**GENRES OF EXPERIENCE:**
**THREE ARTICLES ON LITERACY NARRATIVES**
**AND ACADEMIC RESEARCH WRITING**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

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This dissertation collects three articles that emerged from my work as a teacher and a researcher. In Chapter One, I share curricular resources that I designed as a teacher of research literacies to encourage qualitative research writers in (English) education to engage creatively and critically with the aesthetics of their research-writing processes and to narrate their experiences in dialogues with others. Specifically, I present three heuristics for writing and revising qualitative research articles in (English) education: "PAGE" (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement), "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," and "The Three INs" (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation). In explaining these heuristics, I describe the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of all of the major sections of qualitative research articles, and show how the problem for study brings the rhetorical "jobs" of each section into purposive relationship with those of the other sections. Together, the three curricular resources that I offer in this chapter prompt writers to connect general rhetorical concerns with specific writing moves and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic art. Chapters Two and Three emerged from research inspired by my teaching, during which writers shared with me personal literacy narratives, or autobiographical accounts related to their experiences with academic research writing. In Chapter Two, I consider a major research literature on personal literacy narratives— writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship—and explore the affect of genre conventions at work in this literature and in the autobiographical accounts on which these studies have relied as

chief evidence sources. I propose that the rhetoric of literacy narratives "sponsors," or enables and constrains, the literacy-related experiences of researchers, as well as study participants, and, by extension, of teachers, as well as students. Moreover, I suggest that future literacy-sponsorship studies might attend particularly to the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters. Drawing on important terms in Brandt's work on literacy sponsorship, I outline directions for future research that would honor and rework her three assumptions to examine literacy sponsors as rhetorical "figures," literacy narratives as "scenes" of literacy sponsorship, and literacy sponsorship as "involvement." Chapter Three is my preliminary attempt to pursue this research agenda. In this chapter, I examine how the rhetoric of literacy narratives, in collaboration with audiences and recounters, among other sponsoring influences, may perform poetic and persuasive work beyond literal meaning, and may thus support and limit how literacy is thought, felt, and lived. Analyzing a literacy-narrative excerpt generated in my five-year ethnographic study of doctoral-student writing groups, I highlight what I call "sponsor figures" and "template literacy experiences" (TaLEs), two kinds of narrative composite, which elide the specificity of people to produce character types, and assimilate situations and events to create typical forms, or genres, of experience. Presumably generalized from repeated past experiences, these patterns of social interaction may also be generalized to, and thus repeated as, present and future experiences. I propose that while such composites' original references may never be recovered, distinguished, or verified, their poetic and persuasive work may be examined by researchers, teachers, and recounters of literacy narratives.

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# INTRODUCTION

To highlight thematic and historical connections among the three articles collected as chapters of my dissertation, I offer in this introduction a personal literacy narrative that traces the emergence of those texts in response to my work as a research-writing teacher, my concurrent five-year ethnographic study of research-writing groups for education doctoral students, and my continuing engagement with the scholarship of influential writing-studies researcher Deborah Brandt. As articles, Chapter One is currently under review at *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*; Chapter Two has been accepted for publication by *Curriculum Inquiry*; and Chapter Three is being considered by the *Journal of Literacy Research*.

## My Teaching/Research

Since 2005, I have taught research literacies to individuals and small groups, including graduate students, faculty, and multigenerational research teams. I have taught both native and non-native English speakers, and have consulted on thirty-six dissertations. Through this work, I have engaged graduate students and faculty in exploring affordances and constraints of using various digital technologies and visual-rhetoric strategies to enhance their academic research writing. Additionally, I have designed and facilitated workshops and writing retreats for graduate students and faculty. Most of my teaching has served education researchers specializing in a variety of content areas, including English, mathematics, and science. Through this work, I have developed a coherent and evolving curriculum on academic research writing in the interdisciplinary field of education.

My teaching and research have been tightly interwoven. During the past nine years, my research has focused on issues related to the personal literacy narratives shared with me by academic writers in the course of my teaching. Such autobiographical accounts address, for example, experiences with writing, reading, teaching, learning, knowing, and remembering; and, more broadly, experiences with ability, authority, creativity, and responsibility. I am especially interested in personal literacy narratives that writers recount when they face demands for new performances of literacy, like writing an unfamiliar genre, or with an unfamiliar technology, or for an unfamiliar audience. Such demands can prompt writers to rework connections among their past, present, and future experiences, and to reimagine what they think, feel, and value. Accordingly, I regard personal literacy narratives as important, if unofficial, inquiries that may both inspire and inhibit academic writers' work on their official research projects, including conference papers, research articles, and the dissertation.

From 2006 to 2011, I studied six extracurricular, research-writing groups for education doctoral students, which I facilitated as a research-writing teacher and a participant-observer. Each writing group met for two hours at a time, weekly or biweekly, year-round, over the course of two-to-five years. Meetings were conducted face-to-face, online, or in hybrid form. With the eighteen writers' consent, I audio recorded group meetings and collected artifacts of their writing and peer response. In this way, I amassed oral, written, and visual literacy narratives that had emerged through group conversations and correspondence. My work with these doctoral students, and with other academic writers outside my study, prompted me to examine how academic researchers' personal literacy narratives may operate both as resources for, and as obstacles to, their professional endeavors, especially their attempts to *write* research and to *research* writing.

**My Dissertation**

In my work with academic writers both within and beyond my study of doctoral-student writing groups, I witnessed much suffering, resilience, and change recounted and enacted in personal narratives related to academic research writing for publication. Accordingly, my inquiries both as a teacher and as a researcher during the past nine years have been propelled, complicated, and opened anew by the question: If academic research writing, personal narratives *about* academic research writing, and personal narratives about experiences *evoked by* academic research writing, can hurt and heal academic writers, why and how?

This question has prompted me to investigate how academic writers engage with research genres in their writing, and how they imagine, claim, resist, and revise such *experiences of genre* in their personal narratives. Chapter One of my dissertation is an outgrowth of this work. A central assumption of my inquiries has been that literacy narratives not only purport to convey literacy-related experiences but also participate in their constitution. For example, I have been especially interested in how academic writers' personal literacy narratives connect the past, the present, and/or the future to establish patterns of memory and expectation, or *genres of experience*. Chapter Three of my dissertation focuses on how narrative rhetoric can formulate composites of people, situations, and events to create generic social roles and interactional dynamics that may be applied to other encounters.

In general, to quote Deborah Brandt, I have approached literacy narratives as "sponsors of literacy," or as material conditions that enable and constrain literacy-related experiences. Chapters Two and Three of my dissertation have emerged from my dialogue with Brandt's research. In Chapter Three, I analyze narrative rhetoric at work in an excerpt from a personal

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literacy narrative generated in my study of doctoral-student writing groups, and explain how it "sponsored," or promoted and restricted, how the academic writer who told that narrative may have experienced literacy, at least at the time of the recounting. In contrast, in Chapter Two, I consider the influence of narrative rhetoric on writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship, including Brandt's work. Influential contributors to this major literature on literacy narratives have tended to rely on study participants' personal literacy narratives as chief sources of evidence, though they have also drawn on different narrative genres, like social histories and ethnographies, written by other academic researchers. In Chapter Three, I show how genre conventions of these narrative genres have "sponsored," or enabled and constrained, research on literacy sponsorship.

**Chapter Summaries**

Early in my teaching and study of academic research literacies, primarily with qualitative education researchers, I began to suspect that one reason why academic research writing may have been not only difficult but also painful for those writers was the general lack of curricular resources on rhetorical conventions of qualitative (education) research genres, particularly tools that describe, explain, and promote connections between strategic aims and specific techniques—between the why and the how. In response to this need, I have generated many curricular resources during the past nine years, including the three heuristics presented in Chapter One of my dissertation: "PAGE" (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement), "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," and "The Three INs" (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation). In addition to sharing these tools in Chapter One, I describe the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of all of the major sections of qualitative research articles,

and show how the problem for study brings the rhetorical "jobs" of each section into purposive

relationship with those of the other sections. Together, the three curricular resources that I offer

in this chapter prompt writers to connect general rhetorical concerns with specific writing moves

and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic art. In this way, Chapter One

encourages qualitative research writers in (English) education to engage creatively and critically

with the aesthetics of their research-writing processes and to narrate their experiences in

dialogues with others.

While the (English) education research writers with whom I have collaborated have

found the tools that I offer in Chapter One to be useful in their research, teaching, and service, I

do not regard these curricular resources as sufficient. Indeed, my efforts to teach rhetorical craft

related to strategic concerns, like purpose, audience, and genre, have reinforced for me the

crucial importance of what I call "engagement" issues, or the lived/imagined effects *on academic*

*writers* of their participation in writing research for publication. In Chapters Two and Three of

my dissertation, I propose that the rhetoric of literacy narratives—of whatever medium (e.g.,

words, images, and multimedia)—may both enhance and impede recounters' and audiences'

engagement in literacy-related experiences, including experiences of composing with academic

research genres.

In Chapter Two, I review influential writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship. I

show how subsequent studies have reiterated three basic assumptions of Deborah Brandt's

pioneering oral-history project. However, I also demonstrate that later writing-studies research

on literacy sponsorship has tended to narrow Brandt's expansive notion of "literacy sponsors" to

denote people exclusively. I link this trend to subsequent studies' greater reliance on personal

narratives as evidence sources. This genre typically concentrates agency in people. Thus, I

propose that the rhetoric of literacy narratives "sponsors," or enables and constrains, the literacy-related experiences of researchers, as well as study participants, and of teachers, as well as students. Moreover, I suggest that future literacy-sponsorship studies might attend particularly to the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters. Drawing on important terms in Brandt's scholarship on literacy sponsorship, I outline directions for future research that would honor and rework her three assumptions to examine literacy sponsors as rhetorical *figures*, literacy narratives as *scenes* of literacy sponsorship, and literacy sponsorship as *involvement*.

Chapter Three is my preliminary attempt to pursue this research agenda. In this chapter, I examine how the rhetoric of literacy narratives, in collaboration with recounters and audiences, among other sponsoring influences, may perform poetic and persuasive work beyond literal meaning, and may thus support and limit how literacy is thought, felt, and lived. Analyzing a literacy-narrative excerpt generated in my five-year ethnographic study of doctoral-student writing groups, I highlight what I call "sponsor figures" and "template literacy experiences" (TaLEs), two kinds of narrative composite, which elide the specificity of people to produce character types, and assimilate situations and events to create typical forms, or genres, of experience. Presumably generalized from repeated past experiences, these patterns of social interaction may also be generalized to, and thus repeated as, present and future experiences. I propose that while such composites' original references may never be recovered, distinguished, or verified, their poetic and persuasive work may be examined by researchers, teachers, and recounters of literacy narratives. I also identify opportunities for continued research.

Together, the three chapters of my dissertation contribute to the overlapping fields of literacy studies, writing studies, genre studies, narrative research, and (English) education by identifying new approaches for teaching qualitative research writing, and for studying relationships between literacy sponsorship and literacy narratives. Previous research in these fields has tended to interpret personal narratives of literacy-related experiences, including those presented in pedagogical situations (e.g., literacy autobiographies and writing-process descriptions), as factual reports. In contrast, my dissertation makes several basic arguments:

1. The rhetoric of literacy narratives, in collaboration with recounters, audiences, and other influences, participates in the making, unmaking, and remaking of the literacy-related experiences that these narratives purport to describe.

2. Moreover, the rhetoric of literacy narratives may occasion, as well as stage and report, literacy-related experiences, by "involving," or affecting, recounters and audiences.

3. Thus, narrative rhetoric is a sponsor of literacy, and it conditions the enduring influence of other literacy sponsors.

4. Although some literacy narratives may not be intensely involving or repeated over time, and, in this way, their sponsoring force may be weak, the persistence of the sponsoring influences that they present is nevertheless an effect of narrative rhetoric, which connects the past, the present, and/or the future. In other words, even weak sponsors of literacy are literacy sponsors.

5. While all narrative connections among the past, the present, and/or the future are rhetorical effects, some of those relations are also tropological in that they assert,

for example, that "now" is (like) "then," or that "here" is (like) "there." In other words, the figurative work of literacy narratives merits serious attention.

6. Experience may not be settled or unambiguously linked to specific, actual events. An unverifiable literacy narrative may nevertheless be moving, affecting, involving, sponsoring.

Some readers of my dissertation may prefer that I had not complicated the widespread assumption that personal literacy narratives are factual reports. My intention in doing so was not to discredit recounters or to urge researchers to bolster their truth claims, but, rather, to enact my commitment, as a teacher and a researcher, to the possibility that narratives/experiences of literacy may change—may become, and may enable and constrain the becoming of those they involve. To offer a "template literacy experience" of my own: If narrative rhetoric can participate in the *invention* of literacy-related experiences, then narrative rhetoric can contribute to their *reinvention*. Moreover, such (trans)formative work is a process that I, as a teacher/researcher of rhetoric and writing, may be able to influence. (I am not an economic policy adviser, for example.)

My overarching purpose in presenting the dissertation that follows is to highlight the possibility that narrative rhetoric may hurt and heal academic writers. For example, at times, a personal literacy narrative's claim, however explicit, that "now" is like "then" or that "you" are like "them" may be debilitating (or, in extreme cases, harmful trauma re-enactment); at other times, this claim may be life-giving.

**CHAPTER ONE:**

**Three Heuristics for Writing and Revising**

**Qualitative Research Articles in English Education**

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance….

—Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*

Recently, English education researchers, like their colleagues in the overlapping field of education, have given renewed attention to issues of researcher preparation and development. Topics addressed include challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinarity, traditions and innovations in doctoral-program design, and affordances and constraints of new media and technologies for research methods and dissemination. However, despite the range and complexity of these conversations, there persists a crucial need for curricular resources on writing academic research genres for publication if research writers, including undergraduate and graduate students, and early-career and more accomplished faculty, are to participate with greater ease and effectiveness in the diverse rhetorical communities of English education. Academic research writing for publication is a high-stakes endeavor in which personal and cultural identities, social ties, institutional status, and money are in jeopardy. Vigorous dialogues regarding the aims, means, values, and possible effects of this work are important. Specifically, more discussion is needed on tools for teaching and learning professional genres, especially research articles, on which much of the field's vitality depends.

Some (English) education researchers have drawn on their experiences as successful research writers, journal editors, and mentors to describe the rhetorical functions and

conventional structure of particular sections of qualitative research articles, like the Literature

Review and Methodology sections, which also appear in other research genres, including

conference presentations and dissertations. However, *relationships* among the rhetorical "jobs"

of these different sections remain to be specified. Other education researchers have promoted the

use of rhetorical frameworks developed by genre-studies researchers, such as Swales' general

outline of quantitative research texts in the natural and social sciences, "IMRD" (Introduction,

Methods, Results, Discussion), and his overview of basic rhetorical moves made in the

Introduction section, "CARS" (Creating A Research Space by "establishing a territory,

establishing a niche, and occupying the niche"). Although Swales' guidelines resonate with the

concerns of English education research writers, IMRD does not adequately address the genre

conventions of *qualitative* research articles, which tend to include *additional sections* between

Introduction (what I call the Problem Statement) and Methods (what I call the Methodology

section): namely, the Plan, Literature Review, Research Questions, and Theoretical Framework

sections. Similarly, while Swales' CARS model identifies rhetorical moves made in the

Introduction section, writers and their mentors[1] need *specific approaches* for writing and revising

*all* of the major sections of *qualitative* research articles, especially methods that would highlight

purposive relationships among those sections.

Inspired by previous contributions, I offer in this chapter three heuristics, or invitations to

creative and critical experimentation (Lauer), that may enhance English educators' "true ease in

writing" qualitative research articles for publication. These three curricular resources may also

be generative for qualitative research writers in education who specialize in content areas other

than English language arts.[2] Science education researchers will note, however, that qualitative

research texts in their field tend to merge the Problem Statement, Literature Review, and

Research Questions sections in the "Introduction" section, a move that draws on the rhetoric of academic research in the natural sciences. In the chapter that follows, I, first, review previous contributions to the literature on researcher preparation and development in (English) education. Second, I provide an overview of research on the teaching and learning of genre. Finally, I present my three heuristics, "PAGE" (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement), "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," and "The Three INs" (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation). Together, these three curricular resources prompt writers to connect general rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre, with specific writing moves, and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic "art" rather than as a matter of "chance."

I developed these three heuristics for teaching and learning genre conventions of qualitative research articles through my work with graduate students, faculty, and research teams. Since 2005, I have taught research literacies to individuals and small groups, working extensively with education researchers specializing in a variety of content areas. I have taught both native and non-native English speakers. Through this work, I have consulted on 36 dissertations. I have also conducted a five-year ethnographic study of six extracurricular, research-writing groups for education doctoral students. Additionally, I have designed and facilitated workshops and writing retreats for graduate students and faculty. While the English education researchers with whom I have collaborated have found the tools presented below to be useful in their research, teaching, and service, I do not regard this chapter as "the last word" on genre conventions of qualitative research articles in (English) education. Instead, I offer this chapter as a renewed invitation for writers and mentors to study, practice, theorize, critique, and teach the art of qualitative research writing.

## Researcher Preparation and Development in (English) Education

Since the second CEE Leadership and Policy Summit in 2007, English educators have devoted new energy to issues regarding the preparation and development of English education researchers. Following the Summit, a group of contributors to the thematic strand on doctoral education, including Webb, composed and circulated the CEE belief statement on English-education doctoral programs. In 2009, Webb published the edited collection, *The Doctoral Degree in English Education*. Contributors to the book discussed a variety of concerns, including the English-education job market (e.g., Webb), the field's interdisciplinary participation in both the humanities and the social sciences (e.g., Marshall), the design of English-education doctoral programs (e.g., Wilson and Lindquist), the distribution of research opportunities across the doctoral program (e.g., Carroll et al.), the transition from teacher to researcher (e.g., Beach and Thein), and the importance of new technologies in English education research (e.g., Rozema and McGrail). Additionally, contributors mentioned professional genres that students might write and/or publish during their doctoral programs (e.g., conference papers, research articles, institutional review board applications, grant proposals, fieldnotes, transcripts, dissertations, and job-search documents). However, these researchers did not specify ways in which such genres might be taught and learned, or stress the importance of research-literacy development for effective participation in the field's diverse rhetorical communities.

Webb's book echoed similar discussions in the overlapping field of education. In response to increasing political pressures on public education and the rise of methodological pluralism, education researchers in the U.S. have pursued questions regarding researcher preparation and development with heightened intensity during the past fifteen years. Issues explored have included the nature of education research (e.g., Moss et al.); the epistemological

diversity of the field (e.g., Pallas); the purposes, features, and outcomes of education doctoral programs (e.g., Walker et al.); models of research-methods coursework (e.g., Page); the design and implementation of research opportunities across the doctoral program (e.g., Schoenfeld); alternative forms for the dissertation (e.g., Duke and Beck; Kilbourn); the transition from teacher to researcher (e.g., Labaree); and the affordances and constraints of new media and technologies for research methods and dissemination (e.g., Pea). Although these researchers have raised many important concerns, opportunities remain to emphasize the inextricability of writing from the project of (English) education research, and to address the crucial need for curriculum on the rhetorical conventions of professional genres, especially research articles, which greatly influence the work of (English) educators.

Some education researchers have offered general strategies for writing research articles for publication. For example, Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley have outlined a process of purposeful reflection in which graduate students might engage while preparing a manuscript for submission to a scholarly journal. This series of strategies on planning, writing, and submitting research articles prompts writers to consider broad rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre. However, Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley did not also identify concrete writing moves for realizing these general rhetorical goals. More oriented toward the techniques of writing craft, other (English) education researchers have outlined the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of major sections of research articles, like the Literature Review (Boote and Beile; Maxwell) and Methodology sections (Smagorinsky). (These sections also appear in other research genres, including conference presentations and dissertations.) While such focused efforts have provided useful guidelines for writers and their mentors regarding the organization

of individual article sections, *functional relationships* among the major sections of qualitative research articles remain to be specified.

Kamler and Thomson, education researchers working in Australia and the U.K., have encouraged research writers to use applied linguist Swales' heuristics "IMRD" and "CARS" in composing their dissertations and research articles. "IMRD" (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) is Swales' acronym for the typical argument structure of quantitative research texts in the natural and social sciences (*Research Genres* 100, 107, 208, 217). "CARS" (Creating A Research Space by "establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche") is his model for the conventional outline of the Introduction section (*Genre* 137-66). While both of these scaffolds may support (English) educators' writing efforts, they do not sufficiently assist *qualitative* research writers in composing and revising sections not included in IMRD, like the Plan, Literature Review, Research Questions, and Theoretical Framework sections. Moreover, the CARS model alone does not explain how the *problem for study*, what Swales calls the "niche," connects the rhetorical purposes of each of the major sections of (English) education research texts. In the chapter that follows, I will attempt to augment Swales' two frameworks with the three heuristics that I present below.

## Teaching and Learning Written Genres

Before introducing these curricular resources, I will, first, provide an overview of research on the teaching and learning of writing genres to contextualize my design of these three tools and to suggest possible uses for them. In their reference guide to interdisciplinary genre studies, Bawarshi and Reiff define *genre* as a "typified rhetorical way of recognizing, responding to, acting meaningfully and consequentially within, and thus participating in the reproduction of,

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recurring situations" (213). In other words, genres are patterns of "social action" (Miller). For example, from this perspective, a qualitative research article in English education is not merely a kind of text but, more precisely, the interrelationship of culturally and historically specific rhetorical activities, like writing, reading, classifying, and citing, which condition that kind of text's emergence, persistence, and transformation. Moreover, in this view, genres are patterns of social action which arise in response to other such patterns, and establish, develop, and inspire new configurations of rhetorical work (Bakhtin). Put differently, genres are culturally negotiated frames that, through their reiteration and adaptation, promote, coordinate, and give purpose and meaning to social action (Paltridge). For example, qualitative research articles published in a peer-reviewed journal in English education can serve as models for other such articles, and the journal itself can influence the design of similar periodicals. As "relatively stable types" of rhetorical work which respond to, anticipate, and provoke other social actions, genres can both cross and reorganize contexts of social participation (Bakhtin 60, 78-82).

To track the proliferation, consolidation, and connection of genres across social situations, genre-studies researchers have proposed the terms "genre sets" and "genre systems" (Bazerman; Devitt). A *genre set* includes genres which have been "associated through the activities and functions" of a social group (Devitt 57). For example, regarding the diverse community of English education researchers, the genres of qualitative research article, conference presentation, and grant proposal may be included, among others, in a genre set. Moreover, the qualitative research article itself may be considered as a genre set comprising each of its major sections; hence, the crucial need for curricular resources specifying the functional relationships that connect these major sections as a genre set. By contrast, a *genre system* is the network of genre sets, in which different social groups are stakeholders (Bazerman 96-7; Devitt

56) For example, major sections of qualitative research texts (e.g., the Problem Statement, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Methodology sections) may appear in multiple genres in a set valued by English education researchers (e.g., qualitative research articles, conference presentations, and grant proposals), and some of those genres in the set may be taken up by social groups with distinct yet related agendas (e.g., researchers, teachers, and policymakers) as they participate in the genre system. The limits and scalability of any given genre, genre set, or genre system are tested, contested, endorsed, and enacted by the communities that they implicate.

Additionally, genre-studies researchers have proposed ways of teaching genres to encourage fuller participation in a range of social situations, including academic, workplace, and public contexts (Bawarshi and Reiff). These efforts have been motivated by the aim of enabling writers to analyze, produce, and challenge the prevailing genres of a target community, and to develop "a critical consciousness of both rhetorical purposes and ideological effects of generic forms" (Devitt 192). During the past 25 years, a variety of genre-focused pedagogies have emerged (Johns). While pedagogies from different communities of genre-studies researchers have tended to emphasize distinct aspects of genre teaching and learning, they have generally promoted compatible practices: for example, immersion in the target rhetorical community; critical investigation of that community's social history, cultural values, and rhetorical norms; analysis of conventional and innovative features of genre models; deliberate experimentation with rhetorical techniques; extensive writing and revising in response to teacher and/or peer feedback; and comparative analysis and production of genres at work within and across rhetorical communities. My intention in providing the three tools presented below is to

strengthen such pedagogical approaches as they are enacted in researcher preparation and development efforts in (English) education.

In contrast to recent efforts by (English) education researchers to share strategies for writing and publishing professional genres, some researchers in the overlapping field of writing studies have discouraged explicit instruction in the analysis, production, and revision of written genres. For example, Freedman has argued that writers may acquire conventional forms of social participation exclusively through immersion in the practices and values of the target rhetorical community. In response to Freedman, writing-studies researchers Williams and Colomb have contended that writers may, however, request, appreciate, and benefit from explicit genre instruction. Moreover, the team has reframed the issue of explicit/implicit genre instruction as "a chicken-and-egg problem": "When we learn social context, we are also learning its forms; but when we learn forms, we may also be learning their social contexts" (262). Indeed, all genre learning emerges through dialogues, both deliberate and serendipitous, among writers and mentors, practices and purposes, and traditions and innovations. I offer the three curricular resources below to invite, extend, and bring greater focus and complexity to such dialogues.

## Resources for Writing and Revising Qualitative Research Articles

### PAGE (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement)

As I have mentioned above, (English) education and genre-studies researchers have noted that writing processes and products are often enhanced by writers' consideration of rhetorical concerns, like audience, purpose, and genre. However, curricular resources are needed that transform these conceptual issues into practical tools for writing and revising academic research texts. To this end, I present below my first heuristic "PAGE" (Purpose, Audience, Genre,

Engagement). I designed this series of questions to prompt writers to explore personal and social implications of writing and publishing (English) education research, and to generate possibilities and decisions regarding their strategic composition and revision of academic research texts. I formulated PAGE by reworking Van Tal's heuristic, "MAPS" (Mode, Audience, Purpose, Situation) (qtd. in Swenson and Mitchell 4-5). English educator Hicks has also worked extensively with MAPS. However, the MAPS framework does not adequately address writers' own complex purposes for writing (and not writing). Nor does it distinguish writers' purposes from those of imagined audiences, so that relationships among their interests, concerns, and commitments may be investigated and reinvented. To enrich both (English) educators' qualitative research articles and their experiences with writing and revising those texts, I offer my PAGE heuristic as a practical way to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic art.[3]

Table 1
**PAGE (Purpose, Audience, Genre, Engagement)**

| Rhetorical Principle | General Question | Specific Questions |
|---|---|---|
| Purpose | What effects do I want this text to have on my target audience? | • What *contributions to my field* do I want this text to make?<br>• What is my *explicit rhetorical agenda* for this text? (Which of my aims for this text will I strategically share with my target audience?)<br>• What is my *implicit rhetorical agenda* for this text? (Which of my aims for this text will I strategically conceal from my target audience, as these goals of my project, while relevant to my target audience, might puzzle, offend, or otherwise alienate this audience, if announced in the text?) |
| Audience | How might I appeal to my target audience for this text (vs. the broader possible audience for this text)? | • How might I relate my *inquiry* to enduring research goals of my target audience?<br>• How might I relate my *emotional and ethical concerns* to the values of my target audience?<br>• How might I relate the *design and craft of my research* to the cultural practices of my target audience? |
| Genre | What kind of text is this text? | • In what ways might this text work *with* rhetorical conventions of this kind of text?<br>• In what ways might this text work *against* rhetorical conventions of this kind of text?<br>• In what ways might this text work *beyond* rhetorical conventions of this kind of text, inventing new ways of writing? |
| Engagement | What effects might writing and publishing this text have on me (the writer)? | • What *intellectual work* might writing and publishing this text entail for me?<br>• What *emotional and ethical work* might writing and publishing this text entail for me?<br>• What *social and political work* might writing and publishing this text entail for me? |

The PAGE heuristic may be used to inform writers' decision-making at any point in the writing and revising of qualitative research articles in (English) education. For example, work with the PAGE heuristic may help writers to plan a study and to identify resources for the project, to select a target journal and suitable readers with whom to workshop the article, to determine the purpose and priority of writing and revising tasks, and to negotiate reviewer feedback. Moreover, these questions may enrich dialogues among writers and their mentors regarding the design and craft of qualitative research articles. For example, the PAGE heuristic

may facilitate writers' and mentors' creative and critical work with the rhetorical functions of the major article sections, which I will present in the next two sections of this chapter.

**Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing**

As I have noted above, (English) education and genre-studies researchers have proposed models for understanding the conventional structure of research texts and particular sections within those texts. Swales' "IMRD" (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion) is a popular framework used to outline the typical argument structure of quantitative research articles in the natural and social sciences. However, IMRD does not address the additional sections often included in *qualitative* research articles. While some (English) education researchers have described the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of some sections of qualitative research texts, opportunities remain to specify *functional relationships* among *all* of them. In response, I offer my second heuristic, "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing." I designed this curricular resource to highlight the dynamism of the inquiry staged by qualitative research articles. My tool thus contrasts with Swales' "CARS" (Creating a Research Space) model for writing Introductions, which relies on figures of stasis and colonial conquest in presenting the three rhetorical moves, "establishing a territory," "establishing a niche," and "occupying the niche" (*Genre* 137-66). To avoid connotations of "territory" and "occupation," I use the term "problem for study" throughout this chapter, which, while analogous to Swales' term "niche," is both more generative and more precise. To be clear, Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing does *not* directly correspond to Swales' three CARS moves. Although the first activity of Problem Posing may be associated with "establishing a territory" and "establishing a niche"; and Problem Addressing, with "occupying the niche"; the final

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activity of Problem Posing explicitly "decamps occupied territory" by identifying possibilities

for new inquiry, as I will explain below. Moreover, I developed Problem Posing, Problem

Addressing, Problem Posing to highlight three broad rhetorical moves made by *research articles*,

rather than by the Introduction section alone, on which CARS focuses. Thus, my second

heuristic *encompasses* Swales' IMRD framework (see Table 2).

Before presenting this tool, I will, first, define the term *problem for study*. The problem

for study is the explicitly specified *purpose* of an academic research text. Often written as

"However, research remains to be done on X," the problem for study also identifies a

limitation/boundary of relevant previous research. Thus, the problem for study emerges from the

interests, concerns, and commitments of the target *audience*, as well as from those of the

author(s) (*engagement*). First articulated in the Problem Statement, then in the Literature

Review, and again (in interrogative form) in the Research Questions, the problem for study

creates audience-author involvement as it sets the agenda of the inquiry to be unfolded in the

text. Moreover, the problem for study gives coherence to the major sections that compose

qualitative research articles in (English) education by bringing their distinct rhetorical functions

into relationship (*genre*), as I will now explain.

The problem for study ("However, research remains to be done on X"), or the *purpose* of

the inquiry, includes within it the *object of study* ("X"), or the *focus* of the inquiry. (If the

problem for study is "However, research remains to be done on early-career faculty's research-

writing practices," then "early-career faculty's research-writing practices" is the object of study.)

The object of study is conceptualized and operationalized in the Theoretical Framework section.

(For example, the Theoretical Framework section might theorize "early-career faculty's

research-writing practices" as "rhetorical invention," and might designate "changes in their

written texts and in their talk about those texts with their fellow writing-group members" as evidence of "rhetorical invention.") A study design for generating evidence of this object of study is described and justified in the Methodology section. (For example, the Methodology section might address decisions regarding site selection, participant selection, data sources, data-generation procedures, data-analysis procedures, and researcher positionality, as these choices enabled and constrained investigation of "early-career faculty's research-writing practices.")[4] Evidence of the object of study is presented and characterized as such in the Findings section. (For example, the Findings section might display and interpret discursive changes in early-career faculty's texts and talk as practices of "rhetorical invention.") Rigorously responsible claims about this evidence are made in the Discussion section. Moreover, the Discussion section explicitly demonstrates how these claims extend and challenge previous research examined in the Literature Review. (For example, the Discussion section might argue that "early-career faculty drew heavily on their writing-group members' feedback in interpreting, addressing, and challenging journal reviewers' responses to their article submissions." The Discussion section might then explain how this insight into early-career faculty's research-writing practices both affirms and complicates prior research on graduate-student writing groups.) Based on the limitations/boundaries of the current study, new problems for study (e.g., new areas of inquiry and new research questions) are articulated in the Implications section. (For example, the Implications section might advocate for future studies that track the research-writing practices of members of a writing group as they transition from writing as graduate students to writing as new faculty, to writing as more accomplished faculty. A new *problem for study*, or research *purpose*, would be "However, research remains to be done on ways in which research-writing practices persist and change as writers move through different phases of their academic careers."

A new *object of study*, or research *focus*, would be "ways in which research-writing practices persist and change as writers move through different phases of their academic careers.") The problem for study, which includes the object of study, determines and connects the rhetorical purposes of the major sections of qualitative research articles in (English) education.

Thus, the conventional structure of such articles may be understood as a succession of problem-posing, problem-addressing, and new problem-posing activities. Qualitative research articles in (English) education are organized to guide readers through an inquiry experience and to inspire future research. They begin by posing a research problem, or an issue that remains to be explored; then start to address that research problem, or launch an exploration of that issue; and, finally, identify new research problems, or areas of inquiry disclosed by the current study, to explore in future research. Inquiry begets inquiry. Indeed, problems for study are less like difficulties to be resolved and more like challenges to be multiplied.

| Table 2 | |
| *Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing* | |
| *Broad Rhetorical Function* | *Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles* |
|---|---|
| Problem Posing (based on previous studies) | • Problem Statement<br>• Plan<br>• Literature Review<br>• Research Questions[5] |
| Problem Addressing (through the current study) | • Theoretical Framework<br>• Methodology<br>• Findings<br>• Discussion |
| Problem Posing (based on the current study) | • Implications<br>• Conclusion |

In this way, the traditional form of qualitative research articles in (English) education rehearses a version of the scientific method (observation, background research, question formation, study design, experiment, data analysis, new observation and question formation). However, depending on their commitments, qualitative researchers in (English) education may

be more or less eager to claim affiliation with the natural sciences (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis), and thus may draw on the rhetorical techniques of their communities to challenge and rework the limits of the genre.

During the last 20 years, diverse innovations regarding theories, methods, and rhetorical styles of qualitative research in the social sciences and the interdisciplinary field of (English) education have proliferated (Denzin and Lincoln). For example, qualitative approaches like poetic inquiry (e.g., Richardson), feminist poststructural ethnography (e.g., Lather and Smithies), performance ethnography (e.g., Bagley), and archival rhizoanalysis (e.g., Alvermann) have been proposed, developed, critiqued, and renewed. While their histories differ, these transformations of qualitative inquiry have emerged in various ways through dialogues with the genre conventions that I present in this chapter. Indeed, it is difficult to appreciate the creative and critical force of these innovations if they are isolated from tradition. For this reason, I have chosen to focus in this chapter on rhetorical conventions of a more traditional form of qualitative research writing in (English) education. However, I emphasize that genre conventions only emerge, persist, and change through use, and that such use is historically and culturally conditioned. In other words, what is innovative today may be traditional tomorrow, and vice versa. I also encourage (English) education researchers to explore and draw inspiration from the rich and diverse rhetorical resources offered by qualitative researchers specializing in other content areas in education and by those working in related disciplines and fields.

## The Three INs (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation)

As I have indicated above, (English) education researchers have described the rhetorical functions and conventional structure of specific sections of qualitative research texts, like the

Literature Review and Methodology sections. However, writers and their mentors continue to need *practical methods* for writing and revising *all* of the major sections of qualitative research articles, especially curricular resources that would highlight purposive relationships among those sections. In the previous section of this chapter, I presented the distinct rhetorical jobs of each major section of qualitative research articles in (English) education as they relate to the broad activities of problem posing, problem addressing, and new problem posing. In this section of the chapter, I offer my third heuristic, "The Three INs" (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation), which may be used as a framework for strategically crafting most of the major article sections: namely, the Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Findings, Discussion, and Implications sections (see Table 4). While "PAGE" and "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing" are general orientations to the rhetorical work of qualitative research articles, the "Three INs" is a specific approach for participating in this art with greater ease and effectiveness.

The Three INs heuristic—INtroduction, INsertion, and INterpretation—is one way to structure paragraphs, subsections, and sections of qualitative research articles in (English) education. For example, in the Findings section, a paragraph might be arranged as follows:

- **INtroduction** of the qualitative data (e.g., by orienting readers to the interview quote to be presented);

- **INsertion** of the qualitative data (e.g., by presenting the interview quote);

- **INterpretation** of the qualitative data (e.g., by paraphrasing the interview quote and specifying what it illustrates).

Moreover, a "Three INs" Findings paragraph in a qualitative research article on English teacher candidates' use of new media and technologies during their student-teaching internships might read as follows:

> Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained: "It was important for me not only to give students opportunities to critically explore tools for making podcasts and videos, but also to ask them to examine what was gained and lost by their transformation of their written texts into those other media." Remarking on her students' remediation of their written literacy autobiographies into StoryCorps-style podcasts and digital videos, Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of students' critical thinking about their work with new media and technologies, further evidence of her commitment to fostering students' development of 21st-century literacies.

The "Three INs" structure of this Findings paragraph is foregrounded in the following template:

> Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained [INtroduction]: "_____" [INsertion]. Remarking on ___, Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of ___, further evidence of her commitment to ___ [INterpretation].

Additionally, a Findings *subsection* may include several such Three INs paragraphs as the subsection-level INsertion, plus an INtroduction paragraph that announces the theme uniting those paragraphs, and an INterpretation paragraph that reviews the evidence that they present. Similarly, the entire Findings *section* may begin with an INtroduction paragraph orienting readers to the various subsections, then INsert those Findings subsections, and, finally, conclude

with an INterpretation paragraph, or summary of key findings. Likewise, the overall structure of the *article* may be understood—somewhat differently from my second heuristic, "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing"—in terms of the INtroduction, INsertion, and INterpretation of *evidence* toward the goal of addressing the problem for study, or the important research that remains to be done (see Table 3). While the Three INs method is not the only way to organize qualitative research articles in (English) education, it may be useful in drawing writers' and mentors' attention to the rhetorical work accomplished by particular sentences, paragraphs, subsections, and sections of a given article.

Table 3
***The Three INs (INtroduction, INsertion, INterpretation)***

| Broad Rhetorical Function | Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles |
|---|---|
| INtroduction of evidence | • Problem Statement<br>• Plan<br>• Literature Review<br>• Research Questions<br>• Theoretical Framework<br>• Methodology |
| INsertion of evidence | • Findings |
| INterpretation of evidence | • Discussion<br>• Implications<br>• Conclusion |

The Three INs heuristic recasts writing and revising tasks as specific rhetorical actions that may be undertaken separately or together, and in a variety of orders. In this way, work with the Three INs may make writing projects seem less daunting and more adaptable to an already challenging work schedule. For example, to compose the Findings section of a qualitative research article, a writer might

1. Generate all of the INsertion passages for the major paragraphs by selecting and presenting the data (e.g., Ms. Garcia's interview quote, "It was important for me not only to give students opportunities to critically explore tools for making

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podcasts and videos, but also to ask them to examine what was gained and lost by their transformation of their written texts into those other media").

2. Arrange these emerging paragraphs in a compelling order.

3. Add an INtroduction sentence to the beginning of each paragraph, orienting readers to the data to be presented in the paragraph (e.g., "Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained:…").

4. Add INterpretation sentences to the end of each paragraph by, first, *paraphrasing* the INserted data (e.g., "Remarking on her students' remediation of their written literacy autobiographies into StoryCorps-style podcasts and digital videos,…") and, second, *labeling* it as evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry), using a conceptual term defined in the Theoretical Framework section (e.g., "…Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of students' critical thinking about their work with new media and technologies, further evidence of her commitment to fostering students' development of *21$^{st}$-century literacies*").

5. Interweave transitions between the Findings paragraphs.

6. Open the Findings section with an INtroduction paragraph that gives an overview of the section.

7. Close the Findings section with an INterpretation paragraph that provides a summary of key findings.

In highlighting the specific writing moves by which general rhetorical strategies are realized, the Three INs heuristic may enhance (English) education researchers' writing and revising of qualitative research articles, their comparative analysis of genre models, and their conversations with mentors about these texts.

However, it is important to remember that even as the terms "INtroduction," "INsertion," and "INterpretation" refer to *broad* rhetorical jobs performed throughout qualitative research articles in (English) education, the *precise* work accomplished by each "IN" depends on its location in the article. In my presentation below of the rhetorical functions of each major article section (Table 4), I will indicate the particular work of each "IN" by providing an outline of a Three INs paragraph and a paragraph template for each section.[6] A major purpose of Table 4 is to facilitate writers' and mentors' connection of the specific writing moves made in passages drawn from sample journal articles (paragraph templates) with the strategic purposes driving those moves (rhetorical functions). Similarly, Table 4 may enable writers to translate journal reviewers' feedback on their qualitative research articles (rhetorical functions) into targeted revisions (paragraph templates).

Table 4
***Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles in English Education***

| *Major Section* | *Specific Rhetorical Functions* | *Guiding Question for Writing and Revising* | *Possible Paragraph Structure* | *Possible Paragraph Template* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Problem Statement** (no heading) | • in non-specialist terms attractive to the journal's wide readership, articulate the *problem for study* (the important research that remains to be done), based on a careful examination of relevant previous research<br>• generate an audience for the article | What inquiry does my article begin to undertake, and why does this inquiry matter to my target audience? | • Stakeholders in the Problem<br>• Background of the Problem<br>• Problem<br>• Proposed Response to the Problem | English education researchers interested in __ [Stakeholders] have addressed issues of __, __, and __. Motivated by __, previous studies have assumed that __ [Background].Whereas this assumption has generated important research, the emphasis on __ has meant that few studies have considered X [Problem], an issue that I will explore in this article by __ [Proposed Response]. |
| **Plan** (no heading) | • orient readers to the investigation to follow, without revealing the article's major arguments | What course will readers' inquiry take as they read my article? | • Literature Review<br>• Theoretical Framework<br>• Methodology<br>• Orientation to Major Arguments | In this article, I will, first, review literature on __. Second, I will present my analytic perspective on X, which draws on So-and-so's theory of __. Third, I will explain and justify my study design, which __. Finally, I will offer evidence of X, generated through my research, and make arguments regarding my goal of __. |
| **Literature Review** (or thematic heading) | • in the specialist terms of the target audience, with supporting citations, articulate the *problem for study* (the important research that remains to be done), based on a careful examination of relevant previous research<br>• generate an audience for the article | How have past research efforts, both separately and together, contributed to the need for specific inquiry, which my article will begin to undertake? | • **IN**troduction of the study or set of studies<br>• **IN**sertion of relevant contributions of the study or set of studies<br>• **IN**terpretation of relevant limitations/boundaries of the study or set of studies, beyond which the article will attempt to make contributions | Previous research on __ has tended to __ [INtroduction]. For example, Author 1 argued that __. Similarly, Author 2 claimed that __. Most recently, Author 3 proposed that __ [INsertion]. Although these studies have provided useful insights into __, they have not examined X, inquiry that I will begin to do in this article [INterpretation]. |

| Table 4 (continued) |||||
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles in English Education** |||||
| *Major Section* | *Specific Rhetorical Functions* | *Guiding Question for Writing and Revising* | *Possible Paragraph Structure* | *Possible Paragraph Template* |
| **Research Questions** (no heading) | • pose one or more questions to guide the inquiry undertaken in the article | Which research questions will enable me, in this article, to extend and challenge previous studies examined in the Literature Review section? | • Question 1<br>• Question 2<br>• Question 3 | In this article, I will address the following questions: (1) __; (2) __; and (3) __. |
| **Theoretical Framework** (or thematic heading) | • conceptualize the *object of study* (the focus of the important research that remains to be done)<br>• operationalize that *object of study* | What do I want readers to recognize in the data presented in the Findings section? | • **INtroduction** of a theoretical construct that helps to define the object of study (the research focus)<br>• **INsertion** of a definition of the construct<br>• **INterpretation** of how the construct will be used in the study | In my analysis, I will approach X as __ [INtroduction]. So-and-so has defined X as __. For example, __. Crucially, this interpretation of X highlights __, which is important, given my focus on __ [INsertion]. In my study, __ will constitute evidence of X [INterpretation]. |
| **Methodology** (or thematic heading) | • explain the methodological decisions that together make up the study design<br>• justify those decisions relative to the goal of addressing the problem for study (exceeding a limitation/boundary of previous research) | How might I strengthen connections between my problem for study (the purpose of my inquiry) and the features of my study design?<br><br>• **Site Selection**: *When* and *where* were the data generated?<br>• **Participant Selection**: *Who*, other than the researcher(s), contributed to data generation?<br>• **Data Sources**: *What* data were generated?<br>• **Data Generation**: *How* were the data generated?<br>• **Data Analysis**: *How* were the data organized, selected, and interpreted?<br>• **Researcher Positionality**: *Who* is/are the researcher(s)? How did the *researcher(s)* contribute to data generation? | • **INtroduction** of the methodological decision(s)<br>• **INsertion** of details regarding the methodological decision(s)<br>• **INterpretation** of how the methodological decision(s) were appropriate and advantageous, given the problem for study (the important research that remains to be done) | To investigate X, I chose to __ [INtroduction]. Specifically, I __ [INsertion]. This decision enabled me to __ and thus to pursue my interest in __ [INterpretation]. |

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Table 4 (continued)
**_Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles in English Education_**

| _Major Section_ | _Specific Rhetorical Functions_ | _Guiding Question for Writing and Revising_ | _Possible Paragraph Structure_ | _Possible Paragraph Template_ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Findings** (or thematic heading) | • present relevant data generated in the study, <br>• interpret those data as evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry), using a conceptual term defined in the Theoretical Framework section | How might I strengthen connections between the data and my interpretations of those data? | • **INtroduction** of the data <br>• **INsertion** of the data <br>• **INterpretation** of the data <br> • **Part I**: paraphrasing the data for the target audience <br> • **Part II**: characterizing the data as evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry), using a conceptual term defined in the Theoretical Framework section | Ms. Garcia revisited this theme in our subsequent interview, in which she explained [INtroduction]: "__" [INsertion]. Remarking on __ [INterpretation, Part I], Ms. Garcia emphasized the importance of _, further evidence of her commitment to X [INterpretation, Part II]. |
| **Discussion** (or thematic heading) | • make claims based on evidence of the object of study (the focus of the inquiry) presented in the Findings section <br>• qualify those claims, or set the limits of their validity <br>• explain how those claims extend and challenge previous research examined in the Literature Review section | How might I strengthen connections between the evidence presented in the Findings section and the claims about that evidence made in the Discussion section, and between those claims and previous research examined in the Literature Review section? | • **INtroduction** (reminder or synthesis) of evidence presented in the Findings section <br>• **INsertion** of rigorously responsible claim(s) about the evidence <br> • **Part I**: claim(s) <br> • **Part II**: qualification of claim(s) <br>• **INterpretation** of how the claim(s) extend and challenge relevant previous research, especially research cited in the Literature Review section <br> • **Part I**: reminder of contribution(s) and limitation(s) of previous research <br> • **Part II**: explanation of how the claim(s) extend and challenge previous research | As I have demonstrated above, __ [INtroduction]. Thus, my research suggests that __ [INsertion, Part I]. While I do not argue that __, I do contend that __ [INsertion, Part II]. Prior research on X has focused on __. For example, __ [INterpretation, Part I]. My inquiry extends these contributions by __. However, I also complicate previous work in claiming that __ [INterpretation, Part II]. |

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Table 4 (continued)
***Major Sections of Qualitative Research Articles in English Education***

| *Major Section* | *Specific Rhetorical Functions* | *Guiding Question for Writing and Revising* | *Possible Paragraph Structure* | *Possible Paragraph Template* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Implications** (or thematic heading) | • identify limitations/boundaries of the current study, <br>• propose new problems for study (e.g., new areas of inquiry and new research questions) to be pursued in future studies | How might I strengthen connections between the claims made in the Discussion section and the calls for future inquiry made in the Implications section? | • **INtroduction** (reminder or synthesis) of Discussion claim(s) <br>• **INsertion** of rigorously responsible new problem(s) for study, based on Discussion claim(s) <br>• **INterpretation** of how the new problem(s) for study might be pursued in future research | Based on my findings, I have proposed that __ [INtroduction]. Although my research has addressed __, my study did not examine __ [INsertion]. Future inquiries might explore __ by __ [INterpretation]. |
| **Conclusion** (no heading) | • summarize the contributions of the article <br>• summarize the limitations/boundaries of those contributions <br>• summarize the article's call for future action | How do I want readers to remember my article? | • Summary of the article's contributions <br>• Summary of the limitations/boundaries of those contributions <br>• Summary of the article's call for future action | In this article, I have presented __ and argued that __. However, opportunities remain to investigate __. Continued research in this area of inquiry might address __. |
| **Abstract** | • represent the article <br>• arouse readers' interest in the article | How might I summarize my article for readers and emphasize its contributions to the field of English education? | • Problem for Study (important research that remains to be done) <br>• Theoretical Framework <br>• Methodology <br>• Major Arguments <br>• Directions for Future Inquiry | English education researchers interested in __ have addressed __. However, X remains to be explored. In this article, I investigate X by presenting __ generated in my __ study of __. Through my analysis of __, I demonstrate that __. Based on these findings, I argue that __. My research thus adds to previous research on X by claiming __. My work also encourages new inquiries into __. |

The Three INs is one method for producing qualitative-research article sections that accomplish their conventional rhetorical jobs. However, these same ends may be achieved by different means, though perhaps not as systematically or with as much ease. Below is a list of sample article sections that perform the rhetorical functions outlined in Table 4. These examples are certainly not the only ones that I might have chosen; however, they suggest some of the diversity of the field of English education. In identifying these examples, my intention was not to explore their creative and critical ingenuity, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, but, rather, to inspire writers and their mentors to engage in such investigations. Additionally, I do not claim that the authors of these examples used "PAGE," "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," or "The Three INs," or construed the rhetorical functions of the major article sections exactly as I interpret them in this chapter. The design and craft of qualitative research articles in (English) education is a complex art, which, depending on the situation, may make use of a variety of rhetorical principles and techniques. My purpose in offering this chapter is not to reduce that art to a set of unchanging rules or an infallible method but, rather, to make it more possible for writers and their mentors to engage with its complexity—to try and try anew.

Table 5
**Sample Qualitative-Research Article Sections in English Education**

| *Major Section* | *Sample* |
| --- | --- |
| Problem Statement | Fritzen (2011) "Teaching as Sheltering: A Metaphorical Analysis of Sheltered Instruction for English Language Learners" (pp. 185-186) |
| Plan | Fisher (2007) "'Every City Has Soldiers': The Role of Intergenerational Relationships in Participatory Literacy Communities" (pp. 140-141) |
| Literature Review | Blackburn and Clark (2011) "Analyzing Talk in a Long-Term Literature Discussion Group: Ways of Operating within LGBT-Inclusive and Queer Discourses" (pp. 223-224) |
| Research Questions | Zancanella (1991) "Teachers Reading/Readers Teaching: Five Teachers' Personal Approaches to Literature and Their Teaching of Literature" (pp. 6-7) |
| Theoretical Framework | Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, and Fry (2003) "Learning to Teach the Five-Paragraph Theme" (pp. 142-144) |
| Methodology | Moje and Wade (1997) "What Case Discussions Reveal about Teacher Thinking" (pp. 693-696) |
| Findings | Dyson (2008) "Staying within (Curricular) Lines: Practice Constraints and Possibilities in Childhood Writing" (pp. 127-150) |
| Discussion | Zuidema (2012) "Making Space for Informal Inquiry: Inquiry as Stance in an Online Induction Network" (pp. 142-143) |
| Implications | Rex (2006) "Acting 'Cool' and 'Appropriate': Toward a Framework for Considering Literacy Classroom Interactions When Race Is a Factor" (pp. 318-319) |
| Conclusion | Sherry and Tremmel (2012) "English Education 2.0: An Analysis of Websites That Contain Videos of English Teaching" (p. 64) |
| Abstract | Anagnostopoulos, Smith, and Basmadjian (2007) "Bridging the University-School Divide: Horizontal Expertise and the 'Two Worlds Pitfall'" |

None of the three heuristics presented in this article is a formula for rhetorical success. Rather, as heuristics, they are flexible approaches designed to prompt imaginative and inquiry-driven rhetorical action. Put differently, "PAGE," "Problem Posing, Problem Addressing, Problem Posing," and "The Three INs" were made to be remade. They are not the only approaches that writers might take in writing and revising qualitative research articles in (English) education. Indeed, in offering these tools, I aim not to supersede writers' rhetorical

judgment but, rather, to support its development. Together, these three curricular resources invite writers to connect general rhetorical concerns, like purpose, audience, genre, and engagement, with specific writing moves, and to approach qualitative research writing as a strategic "art" rather than as a matter of "chance."

While I have attended primarily in this chapter to issues of qualitative research *writing*, the genre conventions and heuristics presented above may also be used to enhance *reading* and *responding* to qualitative research articles. For example, depending on the kinds of information that readers are seeking, they may engage in thorough reading of only those sections that perform the desired functions. Similarly, in responding to fellow writers' qualitative research articles, (English) educators may more precisely identify areas for revision, given their expanded sense of the specific rhetorical work accomplished by each major section. Likewise, having read this chapter, writers may find it easier to translate reviewer feedback into action plans for reworking their manuscripts. Other uses and adaptations of the three heuristics presented in this chapter may emerge, which I welcome. Inquiry begets inquiry. I offer this article as another invitation for (English) education researchers to dialogue on the teaching and learning of research literacies, to explore and experiment with genre conventions, and to participate with renewed purpose and engagement, ease and art, in the rhetorical practices of the field.

**Notes**

1. By the term "mentors," I evoke, for example, course instructors, advisers for graduate students, mentors for new faculty, journal reviewers and editors, research team members, collaborative writing partners, and writers' own students.

2. Throughout this chapter, I use the device "(English) education" to indicate the applicability of certain rhetorical moves to qualitative research articles in the wider field of education.

3. In the "PAGE" questions and in those that appear throughout the article, I use the first-person singular pronouns "I" and "me" rather than the first-person plural pronouns "we" and "us." Of course, I recognize that many qualitative research articles in (English) education are collaboratively written. However, I employ the singular pronouns both for brevity and for the intensified call to rhetorical responsibility which, I believe, they express.

4. Qualitative researchers in English education may use the term "data" in quite different ways, depending on their theories of knowledge, truth, subject-object relations, and language (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis). In fact, some qualitative researchers may avoid using the term "data" in an effort to distinguish their work from objectivist social science. In this chapter, I use the term "data" to mark one intersection of consensus and debate regarding purposes, practices, and effects of qualitative inquiry.

5. Research questions are conventionally formulated in response to a careful analysis of the contributions and limitations/boundaries of relevant previous research. For this reason, it makes sense to present the Research Questions section after the Literature Review section, as some qualitative research articles do. However, others pose the research questions at the end of the Problem Statement, assuming that readers will adequately understand the terms, purpose(s),

and urgency of those questions by that point in the article. Still other qualitative research articles use the Research Questions section as a transition between the Theoretical Framework section, which precisely defines the object of study, or focus of the inquiry, and the Methodology section, which presents and justifies the study design. As discussed above, rhetorical decisions made in writing and revising qualitative research articles in English education may be facilitated through deliberate reflection on purpose, audience, genre, and engagement.

6. Graff and Birkenstein also use templates to facilitate high-school and college writers' participation in academic discourse, broadly construed. In contrast, my paragraph templates specifically address the conventional rhetoric of qualitative research texts.

**WORKS CITED**

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**CHAPTER TWO:**

**Literacy Narratives as Sponsors of Literacy:**

**Past Contributions and New Directions for Literacy-Sponsorship Research**


Since the publication of Deborah Brandt's article "Sponsors of Literacy" in 1998,[1] writing-studies researchers have taken Brandt's pioneering oral-history study of literacy development in twentieth-century America as a model for their investigations of formative influences on the learning, doing, changing, and valuing of literacy. For example, researchers have obtained as chief sources of evidence for their inquiries their study participants' "literacy narratives" (Selfe and Hawisher, *Literate vii*), or personal accounts of literacy-related experiences. Moreover, like Brandt, these researchers have generally proceeded from the following assumptions:

1. personal narratives constitute valuable evidence of literate experience;

2. reworking the prevailing notion of context in prior literacy research enables crucial new studies of literate experience; and

3. literacy sponsors mediate access to literacy learning and practice.

In other words, Brandt and subsequent literacy-sponsorship researchers in the field of writing studies have generally held that autobiographical accounts of literate life not only describe significant experiences with literacy but also reveal influential contexts in which those experiences occurred or might take place, including contexts unexamined by previous studies. Indeed, these researchers have assumed that such narratives expose material conditions of literate experience, or key resources for, and obstacles to, literacy learning and practice, including

"people, commercial products, public facilities, religious organizations, and other institutional and work settings" ("Economic" 376; *Lives* 26), which Brandt named "sponsors of literacy."

However, even as later writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship has reiterated assumptions and methods of Brandt's initial project, certain influential contributions to this literature, which have most closely emulated her study design, have also departed from Brandt's analytic approach in surprising ways that have minimized and, at times, reversed key premises and purposes of her study. In the first major section of this article, I review important interventions in literacy-sponsorship research made by two teams of writing-studies researchers: Cynthia L. Selfe and Gail E. Hawisher, and Julie Lindquist and Bump Halbritter. Although other researchers working in the overlapping fields of writing studies, literacy studies, English education, and library studies, have referenced Brandt's construct *sponsors of literacy* (e.g., Haas and Takayoshi; Rowe; Smagorinsky and Smith; Sutherland), fewer researchers have designed studies in which literacy sponsorship was a central object of inquiry (e.g., Donehower, Hogg, and Schell; Scenters-Zapico). Among this group, Selfe and Hawisher, and Lindquist and Halbritter, devised research projects that most thoroughly engaged with Brandt's model. Moreover, Lindquist and Halbritter's study emerged, in part, as a response to Selfe and Hawisher's work. However, despite the intense dialogue among these three studies, the latter two projects, while retaining personal literacy narratives as primary evidence sources, have significantly reworked Brandt's construct *sponsors of literacy* and what she designated as key contexts of literacy sponsorship. Through a review of the two teams' work below, I track a narrowing of Brandt's expansive notion of literacy sponsors, which included mediators other than people, like social institutions, public infrastructure, and communication technologies; and a

conceptual drift away from her analytic focus on economics and history as important contexts of literacy sponsorship.

Emblematic of these shifts are the two teams' claims to having exercised ethnographic orientations in their research (Halbritter and Lindquist 192; Lindquist 177; Selfe and Hawisher, *Literate* 12), despite Brandt's having presented her economics-centered historical project as an alternative to ethnographic studies of literacy (*Lives* 8). As Brandt explained, such research tends not to "invite a search for the interests beyond those of the local users that hold literacy practices in place, give them their meaning, or take them away" (8). In the first major section of this article, I argue that the two teams' return to an emphasis on cultural insiders' interests, practices, and meanings was enabled by these researchers' work with autobiographical accounts of literacy-related experiences as principal evidence sources for their inquiries.

Of course, Brandt had also elicited literacy narratives in her oral-history project. However, Brandt interpreted her study participants' personal histories with literacy learning and practice in relationship to other researchers' social histories of economic and political change in twentieth-century America, assuming a certain compatibility between these two broad and varied narrative genres. Indeed, Brandt drew on both sources in elaborating her construct *sponsors of literacy*, by which she aimed to yoke the contours of individual and group literacy development with the vicissitudes of economic and political forces. In this way, she sought to account for non-local economic and political influences on local pursuits of literacy. Moreover, Brandt emphasized the role of literacy sponsors, as conduits of economic and political forces, in establishing and regulating the value of literacy, beyond and sometimes against the interests of the sponsored. In contrast, beginning with Selfe and Hawisher, who also referenced other researchers' social histories in their analysis of late-twentieth-century American digital-literacy

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development, both teams attributed greater authority to study participants' autobiographical

accounts than did Brandt, and were more concerned with the forms and meanings of literacy that

those individuals claimed in their literacy narratives than with economic values. In fact, each

team introduced ways of collaborating with study participants in the generation and analysis of

literacy narratives, which Brandt had not implemented in her study.

Favoring study participants' personal literacy narratives as evidence sources, both Selfe

and Hawisher's, and Lindquist and Halbritter's, research projects seem to have been more

influenced by the affordances and constraints of the wide-ranging and dynamic personal-

narrative genre than was Brandt's inquiry. For example, as I demonstrate below, both teams have

tended to recognize only *people* as literacy sponsors, despite the great variety of sponsors

identified by Brandt. Indeed, neither team has considered material conditions, like the "public

facilities, religious organizations, and other institutional and work settings" featured in Brandt's

analysis ("Economic" 376; *Lives* 26), *as literacy sponsors*, though both have pointed to different

places, periods, occasions, and cultural milieux as influential *contexts of literacy sponsorship*.

In the first major section of this article, I argue that these analytic decisions, however

purposeful on the part of each team, were encouraged by genre conventions of personal

narratives, which tend to concentrate agency in human or anthropomorphic characters to whom

intention is attributed, especially in the author/narrator/protagonist "I," rather than in settings, for

example (Abbott 19; Anderson 2-3). In contrast, histories written by academic researchers

regularly highlight actors other than people, including time and place, even as they deploy many

of the same rhetorical devices as do personal narratives (White). Although Brandt's, Selfe and

Hawisher's, and Lindquist and Halbritter's narrative evidence sources thus influenced their

studies of literacy sponsorship, these researchers have not given serious attention to the rhetorical

practices of literacy narratives *as sponsors of literacy*—as material conditions that enable and constrain what and how literacy is thought, felt, and lived by researchers and teachers, as well as by recounters of literacy narratives.[2]

Attending primarily to the content of literacy narratives, as though content were independent of form,[3] previous literacy-sponsorship researchers have tended not to investigate narrative rhetoric, or the practices of figuration and persuasion by which literacy narratives imagine, occasion, and renew experience, and, in so doing, involve and influence both audiences and recounters. In response to this opportunity for continued inquiry, in the second major section of this article, I outline directions for future literacy-sponsorship research that would continue to elicit personal literacy narratives as central evidence sources yet would also assume that such accounts *are* sponsors of literacy. Whereas I do not propose that new literacy-sponsorship studies should abandon ethnographic approaches or foreground economic history, I do suggest ways in which a focus on the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters, might enable literacy-sponsorship researchers to examine the interplay of local and non-local values in the practice and transformation of literacy and its significance.

## Past Contributions of Literacy-Sponsorship Research

Below, I present influential contributions to the research literature on literacy sponsorship made by writing-studies researchers Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, and Lindquist and Halbritter. I also highlight dialogue among their three studies.

### Brandt

In this section, I provide an overview of Brandt's groundbreaking oral-history study of literacy sponsorship. I address not only her 1994-2002 articles but also her 2001 book *Literacy in American Lives*, in which she collected and revised several of those articles.[4] For this book, Brandt received the MLA's Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize in 2002, and both the Grawemeyer Award for Education and the CCCC's Outstanding Book Award in 2003. Brandt's work has inspired literacy-related research for the past two decades, including the influential studies that I discuss below. Brandt's project centered on "the acquisition and use of alphabetic script"; however, she recognized that "encounters with literacy often blended with other activities (some people learned about writing, for instance, while drawing, calculating, reading, listening to the radio, watching television, talking)" (*Lives* 9). Among the many contributions of her study, Brandt advanced the following three assumptions, which have informed subsequent investigations:

1. personal narratives constitute valuable evidence of literate experience;

2. reworking the prevailing notion of context in prior literacy research enables crucial new studies of literate experience; and

3. literacy sponsors mediate access to literacy learning and practice.

Below, I track the emergence of these premises in Brandt's work, and foreground aspects of her analytic approach that later literacy-sponsorship researchers have not retained, even as they have adopted Brandt's study design as a model for their projects.

Assuming that "people's accounts of their lived experiences" would provide important insights not only into those individuals' literacy learning and practice, but also into mass literacy development, Brandt sought personal accounts of "ordinary people" as the sole primary sources for her inquiry into twentieth-century American literacy development (*Lives* 9). She elicited

these literacy narratives through one-time audiorecorded interviews, which she conducted during a period of "one to three hours," typically in interviewees' homes (9). Study participants included "80 Americans born between 1895 and 1985" (3). While all contributors were Wisconsin residents at the time of the interview, about half had been born in other states from different U.S. regions (15). Overall, the group "represented a broad cross section of the population in terms of age, race and ethnicity, place of birth, educational level, and occupation" ("Remembering" 460). Moreover, 11 had been raised in "households where languages other than English were spoken, and in some cases, written and read" (*Lives* 15). From her set of 80 research participants, Brandt selected 26 to profile in comparative case studies based on their membership in generational and other social groups. To create these case studies, Brandt drew on other researchers' histories of economic, educational, political, and technological changes in twentieth-century America, which provided an interpretive framework for Brandt's analysis. Brandt's use of in-depth, life-story interviews to produce case studies of demographically diverse individuals' literacy-related experiences has served as a methodological model for later literacy-sponsorship researchers, including the two teams whose contributions I present below.

In designing her study, Brandt drew on methodological approaches from oral history and biographical sociology, fields that highlight "the social conditions of ordinary lives" and "document multiple perspectives on public events" (*Lives* 10). Brandt devised her interview protocol to elicit "direct accounts about how ordinary people have acquired reading and writing and their motivations for doing so" (10). First, she requested demographic information both on the interviewees and on several generations of their family. Then, Brandt inquired about the interviewees' experiences, throughout their lives, of writing and reading with various materials and technologies in a range of places and situations, both in and out of school (208-10).

Additionally, Brandt asked interviewees to narrate memories of "influential people" who had shaped their literacy learning. Thus, the prompts in Brandt's interview protocol encouraged study participants not only to describe "the uses and values that literacy has had for them at various stages of life" (9-10) but also to showcase key people in local contexts of literate activity. As Brandt explained, "it was only through attention to specific material facts of people's experiences with literacy that I could address the questions that mattered to me most: How has literacy learning changed over the last century and how have rising expectations for literacy been experienced as part of felt life?" (4). She elaborated: "Answers to those questions demanded that I pay close attention to what people could remember about the specific scenes of their learning: where they were, who else was present, what materials they used, and so on" (4). Brandt's interview protocol has been emulated by later literacy-sponsorship researchers, as I describe below.

Although Brandt, in interviews, sought accounts of personally "significant events" "specific scenes," and "influential people"—all common features of the expansive and diverse personal-narrative genre—in her analysis, she focused as much or more on public events, large-scale contexts, and actors other than people, which Brandt brought into relationship with study participants' accounts by drawing on other researchers' social histories as secondary evidence sources. For example, Brandt interpreted Lavinia Stokes' description of the pastor who had mentored her in public speaking as evidence of the influence of "the Metropolitan AME Church" as a "consolidating force in the literacy development of its members," though Stokes had not explicitly mentioned this social institution in her narrative (*Lives* 116-117). As Brandt explained:

> I treat autobiographical accounts for their historical value, for their illumination of
> people's relationships to the social structures of their times and places, especially

those in which literacy learning is implicated. Rather than searching for

uniqueness or subjective differences, this study concerns itself with similarities of

experience among people who experience similarly structured positions and

relations (10).

Analyzing literacy sponsorship across the two narrative genres used as evidence sources

in her study (personal histories and social histories), Brandt performed three related kinds of

rhetorical slippage that together contributed to the remarkable diversity of her literacy sponsor

construct. First, she flexibly read literacy sponsors drawn from other researchers' social histories

into her study participants' accounts; for example, interpreting "one African American Methodist

Episcopal (AME) church" (*Lives* 107) as "the Church" (110). Second, Brandt occasionally

positioned a single literacy sponsor in all three narrative roles of agent, context, and event of

literacy sponsorship (e.g., "church" (110-23)). Third, as mentioned above, she differentiated and

conflated different literacy sponsors (e.g., "church" and "pastor" (116-9)). In contrast, the two

teams of literacy-sponsorship researchers, whose influential work I review below, have tended to

attribute greater authority to their study participants' literacy narratives than did Brandt.

Accordingly, these researchers have generally considered only *people* mentioned in their study

participants' accounts as sponsors of literacy, an analytic decision that seems to have been

influenced by their work with personal narratives as major evidence sources. This narrative genre

typically concentrates agency in individual human actors or anthropomorphic characters to

whom intention is ascribed (Abbott 19).

Moving beyond the personally significant sites and situations referenced in study

participants' literacy narratives, Brandt centered four contexts in her analysis: "economics and

history," as well as "the biographical context of learning over a lifetime and the comparative

context of generational cohorts" (*Lives* 4). However, given their abstraction and duration in time, none of these contexts were the local "scenes of new literacy learning" that she had pursued in the interviews (4); nor were they contexts in which Brandt had attempted to do fieldwork as a participant-observer, for example. In fact, Brandt offered her historical project as an alternative to previous ethnographic studies of literacy. According to Brandt:

> Ethnographic descriptions do not often speak directly enough and in a sustained way to the histories by which literacy practices arrive or do not arrive in local contexts, flourish or not in certain times and locales. Nor do they often invite a search for the interests beyond those of the local users that hold literacy practices in place, give them their meaning, or take them away. Nor do they often fully address the mixed motives, antipathies, and ambivalence with which so much literacy is learned and practiced (8).

Brandt summarized: "Just as illiteracy is rarely self-chosen and rarely self-created, the literacy that people practice is not the literacy they necessarily wish to practice" (8). By tracking "economic transformations" over a century, and their relationship to the literacy learning of individuals and social groups, Brandt sought to enlarge and complicate contexts featured in ethnographic literacy research, which, she argued, had tended to interpret the "diversity and multiplicity of literacy practices" as evidence of "cultural variety and human resourcefulness," rather than as "a sign of stratification and struggle" (8). As I demonstrate below, later literacy-sponsorship studies have upheld Brandt's assumption that reworking the prevailing notion of context in prior literacy research enables crucial new studies of literate experience. However, in reintroducing ethnographic orientations, these projects have nevertheless drawn attention away from the influence of economic history on literacy learning and practice.

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Yet Brandt conceived literacy sponsorship as a means of "tracking the presence of economic forces at the scenes of literacy learning" ("Economic" 375; *Lives* 26).[5] Defining *sponsors of literacy* as "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way" ("Sponsors" 166; *Lives* 19), Brandt further characterized literacy sponsors as "delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the means by which these forces present themselves to—and through—individual learners" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19). Additionally, she described them as conduits for political forces, as literacy sponsors may "represent the causes into which people's literacy usually gets recruited" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19). In her view, for the most part, "literacy takes its shape from the interests of its sponsors": "obligations toward one's sponsors run deep, affecting what, when, why, and how people write and read" ("Sponsors" 168; *Lives* 20). As Brandt explained, she theorized literacy, in her study of literacy sponsorship, primarily as "an unstable currency," rather than as "sets of social practices, diverse routines that must be understood in relationship to the particular social aims and habits associated with their contexts of use" (*Lives* 9). In other words, Brandt focused on literacy as "a want" conditioned by economic and political forces, as "an incursion," rather than as a pursuit motivated by personal longing or cultural expectation (9).[6] In this way, she aimed to forge "connections between the ways that money gets made and the ways that literacy gets made" ("Economic" 375; *Lives* 26).[7] In other words, Brandt proposed the construct *sponsors of literacy* to mediate analytically between the personal and social histories that were her primary and secondary evidence sources, and ontologically between "the vicissitudes of individual literacy development" and "the large-scale economic forces that set the routes and determine the worldly worth of that literacy" ("Sponsors" 166; *Lives* 18). In contrast, the two teams of literacy-

sponsorship researchers, whose work I present below, have tended to emphasize forms and meanings of literacy that study participants claimed in their literacy narratives, instead of widespread economic values.

For Brandt, sponsors of literacy, whether human or non-human, discrete or distributed, are chiefly responsible for granting and denying, and for facilitating and impeding, access to literacy learning and practice. Moreover, as conduits of economic and political forces, sponsors shape the value of literacy practices and pursuits. Brandt summarized:

> The concept of sponsors helps to explain, then, a range of human relationships and ideological pressures that turn up at the scenes of literacy learning—from benign sharing between adults and youths to euphemistic coercions in schools and workplaces to the most notorious impositions and deprivations by church or state. It also is a concept useful for tracking literacy's materiel: the things that accompany writing and reading and the ways they are manufactured and distributed ("Sponsors" 168; *Lives* 20).[8]

However, despite the diversity of literacy sponsors identified in her study, Brandt acknowledged that "the figures who turned up most typically in people's memories of literacy learning" were not, strictly speaking, social institutions, corporations, public infrastructure, or communication technologies, but, rather, "older relatives, teachers, religious leaders, supervisors, military officers, librarians, friends, editors, [and] influential authors" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19). This pattern is consistent with rhetorical conventions of the broad and varied personal-narrative genre. As I discuss below, later literacy-sponsorship researchers have retained Brandt's assumption that literacy sponsors mediate access to literacy learning and practice. However, the two teams I feature below have tended to use Brandt's construct *sponsors of literacy*, which encompassed

mediators as different as parents, public libraries, political causes, penmanship, prizes, and prayers (*Lives* 105-35), to indicate people exclusively, an effect that I link with these researchers' greater reliance on personal narratives as chief evidence sources.

While Brandt referred to sponsors as "figures" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19), thereby evoking dramatic characters, cultural types, social roles, psychic phantasies, and rhetorical tropes, she did not explore relations between narrative rhetoric and personal experience in her analysis of literacy sponsorship. Certainly, Brandt recognized that her interview protocol had encouraged study participants to structure their literacy narratives in particular ways: "I devised an interview script by which I could lead participants through a chronological account of both ordinary and extraordinary encounters with writing and reading, lingering to explore their detailed recollections of the literal settings, people, and materials that animated their memories" (*Lives* 12). Brandt even conceded that her protocol may have "imposed itself on the participants, becoming at times at odds with the communication norms they preferred and knew best" (12). However, Brandt did not investigate how the language of her protocol, other rhetorical practices at work during the interviews, and genre conventions of personal narratives, had conditioned experiences of literacy that her study participants both described and performed in recounting their narratives (Wortham, *Narratives*). In fact, Brandt explicitly distinguished her oral-history project from "other sorts of inquiries" that "examine the linguistic forms and functions of narrative accounts themselves to uncover the meaning structures that people call on to bring order to their experiences" (*Lives* 10). Moreover, Brandt did not discuss how literate-life stories, as her primary evidence sources, had supported and limited her exploration of "economies of literacy," though the great diversity of her sponsor construct emerged from dialogic tensions between and within the two narrative genres on which her analysis had relied. Put differently,

Brandt did not consider the personal literacy narratives generated through her interviews, or the social histories that she had consulted as secondary evidence sources, *as sponsors* either of her study participants' or of her own experiences of literacy. Nor did she explore competition and cooperation between these two narrative genres in her research. Like Brandt, subsequent writing-studies researchers have also not examined the figurative and persuasive work of narrative rhetoric as literacy sponsorship. Repeating features of Brandt's study design, including her interview protocol and her use of multiple narrative genres as evidence sources, the two teams, whose studies I discuss below, have participated in the emerging genre conventions of the writing-studies literature on literacy sponsorship, without rigorously investigating the sponsoring influence either of the rhetoric of literacy narratives or of the rhetoric of literacy-sponsorship research.

**Selfe and Hawisher**

In this section, I review Selfe and Hawisher's important literacy-sponsorship research. I concentrate on their 2004 book, *Literate Lives in the Information Age*, which presents their Brandt-inspired study of computer-related literacy learning in late-twentieth-century America (1978-2003). Whereas Brandt had documented a variety of literacy practices claimed by her study participants, including but not limited to reading/writing associated with computer programming ("Sponsors"; *Lives*), Selfe and Hawisher focused on "the literacies of technology," or "the practices involved in reading, writing, and exchanging information in online environments, as well as the values associated with such practices—cultural, political, and educational" (*Literate* 2). Since its publication, this book has been widely cited by researchers working in the overlapping fields of education, literacy studies, and writing studies. Selfe and

Hawisher modeled their study design on Brandt's earlier project, registering their "tremendous debt to Brandt's fine work" (32). However, even as they reiterated three basic assumptions of her study, the team made several key revisions to her model, all of which may be linked with their reassertion of an ethnographic focus on the forms and meanings of literacy learning and practice claimed by study participants. Below, I describe these innovations in greater detail. I also connect Selfe and Hawisher's significant reworking of Brandt's sponsor construct to their decision not to claim their earlier and later studies of digital-literacy development as literacy-sponsorship research.

Upholding Brandt's first assumption that personal narratives constitute valuable evidence of literate experience, Selfe and Hawisher obtained, in the course of several years, "over 350" autobiographical accounts of learning to read, write, and use computers from "a wide range of people of differing ages, genders, ethnic and racial groups, and geographical backgrounds" (*Literate* 7). In fact, the team coined the term "literacy narratives" (*vii*). To elicit these contributions, the team employed a Brandt-inspired interview protocol both in one-time face-to-face interviews and as a survey circulated via e-mail and the Web (7). Thus, Selfe and Hawisher's inquiry generated written, as well as oral, personal literacy narratives and expanded the media of the literacy-narrative genre. Of their group of respondents, the team, similar to Brandt, profiled a selection of "20 individuals," aged "14 to 60," in comparative case studies based on their membership in generational and other social groups (4, 13-4). However, as a "refinement" of Brandt's model, Selfe and Hawisher invited focal participants, several of whom were their current or former students (13-24), to co-author analyses of their literacy narratives and thus to have "more say in the politics of interpretation" (12). Through post-interview e-mail correspondence with these individuals, the team engaged in what they called a "process of open-

ended interviewing" (17). In this way, Selfe and Hawisher again invited *written* accounts as they introduced new ways for literacy-sponsorship researchers to collaborate with study participants in the generation and analysis of personal literacy narratives. As I explain below, Lindquist and Halbritter later extended this gesture by further diversifying the media of literacy narratives through their own innovative collaborations with study participants.

Additionally, Selfe and Hawisher retained Brandt's second assumption that reworking the prevailing notion of context in prior literacy research enables crucial new studies of literate experience. Interviewing or surveying a demographically diverse group of contributors, the team attempted to explore digital-literacy development in U.S. regions unaddressed by Brandt. Moreover, Selfe and Hawisher claimed an ethnographic orientation in their analysis (*Literate* 12), focusing on what they called "the *cultural ecology* of literacy" (5, emphasis in original) rather than on what Brandt had named "the economies of literacy." Whereas Brandt had approached culture as a limited local context conditioned by economic history, Selfe and Hawisher regarded culture as a broader context encompassing economics. To investigate the cultural ecology of literacy, the team, following Brandt's model, did not include fieldwork in their study design but, instead, consulted other researchers' social histories and ethnographies, as well as their study participants' personal literacy narratives, as evidence sources. Within the cultural ecology of literacy, Selfe and Hawisher highlighted four key sites, "schools, homes, community centers, and workplaces" (104), which they named "technology gateways," or "places and situations in which people typically gain access to information technology for the purpose of practicing digital literacy" (179). The team added that "information technologies themselves can serve as gateways to educational and career opportunities, along with advancing a person's digital literacy practices" (179). However, unlike Brandt, the team did not explicitly

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theorize these contexts or tools of literacy sponsorship *as sponsors of literacy*. Similarly, Lindquist and Halbritter, whose study I present below, have not identified the influential places, periods, occasions, cultural milieux, and equipment featured in their inquiry as literacy sponsors.

While Selfe and Hawisher also affirmed Brandt's third assumption that literacy sponsors mediate access to literacy learning and practice, they contended that some individuals can acquire and develop literacy *without* the influence of sponsors (*Literate* 174-6). Moreover, the team argued that literacy learning can be fostered beyond "the interests of corporate capitalism" (Brandt, *Lives* 26). Selfe and Hawisher's reworking of Brandt's theory of literacy sponsorship relied on their restricted use of Brandt's term *sponsors of literacy* to indicate people exclusively. Unlike Brandt, the team attributed greater authority to study participants' personal literacy narratives than to secondary evidence sources. Based on their reading of those accounts, Selfe and Hawisher concluded that some of their focal participants, as "White women who came of age in the late 1960s" (*Literate* 161), "did not have access to powerful technological literacy sponsors," yet had nevertheless encountered "an important benefactor or supporter who made all the difference in the world as far as each woman's experiences with the literacies of technology are concerned" (174).

Pointing to Brandt's association of literacy sponsors with profit seeking, Selfe and Hawisher emphasized that, for Brandt, literacy sponsors have "much to gain, often in an economic sense" (174-6). However, as these researchers observed, not all individuals have opportunities to grow up, study, or work with well-connected mentors or advocates. Moreover, such literacy learners may offer little financial incentive to those who help them. Certainly, Brandt had suggested that literacy sponsors at work in "opportunity structures" that are "more limited, fragile, and fraught with contradiction" are not "powerful agents" (*Lives* 181). However,

Selfe and Hawisher proposed the term "benefactors of the literacies of technology" to designate people who, while perhaps lacking in social status and economic resources, are, more importantly, not motivated by compensation and are, therefore, *not sponsors of literacy* (*Literate* 174-6). According to these researchers, benefactors provide specific assistance to literacy learners or offer them general encouragement and inspiration, while "giv[ing] little thought to recompense or benefits that they may receive in turn" (174). Brandt had also noted the possibility of altruistic literacy sponsorship (e.g., "benign sharing between adults and youths" ("Sponsors" 168; *Lives* 20).) However, she had maintained that sponsors "lend their resources or credibility to the sponsored but also stand to gain benefits from their success, whether by direct repayment or, indirectly, by credit of association" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19). Moving beyond the eventuality of compensation, Selfe and Hawisher accorded an explicit profit motive to literacy sponsors, thereby distinguishing them from benefactors. In fact, the team seems to have divided Brandt's definition of *sponsors of literacy* into two roles played by people: *benefactors*, who "enable, support, teach, [and] model" literacy; and *sponsors*, who "recruit, regulate, suppress or withhold literacy—and gain advantage by it in some way" (Brandt, "Sponsors" 166; *Lives* 19). Although Lindquist and Halbritter, whose work I review below, have not made use of Selfe and Hawisher's distinction between egoistic sponsors and altruistic benefactors, they have also tended to consider only people as literacy sponsors, a significant departure from Brandt's project.

Following their 2004 book, Selfe and Hawisher have continued to solicit literacy narratives and to study influences on digital-literacy development (e.g., Berry, Hawisher, and Selfe; DALN; Hawisher and Selfe; Selfe and Hawisher, *Gaming*). However, none of these inquiries have explicitly addressed questions of literacy sponsorship, which I attribute to the team's restricted interpretation of Brandt's sponsor construct. Similarly, Selfe and Hawisher

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have not claimed Selfe's 1999 book, *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century*, as important early research on literacy sponsorship, though that project examined the "roles" played by "government," "education," "business and industry," "parents," and "ideology" in U.S. technological-literacy development.[9] Perhaps this omission relates to Selfe's focus in that book on "cultural narratives," or "grand narratives" (Lyotard), of technological progress and literacy learning, inferred from artifacts like popular media. In literacy-sponsorship research, the term *literacy narratives* has generally been used to denote study participants' personal accounts of literacy-related experiences, to the exclusion of other literacy-themed narrative genres, like social histories (e.g., Graff), ethnographies (e.g., Heath), case studies (e.g., Dyson), documentary films (e.g., Philibert), and novels (e.g., Byatt). In this way, literacy-sponsorship researchers have distinguished narratives of literacy recounted by study participants from those offered by researchers. Although influential contributors to this area of inquiry, whose studies I review in this article, have emphasized different kinds and dimensions of *literacy* in defining *literacy narratives*, they have tended to agree that such narratives are study participants' autobiographical accounts, regardless of media (e.g., speech, writing, image, and multimedia). However, even as some of these researchers have drawn on different narrative genres in conducting their studies and in writing about their research, they have generally not attended to narrative rhetoric as sponsoring literacy, including their own.

For example, in collaboration with colleagues working at universities across the U.S., Selfe launched the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN), a website that "invites people of all ages, races, communities, backgrounds, and interests to contribute stories about how they learned to read, write, and compose meaning and how they continue to do so." Three notable features of this "publicly available archive" are, first, that it has amassed video-recorded, as well

as audio-recorded literacy narratives produced by either researchers or participants, in addition to written literacy narratives and images (visual narratives), including photographs. Thus, the DALN has widened the literacy-narrative genre's range of media. Second, the DALN has proposed a formal definition of *literacy narrative*: "simply a collection of items that describe how you learned to read, write, and compose." According to the site, "items" are "stories" or "memories" of, for example, "taking a photograph, reading the Bible, publishing a zine, or sending an e-mail message." Finally, the DALN has outlined a "process" for "creat[ing] a literacy narrative": "five basic steps" that guide contributors, first, through inventing a literacy-related life story in response to a series of questions similar to Brandt's and Selfe and Hawisher's earlier protocols, then through the formatting, labeling, editing, and uploading of this personal account. Although the DALN does not mention the term *sponsors of literacy*, it has intervened to shape what counts as a literacy narrative and thus what may be considered as evidence in literacy-sponsorship research, which has tended to rely on narrative evidence. However, neither Selfe nor Hawisher has acknowledged this influence. Indeed, although several of the enduring contributions of the team's 2004 study emerged from their heightened attention to what study participants recounted, Selfe and Hawisher, like Brandt, have not rigorously examined how narrative rhetoric—both their study participants' and their own—enabled and constrained, or *sponsored*, their collaborative inquiries.

**Lindquist and Halbritter**

In this section, I review Lindquist and Halbritter's distinguished literacy-sponsorship research. I address Lindquist's 2010 article, "What's the Trouble with Knowing Students? Only Time Will Tell," which introduces the aims of the team's inquiry and some features of their

study design, as well as Halbritter and Lindquist's Richard Ohmann Award-winning 2012 article, "Time, Lives, and Videotape: Operationalizing Discovery in Scenes of Literacy Sponsorship," which further specifies the purposes of their research and presents their study design in greater detail. To date, Lindquist and Halbritter have not published findings from their study, which they named "LiteracyCorps Michigan" (LCM).[10] In devising and launching their research project, the team, like Selfe and Hawisher, reiterated Brandt's three assumptions. However, Lindquist and Halbritter also made significant revisions to their predecessors' models, which may be linked with their ethnographic orientation toward what Brandt called the "interests," "practices," and "meanings" of "local users" (*Lives* 8).

Affirming Brandt's first assumption that personal narratives constitute valuable evidence of literate experience, Lindquist and Halbritter elicited the "narrated experiences" (Lindquist 178-9) of first-year, first-generation, college students as key evidence sources for their inquiry into "forms and meanings of literacy sponsorship" (Halbritter and Lindquist 173). However, unlike Brandt, and Selfe and Hawisher, who had interviewed study participants about their histories with alphabetic and technological literacy, the team sought to "collect tales from the outside: ones that may not be recognizable on first look and listen—to the teller or the listener— as stories of literacy" (Halbritter and Lindquist 173). Halbritter and Lindquist argued that past narrative-generation methods had favored "stories about the broad and expansive practices of a highly, traditionally literate community," and had thus tended to "characterize the evolving variety of largely recognizable literacy practices of a community of self-identified and reflective literate people" (172-173). Suggesting that writing-studies researchers and teachers are members of that community, the team aimed, through their research, "to learn not about ourselves, but about those who may not feel prepared to offer a 'literacy narrative'"—"at least not

immediately" (Halbritter and Lindquist 173). In this latter group, the team included first-generation college students.

As Lindquist asserted, "despite all our talk of student centeredness and student empowerment, we as [college] writing teachers generally don't know our students very well" (175). She attributed this situation, in part, to "the problem of *time*" (176, emphasis in original). According to Lindquist, "the project of 'knowing' students" is "long-term" because it entails knowledge about their histories, social situations, cultural backgrounds, class positions, material situations, learning styles, affective predicaments, and psychic states" (175), as well as "understanding enough about students' experiences as literacy learners and users to be able to infer what is at stake for them in pedagogical transactions of various kinds" (176). As she explained, semester-long college-writing courses do not provide enough time to know students in these ways (176-7). In response, Lindquist argued that "formal, extended research projects," like LCM, can offer teachers "useful knowledge of students' needs as literacy learners" primarily because such work "spans time," beyond the constraints of "academic-year time, or semester-time, or class-time" (177). The team designed their study to offer college-writing teachers "what they most needed in order to teach their students well" (Halbritter and Lindquist 173). However, they also targeted a less demographically diverse group of study participants than had Brandt or Selfe and Hawisher.

Additionally, Lindquist and Halbritter reiterated Brandt's second assumption that reworking the prevailing notion of context in prior literacy research enables crucial new studies of literate experience. In fact, whereas Brandt had "situate[d] acts of literacy within social and economic structures and processes," Halbritter and Lindquist prioritized "the cultural and experiential dimensions of sponsorship" before "larger social and historical patterns" (176-7),

given their aim of "knowing" undergraduates, especially first-generation college students. The team's attention to time resonated with Brandt's endeavor to track "the arrival of new literacy learning through a life span and across generations" (*Lives* 10), and with Selfe and Hawisher's similar interest in relationships between "literate lives" and "large-scale trends" (*Literate* 9). However, Lindquist and Halbritter were concerned not only with the "personal histor[ies]" (Halbritter and Lindquist 175) recounted in study participants' literacy narratives but also with the unfolding timeline of their own research process. Moreover, "places," which they also called "scenes"—both those mentioned in literacy narratives and those in which literacy narratives are created—mattered greatly to the team (176-8). While Brandt, and Selfe and Hawisher, had assumed that literacy narratives describe important contexts of literate experience, Halbritter and Lindquist added that the temporal and spatial settings in which such accounts are produced, are also significant (177-9). Put differently, the team was interested not only in what I call the *narrated contexts* in which their study participants had or would experience literacy (e.g., childhood homes, future workplaces) but also in what I call the *contexts of narrative production* in which accounts of those experiences were generated (e.g., interview sites).

Indeed, Halbritter and Lindquist argued that changes to the contexts in which literacy narratives are made will prompt study participants to recount narratives about "forms of literacy" beyond the "most recognizable" (182), thereby providing researchers (and teachers) with new access to "less visible forms and operations of literacy sponsorship" (177). While Brandt, and Selfe and Hawisher, had sought to explore unexamined narrated contexts inferred from study participants' literacy narratives (i.e., economies of literacy or the cultural ecology of literacy, including technology gateways), Lindquist and Halbritter designed their study explicitly to investigate "affordances of space and time," deliberately using contexts of narrative production

(i.e., interview sites) as "inventive" resources for participants and for themselves (Halbritter and Lindquist 177, 187-8). Certainly, their predecessors had carefully conceived and implemented their interviews/surveys to elicit study participants' personal literacy narratives. Similarly, the DALN was designed to facilitate contributors' participation on the site. However, Lindquist and Halbritter explained that the purpose of their study—to "*know*" first-generation college students (Lindquist 175, emphasis in original) who were not "self-identified and reflective literate people" (Halbritter and Lindquist 173)—required different inquiry practices from those enacted in previous literacy-sponsorship research.

The team devised their "four-phase, video-based, interview methodology" (Halbritter and Lindquist 172) to progressively and patiently "*teach participants to teach us how to learn from them*" (179, emphasis in original). In "Phase 1," the researchers met with a study participant at "a predetermined location" on their college campus to conduct a "personal history interview" (175). In preparation for this foundational interview, the team requested that participants "bring three 'artifacts' of their choosing—things that represent their past, present, and future selves" (e.g., "soccer balls, dorm room keys, teddy bears, and quilts") (189). During the interview, Lindquist and Halbritter did not pose direct questions, as had earlier researchers, about participants' prior, current, and anticipated experiences with writing, reading, and other technology use in a variety of situations. Instead, they explored the three artifacts of self, inquiring: "Why did you bring this? Does it tell the whole story of your past? What else might you have chosen? Tell us about the people with whom you use this" (Halbritter and Lindquist 190). As the team explained, "we thought that asking first-year college students about 'literacy' might suggest that we only wanted to hear about their experiences with traditional reading and writing" (181). In "Phase 2," they carried out a "follow-up interview informed by [the researchers' and the participant's] viewing

of footage from [the] first interview," in a "location chosen by the participant" (175). In "Phase 3," Lindquist and Halbritter equipped the participant to record, unassisted by the team, video footage of sites and activities (narrated contexts) mentioned in the previous interviews. Finally, in "Phase 4," the researchers rejoined the participant to create "field documentary" videos in those places (175). In other words, the team attempted to approach Phase 3 narrated contexts as Phase 4 contexts of narrative production. The length of each phase, and of the intervals between them, varied in response to study participants and the "rhetorical demands" of "building relationships" (193). In thus modifying the times and places in which participants recounted their literacy-related experiences, Lindquist and Halbritter innovated beyond the literate-life-story interview "in one sitting" model established by Brandt (Halbritter and Lindquist 173). They also expanded the "process of open-ended interviewing" pioneered by Selfe and Hawisher (*Literate* 17). Moreover, the team extended the work of the DALN by obtaining researcher- and participant-generated video-based literacy narratives.

Lindquist and Halbritter additionally intervened to suggest which literacy narratives are most worthy of consideration in literacy-sponsorship research. Assuming that "students are always in the process of inventing themselves and that their interactions with us [teachers and researchers] are, for better or worse, part of that process," the team designed their study to select for those "narratives of self" which were "unlike the ones students routinely deliver when we ask them to create literacy narratives for us" (Lindquist 180-1). As Lindquist explained, "there is often more to learn, from the perspective of a teacher seeking to discover something less visible about the complexities of literate life, from those stories that are less highly mediated, less generically determined, as stories of literacy or education or studenthood" (179). Indeed, she asserted that "not all literacy narratives are created equal when it comes to the work they do for

students and what they communicate to teachers" (180). Seeking to avoid well-rehearsed

performances of membership in a "traditionally literate community," the team concentrated on

the "narratives of self" of first-generation college students (179-182). Although Lindquist and

Halbritter ultimately generated a "smaller" set of personal literacy narratives than had Brandt, or

Selfe and Hawisher, the team reasoned that their work with a more select group of study

participants would enable them to discover "how narratives of things only tangentially associated

with what we have come to recognize as sponsorship can be operationalized to help us build new

theories of sponsorship" (Halbritter and Lindquist 177). Thus focusing on the content of study

participants' personal literacy narratives—on the "things" recounted—Lindquist and Halbritter

did not signal, in their initial LCM-related publications, their interest in examining narrative

rhetoric as a literacy sponsor, even as they acknowledged issues of genre related to study

participants' autobiographical accounts.

Additionally, the team retained Brandt's third assumption that literacy sponsors mediate

access to literacy learning and practice. However, in a departure from Brandt's study, similar to

that made by Selfe and Hawisher, Halbritter and Lindquist have tended to recognize only people

as literacy sponsors: for example, "family," "friends," and "educators" (177, 193). This trend

suggests the influence of personal-narrative genre conventions on the team's research. Also like

Selfe and Hawisher, the team has given heightened attention to what *study participants*

recounted across LCM's four phases, in comparison with other narrative sources. However,

unlike their predecessors, including Brandt, who tended to regard study participants as the

sponsored and thus attempted, through their research, to collect testimonies of the *sponsored*,

Lindquist and Halbritter have proposed that *sponsors* identified in study participants' personal

literacy narratives may also provide accounts of literacy sponsorship. For example, in Phase 4,

the team asked study participants to "arrange for us to meet the people who had appeared in the [Phase 3] video and to set up interviews with others [they] had mentioned" (Halbritter and Lindquist 193). Certainly, Brandt, and Selfe and Hawisher, implied that it was possible for researchers to observe and/or interview people referenced in study participants' personal literacy narratives, provided that these individuals could be contacted. However, neither Brandt nor Selfe and Hawisher carried out such research. Consequently, their studies suggested that literacy sponsorship is *narrated by the sponsored and/or by literacy researchers*. While Lindquist and Halbritter have thus extended storytelling rights to people identified as literacy sponsors, they have not recognized this move as an innovation; nor have they rigorously investigated the influence of narrative rhetoric on their research, especially the tendency of personal narratives to concentrate agency in people or anthropomorphic characters. Certainly, Halbritter and Lindquist claimed that the structure of each phase of their study, the time intervals between them, their location in time and space, the Phase 1 artifacts, the videos from each phase, the student and non-student study participants, and the researchers themselves all acted as resources for narrative invention. However, the team has not explicitly identified these elements of their study design or their study participants' personal literacy narratives *as sponsors of literacy* for themselves, for their study participants, or for eventual researcher/teacher audiences of their work. Lindquist and Halbritter's future publications will indicate emerging trajectories of their ongoing research.

   While the writing-studies literature on literacy sponsorship, as exemplified by the influential studies that I review above, exhibits a convergence on three shared assumptions, it also shows a conceptual drift away from literacy sponsors that are not people, away from economics and social history as key contexts of literacy sponsorship, and away from the possibility that contexts of literacy sponsorship are also literacy sponsors. Additionally, this

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literature demonstrates a trend toward the diversification of researchers' analytic notions of literacy, of the contexts of literacy learning and practice highlighted in their studies, of the sociocultural backgrounds of study participants, and of the media of literacy narratives elicited by researchers. However, this still-emerging literature has not yet given serious attention to narrative *genres* or to the sponsoring influence of narrative rhetoric in general, even as contributors have increasingly relied on personal narratives as evidence sources. These shifts in the literature inspired by Brandt's pioneering study may be linked to subsequent researchers' stronger emphasis on cultural insiders' interests, practices, and meanings, as claimed in their autobiographical accounts—or on what Brandt called "felt life" (*Lives* 4). Nevertheless, writing-studies researchers have not yet investigated the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters, as a crucial collaborator in the performative invention, transmission, and maintenance of experiences of literacy, including experiences of literacy-sponsorship. Put differently, previous researchers have not examined narrative rhetoric's contributions to "felt life" *as literacy sponsorship*. In response to this opportunity for continued inquiry, I propose that future literacy-sponsorship research may renew dialogues among Brandt's initial concerns and those of later researchers by analyzing the rhetoric of literacy narratives both as a sponsor and as a site of the interplay of local and non-local values in the practice and transformation of literacy and its significance.

## New Directions for Literacy-Sponsorship Research

Revitalizing Brandt's three assumptions, in this final section, I specify possibilities for new literacy-sponsorship studies that would investigate how the poetic and persuasive practices of literacy narratives (1) participate in the constitution of literacy-related experiences and their

value; (2) rework narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production; and (3) mediate both audiences' and recounters' access to literacy learning and practice. Addressing these assumptions in reverse order below, I present opportunities for future research that would explore literacy sponsors as rhetorical figures, literacy narratives as scenes of literacy sponsorship, and literacy sponsorship as involvement. The terms *figure*, *scene*, and *involvement* also appear in Brandt's work on literacy sponsorship. Thus, I offer my suggestions below as a renewal of an already rich field of inquiry.

Indeed, the new research directions that I identify in this section emerge from my return to Brandt's earliest publication on literacy sponsorship, "Remembering Writing, Remembering Reading." In that 1994 article, which she later revised and reissued as a chapter of her 2001 book, Brandt exercised a non-economics-centered approach in analyzing "the mixed motives, antipathies, and ambivalence with which so much literacy is learned and practiced" (*Lives* 8). In subsequent publications, she would relate these complexities to literacy's public status as "an unstable currency" (9). However, in her first article on literacy sponsorship, she linked "ambiguous and complex motives and feelings, including self-assertion, violation, jealousy, and guilt," with study participants' personally-significant social interactions with parents and teachers in childhood and adolescence ("Remembering" 465; *Lives* 155). In Brandt's terms, in her 1994 article, she explored "psychological motivations" of literacy learning and practice ("Remembering" 464; *Lives* 154) rather than economic "stratification and struggle," which she would later emphasize (*Lives* 8). This early focus on "emotional conflict" (*Lives* 166) and sponsoring people coincided with Brandt's greater attention to study participants' personal literacy narratives than to secondary evidence sources. Nevertheless, in that first article on her then-ongoing study, Brandt did note a certain interplay between psychic needs and desires, and

economic and political interests in the pursuit of literacy. For example, Brandt theorized

literacy's "particular value for people" as "its usefulness in maintaining material life,

withholding experience for private reflection, venting feeling, and resisting conformity and

control" ("Remembering" 473; *Lives* 163).[11]

I read Brandt's 1994 article as raising, without exploring, an important paradox of literate

experience, which I articulate as follows, drawing on Judith Butler's terms: Because literacy may

be "bound up with the requirements for life," people may become "passionately attached" not

only to literacy but also to the caregivers, mentors, and advocates—the *sponsors*—on whom they

depend for opportunities to learn and practice literacy, as for life itself (6-10). However, because

literacy may promote and impede, or *sponsor*, social interactions with those caregivers, mentors,

and advocates, as well as enable and constrain a sense of self, such passionate attachments may

themselves rely on literacy.[12] This paradox suggests that study participants' personal literacy

narratives may not only report passionate attachments to sponsoring people but may also perform

them, or bring them into (new) being and relationship. For example, in claiming and denying

connections among past, present, and future, narrative rhetoric reinvents what matters, rearranges

social bonds, and renews experiences and their meanings. Thus, this unexplored potential of

Brandt's early work allows for inquiries into the rhetoric of literacy narratives, particularly its

affective force.

Following the publication of her 1994 article, Brandt's analysis moved away from

literacy-related passionate attachments and emotional conflicts. Citing study participants' right to

privacy, Brandt attempted to "de-psychologize" the autobiographical accounts that she had

collected, or to "empty them of their personal significance" in an effort to "understand their

historical significance" ("Protecting" 44). As she explained:

The first thing I now do with an interview script once I transcribe it is to pulverize it, to transform it from a conversation with another whole human being into empirical evidence of how literacy works. I break the interview apart, changing it into scores and often hundreds of facts about the social structures and processes that bear on literacy. I try to put descriptions of events and thoughts into historical currents of literacy, and from that I try to build a theory of literacy worthy of the public interest (43).

Focusing on the content of personal literacy narratives, as though content were independent of form, Brandt chose not to investigate the rhetoric of those accounts. However, rhetorical analyses do not necessarily entail psychological approaches to literacy research.

In an attempt to reconcile different interests in Brandt's research and across the writing-studies literature on literacy sponsorship, I propose that literacy-related affect is not reducible to the psychological. Indeed, Butler's notion of "passionate attachment" makes psychic, social, economic, and political concerns inextricable from language, literacy, rhetoric, and culture, emphasizing the co-participation of discourse in the formation of subjects and social bonds. Elaborating this perspective, Denise Riley attributes "a forcible affect" to language (*Impersonal* 1), which "stands somewhat apart from the expressive intentions of an individual speaker" (5). For Riley, "the very architecture of language itself" (*Words* 3) can effect associations and disclose possibilities for affective engagement, including a variety of orientations like excitement, disgust, fear, anger, surprise, and joy. For Riley, as for Butler, "Language is impersonal: its working through and across us is indifferent to us, yet in the same blow it constitutes the fiber of the personal" (Riley, *Impersonal* 1). This perspective on language, if extended to rhetoric of all media and applied to the poetic and persuasive practices of literacy

narratives, including, for example, gestural and visual narratives, would encourage literacy-sponsorship researchers to investigate the affective power of narrative rhetoric, and its limits, as a sponsoring force in literacy-related experiences. This approach would recognize narrative rhetoric as an important mediator in the emergence, consolidation, transformation, and dialogue of personal and cultural, and local and non-local values regarding literacy. In this way, inquiries into the affective force of literacy narratives would complement and unite literacy-sponsorship researchers' prior explorations of psychological, cultural, economic, and political influences on literacy learning and practice.

**Literacy Sponsors as Rhetorical Figures**

One new direction for literacy-sponsorship research is the examination of literacy sponsors as rhetorical figures. This broad orientation arises from the third assumption listed above: the rhetoric of literacy narratives, particularly the affective force of narrative rhetoric, mediates both audiences' and recounters' access to literacy learning and practice. Moreover, this research direction magnifies potentials of Brandt's use of the term *figure* in her work on literacy sponsorship. Thus, the possibilities for future inquiry that I specify below extend and challenge the previous studies that I review in this article.

As I indicate above, Brandt observed that "the figures who turned up most typically in people's memories of literacy learning" were "older relatives, teachers, religious leaders, supervisors, military officers, librarians, friends, editors, [and] influential authors" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19), a tendency that is consistent with rhetorical conventions of the personal-narrative genre. She also referred to those sponsors as "powerful figures" ("Sponsors" 167; *Lives* 19). Certainly, connections between literacy sponsors and rhetorical tropes (e.g., metaphor,

metonymy, synecdoche, and irony (Burke, "Master")) merit further investigation. However, it seems that Brandt used the term *figure* to denote "a person as an object of mental contemplation; a personage"; as in "father-figure" (OED). Of course, this definition of *figure* relies on tropes, like anthropomorphism, personification, and prosopopoeia, even as it foregrounds a different kind of rhetorical device—the character type.

Working with Brandt's sense of the term, sponsor figures may be considered from a psychoanalytic perspective as "internal objects," or remembered impressions of people encountered in emotionally-significant social interactions, which then come to overlay and merge with new experiences, including exchanges with different people (Hinshelwood).[13] For example, students may attribute qualities of their parents to their teachers, confusing them at times. Or writers may "hear" previous writing teachers' "voices" in their minds as they compose new texts, and may even comply with such promptings. As Brandt observed, "the long shadow of…the disapproving teacher looms large" (*Lives* 13). While writers may be able to recognize differences between a former writing teacher and an imagined inner "voice," and may even laugh at the persistent influence of remembered criticism, advice, or praise, such echoic patterns of social interaction can also emerge without writers' notice or consent. These patterns are fundamentally narrative in that they connect past, present, and future. However, they may be developed and revised in more explicit literacy narratives, including those shared with researchers. Indeed, across a range of media, genres, and occasions, literacy narratives can reassert sponsor figures and their influence, and, in this way, sponsor literacy themselves. Thus, this psychoanalytic perspective opens onto explorations of the affective power of narrative rhetoric, or how impersonal rhetoric conditions the formation, persistence, and effects of

personally-held passionate attachments to sponsors of literacy, including the sponsors that are literacy narratives themselves.[14]

Also in keeping with Brandt's sense of the term, sponsor figures may be approached from a literary perspective as folkloric *dramatis personae,* or "basic functional roles" at work throughout world literature (Prince 23-4, 84-5). Indeed, Vladimir Propp's seven *dramatis personae*—the hero, the dispatcher, the donor, the helper, the sought-for-person, the villain, and the false hero—may be regarded as the many faces of Brandt's sponsor construct, which includes self-sponsors ("Remembering" 465),[15] and may be recognized in the characters and character types that populate narratives of literacy-related experiences. For example, Selfe and Hawisher seem to have interpreted *sponsors* as "villains" and *benefactors* as "donors" (*Literate* 174-6). The team's focus on the generous supporters mentioned in their study participants' personal narratives likely encouraged this analytic decision, which raises questions regarding how narrative evidence sources contribute to the aesthetics of the research process. Future literacy-sponsorship research might examine how the affective force of the poetic and persuasive practices of literacy narratives may prompt researchers to attend to particular aspects of their evidence sources and disregard others.

Of course, these psychoanalytic and literary perspectives may be exercised together, for example, in exploring relations between personal narratives and cultural myths (e.g., Kalsched; Lieblich, McAdams, and Josselson). For example, literacy-sponsorship researchers might consider recurring cultural character types and plot structures at work in the literacy narratives consulted in their inquiries, including both study participants' personal accounts and other researchers' social histories and ethnographies. Such an intertextual approach would focus on the interplay of personal and cultural, and local and non-local values in the practice and

transformation of literacy and its significance. In this way, work in this vein would expand

Brandt's discussion of competing and cooperating literacy sponsors. Taken together or

separately, such psychoanalytic and literary perspectives would complement previous research

efforts by prompting new investigations of how the rhetoric of literacy narratives affectively

mediates both audiences' and recounters' access to literacy learning and practice.


**Literacy Narratives as Scenes of Literacy Sponsorship**

A second new direction for literacy-sponsorship research is the analysis of literacy

narratives as scenes of literacy sponsorship. This broad orientation emerges from the second

assumption listed above: the rhetoric of literacy narratives, particularly the affective force of

narrative rhetoric, reworks narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production. Moreover, it

reconsiders Brandt's, Selfe and Hawisher's, and Halbritter and Lindquist's uses of the term *scene*

in their research on literacy sponsorship. Thus, the suggestions for future inquiry that I offer

below expand and complicate the previous studies that I review in this article.

In their work on literacy sponsorship, Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, and Halbritter and

Lindquist have all drawn on the term *scene*. Although Brandt, and Halbritter and Lindquist have,

at times, used *scene* synonymously with "episode,"[16] they have more often employed this term to

denote "settings" of literacy learning, practice, and sponsorship.[17] Regarding this latter sense of

*scene*, Brandt and both teams of literacy-sponsorship researchers have used the term to indicate

what I call *narrated contexts*, or situations described by study participants' personal narratives

(e.g., past homes, current workplaces) and/or other researchers' social histories (e.g.,

international political climates), which they have regarded, in Brandt's words, as "literal

settings" (*Lives* 12). Additionally, Halbritter and Lindquist have applied the term *scene* to what I

call *contexts of narrative production*, or situations in which such narratives are presented (e.g., research-interview sites), which the team has also construed literally as "concrete places" in "real-time" (178),[18] citing Holstein and Gubrium (*Active* 178).[19]

This distinction between narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production makes relevant another sense of the term *scene*. Beyond setting and episode, narratologists have theorized *scene* as a kind of rhetorical association: specifically, as "a canonical narrative tempo," or "one of the fundamental narrative speeds," "along with ellipsis, pause, stretch, and summary" (Prince 85). From this perspective, a scene occurs "when there is some sort of equivalence between a narrative segment and the narrated it represents" (85). For example, a passage of dialogue is presented at a pace that evokes the process of conversation, including both the represented exchange and the rhetorical conventions of such a social interaction. (In contrast, a narrative "summary" might review only key turns and would thus proceed more quickly than the conversation.) Put differently, from this narratological perspective, a scene is "a representational *mode* in which the duration of the event and the duration of its representation are assumed to be equal" (Newman and Herman 513, emphasis in original). As the narration (e.g., the form of the dialogue) performs the narrated (e.g., the conversation), the narrative scene makes the narrated context (the setting/episode of the story) coincide with the context of narrative production (the setting/episode of the recounting/reception).[20] In both marking and erasing the boundaries between narrated contexts (e.g., a childhood bedroom described in a personal account) and contexts of narrative production (e.g., the research site in which the personal account was delivered), narrative scenes rework those contexts and reinvent experience.[21]

For example, regarding the literacy-sponsorship studies that I review above, a narrative scene may have occurred when a study participant, during her foundational interview with

Lindquist and Halbritter, held her childhood teddy bear, an artifact of her "past self" (Halbritter and Lindquist 189). (Just as narratives may be recounted in multiple modes (e.g., oral, written, visual, gestural, multimodal), so narrative scenes may also draw on a range of semiotic resources.) In working with the narrative rhetoric of the teddy bear, Lindquist and Halbritter, and this study participant, may have made it difficult to distinguish memory from interview, even as they also participated in establishing that difference. Similar contextual interfaces may also have emerged during the team's attempts to interview study participants in sites from their past. Likewise, narrative scenes may have arisen during Brandt's interviews in study participants' homes, or during Selfe and Hawisher's collaborations with their (former) students. Moreover, video generated through Lindquist and Halbritter's research, similar to their predecessors' interview recordings and transcripts, may have operated as narrative scenes, suturing the contexts of video production and of viewing/listening to produce the rhetorical effect of immediacy (Newman and Herman 513). An assumption of this narratological sense of *scene* is that narrative rhetoric is forceful: it works aesthetic and persuasive effects with people and various additional collaborators in social interactions. Future literacy-sponsorship researchers might examine how the rhetoric of literacy narratives may make a scene, or bring into coincidence narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production and thus may sponsor, or enable and constrain, the literacy-related experiences of both audiences and recounters.

This reference to "making a scene" evokes another use of the term. A scene is also commonly understood as "an exhibition of excited or strong feeling between two or more persons," "a stormy encounter," "a disturbance" (OED). This sense of *scene* as intense affect recalls Brandt's early discussion of "scenes of intimacy," or episodes of "adult sponsorship of writing" between parents and children ("Remembering" 469; *Lives* 159); and of "scenes of exile"

(*Lives* 155), or "settings of childhood and adolescent writing" associated with "pain or isolation," like "a hospital bed, the front steps of a house, and, in other cases, a garage, a treehouse, and a highway overpass" ("Remembering" 465; *Lives* 155). These scenes of intimacy and exile, in Brandt's research, are narrated contexts, or situations described by study participants' personal accounts. Moreover, they are episodes/settings of passionate attachment—to sponsoring caregivers, to literacy itself, and to literate selves, among other material-semiotic conditions. Working beyond Brandt, I propose that the narratological and affective senses of *scene* may be strategically combined. Specifically, future literacy-sponsorship research might examine how the rhetoric of literacy narratives, in bringing into coincidence narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, may generate intense affect and thus create possibilities for the reworking of those contexts and for the renewal of literacy-related experiences. In other words, new studies might approach literacy narratives themselves as scenes of literacy sponsorship, as stor(m)y encounters of past, present, and future that sponsor experiences of literacy.

**Literacy Sponsorship as Involvement**

A third new direction for literacy-sponsorship research is the exploration of literacy sponsorship as involvement. This broad orientation develops the first assumption listed above: the rhetoric of literacy narratives, particularly the affective force of narrative rhetoric, participates in the constitution of literacy-related experiences and their value. Moreover, it addresses affordances and constraints of Brandt's use of the term *involvement* in her research on literacy sponsorship. Thus, the possibilities for future inquiry that I outline below both rely on and move beyond the previous studies that I review in this article.

In her earliest publication on literacy sponsorship, Brandt used the terms *involvement* and *sponsorship* synonymously: for example, "parental involvement in promoting writing" and "adult sponsorship of writing" ("Remembering" 469; *Lives* 159). In this way, Brandt echoed her 1990 book *Literacy as Involvement*. In that book, Brandt drew on sociolinguist Deborah Tannen's distinction between two functions shared by oral and written discourse: the accomplishment of social "involvement" and the effect of semantic "message" (Brandt, *Involvement* 19-20; Tannen, "Relative"). Provocatively, Brandt claimed that "the involvement-message distinction becomes untenable from the perspectives of writers and readers in action, for whom message *is* involvement" (*Involvement* 20, emphasis in original). As Brandt explained, writers' and readers' literate sense-making depends on their awareness of writing and reading as social interactions with audiences and authors. In her 1990 book, Brandt, like Tannen, acknowledged the operation, in both oral and written discourse, of "interpersonal devices" (3), or rhetorical moves that initiate, sustain, and otherwise enhance and restrict social interactions. However, unlike Tannen, Brandt emphasized how such "cohesive devices," or "textual ties," emerge from "human ties *already made* between writer and reader" (78, emphasis added).

In contrast, Tannen, in her 1989 book, *Talking Voices*, which Brandt did not cite, demonstrated how such rhetorical moves provoke *new social interaction* among writers and readers, and speakers and listeners, as well as further discursive production. Tannen showed how poetic devices, like repetition, dialogue, imagery, and detail, promote textual relations and thus inspire participation in social interactions (*Voices*). Central to Tannen's argument was her assumption that such rhetorical practices enable and constrain "emotional response" (13). Indeed, Tannen claimed that "An aesthetic response is not an extra added attraction of communication, but its essence" (13). To rework Brandt's formula: for Tannen, the affective

force of poetic devices can generate the social involvement, or passionate attachment, that *is* the message. Thus, Tannen's work on involvement invites future literacy-sponsorship research on how the affective rhetoric of literacy narratives (whether oral, written, or of other semiotic modes) may sponsor the influential social interactions regarded as examples of literacy sponsorship. The possibilities for continued inquiry that I specify below all assume that studies of a wider array of narrative-rhetorical practices would enable such investigations.

As I note above, previous literacy-sponsorship researchers have endeavored to interview study participants from a variety of *sociocultural backgrounds* and to expand the *media* of literacy narratives (e.g., speech, writing, and video). New studies might also focus on diversifying the *rhetorical practices* that count as examples of what would then become a more wide-ranging and dynamic literacy-narrative genre. For example, much literacy-sponsorship research has relied on personal histories elicited through in-depth life-story interviews. Narrative researchers have named such accounts "big stories" because they tend to address a range of life events and to emerge in response to formal occasions for autobiographical reflection (Freeman). In contrast, other narrative researchers have advocated for attention to "small stories" generated through ethnographic fieldwork. These conversational narratives, sometimes co-recounted with audiences, may highlight, in addition to past events, "ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell" (Georgakopoulou 146). Beyond speech and writing, small stories may also include collaborative drawings or shared images and videos, claimed as meaningful by participants in social interactions. A small-story approach to literacy narratives would enable literacy-sponsorship researchers not only to expand and complicate what has become the literacy-narrative genre but also to investigate how the affective force of narrative rhetoric persists and

changes as literacy narratives are transformed across different media and literacy-narrative subgenres, and repurposed for new audiences and occasions.

Studies of literacy narratives that emerge during study participants' conversations with each other—in contrast with those prompted by interviewers' questions—would provide opportunities for tracking how affect circulates, accumulates, and mutates through the rhetorical exchanges of study participants. Such research would also raise important questions regarding the unofficial inquiries into literacy that unfold through study participants' literacy narratives, and how these investigations converge with, and diverge from, researchers' official research projects. For example, future literacy-sponsorship studies might analyze what is *figured out* through the evocation of *sponsor figures*.

Future research on small stories of literacy-related experiences would also create possibilities for researchers to enact a wider range of interactional positions vis-à-vis study participants, beyond those available in formal interviews. Regarding her study of literacy sponsorship, Brandt noted an important constraint on interviewer-interviewee dialogue: the confusion of researchers with teachers. In fact, Brandt chose not to request writing samples from study participants, in part, due to her "reluctance to force into my relationship with the participants the long shadow of the teacher ready to uncover shameful inadequacies of expression. As the interviews demonstrated, the disapproving teacher looms large enough still in many people's memories and was best, I thought, left alone" (*Lives* 13). In other words, the interviewer role, which suggests authority and control in the cultural imagination (Mishler), may more readily invite emotional transference from study participants, who may unwittingly relate to interviewers as to sponsor figures, reliving their remembered passionate attachments. This affective rhetorical practice might be explored in future literacy-sponsorship research.

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In general, new studies might give greater attention to dynamics between researchers/teachers and study participants/students, especially given the trend among literacy-sponsorship researchers of interviewing (former) students. A small-story approach to the generation and analysis of literacy narratives might encourage researchers to design studies that investigate researchers' own teaching, or their ongoing literacy sponsorship of their students/study participants. Such projects might investigate literacy-narrative subgenres regularly assigned by teachers (e.g., literacy autobiographies, and writing-process accounts for portfolios) and analyze the affective rhetoric of those literacy narratives.[22] In her 1994 article, Brandt observed that, in contrast to reading, "Writing overall seems more associated with troubles. There were more accounts of getting into trouble with writing than with reading and about using writing as a response to trouble" (476; *Lives* 167). Future literacy-sponsorship studies might examine how teachers and students interpret and respond to writing troubles—for example, writers' passionate attachments to audiences, to their texts, and to themselves—as they are made, unmade, and remade through writing and through narrating experiences of writing. Prior writing-studies research has addressed how students' previous writing enables and constrains their future writing, and how students' talk about their emerging ideas informs their subsequent drafts (e.g., Bazerman and Prior). New studies might consider how students' *narratives* of their literacy-related experiences, including their experiences with writing, reading, learning, knowing, and remembering; and, more broadly, with ability, authority, creativity, and responsibility, both support and limit—*sponsor*—their work on current and future writing projects. Future research on writers', teachers', and researchers' collaborations with the affective force of literacy narratives would open new inquiries into literacy and literacy sponsorship as involvement.

In outlining these three broad directions for future literacy-sponsorship research, my aim is to amplify possibilities suggested by the influential studies that I review above. Investigations of literacy sponsors as rhetorical figures, literacy narratives as scenes of literacy sponsorship, and literacy sponsorship as involvement would reanimate potentials of Brandt's three assumptions and of important terms in her work. Thus, these new research directions would contribute generative turns to an already lively conversation among literacy-sponsorship researchers. As I have demonstrated in this article, previous writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship has identified a wide range of literacy sponsors. However, even as this emerging literature has relied on literacy narratives as evidence sources, contributors have not yet examined literacy narratives as sponsors of literacy. Moreover, while important insights offered by Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, and Lindquist and Halbritter have been affected by the rhetoric of the literacy narratives that inspired those contributions, the affective force of such narrative rhetoric remains to be explored as a co-participant, with people and other sponsoring influences, in the production, transmission, and transformation of the literacy-related experiences of researchers and study participants, and of teachers and students. Both personal and impersonal, narrative rhetoric is a literacy sponsor that invites research perspectives drawn from a range of disciplines and fields. The literacy-related affect at work through such narrative rhetoric is a matter of public interest, as well as private passion.

**Notes**

1. "Sponsors of Literacy" was Brandt's first formal presentation of the analytic construct by which she had interpreted her study participants' personal accounts of their literacy-related experiences. While Brandt had used the term *sponsor* in previous article publications related to her study (e.g., "Remembering"; "Accumulating"), she had not defined, explained, or justified this analytic construct in those texts.

2. See Bleich for more on the materiality of rhetoric.

3. See White for more on content-form relations.

4. Throughout this article, I provide citations both for Brandt's original articles and for her 2001 book, *Literacy in American Lives*, if applicable. Some of these passages differ in phrasing. In such cases, I quote the updated 2001 version in the text of this article and include the citation for the original phrasing in a note.

5. See Brandt ("Economic" 375) for alternate phrasing.

6. The original title for *Literacy in American Lives* was *Pursuing Literacy: Writing and Learning to Write in the Twentieth Century* (Brandt, "Sponsors" 165).

7. See Brandt ("Economic" 375) for alternate phrasing.

8. See Brandt ("Sponsors" 168) for alternate phrasing.

9. Likewise, Brandt described Selfe's 1999 book simply as a source of "fascinating facts about investment in computer technology, especially as it affects computer education" (*Lives* 232).

10. Throughout this article, I refer to work on the LCM project that is mentioned both in Lindquist's 2010 article and in Halbritter and Lindquist's 2012 article as "Lindquist and Halbritter's study," in keeping with the order of Principal Investigators presented on the LCM

website. However, when discussing claims made in only one of these publications, I retain the order of authors listed for each article.

11. See Brandt ("Remembering" 473) for alternate phrasing.

12. In their 2002 article, Brandt and Katie Clinton proposed that literacy itself may be a sponsor of literacy: "literacy acts as a social agent, as an independent mediator" (349).

13. In his discussion of psychotherapeutic social interactions, sociologist Erving Goffman also referred to such "not quite literal" yet nonetheless "significant figures": "The reprisal principle of ordinary social intercourse is held in abeyance by the therapist, a wide range of 'acting-out' behavior being tolerated by him [*sic*] in support of the doctrine that the client's behavior is directed not at the therapist but at significant figures into which the therapist is projectively transformed, in short, that the behavior is not quite literal, although the client may be unaware of this" (386).

14. Riley emphasizes that even private inner speech, what she calls "my most intimate incarnation," is fashioned from the words of others, and is thus "impersonal and secondhand" (*Voice* 76).

15. In revising her 1994 article as a chapter of her 2001 book, Brandt replaced the term "self-sponsored" ("Remembering" 465) with "self-initiated" (*Lives* 154), a preference that she also exercised in her 1998 article "Sponsors of Literacy" (171).

16. See Brandt (*Lives* 39, 68, 85, 130, 140, 159), and Halbritter and Lindquist (171-2, 176, 190).

17. See Brandt (*Lives* 4, 12, 20, 26, 74, 91, 95, 104, 110, 143, 155, 192-3, 207), and Halbritter and Lindquist (172, 174-182, 184-195).

18. As Halbritter and Lindquist have acknowledged, this sense of *scene* as "setting" resonates with Burke's use of "scene" (when and where)—along with "act" (what), "agent" (who), "agency" (how), and "purpose" (why)—in his "dramatistic pentad," a heuristic for analyzing the rhetoric of "human motivation" (*Grammar* xv). This reference to Burke may have contributed to Halbritter and Lindquist's analytic decision not to theorize "scenes" as sponsoring "agents" (177, 188). However, unlike Halbritter and Lindquist, who with other literacy-sponsorship researchers, have tended to proceed from literal interpretations of narrative settings, Burke analyzed *scene* as an element of narrative rhetoric. Drawing on Burke's rhetorical sense of *scene*, future literacy-sponsorship research might explore rhetorical practices by which literacy narratives, including those recounted by researchers, differentiate among characters, settings, actions, resources, and aims; and concentrate or distribute power across these influences. Such work might also make use of Burke's notion of "ratios," or hierarchical relations among narrative elements, consistent with Aristotelian poetics, especially "scene-act" (setting-action) and "scene-agent" (setting-character) ratios. In discussing ratios, Burke exposed how these "container-contained" metonymies, which may also be reversed, promote and limit theories of power (*Grammar* 3-20). His work may thus be extended to theories of literacy sponsorship.

19. In later publications, Gubrium and Holstein referred to "the setting in which [a narrative] is presented" as "scenic presence" (76). See also Holstein and Gubrium (*Self* 190-197).

20. My theorization of narrative scenes as the coincidence of narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production is reminiscent of Katharine Galloway Young's identification of three narrative contexts: "taleworld," "storyrealm," and "realm of conversation." However, Young's work relies on a distinction between *story* (events) and *narrative discourse* (presentation of events). In contrast, my understanding of narrated contexts and contexts of

narrative production, and of narrative scenes (or narrative collaboration as relational context), is that they are all inextricable from rhetoric.

21. Other narrative researchers have also documented such interfaces between narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, though they have not theorized them as narrative scenes (e.g., Sherry; Wortham, *Narratives*; *Teaching*).

22. However, as Brandt cautioned, it is imperative not to reduce the work of literacy sponsorship to teaching alone (*Lives*). By extension, it is important to consider sponsoring literacy narratives as potentially more, or even other, than pedagogical resources.

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# CHAPTER THREE:

## Sponsor Figures and Template Literacy Experiences:

## Recognizing and Responding to Literacy Narratives' More-Than-Literal Meaning

> Above all, in matters of literacy, we should consider the problems not only of
>
> deficit but of surplus.
>
> —Deborah Brandt, *Literacy in American Lives*

In response to Deborah Brandt's pioneering oral-history study of literacy development in twentieth-century America, researchers working in the interdisciplinary field of writing studies have obtained their study participants' "literacy narratives" (Selfe and Hawisher *vii*), or personal accounts of literacy-related experiences, as chief sources of evidence for their investigations of formative influences on the learning, doing, changing, and valuing of literacy. Like Brandt, later researchers have expected that these narratives would refer to material conditions, or the key resources for, and obstacles to, experiences of literacy learning and practice, including "people, commercial products, public facilities, religious organizations, and other institutional and work settings," which Brandt named "sponsors of literacy" ("Economic" 376; *Lives* 26). To ensure that evidence of such material conditions would emerge through their inquiries, several influential contributors to this literature, including Brandt, have designed their interviews to elicit from study participants personal accounts that provide details of place, time, and occasion, as well as of key people, and available technologies and other supplies (Brandt, *Lives*; Halbritter and Lindquist; Selfe and Hawisher). Moreover, these researchers have made use of the term

*scene* in theorizing literacy sponsorship, assuming that knowledge of the specific locations in which literacy sponsorship takes place would help to explain literacy sponsors' power to enable and constrain experiences of literacy.[1]

This enduring interest in *scene* may be linked to literacy-sponsorship researchers' tendency to emphasize literal interpretations of their study participants' personal accounts of literacy-related experiences, despite the term's theatrical resonances. In general, these researchers, including Brandt, have approached literacy narratives as factual reports, assuming that the people, places, activities, and tools that they describe (e.g., parents, childhood homes, early writing, magnetic letters) occurred as represented. Beyond the oral-history projects of Brandt and, later, Cynthia L. Selfe and Gail E. Hawisher, this trend has propelled Bump Halbritter and Julie Lindquist's recent research efforts to interview people mentioned in study participants' narratives of literacy sponsorship, to videorecord the locations in which events of literacy sponsorship are presumed to have taken place, and to observe literacy sponsorship in action. Attending primarily to the content of literacy narratives, as though content were independent of form,[2] literacy-sponsorship researchers have largely not investigated *narrative rhetoric*, or the practices of figuration and persuasion by which narratives imagine, occasion, and renew experience, and thus involve and influence both audiences and recounters. Indeed, these researchers have not considered the rhetorical practices of literacy narratives as important material conditions[3] of literacy-related experiences, or as potential *sponsors of literacy*. Accordingly, literacy-sponsorship researchers have not examined the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters, regardless of these narratives' veracity. In response to this opportunity for continued inquiry, in this chapter, I analyze a literacy-narrative excerpt and identify two ways in which

narrative rhetoric, in collaboration with audiences and recounters, among other sponsoring influences, may perform poetic and persuasive work beyond literal meaning, and may thus support and limit how literacy is thought, felt, and lived. Advocating efforts to recognize and respond to this surplus, or more-than-literal, meaning of literacy narratives, I raise a question not yet addressed by previous literacy-sponsorship research: How might researchers and teachers take personal narratives of literacy-related experiences seriously, if not literally?

In the theoretical essay that follows, I review uses of the term *scene* in influential literacy-sponsorship studies to denote what I call *narrated contexts*, or situations described by narratives (e.g., childhood schools, current workplaces), and what I call *contexts of narrative production*, or situations in which narratives are presented (e.g., research-interview sites). Drawing on narrative theory, I highlight two other senses of *scene*, which I combine to open inquiries into the affective force of narrative rhetoric, particularly as it enables literacy narratives to rework both narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production and thus to reinvent experiences of literacy. Additionally, I present memory research suggesting that one rhetorical operation of personal narratives is composite-making, or the identification and synthesis of distinct people, situations, and events to form single complex figures of experience. Extending this literature, I observe that some narrative composites are not vivid episodes that merge and stand in for multiple associated experiences. Instead, some elide the specificity of people to produce character types, and assimilate situations and events to create typical forms, or genres, of experience. I name these two kinds of narrative composite *sponsor figures* and *template literacy experiences (TaLEs)*, and argue that they indicate not a "deficit," or lack, of descriptive detail but rather a "surplus," or superabundance, of symbolic meaning. Presumably generalized from repeated past experiences, these patterns of social interaction may also be generalized to,

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and thus repeated as, present and future experiences. In this way, such composites may act both as *scenes of literacy sponsorship* and as *sponsors of literacy*, which I explain below. To illustrate this claim, I analyze examples of sponsor figures and template literacy experiences at work in a literacy-narrative excerpt that emerged during my five-year ethnographic study of six research-writing groups for education doctoral students, which I facilitated as a teacher and a participant-observer. I propose that while such composites' original references may never be recovered, distinguished, or verified, their poetic and persuasive work may be examined by researchers, teachers, and recounters of literacy narratives.

## Scenes of Literacy Sponsorship, Scenes as Literacy Sponsors

Among the many contributions of Brandt's groundbreaking oral-history study of twentieth-century American literacy development, key assumptions and methods of her project have influenced subsequent writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship. For example, Brandt elicited, as primary sources of evidence for her inquiry, study participants' personal narratives of their literacy-related experiences. Moreover, in her analysis of literacy sponsorship, Brandt drew on other researchers' social histories as secondary evidence sources, assuming a certain compatibility between those academic accounts and her study participants' literate life stories. Later writing-studies researchers have adopted these features of Brandt's study design in their work on literacy sponsorship, as I describe below. Additionally, Brandt used the term *scene* to designate the focal contexts of her inquiry: "settings" mentioned in study participants' personal narratives (*Lives* 12), which, through her analysis, she embedded in contexts discussed by other researchers in their histories of social trends and changes in twentieth-century America. Brandt also referred to "episodes," or narrated incidents, of literacy learning and practice as

"scenes," though less frequently ("Accumulating" 659; *Lives* 85).[4] Although subsequent literacy-sponsorship researchers—namely, Selfe and Hawisher, and, later, Halbritter and Julie Lindquist—have also deployed this term, they have interpreted *scene* in distinct ways relative to focal contexts of their projects, as I explain below. In this section, I show that while these later researchers' have differed regarding the settings that they have considered as scenes, both teams have agreed in characterizing literacy sponsors exclusively as people—a significant departure from Brandt who, in addition to people, identified sponsors like social institutions, corporations, public buildings, and communication technologies. Moreover, Brandt theorized scenes/settings of literacy sponsorship *as* sponsors of literacy, a claim which neither Selfe and Hawisher nor Halbritter and Lindquist have made. Nevertheless, the two teams have followed Brandt's example by not investigating literacy narratives, which may present settings and episodes of literacy sponsorship, either as sponsors of literacy or as scenes of literacy sponsorship.

**Brandt**

As primary sources for her oral-history study of the material conditions that supported and limited literacy development in twentieth-century America, Brandt sought "direct accounts about how ordinary people have acquired reading and writing and their motivations for doing so" (*Lives* 10). She reasoned: "…It was only through attention to specific material facts of people's experiences with literacy that I could address the questions that mattered to me most: How has literacy learning changed over the last century and how have rising expectations for literacy been experienced as part of felt life?" (4). Interviewing study participants for a period of "one to three hours," typically in interviewees' homes ("Remembering" 461), Brandt "pa[id] close attention to what people could remember about the specific scenes of their learning: where they were, who

else was present, what materials they used, and so on" (*Lives* 4). To obtain these narrative details, Brandt designed her in-depth, life-story interview protocol to prompt interviewees to recount "memories," from early childhood to the time of the interview, of "places writing/reading occurred," "occasions associated with writing/reading," "influential people," and "materials available for writing/reading" (208-10). As she explained: "I devised an interview script by which I could lead participants through a chronological account of both ordinary and extraordinary encounters with writing and reading, lingering to explore their detailed recollections of the literal settings, people, and materials that animated their memories" (12). Like Brandt, later literacy-sponsorship researchers have elicited study participants' personal narratives through in-depth, life-story interviews, as I describe below. Moreover, they have also used the term *scene* to indicate "literal settings" of literacy learning and practice (Brandt, *Lives* 12).

Context was an important concern in Brandt's research on literacy sponsorship. Indeed, she presented her study as an extension of previous literacy research that had exercised "contextual perspectives" to emphasize "the relational nature of reading and writing," in contrast with "views that equate literacy only with the technical matters of decoding or encoding of written language" (*Lives* 3). As Brandt summarized: "From a contextual perspective, literate abilities originate in social postures and social knowledge that begin well before and extend well beyond words on a page" (4). However, she also challenged this largely-ethnographic sociocultural literacy research by investigating "additional elements of context," namely "economics and history," in her analysis of "relationships between individual literacy development and large-scale economic development" (4). Brandt proposed the construct *sponsors of literacy* to explain how these contexts, which she had theorized based on other

researchers' social histories, "turn up at," and "press on," "the scenes of literacy learning" (4, 20), which she inferred from her study participants' personal accounts. In this way, Brandt used her notion of literacy sponsors to mediate analytically between the personal and social histories that were her primary and secondary evidence sources, and ontologically between "the vicissitudes of individual literacy development" and "the large-scale economic forces that set the routes and determine the worldly worth of that literacy" (*Lives* 18; "Sponsors" 166). Conceiving literacy sponsors as a means of "tracking the presence of economic forces at the scenes of literacy learning" ("Economic" 375; *Lives* 26),[5] Brandt characterized literacy sponsors as "delivery systems for the economies of literacy, the means by which these forces present themselves to—and through—individual learners" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167). She added that literacy sponsors may also serve as conduits for political forces, as they may "represent the causes into which people's literacy usually gets recruited" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167). Following Brandt, subsequent literacy-sponsorship researchers have consulted other researchers' social histories, in addition to study participants' personal accounts, as evidence sources for their inquiries, as I will demonstrate below. However, these researchers have moved away from Brandt's interest in "the economies of literacy" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167), attending to different contexts and "scenes" of literacy learning and practice.

Brandt defined *sponsors of literacy* as "any agents, local or distant, concrete or abstract, who enable, support, teach, model, as well as recruit, regulate, suppress, or withhold literacy— and gain advantage by it in some way" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 166). She used this term to encompass a wide range of mediators, including but not limited to "people": for example, "commercial products, public facilities, religious organizations, and other institutional and work settings" ("Economic" 376; *Lives* 26). Drawing from her two narrative sources (autobiographical

life stories and academic social histories), Brandt identified examples of literacy sponsors that were not explicitly mentioned in study participants' literacy narratives, including contexts like economic systems, cultural institutions, and political history. At times, she also conflated literacy sponsors drawn from these different sources: for example, "the Metropolitan AME Church" examined by historian Gilbert Anthony Williams, with the specific pastor described by study participant Lavinia Stokes (*Lives* 112, 116-7). Moreover, when Brandt discussed the influences of literacy sponsors that were not people but, rather, economic, historical, and political contexts that "came to press on," and intermingle with, "the scenes of new literacy learning" (4), she referred to these contexts both as sponsors of literacy and as scenes of literacy sponsorship: for example, "The church has been a primary *scene* of literacy learning for African Americans throughout their history and continues, for many, to be a key *sponsor* of literacy use and development (143, emphasis added). Diverging from Brandt, influential contributors to literacy-sponsorship research have reduced the great variety of her notion of literacy sponsors, tending to characterize literacy sponsors exclusively as people, which I discuss below. In this way, they have distinguished between sponsors and scenes.

Despite the expansiveness of Brandt's analytic construct, she herself did not explore some of its capacity by not considering her study participants' (or her own and other researchers') narratives of literacy *as sponsors of literacy*, as mediators enabling and constraining literacy-related experiences, or what she called "felt life" (*Lives* 4). Indeed, Brandt explicitly distinguished her oral-history project from "other sorts of inquiries" that "examine the linguistic forms and functions of narrative accounts themselves to uncover the meaning structures that people call on to bring order to their experiences" (10). Interpreting literacy narratives primarily as factual reports, Brandt did not regard her study participants' unfolding

accounts as poetic and persuasive *scenes of literacy sponsorship*, a point that I develop in the next major section of this chapter. Although both teams of writing-studies researchers, whose work on literacy-sponsorship I review below, have made significant departures from Brandt's research, they have nevertheless emulated key assumptions and methods of her study, including her decisions not to approach literacy narratives either as sponsors of literacy or as scenes of literacy sponsorship.

**Selfe and Hawisher**

Registering their "tremendous debt to Brandt's fine work," writing-studies researchers Selfe and Hawisher also collected study participants' personal narratives of literacy-related experiences as primary sources of evidence for their study of computer-related literacy development in late twentieth-century America (1978-2003). The team used Brandt's interview protocol as a model for their own series of questions, which they administered both as a face-to-face interview and as an online survey (6-24, 32, 235-40). Like Brandt, these researchers pursued contextual details through prompts, like "Describe your use of this computer. Who was there? What times of day? What were the surroundings like?" (235-40). Additionally, the team grouped their questions according to different sites of literacy learning and practice, like "home," "school," and "workplace" (235-40), as had Brandt (*Lives* 208-10). In their analysis of digital-literacy development, Selfe and Hawisher highlighted four key sites, following Brandt: "schools, homes, community centers, and workplaces" (104), which they named "technology gateways," or "places and situations in which people typically gain access to information technology for the purpose of practicing digital literacy" (179). The team added that "information technologies

themselves can serve as gateways to educational and career opportunities, along with advancing

a person's digital literacy practices" (179).

However, unlike Brandt, these researchers did not explicitly theorize "commercial

products, public facilities, religious organizations, and other institutional and work settings"

("Economic" 376; *Lives* 26), *as sponsors of literacy*. Instead, the team tended to characterize

literacy sponsors exclusively as people. In this way, Selfe and Hawisher distinguished sponsors

from the focal scene of their analysis, "the cultural ecology of digital literacies" (7), which they

theorized as a broad and changing context that included both Brandt's "economies of literacy"

(*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167) and their own "technology gateways." Similar to Brandt, the team

drew on other researchers' social histories as secondary evidence sources for their inquiry.

However, in attending to "the global scene" (35), or the international sphere of cultural, social,

and political activity that they had inferred from those secondary sources, Selfe and Hawisher

sought to expand the larger social context of individual literacy learning and practice that Brandt

had investigated. Nevertheless, the team did follow Brandt's model by interpreting their study

participants' literacy narratives primarily as factual reports, and by not examining these accounts

either as sponsors of literacy or as scenes of sponsorship.


**Halbritter and Lindquist**

Similarly, writing-studies researchers Halbritter and Lindquist pursued "the life stories of

individuals" in their study of "the lived experiences of people seeking to gain access to the

rewards (namely, social and economic mobility) of education" (177). However, these researchers

argued that their predecessors' efforts had favored "stories about the broad and expansive

practices of a highly, traditionally literate community," and had thus tended to "characterize the

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evolving variety of largely recognizable literacy practices of a community of self-identified and reflective literate people" (172-3). In response, the team devised an in-depth, life-story-interview study design that included a videotaped foundational interview centered on study participants' discussion of three "artifacts" of "their past, present, and future selves" (189); a follow-up interview based on a viewing, with the interviewee, of the previous videotaped interview; an opportunity for study participants to videorecord, for the researchers, personally significant "people and places" mentioned in the earlier interviews; and a final videotaped interview *in those places* with study participants *and those people* (187-93). Halbritter and Lindquist reasoned that this protocol would prompt study participants to recount personal narratives about "forms of literacy" beyond the "most recognizable" (182), and thus to reveal "less visible forms and operations of literacy sponsorship" (177).

While Brandt, and Selfe and Hawisher, had similarly assumed that study participants' literacy narratives would describe important settings of literacy learning and practice, or what I call *narrated contexts*, Halbritter and Lindquist added that the locations in which such accounts are presented, or what I call *contexts of narrative production*, are also significant (177-9). Like their predecessors, the team interpreted their study participants' literacy narratives primarily as factual reports. Moreover, they approached "scenes of sponsorship," or settings described by those literacy narratives, *as* "scenes of interviews," *as* specific factual locations in which videotaped interviews could be conducted (174). By staging interviews in study participants' hometowns, for example, Halbritter and Lindquist attempted to turn narrated contexts into contexts of narrative production. Additionally, in a move reminiscent of Brandt, the team described an episode of their research process (i.e., conducting an interview) as a "scene" (172). However, while Brandt had invoked scene-as-episode in discussing *study participants'* accounts,

the team referred to *their own* written vignette of their research process as a "scene." To date,

Halbritter and Lindquist have not published findings from their research but have, instead, issued

two essays on the purposes, assumptions, and methods of their project. Nevertheless, elements of

their study design show at least a preliminary characterization of literacy sponsors exclusively as

people: for example, as "family," "friends," and "educators" (177, 193). In this way, these

researchers, like Selfe and Hawisher, have distinguished between sponsors of literacy and scenes

of literacy sponsorship—a significant departure from Brandt's work. Moreover, while Halbritter

and Lindquist have recognized that "the interview situation" supports and limits "narrative

invention" (187), they have not explicitly theorized the settings or "scenes of interviews,"

including those believed to be former "scenes of sponsorship," *as sponsors* of literacy-related

experiences. Similarly, these researchers, like their predecessors, have not declared their

intention to investigate *literacy narratives* either as sponsors of literacy or as scenes of

sponsorship.

     In their work on literacy sponsorship, Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, and Halbritter and

Lindquist have all drawn on the term *scene*. Although Brandt, and Halbritter and Lindquist have,

at times, used *scene* synonymously with "episode,"[6] they have more often employed this term to

denote "settings" of literacy learning, practice, and sponsorship.[7] Regarding this latter sense of

*scene*, Brandt and both teams of literacy-sponsorship researchers have used the term to indicate

what I call *narrated contexts*, or situations described by study participants' personal narratives

(e.g., past homes, current workplaces) and/or other researchers' social histories (e.g.,

international political climates), which they have tended to interpret, in Brandt's words, as

"literal settings" (*Lives* 12). Additionally, Halbritter and Lindquist have applied the term *scene* to

what I call *contexts of narrative production*, or situations in which such narratives are presented

(e.g., research-interview sites), which the team has similarly approached as "concrete places" in "real-time" (178),[8] citing sociologists Holstein and Gubrium (*Active* 178).[9] Given the aims and assumptions of their oral-history research (and documentary-video) projects, Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, and Halbritter and Lindquist have not included in their study designs inquiries into the rhetoric of literacy narratives, or the poetic and persuasive work that such accounts perform in collaboration with recounters, audiences, and other material conditions, including and beyond literal meaning. Indeed, these researchers have not considered the rhetorical practices of literacy narratives as important material-semiotic conditions of literacy-related experiences, or as sponsors of literacy and scenes of literacy sponsorship. Accordingly, their influential studies have not addressed the affective force of narrative rhetoric, or literacy narratives' power to fascinate, repel, and otherwise move audiences and recounters, regardless of these narratives' veracity. The purpose of my review above of important writing-studies research on literacy sponsorship is not to emphasize deficits of prior studies but, rather, to highlight surplus possibilities for further inquiry, which are suggested by those earlier projects, if beyond their scope. Indeed, as Paul Ricoeur maintains, the affective, associative power of rhetoric cannot be appreciated but as a surplus that both relies on and exceeds literal meaning.

## Making a Scene

The distinction between narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, at work in the research literature on literacy sponsorship, makes relevant another sense of the term *scene*. Beyond setting and episode, narratologists have theorized *scene* as a kind of rhetorical association: specifically, as "a canonical narrative tempo," or "one of the fundamental narrative speeds," "along with ellipsis, pause, stretch, and summary" (Prince 85). From this perspective, a

scene occurs "when there is some sort of equivalence between a narrative segment and the narrated it represents" (85). For example, a passage of dialogue is presented at a pace that evokes the process of conversation, including both the represented exchange and the rhetorical conventions of such a social interaction. (In contrast, a narrative "summary" might review only key turns and would thus proceed more quickly than the conversation.) Put differently, from this narratological perspective, a scene is "a representational *mode* in which the duration of the event and the duration of its representation are assumed to be equal" (Newman and Herman 513, emphasis in original). As the narration (e.g., the form of the dialogue) performs the narrated (e.g., the conversation), the narrative scene makes the narrated context (the setting/episode of the story) coincide with the context of narrative production (the setting/episode of the recounting/reception).[10] In both marking and erasing the boundaries between narrated contexts (e.g., a childhood bedroom described in a personal account) and contexts of narrative production (e.g., the research site in which the personal account was delivered), narrative scenes rework those contexts and reinvent experience.[11]

For example, regarding the literacy-sponsorship studies that I review above, a narrative scene may have occurred when a study participant, during her foundational interview with Halbritter and Lindquist, held her childhood teddy bear, an artifact of her "past self" (189). (Just as narratives may be recounted in multiple modes (e.g., oral, written, visual, gestural, multimodal), so narrative scenes may also draw on a range of semiotic resources.) In working with the narrative rhetoric of the teddy bear, Halbritter and Lindquist, and this study participant, may have made it difficult to distinguish memory from interview, even as they also participated in establishing that difference. Similar contextual interfaces may also have emerged during the team's attempts to interview study participants in sites from their past. Likewise, narrative scenes

may have arisen during Brandt's interviews in study participants' homes, or during Selfe and Hawisher's collaborations with their (former) students. Moreover, video generated through Halbritter and Lindquist's research, similar to their predecessors' interview recordings and transcripts, may have operated as narrative scenes, suturing the contexts of video production and of viewing/listening to produce the rhetorical effect of immediacy (Newman and Herman 513). An assumption of this narratological sense of *scene* is that narrative rhetoric is forceful: it works aesthetic effects, among others, with people and various additional collaborators in social interactions. Applying this concept to research on literacy sponsorship, I argue that personal literacy narratives, as they unfold, can *make a scene*, or bring into coincidence narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, and can thus enable and constrain the literacy-related experiences of both audiences and recounters. In this way, I honor yet rework Brandt's claim that scenes of literacy sponsorship may operate as sponsors of literacy, proposing that narrative rhetoric may function both as a literacy sponsor and as a narratological scene.

This reference to "making a scene" evokes another use of the term. A scene is also commonly understood as "an exhibition of excited or strong feeling between two or more persons," "a stormy encounter," "a disturbance" (OED). This sense of *scene* as intense affect recalls Brandt's early discussion of "scenes of intimacy," or episodes of "adult sponsorship of writing" between parents and children (*Lives* 159; "Remembering" 469); and of "scenes of exile" (*Lives* 155), or "settings of childhood and adolescent writing"—sites associated with "pain or isolation," like "a hospital bed, the front steps of a house, and, in other cases, a garage, a treehouse, and a highway overpass" (*Lives* 155; "Remembering" 465). These latter scenes, in Brandt's research, are narrated contexts, or situations described by study participants' personal accounts. Moreover, "scenes of intimacy" and "scenes of exile" are settings/episodes of vivid

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affect. Working beyond Brandt, I propose that the narratological and affective senses of *scene* may be strategically combined. Specifically, through my analysis of a literacy-narrative excerpt below, I identify two rhetorical devices by which personal literacy narratives, in bringing into coincidence narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, may generate intense affect and thus create possibilities for the reworking of those contexts and for the renewal of literacy-related experiences.

## The Affect of Narrative Rhetoric

In addition to enabling narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production to overlap, change, and work new effects, the rhetoric of personal literacy narratives may not only connect but may also conflate past, present, and future narrated contexts. Indeed, one common rhetorical operation of personal narratives is composite-making. Memory researcher Ulric Neisser has investigated one kind of narrative composite, which he calls the "repisode" (158) According to Neisser, sometimes the "single clear memories that we recollect so vividly actually stand for something else": "Often their real basis is a set of repeated experiences, a sequence of related events that the single recollection merely typifies or represents" (158). As he explains, such compelling accounts of apparently well-defined, unique occurrences assert general patterns of experience yet render them as discrete events. In other words, "what seems to be an episode actually *re*presents a repetition" (158, emphasis in original). Through his analysis of John Dean's testimony during the "Watergate" hearings, Neisser has demonstrated that repisodes can be prompted by audience questions: "Dean's task as he testified before the Senate Committee was to recall specific well-defined conversations" (158). Indeed, as Neisser has pointed out, Senator Baker requested that Dean provide "vivid details and exact wording" (149). However, Neisser

has also observed, having compared transcripts of Dean's testimony with transcripts of audiorecordings made by President Nixon of conversations with Dean in the Oval Office: "What seems to be specific in [Dean's] memory actually depends on repeated episodes, rehearsed presentations, or overall impressions" (158). In other words, the situation-specific norms for telling a good story, in this case an "honest" account (148), seem to have outweighed "the vagueness of [Dean's] actual recollection" (149). While literacy-sponsorship researchers are not interrogators, prosecutors, or judges, they may invite repisodes during interviews with study participants in pursuing detailed accounts of the material conditions by which study participants have learned and practiced literacy. For example, as I mention above, Brandt "devised an interview script by which [she] could lead participants through a chronological account of both ordinary and extraordinary encounters with writing and reading, lingering to explore their detailed recollections of the literal settings, people, and materials that animated their memories" (*Lives* 12).

Exceeding the scope of Neisser's project, sociolinguist Deborah Tannen has written extensively about tellability norms, or rhetorical conventions of a good story, that are activated and transformed during the recounting and exchange of conversational narratives. In her research, Tannen has identified and tracked discursive moves made by participants in social interactions, which, through repetition, come to structure conversations and thus to define not only what is socially appropriate for the rhetorical situation but also what the rhetorical situation is (*Voices*). Tannen calls this repetition, including self-repetition, "involvement."[12] Among the poetic devices that, she argues, may generate involvement are "detail" and "constructed dialogue"—both features of Dean's testimony and possible attributes of repisodes in general. Tannen emphasizes that such involvement-promoting poetic devices may occur in both oral and

written discourse,[13] and may appear in a variety of genres, including the broad and diverse personal-narrative genre. Moreover, Tannen has shown how repetition itself may function as a poetic device that produces involvement. For example, through her analysis of an audiorecorded dinner conversation, which she later replayed for participants, Tannen has proposed that the emergent poetic structure of conversational narratives—a "spontaneous formulaicity" established through largely-automatic rhetorical mirroring among speakers ("Repetition" 225-33)—may not only prompt participants' further repetitions of both their own and others' words, sounds, and syntax, but may even lead them to claim knowledge and experiences that they would later deny (*Voices* 90). In other words, implicit, as well as explicit, tellability norms that emerge during specific social interactions may more strongly influence the production of personal narratives than may the general expectation of veracity. Central to Tannen's argument was her assumption that involvement-promoting poetic devices enable and constrain "emotional response" (*Voices* 13). Indeed, she has claimed that "An aesthetic response is not an extra added attraction of communication, but its essence" (13). Through her research, Tannen has demonstrated that the affective force of rhetoric may generate not only the forms of personal narratives but, with these structures, their content. Drawing on Tannen's work in my analysis of a literacy-narrative excerpt below, I attend to the involvement-promoting poetic device of repetition, as it both evidences and elicits the recounter's affective engagement with her unfolding literacy narrative. My aim is not to undermine the credibility of personal accounts of literacy-related experiences but rather to suggest that such literacy narratives, as a genre, may be considered not only as testimony but also as persuasive poetry.

Like Tannen, literary theorist Denise Riley has argued that "There is a forcible affect of language which courses like blood through its speakers" (*Impersonal* 1). As she explains, the

affective power of language "stands somewhat apart from the expressive intentions of an individual speaker; so language can work outside of its official content" (5). Indeed, Riley accords a "relative independence to language's emotionality" (5). Echoing Tannen, she maintains: "Language is impersonal: its working through and across us is indifferent to us, yet in the same blow it constitutes the fiber of the personal" (1). However, Riley cautions: "If language exerts a torsion on its users, it does not immobilize them, let alone strangle them" (3). Similar to "the affective quality of music" (5), language can effect associations and disclose possibilities for affective engagement, including a variety of orientations like excitement, disgust, fear, anger, surprise, and joy. Riley attributes this "tangible emotionality" of language (*Words* 4), however, not only to its sonorousness" (22) but also to "the very architecture of language itself," or "grammar," including "syntax," and other "formal structures" (3-4). In my analysis of a literacy-narrative excerpt below, I explore what Riley calls "an inherent emotionality to grammar" (4). Specifically, I examine the use of generic nouns (e.g., "a man"), present-perfect verbs (e.g., "I've been fighting"), modifiers of indefinite frequency (e.g., "always"), and present-conditional constructions (e.g., "If the other person doesn't have the word, then no communication takes place").

Extending Neisser's work, I show how such narrative rhetoric, which elides the specificity of individual people to make character types, and assimilates situations and events to create typical forms, or genres, of experience, produces composites that, unlike repisodes, are evocative yet nondescript. I name these two kinds of narrative composite *sponsor figures* and *template literacy experiences (TaLEs)*, and argue that their lack of descriptive detail enhances their associative capacity, or their potential applicability to a variety of people, situations, and

events. Tracking the repetition of these rhetorical devices throughout the excerpt, I also demonstrate these narrative composites' power to affectively involve the recounter.

## Sponsor Figures and Template Literacy Experiences

In this section, I analyze an excerpt from a literacy narrative generated during my five-year ethnographic study of six extracurricular, research-writing groups for education doctoral students, which I facilitated as a research-writing teacher and a participant-observer. All eighteen doctoral students were enrolled in a prestigious college of education at a Midwestern U.S. research-extensive university. Former K-12 teachers, they specialized in a variety of content areas, including English, mathematics, and science. The literacy-narrative that I present below emerged during a meeting of one of the three writing groups composed entirely of English-education doctoral students, who focused in their research and teaching on issues of language, literacy, literature, and culture. Members of these three groups had formally taught writing as K-12 teachers. Additionally, during the course of my study, all eighteen study participants, including the twelve English educators, assigned, assessed, and responded to undergraduate-student writing as course instructors in the university's K-12 teacher preparation program.

The six writing groups met for two hours at a time, weekly or biweekly, year-round, over the course of two-to-five years. Meetings were conducted face-to-face, online, or in hybrid form. With the writers' consent, I audiorecorded group meetings and collected artifacts of their writing and peer response. In this way, I amassed oral, written, and visual literacy narratives that had emerged not through formal interviews but rather through group conversations and correspondence. Narrative researchers have called such informal, sometimes co-recounted, personal narratives "small stories" (e.g., Georgakopoulou).

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During my fieldwork, I also participated in doctoral coursework with some of my study participants, observed presentations at national conferences for education researchers, offered workshops on academic research writing to doctoral students and faculty, worked as a research-writing consultant for an education research team funded by the National Science Foundation, attended public dissertation defenses in the college of education, and worked for four years at the university's writing center. Drawing on methods of linguistic ethnography, I conducted a more extensive field-based exploration of the contexts of narrative production relevant to my study than did Brandt, Selfe and Hawisher, or Halbritter and Lindquist for their projects. Moreover, I came to investigate literacy narratives themselves, particularly narrative scenes, as "sites of engagement" (Georgakopoulou, 151), or distinct relational contexts, in keeping with the sociolinguistic insight that oral and written discourse not only respond to situations of social interaction but also generate them (e.g., Duranti and Goodwin).

Through my analysis of the literacy-narrative excerpt below, I identify two kinds of narrative composite, which I call *sponsor figures* and *template literacy experiences (TaLEs)*, and show how they operate as narrative scenes that, in addition to claiming, connecting, and conflating multiple previous experiences, also bring into coincidence and rework past, present, and future situations. In this way, I examine the poetic and persuasive work of narrative rhetoric, beyond literal meaning.

The following literacy-narrative excerpt emerged in the course of a seven-and-a-half-minute monologue in which the recounter, Nicole Fitzgerald,[14] reviewed some of her previous experiences with face-to-face social interactions in the course of exploring and explaining her current difficulties with writing academic research in the course of her doctoral program in education.[15]

…In order to make my social interactions work, it's always been a question of changing my vocabulary, even if it's the exact right word to precisely convey what I mean. If the other person doesn't have the word, then no communication takes place. So it's always been a question of having to change who I am, um, in order for them to understand, or a question of having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy of their time, or attention, or intellectual—that I'm worthy to participate in whatever the endeavor is. Because if it's a man, and we're talking about technology, the assumption is I know nothing about it. If it is a, an adult, and I'm a twelve-year-old, sitting, listening to these conversations, the presumption is "The twelve-year-old couldn't possibly have enough life experience or intellect to say anything of relevance or meaning to me about this." Even though, in many cases, it was, you know, if the adult was willing to listen, I did have things to say that were not only relevant but useful to them. Um, and so in a lot of ways, I feel like it's a battle I've been fighting my whole life.

In this excerpt, Nicole asserted that the conflict between "having to change who I am" and "having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy" is "a battle I've been fighting my whole life," including in her efforts as a doctoral student to write education research texts, like journal articles and the dissertation.

**Sponsor Figures**

As examples of this "battle," Nicole presented three dyadic "social interactions," which, in this literacy-narrative excerpt, she claimed as being representative of her "whole life": relations between Nicole and "the other person," between Nicole (as a woman) and "a man," and

between Nicole (as a child) and "an/the adult." None of the interlocutors mentioned in this excerpt are discrete, verifiable people. Rather, they are character types, which I call *sponsor figures*, drawing on terms from Brandt's research on literacy sponsorship. While Brandt identified a great variety of literacy sponsors in her study, including mediators other than people, she acknowledged that "the *figures* who turned up most typically in people's memories of literacy learning" were not, strictly speaking, social institutions, corporations, public infrastructure, or communication technologies, but, rather, "older relatives, teachers, religious leaders, supervisors, military officers, librarians, friends, editors, [and] influential authors" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167; emphasis added). She also referred to them as "powerful *figures*" (*Lives* 19; "Sponsors" 167; emphasis added). The sponsor figures mentioned in this excerpt of Nicole's literacy narrative are composites presumably generalized from repeated past experiences, though it would at least require additional rhetorical work, and may ultimately be impossible, to confirm or deny their veracity. Unlike the vivid characters of repisodes, the character types "other person," "man," and "adult" lack descriptive detail. However, I argue that this apparent deficit, which some researchers might consider as narrative inadequacy (Gubrium and Holstein), may also be regarded as a surplus of symbolic meaning that works beyond literal facts to produce narrative scenes, in which "here" may be reimagined as "there," and "now" as "then." Indeed, I propose that the generic quality of sponsor figures, like "other person," "man," and "adult," is what enables these social roles to be read into a variety of unique people and thus to sponsor how literacy may be thought, felt, and lived.

**Template Literacy Experiences**

Just as this excerpt of Nicole's literacy narrative presents character types rather than distinct characters, so also it asserts patterns of experience rather than discrete events. Specifically, Nicole began this passage of her literacy narrative by claiming the life-long pattern: "…In order to make my social interactions work, it's always been a question of changing my vocabulary, even if it's the exact right word to precisely convey what I mean." Illustrating this claim, she elaborated: "If the other person doesn't have the word, then no communication takes place." Based on this example, Nicole concluded: "So it's always been a question of having to change who I am, um, in order for them to understand, or a question of having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy of their time, or attention, or intellectual—that I'm worthy to participate in whatever the endeavor is." In making this statement, she revised her initial claim: the lifelong pattern of "changing my vocabulary" is now reimagined as a struggle between two undesirable options "having to change who I am" and "having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy." Moreover, language use ("my vocabulary") is associated with self-presentation ("who I am"). As examples of this revised pattern of experience, Nicole then proposed two typical situations: first, "Because if it's a man, and we're talking about technology, the assumption is I know nothing about it"; second, "If it is a, an adult, and I'm a twelve-year-old, sitting, listening to these conversations, the presumption is 'The twelve-year-old couldn't possibly have enough life experience or intellect to say anything of relevance or meaning to me about this.'" Regarding the second example, she added: "Even though, in many cases, it was, you know, if the adult was willing to listen, I did have things to say that were not only relevant but useful to them." Finally, Nicole provided an evaluative summary: "Um, and so in a lot of ways, I feel like it's a battle I've been fighting my whole life."

As a whole, this excerpt of Nicole's literacy-narrative proposes a broad pattern of experience related to language use, identity, knowledge, competence, and authority. Moreover, each sentence of this excerpt is itself such a pattern, which I call a *template literacy experience (TaLE)*.

1. …In order to make my social interactions work, it's always been a question of changing my vocabulary, even if it's the exact right word to precisely convey what I mean.

2. If the other person doesn't have the word, then no communication takes place.

3. So it's always been a question of having to change who I am, um, in order for them to understand, or a question of having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy of their time, or attention, or intellectual—that I'm worthy to participate in whatever the endeavor is.

4. Because if it's a man, and we're talking about technology, the assumption is I know nothing about it.

5. If it is a, an adult, and I'm a twelve-year-old, sitting, listening to these conversations, the presumption is "The twelve-year-old couldn't possibly have enough life experience or intellect to say anything of relevance or meaning to me about this."

6. Even though, in many cases, it was, you know, if the adult was willing to listen, I did have things to say that were not only relevant but useful to them.

7. Um, and so in a lot of ways, I feel like it's a battle I've been fighting my whole life.

In other words, the overarching pattern of literacy-related experience presented in this excerpt is presumably a pattern of patterns, or a composite of other composites.

Several of these template literacy experiences are "if…then" statements, but TaLEs do not necessarily exhibit this form, as I will demonstrate below.

I will begin with TaLE 2, as it is an obvious "if…then" statement: "*If* the other person doesn't have the word, *then* no communication takes place" (emphasis added). English grammarians call such a sentence a "conditional construction" (Aarts, Chalker, and Weiner 88). TaLE 2 includes a conditional clause, beginning with "if," and a main clause beginning with "then" (88). In contrast, conditional sentences using the present tense in the conditional clause and the word "will" in the main clause indicate likely, though not assured, outcomes, given the circumstances (88): for example, if Nicole had instead claimed, "If the other person *doesn't* have the word, then no communication *will* take place." Similarly, conditional sentences employing the past tense in the conditional clause and the word "would" in the main clause designate less likely, hypothetical outcomes, given the circumstances (89): for example, if Nicole had instead claimed, "If the other person *didn't* have the word, then no communication *would* take place." Thus, TaLE 2 works to persuade Nicole (and other audiences of this literacy-narrative excerpt) that this pattern of literacy-related social interaction is *certain* to arise in this kind of communicative situation.

TaLEs 2, 4, and 5 are all present conditional "if…then" statements, though TaLEs 4 and 5 drop the conjunction "then": "Because *if* it*'s* a man, and we*'re talking* about technology, the assumption *is* I know nothing about it" (TaLE 4, emphasis added); "*If* it *is* a, an adult, and I*'m* a twelve-year-old, sitting, listening to these conversations, the presumption *is* "The twelve-year-old couldn't possibly have enough life experience or intellect to say anything of relevance or

meaning to me about this." (TaLE 5, emphasis added). Details of time, place, occasion, specific people, and available tools and other resources are not mentioned in this literacy-narrative excerpt. Instead, the key conditions for the certain outcomes asserted in TaLEs 2, 4, and 5 are *sponsor figures*—the vague social roles "other person," "man," and "adult." Indeed, the generic quality of these sponsor figures is what enables these social roles to be read into a variety of unique people and thus to promote and impede literacy-related experiences.

Additionally, the certain outcomes in TaLEs 2, 4, and 5 are *negatively* evaluated. In the context of this literacy-narrative excerpt, it is undesirable not to communicate, to be assumed not to know anything about technology, and to be presumed not to have anything relevant or meaningful to say. Moreover, according to these TaLEs—which are all present-conditional constructions—these negative outcomes *always* occur in social interactions with these sponsor figures, regardless of other situational details. In this way, these TaLEs support and limit literacy-related experiences, at least at the time of engagement with this narrative excerpt.

In contrast, TaLE 6 is a *past* conditional construction. Both the conditional and main clauses of TaLE 6 feature past-tense verbs: "Even though, in many cases, it *was*, you know, if the adult *was* willing to listen, I *did* have things to say that *were* not only relevant but useful to them" (emphasis added). Additionally, the outcome of this pattern of social interaction is *positively* evaluated. In the context of this literacy-narrative excerpt, it is desirable to have things to say that are relevant and useful. However, because this outcome is confined to the past, this more desirable experience of having the capacity to make valuable contributions is not claimed as influencing Nicole's present and the future as certainly as do negative TaLEs 2, 4, and 5 (which are all present-conditional constructions), even though TaLE 6 purports to be a composite of "many cases."

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Unlike TaLEs 2, 4, 5, and 6, TaLE 1 employs the conditional conjunction "in order to," though, like TaLEs 4 and 5, TaLE 1 implies "then." Nevertheless, TaLEs 1 is a present conditional construction like TaLEs 2, 4, and 5. Indeed, TaLE 1—"*In order to* make my social interactions work, it's always been a question of changing my vocabulary, *even if* it's the exact right word to precisely convey what I mean" (emphasis added)—includes two present-conditional constructions. In addition to the present simple tense, TaLE 1 employs the present perfect tense, suggesting that this state of affairs originated in the past and continues in the present. Moreover, in using the adverb "always," a modifier of indefinite frequency, TaLE 1 extends this pattern of literacy-related experience across the *entire* past and present. Thus, the *negatively* evaluated state "it's always been a question of changing my vocabulary" is presented as a *constant* experience.

Similarly, TaLE 3 is a present conditional construction, using the conditional conjunction "in order to." Moreover, like TaLE 1, TaLE 3 includes two present-conditional constructions: "So it's always been a question of having to change who I am, um, in order for them to understand, or a question of having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy of their time, or attention, or intellectual—that I'm worthy to participate in whatever the endeavor is." Additionally, like TaLE 1, TaLE 3 employs the present perfect tense and the adverb "always." Thus the *negatively* evaluated state "it's always been a question of having to change who I am" or "of having to work so hard to prove that I am worthy" is presented as a *perpetual* tension. Moreover, in addition to repeating TaLE 1's present-conditional sentence structure—as do TaLEs 2, 4, 5, and 6—TaLE 3 repeats TaLE 1's phrase "it's always been a question of." Such repetitions are examples of affective rhetoric that both invites and enacts involvement with the narrative, at least at the time of its recounting. In other words, repetitive rhetoric in literacy

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narratives marks the sponsoring influence of those narratives. In this case, the recounter, Nicole, was involved with these template literacy experiences.

Additionally, TaLE 3 revises the overarching pattern of experience first proposed by TaLE 1. Successful "social interactions" are now associated with "understanding"; and "changing my vocabulary" is now associated with either "either having to change who I am" or "having to work so hard to prove that I'm worthy." This overarching pattern of literacy-related experience is, then, encapsulated at the end of this literacy-narrative excerpt in TaLE 7, which is a metaphor: "Um, and so in a lot of ways, I feel like it's a battle I've been fighting my whole life."

The use of the present-perfect-continuous tense in TaLE 7 suggests that this battle originated in the past and is ongoing in the present. The time frame of the battle is "my whole life." No places, specific people, or other resources are mentioned. As a metaphor, TaLE 7 is a *figurative* template for literacy-related experiences. In other words, researchers will not be able to visit the site of a literal battle, or videotape a literal battle, or interview participants in a literal battle. Nevertheless, at least at the time of this narrative's recounting, TaLE 7—as persuasive poetry—functioned to enable and constrain, or sponsor, how Nicole's language use, identity, knowledge, competence, and authority were experienced.

All seven TaLEs are patterns, or genres, of literacy-related experience. Presumably, these templates are composites of specific incidents, but their sources may be irretrievable. In this literacy-narrative excerpt, TaLEs 2, 4, 5, and 6 are offered as examples of a larger pattern that is proposed in TaLE 1 and later revised in TaLE 3. In other words, TaLEs 1 and 3 function together as a joint composite of TaLEs 2, 4, 5, and 6. TaLE 7, then, operates as a composite of TaLEs 1-6. This literacy-narrative excerpt works to persuade Nicole (and other audiences) that

her literacy-related experiences have been a battle to make her social interactions with other people, men, and adults work, and to be understood by such interlocutors. Throughout her whole life, she has suffered mostly negative outcomes, having been forced to change her vocabulary, who she is, or to work so hard to prove that she is worthy. In other words, this literacy-narrative excerpt proposes a compound template for engaging with Nicole's past, present, and future that unites remembering, reliving, and foreboding.

While the patterns of experience asserted in this literacy-narrative excerpt are largely bleak and rigid, *that* these patterns are being formulated through the unfolding narrative rhetoric suggests quite the reverse: that both literacy narratives, and the literacy-related experiences that they present, occasion, and renew, are dynamic. Indeed, my analysis emphasizes that experience may not be settled or unambiguously linked to specific, actual events. Offering a TaLE of my own, I argue that if narrative rhetoric contributes to the invention of literacy-related experiences, including experiences of literacy sponsorship, then it also participates in their reinvention.

## Facts and Figures

Previous literacy-sponsorship researchers have relied on study participants' personal literacy narratives as chief sources of evidence for their inquiries into key resources for, and obstacles to, study participants' experiences with learning and practicing literacy. Assuming that knowledge of specific episodes and settings of literacy sponsorship would help to explain literacy sponsors' power to support and limit experiences of literacy, these researchers have pursued detailed personal accounts, which they have largely interpreted as factual reports. While I recognize that such approaches have generated a rich field of inquiry, I also contend that a lack of descriptive detail in personal accounts of literacy-related experiences may indicate the

sponsoring work of literacy narratives themselves. Indeed, I argue that the affective force of narrative rhetoric may involve recounters, researchers, and teachers of literacy narratives in literacy-related experiences whose enduring influence may not depend on those narratives' veracity.

Opportunities remain to investigate the poetic and persuasive work of literacy narratives, particularly regarding sponsor figures and template literacy experiences—rhetorical composites that operate as narrative scenes. In this chapter, I have explored sponsor figures asserted as generic social roles. Future literacy-sponsorship research might continue this work, or might examine both less-defined sponsor figures (e.g., "you" and "they") and more-defined sponsor figures (e.g., a specific person who is conflated with someone else). Related studies might analyze the affective force of sponsor figures that do not purport to represent people (e.g., notions of place, like those that have enthralled previous literacy-sponsorship researchers). Similarly, future studies might explore additional rhetorical forms of template literacy experiences. For example, new research might investigate rhetorical tropes (e.g., metaphors) that function as TaLEs (e.g., "it's a battle I've been fighting my whole life"). According to Tannen, such "imagery" is another involvement-promoting poetic device (*Voices*). The narrative scenes that may be generated by rhetorical composites, like sponsor figures and TaLEs, are themselves extended tropes that forge figurative relations between "here" and "there," and "now" and "then." This irony of narrative scenes merits further attention, especially as it bears on questions regarding the durability and strength of literacy sponsors.

In this chapter, I have addressed examples drawn from an oral literacy narrative. Other narrative modes and media, as well as a variety of literacy-narrative subgenres, including academic histories of literacy, might be considered in future literacy-sponsorship research.

Similarly, I have focused on repetitions in one narrative excerpt. New studies might investigate repetitions/transformations across literacy narratives, including those recounted and/or co-recounted by different study participants. For example, future inquiries might track the emergence, uptake, and adaptation of sponsor figures and/or template literacy experiences in dialogues among writing group members over an extended period of time. In such studies, it might be particularly interesting to follow possible correspondences between recurring/changing elements of literacy narratives and opportunities/challenges in writing processes.

Likewise, writing teachers might draw on teacher-research methods to investigate their assignment in writing courses of literacy-narrative subgenres, like literacy autobiographies and writing-process accounts for portfolios. For example, teachers might consider how their design of such assignments and/or responses to student work may favor the use of certain involvement-promoting poetic devices, like detail and dialogue, and may thus invite certain presentations of literacy learning, practice, and sponsorship. Teachers might also engage students in rhetorical analyses of literacy narratives, including those not written by students. For example, writing classes might explore how verb tense contributes to the persistence of certain literacy-related experiences. However, such pedagogical endeavors must, of course, be approached with sensitivity. Students' personal literacy narratives may be highly involving, even if they are not verifiable, and a "deficit" of descriptive detail may indicate a "surplus" of symbolic potential. Indeed, the overarching purpose of my chapter is to suggest that, beyond factual reports of literacy sponsorship, literacy narratives may be taken seriously as possible literacy sponsors by researchers, teachers, and recounters.

**Notes**

1. See Brandt (*Lives* 4, 12, 20, 26, 74, 91, 95, 104, 110, 143, 155, 192-3, 207), Halbritter and Lindquist (172, 174-82, 184-95), and Selfe and Hawisher (35).

2. See White for more on content-form relations.

3. See Bleich for more on the materiality of rhetoric.

4. Throughout this chapter, I provide citations both for Brandt's original articles and for her 2001 book, *Literacy in American Lives*, if applicable. Some of these passages differ in phrasing. In such cases, I quote the updated 2001 version in the text of this chapter and include the citation for the original phrasing in a note.

5. See Brandt ("Economic" 375) for alternate phrasing.

6. See Brandt (*Lives* 39, 68, 85, 130, 140, 159), and Halbritter and Lindquist (171-2, 176, 190).

7. See Brandt (*Lives* 4, 12, 20, 26, 74, 91, 95, 104, 110, 143, 155, 192-3, 207), and Halbritter and Lindquist (172, 174-82, 184-95).

8. As Halbritter and Lindquist have acknowledged, this sense of *scene* as "setting" resonates with Kenneth Burke's use of "scene" (when and where)—along with "act" (what), "agent" (who), "agency" (how), and "purpose" (why)—in his "dramatistic pentad," a heuristic for analyzing the rhetoric of "human motivation" (*xv*). This reference to Burke may have contributed to Halbritter and Lindquist's analytic decision not to theorize "scenes" as sponsoring "agents" (177, 188). However, unlike Halbritter and Lindquist, who with other literacy-sponsorship researchers, have tended to proceed from literal interpretations of narrative settings, Burke analyzed *scene* as an element of narrative rhetoric. Drawing on Burke's rhetorical sense of *scene*, future literacy-sponsorship research might explore rhetorical practices by which literacy

narratives, including those recounted by researchers, differentiate among characters, settings, actions, resources, and aims; and concentrate or distribute power across these influences. Such work might also make use of Burke's notion of "ratios," or hierarchical relations among narrative elements, consistent with Aristotelian poetics, especially "scene-act" (setting-action) and "scene-agent" (setting-character) ratios. In discussing ratios, Burke exposed how these "container-contained" metonymies, which may also be reversed, promote and limit theories of power (3-20). His work may thus be extended to theories of literacy sponsorship.

9. In later publications, Gubrium and Holstein referred to "the setting in which [a narrative] is presented" as "scenic presence" (76). See also Holstein and Gubrium (*Self* 190-7).

10. My theorization of narrative scenes as the coincidence of narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production is reminiscent of Katharine Galloway Young's identification of three narrative contexts: "taleworld," "storyrealm," and "realm of conversation." However, Young's work relies on a distinction between *story* (events) and *narrative discourse* (presentation of events). In contrast, my understanding of narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, and of narrative scenes (or narrative collaboration *as* relational context), is that they are all inextricable from rhetoric.

11. Other narrative researchers have also documented such interfaces between narrated contexts and contexts of narrative production, though they have not theorized them as narrative scenes (e.g., Wortham).

12. In her earliest publication on literacy sponsorship, Brandt used the terms "involvement" and "sponsorship" synonymously: for example, "parental involvement in promoting writing" and "adult sponsorship of writing" ("Remembering" 469; *Lives* 159). In this way, Brandt echoed her 1990 book *Literacy as Involvement*. In that book, Brandt drew on

sociolinguist Tannen's distinction between two functions shared by oral and written discourse: the accomplishment of social "involvement" and the effect of semantic "message" (Brandt, *Involvement* 19-20; Tannen, "Relative"). Provocatively, Brandt claimed that "the involvement-message distinction becomes untenable from the perspectives of writers and readers in action, for whom message *is* involvement" (20, emphasis in original). As Brandt explained, writers' and readers' literate sense-making depends on their awareness of writing and reading as social interactions with audiences and authors. In her 1990 book, Brandt, like Tannen, acknowledged the operation, in both oral and written discourse, of "interpersonal devices" (3), or rhetorical moves that initiate, sustain, and otherwise enhance and restrict social interactions. However, unlike Tannen, Brandt emphasized how such "cohesive devices," or "textual ties," emerge from "human ties *already made* between writer and reader" (78, emphasis added). In contrast, Tannen, in her 1989 book, *Talking Voices*, which Brandt did not cite in her research on either involvement or literacy sponsorship, demonstrated how such rhetorical moves provoke new social involvement among writers and readers, and speakers and listeners, as well as further discursive production.

13. Without referencing Tannen, design theorist Robin Williams has identified similar involvement-eliciting moves of visual rhetoric: namely, contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity.

14. Pseudonym.

15. For ease of reading, I present the transcript as prose.

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