odes. Arguably, these approaches may offer some insights into student research participants’ acquired understandings of the structure of odes.

Although the odes did not receive formal evaluation through a rubric or grade, the odes continued as foundations for discussion in the teacher research participants’ regular meeting. What was not apparent was the effect of the auditory component of the lesson—whether or not, listening to Neruda’s odes in Spanish would consciously add to students’ appreciation of the auditory aesthetics of words and word combinations. What was apparent was what emerged as understandings about odes and how those understandings did or did not transfer to student research participants’ constructions of their odes within this time constraint. All results served to re-emphasize the variability of dynamics involved in writing instruction and activity—even in a relatively homogeneous sampling.

**Description and Context of The Pearl Poems**

From poetry to prose, we then returned to *The Pearl* (Steinbeck). Its inclusion as a significant resource in this section of the study resided more in the novel’s setting, its acceptance as a quality literary work, and its relationship to a correlated art project—papel picados, than as an example of an Hispanic genre form.

After completion of the novel, students returned to poetry. Using *The Pearl* as inspiration and reference, students created their own poems that represented one segment
of the novel’s story. Choices of topics included the following: a scorpion stings Coyotito; Juana, Kino and the villagers take the baby to the doctor; Kino and Juana find the pearl of the world; The priest and the doctor visit Kino once they learn of his good fortune; Someone tries to steal the pearl during the night, and Kino attacks him; Kino goes to the pearl buyers and is cheated; Juana tried to throw the pearl back, and Kino beats her; Kino kills his attacker; Someone burns Kino’s house, and he hides at his brother’s house; Juana and Kino set out for the capital and are followed by trackers; Kino attacks the trackers and Coyotito is killed; Juana and Kino return to their village and throw the pearl back into the sea.

Also significant is the shift in instruction from basically an immersion into writing, literature and art experiences to a focus on more purposeful revision. Additional structure for revision evolved from students’ brainstorming of attributes of poetic writing. From this discussion, students created lists of potential ways of revising their original drafts. These lists included: change form or structure, word choice, restructure for emphasis, repetition, metaphors, similes, onomatopoeia, personification, alliteration, allusions, hyperbole, line breaks, rhyme, rhythm, sensory imagery and assonance. At this time, Mrs. Oldfeld and I rotated from table to table, meeting with students individually to discuss potential ways to revise their poems. Final revisions became the students’ responsibility; however, students had opportunity to meet with Mrs. Oldfeld and me during class-rotation times.

After completion of the poems, students then returned to the art class. Using their poems as inspiration and reference, students captured their poems’ stories in graphic
forms as papel picados. Examples of papel picados decorated the room. Led by Mrs. Powers, discussion of technique and aesthetic elements ensued, offering structure without limiting expression.

Evaluation of these integrated projects reflected the degree of success students had in their representing the scenes in two modes of expression, written and graphic.

Evaluation of written texts (See Appendix FF) featured the following elements: effectiveness of the poem’s structure, poem’s message and its relationship to the excerpt from *The Pearl*, use of figures of speech, application of principles of design, appropriate use of writing conventions, and the poem’s expressive quality.

Analyses reflect Mrs. Oldfeld’s evaluations based on the rubric, teacher research participants’ discussions, and dialogic interviews held with the student research participants. Student research participants’ excerpts, in the Figure 4.12, and complete works in the noted Appendices remain unedited.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eric</th>
<th><strong>The Finding of the Pearl</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kino dove into the cool, clear water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From the boat, I watched him search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He searched for a pearl. A pearl for Coyotito.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I watched him, wishing, hoping, praising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>that he would find it. The pearl would save our son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Like a fish, he swam about, plucking and snatching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He took the largest oysters from their anchors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Then I saw it. He saw it. It was hope, a fleeting glint from the shadows. It was the Pearl that Might Be.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalina</th>
<th><strong>Fate</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The sun stood brightly in the sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Its bathing light fell over Kino’s house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The peace of the morning left a calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over everything it touched.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As quickly as the peace came it was gone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kino slowly turned his eyes towards where the Light rays directed him…Coyotito’s crib. As Kino looked an evil thing crawled down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Namrata</th>
<th><strong>Angel’s Breath</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lips sealed tightly, Kino dove to gather oysters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From the icy sea beds of sand, hoping to find nature’s accidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To pay the doctor so he could care for his son, cure his son, From the vicious thrust of a scorpion’s sting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whilst Juana cared for her ill, ill boy, on the surface, in an heirloom canoe, Kino parted glittering diamonds of water, Eagle-like eyes peering through the seaweed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kino hooked one chafed and calloused foot into a water-silkened rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tied to a rock, to anchor him to the fathomless depths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scraping at stone, loading a basket with oysters, Kino worked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Throat aching, head exploding, heart hammering, eyes burning with the salt, he went on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12: Student Research Participants The Pearl Poems—Excerpts and Papel Picados
Christopher’s
[See Appendix JJ for complete text.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Discovery of the Pearl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our canoe glided on the water on out,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My wife and our gods were with me fulfilling hopes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As we cracked oysters under the rippling water,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hoped, no foresaw, no, knew it would happen,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For I leaned on God and the gods this time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Not spoiling the luck, not cracking the big ones, |
| I counted on the god’s support and God’s help, |
| With the smashing, crunching, crackling, shattering, |
| The song of the Pearl that Might Be zoomed through, |
| Any of those oysters could be concealing that gold. |

### Student Research Participants’ *The Pearl* Poem Analyses

**Eric**

It is in these two pieces, both poem and papel picado, that Eric’s ability strongly surfaces in his writing and his artwork. In contrast to his earlier poetry, “The Finding of the Pearl” represents a more refined, controlled, yet expressive piece of text. Told from Juana’s perspective, Eric shares the search for the pearl, the hope the pearl may bring, and its accompanying evil. Alluding to the pearl’s song, Eric ends the poem on an ominous note. Also evident is his use of repetition for effect, alliteration, and line breaks to control the pace and message. More sophisticated than Eric’s previous entries, this poem retells the story and incorporates emotion.

Similarly, Eric’s papel picado strongly complements his written work. Using the song of the pearl as the basis of the piece, Eric employs movement through lines and presents an image that contrasts the pearl’s beauty with its eerie surroundings. Impressive in interpretation as well as craftsmanship, Eric’s work represents exemplary standards.
Catalina

Perhaps reflecting her more extensive revision opportunities, Catalina’s “Fate” marks a shift toward more sophisticated phrasing and purposeful vocabulary usage. Evident in lines like “Time stood still, no birds sang, no children played, all was quiet,” rhythm, repetition and flow lead the reader to the next line, “Strike!”—a dramatic contrast. Comparing Kino to “the unpredictable sea that could change in moments,” she also attends to similes.

Still surfacing in her writing, however, are the occasional mechanical problems (e.g., “it’s” used as a possessive and punctuation omissions). In addition, stanza continuity remains questionable with the number of lines in each stanza changing for no obvious reason.

The papel picado, although skillfully crafted, offers no direct connection with the poem. Presenting a tearful man, it only suggests sadness and does not complement or reinforce the writing in an explicit manner. Notably, it does employ repetition and contrast, two attributes of her poem, however.

Namrata

Namrata’s response “Angel’s Breath” stands as this unit’s exemplary writing. An artistic interweaving of narrative and poetic expression, the poem captures Kino’s obsession to find the pearl with the potential promise the pearl represents. Tightly constructed, the poem begins with “Lips sealed tightly”—referring to Kino’s lips—and ends with “And on its pink tongue he sees Promise, The breath of an angel”—alluding to the oyster and the pearl. In between, Namrata describes Kino’s desperate circumstances,
what motivates him to continue with “[t]hroat aching, head exploding, heart hammering, eyes burned with the salt.” Incorporating multiple sensory details, the poem stands strong—in vision, message and voice.

Interestingly, Namrata’s initial attempt at this poem, however, evolved as a descriptive paragraph; also, her first attempt to revise her work and render it more poetic did not result in much change. Only after discussing line breaks did the poem begin its transformation to its final form.

Elaborate in its execution, Namrata’s papel picado complements the piece. Capturing Kino tightly embracing both his son and the oyster, the artwork focuses attention to this configuration through intricate cut paperwork and strong placement of colored background. Namrata’s vision for both pieces is clearly conveyed.

Christopher

Interestingly, as in almost all of Christopher’s previous writings, Christopher employs first person to relate Kino’s story. Whether this positioning strengthens Christopher’s approach to writing or is merely reflective of adolescent egocentricity is uncertain. What is certain is his use of repetition to add strength to his message. Christopher uses “the smashing, crunching, crackling, shattering” in one line, and then “my leaning, my wishing, my hoping, my dreaming” in the last. Not particularly expressive, they are parallel in construction. Although this poem could be written as a narrative and have a similar impact, it is more forgiving as a poem—capturing more emotion than substantive story. Also, particular constructions and wording seem somewhat awkward, more slang or colloquial than poetic (e.g., “The song of the Pearl
that Might Be zoomed through” and “My knife busted through, and the volume of the song cranked up”). In general, the writing seems hollow—particularly after the first stanza.

In contrast, Christopher’s papel picado contains drama. Graphically strong with few colors and strong lines, Kino’s hand holding the open oyster extends emphatically through the center of the work. Notes of the pearl’s song, as well as swirling water lines, surround the central image. Had Christopher’s poem shared this drama, its voice would have communicated a stronger message.

Group Analysis of The Pearl Poems

Determining causal and/or correlational relevancy between the instruction and products in this unit is problematic. Givens include a determined focus on Hispanic cultures and certain related genres/ mediums that encourage creative, written expression. Purposeful scaffolding in revision, explicit teaching of attributes of poetic writing, and classroom discussions and analyses of specific texts combined with adequate time and encouragement characterized classroom lessons in the language arts classroom. Further immersion into art as communication and the aesthetics of art typified instructional objectives in the art classroom.

Resulting written texts and art pieces exceeded teacher research participants’ expectations. Within each student research participants’ poem, elements of doing poetry appear. Rhythm—captured sometimes through repetition of phrases and sometimes by contrasting the length of word groups, alliteration, parallel structure, personification, metaphors and other poetic devices are clearly evident. Students’ work reflects attention
to sophisticated writing and artistic elements. Craftsmanship in both writing and art was evident as student research participants frequently seemed to search for the right words and the best form of expression in both classes—language arts and its complementary art course. Everyone involved verbalized the change; it was palpable to all research participants and commented on by outside observers.

In addition, student research participants began talking writing; i.e., students now applied language and terms associated with describing poetic expression and structure to their own work. Conscious of these actions, student research participants evolved to additional levels of literacy learning—a significant outcome at this stage of the study.

Description and Context of the Native American Literacies Unit

With “Songs of the Navajo” filling the room, students entered the world of Native American cultures. Opening their journals and engaging in a “freewrite,” students recorded their thoughts on this December day. For fifteen minutes they wrote. The student research participants’ responses vary, some more engaged with the temporal and mundane than imaginative.

At the end of the freewrite, students received copies of American Indian poetry from songs to war chants. Sitting in a circle, students shared examples orally. After each had a chance to share, students analyzed poetry for its attributes. References and reverences for and to nature resounded most frequently. Next, students noted the brevity and repetition of the pieces. Finally, students noticed some recurring purposes and topics: recordings of significant happenings (e.g., sicknesses, death and war); pleas to spirits for
guidance, blessings, assurance and strength; and acknowledgements of seemingly insignificant (to the students) natural events (e.g., music reaching the sky) and descriptions (e.g., blood on the tip of an arrow).

In contrast to the informal pilot study conducted the previous school year, the teacher research participants decided that students should have a choice in this part of the research. Consequently, after some basic discussion that clarified students did indeed have some understanding of issues of oppression related to Native Americans, students had the freedom to research a relevant theme and create a text using a genre that best facilitated the expression of their thoughts. A basic rubric (See Appendix KK) provided the evaluation format, featuring five components: writing illustrates an understanding of the student-selected genre, text offers authenticity (in fact and tone) based on research, voice is clear, appropriate writing conventions appear, and the text’s message exhibits strength. The rubric resulted from class discussion and collaboration. No parameters restricting length of the text applied.

Simultaneously, through the art class, students studied the work of Edward Curtis, in particular, his Native American photographs. With the understanding of Curtis’s purpose (to capture what he thought would soon be destroyed), students viewed his works. Then, they chose one of the photographs as the basis of a portrait study using conté crayons. Attention to detail and conveyance of appropriate mood stood as two criteria for evaluation of these projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Excerpt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>They force their religion, their language, their unscrupulous ways, upon us. I will always remember how they killed the Sioux; how they robbed us of our culture—our identity. Do you know what it’s like to see a people—a civilization breathe its last, gasping breath? I do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina</td>
<td>I watched as my homeland disappeared into the distance as they dragged me along. As I looked up into the sky, I saw the great eagle soaring freely in the sky and I missed home more than I would ever know. They loaded me into an Iron Horse with the other two boys and girls from my village. I was too enraged to be frightened by what the White-Eyes called a “train.” At fourteen winters, I have been trained by my father to hunt, raid, attack, fight, and walk like an Apache warrior. I could fight like a full-grown man, and I was infuriated that they had thought I was a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata</td>
<td>In your hands you hold the treasures of our Grandmother. You have the power to heal and to make whole. Guard these from the White Man, and use them to strengthen our peoples. May you heal our people, and may the Great Spirit watch over you. I am, <del>Bold Deer</del></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Christopher | **A Path Without Peace**  
Our tribe was moved onto a Path without Peace. We were shoved onto a Road of Rage. We were pushed onto a Direction of Despair. We were forced onto a Trail of Tears.  
Hawk’s Heart woke up to the dawn of a new day,  
*A dawn of new life.* |

Figure 4.13: Student Research Participants’ Native American Unit—Writing Excerpts
Student Research Participants’ Native American Writing Analyses

Eric

In a journal response, Eric shared the following reflections about his writing at this time in the study. He wrote,

Recently, I have been thinking about literary tools. Little things like where to put the period, or the coma. Not in a grammatical context, but for more effective communication. I found myself replacing several periods in my poem with commas because it put less emphasis on the following phrase. Likewise, I added another period so I could capitalize the next word and thus emphasize the phrase. I think that these are subtleties that define good writing. Well-placed punctuation and reorganized words can change the effect on a reader, and that those little changes, grammatically correct or not, are a large step in the right direction toward good writing.

Eric seems to be approaching his writing with a new sense of engagement. Transformed from his baseline writing, which offered an entertaining story, Eric now turns to the subtleties that affect how a reader might interpret what he is trying to communicate. Confirmation of this conclusion follows in Eric’s Native American writing sample, a poem. Although he has seemingly reverted to his former poetic construction (i.e., short lines, few words), this poem reveals perceptive images and reflects a unified tone and purpose. Speaking on behalf of a marginalized population, Eric’s words stand strong, made even stronger with rhythmic repetition and the absence of unnecessary detail. Eric voiced expression as a Native American through “Remembering.” Simple in style yet explicit in content, he begins,
I remember
when there were
no white men,
no diseases,
no devastation

And he concludes,

Do you know
What it’s like
To see a people—a civilization
Breathe its last, gasping breath?

I do.

Eric’s growth as a writer is evident. From the self-professed scientifically based essayist, Eric has evolved to become a writer who effectively uses varying genres and culturally related subject matter to express himself both with creativity and strong, authentic voice.

Accompanying this haunting, reverential text, Eric created a portrait from a photograph from Edward Curtis’s collection of Native American portraits. With respect for his subject, Eric’s attention to detail and shading are evident. Using conté pencil on tinted pastel paper, the portrait adds another dimension to Eric’s message on Native Americans.
An additional piece of interest that reflects a genre associated with Native Americans is Eric’s “Song to Self,” a private poem intended to be repeated daily by its creator in order to remind him of whom he is to be. Included in student research participants’ journals as a private piece of writing, Eric’s message is clear; he shares,

Destiny, fate
The future holds what
I make it out to be
Life will not take me anywhere
I will take myself where I do
To fulfill my lifelong dream.

Every star makes the sky brighter.

Catalina

With no restrictions on genre requirements in this writing experience, students were free to find the genre that best fit the purpose of their message. A requirement, however, was foundational research; writings were to reflect accurate information, vocabulary and basic tone. Catalina chose a narrative, creating a story about an Apache boy who is captured by white people, escapes and returns to his tribe. Although some incidents and cultural markers remain questionable, the story includes many attempts to situate the action in a realistic setting with authentic circumstances. For example, an Indian warrior named One-Who-Never-Forgets acknowledges the nervousness of the horses, used as foreshadowing of the Bluecoats’ approach. In addition, Catalina presents
conflict between the Indians and Bluecoats through their use of knives and pistols. Indians relying on natural warning signs may be accurate; use of pistols in fighting may not be. Also, the narrator, War Hawk, is trained as a tailor by his white captives, a questionable trade for a strong Indian brave. Ambitious in length (five, single-spaced pages), Catalina’s effort to sustain and elaborate this story line is commendable.

Catalina’s “Song to Self” imparts an inner strength, a glimpse of her confidence and supportive network of family and friends. She states,

Loved by everyone in your family
encouraged by friends
they make you laugh, cry, smile,
protect you from harm, but most
of all, they let you be yourself.

Her confidence in herself and her writing continues.

Namrata

Given the freedom to create in any genre, Namrata surpasses all teacher research participants’ expectations. Composing Bold Deer’s Complete Plant-Medicine Book (dated 1823), she promotes cures for everything from head lice (massage a paste of crushed Aster plant seeds into the scalp twice a day) to cholera (drink tea made from Red Cedar to ease symptoms). Accompanying the book was a worn, leather pouch filled with crushed leaves. An attached bibliography added to the work’s credibility.

Once again, Namrata engages in an assignment, playing with its parameters more than merely meeting pre-imposed teacher expectations. Her ability to adopt various
personas seems to fuel her written creations, adding a uniqueness and distinct voice. Her “Song to Self” captures some of this spirit:

Do good in all you can do

Do your best; God will lead you through.

Put others first, yourself last,

And you will be on the right path.

Remember all that you hold true;

Your virtues, values, that make you.

Be strong not in the things of man,

And be a success at all you can.

This song permeates her efforts; she embraces teacher research participants’ expectations, then adds one more challenging dimension—her own values.

**Christopher**

Christopher’s Native American writing marks a pivotal place in his progress. Alternating a repetitive stanza (chorus-like) with stanzas that document a fictionalized account of the Trail of Tears, Christopher –for the first time—positions his work beyond an egocentric perspective. Tension between the “demonic whites” and Hawk’s Heart and his tribe fuels the writing, capturing a moment in American history that obviously resounds with Christopher. Tightly constructed, this poem delivers rhythm, content, and strong emotion. Submitted to the school’s peer-reviewed literary-arts journal, this piece appears to focus on a larger audience than Christopher and his teachers.
Revealing Christopher’s awareness of life beyond middle school, his “Song to Self”—although simplistically composed—summarizes a reflective philosophy. He offers,

In the long run,
In the long life,
the smallest joys
matter the most.
The best time in life
is those tiny little things
that will make
life a worthwhile thing.

**Group Analysis of Native American Writings**

Not as extensive as the previous unit, the Native American Unit’s written texts still maintained exemplary standards. In fact, the texts appear to address more universal topics, topics beyond stereotypical adolescent obsessions. Focusing beyond their personal experiential stories, student research participants aligned themselves with others’ plights and lives. Interestingly, their voices appear stronger, more confident, more purposeful. More than amusing stories explaining lumps under rugs or poetic descriptions of neighbors whose behaviors entertain the neighborhood, these texts document significant historical practices and social conflicts.

Whether increased writing practice, elevated writing purposes, or combinations of these motivated these student research participants is difficult to assess; what remains
apparent is that the resulting texts are significantly improved compared to earlier work.
Discussion of the rubric evaluations accompanying this unit revealed inconclusive results.
With minimal scaffolding (e.g., one introductory lesson, some peer-group editing,
student-teacher conferencing), student research participants connected messages with
genre structures that created dramatic impact.

Student research participants’ reflective journals, however, reveal strong
emotional connections to their writings, resulting in strong voice and explicit purpose.
This verbalized revelation provided some scaffolding—for the teacher research
participants. Students expressed an element of literacy learning; teacher research
participants, in turn, became aware of scaffolding to encourage this learning outcome.

Description and Context of the Asian Literacies Unit

With the beginning of the new year, came the exploration of other cultures—Asian, and our first genre—Samurai Death Poems. Basing our introductory information on the book Japanese Death Poems compiled by Yoel Hoffmann (1986), we learned of this predecessor of the haiku. Traditionally following a 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic form, these “farewell poems to life” also required adherence to specific content. In the first three lines, the Samurai reflected on nature. The last two lines, complementing the first three, elaborated on the poet’s meditative message on his impending death. Simple, yet profound, the death poems challenged the students to think concisely and wisely.

Immediately following the Samurai Death Poetry, instruction on Chinese Harmony Poems began. Mrs. Sanders, the parent volunteer who had assisted with the Hispanic unit, returned with a family video, handouts and enthusiasm. The video, a
presentation by the Xie family (Xie Yong, his wife, and their two children—relatives of Mrs. Sanders who live in China) provided an authentic introduction into the importance of poetry in their lives and in the education of Chinese people, in general. Set before a Chinese pavilion, Dr. Xie presented a brief history of Chinese poetry, its history of over thousands of years and its importance in Chinese education. He stated,

And the poetry [is] usually used in the daily life. The students in China have to learn poetry when they were young, since they were in primary school. They have to understand the meaning and remember it. And poetry usually has a philosophical meaning, and teach people how to be a good person.

Next their daughter, Renni, recited a poem that was over 2000 years old, first in Chinese. Then, she explained its meaning in English. Sawyer, her brother, shared two other examples and their translations. Mrs. Xie wrote a letter to the students to help with our understanding of the Chinese language. Noting “that Chinese grammar has no tense, no gender, no plurals, no prepositions” and that its ambiguity make it a “a perfect language for poetry,” she also spoke of its “lilting sound” (Xie letter). Mrs. Sanders further elaborated on differences between literal and free translations, providing examples of both for comparisons.

This introduction provided a substantial foundation for students’ entrance into the concept of harmony poems. Similar to parodies, harmony poems parallel another piece of poetry—mirroring meter and format, and in some cases, subject matter.

Creation of a harmony poem conferred honor on the modeled poem. Disregarding the
western implications associated with plagiarism, the harmony poem helped establish a poetic legacy, creating a discernable genealogy back to the original text.

From this foundation, students first practiced creating harmony poems from the examples of Chinese poetry presented by Mrs. Sanders. The activities then combined the Samurai Death Poems with the creation of Harmony Poems.

Somewhat more extensive than the previous units, the Asian unit continued with two more major activities. First, to provide more understanding of Asian cultures, students viewed the movie *The Good Earth*. Although it was an older version, students looked attentively to find what the movie presented as cultural markers. In addition to clothing, food, working conditions and housing, in general, students listed social positioning (male vs. female; rich vs. poor), family relationships (extended family, husband and wife issues) and the people’s values (related to social position and survival). Second, students composed a narrative, nicknamed the “Fortune Cookie Story.” The name held a degree of truth; the story’s elements included one fortune from a fortune cookie, one photo for reference, and the directive to create a narrative with a story within a story—a narrative representative of their understanding of Asian cultures. The assignment, designed by Mrs. Oldfeld to offer specific structure for the story’s evolution, was ambitious.

Evaluations of written works differed. Analysis and evaluation of the Samurai Death Poems followed three requirements. One, the poem must follow reflect the correct syllabic pattern. Two, the first three lines must capture a reverential moment in nature. Third, the final two lines must reveal the author’s reaction to his/her death. In contrast, the “Fortune Cookie Story” offered a unique evaluation opportunity. The rubric provided
both the student’s and the teacher’s evaluations of the narrative—with additional room for clarifying comments from both (See Appendix PP).

Complementing the writing experiences in the Asian unit, Mrs. Powers and Mrs. Sanders developed two art-related projects: Sumi-e Paintings, incorporating minimalistic landscapes rendered in ink; and writing portfolios, covered in students’ original Chinese-style block prints. Excerpts of student research participants’ written work follow in Figure 4.14.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eric</th>
<th>Samurai Death Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| [See Appendix QQ for complete text.] | Twinkling petals
Laughing meadow of flowers
Cheerful wispy breeze
The cold wind of death sweeps me
To this warm and happy place. |

**Asian Narrative Excerpt**

The lights dimmed and darkness filled the theatre. A little boy burst through the door, accompanied by the glow of a spotlight.

“Mother, mother!” They’re coming. They’re coming!”

“Who is? Who is coming?”

“The bad army, from the north. They’ve sunken all the boats and they’re going to…”

“Come, Mura. We’re leaving.”

Mura’s mother grabbed his hand and ran toward the door. It flew open, revealing an evil looking warrior. He had a torch in one hand, a sword in the other, and a malicious look on his face. He wore the ornate armor of a samurai leader…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalina</th>
<th>Catalina’s Death Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| [See Appendix RR for complete text.] | With the wild river I came. 
Unbreakable mountains 
Show me the way as 
The sound of thundering hooves 
Lead me to my true passion. |

**Asian Narrative Excerpt**

The next few days were endless for Pan. His mind struggling to figure out what to do. The wind blew hard and the rain poured down on his face, then running down towards the ground. Lighting struck and the thunder shook the earth with its hands. Pan walked quietly like a tiger on the hunt, he stopped then as he eyes fell upon the house of Chow’s family.

“I can’t do this!” he whispered to the rain.

“You must. Your master and lord ordered it under punishment of death!” the rain continued to beat down on Pan as he battled himself.

**Figure 4.14: Student Research Participants’ Asian Unit Writings**

Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Namrata</th>
<th>Samurai Death Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more shall I see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The sunrise embrace the air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reaching to heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Now I will be a stray length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Of light fleeing from the earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Narrative Excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The next morning, the children got up and went downstairs. They went to the dining table where they had been last night, but to their surprise, it was filled with many, many, other Chinese children. When the other children saw them, they moved closer together to make room for the three children. When the three children sat down, a woman served them moon cakes. Imagine that! Moon cakes for breakfast!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chung drooled, and Liu licked her lips longingly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The three children stuffed themselves full of the cakes that were fat with sweet bean paste, nuts, lotus seeds, duck’s-egg yolk. They had bowls of shark-fin soup, prawns in ginger sauce, the same filling rice and roast duck glistening with fat and sauce. They drank weak tea to wash it down.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christopher</th>
<th>Samurai Death Poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colossal mountains,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cliffs of threatening beauty,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The peak of my life,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will now leap beyond them,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This time I will rise over them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian Narrative Excerpt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Get to the fields, Chang!” blared my mother, whacking my bed with a band of straw. “Our couple of slaves can’t do everything.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I immediately sprang up. The all too familiar face of my mother pierced my eyes. She turned to the small window in my sleeping room; I remembered falling asleep with it straight across from me. Then, she pointed to where the sunlight coming through was. It was next to my pillow, crawling up the wall. I failed to wake when the sun hit my face, and that happened all too often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“You told me that this sunlight would wake you up, but you did not wake up!” my mother yelled. She grasped the bundle of straw and wringed her hands in anger. As she left the room, she mumbled, “Again….”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Research Participants’ Asian Writing Analyses

Eric

In his Asian story, Eric tells the story of Mura and his mother. Paralleling some Asian narratives, he creates a story within a story. Cultural markers surface frequently, e.g., his description of the samurai leaders’ armor, the use of the word bushido (the samurai code of honor). In addition, honor serves as the theme for the story.

Eric’s narrative continues for several pages. Even though the story is not error-free, it does demonstrate his understanding of using dialogue to carry the plot, providing cultural markers that authenticate the setting, and constructing dynamic, interdependent relationships among the characters. More than a story that merely satisfied academic criteria, Eric’s text reflects sustained effort and elaboration, two elements missing in his previous writings.

In a discussion with him about the story, he shared that the fortune he had received was too weak for him to use as the central theme for his work. He stated that he had discussed the issue with Mrs. Oldfeld and she concurred, allowing him to modify the theme somewhat. Otherwise, he believed that the story reflected an honest effort on his part, and it was also a challenging assignment.

Catalina

Once again, Catalina returns to horses as the subject of her poem. This time, in the Samurai Death Poem, the horses—her passion—carry her to her death. Not outside the parameters of this genre’s attributes, however, the writing is acceptable—if not representing an imaginative stretch.
In her Asian narrative, effort is notable, however. Developing a story within a story, Catalina begins with the tale of an Asian boy whose parents die; then she inserts the Grandfather’s telling of a story of a samurai who never knew his parents. Although some of her cultural markers are questionable (e.g., the characters’ names appear to be Chinese, not Japanese), Catalina does include virtues like obedience and respect for authority and elders. Description is strong and creative (e.g., “The pale moonlight reached down to cut through the bleak darkness to reach his heart.”). However, the ambitiousness of the assignment seemed to demand attention to move the plot and create tension; consequently, some blatant errors were missed (e.g., “They arrived at a gate guarded by thirty samurai wearing the same brown kimono.”). Basically, the story is strong, and, most importantly, Catalina’s writing continues to improve.

Namrata

Even though Namrata’s Samurai Death Poem is not representative of her ability to create sensory images, she did compose several Chinese Harmony Poems and an Asian narrative that, once again, demonstrate her persistent effort and display her attention to crafting a tale.

Essentially the harmony poems document her flexibility of thought. Taking one idea, transforming it to its opposite or near opposite, she adjust and readjusts word combinations to exact meanings. In one poem, for example, she states, “A crying tree mourning my death for now I am no more.” And in its harmony counterpart, she offers, “A crying tree rejoicing my victory for I have won.”
Her narrative showcases additional talents. For ten pages, she sustains the interwoven stories of a Chinese mother and her children and the retelling of the mother’s life as a young slave. No detail goes unmentioned as she tells of cakes made from “sweet bean paste, nuts, lotus seeds, duck’s egg yolk,” “a beautiful red silk cheongsam with silver and gold embroidery,” and a ship’s cabin that “smelled of vomit and dying men and old fish.”

Namrata and her writing are thriving in this class.

Christopher

Christopher’s narrative does not exhibit attention to detail or grounding in research. Defaulting to contemporary vernacular, he describes that his father “needs to have a time out” and “my father’s temper skyrocketed”—two phrases not characteristic of an Asian setting seemingly long ago. Another weakness is the ambiguity of the setting; conflicts in word choices, the mother’s attitude of total disrespect towards the father, and the family’s laborious fieldwork—even though they owned slaves—interfere with the narrative’s credibility. Clearly, insufficient research and knowledge of this culture have negatively impacted the narrative.

Christopher noted in the Literacy Survey that he learned more about multicultural literacies from the Asian unit than any other. Ironically, it is within this unit that his responses seem to lack depth and credibility. Perhaps relying more on literacy acquisition than literacy learning, Christopher has constructed a narrative that may be best described as a hybrid—a combination of his understanding of a typical narrative interspersed with allusions to his perspective of Asian narrative structure and setting.
Group Analysis of Asian Writings

This unit was a study in extremes. Student research participants composed their most succinct texts in the Samurai Death Poems, and the most extensive in their “Fortune Cookie Stories.” One structured responses to conform to strict parameters: structure and subject. The other demanded other requirements to be considered successful examples of this genre. Situated between the two were the playful opportunities inherent in the Chinese Harmony Poems, only offered as exercises in expanding writing skills and perspectives.

At this time in the research, student research participants also grew in their understandings of the construction and use of rubrics. Rubrics, for this course, were not punitive or rewarding, only supportive and directive. Grades had ceased to be an issue.

Decidedly considered the most challenging assignment this year (communicated in student research participants reflective responses), these writings also presented the most complex plot structures (combining story within story) and supportive detail. Some of the scaffolding that may have influenced these compositions included reading and discussing Namioka’s (2000) “The Inn of Lost Time,” a selection from their literature book. A favorite of Mrs. Oldfeld’s, the story offers an explicit example of a samurai telling a story within a story, a format that student research participants have somewhat mirrored. Classroom discussion emphasized the format, cultural markers, and the use of emotion and dialogue to move the plot; all characterize these students’ responses.

In their rubrics, student research participants as well as Mrs. Oldfeld documented their achievements. The five areas of evaluation included 1) strong movement of plot/tension (30 points); 2) use of picture and fortune (20 points); 3) use of cultural
markers (20 points); 4) balance between showing/telling (15 points); and 5) element of emotion evident in plot (15 points). No student was more than two points away from Mrs. Oldfeld’s score in any of the categories.

In addition, Eric, in an interview, related that he thought that the dual evaluation provided an excellent opportunity to evaluate what he wrote in a more objective and structured manner. He appreciated “the variety of views,” also. Explaining that as he was writing his narrative, he did not attend to evaluating it on the rubric criteria. Instead, he offered, he made decisions based on what he wanted the character to do, what was of interest to him. He also shared that exploring other cultures and their related genres “makes you think of values and ideas specific to that culture.”

Namrata offered other insights about her narrative and its creation. She stated that at times it felt “like another part of [me] is writing; it’s not really [me].” The teacher research participants, after rereading Namrata’s narrative, concur; her writing exhibits a flow, an almost seamless quality, as her narrator weaves the two stories into one harmonious whole. Candidly, she admitted that she did indeed write the entire story in one night and that it was “close to what [she’s] used to.”

Difficult to establish distinctions between literacy acquisition and learning in these two cases, teacher research participants decided that Eric and Namrata may be close to a balance between the two. Offering the possibility that their proficiencies (regarded as literacy acquisitions) allowed them to attend to literacy learning (e.g., the two-fold plot, detailed cultural markers, and appropriate tone) facilitating their potential to compose narratives that surpassed their peers’ writings.
Description and Context of the African-American Literacies Unit

Problems with the African-American Unit originated from scheduling complications. As the school year’s activities and interruptions escalated, time for planning became an issue. Part of the time, I was responsible for accompanying several students to a national competition in Washington D.C.; the research continued without me. Even so, this unit offered the research participants some interesting and valuable experiences and opportunities.

In addition to reading Waiting for the Rain (Gordon, 1987), comparing Martin Luther King’s and Malcolm X’s speeches, and discussing oral literacy traditions and African folk tales, the research participants received instruction in African drumming and its rhythmic mode of communication and also interviewed four of our school’s Somalyi students. Striving to stretch our awareness of others and their ways of living, all the experiences melded. New understandings immediately emerged, expressed in reflective writings, created in response to these collective experiences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Why?  Why is the world this way? Why can’t I go to school? Why can’t I own a farm? Why must I work all day? Why do I deserve this? Why are blacks discriminated against? Why not whites? Why must I live in a township? Why must I live in undeserving poverty? Why is life worth living? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalina</td>
<td>I see the anger  I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky. I see the anger pulling me deeper and deeper. I try to run away with everything I got. I try to scream out and I try hiding my soul. I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky. Save me please, darling, from this hatred all around. Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata</td>
<td>Apartheid? What is that? Is that why we Slave away, day in Day out? For whites? For madam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Selina  I’m so sad around the home now, My doing is grasping and seeing Tengo, Soon he will leave to a township, Has he not been to a township? What shall he do to keep himself from harm? I worry, I weep, I cry, I am anxious, For I do not know what is coming for Tengo, And I have an urge to learn what is.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.15: Student Research Participants’ African-American Writing Excerpts
Student Research Participants’ African-American Writing Analyses

Eric

In fairness to Eric, his schedule was prohibitive during this part of the study. Excelling in an engineering competition, he spent most of his time preparing for an upcoming national contest. Both his teachers and I agreed that the writing and creating he was completing for this competition was much more demanding than what we were offering here in this particular unit. Therefore, his assignments were modified to minimal.

Understandably, his poem reverts to his earlier style—very minimalistic, simplistic, and perhaps, cursory. He is engaged with the assignment at the level that is demanded of him. How to be responsive to Eric’s needs and responsibilities overrode the research at this time.

Catalina

As a reactive response to literature, Catalina’s poem is satisfactory. Without specific imagery, it relies on repetition and emotional references to fill space. Intensity is absent; voice is obviously muted. The text represents another less-than-exemplary writing sample—marking a plateau or valley in the research’s effect on writing development.

Namrata

Maintaining a consistent effort, Namrata submitted a two-voice poem for this response to literature. Frikkie represents one side, Tengo the other. Juxtaposed to present
their contrasts and similarities as Afrikaaner and Kaffir in South Africa during apartheid, the poem presents both perspectives fairly—based on information shared in *Waiting for the Rain* (Gordon, 1987). Seemingly, Namrata, who had been home schooled for most of her education, has the capability to maximize her learning in situations that seem to fail to support her peers in this research.

**Christopher**

Focusing on one minor event in this novel, Christopher’s poem circumvents the novel’s major message. Tengo’s mother’s perspective is a worthy topic, a sensitive topic, and a surprising topic in a classroom of white students who confessed to knowing little about apartheid. It is also interesting that Christopher reverted to positioning the lines in a consecutive step-like pattern, similar to the construction he used in his Native American poem. Also, interesting in his stanza construction is the looseness of the remaining lines, unlike his Native American poem where a deliberate pattern was employed.

**Group Analysis of African-American Writings**

A surface assessment of this unit’s instructional delivery and results might assign a direct relationship between input and output, i.e. the alignment of teacher research participants’ objectives and practices with student research participants’ understandings of expectations and applications of these understandings. No student research participant growth, measured by increased text and/or application of writing conventions, figures of speech and style, etc., appears in the related writings. In fact, Catalina’s and Christopher’s responses contain examples of defaulting to previously applied techniques.
Teacher research participants questioned scaffolding. Acknowledging more than scaffolding related to writing skills, students also needed to sense an emotional connection translating to purpose and relevant expectations. At a time in the year when proficiency testing, winter doldrums, and outside complications impacted classroom experiences, a new sense of commitment demanded attention. Efforts focused on the next unit.

Description and Context of the Independent Study Unit

In the study’s final stages, students’ independent choices of focus cultures offered insight into their personal preferences and goals in writing and artistic communication. Skills that had framed the entire study’s foundation surfaced. The ability to analyze genres and mediums, to recognize distinct and distinguishing attributes, to model these attributes, and to communicate their findings in effective and inspiring ways stood as objectives. From Paris in the 1920s to today’s hard rock cultures to cultures composed of autistic children, students researched the contexts of the literacies, how the cultures communicated, and then—immersing themselves in the cultures’ genres and mediums—communicated, themselves, as if they were a part of it.

The process of evaluation developed from research participants’ perspectives of what our final goals and objectives from this study should be. How could we best evaluate if we had grown in our understandings of communication throughout history and various cultures? Class discussion, with all research participants present, was itself eventful, taking two, class periods to complete. Student research participants appeared
excited about choosing any culture as their target culture, resulting in them sharing their understanding of the situatedness of literacies—a significant growth from their earlier descriptions of literacy in September. The number of examples of genres and art works they would study and share presented the next controversy. A decision to provide some background knowledge gained acceptance first; one student stated that a description and basic understanding of the culture merited attention. Without it, neither the student researcher nor the rest of the class would comprehend some of the reasons why the genre and art were acceptable communicative forms. In addition, students decided that three genres and three art forms would be manageable. All class time, with all teacher research participants facilitating, would be allowed. Conferencing would function as our main form of instructional support.

To offer additional instructional scaffolding, rubrics were customized (See Appendix XX) following a basic format that students completed, after conferencing with teacher research participants. After selection of their focus culture, student research participants specified three genres and three culturally related art forms to use as models for analysis and replication. Three attributes (analyzed and described by student research participants) of each genre and art form served as indicators of successful replication. Teacher research participants would evaluate student research participants’ completed projects based on the individually developed rubrics. Also, students would present their models and their replications to the rest of the class.
Since its first stone structures in 4000 BC, through the first written language, the first organized government, the first monotheist, and even the first peace treaty, Egypt has been a rich society.

[...]

Whenever religion changed, so did the arts. During the 18th dynasty, Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton) declared the sun god Aton (previously called Ra, and later Amon-Ra) the only true god. This sparked a period of cultural change–The Amarna revolution. Art became more natural and realistic, and began to part from religion. Art, however, returned to the previous ritualistic, traditional art when Akhenaton’s successor re-established the polytheistic religion.

*****

Hymn to the Sun, Wind and Rain

Thou art here, Wind,
    Billowing the water of the Nile.
Thou art here,
    Filling the sails of the merchant ships.
Thou art here,
    Bringing the hot dry weather.

*****

The Amulet

“I have received a message from the king of Nubia. He claims to bear an amulet wrought in the finest Nubian gold and, so long as he is wearing it, he cannot be defeated in battle. He requires that there be sent to him a vase filled with power. If this is not done by sunset tomorrow, he will conquer Egypt, his army impervious under the spell of the amulet.”

“What is it that you wish?” asked the magician.

“If it is that I cannot defeat him, I must fulfill his request. Bring me a vase filled with power by midday tomorrow!”

Continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Catalina</th>
<th>Evening of Bloodshed in Old San Juan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[See Appendix ZZ for complete text.]</td>
<td>As the fiery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flame of evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flies over the world</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Spreading its blazing heat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coloring everything blood red</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Atop the golden wheat</td>
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<td>I run over the red blood</td>
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<td>Under the radiant sky of red cries</td>
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<td></td>
<td>So dark the horizon of red on black</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I almost cried out to you</td>
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<td></td>
<td>But across the broken street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shaded by hollow screams of children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miguel Jose and the Sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One blustery summer day, Miguel Jose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was walking down the street from school. As he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walked, he looked up at the sapphire sky and forgot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to pay attention to where he was going. It appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miguel wasn’t the only one watching the sky that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>day for coming the other way young Ivan Rodriguez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was also starring at the sky. They got closer and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closer until…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Ahh! Hey, watch were you’re walking!” a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>very irritated Miguel hissed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Lo siento. Sorry. I was not watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>where I was going.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not even paying attention to the apology that he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was given, Miguel shoved Ivan and stomped off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>towards his house.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As Miguel walked into his house, he was</td>
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<td></td>
<td>greeted with silence. Thankful that he was home,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miguel raced off to find his padre, father. Miguel’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>father was working with las orejas, the sheep, in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>field, and as his son walked up, he looked up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“¡Hola hijo! Hello son. ¿Cómo estás?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How are you?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“¡Muy mal! Some Negro, black Puerto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rican kid ran into my on the way home.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namrata</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[See Appendix AAA for complete texts.]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Go to the Lighted North!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Go to the Lighted North!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go to the Lighted North!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For a kind old maid’ll take you in from freezing’</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you go to the Lighted North!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When moon smiles naught and the owl calls,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Go to the Lighted North!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>For a kind old maid’ll take you in from freezing’</td>
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<tr>
<td>If you go to the Lighted North!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count the roses on the windowsill</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T’see if there’s room for you.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold the lamp to the black-man’s face</td>
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<tr>
<td>And go to the Lighted North!</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christopher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[See Appendix BBB for complete text.]</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosworth Fields</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Epic Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The great Wars of the Roses was a series of civil battles between the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rebellious House of Lancaster and the House of York in England. Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>causes have to do with the civil unrest of the whole population. It</td>
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<tr>
<td>lasted many years, from 1455 to 1487. The Yorkists seemed to have won</td>
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<tr>
<td>the majority of the battles throughout the years, but the House of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster had very mixed and far off alliances that agreed with their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ways and won the decisive battle, the Battle of Bosworth Fields. This</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>war, comparing to the American Civil War, was like having the South</td>
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<tr>
<td>defeating the North. The rebellious side was the victor, but at a cost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This poem is from a rebel soldier’s point of view, however he wished</td>
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<tr>
<td>the war had never started and a day of peace would come. His emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>struggles guide him through the final conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our people await a day of peace in these years but it seems that day</td>
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<tr>
<td>will not be coming upon us soon. It may drag along up to us one day,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but it shall not be soon. A day of peace in this time of battle will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not make its way up to us in the time we desire. The hatred and dread</td>
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<tr>
<td>of the opposites haunts us and we can do nothing, just wait their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrival. We could be attacked, I could be sent to defend our land, to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stop the opposing threat. <strong>101</strong> do not wish to conflict on another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during these years..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eric

In Eric’s Egyptian trilogy, he presents three thorough and tightly constructed pieces based on his research of Egyptian history and genres. Modeling his work from texts he believed reflected authentic forms and content, Eric composed an essay, a poem and a story. All represent effort, reflect growth and maturity in style, and demonstrate his ability to create in multiple, diverse genres.

Eric claims that this course contained more challenges and opportunities for growth than all of his years of school combined. He also added that the foundation and directions explaining expectations and projects’ parameters provided him with the guidance he needed to develop as a writer and an artist.

Significantly, others, both parents and teachers who have known Eric for the three years he attended this school, claimed that Eric has probably changed more than any of the other students in this group. From a boy who rarely spoke in class to a confident, poised public speaker, Eric was transforming. Admittedly, this class was only one factor in Eric’s life that offered him opportunities to risk, to succeed and to fail—and to continue to accept and support him as student and friend. In any case, this year, for him, was pivotal.

Catalina

Alternating discussions with the teacher research participants, Catalina approached this final project with openness and seriousness. With drafts in hand, she asked, “What do you think of this so far?” One of us would question one phrase or more;
another would propose a different consideration. Particularly with “Evening of Bloodshed in Old San Juan,” Catalina wanted feedback. Powerful imagery, multiple references to red hues, and fast-paced snapshots of a burning San Juan characterize this poem.

Catalina played with these words creating multiple written incarnations. A new importance emerged—the sounds of the words as she spoke them became another dimension to consider. In her first eight lines, attention to sounds seems strongest; alliteration is frequent, and rhyming occurs within lines and at breaks. In some instances, it seems as if the sounds of the words overshadow the meanings of the phrases (e.g., “House after house silent prayers, Climb upward over the harbor”).

In “Miguel Jose and the Sheep,” Catalina offers a Puerto Rican folktale that delivers a message about prejudice. Translating some of the dialogue into Spanish, Catalina provides the reader with a feeling of authenticity while also using the dialogue to move the plot. It is an interesting addition that accompanies a rather contrived but charming story. Mechanically, problems still exist (e.g., run-on sentences occur midway through the story).

Catalina claims that this unit was her favorite because “I was allowed to do what I want.” In the study’s final survey, she writes that if “I have no interest in the subject, I hate writing. If I enjoy the subject or am just writing for fun, I love writing.” She also comments, “Well, at the beginning of the year, I wrote ok, but not great and even I see a huge difference in my word choice and writing in general.”

The teacher research participants agree. Our consensus was that she improved more than any other student in the class. Of note, however, is the claim from the
beginning of this research: Catalina was chosen as one of the student research
participants because she represented the female student who exhibited the lowest aptitude
and achievement in writing. Most importantly, however, her love of writing continued—
documented in her final comment as she left class, “I will never forget this class. I don’t
want to leave it.”

Namrata

Venturing to “Underground Railroad Culture,” as Namrata entitles it, Namrata
became somewhat frustrated with this research—mostly because of its limited examples
to model. Understanding that writing was not a permissible slave activity, Namrata
extended the parameters of the study to include *Follow the Drinking Gourd*, a runaway
slave poster, and a Brer Rabbit story as her literary models. “Go to the Lighted North,”
her first entry, parallels cryptic messages offered slaves as guidance for escape.
Attention to spelling modifications, attempting to convey more authentic sounding
words, frequent the text (e.g.,” freezin’,” “ T’see”). In the wanted poster, Namrata even
includes “an additional $800 if you bring the one the Negroes call ‘Moses’ along my
slave”—alluding to Harriet Tubman. Serious tone characterizes the first two
submissions. However, Namrata returns to her playful self in the creation of “Brer
Terrapin and the Feast (Why the Terrapin Has No Teeth).” When a lazy terrapin
neglects to cook a stew for his animal friends, he offers them dirt, salt, and water
simmered in a cauldron. For presentation, “he sprinkled a couple leaves and some
flowers into it. ‘That’ll look expensive now’” is his final comment before the feast. In the
end, he loses his teeth when Sista Fox creates a meal of equal quality just for him.
One of Namrata’s accompanying art pieces featured a set of clay bowls. Attempting to present what she considered “form over aesthetics,” she created these pieces to provide a tangible example of what she considered to be an African attribute of art: a primitive simplicity.

Proficient writing was not the teacher research participants’ concern this year. She had achieved “proficiency.” Motivation was also not a problem. She is self-motivated, coming from a home-school setting where academics are both responsibility and enlightening. Objectives for Namrata included challenging her to expand in-depth written expression through multiple genres, guiding her to revise, and helping her to value the academic writing community. At the beginning of the year, she proved she could write a story and entertain others with her words. Now words needed also to serve her, to allow her to consider more deeply what she thought and felt.

In this study’s final survey, she wrote, “Writing makes me think more deeply about myself and my surroundings, along with situations, etc.” In addition, she stated, “I have begun to like my writing more in the past year. I feel I have drained the maximum from my ‘creativity vault’ and crammed it into my writing.” Citing her Asian story as the one that affected her most, she adds that she uses it to model plots for her other stories. Acknowledging her sense of risk in her writing, she claims “writing exposes the deepest, most secret part of your inner being.” Her understanding of writing, in general, and its meaning in her life is clear.
Christopher

Christopher’s efforts in this class remained enigmatic. This final project contained a burst of effort. Grounded in Medieval Europe, his final project features “Bosworth Fields,” an epic poem; two seasonal poems and a Medieval Irish Folk Song. With clearly defined attributes (e.g., his epic poem contains heroic content, every ten lines are numbered, and the setting is a Medieval battle scene), his pieces exemplify strong focus and voice. In previous assignments, Christopher frequently inserted colloquial phrases and expressions. Potentially a problem in this effort, he remains consistent to a more appropriate approach. Lines like “‘Over the hills we go, my people and I, and we see another force, another force far beyond numbering, thousands more than our army,’” reinforce the writing’s tone. Historical allusions add contextual validity. The season poems offer continuity through stanza structure and repetition. They are a pair, not merely two poems about summer and autumn. His final entry, “A Song of Joy,” maintains the tone, but default to some colloquial problems (e.g., “people stay in the dumps” and “A butterfly in your stomach”) that are doubtfully authentic. However, the song ends with the following verse:

So come with us, chant with us,

We shall spread the word, no, the feeling,

It is a feeling that all need to feel,

And if they don’t, that person will never know his greatness.
Perhaps this verse also captures the feeling about writing that Christopher cites in his reflective journal at the end of the academic year—and this research. He wrote,

As I think back on my middle school years, one event stands out on having a great influence on me. This very event would be entering [this] class. […] I see a future in a job that hopefully involves creativeness and freedom, for I clutch those whenever I am able to. That class has opened the door for that path.

Group Analysis of the Independent Study Unit

No student research participants’ final project disappointed the teacher research participants. None of us said, “If only we had done ….” We only commented, “If only we could keep them here another year.” More than noticeable attention to the art and craft of writing, and more than their abilities to analyze texts and model genres, these students exemplified scholarly researchers—researching how people effectively communicate and researching themselves as individuals who communicate.

Shifts from literacy acquisition to literacy learning are frequently apparent as student research participants vocalized and verbalized their approaches to doing writing. In lieu of teachers informing students of genres’ attributes, students analyzed genres for purposes and structure. Conscious of genres’ social implications, delivered as tacit understandings, student research participants’ responses document these observations. Perhaps Eric stated it most succinctly when he offered,

The most important factor to keep in mind when making decisions [about writing] is context. What type of language best fits the character or writing style? What type of language will help to get the point across
more clearly? Who is the audience? Japanese poetry is simple and strong; long, confusing words or sentences will undermine the underlying principle that the writing is based on. Thus, the piece completely loses its effect, and message.

The results did not yield us expert writers. Instead, we observed literate writers—writers who could talk about doing writing, from their own perspectives and about others. Their texts did not represent perfection; more accurately, their writing embodied them and their views of their worlds and sometimes glimpses of themselves in it. Not academic but authentic voice resounded as they shared their interpretations of the sounds of ancient Egyptians, the ominous echoes of slavery, the sights of a blazing San Juan, and the eternal loyalties left on medieval battlefields. Their works reflected errors and effort; most of all, it represented them.

Chapter 5 presents conclusions and implications based on the results documented in this section. The final chapter’s focus is to evaluate the data based on the basic question driving this study: What dynamics affect literacy acquisition and learning? More specifically, what is happening within these research participants’ shared literacy experiences that impacts their writing and their related understandings of themselves as writers?
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research features collaborative efforts and findings from seven primary research participants: three teacher research participants and four student research participants—not in isolation, however. Integral is the setting. Within this academic setting, research participants planned, shared, and experienced doing language—first acknowledging personal conceptualizations of literacy, then evolving through understandings of others’ literacy expressions and artifacts, and finally concentrating on how these experiences impacted their “doing writing.”

Claiming the results “exceeded expectations,” the research participants searched through products and surveys, reflected on interviews and dialogic discussions, and attempted to form conclusions that captured the factors and dynamics most impacting their written literacy efforts. The results are significant and palpable—and in tangible, measurable forms; their conclusions are significant and also palpable—not as obviously tangible, nor as quantifiably measurable, but notably dynamic. Attempting to capture tacit understandings and ground them in relevant perceptions, perspectives and behaviors, the teacher research participants share, in this chapter, their conclusions and implications of this study.
Discussion of Results

By tradition, education is an outcome-driven enterprise. In an era focusing on “value added” and longitudinal growth measured quantitatively, educators and the populations they serve can become myopic. In this discussion, however, research participants focus on factors beyond the traditional treatment-results protocols defining current classroom procedures. Their conclusions and related implications provide insights and impressions into educations’ intangibles: external and internal factors presumably impacting this research community’s understanding of the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning.

Beyond considerations of Genre Wars, research treatments and product analyses, inquiries and reflections included in this chapter attempt to capture the importance of scaffolding, motivations, and feelings related to the research participants’ interactions and reactions to doing language. These are transparent entities, not definitive in form or universally generalizable. Admittedly, motivations and feelings—characterized by elusiveness and ambiguity-- continue to confound, and, in some academic spheres, their mere mention serves to dilute the scientific strength of research.

Still, the conclusions stand. Divided into two sections, curricular design and delivery and interactions and reactions, this chapter addresses both teacher research participants’ initial framing of the course and also the research participants’ (teacher and student) interactions and reactions as the course progressed. Evolving from discussions of results and data analyses, the conclusions serve to capture the spirit characterizing this study—a study focusing on developing individual written literacy skills as participants analyze and evaluate the literacies of others.
Incorporating Equitable Voice

Creating effective collaborative curricular design and delivery that supports maximizing literacy acquisition and learning (specifically, doing writing) requires the incorporation of equitable voice. Equal voice may be an impossibility in educational systems; it may even be deleterious to construction of effective educational practices in some circumstances. Hillocks’ (1984) meta-analysis of effective modes of teaching supports this assumption, offering that environmental mode—a balance between purposeful, direct instruction and students’ input and interaction—stands as the most effective instructional mode.

Therefore, equitable voice commands consideration—especially in the construction of a collaborative curriculum focusing on written expression. Expressed by the teacher research participants as a vehicle for establishing mutual respect, value, and ownership—as well as grounding curricular decisions in critical and analytical thinking, equitable voice surfaced as a cornerstone throughout this research. It was a deliberate decision and served to frame the decision-making process for all research participants throughout the entire study.

Equitable voice first surfaced in curricular design meetings. Teacher research participants’ initial planning—facilitated by administrative support—occurred in the spring prior to the actual research. Understandings gained from the previous pilot study provided a common-foundation for rebuilding attempts. However, each teacher
participant brought with her the frustrations and beliefs that originated from that experience. Equitable voice provided an arena for discussing the past while considering future curriculum design and delivery. Not merely the opportunity to express or emote, however, equitable voice, for our circumstances, demanded providing sound, researched reasoning. It included listening with a similar respectful stance.

Even though this research design remained as my direct responsibility, we all understood that its success would be directly proportional to the other teacher research participants’ opportunities to freely contribute to its framing. The research needed a design that would be collaboratively built to sustain its delivery if any one of us would be incapacitated and unable to participate during any part of the study. In addition, equitable voice helped to assure, to some degree, that this effort was a joint effort—not a top-down delivery system. Equitable voice encouraged synergy and strengthened the related curriculum and its delivery. Issues of curricular order, inclusion of additional activities and projects, and expanded interpretations of initial proposals developed. No longer three individual teacher research participants, we became a research team that wisely relied on each other for support and feedback, an element missing in the previous pilot project.

Equally essential to this writing research was endeavoring to include opportunities for equitable voice for student research participants. Understanding the parameters accompanying this coursework, student research participants still participated in questioning and modifying curricular design and delivery. Valued as active agents in their educational process, student research participants collaborated in creating working definitions of foundational terms, assisted in developing projects and activities to
strengthen literacy understandings, played a primary role in designing assessment tools, and shared in analyzing their respective texts for patterns and themes.

Implications of equitable voice in education, in general, reside in the concepts of respectful and responsible empowerment. The dialogic dynamic of equitable voice accelerates the assertion of authentic voice in students’ written texts. Students, no longer powerless in doing language or writing, accept and develop active agency—one step toward independent learning.

Establishing Consensus of Opinion

Aligned with equitable voice is consensus of opinion. Obviously, some decisions are givens; standards-driven school systems, such as the one serving as this research setting, come replete with pre-chosen concepts, skills and proficiencies. However, curricular design and delivery present variables, and variables involve decision-making.

Consensus of opinion became crucial. Consensus centered on establishing negotiation procedures. First, teacher research participants, through discussion and with limited debate, decided on a common focus. With that established, it became easier to judge decisions against objectives—rather than personal preferences. Also, modifications reflected minor adjustments (e.g., changes in times and order of units, double-blocking time periods, accommodating schedule changes from testing, etc.) more than substantive changes. With no one questioning key components framing the study, everyone united efforts to achieve established goals and objectives.

Obviously, the previous statement indicates the most important implication of this component. With all teacher research participants uniting in a common focus, instruction
and structure maintained consistency. Consensus among research participants reinforced purposes. Replacing fractured delivery of concepts and skills was a reinforcing mechanism—one that provided a common language and inspired exemplary, not proficiency, standards. Expectations stood clear for both teacher research participants and student research participants.

Providing an Overarching Goal

Reacting to a limitation in the pilot study, teacher research participants concluded that establishing an overarching goal (see Wiggins and Tighe, 2005) that would frame the entire research study was essential to maintaining the research’s focus and purpose. *What are the dynamics affecting literacy acquisition and learning in a classroom of gifted students—and in the worlds outside the classroom’s walls?* became the foundational question.

The results indicate that the students “got it.” Providing continuity and a framework for each student research participant’s study of literacies (their own and others’), the overarching-question approach primed and sensitized students to perceptions of commonalities and differences among various cultures and their related literacies. Focus on standards became secondary; lessons and experiences surpassed minimalistic expectations, replacing them with more global understandings including why some genre forms necessitate attention to standards. Implications include the belief that to achieve standards, lessons and their related foci must surpass standards’ expectations. Focusing
on an overarching goal offered students relevancy and continuity—extending intentionality, purpose and the potential for internalization—instructional scaffolding (see Langer & Applebee, 1983).

Providing Responsive Flexibility

Establishing overarching goals demands responsibility and focus, but developing flexibility allows paths to achieve the goals, accommodating reactive and responsive twists and turns. Collaborative curricular design demands this flexibility. Inevitable complications confound processes and procedures; external factors (e.g., student/teacher absences, scheduling conflicts, etc.) always occur, and lesson design and delivery are not exact sciences (if students remain as the primary focus).

Obviously, additional factors include the participants in any learning community. As this research progressed, its design and delivery changed in response to the student research participants. Responding to the social situatedness of literacy acquisition and learning as well as acknowledging students’ unique needs and abilities positioned students as valuable, active members of this learning community (see Applebee, 1996). Student research participants’ requests for additional time to create written texts and related art projects, the inclusion of more supportive and extensive instruction (delivered through modifications of instructional scaffolding (Langer and Applebee, 1983), and time and efforts to collaborate on evaluation procedures required flexibility. In addition, aligning language arts with art experiences that complemented and reinforced principles within each cultural unit complicated the study exponentially.
Implications are numerous. Implications apply to any classroom. They involve all areas of teaching, not simply literacy acquisition and learning. Three significant implications are as follows:

First, flexibility reflects teachers’ positioning of students’ importance in educational experiences. When teachers apply educationally grounded reactivity and response to students’ needs, they distinguish students as an integral factor in the education equation (see Hillocks, 1984; Applebee, 1996). Addressing students’ understandings, not merely completing lessons on required concepts and skills, stands as a priority. Sound teaching demands this flexibility acknowledging the unique dynamics of each learning community, each class. Perceptive teachers realize that independently each student serves as an idiosyncratic variable in the classroom; collectively, all students within one learning community present an even more complex dynamic.

Second, teachers must apply flexibility to lesson construction and delivery, employing both class and individualized, instructional scaffolding (Langer & Applebee, 1983). This scaffolding includes intentionality, appropriateness, structure, collaboration, and internalization (Langer & Applebee, 1983, p. 170). Timing and sequencing offer some challenges; varying approaches to learning, methods and increments of reinforcement, and alternating forms of assessment all serve as dynamic factors in literacy acquisition and learning. Variability occurs from student to student, class to class, year to year and place to place. Assuming that one-size-fits-all remains problematic and negates the contextual situatedness of literacies.

Third, educators need to continue to question current educational practices and tenets (e.g., traditional modes of delivering information, disregarding varying learning
styles, etc.). Blind acceptance of current trends and prescriptive protocols need to be assessed with the same critical thinking procedures educators purportedly revere. Valuing the cultural situatedness of learners necessitates flexible mindsets to differentiate educational opportunities in appropriately challenging ways and for educationally valid reasons. In addition, responsive flexibility establishes the dynamics of critical assessment within the classroom community, engaging both teachers and students in “curriculum as conversation” (Applebee, 1996)—a key to constructing appropriately differentiated gifted curriculum at a time when education frequently focuses on minimal proficiency.

**Interactions and Reactions**

**Creating a Community of Literacy Learners**

From the beginning, this research sought a community of learners, learners willing to engage in literacy learning. First presented with information explaining the research’s intent, prospective student research participants then learned of their potential role: to search for how people communicate throughout various cultures and develop their own communicative skills and concepts, focusing on written literacies, within this global framework. With that understanding, research participants proceeded—united by purpose, sustained by support.

Crucial to sustaining this support was attempting equalization of power within the classroom setting (see Delpit, 1988; Hillocks, 1984). Clearly, the teacher research participants controlled the basic curricular structure and were also responsible for
assigning conventional grades. However, the student research participants discussed how they could also collaborate in the class’s direction, design and assessment.

Encouraged to question, frequently and critically, student research participants also wanted equitable voice. Class discussions, reflective journal writing, and one-on-one dialogic interviews provided venues for expression. As one student research participant, responding to a prompt inquiring about writing’s power, wrote in his reflective journal, “Writing is an equalizer. It is the place where my words receive sole attention. I can be heard.”

It would not be sufficient to listen and disregard reacting to their voices, however. Issues that directly affected all students frequently served as topics for classroom discussions. Construction of rubrics for evaluation of written texts also followed discussion format. Negotiations were framed in questions; criticisms posed as suggestions based on reasoning.

The fundamental implication of this dynamic is that communities function effectively when all members are valued and are united around a central purpose. Valuing classroom members satisfies social needs and provides support. Moreover, valuing initiates trust. Unification around a relevant, central purpose removes some of the social pressures typically associated with egocentricity and adolescence. Contrary to popular educational mantras that assert “write what you know,” student research participants’ written texts that adapted perspectives from cultures other than their immediate contexts reflected more creativity and elaboration than written texts based on their own lives. Focusing outside the immediate classroom community seemingly provided students with a sense of safety.
Encouraging Personal Goals

Even though this research evolved from an overarching question, student research participants periodically reflected on and developed personal literacy goals. Some aspired to create “The Great American Novel.” Others wanted to improve aesthetic components of their writing. One wanted to be able to respond more quickly to prompts. Time management (i.e., allowing sufficient time for prewriting and adequate revisions) also surfaced as a goal. None, however, focused on improving academic grades or passing proficiency tests.

Teacher research participants questioned why grades were not a concern and more specific applied issues were. Discussion revealed that collaborative rubrics removed the threat of academic issues, and students felt that they were quite capable of demonstrating minimal proficiencies in state standardized testing. Focus was, therefore, more on learning how to express themselves through various genres so that what they wanted to say was precisely conveyed to their anticipated audience. Student research participants concluded that removing potentially punitive grades freed them to applying and developing specific skills and concepts. Student research participants were free to play at writing, expressing themselves in what might be considered non-academic forms (Vygotsky, 1974).

The related implications of these conclusions would be nullified if students had no input in developing rubrics for evaluation. Aligning these evaluations and goals allowed student research participants ownership in their written communicative development. Interestingly, all student research participants, however, believed that the teacher research
participants’ input in these rubrics was also essential, serving as guidance. Encouraging personal goals, incorporating guidance from teachers, and using rubrics to support personal goals emerge as elements of a positive support system that encourages students to create more organized and elaborate written texts.

Recognizing Idiosyncratic and Social Dynamics

Acknowledged at the beginning of this research are students’ entry points, i.e., each student enters a classroom (and learning) armed with different sets of experiences and equipped with varying abilities, skills, concepts and perspectives about themselves and the world around them. Sometimes educators ignore entry points, developing lessons from expectations associated with their grade levels. Sometimes educators accept entry points, working with students from a deficit perspective—rarely differentiating beyond grade level.

In addition to entry points, however, is the concept of idiosyncratic development. As the study proceeded, teacher research participants became increasingly aware of differing rates of progress in various areas. One commonality surfaced: no progress was linear; all followed erratic paths.

Frequently apparent were regressions to thematic and/or structural defaults. Noted several times throughout the study were student research participants’ defaults to various apparent standard strategies and responses. For example, Catalina frequently used horses as her subject matter, Eric resorted to short, phrase-like lines of poetry in several situations when time constraints occurred, and Christopher employed first-person perspective in the majority of his narratives and poems—until his final project.
Arguably, an explanation of these defaults may be related to the dynamic between literacy acquisition and literacy learning. Catalina’s regression to a recurring subject—horses—may reveal her limited understanding of subject appropriateness; Eric’s frequent use of short lines of poetry may reflect his perception of poetic form; and Christopher’s consistent first-person perspective may indicate his positioning on Moffett’s (1981) I/You/It continuum—categorizing his writing as egocentric.

This notion of defaults and their relationship in the literacy acquisition-learning dyad is valuable only if it is incorporated into the construction of instructional scaffolding as described by Langer and Applebee (1983). Analyzing writing for patterns and comparing/contrasting these analyses with explicit objectives can then frame future instruction. Collaborating on analyses and construction of writing plans with students, basing instructional experiences on Hillocks’ (1984) environmental mode, further increases the potential for effective literacy learning.

Whereas language arts curriculum is frequently developed as a linear construction, with parts continually added to improve the wholeness of written texts, student research participants’ responses were not linear. Sometimes the pieces seemed to reflect emotional detachment; other times they appeared as if time constraints impacted student research participants’ attention to elaboration and details.

Entwined with idiosyncratic development are myriads of social messages—providing the foundation of literacy acquisition (Gee, 1983) and sometimes establishing explicit literacy learning. References to Heath’s (1983), Dyson’s (1996) and Eckert’s (1989) findings provide insights into the impact of the social situatedness literacies. No
writer is the same as another; no social situations are equal. In addition, interactions between individuals and social spheres confound the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning. These realities render writing analyses somewhat resistant to quantification—particularly if the meaning-making (Kellogg, 1994) function of writing is the focus of analysis.

The implication for educators is that there is no absolute formulaic approach that ensures students will develop uniformly and consistently into proficient and expressive writers. There is also no definitive planning strategy that all student research participants ascribed to or any planning strategy that each consistently followed. The only consistency was inconsistency—even in a study of gifted and/or highly motivated students. Seemingly, the only assurance that writers may maximize their development through their own idiosyncratic stages is to provide—in a responsive, supportive format—adequate, purposeful and meaningful writing opportunities for all students, with students’ collaboration.

**Acknowledging Writing’s Affective Components**

Repeatedly, student research participants referred to emotional connections to their written texts. Sometimes, they shared that writing served as an escape. Eric stated, “Sometimes you just want to leave everything behind, and escape into a fantasy.” He also contends that if his message is something he cares about, emotion will show in his writing “consciously or not.” Catalina recognized an emotional involved in the process of writing, acknowledging a love-hate component dynamic related to the subject matter. Namrata uses her characters to convey emotions, appreciating writing’s cathartic
attributes. And Christopher contributes, “Writing makes me feel powerful, like I can create my own world.” Researchers from Britton et al. (1975) to Elbow (1994; 2000) concur: writing provokes expression; writing expresses power.

Teacher research participants conclude that these affective components of writing directly correlate with two writing skills: textual elaboration and creation of authentic voice. Within the Asian narratives, for example, student research participants produced extensive, elaborate texts that expressed and sustained intense emotional components (e.g., regret and revenge). Also present in these writings are creative and moving plots, strong verbs, and definite conclusions. In addition, strong voice is also apparent in the Native American poems (Eric’s and Christopher’s) and in Catalina’s “Evening of Bloodshed in Old San Juan.”

This affective connection, frequently expressed in student research participants’ reflective journals and documented in their acts of writing, possesses significant implications. First, writing’s power to help define, release, and express emotions validates its significance as a definitive meaning-making strategy. In Eric’s words, “If writing doesn’t express what we really feel, what truth is there in it?” Educators, understanding the power of exploring possible truths through writing, can support students’ efforts to wrestle with their personal perspectives of themselves and their worlds. Second, acknowledging the emotions associated with the writing process itself, educators can construct appropriate, encouraging reinforcement that provides motivational scaffolding—building from students’ strengths and supporting them through areas marked by anxiety. Interestingly, student research participants’ responses
documented more of an attitudinal love-hate relationship than a love-hate continuum when describing their feelings about their writing. Finally, accepting the depth and pervasiveness of writing’s affective component necessitates development and utilization of dialogic discussions, assessments and evaluations aligned with this belief. Critical to these alignments is students’ involvement. Writing’s value should not be solely measured as an academic endeavor; it should also be appreciated as a means for personal growth, and assessed accordingly. Similarly, explicitly defining assignments’ descriptors of success, preferably through collaborative discussion, seemingly helps reduce negative affective reactions to the creation of written texts. With students’ input, the traditional power dynamic of teacher vs. students transforms to a social dynamic characterized as supportive collaboration.

Positioning Audiences.

All writing starts with self. “Not to sound selfish, but I write for me.” “I write about my problems and dreams and bestow them on a fictitious character.” These comments, made by two of the student research participants, exhibit adolescent typicality: self is important. Moffet’s (as cited in Britton et al., 1975) continuum persists.

The bridge to others, however, presents problems. In designing this research, the teacher research participants consciously created a plan that bridged students’ experiences from composing personal writings to exploring other culture’s writings; this instructional scaffolding (Langer and Applebee, 1983) attempted to expand student research participants’ literacy learning in two explicit ways: to grow in awareness of the
fluidity of genres and the awareness of audience. At the end of this research, Eric
described his understanding of both of these concepts; he offers,

Who is the audience? Japanese poetry is simple and strong; long,
confusing words or sentences will undermine the underlying principle
that the writing is based on. Thus, the piece completely loses it effect,
and message.

From peers to the acknowledgment of others, implications exist. For one, peer
reviews help build bridges to understanding audience. Acknowledging how peers help
individual writers perceive a more comprehensive, differentiated perspective of audience,
Christopher offered, “They [peers] point out things that my self audience kind of skims
over.” Namrata concurred, stating, “When I get input from peers, I know what I need to
fix, strengthen, or tone down. It improves the way I convey my messages to my
audience.” Another implication related to the significance of contextual issues includes
the importance of focused instruction. Focusing student writers on contexts represented
by various audiences sensitizes writers’ revision efforts. Omissions transform to
elaborations; redundancies to deletions; bland phrases to lively expressions—when
writers appreciate their audiences’ potential receptiveness. Further considerations involve
global implications. Audiences situated in international cultures differing significantly
from the writers’ own culture impact the writers’ options and directions—sometimes
restricting choices, other times inspiring flexibility. To summarize, situating the
audience, understanding the audience’s context, adds one more dynamic, one additional
dimension, to developing written literacies (see Britton et al, 1975).
Collaborating with Art

Early in the research, the teacher research participants initiated a collaborative lesson, one that combined instruction on aesthetic components related to both written expression and art. Explored through small groups, student research participants searched for and created examples of the following principal elements of design: unity, pattern, balance, contrast, movement, emphasis, and rhythm. Referred throughout the year, student research participants frequently integrated related examples of these elements into revisions of their works. Research participants concluded that this explicit instruction at the onset of this project and repeated opportunities for applications of these elements contributed to the understanding and attention to aesthetics in students’ written expression.

Arguably, one implication is that aesthetics can be learned. Another is that aesthetics can be expressed in definitive terms that allow for transference from understandings to applications. A third implication involves middle-school students’ ability to appreciate aesthetic components—adding yet another dynamic to how they might express themselves through written work. Student research participants, recognizing the connections between the two disciplines, began incorporating elements of art (e.g., the principles of design) into their written texts—applying one additional level of literacy learning, one more attempt at meaning-making (see Kellogg, 1994).

Limitations of the Study

Global in curricular framing, this research’s conclusions, nevertheless, remain limited. Admittedly, the intentionality of sampling—even with attention to maximum
variation—potentially restricts the conclusions’ applicability to classes of students not comprised of gifted and/or highly motivated eighth grade students. In addition to the student research participants’ individual abilities and attitudes toward learning, this particular class of students generated an extremely positive collective personality; no contentious, disrespectful confrontations occurred. Instead this community of learners served as a constant source of mutual support—atypical in adolescent classrooms, and an enigma to the teacher research participants. In addition, the abilities, energies, biases and motivations inherent in each teacher research participant and their cohesive relationships add other factors that affect the results and related conclusions.

Furthermore, the academic setting, in general, offered support from the school’s administration, parents, and other staff members—setting this class’s activities as a high priority; this degree of cooperation is not always evident in large, public schools.

On the negative side, time, demanded by additional job-related responsibilities, interfered with collection of more data from more frequent dialogic interviews. Complicating this specific data was a collaboration component; i.e., the student research participants’ decision to maintain the case study individuals’ identify private, minimized some of the intensity of focus. Dialogic interviews, therefore, occurred with all students in the class—even though only four of the student research participants’ data was included in the analyses. Also, longer meetings with teacher research participants, and in-depth class discussions would have provided greater insights—for all research participants. As in all educational endeavors, inadequate time and energy and external
interruptions (e.g., absences and scheduling conflicts) limit the effective delivery of all learning. These remain perhaps more as the realities of education rather than the limitations of the study.

**Recommendations for Educators**

This study underscores the complexities associated with education in general and the dynamics of literacy acquisition and learning in particular, specifically related to offering curriculum that addresses the needs of gifted learners, as unique individuals and as members of a gifted community of writers. Recommendations revolve around several significant concepts: resisting the over-homogenization of gifted students; developing appropriately challenging, relevant gifted curriculum; and distinguishing between literacy acquisition and learning in students’ work.

Although attention to accurate and inclusive identification of gifted students is a crucial element in gifted education, it creates a related academic complication—one of critical mass. Ironically, extending identification to include students also characterized as culturally diverse, learning and physically disabled, and, in general, *atypically gifted* (Rogers, 2002; Law, 2002) has resulted in generalization of gifted programming. The gifted population, now over-inscribed and underserved, receives services clearly unchanged in the past decade (*Gifted Child Today*, 2004, p. 7).

In this study, four, case-study student research participants provided evidence of maximum variation within a larger core sampling of highly motivated and/or identified gifted language arts students. As the four case studies illustrated, responses varied
significantly and in markedly different ways. To address the needs of these students, a dynamic curriculum was needed.

Extending Hillock’s (1986) concept of environmental mode and combining this instructional stance with Gee’s (1993) definitions of literacy acquisition and learning, this curricular framework creates a dynamic instructional mode—acknowledging and responding to the social situatedness of each student individually, the class context as a whole, and also the concepts related to literacy acquisition and learning. Appreciating the need to negotiate through all instructional modes (natural process, instructional, individual and environmental) (see Hillocks, 1984, 1986) to address student research participants’ needs, teacher research participants also recognized the necessity of grounding instruction primarily in the environmental mode. This framework respected students’ input and idiosyncrasies, acknowledging these entities as vital to students’ understandings of literacies and themselves.

An additional focus in this study is the attempt by teacher research participants to distinguish between literacy acquisition and literacy learning (see Gee, 1993) in the student research participants’ texts, journals, discussions and interviews. Noting the distinction as the student research participants’ ability to recognize (through explicit verbal explanations or written declarations) ways of their doing writing, teacher research participants realized students’ attainment of additional entry levels into literacy learning. More than measuring minimal proficiency levels of literacy, this data assisted teacher research participants in developing relevant instructional scaffolding (see Applebee and Langer, 1983)—informing their own educational practices, as well. Teacher research participants, similarly, extended their tacit assumptions (acquisition) of students’ literacy
learning and replaced those assumptions with more concrete understandings (learning) of students’ approaches to literacy acquisition and learning.

Also included and significant to this research is the notion of curriculum based on an over-arching question (see Applebee, 1996; Wiggins and Tighe, 2005). Whereas gifted education frequently offers fragmented delivery (e.g., pull-out programs every Tuesday) and random, yet entertaining, activities (Rogers, 2002), this research’s curricular design offered methodical, academically relevant challenges based on literacy acquisition and learning—inviting students into the conversation and construction of their learning and of their curriculum (Applebee, 1996). This design extends the ideas of critical and creative thinking, stretching beyond exercises in developing thinking skills. The over-arching question itself provokes the extended thinking; the students’ situatedness as participants in the process promotes the engagement; the results reflect authentic, directed learning—towards teacher-selected goals and objectives, while encompassing student-valued direction and input throughout the year.

Corollaries directly associated with this study of literacy learning and acquisition also indicate that both social and affective dynamics directly impact students’ conceptualizations of themselves as learners and their attitudes towards learning. Consequently, scaffolding for success in academic feats is not enough; educational scaffolding must consider students’ status within the classroom learning community, their personal valuing of educational objectives, and their sense of self within a larger, more global social context. In addition, assessment as guide to learning must replace assessment as punitive devaluation.
In conclusion, research that helps define the dynamics involved in literacy acquisition and learning needs more rigorous inquiry and analysis—focusing on maximizing learning, not minimal proficiencies related to learning. In a country founded on freedom of expression, the irony of repressive educational doctrines that feature limited academic genres as measures of proficiency is problematic. This study offers one perspective addressing this focus through a year-long curricular design, framed on purposeful continuity and appropriately challenging differentiation.

Recommendations for Students

Emerging as recommendations from this research are students’ rights, rights that promote responsibilities—to self and others. Foremost is students’ rights to appropriately challenging curriculum, to curriculum that supports critical thinking, and to curriculum that equips students with appreciating the powers of literacies—powers that can control and powers that can liberate.

Central to understanding these powers is doing writing. With its capacity to construct order from chaos, writing provides personal power. Students have the right to this personal empowerment. They have the right to the feelings, belonging and spirit captured in this research’s entire class of student participants in a poem edited by Mrs. Oldfeld and inspired by the Native American Unit, preserving in words a year of collaboration.

Song to Selves

Individuals, all with separate lives

Who connect with each other

Monday through Friday
Forty-two minutes a day
Learning together.
A group of essayists, storytellers,
Poem writers,
People of poetry and prose.
A task and job for all to do,
We break boundaries
Writing from here
With words for there—
Warm words, warm feelings, happy times,
Here.
Recall pencils, warm with use.
Scritch, scratch go the pencils.
Heads pulled close to the desks;
Concentration so sharp it could
Gouge your eye.
Eager to learn
Eager to see
Eager to be
The best that we can.
Minds that are imaginative
To create a masterpiece
A group of unique people
We can still grow.

Students asking for more lead,

An eraser, paper, a pen

Recollect Kino and Juana, and, of

Course, *Stargirl*,

The novel that was far in the fire of

Discussion.

Each moment of laughter

Touches the heart and soul of my

Being.

Down on paper

Our souls poured out for the world to

Read

Working, thinking hard of what to do.

Brains churning out ideas,

Learning abounds,

A group that binds together

To share ideas to hold true to words.

When we graduate and go our

Separate ways

Let us remember this time spent

Together as

Friends, foes, and writers’
Let us remember how we lived
Together
For this short time in eighth grade.
We love to write
Nothing anyone says will stop that;
Our love for each other enhances our Abilities,
Writing thoughts more than stories.
If you ever find yourself missing
That first step or first word,
Think of what makes up the word,
The passion for words flows through Us all
A need for healing
A need for feeling
We are the writers
Knowing ourselves
Feeling our poetry
Losing our thoughts
We become better people;
We are one,
This family is all ours.
If we are to make a difference in this
World,
Then let us have a million opinions
But one voice
One heart
One soul
We spill out on paper
Feelings and thoughts
That progress into bigger dreams
And goals;
Let us share our stories,
Jot down our notes;
I say we all make mistakes
And revise.
We will achieve
I know it will happen;
We are one.
We work together,
We learn from each other
And ourselves
And others.
Let us have the courage to move
Mountains
With our pens by our sides,
Let us go into the world,
Let us go and make a difference
In this class
Filled with inspiration;
We are a union
We are one
Our knowledge is our future,
Together we can make difference
Reading, writing,
Expanding horizons
Our class is not one
You find in many places
Writing on topics
Freely with no limits
What our minds create.

It is their ultimate right to be heard—even with imperfect rhythms and freedom of form that resounds with randomized thoughts. Authentic in voice, the poem is solely theirs; however, the curriculum was ours—a complex collaboration of combined thoughts and interactions that searched and researched the personal and social dynamics of doing writing.

From this beginning, they continue to define themselves and their worlds. In the end, their words remain—standing as one measure of their lives.
APPENDIX A

BASELINE WRITING—ERIC
My Dear Ellen,

The weeks past and it happened again. This time it was under the rug in the study. I was up late, finishing the third chapter of my latest novel, there was a loud rustle and I turned around to discover a hump on the rug, a moved closer cautious, an it began to move. I grabbed the chair and went after it, but it just disappeared of the rug, but not before knocking over the lamp. I know how this must sound, Ellen, but you must believe me! I am not going mad. We must do something, there is more her than meets the eye.

I wish you were here, Ellen, I get so lonely at times and perhaps you could see that it is not my mind playing tricks, that it is real. Please send my regards to Dr. Richards.

With Love,

Christopher
Dear Christopher,

After careful consideration, I have decided to conclude my studies here in Spain and return home as soon as possible. You mean more than anything to me, Christopher, and if something were to happen to you while I was away, I don’t believe I could forgive myself.

I have spoken with some of my colleagues and they agree with me. I should be finished by next week. In the meantime, you should try not to overwork yourself, and get some more rest. I’ll be home as soon as I can.

Your loving wife,

Ellen

P.S.

Dr. Richards has recently read a book that he the thinks may interest you. He has promised to send a copy shortly.
Dear Ellen,

Words cannot convey the profound emotions of the past week. It has been happening more and more often. Papers rustling humps on rugs or quilts, objects falling over on their own accord. Things just aren’t where I leave them. I can no longer trust myself. Ellen, I am beginning to doubt my own sanity! No, I cannot, I must hold on. I must be sure of myself. Nothing seems real anymore. Please hurry home Ellen, please hurry!

Love,

Christopher

My Love,

I will be home Monday afternoon. I will see you then.

With love,

Ellen
The front door burst open and a tall brown haired woman rushed inside and dropped two, large, gray suitcases.

“Christopher?!?”

“Ellen?”

A disheveled looking man with a large bald spot rushed to the door. The two fell into a long embrace. Ellen started to cry.

“It’s all right, I’m here. she sobbed [sic]

Christopher did not reply. A short man stepped in the door.

“This is Dr. Brown. “introduced Ellen. “He’s here to help you.”

“Ellen! I’m not going mad, Ellen! You have to believe me!”

Ellen wandered into the study and sank into a nearby chair, crying. There was a quiet rustle. The lights flickered and some papers fell of the desk. She looked out the window and saw Christopher and Dr. Brown drive away. She just sat, puzzling.
APPENDIX B

BASELINE WRITING--CATALINA
Catalina’s Baseline Response

Henry Glover was an old hermit of 58, whose wife had died some years ago and since then the towns people said he had gone nuts…

“Not again!” yelled Henry, as he walked into his living room.

On the floor was a large lump near the lamp stand. Angered by the sight of the horrible lump, Henry grabbed a chair and raised it above his head to smash the lump to pieces when a little voice cried out…

“Don’t hit me! Please don’t hit me!” it pleaded.

At the sound of his ragging voice Henry’s dinner guest, the town mayor [sic] rushed in. At the sight of Henry holding air, or what looked to be air, the mayor was shocked, what the people said was true! The old hermit saw things and talked to air! Shaking his head the mayor walked out of the room.

“look I’m sorry I keep poping up but I’m here to be your best friend because your lonely. By the way [sic] the name is Max and I’m a large mole that can only be see by you.”

Henry loosened his grip, “Why me?”

Max looked at him, ‘because I feel really bad that your wife died. I always to be your friend.”

Henry’s eyes bengan to fill up with water and he then, to the mole’ surprise hugged him.

“Thanks for giving me another chance. Do you want to stay with me perminitly?”

The large mole grinned, ‘you bet I do!”
The two laughing walked out to the kitchen where the mayor stared. Scared by the man laughing and talking to air he left.

From then on the two became good friends. They laughed and no one bothered them, for fear old hennery was crazy. Henry put down the chair and grabbed the little thing out from under the rug. Henry held the thing out in front of him. “What are you doing here again?” he roared.
APPENDIX C

BASELINE WRITING—NAMRATA
Baseline Response--Namrata

Two small fingers paint the walls with a thick, sticky, [sic] syrup. The toddler scrubs her hands in a puddle of ketchup, and joyfully presses them to the honey-smear framing it in red…

Does this sound familiar? It should, whether you remembered, witnessed, or heard of such an event. Maybe you, or the child who did this, got in trouble. But did they deserve it? Not really. Though playing “caveman” is not exactly acceptable, it is actually a form of communication.

“How is finger-painting a form of communication?” you say.

Actually, the answer is surprisingly simple. This child may be expressing boredom, frustration, perhaps experimenting to see what the effect will be. For example: “…a red-faced teenage storms up the staircase, and slams the door to his room….”

What does this express? If you said anger, you are correct. This hormonal whirlwind is trying to get rid of anger by creating loud noises, which use up more energy than tip-toeing and shutting the door gently. It is their form of communication.

When I was as young as the toddler I imagined in the first paragraph, I communicated in a similar manner. As I went through elementary years, my most major form of communication was writing, and sometimes I used music, art, and, of course, speech. I felt I could express myself more, get my thoughts organized, etc. on paper. Or, maybe this was due to the reason that I was extremely shy.

Currently, I have begun to emerge from my shell, and have left my half-started stories unwritten. My major form of communication is now speech.
Over the years, from food-paintings to door-slamming, my communication methods have changed drastically in advancement, but they are still basically the same, and still yell the same words: “I am a communicator!”
APPENDIX D

BASELINE WRITING--CHRISTOPHER
Hank was a very lonely man, who just wanted to stay alone. He just wanted to be by himself so he could work on his novel in peace. Hank was a guy who at first sight you’d expect him to sit on his lawn and yell at the little kids who set foot on his property. No, Hank was more sophisticated; he worked on his book inside next to an open window, and then yelled at the children.

All he did from dusk till dawn is jot away on notepads, read and type. Hank was just one of those retired people who despised all others, sitting alone all day. The slightest distraction drove him mad.

One day as he typed away page after page he noticed a sound downstairs in his basement. As the light in the window shined in, he threw the curtains closed and his room turned into a musty, dark room instead of usual dusty, light room.

His face darkening and grim, he trooped downstairs flicking the light switch on the way down. He heard a crash in the wall, and then heard little claw scratches on the ground. He turned and tossed his head, looking around.

And then he noticed it.

A lump under his rug.

He examined it with the most angry face you could ever find.

“You little vermin! YOU GET OUT OF MY HOUSE NOW!” Hank bellowed furiously. “You disrupted my work!”

The lump dashed away, but Hank couldn’t tell what it was.

Two weeks passed, and it happened again.
Furiously clutching his pencil and paper, he marched down to his basement again, kicking the door open.

There it was.

A lump under his rug.

He screamed and jumped and tossed his paper all over.

“You again?!” I’m calling the exterminator!” Hank horrendously screamed. “I will not be inter—“

Suddenly, he stopped, as the lump slowly crawled to the edge, and a tiny little golden retriever popped his head out from under the rug, staring at Hank sadly.

“A little puppy? What are you doing there?” Hank said thoughtfully.

The puppy whimpered, and its stomach growled. Hank noticed his cellar door open, with the noon sun shining in.

“Don’t worry, fella, I’ll take care of ya,” Hank said sniffing, and then he was inspired by the puppy.

And to this day, the dog barks at intruders yet the bark has become inspiration.

Ah, teamwork…
APPENDIX E

BASELINE RUBRIC
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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventions of writing— mechanics, grammar, spelling, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity— Format, word combinations, original plot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice— Strong wording, Passion, etc.</td>
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<td>Structural elements— Paragraphs, organization, use of dialogue, etc.</td>
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<td>Unique patterns</td>
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Additional Comments:
APPENDIX F

MULTI-GENRE RUBRIC
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APPENDIX G

HOME LITERACY WRITING--ERIC
Interview (with Father)

Q: What form of communication do you use most at home?
A: We generally use verbal communication when everyone is present. Sometimes we leave short notes when convenient to do so.

Q: Why do you use it?
A: Verbal communication is the most efficient means of communication for normal interaction.

Q: What form of communication do you consider most effective?
A: For simple information exchange and direction, verbal communication works best, however, for imparting more important communication nothing beats a written note.

Q: Why do you think so?
A: Written notes give a permanent record of the communication and are not subject to poor memory habits.

Q: Why do you think we don’t always use the best form of communication?
A: We are generally lazy and don’t want to take the time to write things down.

Writing takes too much time and the delivery is not as effective and interesting.

Even when verbalizing we get lazy and use contractions and acronyms all the time.

Q: How do you think different modes of communication affect our development?
A: Different modes of communication help develop more quickly than we were dependent on only one form of communication.

Q: How do you think our choices in modes of communication reflect our personalities?

A: How we communicate speaks volumes about our personality. The way we speak, the words we choose, the clothes we wear, the company we keep all communicate the type of person we are.

Q: Where do we take too many shortcuts communicating?

A: We tend to use generalizations and common words to communicate most of our thoughts instead of using the best words or phrases.

Q: Why do we take shortcuts?

A: It requires a high degree of mental effort to find the best words to accurately convey our thoughts.

Q: What are the adverse effects of taking them?

A: When we take shortcuts in communication we expose ourselves to the risk of being misunderstood.

Q: What problems can lack of communication cause? (Generally speaking)

A: Everything from missed appointments to global warfare.

Q: How much of an effect do subtle forms of communication have vs. outright forms?

A: Subtle forms of communication let the recipient reach a conclusion or understand a message without being placed in the awkward position of being embarrassed or humiliated in front of others.
Q: Which of those forms (subtle or outright) are most effective over a period of time?
A: Each form has its place and can be the most effective form of communication given a particular situation.
Q: Why do you think so?
A: Since we are social animals, we depend on others for just about all of our needs from food to shelter and from love to spiritual fulfillment. The best way of fulfilling our needs is to communicate effectively with one another.
Q: Why do you think that we use different modes of communication for different people?
A: Since we are individuals in a social world we each have a variety of needs and these needs are fulfilled in different ways. Each situation can vary from one individual to another, therefore requiring differing approaches on the individual and the situation at hand.
APPENDIX H

HOME LITERACY WRITING--CATALINA
7:30-- Major league baseball game six. (Florida marlins vs. the New York Yankees)

Setting: living room in front of the TV

Jared: Give it up, Catalina. You know the Yankees will win the World Series.
So give it up. The Marlins stink. They won’t win.

Me: Shoot! I don’t care what you say! The Marlins will win and I’m going to stick with them to end, win or lose.

Dad: It’s not possible for the Marlins to win. So just give it up.

Mom: Will you two leave her alone, she might be rooting for the Marlins but that doesn’t mean that they will win! Hey, I root for the Yankees all the time even when you aren’t and you don’t make fun of me.

5th inning

Me: Go, go, go… Yes! Thank you, Alex! Oh, Jared, look who’s winning now! The Marlins! Thanks to Alex Gonzales and Luis Castillo’s great hit!

Jared: No fair, Posada so had him out! Oh, well, at least it’s only 1-0. Where’re still going to win!

6th inning

Me: Ohmygosh! Yes! Go, Jeff Conine! Yes, yes, yes! Thank you, Juan Encarnacion for bringing Conine home!

Jared: Oh, quit your yelling! It’s only 2-0. Derek Jeter can still hit a home run, and Andy Powerste can still pitch a good rest of the game. Besides, I thought you liked Jeter.

Me: I still do, but the Marlins have Ivan Rodrigues and Miguel Cabbrea.
Jared: Oh! So, that’s why you like the Marlins, they have cute players. You’re so cheap!

9th inning

Me: Oh, Jared two outs and one more to go till the Marlins win! The Yankees lost!

Jared: No, Posada can still hit a homerun, and we could win.

Dad: No, Jared it’s over. I can’t believe the Yankees are going to lose and the Marlins are going to win.

Me: Shh! Josh Beckett is pitching the last pitch.

…

Me: Yes! Yes! Yes! The Marlins won! Chicken! Oh, dear they won! Yeah! Yes!

Jared: I don’t believe it. Someone shoot me!

Me: They won! Beckett tagged Posada out! Ha! Who told you all that the Marlins were going to win! I did! You know what they’re giving Beckett, the MVP too! Oh, this is a great year!
APPENDIX I

HOME LITERACY WRITING—NAMRATA
“Jennie?”

“Yeah Mom?”

“Did you finish all your homework?”

“Uhh…No.”

“Are you watching TV?”

“Er…Yes.”

“Get upstairs RIGHT NOW and finish your homework!”

“But Mom! It’s the back-to-back special! And it’s Friday!

“I don’t care what episode it is OR what day it is. You are supposed to finish your homework before any TV. No upstairs. March.”

“Yes, ma’am.”
APPENDIX J

HOME LITERACY WRITING--CHRISTOPHER
"Bye, see ya Monday," said the bus driver. None of us knew her name; she was just the bus driver.

Trotting over to my garage, I swung my backpack off of my back, tossing it onto the driveway. I heard a pencil snap and my binder rings smash, a sure sign of them being crooked when I opened it.

I began to punch in the code for my garage door opener. Soon enough the weekend would be mine to loaf around. The weekend would be mine to relax. The weekend would be…

The garage door opened.

Brushing a few fall leaves off of my bad, I hurled the sack back onto my shoulders. Opening the door into my home, I realized that the weekend wouldn’t be the great paradise of wonders after all. My weekend began with the all too familiar

Mom’s note…

Christopher,

Take dog out ✓
Do piano ✓
And HW ✓
Clean room ✓

_ Mom
I went ahead and did a few things and checked them off, knowing that maybe if I could get this all done, maybe that note would not be such a threat to me, after all, I get them everyday.
APPENDIX K

EXCLUSION POEM--ERIC
Eric’s Exclusion Poem

Sitting,
Staring,
watching the cars,
the businessmen
the city.

Hoping,
Wishing
Wanting a part in it
the bustle
the activity

I dream,
of a business
of a contribution
an asset to this society
one of businessmen and executives

But in their eyes,
What am I?
a vagrant
an invalid
an insult

People go about
caught up in their own world
And I just sit there
Watching
Wishing.
APPENDIX L

EXCLUSION POEM--CATALINA
What It Used to Be

What it used to be
Strong, sturdy gigantic emerald trees sung with the wind.
A shimmering, sparkling river stretches along our village.
Chubby little birds flew over a sapphire sky.

What it was

What it used to be
Tawny cone shaped teepees stood out against a green forest
Laughing energetic children raced the wind.
Muscular horses grazed peacefully in the fields,

What it was

What happened
Our people became sick, they did nothing.
They shouted at us in a strange tongue that we did not know.
With them came a threatening temper that lashed out at our people.

What it was

What happened
They brought us out and shoved us to the ground
With a mocking tone they took our women and children.
We were powerless to do anything being bound and stripped or our weapons

What it was.

What happened
They lit a torch to our homes, burning them to ashes.
With a shout they led us to the “iron horse.”
The iron horse took our women and children.

What it was

What happened
With a roar it was our turn to be token to the iron horse.
We fought with desperate fear, we fought for our lives.
Only, I manged to escape from iron horse.

What it was.

What is used to be
Here now no horses graze, no children race the wind
No trees sing, no more does the river sparkle.
The air is silent, no birds fly over a sapphire sky.

What it was.

What it used to be
Home to men and women, young and old
A haven to children to laugh and play.

A place where humans and animals were one, is no more.

What it was.
APPENDIX M

EXCLUSION POEM--NAMRATA
Lamentations of an Old Man

A fall leaf trembles
As I pass by;
My aged bones
Take in
A crisp damp morn.
My large, creased hands
Pluck gently
A crumpled leaf,
Alone and forgotten
Like me,
From the muddy earth,

I take in the scent
Of the spring-old greenery
Gone rusty,
Trodden on and encased in soil.
A cloud masks the sun
Casting gray gloom

Stooped over am I,
Like the fragile leaves I am!
I’m a cloud,
Wisp and cold,
There but not there,
If you can understand
My lonely tongue.
My hair, it’s pure white
Like freshest snow.

I savour my hours
Like prisoner its last day
Before execution.
And prisoner I am
Of memories
Long ago forgotten
Amid the shelves of your mind.

And I look upon death, not as fear
But a blessing.
When I lay for eternity,
Perhaps someone shall remember me.
Maybe they will come to cry,
Or glance my way like the passerby.
I don’t know; I don’t care.
They don’t care
I’m a dead leaf
On the ground; jut there
For them to trod upon, and forget
In the fall.
APPENDIX N

EXCLUSION POEM--CHRISTOPHER
All alone, in my own corner,
The seats surrounding me empty,
Lifting my sandwich to take a bite,
I glance around for others,
But they’re too far away to see.

I’m stuck in a cage of feelings,
Not knowing how to cope,
For there is no one there to support,
I glance around for others,
But there’s no one to support me.

Sitting there, nibbling, emotionally hurt,
I’m almost done eating,
Soon I’ll be in class where other people are
Will almost consider my existence,
Bit it’s only a little better than this.

In an emotionally harmed manner,
I weep away to my locker,
With no one on my mind,
For no one in the world,
Has their mind on me.
APPENDIX O

EXCLUSION POEM RUBRIC
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CONCLUSIONS:
APPENDIX P

MULTI-GENRE TEXT SCAFFOLD RUBRIC
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In a particular Calvin and Hobbes comic strip, Calvin’s father comes home to find a number of choking snowmen by the front door. He says, “Eggplant casserole tonight?” Calvin’s mother replies, “Why, yes.” In this strip, Calvin used his snowmen to communicate. The snowmen’s positions and facial expressions showed Calvin’s feelings toward eggplant casserole.

Like Calvin, we all communicate in a wide variety of ways, some of them are strange, subtle, or very obvious, and sometimes without even realizing it. For example, our choices in music, television, and art are expressions of our personality. I only listen to music that conveys a feeling or mood regardless of the words. I think that 60s and 70s music does that best, so I listen to 60s and 70s music as opposed to “New Stuff.” This reflects my personality as an “emotional” person, and tells people about me. Even the way that we do things can reflect our mood or state of mind. In my daily life I also use a variety of modes of communication to consciously convey an idea. I use e-mail and Instant Messenger to communicate with my family and friends. Occasionally, I’ll use the telephone as well. To communicate at home, I obviously just talk, but I’ve been known to use quotes from movies or TV shows rather than whole sentences. I also tend to use a lot of facial expressions and gestures. I have, on more than one occasion, been referred to as a “closet thespian” because of my extravagant acts to get a simple point across. You might consider that as my odd mode of communication, like Calvin’s snowmen.
APPENDIX R

COMMUNICATION ESSAY—CATALINA
Communication Essay--Catalina

What would happen if there were no communication on earth? Life would cease to exist, as we know it today because all living things communicate. People have been communicating since the beginning of time. So, sometimes people take communication for granted; however, without even knowing it, people use many forms of communication everyday. For example, we communicate through our clothing, our type of music, our speech, what we write, even by prayer, and the list could go on and on! In the next few paragraphs, we will discuss how I personally communicated as a young child to my present age. So, relax as I first take you back in time to when I was a little girl.

Technically, we can all communicate from the moment we are born, but since I can’t remember that far back, I’m only going to tell you what I can remember. When I was younger, I used to cry to try to get my way and it usually worked but I’ve stopped doing that now. By the time, I was about 8 or 9 years old, I started to notice that what my Mom had me wear wasn’t what I wanted to wear or wasn’t “my” style. So, I began to pick out my own clothes and branch out and express myself or “communicate” through my clothing.

As I have gotten to be a teenager, I use other forms of communication. Now instead of crying to get what I want, I try to discuss my feelings with others. One of my favorite forms of communication now is e-mail. When, I get on-line, I express myself to my friends by what we talk about. We can express ourselves on anything like school,
Communication Essay

A small child dips her fingers in a puddle of ketchup. She slowly drags them across the white wall. She picks up a green crayon, and sketches frantically over the red dollops, as if to hide her mistake. ‘What is this child doing?’ you may ask, though you think you already know the answer. She is not scribbling. She is actually communicating. The scribbling is a way of communication because the child could be (1) expressing anger, (2) experimenting, or (3) trying to get attention.

Since I was as young as five, my favorite form of communicating was reading and writing. I was very shy, so talking to people not immediately related to me took a lot of efforts. I read, and put myself in the character’s place. The book communicated with me, and I ‘communicated back’ by writing stories of my own. I loved to paint and draw, and you could tell (from what I drew) what I felt.

When I was about nine years old, my stories stopped being ‘So-and-so did this and that. The End’ and became more involved, as with the books I now read. I especially liked to write historical fiction, because I liked the fixed rules for everything in the time gone past. I also expressed myself through embroidery and other hands-on crafts. I had a column published in an online newspaper during this time.

Now, I have stopped being so shy. I write mostly fairy-tale twists (when and if I have time), and read them as well, along with mysteries, adventures, historical fictions, and futuristic books. My main communication is through speech, but it is mostly used with people I know, or with teachers when I am answering questions. Yet, silently, my voice, my stories, and my crafts still scream the same words, resounding off the walls unseen: ‘I am a communicator!’
Christopher’s Literacy Essay

Did you every think about the endless amount of ways we communicate? As a communicator, I think that e-mail, internet posts and messages, and phones are dominant. I am extremely verbal with people I know well and shy with strangers. Getting my point across is easy for me when it is very urgent that my point gets across. A lot of people see me as quiet just because they don’t see me when I am talkative. As a communicator, I am effective when it is necessary for me to be.

As a communicator, I grew and sprouted at my first word. Crying and wailing was my first stage. Progressing, I learned to use words as I gained teeth. Through the years I made gestures, actions, and figured out more words. My communication abilities were rapidly growing.

Getting older, I was granted the almighty privilege of internet e-mail and instant messaging. I then was also aloud to use phones as I please. Meanwhile, my vocabulary and gestures/physical actions were expanding. Going on to fourteen years, my ways of getting my point across will grow with technology.

The effect communication has had on me is extremely great. I would have never been able to get my point across or understand others. The whole world would be a mess if we didn’t communicate. Overall, analyzing my methods, I am effective in the area of communication. This includes vocal, writing, e-mail, gestures, and almost all other kinds. My forms of communication vary, but there are still hundreds of ways I have yet to find. Have you discovered some?
APPENDIX U

MULTI-GENRE PROJECT POEM--ERIC
Mystery Man

His house is on the corner
I see it all the time
You’d think I’d catch a glimpse
Of whoever lives inside.

There’s no one in the yard
The car is always parked
There’s trees around the windows
So you cannot peer inside.
The garden’s neatly kept
The leaves are always raked
The driveway’s cleanly shoveled
By the no one that lives there

The lights are never on
The lawn is always dark
There’s a dark shadow of mystery
Cast upon this corner lot

Who is this Mystery Man?
No one seems to know
There’s a variety of rumors
But could any be true?
APPENDIX V

MULTI-GENRE PROJECT POEM--CATALINA
Three Things to Know About My Neighbors

1). They’re weird.

2). They’re weird.

3). They’re weird.

UNORDINARY

Unordinary
Floppy, brown hair cascades down over his eyes
The athletic senior looking for freedom and independence
Yet, he’s anything but normal to those who know him

Anything but ordinary
Five “M’s”; Mary, Mike, Mimi, Marou, and McClain Murphy
All begin with “M” even the cats names begin with “M”!
Is it just me or is that weird!

Weird
Seven years ago, McClain walked into our newly bought house uninvited
Making himself at home, the young 11-year-old talked away
The first of many appearances, we met our new neighbor.

Crazy
One day harnessed up, he walked onto our deck.
Prepared to climb our tree, he was like a squirrel ready to dance up the tree
In bizarre wonderment, we had him climb back down.
Just plain Weird
Armed with a bow and arrow, McClain climbed our deck again.
With a steel tipped arrow, he tried to shoot it over his house
Stupid kid didn’t realize he could hurt have hurt some one!

Different
McClain an unordinary teenager
Whose favorite mode of communication is
Acting…bizarre

Strange
So this is what we have lived with for 7 years.
A crazy teenager who’s anything but normal
Doing things no one would normally do
Unordinary
APPENDIX W

MULTI-GENRE PROJECT POEM--NAMRATA
Jungle Man

Menacing aloes reach from his home,
Birds of Paradise from green underbrush roam.
Curling pines, old and twisted,
Reflect off of old windows, webbed and misted.

Broken stone for a front walk,
Stone the color of powd’ry chalk.
Home half-hidden from sight,
Peeled pain and shattered glass give you a fright.

Palms unfurling leaves so green,
Grass brown-yellow can’t be seen.
Crooked in a driveway, sit old faded jeeps.
Walk past here at night, and you’ll get the creeps.

What message does he convey?
We never see him by night or day.
What message does he convey?
APPENDIX X

MULTI-GENRE PROJECT POEM--CHRISTOPHER
Terrible Troublemaking Toddler

He’s snooping around the neighborhood,
Just to yell and scream and boss around,
Even though he’s kind of small he’d
Never let a chance to be boss down.

A little kid his is,
Innocently asking parent’s kids for play,
The children have yet to find,
That this will be one lousy day.

This terrible child is the kind,
That would take advantage of another,
This terrible child is the kind,
That I would like to smother.

He asks for food, requests, demands,
And never ever will leave,
His mom must always drop by
For a troublesome son to retrieve.
The sun sets on the horizon,
The kid finally had to go,
But still the horrid facts come to mind,
He will return here, same time, tomorrow.
APPENDIX Y

CONCLUSION—ERIC
In our daily lives at home, at school, and in the community, we use a variety of modes of communication. In our homes we see commercials, we read magazines, we talk and sometimes leave notes. In the community we send out letters, we read and write newspaper articles to spread information around. In home and […] we use more personal names to better illustrated our point. At school we need to provide information to a specific group, or sometimes person, so that they understand the concept fully. Each venue almost has a different division of culture that requires us to use different forms of communication to convey our ideas best.
APPENDIX Z

CONCLUSION—CATALINA
So what did I learn from this whole project you ask? Well, you should have learned that without communication we wouldn’t be here. Aren’t you glad that God gave us the ability to communicate with others? Imagine not being able to tell others what you feel, just having those feelings locked up inside of you, building up wanting to escape but note being able to. Live would be miserable. It would be full with people going crazy from their feelings being locked up inside them, trying to give a cry for help in a mixed up world. Yes, communication is a precious gift that we shouldn’t take for granted. So no matter how much we pay for everything else we own, no one could place a price on communication.
APPENDIX AA

CONCLUSION--NAMRATA
We Communicate Through:

Notes (visibly)

Speech (verbally)

Advertisements (visibly)
APPENDIX BB

CONCLUSION—CHRISTOPHER
The ways we communicate are still being found out. Technology will grow, and with it, so will communication methods. I hope you enjoyed going on this adventure, exploring and discovering ways of communication. Many genres are used throughout the ways of communicating. The numerous communication ways can only shoot up from here. Did you ever think about the endless ways we communicate? Well, it you haven’t before this, now you have.

The end is coming,
The end is approaching,
The end of this book is near.
The end is itching,
Closer and closer,
The end of this book is here.

THE END
(is here)
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APPENDIX DD

ODE--NAMRATA
Ode to Books

Pages filled with boundless wealth;
of shops and swords
of knights and legends.

Of Kings and queens,
princesses and dragons,
Of detectives and villains
and more.

Oh, glorious story
held in my hands
between two covers
warmed with my warmth, and my heart.

Oh joy! To sit in a quiet corner and throw
myself into the world contained on paper.

To stop takes too much effort,
as if ripping my heart out and leaving it there
on a bedrail somewhere.
Oh! sweet bliss to
have one thousand
books lined up on the shelves.
To pick and choose what
adventure I want to try
or be in.

To have books in red,
blue or yellow, pink,
grey or green, big or
small, fall or little,
in possession.

To hold,
To read
Over it,
To weep,
Or laugh,
Or feel bitterness,
Or misery,
Or happiness and gaiety.

Yes, my book. A
wondrous book bound with
Sewing-thread, cardboard, and
Glue, as if containing the
Feelings of those who

Wrote them. Oh! Joy and
Ecstasy.
APPENDIX EE

ODE—CHRISTOPHER
Ode to Maps

Maps
Directional, informing
papers
Helping me on my busy
way
Helping my path be
revealed.
It opens my passages
It leads me away from
where I am now
Some states
Canals
Roads
Boarders
Houses
Cities
Countries
Latitude
Legends
Oceans
Rivers
Landmarks
Lakes
Longitude
My path
Is open for me to go
To leave
To discover
APPENDIX FF

THE PEARL POEM--RUBRIC
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APPENDIX GG

THE PEARL POEM--ERIC
The Finding of the Pearl

Kino dove into the cool, clear water.
From the boat, I watched him search
He searched for a pearl. A pearl for Coyotito.
I watched him, wishing, hoping, praying
that he would find it. The pearl would save our son.
Like a fish, he swam about, plucking and snatchting.
He took the largest oysters from their anchors.
Then I saw it. He saw it. It was hope,
a fleeting glint from the shadows. It was the Pearl that Might Be.
From a frail, dying oyster, it was a breath of life.
Kino brought it up to the boat.
I looked at him, “Open it.”
He did, and there it was. Coyotito’s pearl.
No longer might it be. Now it was.
It was the Pearl of the World, and our son’s salvation.
It had a feeling, a music all its own.
It sang to the heart, a song of hope and of life.
But somewhere, deep inside, it sang of evil.
APPENDIX HH

THE PEARL: POEM--CATALINA
The sun stood brightly in the sky
Its bathing light fell over Kino’s house.
The peace of the morning left a calm
Over everything it touched.

As quickly as the peace came it was gone.
Kino slowly turned his eyes towards where the
Light rays directed him…Coyotito’s crib. As
Kino looked an evil thing crawled down.

At once his calm manner was replaced by raging anger
Like the unpredictable sea that could change in moments
The song of evil ringing in his ears, Kino
Rushed towards the evil thing that threatened to strike.

In happy amusement little greedy hands reached
Up and shook the rope and at last the best fell.
Time stood still, no birds sang, no children played, all was quiet.
Strike!

The evil scorpion landed on Coyotito’s shoulder
It’s tail sailed forward with a whoosh…
Stinging Coyotito. Kino was enraged!
How could this happen to my son? He thought
As he proceeded to crush the evil thing into nothing.

And all at once, the song of evil left
And what remained was the
Emptiness of what fate and done.
APPENDIX II

THE PEARL POEM—NAMRATA
Angel’s Breath

Lips sealed tightly, Kino dove to gather oysters
From the icy sea beds of sand, hoping to find nature’s accidents
To pay the doctor so he could care for his son, cure his son,
From the vicious thrust of a scorpion’s sting.
Whilst Juana cared for her ill, ill boy, on the surface, in an heirloom canoe,
Kino parted glittering diamonds of water,
Eagle-like eyes peering through the seaweed.
Kino hooked one chafed and calloused foot into a water-silkened rope
Tied to a rock, to anchor him to the fathomless depths.
Scraping at stone, loading a basket with oysters, Kino worked.
Throat aching, head exploding, heart hammering, eyes burning with the salt, he went on.
Relentlessly, he ripped gray-fan shells from strongholds.
Mystic shimmers held his eyes, taking charge of them.
With a will of its own, his head turned, his hand paused, riches danced in his head.
Like an abalone shell, was this oyster.
Rocky and rough on the outside, yet the breath of an angel glazed inside.
Faint with lack of breath, Kino tugged at the stubborn shell, to the air!
Bursting through, streaming liquid salt,
He sorted through puny oysters, carelessly.
He dared to hope for good fortune, contained in the wizened one.
At last he threw all oysters aside,
Good luck shone down like the sun onto the Aged One.
Trembling fingers split it open, daring to hope for the best,
And on its pink tongue he saw Promise,
The breath of an Angel.
APPENDIX JJ

THE PEARL POEM--CHRISTOPHER
The Discovery of the Pearl

Our canoe glided on the water on out,
My wife and our gods were with me fulfilling hopes,
As we cracked oysters under the rippling water,
I hoped, no foresaw, no, knew it would happen,
For I leaned on Gad and the gods this time.

Not spoiling the luck, not cracking the big ones,
I counted on the god’s support and God’s help,
With the smashing, crunching, crackling, shattering,
The song of the Pearl that Might Be zoomed through,
Any of those oysters could be concealing that gold.

My knife busted through, and the volume of the song cranked up,
The Song of the Pearl that Might Be came clear,
The gods and God were on my side today,
I have the Pearl of the World to help me guide my way,
And my leaning, my wishing, my hoping, my dreaming paid off.
APPENDIX KK

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APPENDIX LL

NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING--ERIC
Remembering

I remember
When there were
no white men,
no diseases,
no devastation.

I remember
when the Sioux
lived and thrived,
when tipis covered the plains.

I remember
when the white men came.
They promised peace,
but delivered destruction.
They offered hope,
but brought despair.

I remember
when they came,
when death came.

Do you know
what it is like
to watch a nation die—
to see your friends dying,
powerless to aid them?

I remember
The day it started.

They wanted land;
they conquered it.
they wanted buffalo;
They took them.

They forced us to leave
our land,
our homes,
our way of life.
Their avarice,
their evil
scarred the Sioux forever.

I remember
how they brought their ways.

They forced
their religion,
their language,
their unscrupulous ways
upon us.

I will always remember
how they killed the Sioux;
how they robbed us
of our culture—our identity.

Do you know
what it’s like
to see a people—a civilization
breathe its last, gasping breath?

I do.
APPENDIX MM

NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING--CATALINA
Never Change

A breezy wind flew over a shimmering starry night. The trees sang with the wind announcing harmony and peace in the land. Soft moonlight fell over our tepees. The beat of the ceremonial drums rang steady in my ears. The firelight danced in my eyes as dancers moved to the beat. Glorious headdresses adorned the dancers and honors our brothers, the bear and wolf, as children laughed and the older ones smiled. How could we know that this would be the last time we would ever celebrate with our tribe?

As the morning sun began to rise, our horses became restless. One-Who-Never-Forgets looked nervously at the horses.

“What’s wrong old one?” I asked, as I too watched the horses.

“I have only seen this behavior once when I was a child. Then, the Bluecoats were after my tribe, and our horses had been uneasy at such fearsome strangers.”

I looked up startled, “You mean the Bluecoats are coming?”

“I don’t…”

At that moment, an unearthly cry came from the woods. As we looked up, my sisters, Sweet Gum, came running.

“Help!” she cried, fear haunting her face.

The sound of gunfire followed. As I raced towards her, men on horseback emerged from the woods, firing and waving pistols in the air. As one paleface reached for my sister, I leaped through the air and brought down the man with a blow from my knife. His blood splattered me as he fell. I was unaffected. He had tried to take my sister, and I had killed him.

“Sister, are you well?” I asked as my eyes keenly looked for more white-eyes.
“Yes. Thank you brother.” She looked scared but relieved at being safe.

I grabbed her wrist and dragged her over to our teepee. In her hand, I shoved her cornhusk doll.

“Stay here and hold this close. Pretend you are a mother. They will leave you alone if you have a small child,” I held her hand. “Sister, be strong.”

I left her and ran out to help my tribe. The white-eyes had begun to burn our village to ashes. Anger filled me, and I left out a fearsome Apache war cry. As I raced to help the women and children, two men tiptoed up behind me and grabbed me, knocking my knife from my hand. I struggled, but they outnumbered me. They tied my feet and hands together to prevent me from escaping.

I watched as my homeland disappeared into the distance as they dragged me along. As I looked up into the sky, I saw the great eagle soaring freely in the sky and I missed home more than I would ever know.

They loaded me into an Iron Horse with the other two boys and girls from my village. I was too enraged to be frightened by what the White-Eyes called a “train.” At fourteen winters, I have been trained by my father to hunt, raid, attack, fight, and walk like an Apache warrior. I could fight like a full-grown man, and I was infuriated that they had thought I was a child.

Later, a man, who looked like the Mexicans near my village, came to our section of the Iron Horse. HE walked up to me and said something like, “¿Comó estás?” I stared at him blankly. Even if I did know what he was saying, I wouldn’t care. As the man stood there repeating over and over again what he had just said, a Bluecoat walked over and
told me something like, “Hesayshowareyou?” I was started to get aggravated with these men who constantly asked me something in a language I couldn’t undertand.

I looked for a translator and waved him over. “What do they say?” I asked.

“They want to know how are you?” the translator said.

I looked at him coldly. “I’ve been better.”

The two men wanted to know what I had said, but at that moment the Iron Horse lurched forward. I leaned sharply sideways at the unexpected move. Slowly, one by one, the Bluecoats took us to a white-eyes fort with iron gates that locked whoever was inside in. I saw the frightened look in the younger boy’s eyes and knew they would follow my lead.

We were led to an open room where an older man who held himself like a chief greeted us. I figured this was the white-eyes leader. With him was another boy I had known from our village. As a child I had seen him begin to go through warrior training that was before he had left with a white-eyes who had come t our village. He was secretly know as White-Man’s-Shadow. The white man began to talk in his weird language. When he was done, he turned to White-Man’s-Shadow who began to speak in Apache. “Here you will learn to do white man’s work, how to eat like a white man, and how to act like one. You will do what Captain Stratton tells you to do. You will not get into trouble if you do what he says. But, if you don’t, you’ll be punished for your actions,” he explained.

“I will not become like the ‘White Eyes! I’m an Apache warrior, not a shadow to the White Eyes!” I roared, my eyes burning with fire but were cold like ice.
Captain Stratton turned to White-Man’s Shadow wanting to know what I had said. After listening, he said something back harsh and loud. “White-Man’s-Shadow” looked at me and said, “He says you will change your thinking and become a good ‘white boy’ before you leave here.”

With that they led us to smaller rooms and told us to sleep in the white-eyes bed. As soon as the boy was gone, I found my unoccupied bed, pulled the sheets off, and fell asleep on the floor.

The next day, when we lined up we were handed white-eyes clothes and told to put them on. They took my breechcloth away. We were never to see our traditional clothes again.

Then, Captain Stratton pointed at each one of us and said a word. When he got to me, he said something that sounded like, “Tom-us.” After that everyone called me Thomas.

Months passed by, and I learned the white man’s tongue and how to read the white man’s books. I became a “good white boy” and learned the white man’s trade of tailoring.

One day, a man came asking for a boy to work on his farm since he was getting older and needed help. I had been playing the white-eyes game of baseball when I was summoned to Captain Stratton’s office. At once I tensed up. I tried to think of how I could have made Captain Stratton angry with me.

“Thomas, come in here,” Captain Stratton commanded.
He didn’t sound angry, but I wasn’t sure. Curiously, I walked into the room.

Inside stood a chubby man with auburn hair and a beard.

“This is Mr. Steven Alexander. He is looking for a boy your age to work on his farm. I told him you were a hard worker. You will live with him for the summer.”

Captain Stratton told me. He looked like he did the first time I saw him chin high, his eyes hard like iron. His eyes told me he thought I should go.

“I will go and be a good boy like you have taught me,” I said almost to myself.

He nodded, “I trust you will do well, but if you mess up, “ his voice got low and cold, “I will have you back here so fast you won’t know what happened.”

I sat in a rocking buggy as Mr. Alexander drove his two horses. He looked at me from time to time not sure of what to say. At last, he said, cheerfully, “My wife can’t wait to meet you. She probably has cake for you and a fine dinner.”

“Thank you for letting me stay with you, Sir,” I replied.

“None of this ‘Sir’ business. Call me Steven like everyone else does,” I nodded, Yes, Sir.”

So, my life began with Steven and Heather Alexander. I enjoyed it, since they respected my views as an Indian, but I had secretly hidden a “cache” just in case I ever need to escape. My father had always told me to have one wherever I went. So, I had supplies ready in case I needed to run.

One night as I lay awake, not being able to sleep, I heard a piercing whinny from the horses and then a sound of a gunshot. In a flash I was out of my bed and running down the hall. My eyes were not yet focused, but as I ran my steps were sure. As I
reached the barn I hurled opened the barn door and almost tripped over “Uncle” Steven (as I now call him). He lay unconscious on the floor from a shot taken in the arm.

At once vicious anger rose up in me. I saw a dark shadow holding a gun ready to fire. I sprang at the intruder with a war cry forgetting that I was supposed to be a “good white boy.” I surprised the intruder as I leaped onto his back and locked my hands around his neck. In one swift moment I snapped his neck like I had been trained to do. I let go and let the man fall like a stone to the ground.

When I turned to see if my uncle was all right, I saw Aunt Heather standing in the doorway with a fear stricken look upon her face.

“Aunt Heather, it’s ok now. He can’t hurt us any more,” I said instinctively speaking in Apache.

At once I realized that she was not my real aunt, and I quickly repeated myself in English. I took a step towards her, but to my surprise she stepped backwards and let out a moan. It then hit me like a brick that she was scared of me!

I backed up and slid into the shadows torn apart that she was afraid of me. Almost immediately, I realized that I must leave here. No matter what I old the sheriff, I would be hanged. The way they saw it was that I was an Indian, a savage, and I had killed a white man not a criminal.

Without looking back I ran to my cache and took out the little I had stored and ran. I raced with the night like an eagle and hit in the shadows like a panther. All night I ran, I couldn’t risk stopping for fear of getting caught.

When dawn arose I slowed. My eyes flew over the landscape looking for a place to hide for the day. At last I saw it, an old cornfield that was overgrown with weeds. I
plunged down the rows till I was in what I judged to me the middle. I let my stuff fall to
the ground and myself, too. With withered cornhusks, I covered myself to wait the night.
I fell asleep instantly and when I awoke the soft moonlight fell over the night like a
blanket covers a baby. I arose and once again raced in the shadows hiding myself from
the world and myself. On and on till my eyes fell upon the hills.

Maps I had seen at the white-eyes school returned to me. I know that if I traveled
west I would hit my homeland in Arizona; following the signs of mother earth I walked
on and on. Sleeping for a few hours each night, I continued my journey. I walked and ran
till at last I saw signs of my homeland.

Excitement filled me as I saw familiar things such as the tree of the sleeping
hawk. My merriment reached its fill as I saw an old Cache my tribe had used when we
traveled. Even though it was empty, it was still there; a proof that I was home.

In the four months I had been on the run, my jet-black hair had grown back, my
strength and my muscles had returned. I had made myself new clothes, since I had been
on the run with the buck I had killed. I had made it home alive, yet something was
missing…my tribe.

I stayed in my land for three weeks hunting and living off the land before I saw
the first Apache from my village. At first I wasn’t sure who it was, but when I saw that it
was my sister I nearly fainted with joy.

“Sweet Gum!” I yelled racing toward her.

Her eyes darted up frightened that the voice who called on her was a Bluecoat.
She looked me up and down when it finally dawned on her that it was really me, her lost
brother.
“War Hawk, is it really you?” she asked.

At first I didn’t know whom she was talking about, but then I realized that she
didn’t know my white-eyes name.

“It’s me, “ I whispered.

“I thought I would never see you again after they took you. How are you?”

It was a relieve to be able to talk in Apache to another Apache. I had missed being
able to speak freely in my native tongue. Yet as she stood there, I wondered where the
other members of my tribe were.

She looked at me and read my face, “Come and see the little of our people that are
left. Most of them were taken with the white-eyes last raid, or they died from disease.”

As I followed her I saw my homeland slowing changing to the white-eyes way of
life. Yet deep inside I knew that this land not matter how different it may become, it still
would be the home of the Apaches. Underneath, Mother earth would never change.
APPENDIX NN

NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING--NAMRATA
Bold Deer’s Complete Plant-Medicine Book

By Bold Deer, P. D. (Plant Doctor)
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Introduction

For many moons have I wandered these lands in search of the Gifts that our Grandmother has given for the healing of our people. The White Man knows not how to use the very Gifts spread out before us. He tramples them; he crushes them; he devours them, but he does not know the power that these things hold. We must guard these Gifts, lest they too be snatched from us.

In my wanderings, I have taken the wisdom of our brothers, the Catawba, Cherokee, Chippewa, Comanche, Fox, Hopi, Kwakiutl, Luiseños, Maricopa, Menominee, Micmac, Montagnai, Omaha, Papago, Penobscot, Pima, Ponca, and Seminole, and many more.

In your hands you hold the treasures of our Grandmother. You have the power to heal and to make whole. Guard these from the White Man, and use them to strengthen our peoples. May you heal our people, and may the Great Spirit watch over you. I am,

~Bold Deer~

Advice to New Healers:

Keeping things Clean

Every healer should clean wounds before applying anything on them. You can use Milkweed sap or a Creosote leaf softened in hot water. You, as a healer, should also be aware of the fact that bandages need to be kept clean as well. Use the water and the soapy juice that oozes from a pressured Partridgeberry to keep your bandages clean.

Flavoring Medicines

Often, a bad tasting plant-medicine will spook children. Before you even think about giving a child medicine, take a very tiny taste of it yourself to see if it would spook the child. If it would, add Raspberry juice to the medicine. That should help disguise its taste.

Waking an Unconscious Patient

To wake an unconscious patient, burn dried Aster Plants and funnel the smoke through birch-bark tubes, inserted into the patient’s nostrils.

To Cure:

Aches and Pains

To stop this, you can either make a tea from boiled Anemone roots, or you can make a tea from the inner bark of a White Pine tree. Have the patient drink one of these teas every day until the pain is gone.
Boils

To cure a boil, mix together the sap of a White Pine tree with grease or tallow. Apply the paste to the infected area until healed.

Bruises

To get rid of a painful bruise, just make a paste of crushed and boiled leaves and branches of the Creosote plant. Apply to the site until healed.

Burns

There are three ways that you can heal and soothe burns. One method involves softening Creosote leaves in hot water and applying them to the site of the injury. In another, put the juice of a Purple Coneflower stem on the burn until it heals. The last method is the most involved, though. You must make a paste of Hemlock bark and coat the burn with it until it is healed.

Colds

To cure a cold, you can drink a tea made from Aster leaves and stems (discovered by the Hopi), drink a tea made from Creosote leaves, or you can chew on the root of a Virginia Snakeroot plant (discovered by the Cherokee.) Have the patient do any one of these daily until the cold is gone.

Convulsions

To stop the jerky movements of a convulsing patient, you must boil a Purple Coneflower root in water, and carefully get the tea down the victim’s throat (discovered by the Fox.) You must be sure not to choke or drown the patient when administering the tea! Stop force-feeding the patient when they calm down and have stopped convulsing.

Coughs

Boiled and pounded Milkweed roots or the inner bark of a White Pine tree brewed for a tea will reduce coughs. Have a patient either eat the Milkweed paste or drink the White Pine tree daily until the cough is gone.

Earaches

Brew the leaves of a Hemlock tree to make a nice tea. Have the patient drink it daily until the earache disappears.
Eye Infections

Have the patient drink one of the two listed teas until the eye infection is healed: you can give them a tea made from Anemone leaves, or a tea made from the bark stripped from the roots of the Raspberry plant.

Fever

Immediately give your patient one of the following: a tea of Aster leaves and stems, a tea of Hemlock leaves and bark, or have them chew a Virginia Snakeroot root. Place cool, clean hides on their foreheads until they are well.

Hair Lice

Hair Lice are probably one of the most troublesome problems. But, it can be cured easily. Just take the tiny seeds of the Aster plant and crush them into a paste, massaging it into the scalp. Do this twice a day until the problem is resolved.

Headache

To say ‘good riddance’ to this pesky pain, just slice up an Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus) and have the patient eat it. Or, if that is not to their liking, they could eat boiled Milkweed root. Anytime the patient gets another headache, have them repeat the procedure of their choice.

Head Cold

To rid a patient of a head cold, just inhale the smoke of burning Red Cedar twigs. Have the patient repeat this procedure three times a day until cured.

Insect Sting

Apply the juice of a Wild Garlic plant to the site of the bite until healed.

Insomnia

Make a tea of Partridgeberry leaves, and have the patient drink it just before they would usually try to go to bed. Do this every night until they are cured.

Joint Pain

There are many pastes you can make to rid a patient of joint pain. You can apply crushed Anemone leaves, the branches and leaves of a Creosote plant, boiled and crushed, or you can apply boiled and pounded Milkweed roots to the joint. You can also take a tea of
Aster leaves and branches or a tea of Red Cedar leaves. Have the patient do the procedure of their choice until they are out of pain.

**Laziness**

Have children drink tea of Hemlock leaves daily to prevent/cure laziness.

**Moles**

Scrape the fuzz of an Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus) and form it around the mole every day until it is gone.

**Respiratory Ailments**

Take the juice of an Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus) and boil it. Then, have the patient drink it to cure them.

**Ringworm**

Place the sap of the Milkweed plant onto the site of the infection three times a day until the patient is completely healed.

**Sore Throats**

The patient should drink Purple Coneflower tea or should eat a cut-up Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus.)

**Sores**

Apply a paste of Hemlock bark or a Jimsonweed paste onto the sore every day until healed.

**Spider Bites**

Apply damp petals of the Aster plant to the bite until healed.

**Stomachache**

There are three teas to cure this. One is the bark of a Raspberry root tea. Another is to take the root of the Virginia Snakeroot plant and brew it to make a tea. The last is to boil Creosote branches until they release oil. Skim the oil off and mix it with fresh water to make a drink, more than a tea. You can also have the patient chew the root of a Purple Coneflower.
Swelling

Cut up an Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus) and have the patient eat it, or have them drink a tea of the inner bark of a White Pine tree.

Toothache

Have the patient chew on Virginia Snakeroot roots until the pain goes away.

Ulcers

Have the patient ingest a gluey mixture of White Pine sap and grease or tallow. Watch them closely for a number of days, having them swallow this at least once a day, before leaving.

Warts

Scrape the fuzz from an Indian Fig (Prickly Pear Cactus) and form it around the wart every day until it is gone.

Wounds

To heal a wound, you can apply crushed Anemone roots to it. If you don’t have any of this handy, however, apply the paste of Hemlock bark. You can also use Jimsonweed paste, crushed White Pine bark, or the sap of a White Pine tree mixed with tallow or grease.

To Clean:

Body

To clean out the body, have the patient ingest either some Yaupon (American Holly) or Wild Garlic.

Respiratory Tracts

Make a mild mixture of boiled Milkweed leaves, stems, and roots. Have the patient eat small amounts of it until completely decongested.

To Induce:

Appetite

Parch dried Yaupon (American Holly) leaves in a clay pot over a fire. Then, steep them in hot water until you have a black tea. Dilute this and give to the patient to drink.
Diarrhea

Take the bark of the Cascara Sagrada and brew it for a tea. You can also have the patient eat boiled Wild Garlic roots. Make sure to keep the patient hydrated during the period of effect of the prescription!

Perspiration

Parch dried Yaupon (American Holly) leaves in a clay pot over the fire and steep in hot water until the water becomes black. Drink undiluted in small amounts. Or, the patient may drink a tea of Red Cedar berries and leaves. Keep the patient hydrated!

Vomiting

Parch dried Yaupon (American Holly) in a clay pot over a fire, and then steep the leaves in hot water until the water is black. Give the undiluted tea to the patient. Keep water or other fluids at hand.

To Prevent:

Mouth Bleeds

Have the patient eat boiled Wild Garlic root.

Nose Bleeds

Have the patient eat boiled Wild Garlic root.

To Ease:

Cholera Symptoms

Make a tea from Red Cedar and give it to the patient to ease their symptoms. Keep them well hydrated as well.

Upset Stomach

Feed the patient boiled Hemlock leaves and bark, if they can keep it down. That should ease their symptoms.
To Aid:

Childbirth

Make a tea of Partridgeberry leaves and have the patient drink it daily to ensure a quick and easy delivery.

Digestion

To aid digestion, have the patient eat boiled roots of Wild Garlic or Virginia Snakeroot daily.

To Dilute:

Bile in the System

Though it may be bitter, the patient must down a tea of brewed Oregon Grape roots. If administering to a child, use the ‘Useful Tips’ section before it touches their lips.

Medicine

To dilute medicine, one should use water.

Bibliography

APPENDIX OO

NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING--CHRISTOPHER
A Path Without Peace

Our tribe was moved onto a Path without Peace.
We were shoved onto a Road of Rage.
We were forced onto a Direction of Despair.
We were forced onto a Trail of Tears.

Hawk’s Heart woke up to the dawn of a new day,
A dawn of new life.
Hawk’s Heart woke up to the sound of the white men,
The sound of terror,
That sound of evil,
That sound of tortuous horror.

Our tribe was moved onto a Path without Peace.
We were shoved onto a Road of Rage.
We were forced onto a Direction of Despair.
We were forced onto a Trail of Tears.

Tomahawk in hand, quiver and bow on back,
Hawk’s Heart listened as
The white men said that west was our destination,
West was our destiny.
Driven from our land,
Driven from our very roots.

Our tribe was moved onto a Path without Peace.
We were shoved onto a Road of Rage.
We were forced onto a Direction of Despair.
We were forced onto a Trail of Tears.

Hawk’s Heart and his tribe trekked for hours upon hours,
For days upon days.
The tribe lived off the white hunters’ meat, oats, and corn,
Not enough for survival,
The treacherous trail designed our deaths,
As the demonic whites dominated.

Our tribe was moved onto a Path without Peace.
We were shoved onto a Road of Rage.
We were forced onto a Direction of Despair.
We were forced onto a Trail of Tears.
APPENDIX PP

ASIAN UNIT RUBRIC
## Asian Writing Assignment Rubric 100 points

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<td>Explain how the picture and the fortune were used in the story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Element of emotion evident in plot</td>
<td>/15 /15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explain which element of emotion is predominant in this story and how it enhances the plot.</td>
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<td>Final Grade</td>
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What I did particularly well:
APPENDIX QQ

ASIAN UNIT WRITING—ERIC
The lights dimmed and darkness filled the theatre. A little boy burst through the
door, accompanied by the glow of a spotlight.

“Mother, mother!” They’re coming. They’re coming!”

“Who is? Who is coming?”

“The bad army, from the north. They’ve sunken all the boats and they’re going
to…”

“Come, Mura. We’re leaving.”

Mura’s mother grabbed his hand and ran toward the door. It flew open, revealing
an evil looking warrior. He had a torch in one hand, a sword in the other, and a malicious
look on his face. He wore the ornate armor of a samurai leader, but you wouldn’t know if
by the way he acted. Stifling a scream, Mura’s mother quickly ushered a petrified Mura
into a closet. Through a tear in the paper door, he watched the soldier approach his
mother.

“What have you of value in this wretched shack!” spat the soldier.

She straightened up and said nothing, her look was insult enough. The soldier
turned away, and proceeded to destroy everything in his range of vision. As he
approached the closet where Mura was hidden, Mura’s mother searched desperately for
distraction.

“We have nothing you would want.” She said, faltering. “We are only simple
merchants.”

“Only merchants. Then bow down to your new lord, peasant!”

Knowing that she would be killed anyway, Mura’s mother stood firmly, refusing
to submit to anyone with so little honor.
“I bow only to those who are worthy it! You have no honor; you who murder innocent, defenseless people, you who plunder unprotected villages!”

Unable to defend himself verbally, the warrior settled the matter with a slash of his sword. Then, lighting on fire everything within reach, he strode angrily out the door.

Mura stood in the closet, unable to comprehend all that he had just witnessed. What seemed like moments ago, his life had been normal, uneventful. Now he was alone. He had no family, since his father had been killed in battle years ago. He had no home, no belongings. He thought he might have remained there for eternity had the growing flames not threatened his hiding place. Waking up to reality, he ran from his burning home onto the chaotic street, alone and afraid.

Then, from the hillside came an army. The grand army, led the shogun himself charged from the hilltop to repel the invading army. The invaders fought fiercely and cruelly, for they did not follow bushido, the samurai code of honor. When they had been decisively defeated, they retreated and ran, without any honor to lose. All that was left was destruction and misery.

When the invaders had withdrawn, the shogun and his men came thought the streets of the now devastated city. Surveying the damage, shogun Okura rode past the chard remains of Mura’s life. Sitting on the ground, Okura saw him, the look on his face told his life story better than words ever could. Lifting him from a world of fear and sorrow, Okura lifted Mura onto his horse and rode away.

“Mura-san, Okura-san would like to see you.”

“Thank you, “ replied Mura, bowing as he left the room. He walked over to the garden, where he knew he would find the shogun. All serious discussions for as long as
he could remember had taken place in the garden. It was quite a large garden, with numerous winding paths. Mura liked to go there for a feeling of solitude. In many places, the paths were surrounded by trees. It enveloped him in leafy shroud of green seclusion.

“Mura, you look so forlorn, is it still the past that troubles you?”

“Yes. I cannot help but dwell on the events of that night decades ago.”

“But why? What is done is done, Mura, and cannot be undone. You must look to the future, not to the past. Your mother died so that you could live. Do not dishonor her by letting your own life drift past you.”

“I will try to, but it is difficult to forget such an incident.”

“You do not have to forget, just do not put all your energy into grieving.”

“Is that all that you wished to see me about?”

“No—“ Okura broke off, “Mura—I am not well, and I fear that before long, I shall no longer walk in this garden, or enjoy a sunny day.”

“Don’t say that; you will recover.”

“No, not this time. When I am gone, someone will need to lead this nation and this army. I have already spoken to the imperial court. You are to be appointed shogun upon my death. However, a leader cannot always be preoccupied with things that he cannot change.”

Mura looked down at a perfectly shaped bush. He thought maybe if he looked away, the words wouldn’t hit him so hard. He felt worse.

Two weeks later, Mura was called to see Okura. He was pale and could not sit up. In a weak whisper, he addressed Mura:
“Mura—this nation needs a strong leader. You must make wise decisions; restore your own honor and that of your family. Lead these people to victory in life. Help them conquer their sorrow and fear.” Okura closed his eyes and spoke for the last time:

“The flower blooms now
But withers in winter cold
A single seed falls
To flourish anew in spring
As from death springs life once more.”

It had been several years since Okura’s death. Mura once again found himself walking in the garden, as he often was, hiding in its maze of peaceful ponds and trees. Only now he had a new companion; his wife, Onawa, walked along beside him.

“Why must you always be so solemn?” she asked him.

“I am just remembering my mother, how she died to save me. I do not feel so deserving of such a sacrifice right now.”

“Nonsense! You are shogun of Japan; you are going to be a father;…”

“Only by happenstance. I never intended to become a samurai.”

“That doesn’t make you any less deserving of the title. Don’t be so sad about it.”

“I can still be angry though.”

“At whom?”

“At the warriors who led the raid and killed my mother. Why did he have to kill her like that? Why her and not me?”

“Because he did. There’s nothing you can do about it now.”

“That’s what angers me.”
The next morning, Mura returned to the garden; he went back to his house as a small child. He saw his mother being killed, he felt the heat of the flames as he stood, horrified in the closet. He wanted to go back, to change the course of events, but every time, nothing changed. He stayed in the closet. He saw his mother die. He couldn’t stand it—living forever in that brief moment. Pacing back and forth between two Japanese maples, he thought of what Okura had said to him: “Your mother died so that you could live. Do not dishonor her by letting your own life drift past you.”

Mura knew that Okura was right. His mother had died so that Mura could live, and by wasting away, reliving his life over and over again, he made the very thing that haunted him a reality. If he was to spend his life grieving, his mother’s sacrifice would have been futile. He could not bear the perpetual cycle. The more that he grieved, the more he wanted to grieve. Would this never end?

His frustration only fueled his anger, until he just had to do something. Learning that Canata Oda, son of Canata Natagura, who led the raid on Mura’s village was in a nearby town, Mura exploded. In a flurry of grief, hatred and resentment, he had a duel arranged.

Mura mounted his horse the morning of the duel. Slowly, he rode to the open field where he had agreed to meet. There were a few trees scattered about, rising out of sea of grass, their green suppressed by the gray light of the morning. Golden rays of dawn pierced the dull gray and dewdrops gleamed in the yellow sunlight. The great fiery orb rose from behind the mountain and shone through the clouds. Mura met his adversary in the damp field. The two bowed sharply and the duel commenced. The two fought bravely
with each other, their swords shining streaks of yellow light in the early dawn. Mura put forth all his energy that had been withheld in his anger and resentment.

In a streak of light, Mura’s sword hit Oda’s. Oda felt his sword wrenched from his hand and he fell to his knees. Mura found himself standing, sword raised in front of Oda. He saw the look in Oda’s eyes, and it seemed familiar. It was that same look that all too familiar to Mura. It was an expression of determination and energy, the desire, the need to overcome, and the dejection of failure. Mura knew, thought what he had to do. His heart spoke to his hand as he watched as his sword come down before Oda. The tip of the blade passed in front of his eyes, and a single hair fell to the ground. He did not blink. “I offer you a choice,“ said Mura. “You have proven yourself a worthy opponent and an honorable warrior. You may choose to become a samurai in my army, or do as you choose. I have spared your life; do not dishonor me by taking it.”

On that note, Mura mounted his horse and rode back home. Oda remained kneeling in the warm glow of sunrise.
APPENDIX RR

ASIAN UNIT WRITING--CATALINA
Follow Your Heart

“Hey Tor! Work’s up, lets get out of here!” his friend Li shouted up from below.

Toran grinned down at his friend, “Hey man I’ve been dying up here! You should have called me years ago!”

“Yeah, yeah whatever!”

Toran brushed absently at the small beads of sweat that were gathering on his forehead. At the age of seventeen he was as strong as an ox, which made him perfect for construction work. With his coal black hair cropped in a crew cut, he caught the eye of any young lady he passed. As he started to descend, his eyes flew over the breathtaking view of downtown Tokyo. What a perfect day, he smiled as he climbed down the hug shell of a future office building.

“Mom! Dad! I’m home!” Toran yelled as he threw his keys carelessly at the hallway table. “Mom? Dad? Hey guys where are you?”

Toran looked around the small apartment listening for a moment here and there, anything to let him know that he wasn’t alone; the usual banging of pots and pans as his mother searched for her dinner pan, the sound of the weatherman who always predicted rain, and then look surprised as the sun shone like the North Star, or even his mother singing which drove him nuts. Today…nothing, not the stir of the air, or the sigh of the wind. Nothing.

“RIINNGG!!!” the phones shrill voice cut through the silence like a knife pierces the flesh of a man.

Toran raced to the phone, “Hello? Mom?”

“Can I speak to a Mister Toran Chan please? A clam eerie voice asked.
“S-speaking.”

“I’m sorry, sir but there has been an accident…”

Toran didn’t hear anything else. He was in a trance, somewhere between asleep and reality. He appeared at the hospital not knowing how he got there. He waited for the feeling of shock, grief, guilt, anything, yet he felt only the black hole in his heart.

“Grandson!” a voice from afar called to him.

Toran looked up and saw an old man hobbling towards him, “Grandfather? Why are you here?” he asked his voice eyes said that he was confused.

Tai Chan was strong and handsome for his age. He lived very far away from Tokyo so it was only for emergencies or a special occasion that he ever attempted to come to Tokyo. Surprisingly, today Tai looked old, tired, and deeply troubled.

“My grandson, I’m so sorry. Your mother and father both died.” Tai searched his grandson’s face, feeling the pain that now hurt like a sword to the heart.

Toran all of sudden felt scared, trapped, and very tired. His eyes darted hear and there looking for a way to escape. “ No, “ he whispered, “no, NOOO!!”

Toran awoke with a violent shudder. He sat up wildly, breathing hard as sweat dripped off his face.

“Please let it all be a dream. Please!”

“MOTHER!” his heart ached and his head pounded like a drum.

Tai had heard his grandson and came running. He flip on a blinding light and appeared at the doorway. “I heard you screaming.”

“You must have heard wrong old one. I never screamed, “ Tor mumbled.
“You mustn’t deny pain child. It has been three months and I know it hurts, ut you must stop living in the past.”

“I didn’t do anything! They are the ones who left me! I don’t need anyone.”
Toran’s voice was level and hard.

Tai sighed. “I remember an ancient story of Pan Ching, a samurai* warrior. He said those exact words. “Now just relax as I tell you his story.”

Pan was born as a samurai and he know nothing of his parents. The closest thing to a relative he had was his best friend Chow Ming.

One night he came back to his quarters anxious to see Chow, when one grimed faced samurai came forward and bluntly told him that Chow had been ordered to commit seppuku* for deliberately disobeying an order. Pan had decided it for years pushing it farther and farther inside him, when one day he awoke to face his karma*.

“Pan-san Lord Ishana request your presence.” The samurai barked.

Pan looked at the other samurai who worked for his lord; the samurai wore a brown kimono like his, which signified that he worked with Lord Ishana. Pan got up bowed in respect and followed behind the other samurai. They arrived at a gate guarded by thirty samurai wearing the same brown kimono. They all bowed at Pan and the other samurai as they bowed back. Once inside the gate, they walked towards another door that lay opened.

The older samurai pointed, “You go in there. Hai*?”

“His, Domo*.” Pan bowed and he walked, head bowed into the room. He dropped to his knees, head touching the floor towards Lord Ishana.
“Good day, Lord Ishana-sama,” he said politely.

“Good day, Pan-san.” Ishana said bowing but not as far as they were not equals.

“I have a job for you. You must go with ten other samurai to finish off the rest of the detestable Chow Ming’s family for his dishonor. Hai?”

Pan’s heart leapt with shock. “He wants me to do what?” “Hai, Ishana-sama.”

“Good. You shall leave at once and don’t come back without their heads. Hai? You may leave now.” Ishana bowed and Pan also bowed but lower and left.

As I walked down the street accompanied by the ten other samurai Lord Ishana had promised, his mind was working overtime. Would he go and kill the family like his lord ordered? Or disobey his lord and somehow spare their lives without endangering them.

The next few days were endless for Pan. His mind struggling to figure out what to do. The wind blew hard and the rain poured down on his face, then running down towards the ground. Lighting struck and the thunder shook the earth with its hands. Pan walked quietly like a tiger on the hunt, he stopped then as he eyes fell upon the house of Chow’s family.

“I can’t do this!” he whispered to the rain.

“You must. Your master and lord ordered it under punishment of death!” the rain continued to beat down on Pan as he battled himself.

Pan slumped down by a group of bamboo as tears of fear and grief raced down his face with the rain. The pale moonlight reached down to cut through his bleak darkness to reach his heart.

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“You’re a samurai warrior! Look at yourself crying like a woman. You’re a disgrace.”

“AHHHHH!!” he yelled as thoughts and feelings rushed at him.

He ran. He ran to clear his head and to leave his heart behind. He didn’t stop till he was at the house of Chow. He pounded on the door impatiently twirling the hilt of his sword as he waited.

“Hello,” an old creaky voice of an older woman called out, as she opened the shoji screen.

Pan knees began to wobble yet his words were steady, “I’m here to warn you that Lord Ishana has ordered your family’s death. I was sent here by your grandson, please leave now! Hai?”

“If my lord has ordered my death then that is my karma.”

Pan heard a rustle in the woods warning him that the other samurai had awoken and were looking for him.

“Please, I will not allow you to die without a fight. Please?”

The woman looked at Pan and saw something that reminded her of Chow, “Yes, sir. Please forgive me as I’m just a shameful woman, but since you will surely be killed why not escape and live here?”

Pan looked at her and put a finger to his lips, “Shhhhhh. Good bye.” He bowed and went to find the others.
“They have escaped! You must find them before it’s too late!” he laughed to himself silently as the other ten raced to find people that weren’t there.

“Pan-san we couldn’t find them. Please let us commit seppuku as we can’t live with our shame.”

“NO, you may not commit seppuku. You must life with your shame.”

“Seeing we can’t return may we be allowed to live as ronin*?”

Pan sighed, “Permission granted.”

They all bowed and then left, going their separate ways.

Pan went back and lived with the old lady and her family and came to have a true family.

Most importantly, he lived his life knowing he had done the right thing.

Toran nodded, “I guess I will get over my parents death just like Pan got over Chow’s. It’s my karma that I live with you and though I’ll always miss them, I can move on if I follow what I know is right.

Tai smiled, “That’s right my grandson.” He got up and flipped off the light, “just follow what you believe in.”

As Toran feel asleep, he whispered, “and I will become strong in my heart just like Pan.”
APPENDIX SS

ASIAN UNIT WRITNG--NAMRATA
After marching upstairs for the seventh time in an hour, Huan Ling saw the light still creeping under the door of her children’s bedroom. “Go to bed!” she yelled, exasperatedly. “It’s past ten already, and you should get a proper rest. You are growing children!”

“Tell us a story, please!” pleaded Huan Chung, leaping out from the room, a sheet wrapped around him like a cape.

“No.” said Ling, shortly. She was in no mood for games, especially at this time.

“Please?” Asked Huan Liu, a pillowcase tied around her hair.

“Oh, fine.” She said, suppressing a laugh. “Once upon a time there was a little girl who lived happily ever after with a fly. The End.”

“That wasn’t a story!” protested Liu.

Ling stepped into the room, picking her way around bins of toys that were spilled out in a confusion of springs, strings, and wood. She sighed, and pushed them around with her foot. When will they learn to pick up their things? She thought. Finally, she managed to clear a measly space on an elaborate rug, where she seated herself as best as she could in her cheongsam. The children took off their costumes and flung them into the mess. Then they threw themselves down around their mother, ignoring the toys that dug into their stomachs.

“All right. Once upon a time,” began Ling, “there were three children. The eldest was a girl, the middle child was a boy, and the youngest was another girl.”

“There were three children?” exclaimed Chung.
“Things were different then. Their mother worked very hard all the time tending the rice patties to feed them. Their father was away guarding one of the borders of China. The children helped to plant the crops.”

“Why?” interrupted Liu, cocking her head to the side.

“Because, that was their way of living. Anyway, one day a man came and asked to see the children’s mother. And do you know what that man told her?”

“No!” chimed the children, their eyes bright.

“He told her that her husband had been killed. She was so sad that she died right there in the rice patty fields. Now, this man was greedy and always looking for more, more, more, to add to his possessions. He told the children to come with him. Just as the children started walking behind him, their hearts still in pain from their mother’s death, the man jumped around and tied the children up. He dragged them to his home and took the three little children as slaves and…”

“What’s a slave do?” asked Chung.

“They work all day with no rest for nothing and they get barely enough food to feed themselves.”

“I want to be a slave when I grow up!” exclaimed Liu.

“How come they got to be slaves and we didn’t?” whined Chung.

Ling looked on them with pity. *They don’t understand much, do they?* she thought. “Being a slave is *not fun*. Believe me.” She muttered. “These three children slaved for the man for eight long years. Even though they worked from before dawn till well after sunset, he would always tell them, ‘You are nothing but lazy and spoiled little brats. Look at all the work *I* have to do!’”

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“What work did he do?” asked Liu.

“He didn’t do anything, little one! He would just sit with his feet in silk slippers and his body plastered in expensive furs, and watched the children scrub the gleaming tiles with rough cloths and hard soap until their hands turned red and raw and bloody. He would beat them very hard with whatever he could find, and they were so bruised that they could barely stand up. He was a very, very, bad man. One day, this man went out to oversee the building of his new mansion.”

“What is a mansion?” inquired Chung.

“A mansion is a big, big house. Well, this man went to watch it being built when a stone slipped off one of the walls and crushed him.”

The children clapped their hands wildly and cheered. Ling tried to hide a smile as she scolded them for rejoicing over someone’s obviously painful death.

“All his property and things were left for his sister. The three children were very afraid that this sister would be worse than the brother, and they shivered and hid themselves in the farthest corner of the kitchen when she arrived. When the sister came to look around the kitchen, she found the three children. Do you know what she did?”

“No,” said Liu, brushing away a tear. Chung bit his lip.

“This lady ordered the three children to get up, and wash their grubby little faces. She commanded the servants to make sure that she would not see these children in her presence again until they shone like polished pearls in the sun. She strutted off in her silk cheongsam hobbling on her bound feet. The servants rubbed the poor children’s faces so hard that their once pale brown faces turned as red and raw as their ruined hands. The servants dressed the children in clean but scratchy clothes, and tore combs through their
long straggly hair. Then they presented the children to the lady, and left the way cockroaches leave in the presence of light.”

Chang balled his fists. “If that lady ever came here…”

“Hush, my son. That is no way to talk! You should be ashamed of yourself.”

Chung hung his head. “I am sorry mother.”

Ling gave a reproaching look to Chung, and continued. “The lady asked the children if they had anywhere to go. When they didn’t reply, she smacked them, hard, across their faces. When she asked again, the eldest said, ‘Mistress, we are but orphans. We were enslaved by your brother eight years ago.’ The lady, who did not want to hear bad talk about her brother, brought down her fist upon the girl’s head! Then, she said that since the children had nowhere to go, she would have to take them with her to America. She oiled their hair and dressed up the girls in red cheongsams with gold embroidery. The girls complained that they could not move in the tight fitting dresses, but the lady told them to be quiet. She tied their hair into two braids that were tied with shiny red ribbon in a circle. The children felt that they must be decorations for the New Year. She put the boy into a loose tunic and loose pants, and gave him a straw-colored hat the shape of a temple roof. Then she told all the children to come with her in the rickshaw. The children followed the lady, but they didn’t really want to come. The lady forced them into the small and cramped space, and ordered the driver to take them to the nearest port. The driver said he couldn’t possibly run that far, so they went halfway, and caught another rickshaw to the port. From there, the woman bought tickets for a journey to America. ‘I will travel first class,’ she said, ‘because I am important. You three urchins will travel in third class.’ The children nodded quietly, and looked back into the crowd, and waved to
all the people. The children wiped tears from their faces, and at that minute the lady twisted the children around and marched them up into the ship. ‘Goodbye!’ cried the children. They might never see China again.”

“She is mean.” Said Liu. “She deserves to be punished!”

“Yes,” agreed Chung. “She should be beaten until her bones are broken and she has bruises all over.”

“Quiet your mouths! Do you want this evil to befall you? Ward off the evil my children, ward it off!” The children quickly made a clumsy sign to ward off evil, along with their mother. “Now, keep quiet and listen. Do not speak any evil.”

The children pressed fingers to their lips, and settled around Ling.

“The children spent a long, long time in a small room that was filled with eight beds, four on the floor, four hanging from the ceiling. It smelled of vomit and dying men and old fish. Salt water sometimes spilled through the small window, and added to the stench. Rats crept among the floorboards and on the bottom four beds. The children slept on the top beds, but sometimes spiders from the ceiling with fell onto their faces and danced about.”

Liu paled. Chung snickered.

“The children had a horrid time on the ship. When the ship finally docked in America, they staggered off and fell facedown into the sweet-smelling earth. They rubbed their noses in it and lay there for several minutes. Then, the lady saw them dragged them up by their arms. She whacked at their clothes, trying to get rid off the ugly stains left by dirt and spilled food and salt water. ‘Filthy, filthy children! Cannot even keep their clothing clean!’ she screeched. She slapped them for being so careless. She yanked
girls’ hair because they had lost the fancy ribbons, and slapped the boy because his hat was torn. She took all the children to a very huffy looking man. ‘These children are orphans; they belong here’ she said. ‘We have no room.’ said the man.”

“Did they find a place with room?” asked Chung.

Ling counted to ten very slowly under her breath. “If you will stay quiet, I will tell you.”

Chung propped his head upon his hands and stared expectantly at his mother.

“The lady searched for hours until it was dark outside. ‘We will look in the morning.’ She decided. She went to a very fancy hotel and told the children to sleep outside on the steps. ‘Make sure you are awake and ready to go by seven in the morning.’ warned the lady. She went into the building, her cheongsam moving uneasily with her, as if it was too tight and ready to burst at the seams.

The three children were very afraid of what may happen if they were not awake, so they did not sleep the entire night. Also, it was very cold. The wind felt like knives and needles driving into their skin. The flimsy clothing did nothing to keep them warm. As the sun finally crept into the sky, it began to warm up a little. The children stood up and walked around. They saw a man on the street and asked him in Cantonese what time it was. He did not respond, so they asked in Mandarin. Still he did not respond, so they just walked back to the hotel. But, who was that on the steps tapping her foot?”

“Who?” gasped Chung.

“It was the lady! The children were very frightened, and tried to hide, but she saw them. ‘Bad, lying children!’ shrieked the lady. She hit them and screamed at them until the children cried and had cuts and bruises on their skin. Then, the lady patted her hair in
place and took the children around the town, looking for a place for them to stay; her claw-like nails dug into their arms as she led them along.

“No matter where the lady asked, she was always turned away. They walked all day. The children begged for a rest, but she drove them on. ‘No resting for you!’ she told them. ‘You are bad lying children!’”

“That is a mean thing to do.” Said Liu.

Ling put her head in her hands and gritted her teeth. They are children; they are curious. She told her self, over and over again. After a minute or so, Ling raised her head.

“What happened to your mother?” asked Chung.

Ling’s head went back down. “Please stop asking questions.” She said, through clenched teeth. “Now where was I? Oh yes: Finally, the lady came to another place. The owner opened his mouth, and the lady quickly said, ‘I found these children on the street, and don’t know if I should put them in a Chinese orphanage, or turn them into the police.’ She smacked the children’s mouths behind her back so that they would not tell the truth.

“This man had a very soft heart, and felt sorry for the little children. He, too, had been a Chinese orphan in America, and he told the lady that he would keep the children. The lady stalked off, and the children never saw her again.”

“Did he give them anything to eat?” asked Liu.

“Yes!” said Ling, “Rice that was thick and fluffy, delicious bok choy and mangoes, and steamed carp; the children had a feast. They drank a juice that was sweet and sour and wonderful. The man called it lemonade.”
“Finally, the man told them it was time to go to bed. He took them up to a big room with a giant bed in the middle. The room smelled of peach blossoms and the walls were painted the palest orange. The children snuggled into the bed, like baby birds in their nest. The blankets were heavy and cool, but also warm. The pillows were enormous and thick, and smelled like flowers. The children dropped off into a peaceful sleep.”

“Did they like it there?” asked Chung.

“Chung, my son, the children loved it there! Now stop interrupting so I can finish this story. I am tired, and my lids are heavy with want of sleep.”

“Sorry,” whispered Chung.

“The next morning, the children got up and went downstairs. They went to the dining table where they had been last night, but to their surprise, it was filled with many, many, other Chinese children. When the other children saw them, they moved closer together to make room for the three children. When the three children sat down, a woman served them moon cakes. Imagine that! Moon cakes for breakfast!”

Chung drooled, and Liu licked her lips longingly.

“The three children stuffed themselves full of the cakes that were fat with sweet bean paste, nuts, lotus seeds, duck’s-egg yolk. They had bowls of shark-fin soup, prawns in ginger sauce, the same filling rice and roast duck glistening with fat and sauce. They drank weak tea to wash it down.”

“Can we have moon cakes for breakfast, too?” asked Chung, eagerly.

“My son, you are tiring me.”

“Oh, sorry.”
“Perhaps we may have moon cakes in the morn. The children lived there for many years and made friends with most of the others there. As often as possible, the children helped the man with his chores, for they loved him very much, and wanted to make his life easier. In return for their kindness, the man taught the three children *English*, the language of the Americans. Now they could ask the people on the street what time it was, and they would understand.

“One day, the man came to the children, and told that he had happy and sad news. He said that there was a relative of the children’s in Beijing that wanted the children to live with them. ‘What shall we do?’ groaned the children. ‘We love living here with you, but we also miss China. Yet, we cannot live in China, for we have forgotten how to speak Mandarin *and* Cantonese!’”

“The children could not speak Mandarin or Cantonese anymore?” asked Liu.

“No, because no one was there to speak with them.”

“What does *English* sound like?” asked Chung.

Ling uttered an unmelodic and harsh sound.

“What was that supposed to mean?” asked Liu, uncovering her ears.

“It means ‘Stop asking questions!’ in *English.***”

Liu and Chung marveled at Ling.

“They forgot, too, what their mother had looked like or what she had sounded like.” Continued Ling. “Even though the three children wanted to go back to China, they loved America better because they were more used to it, and so they stayed in America, all except one, who was the younger girl. She saved up every penny…”

“What is a penny?” asked Chung.
“It is the type of money they use in America.” She said, almost instantly.

“How do you know English and so much about America?” asked Liu.

Ling froze. The gears in her brain whirred. Her heart throbbed in her ribcage and pounded in her head. I need and answer...I need a believable answer! What was she to tell them? “I...I just do.” She stuttered. “I...I like to study about other countries and sometimes learn the language.” Would they believe that?

“Oh.” said the children. It was amazing that so little could satisfy them.

Ling coughed nervously. “Anyway, the girl saved up every penny she had until she had saved up enough for a trip back to China, and when she turned eighteen she went to Beijing where she lived with her relatives. Some years later she met a very nice man at the market, and they became married.”

“What did she wear?”

“She wore a beautiful red silk cheongsam with silver and gold embroidery, and she held a lotus in her hands, and her head was crowned with delicate flowers. And the wedding feast was moon cakes only and lemonade, which everyone liked. You see, she found out the recipe and had the cooks make it for the feast.”

“Was it a wonderful wedding?”

“Yes it was! You have never seen so much joy and dancing like at that wedding. After the wedding, the youngest girl lived with her husband, and then they had two children. Now she lived with her husband, their two children, all of her relatives and her husband’s relatives. She made sure that her children learned Cantonese and Mandarin, and the Chinese way of life. When they got older, she wanted to teach them English too, but only a little bit. And as far as I know, she is still living there today.”
“Do her children live anywhere near here?” asked Liu, her eyes closing slowly.

“Do Uncle Wong and Aunt Xiang know them?” asked Chung, as his head nodded dangerously.

Ling smiled and lifted the two children into the bed, and tuckeled them in.

She kissed them goodnight, and turned down the lamp. She looked in fondly at her sleeping angels. Someday she would tell them what the story meant, and who the people were. But for now, she would leave them unburdened by her past. For now, she would let them be.

“Oh, yes,” she whispered into the moonlight. “Wong and Xiang know them, all too well. And the youngest girl’s children are much closer than you think.”

**Glossary Terms:**

*Cheongsam*- tight-fitting dress with button-down sides, stiff collar, and slits near the legs to allow movement.
APPENDIX TT
ASIAN UNIT WRITING--CHRISTOPHER
The Watcher

“Get to the fields, Chang!” blared my mother, whacking my bed with a band of straw. “Our couple of slaves can’t do everything.”

I immediately sprang up. The all too familiar face of my mother pierced my eyes. She turned to the small window in my sleeping room; I remembered falling asleep with it straight across from me. Then, she pointed to where the sunlight coming through was. It was next to my pillow, crawling up the wall. I failed to wake when the sun hit my face, and that happened all too often.

“You told me that this sunlight would wake you up, but you did not wake up!” my mother yelled. She grasped the bundle of straw and wringed her hands in anger. As she left the room, she mumbled, “Again….”

I flapped my blanket off of me and dragged myself out of bed. Another day of working awaited me. It was time for another exhausting, dreary day in the endless fields that my mother had owned for years.

“If your father wasn’t such an idiot, we could have all of us work today and get twice as much done,” my mother said in the room next to mine.

My father was always such a grumpy old man. It was a forced marriage; my father kind of picked my mother our as if at a store full of women. They never got along very well, and one night their differences flared all over the house, and they had had enough of each other. I was a very young boy at the time. I’ll always remember my father from that night.

“I thought I told you to get me a drink, women!” My father screamed at her. He lazily plopped onto his relaxing chair.
“Well, I must prepare supper for us all, and not just a drink for you dear,” My mother said calmly, restraining her frustration.

“That can wait, I am thirsty! I worked all day in the fields and I deserve a small reward, now get me drink!”

My mother’s patience flew out the ceiling, “We all worked in the fields today! What makes you think you deserve it more?” she roared.

I sat and watched them fight, curled up in a chair in the corner of the room. I was scared, very scared. I felt oddly uncomfortable being in the middle of their vocal battlefield. I flinched at every curse and scream they unleashed. I watched them for awhile, and I began to whimper and cry into my shirt. I felt strangely sick inside and sad for the reason that my life seemed to be falling apart.

My father and my mother kept going on with an “I hate you!” and an “I hope you death finds you soon!” I sobbed into my shirt that was eventually very damp.

Soon enough, my father’s temper skyrocketed and he stopped yelling. My mother stopped at mid-word, trying to figure out why my father had stopped regurgitating hateful words. My father paused and marched furiously to the kitchen my mother was preparing dinner in. My mother was shoved out of the way and lost her balance, tumbling onto the floor. A very sharp cutting knife lay near the almost prepared meal. Grasping it tightly, my father turned to my mother who began to whimper on the floor almost like I was.

My eyes widened and I looked away and covered my head in fear. My father raised the knife, ready to strike my mother in the neck. My mother screamed like a banshee for help, but my father cuffed her mouth with his hands. He bent down, pointing the knife at my mother. Struggling, my father began to attack.
Suddenly, the wooden door of my house was kicked off of its hinges. A soldier darted in with a rifle, looking around. He glanced at the knife and immediately took the butt of the rifle and smacked my father in the head with it. He fell to the ground unconscious. Several soldiers followed and the sound of horses could be heard outside. My mother gasped and fearfully crawled away from my father.

“Mother, “ I cried, tears running down my horrified face, “what is happening?”

“Your father has been a bad person and needs to have a time out, “ my mother sobbed, watching the soldiers grab my father and take him away.

“What do you mean?” I asked curiously.

My mother never answered that, and just cried harder than she had ever cried before.

The soldiers took him out the door, and soon we heard the galloping horses in the distance.

“Where are they taking him, mother?” I burst out; the tears only came down quicker. My father may have been grump at times, but he was still my father and I loved him very much. I didn’t want him leaving me now, not at this time… Not now…

My mother let out a wail and hit the floor with her fists. I don’t know how she felt, but I think this indescribable emotion just caught us that day. We felt angry, sad, confused, curious, sorry, and I don’t know what else. All I know is that we fell asleep in my mother’s bed sobbing ourselves to sleep. I think I remember a soldier trying to talk to us, but I do not think either of us caught what he said. My father was gone, and we had to hold for ourselves.
I’ve always wondered how the soldiers got there so fast and who called them in. My father’s few slaves were asleep, but they could have possibly heard the fighting and the screaming. I try to forget that night, but I have learned through growing up that you cannot forget things that change your life, because it is those things that you automatically remember.

My life just kind of stayed the same for awhile after that. Repetitive days of fielding, growing, planting, harvesting and a meal twice a day for everyone, including our two slaves just kept churning. I guess I can’t complain about that part, we had some good relationships with our slaves and a meal on the table every night. After the night, my life remained dull, until another day with changes arose.

“Well?” my mother said, “Are you getting up or what?”

“Yes I am, I am sorry, I was just thinking, “ I said shaking my head and getting back to what I was doing.

Field work that day was pretty harsh. I was bent over all day, putting seeds in the soil and then going back to the house to get more seeds and some water. As I went out to put more seeds in the ground, I thought I saw something in the fields that I didn’t recognize. It was a strange thing, it looked like a person working in the fields, but it wasn’t one of the slaves. The slaves usually wore bright white working outfit, but this person was wearing a dark dragon mask.

I had never seen this before, and it kind of puzzled me. I looked at it closer and there was defiantly a person there. It was dark, and it wasn’t moving, just standing in the middle our grain and rice fields. It started to bug me. It was staring. It was just standing there. Soon enough, I got the creeps and I wanted to run. I tripped a little bit, tumbled,
rolled, and then got to my feet. Sprinting to the house, I looked back to see that he wasn’t there anymore. He was watching me.

“Hey did you see that guy?” I heard one of the slaves say to the other. He pointed to where the watcher was.

That night I pondered about awhile about those eyes on that figure. They were just there, not blinking, staring. I shuddered every once in awhile to look around, expecting someone to be there. I kept thinking about those eyes. Now that I think about it, they are what kept me awake that whole night. A pair of bloodshot, wide eyes just stayed and scarred my mind, and I couldn’t get to sleep. I’m not sure why it scared me, it was just that the watcher could have been anyone.

“So you are awake, “ said a familiar voice.

I jumped and looked around. I was wearing my clothes from yesterday. I saw him beside me. It was no dream. He was there.

I screamed “You kidnapped me you—“

He cupped my mouth. He had all black on. His face was covered by a black dragon mask, except for those eyes.

With that my eyes opened faster than ever at this time of morning. That was the quickest I had ever woken up in my whole life.

“You shall come with me, Chang,” he mumbled, taking my hand and uncovering my mouth. He tugged me out a door to the outside markets.

We walked by many stores with ads and posters tacked up for people to see. I remember seeing one many times in particular. It said “PRISONER WANTED. LAST SEEN WEARING A RED SHIRT.”
The watcher pulled a red shirt stuffed in his pockets and tossed it on the ground as he saw the poster. My heart skipped a beat as I almost stopped walking with the watcher. I had just realized I was holding my father’s hand.

“Do you remember that night?” the watcher said.

“Father!?” I screamed.

The watcher jumped and slowly turned around, “You will be quiet right now son, we have somewhere to go.”

The people around look at us funny as he pulled my away from the crowd.

As we got away from some of those people, he pulled me away from the people and privately whispered, “Now that you know who I am I must tell you what I want,” he said, pulling his mask off briefly.

He looked almost exactly the same as he used to. He quickly glanced around and slid it back on. The people around were looking at him funny anyway. His mask seemed kind of odd, but it was of a dragon, so nobody was too suspicious.

“I need you to take me back to the fields. I need you to help me be able to return back! That night something was wrong with me, you know I would never usually do that! You must come with me to our fields and talk with your mother. I must pass as a slave. I must come back home. Prison is not where I belong. Will you do it?”

I paused, and then said, “As long as you do the talking to mother,” I smiled for the first time in what seemed like forever.

He grinned and behind his mask I could see joy. Maybe he was just off that night. Maybe prison has helped him. Just maybe it did.
During the night I went to sleep in his hut and woke up being carried by my father. He didn’t notice I was awake and kept running. It was very dark, and we were in the marked that I had seen that day. I swiveled my eyes around. There was no way of getting back to sleep now with this bumpy ride. We started getting into open fields, away from the market. The fields were familiar, and we were near home.

“You awake, son?” he asked.

So he did know.

He said, “There are soldiers out every night, and its my life if we are caught, no big deal right?

I flinched, I felt like soldiers were all around us now. That must have been how he was caught that night.

“Father, there are soldiers near! I yelled.

There was a gunshot and my father fell down. I felt shocked as I hit the ground. I sprang up to see my father’s body limp on the ground. I saw many soldiers on horses come up to me. I don’t remember anything else.

I woke up in my bed with my mother staring at me with tears in her eyes. It was a sad way to remember my father at that night, but now I have a memorable time we shared to try to unite our family. He died trying to unite us, and that night was on account of a disease that no one knew about in our village. I will always remember my father from that night. Not the night that he was taken away, but the night that he tried to bring us together. I guess he wasn’t too much of a grumpy man, and I will never forget it if I try.
APPENDIX UU

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WRITING—CATALINA
I See the Anger

I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky.
I see the anger pulling me deeper and deeper.
I try to run away with everything I got.
I try to scream and I try hiding my soul.

I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky.
Save me please, darling, from this hatred all around
Yeah.

Same me please, darling, from this hatred all around.
I’m gonna keep runin’ until the day I die.
I’m gonna run on and on, darling, darling, save me now
Yeah.

I can see it, yeah, pulling
I can see it, pullin’ me farther in
I can see it, I can see it.

I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky; oh, yeah
I see the anger pulling me deeper and deeper.
I try to run away with everything I got.
I try to scream out and I try hiding my soul
I see the anger, hollow in the endless sky.
Yeah.

I can see it; hear me out.
I can see it, oooh, pullin’ me farther in.
I can see it.
Oh, ye, ye, yeah.
APPENDIX VV

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WRITING—NAMRATA
FRIKKIE

Boys
Growing up in apartheid.
One

White and fair

I am
Kleinbaas,
Boer,
Afrikaaner,

I
Hate

School.
It is
Free for me

I can read

I
Love

Biltong.

I eat
Fruitcakes

Tea, oh so hot.

I
Play cricket
We milk the cows

He
Taught
Me

TENGO

Boys
Growing up in apartheid.
One

Black and dark.

I am
Black and dark
I am
Kaffir,
Piccanin,
African.

I would

Love
School.
It is
It is
Costly for us

I can read

I

Hate

Biltong.

I eat
Bread and jam
Tea
Lukewarm

We milk the cows
I

Taught
How it is done

I must carry a Passbook always

Passbooks
I have no need of

Apartheid
Separation, tearing us

Because of race.
APPENDIX WW

AFRICAN-AMERICAN WRITING—CHRISTOPHER
Why must Tengo leave us?

Why must Tengo abandon us?
The books I gave him
Were to satisfy his urge to learn,
But all it has done is stoked it.

I’m so sad around the home now,
My doing is grasping Tengo,
Soon he will leave to a township,
Has he not been to a township
What shall he do to keep himself from harm?

I worry,
I weep,
I cry,
I am anxious,

For I do not know what is coming for Tengo,
And I have an urge to learn what it is.
APPENDIX XX

INDEPENDENT STUDY RUBRIC
INDEPENDENT STUDY RUBRIC

DESCRIPTION OF CULTURE /25

HISTORY/SOCIAL CONTEXT /25

THREE WRITTEN FORMS

GENRE ONE /50

GENRE TWO /50

GENRE THREE /50

ART FORMS

THREE ORIGINAL WORKS /50

WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF ART /50

OVERALL PRESENTATION /30

SUPERIOR WORKMANSHIP

EFFORT

CREATIVITY

AESTHETICALLY PLEASING

TOTAL POINTS:
APPENDIX YY

INDEPENDENT STUDY WRITING—ERIC
Hymn to the Sun, Wind and Rain

Thou art here, Wind,
    Billowing the water of the Nile.
Thou art here,
    Filling the sails of the merchant ships.
Thou art here,
    Bringing the hot dry weather.
Thou art here,
    Blowing the dry desert sands.
Thou art here,
    Bringing the cool wet weather.
Thou art here,
    Delivering the life-giving rains.

Thou hast come, Rain,
    Bringing the rich soil and the Nile-flood.
Thou hast brought life,
    The green sprouts in the farmers’ fields.
Thou hast made the farms thrive,
    The fields flourish with life.
Thou hast brought water,
    The animals’ thirst is quenched.
Thou hast brought prosperity,
    The country is full of life, and the markets filled with food.
Thou hast gone,
    The country is dry and barren once more.

Thy rays are powerful, Sun,
    They bestow life and they take it away.
Thy rays are strong,
    They pierce the stormy clouds.
Thy rays are ruthless,
    They torment the midday workers.
Thy rays are harsh,
    They heat the desert unbearably.
Thy rays are benevolent,
    They bring light to the country.
Thy rays are beautiful,
    They shine gently through the day.
Thy rays are gone,
    The country is overcome with darkness.
One day, Pharaoh called in his chief magician, the Kherheb.

“Pharaoh–life, health and wealth be to you! Why have you called me here?”

“I have received a message from the king of Nubia. He claims to bear an amulet wrought in the finest Nubian gold and, so long as he is wearing it, he cannot be defeated in battle. He requires that there be sent to him a vase filled with power. If this is not done by sunset tomorrow, he will conquer Egypt, his army impervious under the spell of the amulet.”

“What is it that you wish?” asked the magician.

“If it is that I cannot defeat him, I must fulfill his request. Bring me a vase filled with power by midday tomorrow!”

So the magician returned home and read all of the scripts that he could find, but nowhere could he find an incantation to fill a vase with power. That night, the wise god Thoth came to him in a dream. He revealed a spell, and told the magician: “It is not to be that Egypt should become but a worthless stone, all gold extracted from it. Resistance must be wrought from what wealth remains.”

The magician awoke pondering these words. He then set out to gather the necessary ingredients. He collected the strength of the wind, the fortitude of stone, and the resilience of the Earth, reciting the incantation as he added them to the vase. At midday, he delivered the vase to Pharaoh, who reluctantly had it delivered to Nubia. He returned home, thinking of the riches and power that Egypt was losing to the Nubian King. It was like extracting gold from a stone, he thought, remembering Thoth’s words. He then realized what needed to do.
The next day, the Nubian king sent a second request. The magician was again summoned by Pharaoh.

“Pharaoh—life, health, and wealth be to you! Has the Nubian again sent a request?” asked magician.

“He now demands a vessel containing life itself. This cannot continue—the Nubian must be stopped! Bring me the vessel filled with life and a plan by midday tomorrow.”

The magician returned home and, again read all of his scripts and pondered, but he could not see how a vessel could be filled with life itself. That night, Thoth again appeared to him and gave him the incantation that could put life itself into a vessel.

When he awoke the next morning, he set about collecting the fertility of soil, the purity of water, and the power of the sun, reciting the incantation as he added them to the vessel. Then, feeling a sense of loss, he gave the vessel to Pharaoh at midday.

“Pharaoh—life, health, and wealth be to you! I have brought the vessel as you asked, and I have a plan. I shall create a sword for you, one powerful enough to destroy the amulet. I will have it by the morning of the day after next.”

That night, the magician read all of his scrolls once again, trying to create a spell powerful enough to devour the evil of the amulet. He knew that tonight, he would receive no help from the gods in his quest, for only the strength of man could destroy the evil of man.

The next morning, the magician began to gather all that he needed for his incantation. Walking through the streets of Thebes, he found devotion and patriotism for Egypt and for the good god and Pharaoh. In the temples he encountered righteousness and morality. He then went to the Nile farms and gathered the strength and endurance of
the laborers. Finally, he gathered the determination, resilience, and kinship of all the Egyptian people. On the second day, he caused the sword to be forged–fused together with kinship, reinforced with resilience, and shaped with determination. It was a beautiful sword, wrought from the purest treasures of Egypt, and infused with the power to overcome evil.

When the next morning came, the magician returned to Pharaoh’s court.

“Pharaoh–life, health, and wealth be to you! I have brought a sword, wrought from the purest treasures of Egypt, and infused with the power to overcome evil. You must wield it in a duel with the Nubian. However, the sword must only be used for the purest and most just causes. It may destroy the amulet, but it cannot be used in hatred against the Nubian, or it will shatter in your hand.”

“You have served me well. Tomorrow I shall travel to Nubia and crush the evil of the amulet.”

So it was that Pharaoh traveled down the Nile to Nubia, where he met the antagonistic Nubian King. They dueled for one day under the hot sun, and one night under the full moon. On that morning, with a determined and forceful thrust, Pharaoh drove the sword into the center of the amulet. The sword fell to the ground, its energies extinguished. The amulet promptly shattered into the sandy dust of the desert and blew away in the breeze. The Nubian King knelt before Pharaoh.

“Pharaoh–life, health, and wealth be to you! The will of Egypt is greater than the magic of Nubia.”

Thus, Egypt continued to rule over Nubia, and the treasures of Egypt shall forever reign over simple wealth in gold.
Proverbs

-If one could not feel pain; he would not know happiness.

-Honor is different through the eyes of another than one’s own eyes.

-Trust thyself to do something, and it shall be done.

-Should a duck flies with geese, he would become one.

-A mountain becomes but a hill when one looks down from its peak.

-It is easier to find a meaning when it is not buried in clutter.

-Though the path is crooked, walk straight.

-A strong man can move boulders; a wise man can move mountains.

-Should all care for each other, one would not need to care for himself.

-You must look before you can see.

-It takes more than one view to see the whole object.
Evening of Bloodshed in Old San Juan

As the fiery
Flame of evening
Flies over the world
Spreading its blazing heat
Coloring everything blood red
Atop the golden wheat
I run over the red blood
Under the radian sky of red cries
So dark the horizon of red on black
I almost cried out to you
But across the broken street
Shaded by hollow screams of children
House after house silent prayers
Climb upward over the harbor
Sanguine hills shine
Over the torched city
Descending to a standstill
The sight was too unexpected for me to speak, running from you
In the scarlet rain
Of screams on the shore
To this smell of hibiscus
Ruby enough for you to reach me
And look around
I knew with my heart
How much that you would have hated
This evening of bloodshed
Sanguine hills shine
Over the breeze of a torched city.
Miguel Jose and the Sheep

One blustery summer day, Miguel Jose was walking down the street from school. As he walked, he looked up at the sapphire sky and forgot to pay attention to where he was going. It appears Miguel wasn’t the only one watching the sky that day for coming the other way young Ivan Rodriguez was also starring at the sky. They got closer and closer until…

“Ahh! Hey, watch were you’re walking!” a very irritated Miguel hissed.

“Lo siento. Sorry. I was not watching where I was going.”

Not even paying attention to the apology that he was given, Miguel shoved Ivan and stomped off towards his house.

As Miguel walked into his house, he was greeted with silence. Thankful that he was home, Miguel raced off to find his padre, father. Miguel’s father was working with las orejas, the sheep, in the field, and as his son walked up, he looked up.

“¡Hola hijo! Hello son. ¿Cómo estás? How are you?”

“¡Muy mal! Some Negro, black Puerto Rican kid ran into my on the way home.”

Miguel’s father raised his eyebrow in amusement and said nothing as he once again bent to attend to a sheep. Seeing that he was dismissed, Miguel walked off to go play.
As the cobalt sky raised over the town, Miguel’s father walked towards his house thinking of how he could teach his son a lesson. Behind him the restless orejas moved noisily toward their separate sleeping sections. All of a sudden an idea flew into his father’s head.

“Son? ¿Donde Estás? Where are you?” his father called as he entered their hut.

“Right here! ¿Qué tú quieres? What do you want? He asked as he skipped into the room.

“Tomorrow I must go help Senor Gonzales with his crops. While I’m gone, I want you to sheer the orejas for me.”

“Oh, sí, papa! I’ll do really well sheering the orejas.

“Bueno. Now go to sleep, and leave me be.”

The next day, Miguel’s father got up really early and left. Miguel looked around and slid into his father’s shirt and hat. Next, he decided that taking lunch with him was a smart idea so he packed un pastel, cake, un sopa de polla, chicken soup, and soda all into a huge bag. He raced the pollos, chickens, past the hill, through the old barn and up into the field.

Miguel looked around and saw the orejas were still asleep! He chuckled as he walked towards the first cluster and nudge the first oreja with his foot.
He sang as he woke up the orejas, “Rise and shine, sleepy heads! The
golden sun is shining and the puerquitos, the pigs, are squealing. It’s time to get a
haircut and play! Ha, ha, ha!”

Quickly, all the sheep were up, though they were not happy about it.
Miguel herded them into a small pen. As he began to sheet the sheep, he failed to
notice that the sheep were flustered at having been mixed, black and white sheep
alike. Pretty soon the sheep were all upset and were making it hard for Miguel.

“¿Qué pasa? What’s wrong? He asked the sheep?”

The sheep looked at him and said, “Bah! Bah!”

“Oh! Yo se, I know! Ellos tiernen sed. You guys are all thirsty.”

“Bah!”

Miguel ran and dragged the water trough to the pen and poured water
into it, but the sheep just began to bah louder.

“Ok! I know, yo se, I know! You want out! Wait one second.”

He opened the door and had to dodge the livid sheep as they tore through
the open door. As soon as they were out, the sheep began to separate into colors,
black sheep here and white sheep there. Miguel shook his head at the sight.

“You stupid sheep. What does it matter what color your wool is? You are
all sheep!”
Miguel sat down and shrugged he had a job to do. He could sheet the sheep out in the field it was okay with him.

After many hours, he got done with his last squirming sheep. Before he went back towards his house he stopped to watch the sheep. The usually separated sheep were mixing together, not realizing that before they hadn’t been friends. Hearing a footstep, he looked back and saw one black sheep walk towards one white sheep and rubbing noses. The sheep were acting like one big happy family and were making friends all over again. They had realized that they were all sheep no matter what color their wool.

Smiling he turned and began to walk towards his house. Halfway there he stopped. He had acted just like those sheep and had looked down upon the black Puerto Rican kid he had run into in the street. Miguel shut his eyes and looked again, and there, within the herd of sheep, his father and a darker Puerto Rican stood laughing and talking. Miguel turned and raced off to meet his father. Miguel grinned, he could change his thinking, too.

So, even today, in Puerto Rico, whenever a man or women looks down on someone of a darker skin and pretend that they are superior, people will say,

“That person acts just like las orejas de Miguel Jose,” or Miguel Jose’s sheep
APPENDIX AAA

INDEPENDENT STUDY UNIT--NAMRATA
Go to the Lighted North

Go to the Lighted North!
Go to the Lighted North!
For a kind old maid’ll take you in from freezin’
If you go to the Lighted North.

When moon smiles naught and the owl calls,
Go to the Lighted North.
For a kind old maid’ll take you in from freezin’
If you go to the Lighted North!

Count the roses on the windowsill
T’see if there’s room for you.
Hold the lamp to the black-man’s face
And go to the Lighted North.

Wade through the stream
To brush off the blood;
There’s warmth on the other side.
Go to the Lighted North.

When the sunset bleeds onto the horizon
Go to the Lighted North.
For a kind old maid’ll take you in from freezin’
If you go to the Lighted North.
$200 REWARD

RANAWAY from the pub at

Bristol on the night of
Thursday the 8th of May, a
negro woman who is called
MABLE

about 24 years of age, 4 feet and 9 inches
high; of very dark color;
missing three fingers on the right
hand. Stole one pound of dried beans
and one yard of fine muslin.

A $200 reward will be paid to
anyone who finds her, and an
additional $800 if you bring the
one the Negroes call ‘Moses’
along with my slave.

may 8-84       H.M. RICHMOND
Brer Terrapin and the Feast (Why the Terrapin Has no Teeth)

Brer Goat had always been real helpful like to all the forest animals, so it was a mighty sad occasion when Brer Robin announced that Brer Goat had died. For a whole week all the animals walked around with red, puffy eyes and wet faces, and a sniffle up their nose, weepin’ and wailin’ that their friend had passed on to be with the Lord. If got so bad, that no work was getting’ done. So, Mayor-Brer Bear came up with a plan that would help them to get their chores finished.

“I says we all get togetha and have a big feast to honor Brer Goat—“ the congregation began to tear “—and we can get on with our work. The reast will last for three days…that should be enough time, shouldn’t it?…yes, three days of fun, dancing, and mourning for Brer Goat. Each member will have a special job for the party…”

The animals burst into an applause of “We hear ya Brother!” and “Amen, Brother!

All the animals were now busy with the feast preparations, except for lazy Brer Terrapin. All he wanted to do was enjoy himself at the party. He didn’t actually want to do anything to prepare it.

“Brer Terrapin, shouldn’t you start making the food, now?” asked Sista Squirrel.

“You know you should’ve bought the food ages ago, but you still have time.” Brer Terrapin was in charge of the meal operations because he was the richest animal.

“Mmmmmugggrurrum…” grumbled Brer Terrapin. “I’ll do it later. I want to sunbather right now.”
Sista Squirrel shrugged her shoulders and went off. Brer Terrapin went on dillydallying day after day, until it was the night before the big feast. “Oh, no! wailed Brer Terrapin. “What will I do? All the stores are closed, and I’m out of every last morsel.” Brer Terrapin looked out the window at the night coming on. “Ah-ha! Look at that gravely dirt! If I add enough water and enough salt, it should kind of look like stew.”

So Brer Terrapin raked together the gravely dirt and poured it into a cauldron. He added a tin of salt and stirred it good. Then he added a few splashes of water, turned the spoon a few times, and put the pot onto the fire. Then he turned in for the night.

The ‘stew’ bubbled and simmered all night. When the first fingers of dawn crept into the woods, Brer Terrapin hoisted the kettle onto his shell and began to walk to the clearing, where the feast was being held.

When he got there, he plunked the stew down onto the center of the table. When no one was looking, he sprinkled a couple of leaves and some flowers into it. “That’ll look expensive, now.”

Each animal eyed the stew hungrily as they arrived. After Mayor-Brer Bear’s speech, Sista Mouse served each creature a heaping not ladleful of food.

“Looks good,” boomed Brer Badger.

“Fine work!” said Brer Yak.

Brer Terrapin humbly declined any food from Sista Mouse, smiled smugly, and snickered inside hisself.

As each member took a bite, their face went from normal to green of a fresh young leaf. But, they were too polite to say anything. Instead, they just pushed their food
aside, and subtly spit what was in their mouths into their napkins, and said, “Umm, not bad. But, I just ate breakfast.”

At least the rest of the day was fun for everyone.

The next day, Brer Terrapin made the same dish, and the animals said the same thing. Sista Fox got mighty suspicious and came up with her own plan to catch Brer Terrapin in his own trick.

That night, Sista Fox followed Brer Terrapin home. She watched him make his gravely dirt stew, and said herself, “Well, well, so that’s what it is. Well I’ll teach you.”

She scribbled a note and left it on Brer Terrapin’s door. Then she went home.

The next morning, Brer Terrapin found a note from Sista Fox that said how kind he was for bringing all the food, but she’d bring it today. She also asked him to bring her a bowl of his terrific recipe for her to have in return. All puffed with pride, Brer Terrapin filled a bowl, covered it with a wet cheesecloth, and set off for the feast.

Sista Fox rapped her spoon on the edge of the pot and set it on the table. She sniffed at the aroma a few times and then sprinkled some sage and basil into the soup.

Sista Lynx spread the word to all the other animals that Brer Terrapin wouldn’t be cooking that day.

All the animals spent the day in the Crook’d Creek, splashin’ and divin’ and havin’ a whole lot of fun.
When meal-time came, all the animals sat down with eagerness. Sista Mouse served each person a bowl of soup, but skipped Brer Terrapin.

“Sista Mouse, I believe you have forgotten the most important person at this table.”

Sista Mouse curtsied and apologized. “We just had a very special dish for you Brer Terrapin. You’ll have your meal in a second. Eat up good, now, or you’ll offend Sista Fox. She made it just for you.

Sista Mouse came back with a big bowl of thick, meaty stew, with huge mint leaves in it. “Here, Brer Terrapin. We’d never forget you!”

Brer Terrapin dug into the bowl and noticed a thick gray-brown layer underneath. He shrugged his shell, and popped it into his mouth. “Oooh! This is too hard!” He spat the stew onto the table along with four teeth.

Sista Fox began to snuffle. Brer Terrapin quickly forced in another bite, and the rest of his teeth fell out. “Ohf! I can’t do dif! I fts fo grof!” And Brer Terrapin ran off, quite embarrassed into the woods, wailing and blubbering like a baby. And since that day, not a single terrapin has ever had teeth as a reminder of his stupidity.
APPENDIX BBB

INDEPENDENT STUDY WRITING—CHRISTOPHER
Bosworth Fields

An Epic Poem

The great Wars of the Roses was a series of civil battles between the rebellious House of Lancaster and the House of York in England. Some causes have to do with the civil unrest of the whole population. It lasted many years, from 1455 to 1487. The Yorkists seemed to have won the majority of the battles throughout the years, but the House of Lancaster had very mixed and far off alliances that agreed with their ways and won the decisive battle, the Battle of Bosworth Fields. This war, comparing to the American Civil War, was like having the South defeating the North. The rebellious side was the victor, but at a cost. This poem is from a rebel soldier’s point of view, however he wished the war had never started and a day of peace would come. His emotional struggles guide him through the final conflict.

Our people await a day of peace in these years
but it seems that day will not be coming upon us soon.
It may drag along up to us one day, but it shall not be soon.
A day of peace in this time of battle
will not make its way up to us in the time we desire.
The hatred and dread of the opposites haunts us
and we can do nothing, just wait their arrival.
We could be attacked, I could be sent
to defend our land, to stop the opposing threat.

I do not wish to conflict on another during these years.
Blade clashes with blade and our people
of the House of Lancaster will collide with the House of York.
Our people of the House of Lancaster shall spill blood
and with that, spill the blood of the enemy.
I feel condensed, tight, as though I do not have any choice.
I feel that a hellish future is in front of me and I cannot change it.
But I am for my people, to protect them forever
and there is noting that can be sent at me and be ignored
if it brings danger to my people.

However I immensely urge to experience a day of peace.
That day of peace may not be coming soon,
but I am arriving to battle, arriving for my people.
I shall not let the people I have stuck with for so long
suffer because the Yorkists, however they keep gaining victory,
I am showed the battle plan, how our armies will meet.
Our army is to meet with them in the midst of Bosworth Fields
The nightmare of my life will become reality
much that I fear shall stand in my life’s path.
I cannot control its coming, its emerging upon me.

War is here, it has come to the Bosworth Fields.
Dawn breaks, and a sequence of ruthless fighting is racing at us.

*A day of peace will come, I thought, but today will not be it.*
I ride to battle, for my kin, but not in a way I choose.
My feelings are still tied and shrunk and the commander marches on in front.

Over the hills we go, my people and I, and we see another force,
another force far beyond numbering, thousands more than our army.

In a mixture of fear, hate, and loyalty, I raised my sword for my people.

A charge is screamed and all of the rebels in our army start to run.

They begin to assault the Yorkists, and the Yorkists dart at us as well.

Yells that crush my ears arise from the hills.

Now is the time I will protect my people, finally

I will give them their day of peace and much more by eliminating
the Yorkists, the evil. Then I shall no longer be constrained.

Sprinting hordes of armed men aim to defeat their opponents, us.

Our army will mix with theirs, and many people’s deaths will come.

I see our soldiers launching enfilades of arrows into the ocean of enemies.

I see stray barrages of arrows knocking several of our soldiers down.

They fell before the armies me, but they did what they could.

Now we come closer to our possible end.

Now we come to the Battle of Bosworth Fields.

A fierce collision of the front lines fills the air with sound of war.

Sword, spear, bolt, armor, shield, all is knocked and broken and splintered.

I fight against the House of York, valiantly swinging and defeating enemies.

Nothing shall cause me to halt, this violence is for me and my kind.

The Yorkists will pay for their victories, their slaughters of us.

They are! They are! Our force is beginning to drive them.
I hate them! Those Yorkists! I am joyous to see them flee!

My hate guides me to a rampage over the enemy, the putrid Yorkists.

Now they are paying, now they are suffering!

The time has come for me, I am finally atop them.

Victory! It is the word I wish to happily hear in my ear.

Victory to the Rebels! It is the phrase I dream to have heard.

Victory over the Yorkists! It is the chant I want the Yorkists to dread.

The Lancastrians have decidedly ended the Wars of the Roses.

We wear our red rose badges proudly as the staggering leftovers,

the Yorkists that are retreating away from the fields, disappear.

I have given my people a day of peace, for the Battle of Bosworth Fields is won.

A Song of Joy

Joy, Joy!
A joyous day is ahead,
The greater our happiness and the less our sorrow,
The less our worries and doubts.

Joyous we be!
A feeling has spread over all;
A feeling that will engulf upon us,
And we shall be rejoiced.

A great day it shall be,
If we spread our good luck and feelings;
We shan’t worry about anything around,
No more sadness shall corrupt here.

The people around here are drooping,
There is no way they could be a joyous folk,
We shan’t wait, we must go to them,
We shan’t let people stay in the dumps.

It is a feeling that seems too good,
But it can’t be, because it can always raise more,
The little bits of negative feelings drift,
And you rise with no problems, just joy.

From all around this feeling must go,
A way it must travel, more people need happiness,
A butterfly in your stomach will float away,
You must forget all you dislike!

So come with us, chant with us,
We shall spread the word, no, the feeling,
It is a feeling that all need to feel,
And if they don’t, that person will never know its greatness.
LIST OF REFERENCES


