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FINESSING TEACHING CONTEXT SHAPES EVOLVING
PRACTICE**

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Laura Sue Pardo

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Ph.D

degree in

**Curriculum, Teaching and
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**BEGINNING TEACHERS LEARN TO TEACH WRITING: FINESSING
TEACHING CONTEXT SHAPES EVOLVING PRACTICE**

By

Laura Sue Pardo

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

BEGINNING TEACHERS LEARN TO TEACH WRITING: FINESSING TEACHING CONTEXT SHAPES EVOLVING PRACTICE

By

Laura Sue Pardo

This study was conducted within a sociocultural framework and viewed beginning teachers instruction through the lens of teaching writing. The research is in response to a national call for more focused attention on teaching writing in elementary schools, work in urban schools, and research on teacher knowledge and beginning teachers. The research question was: What influences beginning teachers in an urban setting as they translate and implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum into practice? Sub questions were designed to probe into teachers' knowledge sources by drawing on their understanding of writing curriculum and through observation of their evolving practice. These questions were: What knowledge sources do these teachers draw on? What contextual factors influence their instructional decisions? How do they manage the various knowledge sources and aspects of their context?

To address these questions, three beginning teachers were observed and interviewed across one school year. The focus of the interviews and observations was on writing instruction. Some observations were videotaped and followed by viewing sessions, where each teacher explained the knowledge sources and other factors that influenced the writing instruction during that particular lesson. Interviews were conducted before and after the study as well

as once around the materials that each teacher used to teach writing. Field notes were maintained across the year as well.

Analysis focused on determining how each teacher thought about and made instructional decisions for teaching writing. Findings revealed that these teachers drew from a range of knowledge sources, and that contextual factors inherent in teaching also influenced teachers' instructional decisions. These factors included the policy environment, school, community, students, colleagues, materials, teaching tools and the teacher's own identity. Further, this research suggests that teachers learn to teach writing by finding ways to work successfully within their unique teaching context. Teachers acquiesce, accommodate, resist policy as they try to balance, navigate, and juggle their teaching contexts; they eventually learn to finesse their teaching contexts as teaching practices evolve.

Implications emerged from this study that focus attention on teacher preparation, induction, and professional development. Beginning teachers are supported in various ways and with different amounts of support as they try to determine how to navigate teaching contexts. Systems of support already in place may need to provide additional attention to issues of teaching context in order to best support the development of beginning teachers.

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Second, my dissertation director and committee chairperson, Dr. Cheryl Rosaen, has had enormous influence over my writing and in helping me to shape the work that emerged throughout this study. She read numerous drafts, found time to meet with me on many occasions, and supported the balance I had to create between my family and this work. Cheryl's feedback was always the right combination of affirmation and of challenging ideas. She pushed me to consider more and deeper ideas, and to refine my writing with each new draft. To her, I am eternally thankful.

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contributed to the shaping of the teaching context visual model, Tom helped me realize that the size of the circles could represent the relative importance of each factor. Randi was crucial in helping me think about models of mentoring and induction as I tried to situate what was happening in these three classrooms to what might be possible. Susan provided incredible conversations about the emerging findings in my work. She always pushed me to read further, to dig more deeply, and to talk to others who might share my passion for learning about the work that teachers do. I am appreciative of the support provided by my committee and I publicly thank them here.

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Chapter 1

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT LEARNING TO TEACH WRITING

A Look into a Beginning Teacher's Classroom

The time was around 9:30 in the morning, the setting was the classroom of second year teacher, Bethany. She and I had gathered around the TV/VCR unit mounted to the ceiling in her room to view a videotape of the writing lesson that she taught two days earlier. Bethany's students had Art for an hour, and then Music, so we had the room to ourselves on a chilly December morning. The Writing Workshop that was captured on videotape occurred near the end of a writing project that Bethany's urban students had been engaged in for about two weeks. The students had read two picture books by Faith Ringgold (*Cassie's Word Quilt*, 2002; *Tar Beach*, 1991) including one about a quilt and they were now in the process of making their own quilt. Bethany and the reading teacher who worked with her had collaboratively selected the topic "determination" for the focus of the quilt. Each student was asked to write a paragraph about determination and then illustrate the picture, first on a square sheet of paper, but eventually on a fabric quilt square. In the lesson we viewed during this viewing session, Bethany was leading a shared writing to construct the introductory paragraph that would be at the center of the quilt. As she explained the process to me, she began to lament the instructional decision she had made during the project to write the introductory paragraph after the students wrote their individual paragraphs.

The only thing I did do, which I messed up at the beginning of the project, is when I should have done the shared writing together, and then sent

them off to do their one paragraphs, and then come back for the closing at the end.

Here Bethany clearly saw an instructional decision that she wished she could change. In hindsight, she thought it would have made more sense to do the introductory paragraph prior to asking the students to write their own paragraphs about determination. As Bethany continued her monologue, it became clear that this was not a planned instructional decision, in fact, she admitted she was not exactly sure how it happened.

I don't know what happened. I was up there explaining it, and I said we're going to do this, and I said can everyone think of a time when they were determined. We went through and talked about what it meant to be determined.

In this section, Bethany recognized that she was following a pattern she often used to get students ready to write. She asked them each to think and then talk about the topic. In this case, Bethany realized that after the group sharing, she simply asked students to begin writing. In a prior lesson, I observed Bethany ask students to think about the theme of Thanksgiving and then, as the students shared their ideas with the class, Bethany created her own list of ideas on a concept web style template. After she had filled up the first box of the template, she then modeled for her students how to use those ideas to write an introductory paragraph. My hunch is that Bethany had originally planned to follow a similar pattern with the determination writing, but that for some reason, she forgot, and asked the students to begin writing their paragraphs immediately after the class sharing. Her next sentence confirmed that hunch.

The next day we were already revising and some of the kids thought they were done.

This statement showed that it did not take students long to draft the paragraphs, and the next day she felt she had to move into revision. I took this to mean that she felt she had lost the opportunity to write the introductory paragraph near the beginning of the project. As Bethany continued, she tried to examine why she ended up doing the paragraph at the end of the project.

Then I was going to do the shared writing in the middle, when everyone was at different parts, but [the reading teacher] said, "Well, let's finish them," and we finished the paragraphs.

This statement provided evidence of Bethany's reliance on those more knowledgeable than herself. It is likely that since she had not completed a project like this previously, she followed the suggestion of a more experienced teacher. Even though Bethany ultimately made the decision to wait and do the introductory paragraph at the end of the project, she was not pleased with her decision.

So I did it backwards. It felt backwards to me. They've already done their paragraphs, and I was supposed to do the introduction first.

It is possible that Bethany was drawing from her own background knowledge of how writing proceeds. She may also have recalled course work from her teacher preparation program that talked about writing as a process. Whatever the reason, it seemed clear to me that Bethany felt like she had made a poor instructional decision by writing an introductory paragraph at the end, instead of at the beginning, of the project.

Bethany continued to reflect on this decision as she unpacked what was gained and lost by writing the introduction at the end.

Plus, I think if I would have done the introductory paragraph first, well, I guess there are pros and cons. If I would have done it first I think some of the kids who really didn't know what it meant to be determined would have had better ideas, because when we did break and go back to the seats there were about four kids that I had to spend a lot of time talking to [students] separately [i.e. individually], and going over the same thing, what does it mean to be determined.

In this section, Bethany recalled that some students struggled to write their own paragraphs and she attributed some of that to a lack of understanding of the term determination. She hypothesized that if she had done the introductory paragraph first, more of her students would have been able to understand what determination meant, and would have had an easier time writing their individual paragraphs. Bethany then carried out the pro/con scenario and considered what was good about doing the introduction near the end of the project.

I guess the pro would be about coming together at the end, they all know in detail what determination was. I think if I had done it at the beginning, I would only have got the kids who knew what determined was, which probably, at that point, was only three or four of them.

As Bethany considered the advantage of doing the introduction at the end, she noted that all students had a better sense of determination and were able to contribute to the conversation and the shaping of the introductory paragraph. Since there was no compelling evidence to convince Bethany that her decision was right or wrong, she contemplated an alternate instructional move.

The other thing I guess I could have done was done the introductory paragraph at the beginning. Then after they'd done their paragraphs, I could have gone back and we could have edited mine, 'cause then they could have seen the editing process.

Bethany attempted to rationalize an alternate way of modeling the introductory paragraph. It is likely that she drew on knowledge she had of her students and

how they would have benefited from a mini-lesson on editing. She also may have remembered previous experiences or lessons where something done at the beginning was revisited near the end. As she contemplated this new alternative, she wound down her monologue with:

That would have probably been the best. Sometimes you make mistakes.
(Viewing Session 1, pp. 4-6)

Bethany's final comments indicated that she had reflected on an instructional decision and come up with a better method for next time. However, she also acknowledged that she made an error in teaching, and that it is okay to make mistakes. This indicated to me that Bethany learned from her experiences, through trial and error, and from examining the 'mistake' after it happened.

Throughout this monologue, Bethany agonized over an unintentional instructional decision. At first, Bethany stated, "I messed up, I did this backwards." As she talked however, she began to analyze the decision and could see both pros and cons to the way she did it (writing the introductory paragraph near the end of the project) and for the alternative (writing the introductory paragraph at the beginning of the project). Her final statement "sometimes you make mistakes" indicated that Bethany realized that, as a beginning teacher, she was still learning. This example seemed to provide evidence that Bethany drew on various sources of knowledge as she taught and thought about the lesson. Her students, her background knowledge, her previous experiences, her reading teacher colleague, and her sense of who she was as a teacher (i.e. her identity) appeared to contribute to her understanding and explanation of this instructional decision.

However, understanding how one learns to teach is likely more complicated than analyzing one short monologue. Sources of knowledge that beginning teachers draw on are likely more diverse than what this discussion revealed. In order to understand more about teacher knowledge and how beginning teachers learn to teach writing in urban schools, I examined three beginning teachers writing instruction and attempted to determine what knowledge sources influenced their instructional decisions for teaching writing. In this chapter, I situate this study of Bethany and two other beginning teachers in the literature on learning to teach, learning to teach writing, and learning to teach writing in urban schools. The literature review will help us see how the ideas Bethany grappled with here are illustrative of the complexities of learning to teach writing in urban schools.

Learning to Teach

Learning to teach is a complex, lengthy undertaking because teachers need to know many things about subject matter, learning, curriculum, children, and pedagogy. Below I review several strands of research related to learning to teach and examine what they do and do not help us understand about each knowledge area and how the various areas intersect.

Perceived Problems of Beginning Teachers

Over the past twenty years, researchers have studied a variety of aspects of learning to teach. Twenty years ago in a literature review Veenman (1984) examined the most common perceived problems of beginning teachers. He located 83 studies from around the world and from them he identified eight

common problems most often perceived by beginning teachers. Those problems included classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students. If beginning teachers perceive these problems as obstacles to their teaching, one wonders how is it that they ever learn to teach? Veenman's work was important because he provided researchers an insight into the work of learning to teach through the eyes and experiences of beginning teachers. However, Veenman's work did not address how beginning teachers deal with these problems and how they learn to teach in spite of these difficulties. What do they pay attention to? What do they ignore? Do the perceived problems contribute to their instructional decisions in any way? This study illuminates the factors that teachers pay attention to and that contribute to their instructional decisions.

Teachers' Thought Processes

Another line of work that emerged at this time concerned the thinking processes of teachers (Clark & Peterson, 1986). These researchers theorized that teachers' thought processes included thinking about teacher planning, teachers' thoughts and decisions, and teachers' beliefs and theories. They conducted a literature review organized by these three domains, examining fifty-three studies across the domains. Their research found that teachers are thoughtful about planning, they engage in up to eight different types of planning and experienced teachers do more planning mentally and less on paper. They

found support for the notion that thinking plays an important role in teaching and that attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions do influence how a teacher thinks about teaching. “The emerging picture of the teacher as a reflective professional is a developmental one that begins during undergraduate teacher education (or even earlier) and continues to grow and change with professional experience” (p. 292). Clark and Peterson’s work contributed greatly to the learning to teach literature because they recognized that learning to teach involved cognitive processes. They also discussed what has come to be referred to as “identity” – the way attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions influence what teachers think about and how they implement instruction. This study opened the door for future research about how teachers’ thought processes are related to learning to teach. What this research did not address was how teachers’ thinking about aspects of teaching other than planning influence their instructional decisions. How does what teachers think about the classroom environment, the neighborhood community, and the larger policy climate influence learning to teach?

Attitudes, Beliefs, and Dispositions

Many researchers followed up on this work of examining the attitudes and beliefs domain that Clark and Peterson identified as an important aspect to teachers’ thinking by conducting additional research on teachers’ identity (Danielwicz, 2001; Richardson, 1996; Stephens, Boldt, Clark, Gaffney, Shelton, Story, & Weinzierl, 2000; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). In a meta-analysis of 93 empirical studies on learning to teach, Wideen and his colleagues found that the students enter a teacher education program with experiences,

expectations, and beliefs about teaching. While they found that many traditional teacher education programs had little effect on teacher candidates beliefs, there were some programs that were successful in changing the attitudes and beliefs of their students. These successful programs built upon the beliefs of preservice teachers and featured systematic and consistent long-term support in a collaborative setting.

Stephens and colleagues (2000) studied four beginning teachers in an attempt to determine how teachers construct new beliefs and change their practices. At the end of the two years, two of the teachers had “altered their beliefs and practices because they experimented with new ideas and practices and because they focused on the skills and strategies of individual students” (p. 532). This body of work suggests that studies conducted with beginning teachers need to account for the importance of their personal attitudes and beliefs when thinking about pedagogy and teaching practice. However, at the same time, it raises questions about how teachers’ identities, that is, teacher’s beliefs, past experiences, attitudes, and dispositions, interact with students, materials, colleagues, and curriculum and assessment policies.

Danielwicz (2001) explored how individuals become teachers and how identities arise and develop. She found that teachers come to engage with their own identities and that teaching becomes a state of being for them, rather than a way of acting or behaving. Additionally she discovered that this process might begin in teacher education, but it becomes accomplished during the beginning years of teaching, when teachers, immersed in the life of teaching, take on a

teaching identity. Danielwicz describes teaching as “a complex and delicate act” (p. 9) and claims that identity develops through practice. She defines identity as our own understanding of who we are, who other people think we are, and our understanding of how we relate socially to others. Her study found that this identity is shaped in teachers by the situations and others who work within the same space and parameters. Since beginning teachers find themselves in schools as teachers for the first time, they are still very much constructing their teaching identity. This study examines teachers’ evolving identities and the interactions of these identities with the other areas of teaching context.

Sources of Knowledge

Another line of research examined not only beginning teachers, but also experienced teachers, and it looked at the sources of knowledge teachers draw on to learn to teach (Kennedy, 2002; Shulman, 1987; Wilson & Berne, 1999). While studies in this area have determined that teachers draw on a variety of sources of knowledge when teaching, there are many interpretations of what types of knowledge are needed, what each kind of knowledge consists of, and how the various types of knowledge work together to inform instructional decisions. For example, in a study of 45 teachers’ lessons, Kennedy (2002) found that teachers draw on three sources of knowledge when making instructional decisions. She describes craft knowledge as that which is acquired through experience; systematic knowledge as the knowledge acquired through undergraduate preparation, reading journals, and continuing professional development; and prescriptive knowledge as that acquired through institutional

policies. Kennedy also edited a book (1991) that speaks specifically to the kinds of knowledge needed for teaching various subject matters, and since some of those chapters describe writing, more information from Kennedy's work will be presented later in the section on learning to teach writing.

Shulman (1987) described pedagogical content knowledge as knowledge that blends knowledge of content, children, and how to best deliver that content to children. Teaching that draws on pedagogical content knowledge emphasizes comprehension, reasoning, transformation and reflection. Shulman also describes a "wisdom of practice" that comes from experience and is embedded in the everyday practice of teachers. This literature makes clear the many and varied sources of knowledge that teachers must draw on for teaching. What it does not make clear is how teachers learn to manage the various sources of knowledge simultaneously. How do teachers know when to foreground one type of knowledge over another? How do they navigate and understand the various overlaps among knowledge sources? What is also unclear is how pedagogical content knowledge varies between contents. These questions remain unanswered by the current literature, particularly in the area of writing.

Learning to Teach Continuum

Drawing on her career-long work in teacher education, Feiman-Nemser (2001) theorized about a learning to teach continuum. She identified and organized ideas of learning to teach into a set of central tasks including analyzing beliefs and forming new visions, developing subject matter knowledge for teaching, developing understanding of learners and learning, developing a

beginning repertoire, and developing the tools to study teaching. Each of these tasks can be daunting and complicated; combined, they can cause new teachers to feel overwhelmed and under-prepared to meet the rigors of classroom teaching. Feiman-Nemser's continuum is helpful in understanding the various stages that beginning teachers go through, yet because she described these central tasks as if they stood alone, without overlap, one wonders how beginning teachers are able to develop each of the central tasks at the same time? If they only develop one at a time, how do they know what to focus on first? What guides their growth and decision making as they move along the learning to teach continuum? This study examined beginning teachers as they tried to engage in multiple central tasks simultaneously.

Concept Development

A more recent line of research within the learning to teach literature deals with the role of concept development in learning to teach (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Johnson, 2003; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004). These researchers argue that beginning teachers often hold under-developed or pseudoconcepts about theories and methods of teaching, and that these ill-formed concepts influence instructional decisions. The terms conceptual and pedagogical tools are introduced in this work with conceptual tools referring to principles, frameworks and ideas and pedagogical tools referring to the classroom practices, strategies and resources. Teachers whose conceptual tools are not fully developed, are

likely to implement pedagogical tools based on what they observe, and not upon a deeper conceptual understanding.

These researchers also acknowledge the influence of teaching identity within this body of work and discuss the case of Andrea, a beginning teacher who struggled to maintain and develop her identity amidst the confusion of opposing conceptual models. Because identity develops as teachers learn to recognize the role their own attitude, beliefs and dispositions have on their instructional decisions; being confronted with opposing ideologies in schools can cause beginning teachers to question their prior beliefs and to begin to form new ones, or at least hybrids (Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002). Faced with her own conceptions of good teaching, those of the university she attended as an undergraduate and those of the school where she student taught, Andrea became frustrated because these conceptions were in conflict with one another. In order for Andrea's identity to continue developing, she had to find ways to resolve the mismatch between her prior beliefs, attitudes and dispositions and those of the university and school. This research helps us understand that beginning teachers may be struggling with understanding various concepts about teaching. It does not help us understand how beginning teachers develop concepts more fully. We are also left to wonder how, and if, they even realize that they lack conceptual understanding, and to ponder whether conceptual understanding refers only to pedagogical and conceptual tools, but also to areas of policy, curriculum and assessment. This study helps us think about how

beginning teachers' concept development is aided or hindered by the various factors in their teaching contexts.

The Role of Curriculum and Policy

Some of the same researchers from the above work on concept development have recently embarked on a series of studies that examine how beginning teachers work with constraining policy and curriculum environments (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Grossman, Thompson, & Valencia, 2001; Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky, & Fry, 2003; Smagorinsky et al., 2002). This work explains that in the current political climate of high-stakes testing and standards-driven curriculum, policies at the district levels are influential in shaping how beginning teachers learn to teach. In the Grossman, Thompson and Valencia study (2001), the researchers followed three first year teachers to determine how district level policies impacted their first year. They found that:

Directly and indirectly, district policies teach beginning teachers what to worry about and how to get help. In this sense district policy functions as a curriculum for teacher learning, helping to shape what and how beginning teachers learn about teaching. (p. 2)

Another group of researchers (Kaufmann, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske, 2002) studied 50 first and second year teachers to determine how curriculum and assessments within a standards-based reform movement shaped their experiences as beginning teachers. They found that this accountability environment created a sense of urgency for the teachers, but at the same time provided the teachers with little support for how to work effectively within this environment. The beginning teachers in this study expressed frustration and

some even left “teaching prematurely because of the overwhelming nature of the work and the pain of failing in the classroom” (p. 273).

This set of studies acknowledges the constraints formed by district policy and curriculum within schools, but leaves us wondering about the constraints that exist due to state and federal policies, available materials, colleagues, and the student population of a given school building. How do beginning teachers make policy and curriculum decisions while dealing with students, parents, and other teachers as well? Which factors are given more weight in their instructional decisions? The current study will help us think about the relationships between these factors and their influence over instructional decisions.

The Research Base and the Current Study

The entire body of literature described above and focused on learning to teach has informed the current study and has helped me situate my work within the broader field. It considers the problems that beginning teachers face, their thought processes, their attitudes and beliefs and emerging identities, the knowledge sources they draw on, their conceptual development, and the role of policy and curriculum. However, I am interested in understanding them as overlapping and interconnected, and learning about how teachers manage and navigate a complex set of factors that have been shown to contribute to learning to teach. My study extends the work of Smagorinsky, Grossman and colleagues and will add to what we know about how context shapes how beginning teachers learn to teach.

The Role of Subject Matter

Most of the literature described above was not undertaken with a specific subject matter in mind. Beginning teachers have been studied across a variety of subject matters, and often without the lens of one particular subject matter. Some studies focused on language arts more generally (Grossman & Thompson, 2004; Grossman et al., 2001) or secondary English specifically (Johnson et al., 2003). Because I am interested in how beginning elementary teachers learn to teach writing, I continue the literature review by moving to studies that specifically address teaching writing.

Teaching Writing

Years of research on writing and teaching writing show that we know a lot about writing as a process, how writers progress through that process, and how teachers can support and encourage that process. Research also shows us how good teachers teach writing. Many qualitative studies provide examples of the effective classroom practices of exemplary and/or experienced classroom teachers. In the following sections I review the literature on writing and teaching writing to help build a context for understanding the descriptions of writing instruction that I include in the three case studies presented in this dissertation.

The Writing Process

Writing is a process involving a series of stages or phases that a writer moves through each time s/he engages in writing (Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981; Hayes & Flowers, 1980). In this early model, three main phases were described as planning, translating and reviewing. As the model evolved, translating became drafting and reviewing became revising and editing. As Flower and

Hayes (1981) explored the cognitive aspects of writing, they suggested four key points for further understanding the writing process. First, writing is really a set of distinctive thinking processes that writers engage in throughout the composing process. Second, these processes are hierarchical and embedded in an organizational structure that guides the writing. Third, composing is a goal-directed process, guided by the writer's own goals. Fourth, writers create these goals by generating many shifting and changing goals based on the developing sense of purpose for the writing, and sometimes create entirely new goals as new ideas emerge during the writing. Further, Flower and Hayes realized that writing is not a linear model – that is – writers do not progress through the stages in exactly the same order each time they write. Nor are any two writers likely to follow the same progression of steps even though they may be writing on a similar topic or for a similar purpose. Understanding how one learns to write is a concept that teachers need to have in order to guide students through the writing process.

Emig (1983) found similar results when she tried to deconstruct the magical nature of writing by looking at the findings from developmental research on writing. She found that writing is learned rather than taught, and that writers of all ages work back and forth between whole and part, focal and global when they construct text. Emig agreed with Flower & Hayes that writing is a process and that there is no monolithic process. She stressed that the aim, purpose, and audience, as well as the individual and idiosyncratic features of the writer shaped the process for each writer. Further she discovered that writing can be improved

by working with a group of writers, including a more knowledgeable other (i.e. a teacher) who can give response and advice. This research leads one to question what the role of a teacher might look like if the teacher is attempting to use a process writing approach for teaching writing.

When a perceived writing crisis gripped the country during this time period, Scardamalia & Bereiter (1986) responded by synthesizing the literature that addressed learning to write. They confirmed and extended the work of Flower & Hayes (1980, 1981) and Emig (1983) by suggesting that writing is not linear, mental representations exist and are important for composing, writing does follow a process, problem solving models are effective, and short and long term memory are used in different ways during composing. They also found a common set of problems that existed and limited how students were learning to write in schools including understanding and applying various text structures, content knowledge, language production, goal formation and planning, revision, use of strategies, and issues of instruction. They introduced "new" approaches to writing instruction that include use of procedural facilitation, use of conferencing, invented writing and spelling, and explicit instruction in cognitive strategies.

As a body, this research raises questions about beginning teachers and their concepts of the learning to write process. These researchers illuminate the complexity of learning to write and learning to teach writing. Do beginning teachers have fully developed concepts of learning to write? What happens if teachers' conceptual understanding of the writing process is different from this

model? Additionally, the studies discussed above (Emig, 1993; Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986) present cognitive models of learning to write. What about the influence of the sociocultural context in learning to write? While our understanding of learning to write emerged from work with cognitive models, sociocultural work has shaped many of the current pedagogies. In the next section I describe some of the early sociocultural research on learning to write.

The Influence of Context in Learning to Write

Also emerging in the 1980s, and continuing throughout the next two decades was a strand of research on writing that focused on the role of context in learning to write (see for example, Freedman, Dyson, Flower, & Chafe, 1987). The social and cultural context of schools, homes, and communities and the interactions between writers and others became important ideas for writing researchers (Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 1993, 2003; Heath, 1983; Purcell-Gates, 1995).

Given the diversity of American school children, it is striking that there are so few systematic looks at how diversity figures into the teaching and learning of writing. The composing of written texts...is a distinctly sociocultural process that involves making decisions, conscious or otherwise, about how one figures into the social world at any one point in time. (Dyson, 1993, 6-7)

This strand of research suggests that teaching and learning writing can only be understood within the social and cultural communities in which these processes occur. Further, it places writing in a position where it supports young children in finding a place for themselves within official school communities. Some children, in fact, use writing to manipulate and transform their own space

in schools, where they find the social and cultural norms vastly different from those of their homes and neighborhoods (Dyson, 1993). Translating this into practice is complicated, yet studies of effective teaching have provided glimpses of how this might occur. What was not been studied or understood is how, or if, beginning teachers can do this effectively. What do beginning teachers understand about the role of context in learning to teach? How/Do they utilize that information in designing and implementing their writing instruction?

More Recent Writing Research

The research on writing discussed up to this point is important for laying the foundations of this body of literature. However, more recent research has focused on a wide variety of both sociocultural, and cognitive domains and has added to the growing knowledge base about teaching writing. Dyson and Freedman (2001) synthesized and organized the literature as to the four main aspects of the writing process that help writers improve. They include the uses of writing, the evaluation of writing, the processes of writing, and the development of writing. They argue that research has shown that children can be taught a repertoire of skills in all four areas and that enable them to develop effective written language.

Through supportive and responsive classroom environments, schools may best help each generation grow into literacy in ways that enable them to use written language productively and fulfillingly throughout their lives. (p. 984)

In a similar review, heavily influenced by work by the National Writing Project and the National Center for the Study of Writing, Sperling and Freedman (2003) trace the development of writing research from the earliest cognitive

models (Emig, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981); through Vygotsky's work on social interactions (1978) and Bakhtin's work on the social and historical culture of language (1986), to current work that makes clear the connections between writing and other communicative and literate processes. In particular these studies found support for connections between writing and speaking and reading and writing. Sperling and Freedman claim that writing research has influenced the presence of writing in many schools curriculums, and has shaped the practices that teachers use to support students in learning to write. However, they urge us to consider conducting more research to "understand patterns in writing and learning to write that are influenced by particular differences in [sociocultural and linguistic] contexts" (p. 386). While this work does help us think about learning to write from a learner's perspective, more research is also needed that helps us understand the teacher's role more fully, particularly in light of the various contexts that shape her environment. My study addresses this gap.

The Knowledge Teachers Need to Teach Writing

Kennedy (1991) presents a volume on the knowledge that teachers need to teach various subjects. In the section on writing, she presents three chapters that describe the knowledge teachers need to teach writing in different ways. Romano (1991) argues that the most important thing teachers need to know in order to be able to teach writing is that they themselves must be writers. This sentiment is echoed by other writing researchers (Fletcher, 1993; Graves, 1983; Hillocks, 1991). The explanation for the teacher-as-writer theory is that teachers

will know the process a writer must engage in to write, and they will be more likely to support students throughout this process. Hillocks (1991) also suggests that teachers need to understand discourse theory, strategies for writing, and procedures for analyzing and assessing text. Gage (1991) describes the knowledge teachers need for teaching writing as varied and ambiguous and suggests that teachers need to adjust to living with ambiguity as well as to try different approaches and make their own decisions.

Effective Writing Instruction in Elementary Classrooms

Many researchers have documented how teachers have developed effective practices in elementary schools that draw upon the research base on the writing process as well as considering the role of context in learning to write. Because strong commonality exists among these works, I will describe only a few of them. Most researchers and practitioners agree that guiding students through a writing process is an effective way to teach writing (Calkins, 1995; Christie, Enz, & Vukelich, 1975; Fletcher, 1993; Graves, 1994). In a previous study (Pardo, 2002), I synthesized the research done by some of the leading researchers in the field of elementary teaching of writing (i.e. Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, and Ralph Fletcher). I discovered several common elements for effective classroom implementation of the writing process. Those elements included: teach the writing process, teach conventions, ask students to revise their work, spell correctly, work with words, and develop learning communities. Doing this well would include providing students with regular and frequent time to write (Calkins, 1983; Graves, 1983) and providing a rich classroom environment

that fosters sharing, writing, and risk-taking (Calkins, 1983; Christie et al., 1975). Writing taught as a process, integrated with skills and content is the most effective way to teach young children to write (National Writing Project & Nagin, 2003).

While the research is clear about what effective writing instruction looks like, most of these studies examined the practice of experienced teachers. What kinds of writing instruction are beginning teachers capable of implementing? Lensmire (1995) went back to a third grade classroom during his graduate work to implement writing workshop. As a beginning teacher, but experienced educator, he tried to figure out how to best respond to children's writing during writing conferences. He found that children were mean in their responses to the writing and lives of other children and he identified the real dilemma of letting children's voices be heard, while at the same time not hurting classmates by that voice. If experienced educators as beginning teachers, who understand the writing process, have difficulty implementing this model, what can we expect of true novices? How do they juggle the various aspects of teaching process writing? How do they make decisions about organizing and implementing writing instruction? This study addresses these questions.

The Research Base and the Current Study

The studies about teaching writing are clear. Since writing is a process, teachers should guide students through this process, helping them move recursively through the steps of plan, draft, revise. Effective classroom research focused on writing instruction helps us see the possibilities – the end goal. What

is not clear about teaching writing is how teachers develop the knowledge and skills to become effective. Even less clear is the role that the variety of other factors that influence teaching and were described in the proceeding section of this chapter play in learning to teach writing. How do beginning teachers pay attention to and develop sound writing pedagogy when they are also confronted with constraints from policy, curriculum, and assessment, and complex factors of working with students, colleagues, and materials within any given community? The current study uses writing instruction as a lens to view how beginning teachers navigate and manage the multiple influences that exist.

An Urban Setting

Most learning to teach studies and studies about teaching writing describe the setting within which the study took place in terms of urban, suburban, or rural. However, the setting is not foregrounded in the work, it is just another descriptor of the participants of the study. Recently government organizations and colleges of education have revealed the specific need for studies focused in urban settings (e.g. National Institute for Urban School Improvement, 2003) that would help teacher preparation programs more adequately prepare teachers for urban settings. The emergence of this field of research, as well as my own teaching experiences influenced my decision to situate this study in an urban school. In the next section, I review literature that specifically addresses teaching writing in urban schools in order to establish more fully this study within current research.

Teaching Writing in Urban Schools

In a synthesis of the research on the teaching of writing in urban settings, Flood and Lapp (2000) reviewed studies from research on the cognitive processes involved in learning to write at the primary grades (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Dyson, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1995; Graves, 1975, 1981), in the intermediate grades (Dahl & Farnan, 1998; McGinley & Kamberelis, 1996), the role of classroom environment (Cazden, 1986; Loughlin & Martin, 1987), the use of technology in teaching writing (Cochran-Smith, Kahn, & Paris, 1990; Dickinson, 1986; Jones & Pelligrini, 1986), and grouping arrangements (Dahl & Farnan, 1998; Flood & Lapp, 1997; Tway, 1991). They found that a process approach, based on constructivist notions, was most appropriate for children from a wide range of language backgrounds. This approach assumes that writers develop writing skills by constructing and revising texts utilizing some form of process or orderly manner. It enables children to write frequently, continually revising the content as well as the form.

An important finding from this work was the need for an organizational structure for teaching writing to urban students. Urban students, more so than those in other settings, benefit from being taught and using a clearly organized and maintained structure. The research showed that management systems that allow children time to work independently and with the teacher individually, that provided students choice and that focus solely on writing and the component parts of the writing process were most effective. While some might argue that all students would benefit from these types of organizational structures, the point of Flood and Lapp's research synthesis work was to seek evidence that it worked

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particularly for urban students. This research makes a case for how teachers in urban settings might organize for writing instruction, but because this research covered a span of years of experience, grade level, and type of writing instruction we are left wondering how beginning teachers learn to organize in this way? What concepts, materials, pedagogical tools, knowledge sources might they possess that would help them realize these things? What if they do not realize the importance of organization and they structure writing instruction in different ways? How does that support or hinder their process of learning to teach? These questions will be addressed by the current study.

How Urban Settings Interact with Teaching Writing

As a researcher working in urban contexts, Dyson (1994) found that children in urban settings write to establish social cohesion, engage in artful performances, and to communicate information. She suggested that children are complex social and cultural beings and those teachers who have flexible curricular goals are more likely to acknowledge children's unique characteristics (race, ethnicity, class, language, and religion) and to consider those frames when planning and delivering instruction. In a year-long study of urban first grade students, Dyson (2003) found that school context and home and social culture influenced the children's choice of writing topics and format of writing. The brothers and sisters (a self-selected name for a group of African American first grade students) used ideas from popular media (sports, movies, and cartoon characters) as the basis for much of their writing. They borrowed ideas, language, names, and structures from these various sources, and merged them

with the evolving school culture of their first grade classroom. About this work

Dyson writes:

The children's socioideological landscape provided them with whole utterances, utterance types or genres, and particular words and phrases, and this textual and cultural material became the stuff with which the children could construct their present lives, remember their pasts, and anticipate their youthful futures. In so doing, they were, at the very same time, constructing complex selves who participated in varied social institutions and, more broadly, in particular social and cultural spheres. (p. 42)

In this study, as well as an earlier one (1993), Dyson found that the teacher's role was crucial in helping urban kids realize the requirements and expectations of school based literacy. While a flexible curriculum encouraged urban children to write and to draw on their own experiences and language, both Rita and Louise (teachers in Dyson's studies) were able to be more demanding when necessary, becoming more directive at times. Like others who have written about using explicit language with urban children (see for example, Delpit, 1995), Dyson discovered that Rita's and Louise's students were more successful when they were given specific instructions about the tasks they were expected to do. Rita and Louise taught first grade, but, Dyson also studied Louise in a third grade classroom and found that the permeable curriculum and the role of the teacher continued to play necessary roles in shaping the official school literacy experiences for older children. This was especially true because third grade students had become more sophisticated at moving language and ideas from the unofficial community into the official curriculum of the school. If Louise had been oblivious to this, or had decided to deny these voices, her students likely would not have had the opportunities for success with school based literacy.

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In another study, an urban middle school teacher, Mrs. Slatko, believed in student-based writing pedagogies. In order to best meet the needs of her sixth and eighth grade students, she began the year by surveying her students to find out their skills, aptitudes, interests, and study habits (Manning, 2000). Mrs. Slatko then used the information from these studies to inform her classroom decisions. She discovered that pedagogies that supported students' personal responses, that had meaningful purposes, and that encouraged students to go beyond the level of simply summarizing were most successful for her urban students. One way students did this was by writing letters to Mrs. Slatko and to their peers describing their learning processes and any interesting content or new ideas that had emerged. Mrs. Slatko also found that self-assessment, student-based inquiry projects, and writing their own children's book to be presented to the elementary school to be effective practices for helping urban middle school students learn to write. The kind of knowledge that teachers need to have about students is centered on learning about the cultural, social, linguistic and political backgrounds of their community, families, and students.

The teachers described in these studies of learning to teach writing in urban contexts are experienced teachers. They might be considered exemplary or highly effective. While they do help us understand some of the effective writing pedagogies for working with urban students, we are left to wonder how beginning teachers in urban schools learn these practices? How do beginning teachers, situated in urban settings, use a variety of knowledge sources, draw on personal beliefs, focus on multiple tasks and contexts, and emerge with effective

writing practices? These highly problematic questions are addressed in this study.

Pulling Together the Relevant Research

The literature reviewed in the previous three sections provides clear and substantial information about learning to teach, teaching writing, and teaching writing in urban schools. What it does not do is provide information about the intersection of these areas of study. How do beginning teachers learn to teach writing in urban schools? This was the main question addressed by this dissertation. In this study, I take a close look at three beginning urban teachers as they teach writing across a school year. By asking each to identify something about their writing practice that they wanted to improve on during the school year, I was able to observe and learn how novices articulated and pursued learning something new in order to change their practice. In addition, I was pleasantly surprised to realize that the multiplicity of factors that emerged in the learning to teach literature were not only evident in this study, but also intersected in interesting ways.

The Significance of This Study

Understanding Writing Instruction

This work is important to the field in a number of ways. First, looking closely at how early career teachers learn to teach writing may help us understand more about the current nature of writing in elementary schools. This is particularly true in the political climate of *NCLB* and high-stakes testing because writing seems to be ignored by *NCLB* and some state and national

assessments. Additionally, there has been a significant influx of new teachers over the last five years and looking at how new teachers think about teaching writing may illuminate what writing instruction looks like for beginning teachers. This will enrich the literature on writing instruction, since most studies of effective practice looked at experienced teachers. This work can help us answer the question, What kind of writing instruction is possible for beginning teachers to achieve? What kinds of practices are likely to emerge and how do they evolve over time? These kinds of questions are addressed in this study.

Understanding writing pedagogy of beginning teachers in urban schools will also broaden our definition of effective writing pedagogy. Just as Dyson (1993, 2003) and Manning (2000) uncovered unique characteristics of effective writing instruction for experienced teachers of urban students, this work reveals characteristics of beginning teachers' writing instruction for urban students.

Teacher Preparation Programs

This study will inform teacher preparation and alternative certification programs. Specific experiences and kinds of knowledge that are influential to these three beginning teachers could illuminate ways to organize and structure experiences and knowledge for educating future teachers. This research can support teacher preparation in terms of understanding and presenting writing pedagogy by building a repertoire of specific strategies, organizing structures, and possible case studies. Building and using case studies has been shown to support the development of teacher candidates knowledge about teaching (Boling, 2003), and the three case studies developed in this research could

become part of a set of case studies regularly used in literacy methods courses. Since it is likely that the number of new teachers will continue to increase over the next decade, the stance that teacher preparation programs take on the teaching of writing will have long term effects on our children.

Induction and Professional Development

School districts and organizations that work with beginning teachers can learn more about how to work effectively to help teachers develop knowledge needed to improve writing instruction. This seems particularly timely in an era where programs of induction are being discussed nationally (i.e. Teachers for a New Era, a recent Carnegie project)¹. At the University of Georgia, an alternative certification program was designed to include a mentor teacher component where mentor teachers took substantial roles in developing strong mentoring practices as they supported novice teachers (Stanulis & Russell, 2000). A new book by Breaux and Wong (2003) describes the FIRST (Framework for Inducting, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers) program Breaux implemented in her Louisiana school district. Other states currently require the use of mentoring programs as well as provide full funding for those programs (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Washington DC, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, and Washington)(The Mentor Center website). Michigan's program is currently required, but is only partially funded by the state.

Veenman's work (1984) suggested specific induction practices over twenty years ago, and the list still seems appropriate today. He found that strong

¹ More information on this project is available at http://www.carnegie.org/reporter/03/foundation_roundup/newera.html.

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induction programs would provide new teachers with support through: provision of printed materials, orientations, released time, group meetings, consultations with experienced teachers, workshops and conferences, reduced work load, opportunities to observe, and team teaching. More recently, a handbook chapter summarized the induction literature to include strong ties with teacher education, strong bonds between schools and universities, aimed at retention of teachers, including both instructional and psychological support, both in individual and group situations, and good ways to train mentor teachers (Gold, 1996). This study will identify which of these supports were available to each teacher, how helpful each was, and may suggest additional ways induction practices can be supportive of beginning teachers.

Teaching in Urban Contexts

Finally, this work will add to the growing number of researchers and practitioners who study writing in urban contexts. It seems likely that many new teachers will teach in urban settings, since that is where demand and attrition are both high (Oakes, Franke, Quartz, & Rogers 2002). Knowing all we can about how beginning teachers in urban settings learn to teach writing can provide great benefit to a great number of urban children, as well as help identify unique needs in preparing urban teachers. This work will also explore the role of the urban contexts as only one of a multitude of factors that influence teachers' instructional decisions.

The Organization of this Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I describe the methodology employed for this study, including an introduction to the participants in the study, Celina, Aileen, and Bethany. In Chapter 3, I introduce a model of teaching context that helps me hypothesize about the influence of context in learning to teach writing for Bethany, Celina and Aileen. Chapters 4-6 present the case studies of Celina, Aileen and Bethany as the teaching context model is explored and analyzed for each teacher's specific case. In Chapter 7 I present cross-case analysis of the three cases and explore how these three cases help us think about how teachers learn to teach and how the teaching context model illuminates and helps us understand the role of teaching context in learning to teach. Finally, in Chapter 8, I discuss implications of this study and propose future research.

Chapter 2

THE BEST LAID PLANS: THE EVOLUTION OF A QUALITATIVE STUDY

Sometimes the best laid plans do not materialize in the end product that one envisions. I initially conceptualized this study as one that would help me understand the kinds and depth of knowledge that teachers needed to teach writing. I hoped to figure out, through ethnographic and descriptive methods, what was going on in writing instruction in the urban classrooms of beginning teachers and the various knowledge sources teachers drew upon to enact their practice. I did not form hypotheses about what I might find, but rather entered the study eager to see what existed and to try to understand it. Yet the one assumption I did make was that this was a study of knowledge about teaching writing. However, what I found in the data was that I actually had a very interesting study about the role that teaching context was having in these beginning teachers' lives.

In this chapter, I describe the methodology I employed during the study, initial research questions, participants, methods of data collection and data analysis. I conclude the chapter by describing how this study became one that explained more about how teaching context shapes beginning teacher's evolving writing practice than one that would help us understand the knowledge sources that beginning teachers draw on to teach writing.

Methodology

Research Questions

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This study focused on how early career elementary teachers attempted to make improvements in their writing practice. Each of the three teachers in the study, Celina, Aileen and Bethany, identified one area of their writing instruction that they wanted to improve upon during the school year. The decision to ask each teacher to identify an area of their writing instruction to work on was intentional because I wanted to be able to gain access to their thinking and the knowledge sources they drew on to implement those changes. The primary research question that initially formed the basis for this research was:

What knowledge do beginning teachers in an urban setting draw on when they translate and implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum into practice?

Sub questions were designed to probe into teachers' knowledge sources by drawing on their understanding of writing curriculum and through observation of their evolving practice. These questions were:

1. How do novice urban teachers understand the writing curriculum in their school?
 - a. To what extent does this curriculum match what research supports?
 - b. To what extent does this curriculum match the curriculum and practices emphasized in their teacher preparation program?
 - c. To what extent do the teachers perceive a tension between district curriculum, research on best practice in writing instruction, and the knowledge and experiences gleaned from their teacher preparation

- program, and to what extent do they feel forced to make choices between the three sources of knowledge?
- d. If so, what is the basis of their choices ?
2. How do these teachers attempt to translate writing curriculum into effective practice?
- a. What kinds of knowledge do urban teachers need to implement and change/improve a particular aspect of writing instruction?
 - b. How does the literature and previous research in the teaching of writing inform or hinder teachers in making changes/improvements in their writing practice in urban contexts?
 - c. What do teachers do to support their implementation of something new into their writing instruction?

This qualitative study used the methodological tools of interviews, classroom observations, videotaped observations, viewing sessions, and materials discussions to closely examine how Aileen, Bethany and Celina learned to implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum in their urban classrooms. In the following sections I describe the participants including the context of their school district, the methods I used to collect data, and the methods I employed for data analysis.

Participants

Three teachers from the Gambell School District² participated in this study. I decided I wanted to conduct my study in an urban setting, and Gambell is the closest one to our university. I sent an email and asked MSU teacher education

² This is a pseudonym.

faculty members if they knew of any recent teacher candidates who were now teaching in Gambell. In the spring of the year preceding this study, I contacted ten teachers who taught in Gambell. Each had taught less than five years. Six of those teachers expressed interest in the study and asked me to contact them in late summer. All six of those teachers were pink-slipped (laid off) near the end of the school year, and most spent the summer unsure whether or not they would have a job for the next school year. When I contacted the six teachers in late summer, two had been assigned reading teacher positions, and so would not be able to participate in the study since they would not be teaching writing, nor would they have a regular classroom setting. The four remaining teachers agreed to be in the study. During September, I contacted the four teachers to set up initial interviews for October, and one teacher indicated that because he had been assigned a new grade level and a new school, he had decided it would be too difficult to be in the study. That left three beginning teachers as participants in the study.

Because all three teachers were graduates of MSU's teacher preparation program, they had all participated in a year long internship during the year following their graduation from MSU. The teachers in this study occasionally reflected upon their internship or mentioned the collaborating teacher (CT) with whom they worked during the internship. Often the relationships between CTs and interns is a strong one, due to the intense nature of a full eight weeks of lead teaching during February and March. It is not uncommon for intern and CT relationships to continue even after the internship has officially ended.

Demographic information about these teachers is included in Table 1. You will notice that two of the three teachers are white and two are in their twenties. All of the teachers considered themselves middle-class. These are factors that typify most beginning teachers, since most beginning teachers are female, white, middle-class and in their twenties (Banks, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto, 2000). Having one beginning teacher in her fifties, and one Latina teacher gave the study more depth because findings might be more representative of a range of beginning teachers. The teachers were in three different grade levels and all had been teaching for different amounts of time. The diversity in these demographic factors means that results revealed in the study will show commonalities and distinctions across grade levels and within the first four years of teaching.

Teacher³	Age	Race	Grade Level	Year of Teaching
Celina	29	Latina	2 nd	4 th
Aileen	56	White	1 st	3 rd
Bethany	24	White	4 th	2 nd

Table 1. Demographic information of the participants in this study during the school year 2003-2004.

Data Collection

Each teacher was interviewed in the fall, at the beginning of the study, and in the spring, at the conclusion of the study. Each teacher participated in one materials discussion (discussed below) during the second semester of the school year. The number of observations, videotaped observations and viewing sessions varied among the participants due to a variety of logistical constraints

³ All names of teachers and schools are pseudonyms.

and affordances. Appendix A provides a chart of the specific data collected for each participant.

Fall interviews. I began my data collection with in-depth personal interviews in the fall (see Appendix B for initial interview questions). The Gambell School District restricts data collection until October 1st of each school year, so interviews were conducted as early as possible in October. Because I wondered if and how a teacher's background and experiences influenced her writing instructional decisions, I asked some questions of a personal nature. In each interview, I inquired into each teacher's personal history, including how each teacher thought of herself as a writer and a teacher of writing. I asked about how she had learned to write, what kind of writer she was in high school and college, and what kind of writing she did now. I also asked her to describe her philosophy for teaching writing, the instructional model(s) she used, and to explain how writing looked in her classroom. Finally, I asked each teacher to identify something in her writing program that she wanted to work on during the school year – something that she wanted to improve upon or change from past years.

Celina identified two aspects of her writing workshop that she planned to work on during the study. She wanted to consistently model writing for her students, and she wanted to make conferences more effective. Aileen wanted to get all of her students writing paragraphs by the end of the school year. Bethany wanted to implement a writing workshop model, something she had not used consistently the year before, and work on conferencing and publishing. Asking teachers to identify something they wanted to work on during the year was a key

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aspect of the study design because it gave me access to the kinds of thinking and the kinds of knowledge beginning teachers draw on to learn to teach writing. Because it is difficult to measure how one learns to teach something, I made the assumption, for this study, that the teachers' active pursuit of changes in their writing instruction would help make their learning visible.

Classroom observations. My initial visit to each classroom provided me the opportunity to observe and absorb the way each classroom was organized, how a typical writing lesson proceeded, and how the children would react to my presence. Hand-written field notes were taken as I observed a writing lesson, maps were drawn of each classroom, and I also noted all the print materials that supported reading and/or writing instruction that were posted somewhere in the classroom (i.e. environmental print). These initial visits also provided an opportunity for the teacher to introduce me to the students and for me to discuss the research permission (i.e. assent) slip that the children in Bethany's classroom needed to sign (because they are older than 8). An additional classroom observation occurred in Aileen's room during the second semester when she switched from one type of writing instruction to another. This observation served a similar purpose to the first – it allowed me to see how a typical writing lesson looked so that when I came with my video camera I knew what to expect. This helped me know where to locate my camera, and to think about the flow of the lesson I would be observing.

Videotaped observations. Each teacher was videotaped several times (see Appendix A for specific times and frequencies) during writing instruction, at

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a time when she had identified that she was working on the particular aspect of her teaching that she had selected earlier in the school year. Each lesson occurred in a single class period and ranged from 35 minutes to just over an hour. In Aileen's classroom, video observations also included the morning seatwork prior to the writing instruction because children were engaged in reading and writing during this time, and Aileen felt strongly that the morning work supported the writing instruction. She made numerous connections between the two activities and because it was important to her, I felt I needed to videotape these events as well because I wanted to document the connections that she explicitly made between reading and writing, and to see if and how she built on those connections during writing instruction. Individual students were not videotaped, however children were present in the lessons as they interacted with the teacher in the normal course of classroom instruction. At times, in all three classrooms, the teachers engaged in writing conferences. During those conferences, specific students were videotaped, but always within the context of writing instruction. Throughout the study, the focus remained on the teacher and writing instruction, and not on individual students or student learning.

Prior to each observation, I met briefly with the teacher to find out what the lesson was about, to get copies of her lesson plan and to listen to her explanation of the purpose and origin of the lesson. Lesson plans were not collected for all lessons (this is noted on Appendix A), since Aileen did not prepare specific lesson plans for her writing instruction, and Bethany was not consistent with preparing copies for me. However, each teacher met with me

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prior to the lesson and was able to articulate clearly what the upcoming lesson was about. Bethany's lessons often utilized handouts or templates, and she always provided copies of the handouts for me.

After each videotaped observation, the tape was immediately transcribed. Because several hours (or a day) passed between the video-taping and the viewing session, there was time to transcribe the tape prior to the viewing session. An example of a videotape transcript is found in Appendix C. In this transcription you will notice that Celina is model writing for her students. She is thinking aloud and saying everything she is writing. The transcript indicates what she wrote, and what she said during the lesson. Watching and transcribing the tape immediately after the lesson supported me in creating questions that I wanted to address during the viewing session. Each of these question sets were slightly different, based on the teacher's goals and the nature of each lesson.

A sample viewing session question set is found in Appendix D. You will notice that there were several general questions I planned to ask Bethany prior to viewing the tape. The purpose of these questions was to inquire about some of her long term goals for writing workshop (i.e. conferencing and publishing). I also listed specific questions that I had as I viewed the tape during the transcription. I asked these additional questions after the viewing session if they did not come up naturally during the viewing session.

Both the transcription and the question set were helpful during the viewing session. The transcription provided the teacher and me a written script to refer to if needed during each viewing session, and alerted us to places where we might

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need to rewind and listen to a section of the lesson again. The question set allowed me to pursue the questions I had that would help me understand how each teacher was thinking about meeting her writing instructional goals.

Viewing sessions. Viewing sessions occurred after each videotaped observation (either the same day after school, or as soon after as possible), and were audio-taped. Each viewing session consisted of the teacher and me watching the video tape of the lesson together. An excerpt from a viewing session transcript is contained in Appendix E. In examining the transcript, you will notice that the audio counter runs continuously throughout the entire interview, and the video counter stops and starts, because sometimes one of us would stop the tape to pursue an issue raised by what we were seeing. For example, when the audio counter is on 032, the video showed the children getting out their writing folders and Bethany commented that the students are used to this routine. I realize that I had a question about the materials in the folder because what I had observed in the current lesson was different from the previous lesson, so I stopped the tape to follow up and question the use of templates for organizing the writing. When that conversation ended, the videotape was resumed (audio counter was on 0210), and the viewing session continued in this manner.

The viewing sessions helped me understand how each teacher was thinking about her writing instruction, whether or not she felt she was making progress towards her goals, and what pedagogical problems she was working with. For example, in the transcript of the viewing session with Bethany

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mentioned above, found in Appendix E, I began by asking Bethany how she thought the lesson I had videotaped earlier, had gone. She responded by saying that she felt like the lesson only engaged a couple of students, and not the whole class. We then referred to the transcript where I noted that she called on at least eight different students during the lesson. Bethany is affirmed by that because she felt like only a couple of students interacted with her. A bit later in the conversation, you will notice that Bethany contemplated how the lesson might have been without an extra teacher in the room. By listening to her describe a pedagogical problem and its possible solutions, I was privy to not only her thinking about logistical matters, but also how her writing practice is evolving. During each viewing session, I followed up on comments made by the teachers or with things I had noted during the observations by probing with questions that tried to get at the knowledge sources of her actions and decisions (review Appendix D for sample questions). The viewing sessions also helped me think about what kinds of things I wanted to look for in subsequent observations and viewing sessions, and helped me to determine the content of the final interviews.

Materials discussion. During the fall semester, all three teachers mentioned various handouts, professional books, a balanced literacy notebook furnished to them from the Gambell School District, etc. that each teacher used to shape her evolving teaching practice for writing. Therefore, in the spring I decided to conduct a materials discussion with each teacher so that I could actually observe each material, see what it consisted of, and could hear each teacher describe its importance for planning and teaching. Appendix F provides

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a sample of the information I asked for prior to the materials discussion such as curriculum materials, conference or workshop materials, professional books, teaching guides and textbooks, and student work.

During each materials discussion, I facilitated a conversation with each teacher where she would explain what each piece was and how she used it in the classroom. Appendix G shows my protocol for the discussion. In each materials discussion, I asked the teacher to tell me what each item was, how she came to know about the document, and how each document supported her in planning and teaching writing. These discussions were audio-taped and transcribed. Appendix H shows a sample list of the materials that Bethany assembled, and my brief notes about each item. For example, Bethany shared two professional books (numbers 1 and 2 on the list), both published by Scholastic and focused on the 6 + 1 Traits Writing Program. This list helped me as I transcribed the audio-tapes of the materials discussion, and I referred to specific items we were talking about by the number from these lists during the discussion. A sample transcript is found in Appendix I where you can see Bethany and me discussing this program and how the use of templates and an assessment rubric used in her school reflects both the MEAP test (Michigan's state wide assessment program) and the 6 + 1 Writing Program. The materials discussions helped me contextualize what I observed and what the teachers discussed in interviews. It also gave me additional access to the way each thought about writing and how to teach writing.

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Spring interviews. To end the data collection, each teacher was interviewed a final time. In these interviews, I asked each teacher to describe the process she had been involved with over the course of the year as she worked to implement/change something about her writing program. I tried to get each teacher to identify where the knowledge came from that helped her work on this aspect of her curriculum, whether it was successful or not. For instance, there were questions about meeting her self-selected writing goal, her current understanding of writing curriculum and instruction, the sources of knowledge she drew upon during the school year, the policy environment, and her future plans for writing instruction. I inquired as to how each teacher interpreted her level of success and her plans for the future. I crafted questions that not only asked teachers to reflect on writing instruction across the year, but also included questions specific to each teacher's context and writing goal. A sample spring interview protocol is found in Appendix J.

Data Analysis

Each interview, video taped observation, viewing session and materials discussion was transcribed as soon as possible after they occurred. Initial thoughts, noticeable patterns, and questions from the interviews and transcripts were noted in my field notebook as they occurred to me. For example after a videotaped observation of Aileen's class in mid-January, I noted that during the morning message:

students were much more engaged than in November. A lot more students participated, they were much more vocal, and their language seems more sophisticated. What did Aileen do that encouraged so much growth in such a short time? (Field Notes, January 2004).

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Besides taking occasional field notes, I indexed each data source as it was transcribed and I maintained a large three-ring binder for each teacher's data. As time passed, I also created and maintained a smaller binder that contained my field notes, analytic memos, data charts, and reviews of related readings. I engaged in a recursive process of data analysis and written reflection. Sometimes the writing took the form of analytic memos, other times it was data charts that allowed me to see one aspect of my data clearly. I include a description and explanation of a data chart later in this chapter.

Uncovering categories in the data. I used an inductive coding process (Strauss, 1987) to sort through my data and to search for categories within the data that would help me make sense of the data and address my research questions. I began by reading through the data and noting the various areas that emerged (they are listed below). I used a variety of colored sticky notes to mark each place in the data where each area was represented. I analyzed the data for one teacher at a time, and as I moved to the second teacher and then the third, I found the categories shifting and changing. For example, I originally had one category called "writing", that included ideas in the data that related to teaching writing. However, as the analysis continued, it became clear to me that this category was too broad and I needed to refine it. Eventually I ended up with four categories about writing – the teacher's personal writing history; her thoughts feelings, and beliefs about writing; her ideas about and implementation of writing workshop; and her thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about teaching writing. As the categories evolved, I revisited each teacher several times to ensure that I had

similar categories noted across the cases. I ended up with a common set of categories across all three case studies. My final categories represented the various kinds of information I had about each teacher and they were:

- Personal writing and school history
- Conceptual and practical ideas about writing workshop
- Setting and achieving writing goals
- Understanding the writing curriculum
- School contextual factors that influenced writing instruction
- Beliefs about learning, children, and schooling
- Beliefs, feelings and thoughts about writing
- Beliefs, feelings, and thoughts about teaching writing
- Issues related to urban education
- Identification of knowledge sources that influenced writing
- Federal and state level bureaucracy
- My role in the teacher's classroom

Organizing the categories. At this point I went back to my initial research question, "What knowledge do beginning teachers in an urban setting draw on when they translate and implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum into practice?" I realized that I was interested in three things and that I could use these to organize my categories: beginning teachers, teaching writing, and the urban setting. I organized the categories into those headings in the following ways. First was the issue of learning to teach which included the sources of knowledge teachers draw on as they learn to teach, and their philosophies and/or beliefs about teaching. It seemed that part of my question could be answered by looking at the sticky notes for:

- Identification of knowledge sources that influenced writing
- Beliefs about learning, children, and schooling
- Personal writing and school history

Second was information about how each teacher thought about and planned for writing instruction. Questions such as: What model is best? How is that

implemented? How does it look in practice? would be answered by this kind of data. The categories I placed under this heading included:

- Beliefs, feelings and thoughts about writing
- Beliefs, feelings and thoughts about teaching writing
- Understanding the writing curriculum
- Conceptual and practical ideas about writing workshop
- Setting and achieving writing goals

Finally, the data provided information about the various school contexts and policies. The question, What's going on in your school, classroom, district, etc. that influences how one can learn to teach? would be addressed by this data. I organized the following categories within the context heading:

- Federal and state level bureaucracy
- Issues related to urban education
- School contextual factors that influenced writing instruction

That left one category – my own role and influence in the teachers' thinking as they participated in this study. I decided to leave those data in a separate category, realizing that they might help me think about how the teacher was learning to teach, but that I would not be sure until I analyzed them further.

Sorting the data into the three organizing structures. Once I had my three main structures identified – learning to teach, teaching writing, and urban context, I created individual note cards for each sticky note in my data. While the sticky notes merely indicated a category, the note cards were my interpretation of how that piece of data (an observation or something the teacher said) fit in that category. For example, in a videotape transcript of Celina's modeling during a writing workshop mini-lesson, I put a red sticky note next to the think aloud that Celina engaged in. A red sticky note indicated the category "conceptual and

practical ideas about writing workshop". Celina's think aloud is below (the italicized words are the words she wrote on the chart paper).

My favorite season is spring (writing on chart paper). *During*, that's a word I really don't use often, but I'm going to try that. *During spring*, and like is taken out of our vocabulary, like is not even in our vocabulary. *During spring* (she has written sping), sp – r -, stick that r right there (as she realizes she missed it). *During spring*, (she begins to write again), *I enjoy walking my dog milan*. You know, I am thinking, milan is, I need to capitalize Milan because Milan is a name. [I'll] go back and capitalize it. (she does). *My dog Milan* (rereading) *in my*, oh this word is the toughest, oh I struggle with this word, *neighborhood*. Neigh, neigh, I know we've been working on the gh, bor, hood. There. *Period*. (she moves her finger quickly to the top of the text). *My favorite season is spring. During spring I enjoy walking my dog Milan in my neighborhood*. So, I put that down – it's the first thing in my web (she reaches over to the web and points to "walking my dog"). (Video Observation 2, pp. 1-2)

When I interpreted this section of transcript on a note card, I wrote:

C thinks aloud and models word choice, sentence variation, stretching words, inserting missed letters, capitalization rules, punctuation, using her plan and rereading. This matches her writing curriculum and her own description of what she wants to accomplish through her model writing. (Note card 95)

Because Celina had shared the second grade curriculum document with me (i.e. the SIM), I knew these elements of mechanics, as well as word choice were part of her curriculum. Further, in a lesson plan for the videotaped lesson of December 18th, Celina wrote in her anticipatory set section of the lesson plan, "Do a picture plan of what I'm going to write about: shopping for my Christmas items." Later in the lesson plan she indicated "make sure to reread each sentence and refer back to plan to reinforce what good writers do" (Lesson Plan 1, p. 1). In interviews with Celina across the year she indicated that "modeling is the key...showing and sharing my ideas with them, showing them what I do as a writer" (Spring Interview, p. 17) and that "the conventions are not connecting

with a lot of people, they forget to the punctuation, or they forget to capitalize. So those are the things I'm working one, the things I model" (Viewing Session 2, p. 3). Later in the same interview she noted "I still have a few kids who [ask] how do you spell? But I really want them to stretch out words" (Viewing Session 2, pp. 5-6). By using various data sources to interpret my sticky notes, the note cards helped me understand how Celina was learning to teach writing. This example showed me that Celina was learning to teach writing by identifying clear goals for modeling (per her curriculum), modeling specific elements of good writing during writing workshop and then reflecting on her modeling.

I analyzed each teacher's data separately, creating one set of note cards at a time. After I had created and sorted all the note cards for one teacher, I began to look at what the data, through the note cards, were telling me in regards to my research questions. The most common way I did this was by sorting the note cards into smaller piles and then looking for commonalities within each pile. I eventually created a data chart for each pile so that I could easily see what each set of data represented.

Appendix K gives an example of a data chart that emerged while I was working with Aileen's data. In this example I was exploring Aileen's use of Morning Message to teach writing to her first grade students. The smaller pile "Morning Message" was created from all the note cards that fit into the middle structure of "teaching writing." As I sorted the cards for "Morning Message" I noted that I was learning three kinds of things about Aileen's use of morning message – why she does it, what skills it includes, and what it looks like. The

data chart provides specific examples for each of the three smaller categories within "Morning Message." The number following each piece of information refers to the note card that contains that information. This was helpful to me because when I began writing each case study, I could refer to the note card and then to the actual data – since each note card contained the data source and page number(s) it was drawn from. I also used this process as a way to double-check my initial interpretation of the data. By locating the actual data source as I was writing each case study, I could re-analyze to provide more validity to my findings. There were numerous times across the process of analyzing, creating data charts, writing analytic memos, and finally drafting text, that I found myself revisiting the data and revising my ideas as I tried to determine what the data were revealing to me about how each teacher learned to teach writing. Using my initial sticky notes and categories, the note cards organized in the big three areas of learning to teach, teaching writing, and urban contexts, and revisiting the actual data as I outlined and wrote each chapter, allowed me to triangulate the data and to feel confident in my findings.

An example of a discrepant case occurred with Aileen's data surrounding her students' use of Black Vernacular English and her decision to correct them when they formally addressed her. At first I noted that "use of non-standard dialects is acceptable" in Aileen's classroom (Field Notes, November 2003). This was also confirmed through numerous classroom and video observations – I heard children using non-standard dialects in the classroom. These observations and early field notes, led me to a note card where I wondered if Aileen might be

responsive to her students' culture (Ladson-Billings, 2001). As I pursued this direction, I reread Ladson-Billings work, and I began to draft text about Aileen and culturally responsive pedagogy. As I revisited my data to find quotes or supporting evidence, I found that the data raised additional questions, because I had numerous examples of Aileen correcting children's non-standard dialects, and later claiming that children needed to speak "correctly." The more I thought about this issue, and talked with colleagues about it, it became clear that while Aileen might be culturally responsive in some respects, she may not be in regards to language. Even though Aileen allowed children to talk freely and often in order to construct meaning and to engage in learning in ways that might match their own cultural heritage, in formal settings she did not honor their Black Vernacular English because she corrected aspects of their language that represented their linguistic and social culture.

Teaching context emerges as a powerful influence. As I completed sorting, analyzing, and writing about the first teacher, Celina, an idea began to emerge that Celina was making a lot of her instructional decisions not based primarily on any set of various knowledge sources, but because of the constraints and affordances that existed in her teaching context. I began to sketch a visual representation of what a teacher's teaching context might look like, and I began to sort through Aileen's data. As I worked through Aileen's and then Bethany's data, I continued to develop my understanding of teaching context, and I fine-tuned and adjusted the visual I had created to represent teaching context. It soon became apparent to me that the most interesting

finding from my study involved the role of teaching context as teachers developed their writing practice. In the next section I briefly describe how this changed the shape of my study and I preview the following chapter which presents my teaching context visual and where I hypothesize about the role of teaching context in learning to teach.

Realizing the Role of Teaching Context

While each of the teachers was able to identify sources of knowledge that they drew on to teach writing, they also talked often and passionately about other aspects of the classroom and school setting that seemed to influence the decisions they made. For example, Celina, in her fourth year of teaching, described the daily Writing Workshops she had used for writing instruction during her first three years of teaching. However, during this study, Celina had modified the frequency of her Writing Workshop to only occur three days a week. The other two days of the week Celina focused on writing that prepared her students for the state's writing assessment test. She did this because of the high stakes nature of testing in our state and the fact that her school, Crestview, had received very poor reading and writing scores during the previous two school years. In fact, Crestview was in jeopardy of being run by the state if test scores did not improve.

As ideas like this emerged from my data, it became clear to me that more than just various knowledge sources were influencing Celina, Aileen and Bethany as they planned and taught writing. I began to re-examine my data to try to determine the various influences in each school and classroom context. I found

that the students, school, community, district, state, and federal government potentially influenced the way each teacher thought about writing instruction. These aspects of teaching context were ones that the teachers had little control over. However, there were some aspects of the teaching context that teachers could control – the pedagogies and methods they employed, the materials they accessed, and the colleagues they sought out. Additionally teachers had their own background knowledge and prior experiences to draw from that were neither within or outside of their control, but were none-the-less highly influential. Their evolving teaching identities also appeared to be shaping instructional decisions. So, using the broad idea of teaching context I eventually reshaped my research question to:

What influences beginning teachers in an urban setting as they translate and implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum into practice?

Sub questions were:

What knowledge sources do these teachers draw on?

What contextual factors influence their instruction decisions?

How do they manage the various knowledge sources and aspects of their context?

From these emerging findings about context, I created a visual to represent a teacher's teaching context. In the next chapter I share this visual with you and describe its potential role in learning to teach for Aileen, Celina and Bethany. Because it made sense to look at each teacher's context individually, it was at this point I decided to organize my work as three case studies, rather than by an

overarching theme or pattern. While this research remained focused on teacher knowledge, it also expanded to include the knowledge and influence of teaching context.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the logistics and time constraints on three practicing teachers and one busy graduate student. In my initial proposal, I stated that I would like to videotape each teacher 1-3 times each semester. My intention was to achieve the upper end of this. However, I was only able to videotape each teacher once in the fall semester, and, in the spring, I videotaped Celina only once, Bethany twice, and Aileen three times. The reason for only one videotaped observation in the fall this was due to the Gambell School District's policy that all research must be conducted between October 1st and April 30, and therefore I was not able to begin right away in September as I had hoped.

Aileen was the easiest teacher to schedule time with, and that makes sense as we will see that her teaching context provided her the most freedom and flexibility. Bethany would not let me observe at all during January and not in February until after the MEAP test had been given. She reported that she would be doing MEAP preparation during January, and would not be having regular writing workshops. Obviously, I honored her request. Celina and I had to reschedule a great number of videotaped observations due to many factors. Since Celina only taught Writing Workshop three days a week, we were already limited to those three days. Celina had teacher candidates from the local

university in her classroom on two of those three days, and decided that it would be problematic for me to videotape when the teacher candidates were present. That left one day a week that we could schedule observations. If something came up for either of us (e.g. an unannounced IEPC), rescheduling often took two or three weeks. While these limitations prevented me from collecting more data on each teacher, they also confirmed my emerging hypothesis that teaching context was shaping what the teachers did in the classroom, not only in terms of instructional decisions for writing, but also to schedule simple videotaped observations of regular writing instruction. On a related note, I was able to conduct all the interview, viewing sessions, and materials discussions that I had planned, because the teachers had more control over their after school time. These data collections all took place outside the school day, and therefore were much easier to manage.

This study was also limited by the small sample size. While studying three teachers allowed me to get to know each one at a deeper level, and to engage them in substantive conversations across the year, it also hindered me from making broad generalizations. My decision to use ethnographic methods to study these teachers required that I spend time with each of them in their classroom environments and that I look at their teaching over time. The more teachers in the study, the less likely it is that I would have had enough time to delve as deeply as I did into each case. Repeating the study with more teachers would permit a larger sample size and add to the generalizability of the findings. This is discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

Chapter 3

EXPLORING TEACHING CONTEXT AND ITS ROLE IN SHAPING TEACHING PRACTICE

McLaughlin & Talbert (2001) found that teaching context in high schools was shaped by both students and subject matter. In a longitudinal study, they “analyze[d] teachers’ work within fairly typical school organization structures and consider[ed] ways in which conditions in multiple administrative levels shape teachers’ daily work and careers” (p. 143). As a result of their work with sixteen high schools in four states, these researchers represented the multiple and embedded settings and contexts of schooling in a set of nested boxes. In earlier work, this group of researchers found that social and institutional contexts of teaching permeated every layer of school organization (Cohen, McLaughlin, & Talbert, 1993). They also believed that these forces shaped what went on in classrooms, the actual instructional decisions that teachers made on a daily basis. Further, they sensed that this aspect of teaching was basically ignored in the educational literature.

Other researchers have investigated the various contexts that teachers work within. Chubb & Moe (1990) argued that private schools free teachers from the bureaucratic constraints of public education, which in turn enabled them to be more responsive to parents and students. Apple (1982) and McNeil (1986) also believed that bureaucracy constrained teachers’ authority and often served to routinize the work that teachers did in schools. Other studies have shown that different social class structures of parents, schools, and communities influenced

what happened in them (Anyon, 1980; Lareau, 2000; Metz, 1978; Oakes, 1985). For example, Lareau (1987, 2000) looked at two elementary schools with differing levels of parents' social class. She found vast differences in the way parents intervened and supported education between the two schools and this caused teachers to react in different ways. This group of studies, provides further support that the context in which teachers work shapes their evolving practice.

Representing Teaching Context

This entire body of work has been influential in my own thinking about how various contexts interact and influence the work that teachers do in classrooms. In this chapter, I present a model of teaching context and I hypothesize about its application to not only Celina, Aileen and Bethany, but to all classroom teachers. Context is defined by Webster's New World Dictionary (2002) as "the whole background or environment." Most of the educational research that considers context interprets teaching context to include all the factors that shape, influence, or interact with the teacher and the act of teaching. I have interpreted teaching context in a similar way and the model presented below represents the factors that this study confirmed to be present for Aileen, Bethany and Celina.

Evolution of the Visual Model

The visual model that I present next evolved over the course of several months and through conversations with committee members and colleagues. What began as a metaphor of an explorer traveling uncharted territory to explain patterns in the data was first transformed into a Venn-like diagram. This diagram

was eventually shaped into a web visual, where ideas about connections, sizes of circles, the center of the visual, and the explanation of how it represented teaching context emerged. The teacher is the actor in these various contexts and is therefore centered in the middle of the teaching context. The outer circles in the web indicate the various factors that make up a teaching context. They include policy environments, students, community, colleagues, materials, and teaching tools. Teaching takes place in and among the various relationships and connections within the entire model.

A Sociocultural Framework

This study is situated in a sociocultural framework as represented in this teaching visual. Research shows that the social and cultural norms of any environment influence and shape what happens in that environment. Sociocultural theory helped me focus my research on the culture that existed in these schools and to determine what part of the existing culture influenced and interacted as teachers enacted and developed practice. Further, the teaching context in which teachers found themselves existed within specific cultural and social environments, and because these are crucial to understanding and working in schools, I have situated the teaching context visual within a sociocultural frame.

The Model of Teaching Context

Figure 1 represents a generic model of teaching context. The generic model emerged from the data as I noted that things other than knowledge were influencing the teachers' instructional decisions. Factors such as certain policies

and mandates, students, families, co-workers, and teachers' deeply held beliefs continued to emerge from the data and were some of the early categories I had for the visual model. I drafted a generic model from Celina's data (she was the first teacher whose data I analyzed) and then tried to apply each teacher's specific situation to the model as I continued to analyze the data. The model shifted and changed over time as I considered different labels for the circles, experimented with different kinds of visual models (such as a Venn Diagram), and thought about how best to represent the relationships between the various factors that make a teaching context. The circles in this visual represent the teacher and the aspects of teaching context identified above. The lines connect each aspect of the visual to each other aspect. As I proceeded with my analysis of the data, I hypothesized that these lines represented potential connections between the various aspects of teaching context. In this section, I will describe what is contained in each factor and then talk about the visual as a whole, describing in more detail the connections that the lines represent, and discuss other nuances of the teaching context visual.

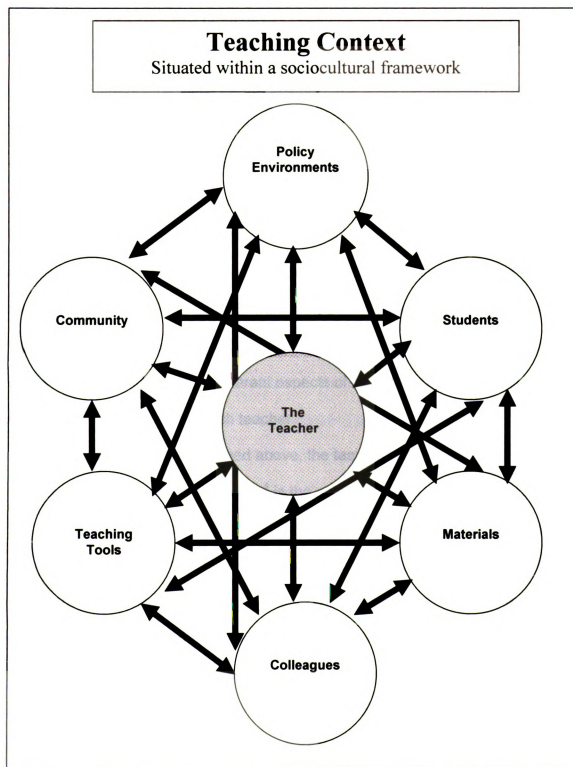


Figure 1. Teaching Context Model

The Circles

The circles are shaded differently because I wanted to represent that the outer circles are not the same as the teacher. Because the teacher is the one navigating and moving within her context, I wanted to represent her in a way that was different from the other circles. In subsequent chapters, the outer circles will vary in size for individual teachers, depending on how much each factor influences that teacher's instructional decisions. The largest circles in each teacher's teaching context indicate the aspects that were most influential during this study, as she learned to teach writing. It was interesting to discover that while all aspects of the teaching context existed for all three teachers, the sizes of the circles varied because different aspects of each teacher's teaching context had different influences for each teacher.

The teacher. As mentioned above, the teacher is in the center of the teaching context visual because she⁴ is the actor within the system and the one who is making instructional decisions. The teacher's identity forms the content of the teacher circle and includes demographic information, background experiences, beliefs and dispositions, and teaching persona. Where a teacher comes from, what she brings with her into the classroom, and what her beliefs are shape the kind of teacher she ultimately becomes. Palmer (1998) strongly argued that teachers must realize this and must embrace their own personal identities, going so far as to say, "good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). He believed that teaching techniques and

⁴ The pronoun "her" is used throughout this document when talking about teachers because all the teachers in this study were women. However, this is not to imply that the same ideas do not apply to male teachers, because I believe that they do.

knowledge about children are not all that are needed for good teaching and that “the connections made by good teachers are not held in their methods, but in their hearts – meaning hearts in its ancient sense, as the place where intellect and emotion and spirit will converge in the human self” (p. 11). My representation of the teacher embodied these sentiments as well as those of Danielwicz (2001) whose work was described in Chapter 2. In my work, who Celina, Aileen and Bethany were as teachers influenced, to a great extent, their evolving writing practice.

The teacher circle on the visual then, represents not only demographic information and ideas about beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions, but also those of emotion, intellect and spirit of each teacher. Educational background, work experience, family, sense of humor and teaching philosophy also exist in the identities that teachers establish. As was discussed in Chapter 1, identity is something that evolves over time (Clark & Peterson, 1986). It is also possible that teachers hold more than one identity at a time (a mother, a wife, a daughter, etc.) and the sometimes these multiple identities can be conflicting (Danielewicz, 2001). Celina, Bethany, and Aileen are beginning teachers, and as such, have newly-formed and still-evolving teaching identities. Contextual, social, and personal factors influence how they think about and shape teaching practice, and at the same time, these factors continually mold and reshape each teacher’s identity. The teachers’ identities in this study were influential in shaping their evolving writing practice.

Students. The students in a teaching context included the actual individual students in a classroom and their unique needs. These needs included social, emotional, academic, linguistic, cultural, and economic. The number of students in a particular classroom might also be a factor that influenced a teacher's decision making, as well as how the children interacted with each other. The kind of classroom environment that resulted from each particular mix of children, whether explicitly planned and designed by the teacher or not, is also represented by this circle. For Aileen and Celina, who their students were influenced the work they did. This was less so for Bethany, and as I describe her case in Chapter 6, we will see that Bethany did not ignore her students, rather her attention was focused on other aspects of her teaching context.

Community. Community included several features. First was the grade level because each grade level had its own inherent set of expectations, issues, constraints and affordances. Another feature of community was the school itself; including the morale of the building, the physical aspects of the building, and the status the school has within the larger community. A third feature of community was the neighborhood surrounding the school, from which most of the school's student population are drawn. The existence of a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the support of various local businesses, and the geographic location of the community within the district were all aspects of this part of community. Some schools within the Gambell School District were magnet schools – having a specific academic focus, and those kinds of differences shaped a particular

teacher's teaching context. The final aspect of community was whether the community was rural, urban, suburban, or has some other classification (e.g. a charter or parochial school).

Each of these features of community can influence how teachers make instructional decisions. Gambell is an urban school district, so that part of the teaching context was similar for Aileen, Bethany and Celina, even though their individual schools were slightly different. Grade level varied for these teachers, and in this study that aspect of teaching context was particularly relevant, because all three teachers were influenced by grade level as they made instructional decisions for teaching writing. As well, two of the three teachers were in magnet schools and for Bethany this was a contributing factor in the shaping of her writing practice.

Colleagues. Teachers sought support for their work from a variety of sources. In terms of human resources, teachers sought out other teachers – in their schools, in their district, and from their teacher preparation programs. In addition, the school principal and other support personnel (e.g. reading specialist, librarian) were potentially valued colleagues for classroom teachers. Some colleagues may not be sought out, but are assigned, such as mentors for beginning teachers. In some cases, mentors were supportive and helpful, in other situations they were almost invisible, and sometimes mentors created additional tensions for beginning teachers. Each of the teachers in this study sought out other professionals to encourage, collaborate and guide them in their development of writing practice. Aileen was the only one of the three who

seemed to benefit from being assigned a formal mentor by the Gambell School District, even though Celina was assigned a mentor during her first year, and the Gambell School District claims to provide mentors for all untenured teachers. A mentor was expected to support a beginning teacher's acclimation to the school and teaching. More important than a formal mentor however, was the presence of other, self-selected mentors, as all three of the teachers sought out informal mentors in their early years of teaching.

Materials. Teachers also sought out material resources. They looked for professional books, trade books, and Internet websites to support their teaching. They borrowed ideas from other teachers, attended workshops and conferences and sometimes went back to college to pursue an additional degree. Teachers became very good at accumulating a set of materials to support their instruction. This aspect of teaching context also included district provided and required materials, as well as manipulatives and other hands-on materials. While the sets of materials varied greatly for Aileen, Celina and Bethany, each sought out and used professional resources aside from their district selected and provided materials.

One professional development opportunity provided a wealth of materials for all three teachers in this study. *Literacy Instructional Frameworks Training* (LIFT) was a balanced literacy approach that was offered each semester by the local intermediate school district (ISD)(Intermediate School District, 2004). The workshops occurred weekly across a school semester, with substitute teachers provided by the district so that teachers could attend. The workshops focused on

a variety of instructional strategies including emergent literacy, comprehension frameworks, writing, text selection, and classroom management. Professional books were included as part of the workshops and teachers were able to continue to draw from the books even after their LIFT session ended. In addition, teachers were trained how to administer Michigan's Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP), a set of assessment tools to measure students' literacy abilities.

Teaching tools. In order to make informed instructional decisions, teachers drew from a set of teaching tools that had been developed throughout the course of their lives. Beginning when they were children in K-12 schools, teachers were absorbing and learning various ways to teach. In teacher preparation courses, and field experiences, novice teachers learned about a variety of methods and tools for delivering instruction. By the time teachers were assigned their first classroom, they likely had a repertoire of teaching tools from which to draw for planning and implementing instruction. Grossman and colleagues (1999) described teaching tools as falling into two categories. First were conceptual tools which included frameworks, principals, and ideas about teaching, learning, and literacy. These helped guide teachers in decision making in a broad sense. The second kind of tools were pedagogical tools that included the classroom practices, strategies, and resources that have immediate and local utility. So, in theory, a teacher would use conceptual tools to help her select the appropriate pedagogical tools. In my visual I have represented both conceptual and pedagogical tools in the teaching tools circle. Bethany, Celina and Aileen

demonstrated the existence of teaching tools and their reliance on such tools supported them as they taught writing.

Policy environments. The policy environments aspect of teaching context included various policies and mandates from the federal, state and local levels. It included high-stakes testing, standards based teaching, and federally funded grants. For this study, the policy environment for Aileen, Bethany and Celina was similar, since they all taught in the same district. In the final section of this chapter I describe this policy environment. Next however, I describe how the lines connecting various aspects of the teaching context represent potential tensions.

Connecting Lines

The lines showed the possible connections between the various parts of a teacher's context. They also represented the possible locations for tensions for each teacher. I used the terms tension and harmony throughout this work to describe the positive or negative situations that these connections brought. If a connection was negative, having two opposing viewpoints, constraining the teacher – I found this to cause tension for the teacher. Obviously many tensions existed for teachers between and among the various aspects of their teaching context. Some, however, were easily manageable or dismissed, and did not have a great influence on a teacher's instructional decisions. Other tensions however, were quite problematic and teachers were forced to find ways to deal with the tensions. Those tensions are the ones that I am most interested in and I

explore some of these tensions for Aileen, Bethany, and Celina in the upcoming chapters.

Not all the connections in a teaching context were negative however, and not all created tension. Some connections provided positive energy so that the teacher could continue working on teaching practice and is motivated to move forward. I termed these kinds of positive connections harmonious, and I will demonstrate that each teacher used some of this harmony to tackle or help her manage the tensions. Additionally teachers also used the positive energy from harmonious connections to work on some aspect of their writing practice and to plan for the future.

Acquiesce, accommodate or resist. Dealing with tensions might happen in a variety of ways. Borrowing from the work of Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson, I propose the terms acquiesce, accommodate and resist (2002). In their study of first year teacher, Andrea, these researchers found that Andrea acquiesced when she felt “handcuffed by requirements and at odds with the curriculum” (p. 196), accommodated when she found ways to move between her ideals and her realities, and resisted (only near the very end of her first year) when she opposed the curriculum. I will use these terms to explain the reactions that Celina, Aileen and Bethany had to the policy-related tensions inherent in their teaching contexts.

Finessing. Because Aileen, Bethany and Celina are the actors in their teaching contexts, it seems clear that they act or move in some way, throughout and among the various aspects of their teaching contexts. Throughout this work

I use the terms navigate, manage, and balance to refer to the ways the teachers maneuver. I introduce the term “finesse” to mean a precise and complicated system of manipulating and maneuvering certain aspects of teaching context as the teachers learned to teach writing during this study. The term finesse was originally revealed to me through a summary document of elementary teacher preparation published by the International Reading Association (2003). They claim that:

The better prepared teachers are so well grounded in their vision of literacy and their ability to teach reading that they are more comfortable finessing the system, enriching the program, and drawing from a repertoire of strategies to help struggling readers. (p. 7)

The more I considered what my data was revealing to me about the importance of teaching context in shaping evolving practice, I realized that Celina, Bethany and Aileen were learning how to finesse their teaching contexts.

It would obviously be very difficult for beginning teachers to attend to all of these influences at the same time so I hypothesize that beginning teachers must make choices. What they pay attention to matters. Some connections created tensions that could not be ignored and must be attended to. I provide specific examples of how Celina, Aileen and Bethany did this in the following chapters. In each of the following chapters (4-6) I present Bethany's, Aileen's and Celina's teaching contexts individually. For each I illustrate how the visual helps us make sense of how she is learning to teach writing. In each circle, I provide specific information for that teacher, and include only the lines in the visual that created areas of tension or harmony for each teacher. The individual visuals will help us see how each new teacher's journey of learning to teach can be vastly different

from any other new teacher's journey. I now conclude this chapter with a description of the common policy environments that Celina, Bethany and Aileen worked within during this study. In subsequent chapters I will show how each case helped me test and deepen my understanding of the visual as I tried to figure out how and if the visual "worked."

Celina's, Aileen's and Bethany's Policy Environment

The teaching context visual helped me realize the various aspects of teaching context. In this section of the chapter, I explain the various policies that influence the Gambell School District and the individual schools that Celina, Aileen, and Bethany teach in. This section is organized from the widest policy environments (i.e. at the federal level) to the state, district and local school levels.

Federal Level Policies

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

NCLB is the federal government's most recent policy governing the instruction of the nation's children. Signed by President Bush in January 2002, *NCLB* calls for:

increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for States and local educational agencies in the use of Federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children. (*US Department of Education, 2001*).

The president joined many policy makers and citizens when he claimed that "many of our nation's neediest students are being left behind" (*NCLB* website, 3/25/03). This revision of the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) required states to enact challenging standards in reading and mathematics and

to test annually all students in grades 3-8 to see if they were achieving those standards. Further, the act required that learning outcomes for all groups of students, disaggregated by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability and limited English proficiency, be written so that all groups become proficient by the year 2013. Schools that did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) as measured by the annual tests would be subjected to corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at improving student learning. Schools that met or exceeded AYP would be eligible for State Academic Achievement Awards. While the federal government required that states must measure its students' achievement, it was up to the individual states to develop and implement their own way to do this.

Reading First. While there are many facets and components of the *NCLB Act* (the document is over 1200 pages long), the part that interacts with this study is the Reading First grant. The President's Reading First initiative supported Bush's commitment to make sure that every child can read by the end of third grade by providing funding for schools that use scientifically-based reading programs. Six year grants were made available for states who then determined the sub-grants awarded to local communities. Because Reading First focuses on providing beginning readers with a strong foundation in reading, the grant targets mainstream K-3 classrooms. It is based on the findings of years of scientific research compiled and reported by the National Reading Panel (NRP)(2000). It is interesting to note that *NCLB* and Reading First target reading— not writing or any of the other components in the language arts. In fact, writing is never mentioned in the entire *NCLB* document. However, the *NCLB Act* did influence at least one

teacher in this study as she learned to teach writing within the constraints of the Reading First grant. It will become evident that Celina made instructional decisions for writing based on the mandates of time, materials, and pedagogy that existed because her school was awarded a Reading First grant.

The State Level

Reading First

The state of Michigan's Reading First grant eligibility was \$28.4 million per year for up to six years. The Department of Education for the state of Michigan published a list of those school districts that met the criteria for the grant (among those criteria were having 40% or more of students fall below the lowest category on the state reading test and having 15% of children living in poverty). Local school districts on the list were invited to submit a grant application adhering to the guidelines of the grant. The grant had to show how districts would provide ongoing professional development for its Kindergarten through third grade teachers in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (the five areas that comprised the results of the NRP's report). School districts also had to provide assurance that they would purchase and use materials, programs, strategies and instruction that were based on scientifically based reading research. Further, reading instruction must take place for ninety consecutive minutes every day, and should focus solely on the five areas listed above.

The Michigan State Department of Education was one of the first states in the nation to receive and begin implementation of the Reading First grant

(Michigan Department of Education, 2003). Student progress would be measured through scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for grades Kindergarten through third, and through the state assessment of reading test (Michigan Educational Assessment Program or MEAP) at grade 4 to provide longitudinal data. Schools that received the grant would be responsible for ensuring that every teacher in grades Kindergarten through third administered the DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) test at appropriate intervals, and maintained accurate records of student progress. The State of Michigan recruited current classroom teachers to act as facilitators and school districts agreed to grant the teachers a leave of absence. These teacher facilitators were assigned to a school within their own district and facilitators worked closely with teachers as they implemented the requirements of the Reading First grant. Since these teacher/facilitators were assigned to monitor the implementation and adherence to the Reading First grant, some classroom teachers felt they were being watched, and they were not pleased with the intrusive nature of this role.

As the evidence will show, Celina did not value or appreciate the presence of the Reading First facilitator assigned to her school. As Celina attempted to implement sound instruction – the same instruction that had been successful for her for the previous three years of teaching second grade, the Reading First facilitator continually reminded Celina of the expectations of the Reading First grant. Because the Reading First grant focused clearly on reading, and because Celina truly believed in teaching children to write, clear tensions existed in this

aspect of Celina's teaching context. As will become clear in Chapter 4, Celina believed reading and writing were parallel processes and that successful literacy pedagogies included both reading and writing in overlapping and interconnected ways. The existence of the Reading First grant contributed to this study ultimately being less about teaching writing and more about understanding the role teaching context had in shaping evolving practice.

Michigan Curriculum Framework

The state of Michigan claims to be committed to providing its children with the knowledge and skills they need to become successful and productive citizens. To this end, Michigan released the Michigan Curriculum Framework (MCF) in 1996 (Michigan Department of Education, MDE, 1996). For English Language Arts, the document lists twelve standards with several benchmarks within each standard. The document is arranged by early elementary, later elementary, middle school and high school. All three teachers in this study had used this document during their teacher education programs and were responsible for using the MCF to guide instruction in language arts, including writing, during this study.

Michigan Educational Assessment Program

Teachers were held accountable for teaching the curriculum (i.e. MCF) through a state-wide standardized test in all four content areas (Michigan's Educational Assessment Program, MEAP). MEAP scores are used to determine AYP for each school and therefore are important to various stakeholders, including teachers. Fourth grade students take the English language arts and

mathematics MEAP tests and fifth grade students take the science and social studies tests. The pressure of the MEAP test is important in this study for Bethany, a fourth grade teacher. The evidence will show that her teaching context was shaped heavily by the stress and high expectations placed on her and her students to perform well on the language arts MEAP test.

The language arts portion of the MEAP. The English Language Arts (ELA) portion of the MEAP test has three parts. The first part asks students to write on a specific topic or theme (e.g. loss or your best day ever). There are suggestions given for how to interpret the theme and students are allowed time to brainstorm, draft, revise and recopy. The second part of the test is focused on reading comprehension, where students are asked to read two texts of different genres, but focused around a similar topic. A third piece is listened to and students are asked questions about each text individually and across the texts as a set. The third part of the test requires students to write in response to the readings. The structure of this writing for fourth graders is usually compare/contrast. There is also writing on the fifth grade social studies test as students are asked to write a persuasive essay. The essay must include a clearly stated position, evidence from data provided in the question, and the use of one or more core democratic values. Knowing what the ELA MEAP test consists of is important for helping us understand the teaching context that Bethany worked within during this study. As we will see, Bethany's writing instruction revolved around preparing students for the various kinds of writing they were expected to write for the ELA MEAP.

Education Yes!

In 2003, the Michigan Department of Education developed a state wide accreditation system called *Education Yes!* This report card system is designed to help the state monitor student progress in order to comply with *NCLB*. Individual schools throughout the state were graded in a report card system, based on MEAP test scores, attendance rates, professional development programs, parent involvement, and several other factors. Sixty-seven percent of the school's grade was based on student achievement as measured by the MEAP while thirty-three percent was based on eleven performance indicators that can positively impact student learning. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was established in 1994 in Michigan and initially served to focus Title I schools and districts on increasing student achievement (Michigan Department of Education, 2004a). Since *NCLB*, the State of Michigan expanded AYP to focus on English language arts and mathematics, to report desegregated data for all subgroups, and to meet the requirements of the *NCLB Act*. The *Education Yes!* Report card and the report of AYP for each school are published and presented each year. Schools who fail to make AYP for two consecutive years are identified and are required to implement improvement plans (Michigan Department of Education, 2004b). Both Celina and Bethany taught at schools that had not met AYP the previous school year. In fact, Crestview, the school where Celina taught, was in its second year of not making AYP, hence the Reading First grant award. Teachers in schools that did not meet AYP felt immense public scrutiny and added stress for promoting large reading

achievement gains in their students. While Celina and Bethany never mentioned AYP during this study, as part of the larger policy environment, it seems important to mention and recognize this facet of their teaching context.

Michigan's New Teacher Mentoring Program

Since 1993, Michigan has required that "all new classroom teachers in the first three years of classroom teaching experience be mentored by one or more master teachers" (State of Michigan, 2004). The mentors should have demonstrated excellence in teaching, participate regularly in professional development activities, have the same certification or specialty area as the new teacher, and be located in the same building whenever possible. Mentors will receive training by the individual school districts. New teachers are to be supported in gaining knowledge of community, classroom management, parent/guardian interaction, curriculum alignment, diversity, networking, teacher evaluation, time management, use of volunteers, how to use resources, and knowledge of legal rights. As new teachers, Celina, Bethany, and Aileen were assigned mentors during their first three years of teaching. Bethany's mentor played a crucial role in her teaching context, while Aileen's mentor was less influential and although Celina had been assigned a mentor in her first three years, she did not have a mentor during this study as she was in her fourth year of teaching.

The Local Level

The Gambell School District

The Gambell School District is located in Gambell, a mid-sized industrial city, providing jobs in both the manufacturing and service industries. The demographics of Gambell include 65% white, 22% African American, 10% Hispanic, and 3% Asian (Free Demographics, 2003). At the time of this study, the Gambell School District consisted of 29 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools and several alternative education centers, and covered 64 square miles (Carpenter, 2002). Recently the district had reconfigured some of the elementary schools to include pre-Kindergarten, others to include sixth grade, and closed one elementary building. The district enrolled 17,154 students, employed 1389 teachers and 1155 other staff in 2002-2003 and had a student teacher ratio of 16.4. Gambell faced a large drop out rate (8.18% for 2002-2003 (Aguirre, 2003)) and graduated 689 students in 2002. Fifty-seven percent of students in the district are economically disadvantaged (Standard and Poor's, 2004). The free and reduced hot lunch percentage for the district is 48% and 19% of students qualify for special education. The racial distribution of the district includes 5% Asian, 39% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 40% White. These factors are indicative of urban settings (Anyon, 1997; Mirel, 1999) and as such Gambell is considered an urban district. This setting was chosen specifically for this study because I wanted to look at how beginning teachers in urban settings learned to teach writing.

Gambell's Reading First Grant. The Gambell School District applied for and was awarded the Reading First grant because a number of its schools had not met AYP. Both Bethany's school, Parkside, and Celina's school, Crestview

were among those buildings who received funds from the Reading First grant. In those schools implementation included the installation of a ninety minute time block for reading instruction each day. During those ninety minutes of uninterrupted time (no specials classes such as art, music, physical education or library; field trips; or recesses could occur during that time), teachers were to engage children in the five elements that the NRP discuss as supportive of reading growth – phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Also during this mandated time, teachers were to use only the district approved and provided commercial materials – those that were chosen because they were based on scientific research. In addition to the literacy facilitators the State of Michigan assigned to each building, Gambell maintained a literacy coach in each elementary school to not only help with the implementation of the Reading First grant, but to support teachers in all areas of literacy instruction, including DIBELS and other diagnostic testing. These mandates – of time and materials – and the presence of new reading support personnel, changed the face of teaching writing for some teachers in the district. As we will see, Celina was one of these teachers who had to learn how to teach writing under very different constraints during her fourth year of teaching. These constraints did not affect Bethany in the same way, because she taught fourth grade, and the Reading First grant focused on grades K-3.

Sequenced Instructional Manuals. About four years ago the Gambell School District created Sequenced Instructional Manuals⁵ (SIMs) to support teachers in their implementation of state curriculum. SIMs existed for grades 2-8,

⁵ This is also a pseudonym.

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and provided teachers with specific content objectives for each of the four core subject areas (language arts, math, science, and social studies) for each of the four marking periods. There were several reasons the district decided to implement the SIMs (Pardo, 2003). First, some teachers felt that the state's curriculum was large and cumbersome to navigate. Further, it included standards for lower elementary and upper elementary only – it did not have specific grade level expectations. The SIMs document broke the curriculum down by grade level and it contained all core objectives on a large, one-page, fold-out sheet. This allowed teachers easier access to the document, and encouraged teachers to use the required curriculum. Second, the district combated a high mobility rate and many students moved between the twenty-nine elementary schools. Implementing the SIMs across the district made it more likely that students who moved from one school to another within the district would not miss any important content as teachers in all schools should be in about the same place at the same time instructionally. Third, the district hoped to make teachers more accountable for teaching the content contained in the curriculum document and now in the SIMs. One way they hoped to do this was through the administration of a nine week test, covering the material designated on the SIMs for the corresponding nine week period. Both Celina and Bethany were responsible for adhering to the SIMs and administering the nine week tests. As will become evident, this was problematic only in the sense that both Celina and Bethany were already working under policy constraints (Celina as a new Reading First building and Bethany as a fourth grade teacher in a building that

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had not met AYP, and who felt ultimately responsible for her students' MEAP scores). The SIMs was not available for first grade teachers, and therefore did not affect Aileen's instructional decisions.

Gambell's magnet schools. Three years ago the Gambell School District was awarded a three year federal grant totaling \$6.4 million to create five magnet schools. These opened in the fall of 2001 with open enrollment for students in Gambell and the surrounding school systems. The magnet schools' goals focused:

on improving student achievement, increasing enrollment, developing greater racial balance in the five buildings, and using innovative methods and instructional programs to challenge students by providing enhanced educational experiences featuring in-depth, hands-on exploratory activities. (GSD Annual Report, 2003)

Two middle schools and three elementary schools served as magnet schools during this study (2003-2004). Parkside, where Bethany taught was a Performing Arts Magnet School and Forest Glen, where Aileen taught was a Math, Science and Technology Magnet School. For both Bethany and Aileen, their teaching contexts were shaped, in part, by the magnet status of the schools where they taught.

The three teachers in this study teach at three different elementary schools within the Gambell School District. Characteristics of the three schools, as described in the text above, are summarized in Table 2 below.

	Crestview	Forest Glen	Parkside
Teacher	Celina	Aileen	Bethany
Grades	K-5	K-6	K-6
Reading First Grant?	Yes	No	Yes
Magnet School?	No	Yes – Science,	Yes – Fine and

		Math and Technology	Dramatic Arts
Made AYP (2002-2003)	No	Yes	No

Table 2. Characteristics of schools in the study during the 2003-2004 school year

Table 2 makes it clear that Crestview, where Celina taught, did not make AYP during the previous school year and as such is now a *Reading First* school. She did not teach at a magnet school. Bethany's school, Parkside, also did not make AYP in the previous school year, and was also a recipient of the *Reading First* grant. However, Bethany did teach in a magnet school focused on the fine and dramatic arts. Aileen was also at a magnet school. Forest Glen focused on science, math and technology. Forest Glen did make AYP the year preceding this study and they were not awarded a *Reading First* grant. Each of the factors listed here were influential parts of the teaching contexts for Bethany, Aileen, and Celina as will be evident in the next three chapters.

Setting up the Case Studies

Having situated this study in the field of learning to teach writing in urban schools, discussed my methodology, and put forth a hypothesis for and visual representation of teaching context, I now turn to the case studies of each teacher. In Chapter 4 we learn how Celina managed the tensions between her policy environments, her self-selected teaching tools, her students, and her identity. Further, we will see that because harmony existed between Celina's teaching toolkit and her community, identity, colleagues, materials, and students,

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Celina was afforded the opportunity to modify and improve upon her writing instruction.

In Chapter 5 we learn how Aileen managed the tensions between her community, her teaching tools, her colleagues, and her own identity. Additionally we see how she managed the tension between her own cultural background and the varied and different cultural backgrounds of her students. Finally, I show how Aileen used the positive energy that resulted from the harmonious connections between her teaching tools and the way they interacted with her students, her materials, and her own identity to achieve her writing goals across the year and to plan for the following school year. In Chapter 6, the story of Bethany helps us see how she dealt with multiple and overlapping tensions between her policy environments, her community, and her colleagues. Interwoven within these same facets of her teaching context, Bethany had moments of harmony, and I will illustrate how she grew and reflected as a teacher of writing across the school year.

Chapter 4

"WE BEGIN WRITING IN THE NINETY-FIRST MINUTE: WRITING INSTRUCTION IN CELINA'S CLASSROOM"

This chapter begins to provide support for the hypothesis that emerged from this work that teaching context, in a broad sense, matters for learning to teach. Telling the story of Celina and looking at the various aspects of her teaching context helps us understand how she learned to teach writing to her second grade students. I will argue that Celina learned to teach writing by navigating the tensions and harmonies exerted on her by the various contexts that surrounded her – community, students, colleagues, materials, teaching tools, identity, and policy environments. Among these factors the most influential for Celina were the policy environments inherent in her current teaching assignment. Further, this chapter will provide examples of how Celina navigated, balanced, and over time finessed her teaching context as she moved from a beginning teacher to one with more experience. Celina's story is important because it permits a close examination of a teacher who has maintained a fairly constant and stable teaching context across the first four years of her teaching career – something that is uncommon among many beginning urban teachers (Dyson and the San Francisco East Bay Teacher Study Group, 1997).

Celina's Writing Workshop

A focused gaze across the brightly lit classroom reveals twenty second-grade writers engaged in a variety of events during a writing workshop. Two boys, heads close together, talk excitedly about the video game that is the focus of one of the boy's writing, his hands waving emphatically as he demonstrates a

move from the game that he has described in his writing. A small, round table shows three children in various stages of illustrating published books, markers spread like a rainbow across the table. Several children are writing intently, their shoulders and heads hunched over close to the desk, pencils moving slowly but deliberately across the paper in front of them. Another child is drawing a concept web, glancing back occasionally to look at the one his teacher modeled minutes before in a whole class mini-lesson. A small girl is reading to a friend from her writing journal, and she stops occasionally to make a correction on her paper. Other children are sitting quietly, looking around the room as they contemplate what they will work on in today's writing workshop. In the back of the room, Celina, their teacher, is gathering the teaching points checklists (a checklist of writing skills that Celina wants her second grade students to master during the school year) that she will use with each child as she conducts several writing conferences during the day's workshop. To an observer, the room has a positive hum – work is happening here - intellectual, creative and focused work.

A Typical Workshop

During the 2003-2004 school year, Celina's writing workshop followed a predictable and similar pattern. Writing workshop began with the children seated on a carpeted area of the room observing a 10 minute mini-lesson where Celina modeled writing on large chart paper. Next was a 3-5 minute transition time where students collected materials, went back to their seats, and listened to a brief reminder of the rules and expectations for the workshop. During the next 25-30 minutes students wrote new stories, added to or completed stories already

started, read stories to classmates, illustrated published books, and conferenced with Celina. The workshop ended each day with children cleaning up and putting away their materials. Most writing workshops were about 45 minutes in length and they occurred three days a week.

Establishing routines. Celina's writing workshop was a key feature of her writing instruction, one she firmly believed would help her students become life long writers who enjoy writing. She purposefully and thoughtfully crafted the writing workshop over the past three years, changing and adding elements each year to best meet the needs of her students. During the last twenty years, researchers and teachers of writing in elementary schools, like Celina, have found ways to be successful using the writing workshop model (Atwell, 1998; Calkins, 1995; Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 2003; Graves, 1994). One of the most important aspects of successful writing workshops is the establishment and maintenance of regular rules and routines – a stable structure which frames the activities of the workshop (Atwell, 1998; Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1998). Celina had established a routine for her writing workshop, and across the school year she added some additional and more specific guidelines. In this way, Celina continued to learn about teaching writing.

Mini-lessons. Mini-lessons compromise one of the most common instructional components of the writing workshop model and are focused in a number of areas (Calkins, 1986; Christie et al., 1975). The content and format of the mini-lessons are determined based on the needs of the students in the class and the teacher's curriculum. A mini-lesson is different than the presentational

style that Hillocks (1986) found because it is shorter, it serves as a springboard to actual writing by students and it is shaped by both the curriculum and the current needs of students. Celina began each writing workshop with a mini-lesson, focusing her modeling of writing on what she knew about her curriculum (e.g. fantasy genre), and what her students needed (e.g. over-reliance on the word “like” in their writing).

Conferencing. During a typical writing workshop, another regular routine is that of a writing conference. Conferences occur between teacher and student and between students. Conferencing provides an opportunity for the teacher to support an individual writer during the writing act. Celina performed conferences during every writing workshop during this school year; working individually with her students to support their unique needs. In urban schools, like Crestview, when teachers are working with students who may have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds from them, conferences provide a time for the teacher to work individually with students on specific language and word skills that may be unique for one child (Lensmire, 1995).

Teaching Writing in an Urban School

Researchers in urban settings have found flexibility to be a key factor when using models such as the writing workshop (Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 1993, 2003; Graves, 1983; Lensmire, 2000). Dyson (1993) describes the “permeable curriculum” that one teacher, Louise, implemented where she was open to the language and experiences the children brought with them to school. While Louise did have a schedule, it was flexible, and it permitted her to introduce her

students to the official school curriculum in ways that permitted successful writing experiences. Based on conversations with Celina, about the way her writing workshop had evolved and been shaped over the past four years, it seems likely that Celina realized the necessity for flexibility so that she could best meet the needs of her particular students.

Celina's Teaching Context

As discussed earlier, I propose that teachers learn to teach by managing or finessing the various tensions of their teaching context, while at the same time gaining energy for teaching from the harmonious connections inherent in that teaching context. Celina's specific teaching context was comprised of the general categories of policy environment, community, students, colleagues, materials, teaching tools, and identity. Figure 2 below illustrates some aspects of her personal teaching context as well as some of the relationships between them. In the remainder of this chapter I will briefly describe each of the aspects of Celina's teaching context and then describe several examples of how this context affected her instructional decisions for writing.

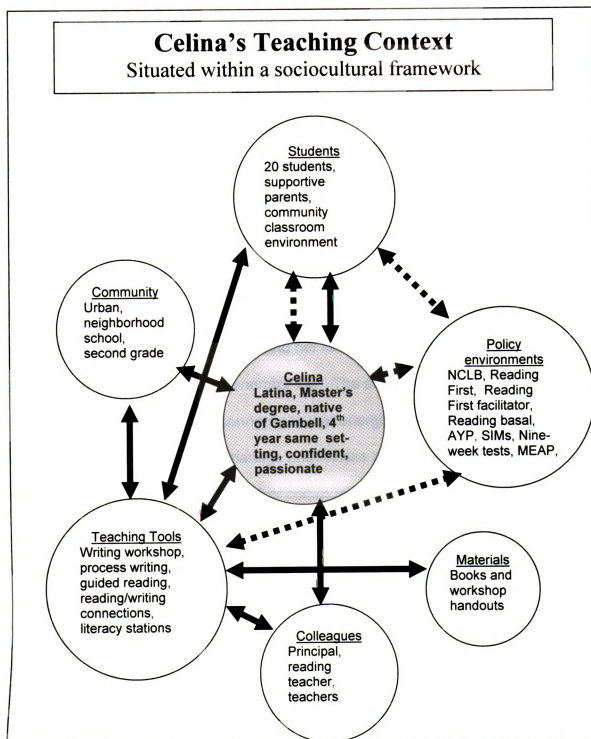


Figure 2. Celina's Teaching Context

The size of the circles in this visual matters – the larger the circle, the more powerful the influence this factor had on Celina's instructional decisions. Policy environments, teaching tools and her students had more influence on Celina's decisions than did her community, her colleagues, her students and the available materials. If you remember from the earlier presentation of the generic teaching context visual, connections exist between all elements, and each connection is potentially a point for tension or harmony. In Celina's teaching context, the dashed lines indicate tensions; between policy environments and Celina's teaching tools and between her students and her own identity. There was also some tension between her students and her identity, but there were also some aspects of this relationship that energize her. The solid lines represent areas of harmony for Celina – positive connections that energized and motivated her, and that helped her to find ways to manage and finesse the tensions. Celina's teaching identity matched well with her community, her teaching tools, the support she received from her colleagues, and her students. There was also a harmonious connection between the materials Celina drew from for teaching and her teaching tools. Her teaching tools also aligned with her students, her colleagues, and the community.

Obviously, connections existed between each of the other categories. For example, the school structure of having SIMs and nine-week tests was likely a direct reaction to the community of Gambell. However, as Celina learned to teach writing during this study, this connection – even though it may be tenuous – was not an influence on her instructional decisions. She accepted the fact that

she taught in an urban district, where student achievement scores were low, and that part of her school district's response was to implement the SIMs and nine-week tests. So the lack of connecting lines in the visual does not indicate that connections did not exist, merely that they were of such a nature that they did not influence Celina's instructional decisions for writing. It is also certainly possible, that some of these connections were more influential to Celina, but were invisible to me through classroom and video observations, viewing sessions, and interviews.

Celina's Identity

During this study, Celina was a 29 year old Latina. She grew up in Gambell, and attended the Gambell School District from Kindergarten through eighth grade. Growing up in Gambell, one of seven children, she explained that "I didn't get those experiences [traveling, vacations, art museums], and it's not because my parents aren't good parents, but because they didn't have the money" (Spring Interview, p. 28). She attended a local suburban high school and community college, and eventually earned her elementary teaching certificate at a nearby university. Celina chose to teach in Gambell even though she was also offered a job in a nearby suburban district.

I was a Gambell child, and I like the kids... This is more reality. It's basically us against the world. I always say that Gambell School District probably has the most creative teachers. We work with less, do more, have big classrooms, and make it successful. (Fall Interview, p. 6)

Celina's commitment to urban school teaching, and Gambell influenced who she was as a teacher and shaped the way she navigated and managed the dilemmas within her teaching context. She was passionate about helping her students –

many of who she characterized as “needy”. Celina was in her fourth year of teaching during this study; having taught second grade for all four years at Crestview Elementary. She recently received her Master’s degree in Curriculum and Teaching from the same university where she earned her bachelor’s degree.

Celina’s Policy Environments

As described earlier, the district (Gambell) and state (Michigan) that Celina taught in were implementing the first year of a federally funded Reading First grant. Celina’s school, Crestview, was a Reading First school, and as a second grade teacher she was expected to adhere to the mandates of the grant. Crestview had failed to make AYP in the 2002-2003 school year, thus qualifying them for the grant. Crestview also asked its teachers to adhere to the district mandated curriculum (SIMs) and to administer the nine-week tests (for grades 2-6). Each spring, teachers also administered the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. In addition, fourth and fifth grade teachers gave the MEAP test in late January/early February.

Celina’s Community

Crestview, as part of the Gambell School District, is an urban school. It is primarily a neighborhood school, drawing children from nearby homes. One large government subsidized housing project is also within the boundaries of the school and many of Crestview’s children live in these projects. Celina described the parents from the school as supportive, recalling that about half of her students’ parents usually attend field trips and class events (e.g., a fiesta). “We have a really strong PTA too, we’re very fortunate” (Fall Interview, p. 5). Celina’s

second grade setting means that she used the SIMs documents to guide her curriculum, she administered the nine-week tests, and she gave the Iowa Test in the spring. While the MEAP is not given to second grade students, Celina nonetheless supported the school's collective goal to work towards the content expectations of the MEAP.

Celina's Students

Celina had twenty students for most of the school year (a new student entered the classroom in late spring). Of these students, two were diagnosed with ADD, one with ODD (Oppositional Deviant Disorder), one was mildly autistic, two were ESL (Spanish and Arabic were the first languages), and one student received special education services. Several children were bilingual (English and Spanish). Eleven children were White, six were Hispanic, and five were Black. These numbers represented a higher percentage of Latino children than the school's average, but because Celina is Latina, some of the parents of the Latino children requested Celina, and the principal honored these requests. While Celina was fluent in Spanish she spoke only English in her classroom. Celina described her children as "very needy. They need your approval, they need extra support, they need hugs. (They) are very immature... very young" (some of her students began kindergarten at age 4, so several of Celina's students began the year as six-year olds) (Viewing Session 2, pp. 44-45).

Building a classroom community where all children are respected was very important to Celina. "Making a community and building a team... it's important to teach them those skills...to respect one another. Having community

in school is important. This is our little family” (Spring Interview, pp. 25-26). As an observer, this sense of community was observable in the way students utilized the materials and space in the classroom, and in the way they treated me as a “visitor.” Children were respectful and busy, and seemed to know the expectations for their work and their behavior.

Celina's Colleagues

Along with the unsolicited resources of a Reading First grant facilitator (whom I have listed as part of Celina's policy environment), Celina had the positive support of other colleagues. The reading teacher in her building, her principal and colleagues at Crestview, and her friends who taught at other schools in Gambell provided her with support. For example, several teachers who Celina had known from her undergraduate program, were in the Master's program with her. Because they all taught in Gambell and met regularly in classes at the university, Celina could and did engage in intellectual conversations about teaching. These relationships energized Celina, helping her to discover new ways to approach teaching dilemmas.

Celina's Materials

While the Gambell School District had mandated the use of a particular reading basal program (again, I've included this in Celina's policy environment), Celina drew from many other materials to inform her teaching of writing. Her material resources included professional books she had gleaned from her Master's degree program, from various workshops and conferences, and that she had purchased upon recommendations of other educators. She also drew

from a wide range of children's books, leveled readers, manipulatives that she used for literacy centers (e.g. letter cards, wipe-off boards), and commercially purchased "workbooks." Celina eagerly sought out materials that would support her teaching toolkit and her personal identity, so that she could best support her students' learning.

Celina's Teaching Tools

Celina's toolkit contained pedagogical tools (Grossman, et al., 1999) that were both conceptual and practical. Some tools, such as process writing, writing workshop, integrated language arts, and literacy stations were developed through her teacher education program and her own classroom experiences. Other tools, such as basal readers, guided reading groups, rubric-based writing, and phonics workbooks were mandated by the Reading First grant and her school district. She was trained by her district, and this training was reinforced by the Reading First facilitator, in the use of these kinds of tools, and Celina was expected to use them to teaching reading.

Celina Manages and Finesses Tensions

I argue that Celina managed the tensions created by the various aspects of her teaching context and used the positive energy from harmonious connections to grow and learn as a teacher of writing. In the next section I discuss findings that support these assertions. First, I will show that because of the tension that existed between policy environments, Celina's teaching tools, her classroom, and her identity, Celina felt constrained and ultimately decided to teach writing in two distinct ways. Second, I will further illustrate that because of

this tension, Celina finessed some of the district and Reading First mandates to fit what she determined was best practice for her students. Third, we will see that because harmony existed between Celina's teaching toolkit and her community, identity, colleagues, materials, and students, Celina was afforded the opportunity to modify and improve upon her writing instruction. Finally, the chapter concludes with discussion about the findings within the teaching context visual and learning to teach writing.

Celina's Additional Writing Instruction

Because Celina believed in process writing and the writing workshop, she remained adamant about using these pedagogical tools, and three days a week she maintained a writing workshop similar to the description in the vignette earlier in this chapter. However, Celina believed that her students would not be equipped to take district and state standardized tests if the only writing instruction they received was through the writing workshop. "When we have writing workshop I want it to be fun and free. (Students) don't have to follow some formula, but they can write from within" (Materials Discussion, p. 8). Celina felt that the rubric-driven, formulaic writing found on standardized tests (i.e. the nine-week tests and MEAP) were not fun, and because students were prompted, given a genre, and assessed on mechanics more than ideas, she felt that her students would not be able to write freely. She cared about how her students were interpreting the formulaic writing and she claimed:

My students have a really hard time with ...writing that's formulaic, and I think it's because it's regurgitate and spit, regurgitate and spit. It's hard...getting them to write exactly what they're supposed to say. It's not connecting to them...because it's not real. (Materials Discussion, p. 32)

In this same conversation, she went on to describe the most recent nine week test where her students were asked to write a friendly letter. She felt her students were so frustrated with trying to remember the date, the salutation, to indent, to address the purpose of the letter, that “they couldn’t write from the heart like we usually do when we write a letter. They had to...follow a script” (Materials Discussion, p. 33).

Teaching Formulaic Writing

Because of the tension caused by policy environments (in terms of standardized testing) and her own beliefs and pedagogical tools for teaching writing, Celina decided to provide additional writing instruction for her students. She used the time on the two days when she did not do writing workshop to teach what she termed “formulaic” writing. She used the rubrics provided by the state and district to explicitly teach the genres and skills of writing her students would be formally assessed on. She modeled this kind of writing for her students, but she did so in a context of the rubric and how they could become savvy and effective test takers. The focus in this instruction was on product, not process as it was during writing workshop. Celina responded to the policy climate by making distinctions and separations, rather than trying to merge two opposing pedagogical tools (i.e. that of writing workshop and that of standardized test preparation). Because she wanted her children to develop a passion for writing, she maintained the writing workshop. “As far as writing for enjoyment, (students) really like writing workshop” (Viewing Session 1, p. 49). But, because she feels obligated to her students and wants to prepare them for the

standardized tests, she also teaches them how to succeed with “formulaic” writing. She states:

[Students] know the difference, when we’re going to really practice our writing skills, our strategies...to really work on the formulaic, standardized testing. They have to know that (it is) never going to go away. (Materials Discussion, pp. 8-9)

Even though Celina experienced the tension created by this aspect of school structure as negative and constraining, she found a way to accommodate district and state policy while at the same time remaining true to her teaching tools as well as her own beliefs and in accordance with previous teaching experiences (i.e. her identity).

Maintenance Mondays and the Ninety-First Minute

Integrated Language Arts

The same tension that caused Celina to separate writing workshop from formulaic writing, also influenced another decision related to writing and the language arts. Celina had always taught language arts through integration. She reported that in the first three years of teaching, she embedded reading, writing, listening and speaking through the use of themes. She used trade books, literacy stations (i.e. centers), and guided reading groups to build not only writing skills and strategies, but also to teach reading. During this study, the expectations of the Reading First grant created tensions for Celina because she wanted to continue teaching in integrated ways, and the Reading First grant called for a “reading only” approach. Specifically, because Reading First asked teachers to teach only the five elements of reading instruction that the National Reading Panel report (2000) found supported reading achievement (fluency,

vocabulary, comprehension, phonics, and phonemic awareness). Writing, and in particular, writing workshop was not supposed to be part of this mandatory, ninety minutes per day, of reading instructional time. Additionally the teachers at Crestview were expected to use the district provided basal reader for this ninety-minutes of instruction. Celina's prior experiences, the professional resources she was reading, professional development workshops she had attended, and her pedagogical toolkit reinforced that thematic, integrated language arts instruction was appropriate and supportive of student's reading achievement. Thus the tension.

Managing the Tension with Maintenance Mondays

In order to manage this tension, Celina did two things. First, she implemented what she termed "Maintenance Mondays," and second, she continued to do writing workshop – she just waited each day for the ninety-first minute in order to begin the workshop. Because Celina was expected to use the basal reader her district had provided, she introduced the story of the week to her class each Monday. She did pre-reading activities (e.g. vocabulary, phonics) as suggested by the basal's teaching guide, and then played the audio CD of the story (modeling fluency) and asked her students to follow along in the readers. She then led a discussion of the story elements (comprehension). During the remainder of the week Celina drew from her thematic units from previous years to organize and maintain literacy stations that would support her own conceptual understanding of language arts as an integration of reading and writing. She maintained some literacy stations that focused on the five elements of the NRP,

others that focused on the integration of the language arts, and occasionally had stations that made content area connections (this also was discouraged by the Reading First grant).

Reading and writing connections. Because Celina believed in the existence of strong connections between reading and writing, she wanted to find ways to help her students realize these connections. “Maybe some people have an intrinsic ability to just construct words on a page, but ... young children need exposure to good literature, a lot of literature” (Fall Interview, pp. 11-12). Celina read aloud to her students three times a day and during read alouds took time to talk to her students about how an author created a picture through his/her words, or how a particular author’s craft was appealing or distracting. Celina felt that “using literature in and out of writing workshop allows the chance to make a big deal about what authors do. Good writers make you want to read a book over and over again” (Spring Interview, p. 8). Maintaining writing workshop was an important way that Celina made reading and writing connections clear to her students. While some teachers stopped doing writing workshop because of the Reading First expectations, Celina was adamant about its continued use. Over the course of the school year, Celina commented a number of times, “on the ninety-first minute, we start writing workshop” (e.g. Fall Interview, p. 29). During writing workshop she was able to model how good writers reread what they write, listening to see if it makes sense, revising and rethinking the text as they consider their audience. Celina encouraged her students to reread their own texts, and asked them to read their pieces to their classmates in preparation for

conferencing with her. She began each of her writing conferences by asking students to read her what they had written. Across the school year, Celina was observed making explicit connections between what good readers and good writers do. Even though a tension existed for Celina, caused by the expectations of policy environments and Celina's views on integrating reading and writing, Celina found a way to navigate and balance this tension, foregrounding her knowledge about her students and some of her pedagogical teaching tools (e.g. reading and writing connections).

Celina Uses an Affordance in her Teaching Context to Improve Writing Workshop

Over the previous three years, Celina had been adapting and crafting her teaching practice of writing. Because she enjoyed teaching writing through the writing workshop, and she felt that she students were able to progress as writers, positive connections existed between her chosen teaching tool (i.e. writing workshop) and all other aspects (except for the policy environments) of her teaching context (you may want to refer back to the teaching context visual, and to notice all the solid lines coming into and going out from Celina's teaching tools). These positive connections between teaching context elements provided Celina with energy and motivated her to continue to fine-tune her implementation of writing workshop. During this study, her fourth year of teaching, Celina set two personal goals for her writing workshop.

Conferences

First, she wanted to improve the way she conferenced with her young writers so that she could meet with each one regularly. At the beginning of the

year Celina expressed her desire to conference every time she did writing workshop, and to maintain the conference with each child for at least five minutes so that she could adequately support each student's growth as a writer. Near the end of her third year of teaching, Celina had attended a workshop where a second grade teacher talked about conferencing with one group of students each day, so that by the end of the week all children had been engaged in at least one writing conference. Celina believed she could easily implement this instructional strategy since her children already sat in small groups. She hoped conferencing this way would help her eliminate the long line of children that had formed during writing workshop the previous year, as children waited for her to conference with them.

Modeling

Celina's second goal was to model writing every day for her students. Celina felt that her students did not know how good writers thought about writing, how they found ideas and wrote about them, and how they engaged readers. She felt many of her students did not see the adults in their lives as writers, and she wanted to provide a positive role model for them. She decided to model writing for her students at the beginning of every writing workshop; varying the genre to match her district curriculum (i.e. Sequenced Instructional Manuals – SIMS). Across the year, she also planned to use different brainstorming techniques to meet the developmental needs of her students. Celina believed that she could embed reading/writing connections, specific writing skills (i.e. punctuation and capitalization) and subject matter content through her model

writing. She absolutely believed that modeling was the most important part of her writing workshop and that children needed to see writing modeled every single day.

I feel modeling is the key, modeling and teaching strategies and showing, sharing my ideas with them, and showing them what I do as a writer. (It helps them become better writers and I think that's so important. (Spring Interview, p. 17)

Celina Finesses her Writing Instruction

During the school year, Celina worked simultaneously on implementing both of these goals.

Modeling. Celina was observed beginning each mini-lesson with modeling where she thought aloud about her process for writing and the decisions that writers make during writing. She modeled the planning stage of writing, "My topic today is spring. My favorite season is spring. I'm going to pick four things that I do in spring time" (Video Observation 2, p. 1). She used her plan to write, frequently rechecking it to make sure her writing followed her plan. She considered word choice carefully, used detail, reread her text often, edited, revised, and commented on how hard it was to write well. Celina often stressed the "rough" nature of initial writing:

This is only my rough draft. I see some things that I really need to work on in here, and I'm going to go back and make those changes. Remember, this is my rough, so if it looks a little rough, it's okay. (Video Observation 2, pp. 2-3)

Across the year she was observed using a variety of genres in her model writing (e.g., fable, personal narrative, poetry), as well as a range of ways to plan (e.g., webbing, TAP – topic, audience, picture plan). Earlier in the year, Celina had

expressed how uncomfortable she used to feel when thinking aloud for her students, and attributed her lack of consistent modeling in previous years to her discomfort with this process. But near the end of the year she claimed, "It's amazing how much you can grow in a year. Where it just becomes second nature to the point where you feel comfortable and confident. I'm doing it, and this is what works for me" (Spring Interview, p. 18).

Celina reported that she focused her model writing on certain writing strategies and skills based on her students' needs.

A lot of times when I'm checking their writing workshop journals, I'm thinking, oh, this is where I need to go back, or I can see that they are writing exactly how I did it. [I'll ask myself] What does the majority of my class need to build in writing? What do I have to do to make them better writers? So I really focus on those elements. (Materials Discussion, pp. 26-27)

In her final interview, Celina acknowledged that she felt good about meeting this goal. She modeled writing every single time she did writing workshop across the entire year, and she felt that her students benefited from the modeling.

If I said we're going to write on this topic, I would be very confident that all my students would be able to do that without a problem. With punctuation, sentence structure, everything down. I think that's a good feeling, to leave with at the end of the year. (Spring Interview, p. 15)

Conferencing. Celina began the year implementing her new idea for conferencing –the one she had observed and heard about at a workshop near the end of the previous school year. She used a teaching points checklist that she received at a district sponsored workshop, and she met with one group of students each day. At the beginning of the year, Celina was observed sitting at a back table with her checklists, and calling students from one group back to the

table, one at a time. Later in the year, Celina actually joined a group and worked her way around and through the group, conferencing with each student in the group, her checklist on a clipboard. By the end of the year, Celina had returned to the back table and was calling random students back to conference with her. In reflecting back on whether or not Celina met her goal for conferencing, and what she learned from the experience, she was very optimistic.

Calling [students] randomly helped me meet with more children. When I was doing it by group, I was feeling like I was getting behind. I wasn't meeting the needs of every student so I felt this [calling students randomly] was a better strategy. (Spring Interview, p. 4)

Additionally Celina noted that when she was moving around the room it did not feel normal to her. She felt more able to focus on the child and the content of the conference when she was sitting in a consistent place. She speculated that when she moved around, it may have made the children more fidgety and caused more of them to approach her during a conference.

Even though she eventually went back to conferencing with students when they were ready, she did implement some routines that eliminated the lines that formed the previous year. Celina established and maintained a set of "expectations" that she posted on the chalkboard that included: (1) you must start a new story when you finish one, (2) proofread and reread your story for meaning, and (3) read your story to two other people before you are ready to conference with Mrs. R. This helped each conference proceed more easily since students' pieces were in better shape, and it also helped students know what to do when they were finished. Near the end of the year, Celina spoke about an

idea she had heard another teacher discussing on how to get kids to peer edit. She has decided to make this one of her goals for next year's writing workshop.

Learning to Teach Through Trial and Error

Celina met her self-established goals for her writing workshop mainly through trial and error. She claimed:

The most powerful tool I have ever used is trial and error. [I ask myself] What works and what doesn't? If it doesn't work, don't do it. [I ask] what engages my students? What is going to make them better writers? What do I need to do to get these [students] from here to here? (Spring Interview, pp. 16-17)

She reported that she felt no big "aha" moments this year, but that she became more able and passionate about teaching writing. She talked about how challenging it was for her in the first year or two, when she was not sure how to teach writing. "I used to feel like I have to do it this way because this is how I was taught, and this is what it says in the book. Now I feel like, this is how I'm doing it because it works for me" (Spring Interview, p. 18).

How Celina Navigated and Managed her Teaching Context as She Learned to Teach Writing

A Stable School Environment

Because Celina had taught at Crestview for four years, she had come to know the school, principal, community, and other staff members well. Celina was a highly respected member of her staff, and she felt that her principal supported her pedagogical decisions. Members of the school staff had complimented Celina on the writing pieces that her students had written and that she had displayed in the hallway outside her classroom. Parents had been supportive of

her narrative addition to the report card where she wrote about each child's progress in all content areas, including each child as a writer and a list of writing skills that each child needed to work on. The reading teacher at Crestview was very supportive of the kind of child-centered teaching Celina believed in and often talked with Celina about effective classroom practice. Personnel from a nearby university who worked in her building had commented to her about how pleased they were to place undergraduate teacher candidate students in her classroom because her pedagogy matched that of the university's curriculum. To sum up, Celina had a great deal of support from the community that she worked in. Perhaps because she felt so much affirmation for her teaching, she gained confidence and competence in her own abilities. These factors have likely helped her realize the harmony and use the energy they afford within her teaching context to continue growing and learning as a novice.

Remaining in Second Grade

Another important element of Celina's teaching context was the fact that she had taught second grade for all four years of her teaching career. This meant that she did not have to relearn new curriculum objectives, SIMs, or how to administer the nine-week tests each year. She did not have to rethink the developmental stages of her students each year, but began building a knowledge base for the range of what second graders should know and can do. Each year her experiences allowed her to build on this knowledge and to finesse her writing instruction to meet what she had learned about second graders and writing from previous years. During Celina's first year, the district did not have a SIMs

document, and Celina used the MCF to guide her instruction. Because she had been exposed to this document in her teacher preparation program, she felt comfortable using it in her first classroom. The SIMs were introduced during Celina's second year, and the nine-week tests during her third year. During the fourth year, the Reading First grant and the mandated 90 minutes of language arts time was installed. Perhaps because Celina's context changed *just a bit* each year, she was able to continually add to her knowledge base and never felt completely overwhelmed. It is likely that a first year teacher having to navigate and manage all of these policy requirements at once would find it more difficult than Celina did.

Celina's Identity Influences her Teaching Context

Celina's teaching identity developed because of her background and experiences. Because she grew up in Gambell, Celina claimed that she was like her students in many ways. She recalled the positive influence some of her teachers had on her, and she wanted to make the same kind of difference in the lives of her own students. Celina's presence in this school and this district were very important to her. She chose to teach in this district. She was offered a job in River Valley (a suburban school district that her niece attends), but turned down the job to teach in Gambell. She recalled how shocked the administrators at River Valley were when she told them why she turned down the job, and how some of her friends thought she was crazy. Because River Valley was a suburban school system, the resources, students, MEAP scores, and facilities were better than those in the Gambell District. But, Celina was adamant about

working with students who were like her. She felt she could be empathetic to their backgrounds and that they could benefit from a positive role model. Because Celina was so heavily vested in this district and the children who attend this district, her passion made her a strong advocate for children. Many of the instructional decisions she made for writing reflect this passion. This was evident through the understanding Celina demonstrates for the various aspects of her teaching context, particularly her community and her students.

Ignorable Connections

Some connections between aspects of Celina's teaching context did not seem to influence her instructional decisions. For example, specific policies within her policy environment seemed to assume certain things about urban schools and urban classrooms (i.e. that teachers are not qualified, that they are not delivering effective instruction), and therefore policies were needed to hold teachers accountable. This connection between policy environments and the community and student aspects of Celina's teaching context had the potential for a tenuous situation. However this possible tension did not manifest itself for Celina. New teachers learn to navigate the various aspects of their teaching context, and they make deliberate choices about which tensions they can manage. Other areas of tension are ignored, so that energy can be devoted to managing the identified tension. In this case, Celina chose to manage the tension created by the interaction of her school structure, her teaching tools, and her own identity, and to ignore the tension created by the policy environments,

her community and her students (perhaps because she felt she could not change or manage that tension as easily).

Another example of this occurred with the possible tension created by the materials available to Celina for teaching. Many people assume that students in urban classrooms do not have access to the same resources as students in suburban areas, and that the teachers in urban settings are also lacking in professional development and/or intellectual conversations. This was just not true for Celina. She was very adept at seeking resources – both human and material – to further her own knowledge about teaching and learning. She also found ways to “work the system” so that she had the student materials necessary to teach. These possible areas for tensions were simply not an issue for Celina, because she was proactive and enthused, rather than reactive and passive.

So What Does Celina’s Story Help Us Understand About Learning to Teach?

Learning to teach is complicated. Celina’s teaching visual provides a glimpse into the complexities, but in actuality the act of decision making and implementation of instruction is much more challenging. Celina, like other beginning teachers, is faced with a multitude of factors, all contributing in some way to what she knows about teaching and learning and what she can do with that knowledge. Celina’s example shows us that some of the aspects of her teaching context create tension. She chooses to manage some of these tensions, while ignoring or accepting other tensions. She also realizes that some of the interactions between the aspects of her teaching context are harmonious and these relationships energize and motivate her to try new things.

Acquiesce, Accommodate or Resist?

This work connects to and builds on the work of Smagorinsky and colleagues (2002), who present the case study of Andrea, a new teacher learning to teach within a prescribed curriculum. Smagorinsky and his colleagues describe how Andrea engaged in three different behaviors across her student teaching and her first year of teaching. At times, she acquiesced – she merely accepted or complied with the policy environments and the mandated curriculum. Sometimes, Andrea accommodated – she moved between her ideals of teaching and the harsh realities of her context. Finally, near the end of her first year, Andrea began to resist – to oppose the curriculum, either overtly or subversively. As a new teacher, Andrea navigated and negotiated the settings, relationships, and mandates that confronted her, much like Celina did.

Celina accepted that her students would have to take standardized tests in writing. She may not have agreed with the concept of standardized tests in general, nor with the specific grading rubrics, but none-the-less she felt compelled to prepare her students for the tests. While at first glance this decision might seem as if Celina acquiesced, upon deeper consideration it appears that Celina made a smart decision. In life, adults are often asked to write formulaic pieces and Celina knew that her students would be assessed in standard forms through K-12 schooling and beyond. It makes sense that she provided them with the tools they need to be successful with this kind of writing. This belief is consistent with those of Lisa Delpit (1995) who had this to say about teaching children of color writing.

In this country, students will be judged on their product regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit. (p. 31)

Further, because Celina was passionate about personal writing, and she wanted to develop a life-long love of writing in her students, she wisely maintained writing workshop in her classroom. No guidebook or knowledge source existed to help her with this decision – it was one she thought through, drawing on her various knowledge sources and aspects of teaching context, and she ultimately made this decision on her own. This seems to be more an example of accommodation, than one of acquiescence. Celina moved between the ideal of learning to write through writing workshop, and the harsh reality of standardized assessments of writing. Perhaps because Celina is in her fourth year of teaching, unlike Andrea who was a first year teacher, Celina has become more savvy about her decisions and found it easier to accommodate and resist than Andrea did. In any case, if we are to learn anything about how beginning teachers learn to teach, it seems that understanding how teachers like Celina make decisions is crucial.

Similarly, the way Celina chose to consider the absence of reading and writing connections in the Reading First grant, and how she ultimately came to a decision for how she would teach her students is an important one for us to understand. Celina's prior experiences in this same school, teaching the same grade, gave her knowledge and confidence that teaching reading and writing in integrated ways helped her students learn to read and write. So, when confronted with opposing information (i.e. that of the NRP's report), she was able to draw on a range of knowledge sources and make a decision that she felt

supported her needs and the needs of her students. Some might wonder if she acquiesced by using the basal reading program on Mondays, but I would argue that the way she used the basal reader was totally consistent with Celina's views of learning to read and write and how to best teach reading and writing to this group of students. In fact, her decision to not use the basal every day is an act of resistance. Celina was selective in the materials she chose, and she made those decisions with her students in mind. While Celina pondered whether or not it would be discovered that she was not using the basal reader religiously, she did not seem worried about it, speaking candidly with me about it on numerous occasions. Taking risks, such as Celina did here, was courageous. More aspects of her teaching context supported her decision to use the basal in minimal ways. Many beginning teachers, in this situation, would perhaps find it easier to simply acquiesce. However, understanding decisions such as Celina's can help us think about the role of context in learning to teach.

Chapter 5

“[STUDENTS] CAN TAKE RISKS HERE”: WRITING INSTRUCTION IN AILEEN’S CLASSROOM

Examining the influence of beginning teachers’ teaching context through Celina’s experiences gave us a close look how beginning teachers learn to teach when their context is fairly stable. We turn now to examine Aileen’s context – one that is far less stable – to determine how the teaching context visual helps explain the influence her context exerted upon her, and how she learned to teach writing across the year.

While Celina had enjoyed four years of a relatively stable teaching context, Aileen’s first three years of teaching were less stable and more complicated, even though both women taught in the Gambell School District. During her first year of teaching, Aileen was placed in a first grade classroom in a newly established magnet school focusing on global issues. Much of the staff, including the principal were new to the building. Aileen found out during the summer between her first and second years that she would be teaching fourth grade in the same school in the fall. Since this was such a big change from first grade, she spent much of her summer thinking about and planning for a fourth grade classroom. However, four weeks into her second school year, smaller than expected class sizes determined that Aileen’s current classroom would be disbanded, and she would be reassigned to another classroom and school in the district. Aileen eventually spent her second year of teaching in a Kindergarten/1st grade split in one of the lowest achieving schools in the Gambell District. At the end of her second year, Aileen was among over 100 teachers who were pink-

slipped, and she left for the summer unsure of where she might be placed and even if she would have a teaching job in the fall. Aileen was called back from the lay-off (almost every teacher was), and she began her third year of teaching in a 1st grade classroom in a Math, Science & Technology magnet school. This study took place during Aileen's third year of teaching, her first at this magnet school, Forest Glen Elementary School.

Aileen Models Journal Writing for Her Students

It is the last day of March, and eighteen first graders have recently settled their chairs in three neat rows near the front of the room. Many are leaning forward in their chairs so they can see the large journal their teacher, Aileen, is securing to the chalkboard with two large magnets. They seem eager for the lesson to begin. Aileen picks up a green marker and begins drawing flower stems on the very top of the journal page. She says "I am going to draw a picture of my crocuses. Here are my purple ones" (Video Observation 4, p. 6), and she switches to a purple marker. Aileen continues to draw - yellow crocuses, and then some yellow daffodils, all the time talking aloud about what she is drawing and thinking. Children comment as she draws, "That's a tall flower", "We can see the crocuses", "I have crocuses and daffodils in my yard too" (Video Observation 4, pp. 6-7). Aileen keeps drawing and talking, at times responding to her students' comments. When she has completed her drawing, she begins to write in her journal, directly below the picture she has drawn. She talks through what she wants to say, tries out some words, and then begins to write. The children chant along with her, spelling many high frequency words as

they go. At times, Aileen stretches a word out, so the children can hear all of the letters and they can help her spell. One of the students notices that the word “morning” (in Aileen’s story) ends with an ‘ing’. The class has recently studied the ‘ing’ ending, and Aileen praises the student for realizing this, underlining the ‘ing’ in morning. As she completes each sentence in her journal she rereads it and then composes her next sentence. She continues to think aloud as she models how a proficient writer completes a journal entry. Students are not quiet during this time; instead they chime in with the rereading and to help with spelling, they point out other words that end with ‘ing’, they ask questions, they notice other patterns in the words Aileen is writing. As Aileen ends her journal entry, the students all begin to read the entire text. Intonation, inflection, and attitude are heard in the voices of eighteen small children, especially when they read the last line of the journal writing “they [the flowers] were looking good!” As the choral reading ends, Aileen quickly and quietly tells students she will be passing out their journals so that they can begin writing. The children’s journals contain large sheets of paper that are blank on the top and have lines on the bottom. The papers are stapled together with a construction paper cover. Aileen reminds students to draw their picture first on the top of the page. Aileen also asks students to make sure they write at least three sentences. As she begins calling students’ names, the class moves back to the tables, and within minutes students are drawing in their journals.

Aileen’s students did not look like this in October, nor did Aileen’s writing instruction. Her students were not able to write three sentences independently,

and she did not model write in her journal until January. Aileen purposefully and carefully crafted her writing instruction across the school year so that her students would be able to engage in journal writing on this particular spring day.

Morning Message

In October, Aileen began doing Morning Message (Kaufman, 2002; Mariage, 2001; Tompkins, 2003) each morning with her students. Morning Message is an interactive writing activity where students supply the text that the teacher writes on large chart paper. In her rendition of Morning Message, Aileen selected one student to be the “writer” each day (this position rotated, so that all students in the class had a turn). The “writer” was asked to select a topic and to make a general statement about that topic. Aileen wrote the title and the general statement on a large piece of chart paper that was taped to the front chalkboard. Using the five W questions (i.e. what, when, where, why, and who) and how, Aileen guided a question/answer period between the students in the class and the “writer”. A student would ask the “writer” a question about his/her topic, and the “writer” would respond. Aileen would write down the response that the “writer” gave – including those responses that were incomplete sentences. Aileen also deliberately made errors in punctuation and capitalization as she wrote. After each of the six questions had been asked and answered, Aileen asked the class to help come up with a “wind-up” sentence – a sentence to close the story. The class then read the story together. Aileen then led the class, sentence by sentence, in editing the story. After the story had been edited, the class read through the story together.

Journal Writing

Aileen continued doing Morning Message throughout the fall semester and a few times in January. Beginning in mid to late January, she began to model write in a journal in the manner just described. When she began to write in the journal every day (by mid February), she ceased doing the Morning Message. The modeling of journal writing, followed by the students' writing in journals continued throughout the school year. In this way, consistently throughout the school year, some part of Aileen's morning routine always focused on writing.

Additional Writing Instruction

While Morning Message and the Journal Writing were Aileen's main writing instructional methods, additional activities such as letter–word charts and name graphs were occasionally done in place of the Morning Message or Journal Writing. Letter–word charts consisted of a homemade chart for each letter of the alphabet. Aileen printed both the upper and lower case letter at the top of the chart, and then asked students to tell her common words – including names of their classmates – that began with that letter. She printed each word and drew a picture beside the word. The completed charts spanned the length of the collapsible wall between Aileen's room and a computer lab.

The name graphs contained each child's name, followed by all the smaller words that could be made by arranging and rearranging the letters in that student's name. The chart was done on large graph paper, so that it was easy to see how many letters each child's name had, and also to see how many words (represented numerically on the graph) were made from each name. During the

first semester, writing instruction focused primarily on Morning Message and the letter–word charts, while during the second semester, the focus was mainly on the name graph and Journal Writing.

Now that we have a picture of what Aileen's writing instruction looked like, in the next section, I describe the specific elements of Aileen's teaching context. I then move into a discussion of how her teaching context influenced the decisions she made for writing instruction.

Aileen's Teaching Context

As discussed earlier, I propose that teachers learn to teach by managing or finessing the various tensions of their teaching context, while at the same time gaining energy for teaching from the harmonious connections inherent in that teaching context. As with Celina's teaching context, Aileen's teaching context is comprised of the general categories of policy environment, community, students, colleagues, materials, teaching tools, and identity. Figure 3 below illustrates some aspects of Aileen's personal teaching context as well as some of the relationships between them. In this section, I will briefly describe each of the aspects of Aileen's teaching context and then in the sections that follow I will describe several examples of how this context affected her instructional decisions for writing.

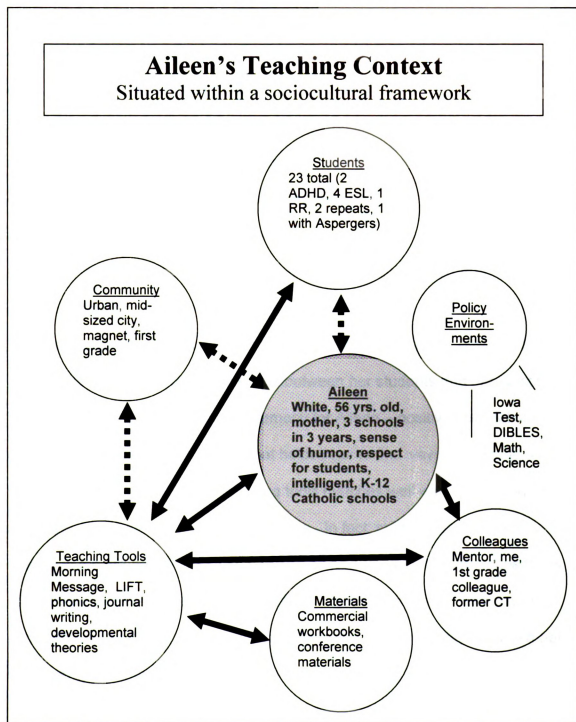


Figure 3. Aileen's Teaching Context

You will recall that the size of the circles in this visual matters – the larger the circle, the more powerful the influence this factor had on Aileen’s instructional decisions. Aileen’s teaching tools and her students had more influence on her instructional writing decisions than did her community, her colleagues, her materials, and her policy environments; and her colleagues, materials, and community were more influential than her policy environment. If you remember from the earlier presentation of the generic teaching context visual in Chapter 3, connections existed between all elements, and each connection is potentially a point for tension or harmony. In Aileen’s teaching context, the dashed lines indicate tensions: between her own identity and her community, between her community and her teaching tools, and between her students and her identity. The solid lines represent areas of harmony for Aileen – positive connections that energized and motivated her, and that helped her to find ways to manage and finesse the tensions. Aileen’s teaching tools matches well with her identity, her materials, her students, and her colleagues. In fact, in this study, Aileen’s identity is the strongest contributing factor, on its own, and through connections with other elements of her teaching context. These harmonious relationships, centered around Aileen’s choice of teaching tools and her identity, provided her with energy and motivation for navigating and managing her context.

As was illustrated with Celina and her teaching context, connections do obviously exist between each of the other categories. For example, the policy environments that Aileen worked within, even though not a big influence for her, may have shaped the way her colleagues taught and some of the materials the

district provided her. However, Aileen found ways to work with her colleagues and to purchase and use additional materials so that this possible tension did not influence her instructional decisions for teaching writing. The lack of connecting lines in the visual does not indicate that connections did not exist, merely that they were of such a nature that they did not influence Aileen's instructional decisions for writing. It is also certainly possible, that some of these connections were more influential to Aileen, but were invisible to me through classroom and video observations, viewing sessions, and interviews.

Please note that the specific details about policy environments are shown outside the corresponding circles. This was due to lack of adequate space within the circle, because the size of the circle matters, and should not indicate anything unique about this aspect of Aileen's teaching context (other than its lack of substantial influence on her instructional decisions).

Aileen's Identity

Aileen is a white woman, who, at the time of this study, was 56 years old. Aileen is married and has two adult sons. She was raised in a large city in another state in the Midwest and attended Catholic schools for her K-12 education. Aileen's husband was a professor, and she lived in an upper-middle class suburb of Gambell. Aileen began college soon after high school, but did not obtain a degree at that time, putting a career on hold so that she could raise her sons. When her children were in elementary school, she began volunteering at their school – working with individual children and reading and writing. As her boys grew and moved into middle and high school, she maintained her volunteer

work at the elementary school, eventually being hired as a paraprofessional aide, where she worked mainly in the school's publishing lab. After her sons graduated from high school, Aileen decided to return to college for a teaching certificate. She had been inspired by her work with the teachers and students at the elementary school where she worked, and she felt like she could do this (even though she felt she was "old").

She entered a teacher certification program at a local university, was able to transfer a great number of credits, and primarily enrolled in teacher education courses. She also took courses in child development, which became her major. Aileen's child development courses were highly influential in shaping her teacher practices. The coursework reaffirmed what she had begun to realize while she worked in her sons' elementary school and from her years as a parent. Her child development student teaching consisted on one semester in a laboratory school with young children, and she found that experience foundational because she was able to observe and apply the philosophies of the program. She began her internship eager to implement child development pedagogy in an urban first grade classroom. Even though her collaborating teacher did not share Aileen's child development background, she did allow Aileen to try many different teaching methods. When Aileen began teaching in her own classroom the following year, she maintained a strong focus on child development philosophies. These ideas became a strong part of Aileen's teaching identity, as many of her instructional choices could be supported by child development theories.

Not only were Aileen's educational and work-place experiences an important part of her identity, so was her sense of humor. Aileen was a very calm and methodical person, who saw humor in many situations, and who did not let the little things in life get her down or cause her to become too frustrated. This is in contrast to Celina and to Bethany (who we meet in the next chapter), who were very much overwhelmed and frustrated by many of the little things that plagued their daily instructional decisions. Aileen was often heard joking with her students, there was a lot of laughter in her classroom, and she and I chuckled about the many funny things that teaching can uncover. This aspect of Aileen's identity was a core part of who she was and inevitably influenced how she thought about teaching and learning.

Like Celina, Aileen also chose to teach in Gambell. She did her internship in Gambell and commented that she "felt some allegiance to Gambell, because I had taught at Abbott (for her internship) and I knew what the kids were like and I thought, I can do this" (Fall Interview, p. 4). During her initial job hunt, Aileen was offered a job in a nearby rural district, but declined – partially because the offer came after the school year began, but also because of the allegiance she claimed she felt to teach in Gambell. Because Aileen was very different from the children she taught (she was white, upper-middle class, raised Catholic, and older than most beginning teachers), this created some tension for her across the year. Further discussion will highlight this tension and perhaps suggest that maybe this was not the right place for her, however, Aileen had good intentions,

she worked hard and she maintained that she felt like she was needed in Gambell.

Aileen's Students

Aileen began the school year with twenty-three first grade students. Aileen's students were very diverse in terms of race, culture, language, social, emotional, and academic needs. Fourteen of Aileen's students were African American, four were White, three were Asian, and one was Hispanic. A Muslim student moved out of her classroom in the early spring. Four of Aileen's students were ESL and two had been diagnosed with ADHD. Two students had already repeated the first grade, one had recently qualified for special education and another student was being tested for special education. One student had Aspergers, one attended Reading Recovery, two had large numbers of absences and Aileen suspected one student was dyslexic. A range of social and emotional issues were evident in Aileen's students and she described various students as "easily distracted", "cries often", "delayed social development", "poor attitude", "emotionally needy", and "immature" (Spring Interview, p. 65).

Aileen's Teaching Tools

Aileen's teaching tools for writing instruction included conceptual tools such as emergent literacy, developmental appropriateness, reading and writing connections, and cultural awareness. These tools were gleaned from her teaching education program, particularly her child development major. Her pedagogical tools included Morning Message, journal writing, phonics instruction, the use of environmental print in the classroom, and guided reading groups.

These tools were developed primarily from the internship portion of her teacher education program and from her attendance at various district professional development workshops (e.g. LIFT) and a state level reading conference.

Aileen's classroom environment looked different during different points in the year, and during different activities. At times, her classroom might have been described as "traditional." It was more teacher-focused, children sat quietly and followed along on worksheets, and responded by raising their hands. Other times, Aileen's classroom looked very progressive and child-centered. Children worked collaboratively or at least talked freely among themselves as they worked individually. At times, Aileen led a guided reading group while the other children wrote in journals, having autonomy over their writing topics, where they chose to sit in the room, and with whom they wanted to work. Often, a child development focus was evident through the tasks Aileen assigned and the expectations she had for completing those tasks. For example, Aileen often encouraged her students to take risks and to experiment in the classroom; "a particularly powerful tool for children who have traditionally been labeled poor achievers" (Newman and Church, 1990, p. 23), and something she had learned in her teacher preparation courses. She claimed, "[Students] can take risks here. That's my philosophy. Try it; so what if you make a mistake" (Viewing Session 3, p. 34). Aileen's students seemed to adapt to the various aspects of the classroom environment. They were observed sitting quietly and following along with Aileen during morning work, as well as actively engaging in Morning Message and Journal Writing.

Aileen's Materials

Because Forest Glen had not been awarded a Reading First grant, Aileen, in contrast to Celina, was not required to use the district provided basal reader. While the basal, its corresponding workbooks and teaching guides were available to Aileen, she was not mandated to use them, and she deliberately chose not to use them. She did however, utilize the leveled books in the school's book room to support her instruction during guided reading groups. For writing instruction, Aileen chose to draw from commercial black line master books that she purchased at local teacher supply stores and a state level reading conference (Materials Discussion, pp. 2-3). These books contained worksheets and ideas for teaching phonics, sentence construction, and reading comprehension. Aileen felt that the materials she used for writing instruction were developmentally and culturally appropriate for her students.

Aileen's Colleagues

Aileen's colleagues consisted of her first grade teaching partner, her assigned mentor, her collaborating teacher from her internship, and me. Janet, Aileen's first grade teaching partner, taught in a room connected to Aileen's by a short hallway containing shared bathrooms. Daily conversations between Janet and Aileen were normal and ranged from talk about specific children to instructional issues and teaching methods. Marlene, Aileen's assigned mentor, was the reading recovery teacher at Forest Glen. Marlene was available to answer questions for Aileen, or to help her locate supplies. In contrast to the

mentors Aileen was assigned during her first two years, she felt Marlene was a blessing and Aileen valued very much the ideas that Marlene shared with her.

The most important colleague Aileen had was Linda, her collaborating teacher from her internship. Aileen and Linda lived near each other, they served on a district wide science committee together, and Aileen often called or spoke with Linda when she had questions about teaching first grade students. Similar in age, and both raising two young adult sons, Aileen felt a great camaraderie with Linda, as well as a great deal of respect. During the school year of this study, Aileen attended a state wide reading conference with Linda. Linda's support of Aileen, and her affirmation of Aileen's intelligence and abilities remained important to Aileen even three years after her internship had ended.

Aileen and I also enjoyed a collegial relationship and Aileen suggested that my support during the course of the school year was helpful. Aileen and I had known each other for about four years at the time of this study, as I was a liaison between the university and the school where she did her internship. Our relationship was one of professional collegiality, although Aileen expressed admiration for my work and treated our time together as a way for her to learn more about teaching writing. Aileen's colleagues were a positive connection for her across the study, as represented by the solid line between her colleagues and her identity in Figure 3.

Aileen's Community

Forest Glen, as part of the Gambell School District, was considered urban. However, because Forest Glen was a magnet school, parents across the district

could elect to send their children to the school, and many of Aileen's students were bused to Forest Glen from across the district. The neighborhood surrounding Forest Glen was quite similar to that surrounding Crestview – single family homes with yards, tree-lined streets, and one apartment complex directly across the street from the school. Aileen described Forest Glen as less urban than the other schools she had taught at in Gambell.

A neighborhood affects the school. Abbott [where she did her internship], it was a beat up neighborhood. Sycamore [where she taught her first year], beat up. Brown Street [where she taught her second year] used to have prostitutes across the street from the school. The mothers would have their kids in school while they'd be prostituting. Think of the effect that had on the kids. (Spring Interview, pp. 34-35)

Even though Forest Glen's students did not all come from the neighborhood surrounding the school, Aileen felt that the calmness and stability of the Forest Glen neighborhood created a "less urban" school community.

The magnet status of the school created an additional community for Aileen, because the teachers, parents, and children were all focused on math, science and technology. Staff had numerous inservices to help them plan and implement new technologies, pedagogies and materials. Parents were excited about the weather station, school garden, computers and robotics lab that their children interacted with. All the students in the school had white lab coats, and they were often observed wearing their lab coats as they learned to think and act like scientists.

During the first semester of the school year, Aileen felt that her curriculum was pretty typical of years past – she needed to get her students reading and writing and understanding numbers. However, during the second semester,

Aileen felt the magnet focus influenced many of her instructional choices as she tried to focus on math and science and embedded reading and writing instruction during math and science time. She also focused some of the texts and journal writing prompts around math and/or science topics. Because Aileen enjoyed teaching math and science, she found this rather easy to do.

Aileen Manages the Tensions

First grade teachers in Gambell were not provided with SIMs, nor did they administer nine-week tests. Therefore, Aileen was able to create a classroom community that focused on her goals and beliefs, and she was not mandated to pace or sequence the curriculum in a specific way. This is important as we now turn to look at how Aileen managed the tensions between her identity and her community, her teaching tools and her community, and her students and her identity. This study found that Aileen managed the tension formed between her community, herself, and her teaching tools by relying on her knowledge of child development. Further, I will explore the tension between her own cultural background and the varied and different cultural backgrounds of her students by suggesting that Aileen is engaging in some aspects of culturally responsive pedagogies (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 1999, 2001), while at the same time ignoring other aspects. Finally, the evidence shows that Aileen used the positive energy that resulted from the harmonious connections that existed among some of the elements of her teaching context to achieve her writing goals across the year. In the remainder of this chapter, I describe each of these to add to the illustration of

how a beginning teacher learns to teach writing by navigating and finessing her teaching context.

Aileen Draws From Child Development Theory to Support Writing Instruction

Aileen's teaching tools reflect her beliefs and the child development focus of her teacher preparation. However, the pedagogical tools of Morning Message and Journal Writing that she employs were not familiar to the parents of her students, nor were they the same pedagogical tools that other teachers in the building used. Parents of her students and other teachers, and the principal to some extent, questioned the way Aileen taught writing. This created tension for Aileen. During this study, Aileen managed this tension by verbally respecting her colleagues and the parents of her students, but ultimately adhering to her beliefs and the content of her teacher education courses to implement writing instruction based on child development theory. Because she was a parent she realized that parenting

is the hardest, and you know, I had a lot of empathy for the parents who do try. And next year, what I plan to do is, write up a little guide, so that the parents will have that, as to how I'm teaching. Just a little short thing so the parents can use what I use at school with their kids, because they weren't taught this stuff when they went to school. (Spring Interview, p. 32)

This remark revealed to me that Aileen wanted to continue using child development pedagogies, and that she wanted to inform the students of her parents how they could support those methods at home.

Aileen did a number of things to support a child development perspective for the beginning readers and writers in her classroom. First, as described above she sequenced writing instruction from the letter-word cards, to Morning

Message, to Journal Writing to name graphs – and each activity built on what the children knew and could do, and pushed them to do more. Not only did these activities build developmentally, becoming more complex in the type of thinking required and more skilled in the use of small motor skills, but Aileen was also able to engage students at various developmental levels in each activity. She began the year with the letter-word cards, even though some children could not yet read or write all the letters. Because most students had some phonemic awareness, when she pronounced the letter 't' as 'tee', students could hear the sound it made and were able to contribute words that began with 't'. Aileen then selected words and wrote them on the charts, drawing a picture to help all students identify the word later. Aileen explained that this activity was developmentally appropriate because all children could engage, even those who were not able to read and identify all the letters of the alphabet individually.

Child Development Principles

Child development theorists (e.g. Erikson, Piaget, Freud) reason that children go through certain definable, linear stages as they learn and grow. They also believed that children would not progress to a new stage until they had mastered certain benchmarks that characterized each stage of growth. While all children pass through the same stages in the same order, the rate at which they do so may vary. This can cause problems for teachers in schools, since most classroom instruction is the same for all children regardless of their stage of development. Developmental appropriate curriculum, as described in Aileen's child development courses, adheres to three common principles:

1. Developmentally appropriate means taking into account what is known about how young children develop and learn and matching that to the content and strategies they encounter in early childhood programs.
2. Developmentally appropriate means approaching children as individuals, not as a cohort or group.
3. Developmentally appropriate means treating children with respect – understanding children's changing capacities and having faith in children's continuing capacity to change. (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 1993)

Throughout our conversations and my observations, it seemed clear that Aileen's course work in the child development major helped her to recognize and understand the developmentally appropriate principles, and supported her planning and implementation of instructional models that allowed for a range of developmental levels in her students.

Aileen's Writing Goal

Aileen's writing goal matched the third developmentally appropriate principal. She believed that classrooms should provide students with learning opportunities that they could be successful with and that, as a teacher, she was responsible for establishing these learning opportunities. She thoughtfully considered the six domains of the whole child that the child development program espoused – aesthetic, affective, cognitive, language, physical and social (Kostelnik et al., 1993). Aileen's goal for writing was that her students would write simple paragraphs by the end of the year. This goal reflected the child development domains in that writing a paragraph required both cognitive and language skills, involved a physical act, occurred in a social setting, and,

because Aileen provided students with a choice of writing topics, also appealed to students aesthetic and affective domains.

Aileen believed that meeting this goal was possible if she simply provided models, scaffolds, and instruction that recognized and began at the point her children were when they entered her classroom in August. This belief was identified early in the school year, when she responded to my question of “How will you meet your goal of having kids write paragraphs by the end of the year?” with “I have to work with very basic stuff like letter formation and then word formation and phonemic awareness. Then we’ll work on sentence structure, like what kind of sentence makes sense” (Fall Interview, p. 17). Aileen appeared to accept that learning to write involved learning a series of low level skills that could eventually become automatic so that students could focus on writing for meaning. This is consistent with a developmental approach to learning which claims that children learn by having experiences within each stage of growth that help them move from more concrete to more abstract (Piaget, 1979).

While Aileen’s comment might be interpreted as a traditional way of teaching, rather than one consistent with child development approaches, Aileen’s choice of teaching tools supported a child development approach. A recognized teaching strategy within the language domain of child developmental theory states “have children dictate stories, experiences, or observations, and then let the children hear and see their own words in print” (Kostelnik et al., 1993, p. 158). Aileen’s use of Morning Message did exactly that. She adeptly wove the

teaching of lower level skills (i.e. letter and word formation, phonemic awareness and sentence structure) into a developmentally appropriate pedagogy.

Because Aileen acted as a scribe during Morning Message, all students, regardless of their development in written language, were able to engage in this activity as well. All children were encouraged to ask questions of the student “writer,” and because Aileen rotated this position, all children were able to participate as the “writer.” Later in the year when Aileen moved the children into journal writing, each child’s developmental level was again considered because Aileen’s expectations for the amount and quality of the writing varied from child to child. Aileen used the journals to see individual student growth and progress, rather than to compare students to each other or to a “norm.” On the district provided report card, Aileen had to determine if the students were pre-emergent, emergent, early fluent, or fluent in writing. She used the journal writing, particularly noted how children’s writing had changed over time, to determine this assessment. The report card, and Aileen’s method of determining writing level, was consistent with a developmental approach.

The Interrelationships of the Language Arts

A second way Aileen’s teaching illustrated a child development perspective was evident through Aileen’s belief that oral language was connected to reading and writing, and that reading and writing are best taught simultaneously (Kostelnik et al., 1993). Aileen integrated literacy activities – involving oral language, reading and writing - throughout the school day. One example of this occurred with the morning seatwork that Aileen’s students

engaged in each morning while she took attendance and handled other housekeeping chores. Students were given something to read and respond to, from two or three simple sentences to a short story, such as this one in January, entitled *Tom Turtle*.

Tom Turtle. Terry has a pet turtle. His name is Tom. Tom lives in the yard. One day Terry lost Tom. Tom was lost for three weeks. She found him in the flowers. (Video Observation 2, p. 1)

During the lesson with this story, children read the story chorally with Aileen two times. Aileen then proceeded to provide a mini-lesson for the students by covering the kinds of skills she had identified earlier that support the children in learning to write. The first thing she wrote on the chalkboard and talked about was vocabulary:

Okay, the words that you might have problems with are turtle (she writes turtle and weeks). Okay, this double e right there makes the e say its name. Eee, so it's weeks. You can actually see the word "we" (she draws a line between the two e's). Do you see the word we? (The children nod in affirmation, some say 'yes').

Here I noticed that Aileen was making a connection to phonics as well as to locating words within words (which is something she did in the Name Graphs). Aileen is addressing her goal of having children recognize high frequency words. She then continued:

(She writes lost on the chalkboard). Lost. Everybody look up here. Lost. L-o-s-t. It's not exactly the short o sound, we don't say laast. I laast my clothes (she's shaking her head no). We don't say that. (Children laugh). I lost. It's the aw sound. I would like everybody to circle the word lost [in their little book]. (She walks around to see if they are finding the word lost).

Aileen helped children think about phonic elements as well as being able to recognize the word in print. She concluded the mini-lesson:

And then another word that you've had but probably don't remember, is found. F-o-u-n-d (she writes it on the board). It's the exact opposite of lost (she draws a line between the two words). Found. Circle that word in the last sentence (Video Observation 2, pp. 1-2).

After the mini-lesson, Aileen lead the children through reading the seven questions that were at the bottom of the page. The questions were:

1. Who has a pet?
2. What is the pet?
3. What is the pet's name?
4. Where does Tom live?
5. What happened one day?
6. Where did Terry find Tom?
7. How many weeks was Tom lost?

As the students and Aileen read each question together, the students chorally responded with a complete sentence answer. Aileen realized that there were several different correct responses, and she often asked individual children to repeat their answers. The answer for number one was "Terry has a pet," for number two it was "The pet is a turtle" or "Terry's pet was a turtle," and the patterned continued (Video Observation 2, p. 2). Aileen explained that this activity was developmentally appropriate because "they need to talk. So many teachers always want to just have everybody else quiet and just have one person raise their hand" (Viewing Session 2, p. 7). Aileen also felt that this activity was important because it taught children sentence structure, it allowed them multiple opportunities to write high frequency words, and helped them to see the connections between reading and writing (Materials Discussion, p. 2).

Aileen continued this morning routine all year. Later in the year, students received a little folded, eight-page book that contained substantially more text and focused on a certain phonics pattern (e.g., 'ing'). Aileen taught the children

how to construct complete sentences to answer each question because she believed this would help them learn about sentence structure. She also felt the act of writing was reinforcing some of the manual skills, such as letter and word formation, and phonemic awareness, that would help her students become writers. During the final interview, responding to my question about what was the one thing that really supported the children reaching the goal of paragraph writing, Aileen responded:

...the fact that I had them working, from almost the beginning, on those little practice sheets, every morning. You really have to get the kids...trying to write out sentences. The most difficult part was really getting them to write sentences, to reread their own sentences, making sure that they really wrote the words down that they...thought they wrote. (Spring Interview, p. 12)

Aileen's continued and consistent support of all children through the morning seatwork supported her goal of having children write paragraphs by the end of the year, as well as demonstrating a focus on developmental appropriateness because it helped Aileen relate reading, writing, and oral language.

The Classroom Environment

By having her students sit at tables, Aileen was also demonstrating adherence to child development philosophy. Aileen was adamant when she told me:

Some teachers like to have desks in their room, I don't. I like to have tables. I remember when I was little, you were never supposed to copy over from the person next to you. But actually, in Kindergarten and 1st grade, having somebody next to you that can do something and you learning from them is okay. I say [to the children] [looking at someone else's paper] is okay, because I want you to learn from each other. It's that cooperative learning. (Fall Interview, p. 11)

Aileen realized that because her students were at different levels, and since she was the only teacher in the room, students could support each other's learning by working together. One way she did this was by purposefully seating the children next to each other at tables.

Managing the Tension

The tension I described in this section is one that existed between the community (namely parents, other teachers in the school, and the principal) and Aileen's chosen pedagogy for writing instruction. Because she adapted a child development approach, she encountered some resistance and a noticeable tension was felt. For example, one of her students had a sibling in the other first grade classroom. It was easy for the parents of this child to see that the two teachers were not doing things exactly the same. This caused the parent to question Aileen and her methods (Viewing Session 5, p. 29). Because Aileen's teaching colleague, Janet, and her collaborating teacher from her internship, Linda, did not use developmental approaches, and because Aileen respected them, she often questioned herself and her decision making as she strove to adhere to her beliefs and her teacher preparation. She seemed to seek affirmation from the videotaped lessons and from me that the work she was doing was appropriate.

Although Aileen questioned herself, she did not let the potential tension surrounding her colleagues and her community influence her instructional decisions for writing. Her strong sense of who she was as a teacher – her background experiences as a mother and from her work in her sons' elementary

school, and her strong belief that a child development approach to learning was best for her students, enabled Aileen to manage this tension by maintaining a child development approach to instruction. She used some of the energy she gleaned from feeling confident that her teaching tools matched her students' needs, the materials she selected and who she was as a teacher to help her manage this tension.

Aileen and Culturally Responsive Teaching: Is She Responsive?

Aileen recognized that she was different from her students and that their home and school lives did not mirror her own experiences of elementary school in the 1950s. Perhaps because it had been so long since Aileen attended elementary school, and she perceives schooling to be very different in this urban magnet school from her Midwestern Catholic school, she was very aware of the backgrounds and home experiences of her students. She compared her own home life with that of her students:

My parents sat down with us every night, helped us do our homework or made sure we did it. A lot of parents [of my students] think school is the school's problem. They are really concerned about family, going to family functions and not worrying about [making up missed school] work. (Spring Interview, p. 28)

Aileen believed that parental support was the key to children's early success in learning to read and write, and while she encouraged the parents of her students to work with their children at home, she also realized that most of them did not. Because of these differences in background experiences and values, Aileen experienced tension between her own identity (i.e. her family background,

experiences, and K-12 schooling) and the backgrounds and family lives of the particular students in her class.

This issue created tension for Aileen because she held a great deal of respect for her students, and she worked hard to meet their needs. Yet, she was never quite sure that what she was doing was making a difference and if it was the right thing to do. This was clear to me by the numerous times Aileen sought affirmation from me on what she was doing. Often during our viewing sessions, as we watched the videotapes together, Aileen would ask if what she was doing was meeting the needs of her students (e.g. Viewing Session 2, p. 14). In this section of the chapter, I explore the notion of culturally responsive pedagogy and raise the question whether Aileen was learning to teach in ways that are consistent with this theory. While Aileen never claimed to be using culturally responsive pedagogies, as I watched her struggle with issues of difference, it occurred to me that she was in some ways very responsive to children's cultures, yet in other ways seemed oblivious to it.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Culturally responsive pedagogy emerges from the intersection of culture and teaching and is based on three propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence, and sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2001).

Academic achievement. Academic achievement is defined by the teacher's clear goals for student learning, her devotion of class time to teaching and learning, her ability to assess student learning and articulate student progress, and her knowledge and skill levels (Ladson-Billings, 2001). By this

definition, and through analysis of the extensive data from Aileen's classroom, Aileen demonstrated concern for the academic achievement of her students. Aileen's goal of getting all of her students to write a paragraph by the end of the year was clearly articulated during her fall interview, and she recalled this goal during subsequent viewing sessions and interviews.

Very little "down" time was observed in her classroom as the children entered the classroom each morning with the reading comprehension paper already on their tables with the expectation that work would begin immediately. During viewing sessions Aileen's knowledge of her individual students' achievement was clear as she routinely talked about what various students could do and what their problems were. For example during a viewing session in March, as we watched Aileen lead the reading of the text during the morning seatwork, Aileen stopped the videotape and commented:

Now, I had told everybody to put everything down, right? [Student S] was writing. And I don't want her to write because she really needs to, she's one of my low kids. And [Student D] too. They're both low. They need to follow along, not work ahead. (Viewing Session 4, p. 4)

As we continued to talk about this example Aileen explained that low students could benefit from tracking the print in the book as it is read aloud, and by constructing the complete sentences orally before they have to write them on their own later. This demonstrated to me that Aileen was aware of one of her intermediate goals – getting children to understand sentence structure – as a step towards reaching the year-end goal of paragraph writing.

During the viewing sessions, we sometimes looked through the student journals, and Aileen noticed where certain students were making progress and

where others seemed to be stagnant. For example, the student that received reading recovery support and was also ESL, had written the following entry in early March “I like my counsn my counsn is get mnrd.” Aileen read the entry as “I like my cousin. My cousin is getting married” and she said “Now [Student Y] is one of my really lowest kids, and that to me is good!” (Viewing Session 3, p. 26)

Using the definition of academic achievement provided above, I have described Aileen’s clear goals for student learning, her devotion of class time to teaching and learning, and her ability to assess student learning and articulate student progress. The final part of the definition, knowledge and skills levels was supported through my observations and conversations of and with Aileen. She was able to articulate more knowledge about children and learning theory than either Celina or Bethany, and was also able to explain a variety of pedagogies and classroom routines. I inferred that because of her age, her experiences as a mother and a volunteer and paraprofessional for so many years in elementary schools, and from my many conversations with her, that Aileen’s knowledge and skill levels were another indication of her attention to academic achievement.

Cultural competence. The second element of culturally relevant pedagogy is cultural competence, which includes the teacher’s: understanding of culture and its role in education, initiative to learn about her students’ culture and community, use of student culture for a basis for learning, and promotion of flexible use of students’ local and global culture (Ladson-Billings, 2001). While data confirmed rather easily that Aileen was concerned with the academic achievement of her students, whether Aileen demonstrated cultural competence

was a bit harder to determine. Aileen was definitely aware of the cultural differences that her students brought to the classroom, and she did not view these differences as deficits, but rather as ideas she needed to understand so that she could support her students.

One area in which this occurred in Aileen's classroom was through oral language. A majority of Aileen's students spoke Black Vernacular English (BVE), three ESL students spoke various Asian languages, and another ESL student was a native Bosnian speaker. Because of these oral language issues, Aileen valued the spoken word in her classroom. This is evident through the talk that she encouraged during the Morning Message and Journal Writing, and her earlier comment about how children need to talk to make sense. However, the spoken word that she valued and promoted was Standard English. For example, Aileen realized that many of her students did not hear the "th" sound, instead they heard an "f" sound. These students might pronounce 'math' as 'maf' or 'bathroom' as 'bafroom'. Aileen consciously made an effort to help children hear the 'th' sound in these words, show them how it was spelled, and reinforced that as they grew older they needed to be able to spell and pronounce words correctly. She explained why she did this:

I'm really picking on language because I think first grade is the time when they really have to learn about all the mistakes they make and then start correcting them. [They need to] realize what mistakes they had and to realize how people will interpret it. I tell them, you misheard this, and that's okay. (Viewing Session 2, p. 29)

This example seems to suggest that Aileen is not culturally responsive because she assumed her students "misheard" the ending of a word, not that they were

speaking a dialect that often leaves off endings. Researchers (see for example Delpit, 1995) have spoken about helping children of color understand how to code switch, to teach them when they need to speak Standard English, and when it is okay to use the BVE dialect. Aileen never indicated that she understood that her students might need to know when to speak each code, and that as a part of their culture, it was important for them to maintain their home dialect. The following transcript of a viewing session conversation after I observed Aileen correcting a child's use of the word "bafroom" instead of "bathroom" illustrated how Aileen thought about children's grammar.

Laura: Why do you correct grammar? Are you taking into consideration the context? The urbanness of the kids?

Aileen: I don't really think about that. I just think about every child having, you know, you've got to start where they are and lift them up. I did that with my own sisters when they were little. I'm nine and ten years older than them. I just would not let them get away with saying words incorrectly, unless they really did have a speech impediment, which my one sister did. I just sit there and work with them on how you pronounce things, and the correct way to say it. I didn't want them to be, I wanted them to sound smart.

Laura: Do you tell your kids here, when you talk to them about bathroom, that you want them to sound smart?

Aileen: Uh, huh. When you go to work for your employer, and you say bafroom, they're not going to know what the heck you're talking about. (Viewing Session 2, pp. 39-40)

This example raised the question of whether Aileen knew something about code switching, and whether she was explicitly addressing this with her students.

Because conflicting evidence emerged, it was not clear if Aileen was demonstrating cultural competence. It certainly appears that if she was, she

was just beginning to understand how and why to help her children understand differences in the oral and written language code.

However, Aileen did express that the African American students in her classroom were more verbal than the other students, and that they used talk as a way to make sense of the world and their surroundings. She related her knowledge of predominately Black churches, where the members of the church called out during a service in response to the preacher's message. She realized that her African American students were likely to call out in formal settings like church, and in less formal settings at home and on the playground. Because her children were relative newcomers in schools, Aileen expected that many of them were still confused about the use and role of talk in schools. This is one reason Aileen gave for encouraging her children to talk during her journal writing. She believed that culturally, African American students are accustomed to using oral language as a way to make sense of things, and she wanted her students to be able to use this in the classroom.

It was also interesting to note that when children were talking during Morning Message or Journal Writing, Aileen did not correct their BVE. The examples of correcting dialect that I observed came in one-on-one situations when Aileen was either working with a child, or when a child asked Aileen a question.

Cultural competence includes understanding of culture and its role in education, initiative to learn about students culture and community, use of student culture for a basis for learning, and promotion of flexible use of students'

local and global culture. This study did not seek to find support for, nor did it provide evidence that Aileen sought to learn more about her students' culture and community, or that she used students' culture as a basis for learning. It appeared that Aileen might be developing cultural competence in some areas, but not consistently in all areas.

Sociopolitical consciousness. The third aspect of culturally responsive pedagogy is sociopolitical consciousness, which includes the teacher's knowledge of the larger sociopolitical context, investment in the public good, attempts to connect students to the larger social context, and the belief that students' success had consequences for his or her own quality of life. Aileen's self-proclaimed decision to teach in Gambell because she wanted to make a difference hints at her investment in the public good. As well, during one of our conversations about the various policies (e.g. NCLB, Reading First) that affect public education today, she became very adamant and somewhat agitated as she told of a school board member who was trying to dissolve the magnet focus at Forest Glen. This monologue suggested she was aware of the larger sociopolitical context and she was connecting her students to this context. She claimed:

It makes me crazy. We are scrambling as fast, as hard as we can now, and then you're going to have people come in and say you're not doing a good job... Think about it. These politicians have been educated themselves, probably had interested parents. All these people up there are all these educated people, but they have never seen the other side of the story... I don't know how much influence these guys [on the school board] will have, what really kills me is that the guy who does all this vocalization lives in Franklin [the same affluent suburb of Gambell that Aileen lives in], but keeps an apartment in Gambell, to keep his nose in our business and that aggravates me. It's like you want to bring down

Gambell; let's bring Gambell up, like Franklin. I'm from Franklin and I'm going in here trying to bring in values and do some stuff I saw in [Franklin]. What's the matter with him? (Spring Interview, pp. 44-46)

This conversation made it appear as if Aileen knew about the larger sociopolitical context of the world and that she felt an investment in public good. It also implied that she believed her students could have better lives if they were given the resources and opportunities that students in Franklin had. It is problematic in the aspect that the "values" she speaks of were likely the values of Franklin and her upper-middle class status. This comment made me question Aileen's sociopolitical consciousness. Wanting to teach in an urban setting so that middle-class values and norms can be taught, and urban children can be brought "up" to the level of the suburbs seemed problematic to me.

Is Aileen culturally responsive? Aileen and I never had a conversation about culturally responsive pedagogy, however the data and my analysis of the data can be interpreted to suggest that the way Aileen managed the tension she felt between her own identity and the nature of her students' identities, was to engage in activities that reflected a culturally responsive stance. It also suggests however, that Aileen was unknowingly conflicted about what her role was as a teacher of urban students, and what was best for her students. I maintain that Aileen demonstrated some aspects of culturally responsive teaching, but not knowingly and not completely.

Aileen's Writing Program Evolves

A positive or harmonious connection existed for Aileen between her teaching tools, her materials, her students and her own identity. Because she

selected the teaching tools (she was not mandated to use particular materials by the district) and she purchased many of her own materials, Aileen was able to match both the tools to her materials, her identity, and to her students. She selected the materials and teaching tools that matched her own background experiences and teaching philosophies and that she believed would work to teach these particular students. She used the energy from this positive relationship to propel her writing program forward, stay focused on her goals throughout the year, and to become more confident in her abilities to teach writing. Because the school year started on a good note – she had time to get her classroom set up, her room was empty of other teachers' belongings, she had been assigned a grade level she was familiar with – Aileen used this year not only to meet her writing goals for this group of student, but also to solidify and add to her own knowledge base about teaching writing, and to make plans for teaching writing in the next school year. “This year, I just got more practiced at [teaching writing]. [Things] just fell into place” (Spring Interview, p. 24).

Aileen Gets Organized

One thing that helped Aileen during this study was organization – she became more organized and able to keep up with sequencing of skills and the management of the classroom.

I got more organized. I had the kids doing the papers they should have been doing. I knew what I was going to teach, in a certain sequence so it made sense. I tried to keep it in a certain organized way so that [the students] would see the pattern. (Spring Interview, p. 5)

The papers Aileen talked about here referred to the morning stories. She believed that she was not only able to organize writing instruction, but also the

various elements that supported this instruction. She utilized environmental print in ways she had not before – using a word wall, the letter-word charts, and posting certain high-frequency words in the room (e.g. the color and number words). She made connections between reading and writing through the use of the stories/books in the morning work (described earlier in this chapter). She connected oral language to both reading and writing, by focusing on fluency in all three areas. She integrated authentic reading, writing, and speaking tasks into her content area instruction, particularly math and science, and particularly in the second semester. She focused on word identification through spelling and phonics instruction, posting and using high frequency words, using challenging vocabulary when speaking, reading, and writing, and through content areas. Perhaps because Aileen had taught 1st grade three times previously, she had a good grasp on what her students needed to know and be able to do in order to become readers and writers, and she was focused on her goals.

A Professional Relationship

Along with her personal organization of students, content, and pedagogy, Aileen also used the energy that our relationship brought to confirm some of her own teaching theories and to make plans for the future. Perhaps because Aileen and I knew each other prior to this study, during the study, she regularly sought advice for how to improve things, affirmation of the things she was currently doing, and dialogue about the complexities of teaching urban children to write. On more than one occasion, our conversations ran long and the school building became empty and quiet as other teachers left for the evening, and night fell as

we looked over student work and tried to figure out what her children knew and how her instruction could support each one. Speaking of our relationship near the end of our final interview Aileen commented,

[This experience] has been really positive. I really had to think about how I wanted to teach. I had these ideas in my head, but you know, to be able to do it for you, it was a good thing when you came in. It reinforced my thinking about, I'm not doing everything wrong here. I'm doing quite a lot right. (Spring Interview, p. 48)

Aileen used this study as an opportunity to bring what she had learned in her teacher preparation courses, as well as her first three years of teaching, to “bring it all together.”

Planning for Next Year

Finally, Aileen used the positive energy from what was working – her teaching tools and materials with her students - to reflect on her practice, and to use new information gleaned during the school year to plan for the next school year. In particular, two events helped her define her goals for future writing instruction. The first was a district-wide language arts academy, put on each year by grade levels, to help teachers understand and implement language arts instruction. It was at one of the professional development sessions that Aileen observed the presenter modeling journal writing. Before this time, she had not realized the amount of thinking and talking aloud that students needed in order for the modeling to help them become better writers. Shortly after she attended the presentation, Aileen commented:

[The presenter] showed how she goes through her thought processes, so the children could understand where she is with her thinking. I thought, 'oh my gosh,' I really need to do that with the kids. (Viewing Session 3, p. 7)

Aileen began to model journal writing as she had observed the presenter doing, and in her final interview she returned to the importance of that workshop.

I knew about the picture plan and I knew about the modeling, but when we had that three day academy...and I saw how somebody else had done it, where they really do out loud thinking. When I saw that modeled, that was an eye opener to me. (Spring Interview, p. 14)

Aileen's reflection on this event caused her to modify and tweak her journal writing and she felt that "[that professional development] was the best thing I've ever seen, ever. For a three day thing, I learned a lot from that" (Spring Interview, p. 24). It also solidified the role of journal writing in teaching young children to write, and she vowed to use it again the following year.

The second event that influenced Aileen's decisions about writing instruction for not only the remainder of this school year, but for next year as well, was an article she read in a teaching journal about phonemic awareness. The article discussed a first grade teacher's use of phonemic awareness instruction and how she spent four months of first grade on phonemic awareness.

[The article] said you should really teach [phonemic awareness] for the first four months. I have not done that. I've done it for about the first two months...it's showing up later in the year, that they really don't have a good grasp...so next year, I will do that. For four months, all the way to December. (Viewing Session 5, pp. 15-16)

In the final interview, I asked Aileen what her current thoughts were on the role of phonemic awareness. She replied:

I mean, you're really teaching it all year through, but to really concentrate on the beginning of the word, the end of the word, and the middle of the word. To really concentrate on that, for four months. (Spring Interview, p. 2)

These events and reflections allowed Aileen to solidify her knowledge about writing instruction and to make plans for the following school year. She planned to do phonemic awareness for longer in the school year; she planned to continue modeling journal writing, and to follow the sequence from Morning Message to journal writing. Based on a time near the end of the year when Aileen worked with students during the journal writing time, she also planned to do guided reading groups at a different time during the day so that she can consistently work with children on their writing, instead of letting them write individually while she met with reading groups.

I want them to have more success with their writing too, so I've been rethinking my strategy and I'm going to change it next year too. When I went [among the students] I could really keep tabs on what they were doing and that way I could treat more than one child at a time. (Viewing Session 5, pp. 24-25)

Aileen used the harmonious energy from her teaching context to focus on her goals, solidify her knowledge about teaching writing, and make plans for the next school year. In the next section, I discuss how Aileen managed and finessed her teaching context.

How Aileen Managed and Finessed her Teaching Context as She Learned to Teach Writing

The Influence of Aileen's Identity

Aileen managed and finessed her teaching context by relying on her own experiences and the knowledge she gleaned during her teacher preparation. Aileen possessed a great deal of life experiences that supported and upheld her teaching context. Her husband supported her decision to pursue teaching at this phase of her life and helped her with her own writing throughout her college

courses. Raising two children provided her with a great deal of experience both in terms of knowledge about academic and social development, and motherhood also gave her a perspective of how home life can interact with schooling. Her time spent in her sons' elementary school, both while they attended there, but even long after, provided her with a foundation of knowledge and understanding of how children learn to read and write in a middle to upper-middle class setting. Her decision to pursue a child development major and the theories and concepts she developed during that work were clearly evident in her teaching. Because of these factors, Aileen probably can not be considered typical of many beginning teachers. She was a secure and confident woman in her life outside of school. However, it appeared obvious that her life experiences informed and supported the ways she thought about, navigated, managed, and finessed her teaching context.

The main tension in Aileen's teaching context came from the traditional way that some of her colleagues and the parents of her students expected schools to work, and the kinds of teaching they expected to happen. Because a traditional way of teaching (e.g. use of basal readers, scripted writing prompts, children sitting in rows and reciting for the teacher) did not match Aileen's experiences, teacher preparation, and beliefs, she did not feel comfortable adapting her teaching to match the teaching of her colleagues or the expectations of the parents of her students. It is likely that her age and experience gave her the confidence needed to manage this tension by adhering to her identity rather than acquiescing to the expectations of the various

stakeholders in her teaching context. A less experienced teacher might have simply acquiesced in this situation. Ultimately, like Celina, Aileen made the decisions she did because of her students – she honestly felt that she could best meet their needs by teaching children to write using Morning Message, journal writing, and by making visible and explicit the connections between reading and writing. Many novices are not able to give priority to their students because they spend too much time thinking about their teaching (as we will see in the next chapter was true for Bethany). Even though she realized cultural differences existed between herself and her students, she chose to engage in pedagogies that considered and supported them through both developmental and cultural lenses.

While this discussion highlights how Aileen's identity supported her learning to teach, some of the research suggested that Aileen's identity also conflicted with that of her students. In the earlier discussion of Aileen's practice of correcting students' nonstandard English dialects, her identity, particularly her background experiences likely influenced this discussion. Aileen's relationship with her sisters, and particularly her sister who had a speech impediment, could unknowingly, contribute to how Aileen interpreted poor grammar. So while it is not clear whether her identity encouraged and supported culturally responsive pedagogies or inhibited her from achieving them, it is clear that her identity – her background and experiences influenced instructional decisions in the classroom.

Positive Connections Create Positive Energy

Aileen had control over her teaching tools and the materials she used for instruction and she was able to match these to her own experiences and beliefs and to her perceived needs of her students. These relationships provided her with positive energy and the motivation to continue to fine-tune her teaching of writing and to move forward as she planned for the future. In addition, the relationship she and I had provided an impetus for dialogue, discussion, and reflection that propelled her further along the pathway of learning to teach. Aileen also found positive energy through her sense of humor. Her students were often heard laughing over something that Aileen said, and she and I often chuckled over the things we viewed in the video tapes of her teaching. "Humor is important. If you can't humor your kids, I feel sorry for them. They're never going to want to come to class. They'll see school as a labor" (Spring Interview, p. 48). While Aileen did not think lightly of teaching and learning - she realized the importance of her task, she often found humor in the things her students did and said, and she made them laugh on numerous occasions. Realizing her sense of humor was a key part of who she was a mature adult, and finding a way to keep that part of her identity in her teaching, provided Aileen with energy to tackle some of the tenuous relationships of her teaching context.

Ignorable Connections

Some aspects of Aileen's teaching context appeared not to influence her instructional decisions, in particular the policy environment. Even though she was adamant (as evidenced by her earlier comment concerning the school board member) about public policy and the negative publicity that teachers and

students in urban schools often endured, policy did not directly influence Aileen's instructional decisions for writing. This happened, most likely, because Aileen taught first grade in a non Reading First grant building. As a first grade teacher, she did not have SIMs or nine-week tests. Because she was in a non Reading First school, unlike Celina, she did not have a Reading First facilitator checking up on her, nor did she have to adhere to the mandated materials or the 120 minutes of time for literacy instruction. Aileen was afforded professional integrity for making instructional decisions based on her knowledge, skills and experiences, and she took advantage of this opportunity to develop and refine her own evolving teaching practice.

So What Does Aileen's Story Help Us Understand About Learning to Teach?

Like Celina's story of learning to teach writing, Aileen's story helps us realize the complexities that face beginning teachers as they consider the various aspects of their individual teaching contexts. Aileen's example confirms that some aspects of teaching context create tension and that how teachers manage and navigate those tensions depends on some of the other aspects of the teaching context – for Aileen, the primary influence was her well-formed identity. Aileen's story also illustrates how harmonious connections in teaching context can support positive change and can energize teachers to continue to build effective teaching practice.

Acquiesce, Accommodate or Resist?

Aileen's case adds to the work of Smagorinsky et al. (2002) in helping us think about examples of acquiescence, accommodation, and resistance. Aileen's

decision about teaching tools and materials, in light of the expectations of parents and the current practices of colleagues, is an example of resistance. Like Andrea (the first year teacher in Smagorinsky's work), Aileen's resistance was subversive. Aileen did not openly denounce what her colleagues were doing, she did not "give in" to what the parents would have liked, and she was not trying to change the system, the school, or her colleagues. Throughout the year, and by her many instructional decisions, Aileen made decisions because she was trying to do the best she could for her students. If that meant she resisted the popular culture of the building she was in, so be it.

Aileen's work with her students in light of their culture and the disconnect between students' culture and her own provides an illustration of accommodation. Aileen drew from what she knew about teaching, learning and children and what she observed in her students and attempted to accommodate both. It is likely that as Aileen learns more about her students and more about teaching and learning, she will continue to make accommodations in her instruction and teaching practice.

There is little evidence that Aileen acquiesced during this study because of particular aspects of her teaching context, however, a less experienced teacher might have acquiesced by teaching in more traditional ways that matched those of her colleagues and the expectations of her students' parents. Her decision makes sense given her life experiences and recalling that Celina in her fourth year of teaching, did not acquiesce either. This reinforces the notion that Smagorinsky and colleagues examined that as teachers gain more

experiences and confidence with teaching, they are more likely to accommodate and resist and less likely to acquiesce. Even though Aileen had three years of experience, compared to Celina with four, because of Aileen's age and life experiences she was further along (than Celina) the continuum of learning to teach.

In some ways, Aileen's case seems less tenuous than Celina's (and Bethany's). Two hypothesis have emerged from this data and have been discussed previously in this chapter. However, understanding what influenced Aileen as she learned to teach writing helps us think about the role of teaching context in learning to teach. To that end, I will summarize those hypotheses here. First, the policy environment in Aileen's teaching context was not problematic for her. There was no Reading First grant, no mandated curriculum, and (as we see this emerge as a problem for Bethany), no MEAP test to worry about. The implications for instruction that both Celina and Bethany had to contend with simply did not exist for Aileen. Second, Aileen's age, experience and well-shaped identity provided her with confidence and a calm, easy going manner which guided her instructional decisions. She was not as easily frustrated or overwhelmed by the various parts of her teaching context as Bethany and Celina were. There were more parts of her teaching context that she could ignore or work within, that for less experienced teachers, would have created tensions.

Chapter 6

"SOMETIMES YOU MAKE MISTAKES": WRITING INSTRUCTION IN BETHANY'S CLASSROOM

This chapter compliments and offers another layer of understanding to the teaching context model introduced earlier in this work. Examining Celina's case illuminated how teachers learn to teach in a tenuous, yet stable context. Aileen's case added to our understanding because her context was less tenuous, yet unstable. Examining Bethany's story helps us understand how a teacher with an ever-changing teaching context, in her second year of teaching but fourth school setting, makes instructional decisions within her unique teaching context. As in the first two case studies, I will argue that Bethany learned to teach writing by navigating the harmonies and tensions that existed through the relationships created by the various aspects of her teaching context (i.e. community, students, policy environment, materials, teaching tools, colleagues, and personal identity). The most influential factors for Bethany were the policy environment and her teaching colleagues, with her teaching tools reflecting additional influence. Less important were her materials, community and students. This chapter will also illustrate how Bethany took one stance during the fall, mostly one of acquiescence; and then began to accommodate and resist during the spring. Bethany's story is important because it permits a close examination of a teacher who moved from location to location during her first two years of teaching, and thus had to learn to navigate multiple sets of contextual factors.

Bethany "Writes With" Her Students

As Bethany's twenty-two fourth grade students entered the room, they quietly and quickly retrieved their writing folders from their desks, and waited patiently for her as she prepared the overhead projector for the day's lesson. She began by referring to the current template, or graphic organizer (Appendix L), that the students were using to plan their writing pieces. She reminded them that she had already written the paragraph that matched the introduction box of her template, and that today she would be showing them how to write the paragraph for the first event. The focus of the lesson was on using sensory images to write interesting descriptions and Bethany and her students were using a piece of artwork for their inspiration. Using authentic artwork is a key aspect of Bethany's instruction across the disciplines because Parkside, the school where Bethany teaches, is a magnet school for the fine and performing arts. In this particular painting, two small Black boys are working in a garden with, what one assumes, is their mother.

Bethany rereads the text the class generated from the previous lesson: On a hot spring afternoon in the 1850s, there were two small African American boys assisting their mother. The mother is carefully moving the wooden stick on the surface of the dirt in a small field where vegetables are growing in neatly planted rows. They could begin to hear the crunch of the first lettuce leaves hit their mouths in anticipation of their vegetables growing. (Video observation 2, p. 2)

As she concluded the rereading, she immediately told students, "Today I am going to show you how to do the first event – which is the boys pick the vegetables. How does it look, sound, taste, feel, smell, when people pick vegetables?" (Video observation 2, p. 2). The lesson proceeded as Bethany solicited ideas from her students, tried out various language, and eventually

drafted the paragraph that described her first event – the boys picking the vegetables. Bethany termed this kind of shared or interactive writing a “write with” because it was co-constructed. There were times when Bethany’s mini-lessons were more of a “write to” and she simply modeled writing for the students without asking for their suggestions. Bethany learned these terms from LIFT (Literacy Instructional Frameworks Training) that is offered by her local Intermediate School District (ISD).

Throughout the lesson Bethany continued to ask questions that reminded students to use their five senses to describe what was happening in the scene. She used the words, visualizing, imagining, tasting, smelling, and even asked students to close their eyes at one point in the lesson (Video Observation 2). She adeptly drew language from her students that helped her describe how the two boys in the picture picked the vegetables. The second paragraph, when completed, read:

George wiped the sweat off his brown eyebrow and took a deep breath. His legs and arms were tired because of the exercise he was involved in. it seemed like the hundredth time that day when he took his final squat and dug his left hand into the soily dirt. He could smell the lettuce mixed with dirt. Finally, he called it a day when the last lettuce hit the gray bucket. (Video observation 2, p. 9)

The mini-lesson took about fifteen minutes, and at its conclusion Bethany reminded students to continue working on their current story, making sure to use descriptive language and to use the template to help organize and plan what they would write. During the remaining thirty minutes of writing workshop, Bethany’s students planned, wrote, or revisited an earlier piece of artwork placed on the front board. Bethany explained to me that the students had two or three stories

in process right now, and while some were writing from a picture prompt, others were creating their own stories. All students were using the template however, and all were focused on using sensory images to create descriptive language. Bethany spent the remainder of writing workshop moving around the room, often stopping beside a student to prompt them, question them, or answer a question that they had about their writing process. When the bell rang thirty minutes later, Bethany quietly asked students to place their writing materials in their writing folders and to line up for lunch

Is this Writing Workshop?

Bethany describes her writing time as Writing Workshop, and per the vignette above, it might seem that Bethany is effectively implementing this instructional model to teach writing to her fourth grade students. However, across the school year, several things emerged that raised questions about Bethany's understanding and implementation of Writing Workshop.

Mini-lessons. Bethany's writing time always began with a mini-lesson. However, every mini-lesson involved the use of a template, although the exact genre and format of the templates changing across the year. Bethany did not use the mini-lesson as a time to talk explicitly about conferencing, revising, word choice, or voice, although she modeled these through the use of the template. Writing Workshop experts (e.g. Donald Graves, Lucy Calkins, Ralph Fletcher) speak about the various kinds and purposes of mini-lessons, and the varying lengths and formality of them as well. While Bethany and I talked about the various kinds of mini-lessons she might do during writing workshop, Bethany was

observed implementing mini-lessons in a more rigid, routinized way that always focused on planning and learning the structure of a particular genre.

Publishing. One of Bethany's goals for her writing instruction across the year was to lead her students through the entire writing process, from planning to drafting, to revision, and finally, to publication. Bethany struggled with this goal throughout the school year, with her students publishing their first books in April. Bethany maintained the notion across the year that she needed to keep all of her students at the same place in the writing process and with the same genre/topic of writing so that she could provide support and instruction. Because it took a long time for Bethany to move twenty-two students through the entire process, and because she changed writing templates occasionally, many pieces were never completed and remained unfinished in the students' writing folders. A myriad of factors contributed to this dilemma and they will be illuminated later in this chapter.

Researchers and practitioners who write about implementing effective classroom writing instruction include public sharing as a key component of the workshop (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1994; Routman, 2000). Many teachers organize sharing use an Author's Chair format where the author sits in a special chair and shares his/her work with his/her classmates. Since writing is a social act (Graves, 1994) it make sense that writing is shared in a social setting. During one of the early LIFT classes, Bethany had read about writing workshop in one of the course books (Fountas & Pinnell, 2000) and in the fall interview in October of the school year Bethany claimed:

I saw in the Fountas and Pinnell [book] where they had an outline for writing workshop and I think they had Fridays as Author's Chair. Once [the students] get published work, I told them that we'll put them in our class library, and then we'll have Author's Chair where they'll be able to read their own story before it goes on the shelf for other kids to read. (Fall Interview, p. 18)

Bethany's interpretation of Author's Chair is incomplete and does not allow for students to share their writing pieces during the writing process, but only as a finished product. I never observed Author's Chair, or any other kind of public sharing, during the school year. When I revisited this idea during the spring interview in May, Bethany said "in a way [students] are sharing their published pieces [by placing them in the reading corner], it's just not taking the time to read their pieces. I haven't done that. I don't think it's very important" (Spring Interview, p. 3). Bethany's incomplete conceptualization of writing workshop and her lack of inclusion of all the components that embrace the model was a factor for how she learned to teach writing across the year.

Conferencing. The second of Bethany's self-assigned goals for her writing across the year was to find a way to manage conferences effectively. Bethany's definition of conferencing was gleaned from many comments she made across the year, and emerged as 'the time when the teacher meets with the student for revision and editing purposes *after* the piece is considered complete by the student'. Unlike the way experts envision writing conferences, Bethany did not consider the informal conversations she had with students during writing time (as described above) as conferencing, nor did she build more formal conferences into writing workshop while students were at stages other than near-completion of the writing process. Bethany conferenced in small groups where she asked

students who were done with their pieces to join her at a table in the back of room. She would read and talk through one student's work at a time, asking each student to sit and make corrections after she read through it. As students completed the corrections, she would read it again. Some students remained at the table through multiple rounds of corrections, while others were asked to make a few changes and then were sent back to their seats.

Smagorinsky and colleagues (2003) describe a phenomenon of beginning teachers traveling a twisting path of learning to teach because they may hold only partial or pseudoconceptual understandings of models and tools that they are trying to implement. I questioned the fullness of Bethany's conceptual understanding of Writing Workshop throughout this study. As we look at her teaching context in the next section, I use the teaching context visual to help explain how it is possible that she had an incomplete conceptual understanding of Writing Workshop and how various factors within her teaching context acted to impede her from developing a richer conception during the school year.

Bethany's Teaching Context

As I did for Celina and Aileen, I make the case that Bethany learned to teach by managing the various tensions that existed within her teaching context. Additionally, and unlike Celina and Aileen, I argue that Bethany's tensions changed during the school year and can be understood as her context prior to the MEAP test (given in late January) and after the MEAP test. Figure 4 below represents the various aspects of Bethany's teaching context and the tensions and harmonies that emerged across the year. In the remainder of this chapter I

briefly describe each of the aspects of Bethany's teaching context and then examine how her shifting context influenced her writing instructional decisions differently across the year.

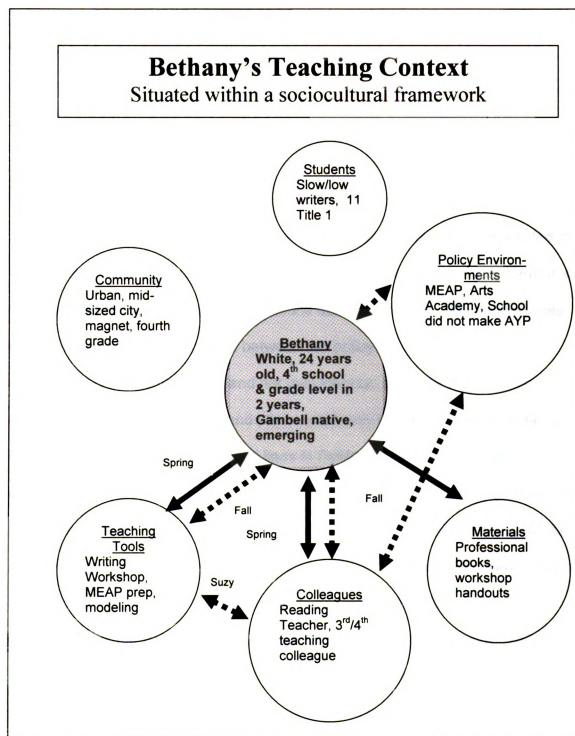


Figure 4: Bethany's Teaching Context

As with the teaching context visual for Aileen and Celina, the size of the circles in the visual matter. The larger circles in Bethany's teaching context – policy environments, colleagues, and her identity influenced Bethany's decisions more than her teaching tools, her materials and her community. Least influential, in this study, were Bethany's students. Recalling the generic teaching context visual presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 1) reminds us that potential connections exist between each of the aspects of teaching context. The lines represented in Bethany's teaching context visual represent the tensions and eventual harmonies that were influential to her writing decisions during the study. The dashed lines represent tensions that occurred between her policy environments, her colleagues, her teaching tools, and her own identity. Some of these tensions existed across the entire year, and others were only influential during the fall of the year (i.e. pre-MEAP). The solid lines in Bethany's teaching context visual represent harmonious relationships. For example, Bethany's choice and use of materials for teaching writing remained very stable and within her control for the course of the year. As we will see in the upcoming discussion, this created some authority for Bethany and allowed her to make some instructional decisions. Other areas of harmony arose during the spring semester (i.e. post-MEAP) between her colleagues, her identity, and her teaching tools. Of course relationships exist between the other categories in Bethany's teaching context. For example, being in fourth grade was a direct connection to the MEAP test, because in fourth grade, students take the language arts MEAP. However, the tension for Bethany, was not between her community and her policy

environment, but instead resulted because of the way the MEAP policy related to other areas of her teaching context (e.g. her colleagues and teaching tools). This tension will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The lack of connecting lines in the visual does not indicate that connections did not exist, merely that they did not explicitly influence Bethany's decisions for teaching writing during this study. It is also possible that some of these connections were influential to Bethany, but were invisible to me through classroom and video observations, viewing sessions and interviews.

Bethany's Identity

During this study, Bethany was a 24 year old white woman. She had grown up and lived in Gambell her entire life, recently purchasing her first home near the elementary school she had attended. As an elementary student Bethany reported that she "struggled with reading, and I was a Title One student, so I would always go out of the room for...extra help in reading and writing" (Fall Interview, p. 6). While her parents chose to send her to a local suburban middle and high school, she maintained close contact with friends and relatives who attended Gambell Schools. Bethany did not recall doing much writing during middle and high school, except for maybe an occasional book report. Bethany attended a local community college and then transferred to the nearby university to get her teaching credentials. During college Bethany discovered that:

writing was really easy. I could do a fifty page paper on the computer no problem. I would wait until the day before it was due, and I would sit down at the computer and just type it out. I wouldn't do all the drafts you were required to do. (Fall Interview, p. 7)

Bethany vaguely remembered hearing something about a process approach to writing in her teacher education courses, but since she never needed to go through all the steps, she admitted, she had not paid much attention to the process model.

Bethany did her year-long internship in a second grade classroom at Abbott School in the Gambell School District. During her internship, a position opened up at the school, and the principal asked her to finish the year as the long term sub. Since student teaching ended in April, she was able to teach for about six weeks as a long term sub, prior to landing her first job. That position remained open into the next school year, and while Bethany did search for a job during the summer, she had not found one when school began and so she began her first year of teaching as a long term sub in second grade at Abbott School. After about a month, the position was dissolved because of low class sizes, and Bethany was placed in a long-term sub position in a 2nd/3rd grade split in another Gambell School. She remained there until mid November, when a posted position became available. She applied for the fifth grade opening, and was officially hired in late November. Bethany completed her first year in a fifth grade classroom, where the students proudly claimed that they had driven their first teacher to retire. Near the end of her first year, Bethany, like Aileen, was pink-slipped (i.e. laid off). She was informed in early August that she would have a job for the following year, and was later assigned to the fourth grade classroom at Parkside. Bethany was in her second year of teaching, although her fourth classroom, during this study.

Bethany was currently learning about writing workshop as part of her LIFT class, and she pulled many ideas from the materials and practical ideas shared in class. These materials and ideas will be discussed further in the materials and teaching tools sections below.

Bethany's Policy Environments

As described earlier, Gambell was implementing the Reading First grant in many of its schools. Parkside, because they did not make AYP the preceding year, was one of these schools. However, because Bethany taught fourth grade, and the Reading First grant applied to grades K-3, the influences that plagued Celina because of the Reading First grant were not a factor for Bethany. However, because Parkside had not made AYP, and because the MEAP scores are used, in part, to determine AYP, and because the MEAP is given in fourth grade, Bethany felt a great deal of pressure and tension. Her policy environment included the threat of not making AYP again, and the need for improved achievement scores of her students on the MEAP.

Additionally, the magnet status of Parkside influenced a building wide decision for grades 4-6 to implement an Arts Academy three mornings a week for an hour and a half each morning. During this time students took elective courses such as choir, keyboarding, dance, pottery, etc., with each teacher and support staff member teaching a course. Because Arts Academy took up a large chunk of instructional time, Bethany felt conflicted about how to implement her "regular" language arts instruction so that it fit with the constrained parameters of the Arts Academy.

Bethany's Community

Parkside, as already stated, is a magnet school, situated with an urban context. Parkside draws students from across the district and has a great number of children bused from all areas of the district; it is not a neighborhood school. While Bethany felt Gambell was an urban district, she felt Parkside was not.

I think all three schools that I've been at [prior to Parkside] were all Title One schools, which goes by low test scores and free and reduced lunch. Gallagher [her third school from her first year] was really low income, Abbott was low income, I don't know about Miller Lane [the school she taught at for about six weeks during her first year]. This school is supposedly low income, but it's a school of choice, a magnet school, and we have a waiting list to get into the school. They're not neighborhood kids, and the fact that they are on a waiting list, their parents are very involved, because their parents want them here. (Fall Interview, p. 4)

The urbanness of Parkside did not influence Bethany during this study. The magnet status of the school, and the fact that Bethany taught fourth grade did influence her, as described earlier in this chapter.

Bethany's Students

Bethany had twenty-five students in her class, until January, when two students moved. Only twenty-two (and then twenty) students were in her classroom during writing instruction as the other three students were in the resource room during that time. Of those twenty students, eight were African American, seven were White, three were Latino/a, and two were Asian. Two children spoke English as a second language (Spanish and Hmong were the first languages), and eleven of the twenty students received Title One support.

During interviews, Bethany rarely spoke about individual children; instead referring to “low writers”, “slow writers”, “high readers” and “Title One” students.

As the study unfolded, I initially felt that Bethany was not influenced very much by her students, nor were they a big consideration for her teaching. She claimed that she wanted to teach in Gambell, but her reasons for wanting this were not evident to me. During the data analysis however, I was amazed at how thoughtful Bethany was about her individual instruction with particular students. She knew the abilities of her students and she provided different levels and kinds of support based on what she felt each student needed. For example, one of her students was writing about how it might feel to the main character to be adrift on a boat, but the student had never been on a boat, so Bethany proceeded to help her connect to a personal experience of riding in a car with the windows down. She explained to the student that she could use that experience to describe what it might feel like to be on a boat (Video Observation 2, p. 12).

Another time, during a viewing session as we watched a small group conference earlier in the year, Bethany responded to the amount of time she spent with one student.

This kid, is one of my, he's not a difficult kid, he's far from difficult. I just don't know how to deal with him. Everything I try to do, he's like, oh, sorry, sorry. He apologizes to me like fifty times a day. And every time I say something about what do you need to do here, he say's 'I'll change it, I'm sorry, I'm sorry'. What I want him to say is how he changed it. I can't get him to do that sometimes. He thinks it's changing the words, he doesn't know we're changing the main ideas. (Viewing Session 1, pp. 28-29)

Comments and interactions like this, led me to believe that Bethany was not only aware of her students' needs, but also empathetic toward her students. When

asked in her final interview if she considered Parkside an urban school (something she would not commit to in the Fall Interview), she hesitated, and then replied:

It probably is. That's the type of kids I want to work with, because I think I can make a bigger difference. They're not getting support at home. If I can give them as much support as I can in class...I think it's urban. It's urban because when we talk about things, they are giving me a city perspective. I mean, they're definitely not country kids. (Spring Interview, p. 40)

I eventually realized that the relationships Bethany had with her students were important to her. It was obvious to me that the relationships Bethany had with her student were not tenuous, but it also became clear to me that the relationships, while perhaps harmonious, were not affording Bethany the same kind of energy that some of the Aileen's and Celina's positive connections afforded them. While she made instructional decisions for working individually with students based on their needs, it was not evident that she made whole-class decisions about writing instruction based on what she thought her students needed. Later in the chapter, I explain how Bethany managed the most stressful and tenuous part of her teaching context in the fall, and then how this evolved in the spring, and I again point to the seeming invisibility of her students as she managed as well as she could given her context.

Bethany's Colleagues

Two colleagues influenced Bethany throughout the course of the school year. Suzy, Bethany's official mentor and the reading teacher at Parkside, seemed ultimately responsible for the achievement of the fourth grade students on the language arts portion of the MEAP. Beginning in September and

continuing until the MEAP was administered in late January, Suzy taught lessons in Bethany's classroom each morning, for the sole purpose of MEAP preparation. These lessons were in both reading and writing. Additionally, Suzy met with Bethany, and Amanda, a 3rd/4th grade teacher, on a weekly basis. The three women planned how they would teach the reading tasks and writing structures that would most likely help their students do well on the MEAP. The group, led by Suzy, decided that the writing instruction would be guided by a template that would help students organize writing in a way that would match the MEAP rubric. Suzy designed the template, she modeled how to use it for Bethany, and she expected Bethany to use the template in the fall for her writing instruction. The relationships Bethany had with these two women influenced her writing instructional decisions tremendously.

During the fall semester, the relationship with Suzy was very tenuous. She was physically in Bethany's classroom daily, and she was a strong MEAP advocate. She modeled lessons that she expected Bethany to emulate and at the weekly meetings she provided Bethany with so many materials and ideas that Bethany often expressed to me, feelings of frustration and of being overwhelmed. It is also possible, that because Suzy was Bethany's mentor, she felt she needed to comply with Suzy's instructional ideas. When the MEAP test was over in mid-February, Suzy shifted her MEAP preparation to the third grade classrooms and no longer met with Bethany for planning each week. It was not evident that Suzy continued to meet with Bethany at this point, even in the role of mentor. However, at that point, Bethany's relationship with Amanda emerged as

a positive one, and they worked together as colleagues across the remainder of the school year. It was not clear to me whether her relationship with Amanda in the fall was tenuous or not, but during the spring, Bethany used some of the energy from the relationship to think differently about her writing instruction.

Bethany's Materials

Bethany's relative freedom to select and use her own materials for writing (and all of language arts) instruction was a fairly positive factor within her teaching context. Because she was attending LIFT and meeting with Suzy and Amanda, Bethany was able to explore the various materials from LIFT with her colleagues, and then make decisions about which materials to ultimately use. Although Suzy's influence in writing was strong, and she was able to convince Bethany and Amanda to use the topic-focused templates, Bethany remained optimistic about the fact that she did not have to use a basal series, and that she could use whatever materials she wanted. Bethany also had a lot more say over what materials she drew from for reading instruction, and that may have contributed to the positive nature I observed surrounding her selection of materials. Additionally, while Suzy influenced Bethany's materials selection in the fall, Bethany had more control over her materials in the spring. Because she was not under the guidelines of Reading First, she did not have to use the district supplied basal materials, and she deliberately chose not to use them. Because she was currently taking LIFT, she was able to select pedagogies, models, and materials discussed in LIFT, and implement them into her classroom. For example, Bethany was introduced to the book *Strategies that Work* by Harvey

and Goudvis in LIFT, and she eventually adopted a Reader's Workshop approach for her reading instruction (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). Additionally she borrowed ideas about the strategies she was teaching for reading, for her writing mini-lessons (e.g. the use of visualizing in the writing lesson described earlier). Many of the ideas Bethany had for teaching writing came from the 6 + 1 Traits Program, marketed by Scholastic (Culham, 2003), that Bethany heard about at LIFT, and purchased at the urging of Suzy. Like Celina and Aileen, Bethany also attended her district sponsored three-day academy on implementing a balanced language arts program. She received additional materials (i.e. templates) that she utilized for her writing instruction during the spring semester. Because Bethany did not have to use a mandated basal, and she had a wealth of materials from LIFT and her work with Suzy and Amanda that she could draw from, even though during the fall she primarily used the topic template for writing instruction, she felt good about the materials she was using.

Bethany's Teaching Tools

Bethany's teaching toolkit for writing consisted primarily of her incomplete conception of Writing Workshop. She also drew from the MEAP preparation lessons that Suzy modeled for her on a regular basis. While her understanding of Writing Workshop could be considered a conceptual tool, her imitation of Suzy was more likely a practical one because Bethany learned how to use the template by observing Suzy and then trying it on her own. There was no evidence that Bethany conceptualized MEAP preparation writing as effective writing pedagogy. Other conceptual tools Bethany drew from included process

writing, scaffolding and modeling, and authentic assessment. Although many of these concepts may be under-developed, she nonetheless drew from her own understandings of them. Bethany tried to implement some of the pedagogical tools she was learning about in LIFT, and that were shared by Amanda – particularly in the second half of the year, such as Reader's Workshop, an instructional model for teaching reading that encouraged comprehension strategy instruction and engaged students with reading self-selected texts. It mirrored the format of Writing Workshop in that the workshop began with a mini-lesson by the teacher, followed by a time when students read and responded to texts, and during which the teacher conferenced with students to assess their understanding and application of appropriate comprehension strategies. After the MEAP test, Bethany also created and maintained a word wall, where she posted, and regularly reviewed, high frequency and content-related words.

Because during the fall semester Bethany focused writing instruction on MEAP preparation, she was not able to implement writing workshop in a way that matched her expectations or her beliefs. During the spring however, she had more freedom and leeway to pursue writing workshop in ways that felt more in line with her experiences and beliefs. It was during this time that she began to experiment with peer led conferences, and also when her students published their first pieces of the year. Therefore, her choice of teaching tools was constrained and created tension for Bethany during the fall, whereas in the spring, she was able to select teaching tools that she felt were more appropriate, and these affordances provided her with harmonious energy.

Bethany Manages Tensions in the Fall and Finesses them in the Spring

I argue that Bethany managed the tensions in the fall by doing what she had to do keep her head above water. Being in the fourth context in two years felt like a “sink or swim” situation to Bethany, and she managed the tensions in the easiest, and perhaps only, way she knew how to. In the spring however, when some of the constraints of her teaching context were removed, Bethany began to finesse her context as she used reflective practices to make subtle changes in her current practice and to plan for more substantive changes for her future practice. First, I present the fall situation, describing the interconnectedness of several key tensions, and I examine how Bethany managed them. Second, I discuss how things changed after the MEAP test, and how Bethany then drew energy from some of the harmonious aspects of her teaching context to contemplate and make changes. Finally, I discuss how Bethany’s case sheds light on the teaching context model, and how we can think about her decisions in terms of acquiescence, accommodation, and resistance.

Managing Overwhelming and Overlapping Tensions

Several aspects of Bethany’s teaching context came together during the fall semester in such a way as to create one large, interrelated tension. First, because Bethany taught fourth grade and the MEAP was given in fourth grade, and because Parkside had failed to make AYP the previous year, Bethany felt immense pressure to prepare her students to do well on the MEAP test. Second, because Parkside was a magnet school and the school faculty had some leeway for making structural decisions, the students at Parkside were regularly released

early every Wednesday so that faculty could meet and plan to implement the magnet focus. In the past, this time had been used to pursue the goals of establishing a fine and performing arts school. During this study however, because Parkside had failed to meet AYP and had received a Reading First grant, the K-3 teachers spent each Wednesday afternoon in intensive professional development related to teaching reading and implementing the goals of the Reading First grant. This left teachers in grades 4-6 without an assigned professional development. The decision was made by the building principal that teachers in grades 4 would work on improving MEAP scores. Due to circumstances (that I did not completely understand), Suzy, Amanda, and Bethany began meeting every Wednesday afternoon to focus on preparing 4th graders for the English language arts portion of the 4th grade MEAP. Third, and as a result of these weekly planning meetings, Suzy began teaching MEAP preparation to Bethany's students each morning. Additionally Suzy's influence on Bethany's teaching emerged as Suzy offered instructional ideas, brought Bethany teaching materials, and focused the Wednesday meetings on improving Bethany and Amanda's practice. It was unclear to me why the other 4th grade teacher, one with a great deal of teaching experience, was not included in these meetings, nor why Amanda was not expected to work with the Reading First information, since half of her class was in third grade. The message that Bethany related to me was that she and Amanda needed help because they were relatively young and inexperienced classroom teachers.

As all three of these circumstances intersected, they created tension for Bethany. Even though she had a sense of what Writing Workshop could be, and even though she set goals of working on publishing and conferencing for the school year, during the fall semester, Bethany did not actively work on achieving those goals. Instead, Bethany created a manageable routine of writing instruction that involved a mini-lesson focused on genre through the use of template, followed by students working through the writing process, as a group. At times the whole group was drafting, other days they were in small group conferences, some were illustrating, and near the end of the year only, some were actually typing their pieces for publication.

Using Templates

Most of the work that emerged from the Wednesday afternoon meetings focused on helping students to write in the genre required by the MEAP, which was topical or theme based writing. To help Amanda and Bethany teach this genre of writing, Suzy designed and created a template (Appendix M) that contained four boxes and a smaller box that crossed over the intersection of the four larger boxes (i.e. a modified concept web). In the center box, students entered the assigned theme or topic; such as pets, Thanksgiving, or family. Then, in the first box, students would brainstorm everything they knew about that topic. In each of the other three boxes, students took one item from the 1st box to describe in detail. Students used the information in the boxes to write a draft of a topical essay. This template, in slightly modified formats, was used across the entire fall semester, because Suzy felt that it would prepare the students for

organizing and writing on the MEAP. Suzy modeled the template's use and then Bethany used it repeatedly in writing workshop. Bethany's students worked through four or five different themes and most students completed each piece, although no revision, editing, or public sharing of any kind occurred with any of the pieces; the unfinished pieces simply went into the students' writing folders. I hypothesize that Bethany could not see beyond the modeling that Suzy was doing and that she moved through the motions of doing what she felt was expected of her. Bethany remained aware of her conferencing and publishing goals, but during the fall, she was not able to work towards publishing because she felt that she could only publish what had been conferenced with her, and only finished papers could be conferenced. Additionally, Suzy would begin new topic writing in the MEAP preparation time, causing Bethany to leave a piece that might almost be ready for conferencing, to work on a new piece. While it appeared that Bethany did not realize that she could use these template-driven pieces to help her meet her goals of publishing and conferencing, it also might be that she simply did not know enough about or understand the writing workshop well enough to do anything but follow Suzy's lead.

Assessing Student Work

Another thing that emerged from the Wednesday meetings and that was reinforced by Suzy during MEAP preparation was the introduction of a rubric that was used to assess students' work. The rubric was created collaboratively by merging ideas from a rubric found in the Scholastic 6 + 1 Traits book (Culham, 2003) and the rubric provided by the Michigan State Department of Education

that was used to officially rate the MEAP responses. Suzy, Amanda and Bethany changed the rubric from 6 traits to 4 and then they

altered the wording on the rubric because it's a little wordy. Our kids can't understand it. [We] took some of the words on the MEAP, but some of the words that are just easier. You have to teach them that, you have to show them what those words mean. (Materials Discussion, pp. 17-18)

This occurred in late October, just prior to parent teacher conferences. During an observation and viewing session during the first week of November, Bethany admitted to me that she had no writing grades for the first marking period, because Suzy was leading all the MEAP preparation lessons and she was trying to follow up by using the template during writing workshop and the students had not yet finished any pieces. Because students had not officially "published" anything, she had not formally "graded" them, she therefore found herself in a quandary about what to do for grades in writing on the report card. Later in the year when I asked her how that worked out for her, she replied that she ended up grading a few papers that were in the students' writing folders using the rubric, but that the grades were really low. She expressed that several parents were upset with their child's writing grades. Although this frustrated Bethany and she eventually changed things for spring conferences, during the fall semester, Bethany seemed at a loss for what to do next.

Sinking, Swimming, or Merely Treading Water?

Bethany managed the tension caused by her policy environment, her colleague Suzy, the conflicting teaching tools of MEAP preparation and Writing Workshop, with her own evolving identity by treading water. Bethany's identity as a teacher was still developing during the fall semester. It appears that her

identity was being influenced by her sense of what she might do to support her students, what she was learning about reading and writing instruction in LIFT, and conversations with Amanda. Because MEAP preparation, formulaic, template-driven writing, was not coherent with her developing identity, I propose that she simply maintained as much normalcy as she could during the stressful days pre-MEAP. She did not sink or fail, she methodically plugged along doing what Suzy modeled or explained that she should do. She did not swim on her own, rather followed Suzy's lead and maintained a steady course. Smagorinsky and colleagues (2003) discuss this as a natural occurring state for beginning teachers who are trying to navigate a twisting path due to the unfamiliar contexts that confront them. As an early-career teacher, Bethany was trying to develop her conceptual understanding of Writing Workshop, while at the same time trying to understand the kind of teaching Suzy advocated and termed MEAP preparation. Writing Workshop is based on the premise that students will engage in and learn about writing by having choices in topic, genre, format, etc. The teacher establishes an environment where skills and strategies are addressed through mini-lessons and conferences, writers experiment with ideas, and in-progress writing is shared regularly. The kind of writing Suzy was modeling and calling MEAP preparation did not provide students with choices about genre, format or topic. Students were given a topic and a template, and were guided through the process of completing the template. The teacher modeled how to go from the template to the written text. The text was examined according to a MEAP rubric, and then the process repeated itself with a new topic. It seems

quite possible that these conflicting ideologies confused and overwhelmed Bethany, and she struggled to understand either pedagogy well. After the MEAP however, things began to change for Bethany, as some of the constraints described here were removed. In the next section I describe how Bethany managed her teaching context after the MEAP.

The Role of Reflection During Spring Semester

Once the MEAP test had been given, things changed for Bethany because relationships that were tenuous during the fall semester ceased to exist during the spring semester. First, Suzy began working in the third grade teachers classrooms and did not spend the first half hour of the day MEAP prepping in Bethany's room. Second, the Wednesday afternoon inservice meetings became building wide again, as the entire staff was trained in planning for integrated curriculum that they would likely begin using during the following school year. What this meant in terms of harmony for Bethany, was she was able to make more decisions herself instead of being immersed in the ideas and influences of Suzy. This left Bethany to draw on her own knowledge, the knowledge she was gaining from LIFT, the district's literacy academy, and her work with Amanda. Finally, Bethany began to use me and my knowledge of literacy as a support for learning to teach. The consequences of these three changes in her context caused Bethany to become more reflective about her writing instruction and to encourage her to begin making and planning for change. During the spring semester, Bethany's teaching context was more harmonious and she began to think more reflectively about the implementation of her writing instruction.

Suzy's Absence

Because Bethany felt compelled during the fall semester, to imitate the kind of modeling and writing instruction that Suzy delivered, Bethany did not have a chance to work on her own goals for writing workshop during the fall semester. This was reflected in the following comment that Bethany made in her final interview:

I think Suzy influences me the most. I mean that's her thing, reading and writing. She's been teaching for so much longer than I have; I respect how she thinks and how or what approach I should take. The only bad thing, well not bad thing, well it is a bad thing. She is so driven by the MEAP, that it's like what she's saying is to prepare them for the MEAP, not necessarily to prepare them to be good writers. Because there could be someone who's a really good writer, but they're not going to do well on the MEAP, because maybe they just don't like the stress of the testing. (Spring Interview, pp. 32-33)

Bethany's reluctance to name Suzy's focus on MEAP as a "bad thing" may indicate the nature of the mentor/mentee relationship as well as the expert/novice stance that seemed to permeate Bethany and Suzy's relationship over the course of the year. It seems likely that Bethany acquiesced to Suzy's writing instruction expectations both because Bethany saw her as an expert, and she was her officially assigned mentor.

In the spring however, Bethany began to reflect and talk about how to conference more effectively, and how to bring students more quickly through the writing process so that they could publish their written pieces.

They haven't published anything that's in my classroom library, which was my goal. Here it is over half the way [through the school year]. That's why I think I'm not conferencing enough. It might also be because we only write on four days for a short amount of time. I don't feel like I'm giving them enough [time], so they can conference and get it published. It's like we have all these unfinished pieces in our writing folder...It takes so much

time, sitting there and going through the stories with them. (Viewing Session 2, pp. 41-42)

Bethany admitted that she was not making good progress towards her goals, and she began to think about ways she could move towards them. Eventually Bethany taught her more able students to peer conference, and this helped her get through the conferencing more quickly so that more students could publish. However, most students only published one story during the entire school year.

The biggest difference in Bethany's instruction during the spring occurred because she no longer had to use the modified concept web template and focus solely on theme-based writing. While she still had to teach a variety of genres (based on the curriculum recognized in the SIMs), Bethany was able to select and use her own templates for teaching the various genres. During the spring, Bethany concentrated on narrative, and began by using the template described earlier (and shown in Appendix L). Students wrote a total of three stories, two of them connected to visual art. Following the story genre, Bethany taught poetry and then in late April moved into persuasive writing (which was to prepare her students for the writing they would do on the fifth grade Social Studies MEAP the following year).

It was during the time after the MEAP was given, and before she started doing persuasive writing, that Bethany's writing workshop looked most like writing workshop (per the vignette earlier in this chapter). While she still struggled with issues of pacing (i.e. keeping all students in the same phase of the writing process at the same time), she was able to conference more frequently, she began using peer conferencing, and students did publish books during this time.

One of the biggest things that emerged during time however, was Bethany's reflective nature. She began to question things, to contemplate changes, to make modifications in templates and to plan ahead. For example, Bethany received the five senses template (Appendix L) in January at the district sponsored literacy academy. She used it for the narrative writings after the MEAP and she found she really liked certain aspects of it. "I really used that one. I've used things that [the presenter] taught us in the workshop, but...I'm going to change some things for next year" (Materials Discussion, p. 12). This was one of the first indications that Bethany was being thoughtful and reflective about her writing practice. Schon (1987) explores the notion of reflecting *on* action as a necessary and precursory step to reflecting *in* action. During the spring, Bethany began to think back on what she had done, and to make plans for the future. Schon suggests that while this kind of reflection has no direct connection to present action, it can shape thinking so that eventually one thinks and reacts while doing something. My observations and conversations with Bethany reveal that she was reflecting on action, and I surmise that in time she will begin to be more reflective in action.

Bethany Utilizes Colleagues

After the MEAP, even though Suzy did not meet with Amanda and Bethany, they continued to meet without her. Some of the meetings were during the Wednesday inservice time, but other meetings were less formal and occurred at various times of the school day. Because Amanda was more experienced than Bethany (she had taught for eight years), yet closer to Bethany's age than

Suzy, Amanda and Bethany became mutually supportive. Bethany referred to Amanda as a friend and mentioned teaching ideas and tips that she had borrowed from Amanda. While the connection between Amanda's relationship with Bethany and writing instruction was not evident to me, the positive nature of their relationship seemed to provide Bethany with affirmation and may have contributed to the emergence of her reflective stance.

Additional evidence that Bethany was becoming more reflective after the MEAP came from the subtle change in our relationship. During the fall, Bethany and I had a strictly interviewer/interviewee relationship. Most of my questions were answered succinctly, but without any additional conversation. It was almost as if it had not occurred to Bethany that she could learn about teaching writing from collaborative conversations with me. However, during the spring semester, our relationship changed. While we never became collegial in the same way Aileen and I did, an expert/novice model evolved as Bethany began to engage me in discussions about her evolving practice and to think about ways to improve it. Unlike Aileen, Bethany rarely asked me straight-forward questions, but rather would begin dialoguing about a problematic topic and then as I responded, engage me in conversation where she could access my experience and knowledge. The following interchange occurred in mid-March and is representative of the way Bethany engaged with me during the spring semester. This conversation centered on the fact that Bethany's students had not published regularly over the year – one of her self-selected goals for writing instruction.

Laura: You've walked the kids through [the writing process] with a lot of support for each piece.

- Bethany: Yeah, but they haven't done it on their own yet.
- Laura: Yeah, which makes it a little harder, because they're all kind of ready, they're all at the same stage in the whole process. That might be why it's harder to publish, because they're all ready at the same time and it's so daunting. How are you going to conference with all those kids quickly and then get them to either type it or rewrite it or whatever.
- Bethany: Yeah, I think they're ready to move on to a story of their own. So I'm ready to do that. Because I'm going to be conferencing with kids but telling other kids that they can move on to the next story. So that they, they already have a lot of unfinished pieces, so I will just be calling them [to conference] like I did with the [determination] paragraphs. And maybe not pick as many kids, but have maybe three or four back here at a time, because they'll be longer pieces... I did a little bit of that last week. (Materials Discussion, pp. 13-14)

This conversation provides evidence of Bethany's reflective nature emerging and is also in stark contrast to our interviews in the fall, where she merely answered my questions, and did not take up and expand on ideas I raised. After the MEAP, Bethany was more engaged in our conversations and often followed up on ideas that had been raised earlier. I felt that our relationship was a positive connection for Bethany during the spring, and because of its harmonious nature, it may have provided Bethany with energy with which she could begin to think about her evolving writing practice.

How Bethany Navigated and Managed her Teaching Context as She Learned to Teach Writing

Bethany managed her teaching context in two distinct ways. In the fall, she acquiesced to the pressures of MEAP preparation and the strong influence of Suzy. She was in survival mode; she could sink or she could swim. Bethany,

instead, tread water. It is not clear whether this was an intentional choice by Bethany, or on unconscious one. During the spring, Bethany began to accommodate and to make plans for future accommodation during the following school year. In some ways Bethany's case is messier than either Aileen's or Celina's, because her teaching context seemed to evolve across the year, while Aileen's and Celina's context remained fairly stable across the year. However this makes sense when we consider that she has less teaching experience and more teaching contexts than either Aileen or Celina. Prior to the MEAP Bethany managed the dilemmas and tensions within her teaching context by paying attention to only two things – preparing students for the MEAP and pleasing Suzy (which might be considered the same thing).

The Role of Bethany's Students

Bethany's students were not influential to her prior to the MEAP test. Although she obviously needed them to pass the test, the tension created from the kind of writing she was being asked to teach was more in need of managing than her students. Bethany cared for her students as a group, and even though no evidence emerged that linked her students' needs with her instructional decisions, evidence was provided earlier of her attention to students' individual needs. One way that Bethany managed her teaching context was by paying attention to the things that would not go away – the larger-than-life, looming, overshadowing-every-thing-else, nature of the MEAP test. Her students were a constant for her, always there, not causing her tension, perhaps providing harmony, but they were not something that needed to be managed in the fall. In

many ways, Bethany is like Andrea, the first year teacher in Smagorinsky, Cook and Johnson's work (2003). She had hopes to do more student-centered activities, to put into practice a model (i.e. writing workshop) she had learned about in teacher education classes; but the curriculum and policy constraints caused her instead to simply acquiesce to the policy requirements, and to put her students on the back burner.

Reflection in the Spring and Beyond

Bethany managed her teaching context after the MEAP test by reflecting on her current and past practice and by beginning to make accommodations in her practice. She planned for next year and made small changes for the rest of the current school year. She began to question the practices that Suzy was advocating, and that she had been following along with. As she gained more experience with and knowledge about her teaching context, she was more able to navigate the path more easily, and she moved from a stance of acquiescence to one of accommodation. Understanding Bethany's context brings us closer to understanding the role of teaching context for all beginning teachers. In the next chapter, I address cross-case similarities and revisit and answer my research question. In the final chapter, I suggest implications for future practice in teacher education, induction and professional development.

Chapter 7

WHAT INFLUENCES BEGINNING TEACHERS IN AN URBAN SETTING AS THEY TRANSLATE AND IMPLEMENT A PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THEIR WRITING CURRICULUM INTO PRACTICE?

In this chapter, I revisit and attempt to answer my initial research question (i.e. the title of this chapter), by drawing on the individual case studies presented in the previous three chapters and through additional cross-case analysis. The three teachers in this study were influenced by both a variety of knowledge sources and various elements of their unique teaching contexts as they planned and taught writing across a school year. In order to help us understand the significance of this study, I begin by summarizing the writing instruction that the teachers were engaged in, their individual writing goals for the year, and the particular aspect of their writing curriculum that they were trying to improve on during this study. Second, I use data from each of the three case studies to identify initially the knowledge sources each drew on individually, and then collectively to think about the knowledge sources in broad ways and to generalize about the sources of knowledge all beginning teachers might draw upon. Third, I use cross-case analysis to once again examine the teaching context visual and to make hypotheses about its future usefulness in understanding the role of context in learning to teach. Finally, I discuss and contemplate the various ways teachers might manage these multiple knowledge sources and elements of teaching context in order to support their development of effective teaching practice for writing.

Teaching Writing In Three Urban Classrooms

Celina's Writing Instruction

Celina taught writing in two ways across the year – writing workshop and formulaic writing. Writing workshop helped support Celina's goal of engaging students in authentic, creative and enjoyable writing that would help create life-long writers in her students. Celina balanced this with formulaic writing instruction that would prepare her students for the kinds of standardized writing assessments they would be asked to take throughout school. Celina also integrated writing during reading instruction (even though the Reading First grant discouraged this) and through literacy stations. Celina created multiple opportunities for her students to engage in content area writing as well. These instructional models supported Celina's beliefs of how children learned to write. That is, she believed writing was developmental and consisted of smaller units (writing skills) such as sentence structure, grammar, fluency, etc., and that all children could make progress in writing over time with practice and instruction. She wanted to engage her students in a variety of types of writing instruction so that she could meet the wide range of needs of her students and her curriculum.

Celina's writing goals. Celina's writing goals for the year included consistent use of modeling, a smoother organization of the writing workshop, and improving writing conferences. She worked simultaneously on all three goals across the year albeit in different ways. Celina wanted to model every day for her students – whether through writing workshop, formulaic writing instruction, or content areas. This goal was achieved because she simply made sure she did it every day – it was a matter of putting this goal in the forefront of her mind, and

making sure she planned with this in mind. The organization of her workshop evolved over the year as her students progressed and were able to work more independently, and as she understood the specific learning needs of her students. She did not have a plan for making her workshop run more smoothly, other than changing things when they needed changing. This occurred several times throughout the year, in terms of her expectations for the students during writing time, and how she instructed the students regarding her expectations (e.g. creating and posting charts with her expectations).

From the three goals described above, Celina identified learning to improve writing conferences as the particular aspect of her writing practice that she wanted to implement during this study. Celina began the year with a vision of how writing conferences might work effectively in her classroom gleaned from ideas presented at a workshop she had attended near the end of the previous year. She wanted to try conferencing with one group of students per day (i.e. about five students each day). She hypothesized that by the end of the week she would have conferenced with all her students. She envisioned each conference lasting about 5 minutes, so that she would be able to talk to all five children in a group during the thirty minutes of the writing workshop that she designated for writing time. Celina also wanted to use a teaching point checklist during each conference – a list of writing skills that she wanted her students to accomplish across the year. Using the checklist would help her select one or two teaching points for each student during the conference, and would permit her to revisit each earlier conference at a glance. She also hoped that this structure

would encourage students to stay in their seats and work during the entire writing time, instead of interrupting her with questions as they had in the past. She felt that students would realize that she was working with only one group per day (she would sit with that group) and this would signal the rest of the students not to disturb her.

Over the course of the year, Celina adapted and revised her writing conferences several times. While she began meeting with students in groups, she eventually discarded this structure. First, she moved to her own table in the back of the room, but still worked only with one group per day. This gave her more control over the entire classroom because she could see the whole room and could still manage various students as needed. Later, however, she began conferencing with students who had completed rough drafts and were ready to move towards publishing, because she felt they needed her help for revision and editing. Celina also experimented with the way she conducted the conferences across the year. She tried having the children identify something about the piece that they wanted help with, but when children began saying “nothing”, she moved to her teaching points checklist as her primary tool for focusing quickly and immediately on one writing skill that she wanted each student to work on. She tried to determine if students should read the work, or if she should (conferences were much shorter if she read the piece). She sometimes let students make notes and corrections as they talked, and sometimes she took the paper and wrote ideas, or drew arrows to indicate text movement. Eventually Celina decided that she wanted her students to develop ownership over their writing and

to see themselves as authors. This led her to the decision to always ask students to read their own papers during the conferences (even though this took longer than if she read them), and to let them do their own writing and note-taking during the conference. She expressed how frustrating it was sometimes because the children worked so slowly, but she felt she could not encourage ownership if she took the children's papers and wrote all over them.

How did Celina learn to teach writing? As Celina learned to improve her writing conferences across the year, she did so primarily by trial and error, by experimenting with various approaches, and by building experiences that she could reflect upon. She gleaned ideas from conferences and workshops and other teachers, and then she tried some of the ideas out in her own classroom. She discarded what did not work (like conferencing with a group and sitting with that group), and tweaked ideas that had potential (like the teaching points checklist). Celina was not afraid to abandon ideas that were not working and to try something else. She let her own experiences and the reactions of her students guide her decisions. She had an ideal vision of what writing workshop should look like and what it should provide her students, and she worked on tweaking her current model in hopes of reaching her ideal.

Aileen's Writing Instruction

Aileen taught writing through Morning Message during the first half of the year, and through Journals during the second half of the year. She felt these methods were consistent with child development theory and that they encouraged children to continue to make progress in writing. In addition, Aileen

did whole group activities such as letter-word charts and name graphs that supported the children's writing in that they could use these charts when they were writing independently to help with spelling. Aileen also used a morning seatwork activity that drew on the connections between reading and writing, and that focused her students on writing complete sentences each morning in response to a short story. She felt that students would learn about writing from regular reading and, while other methods of writing instruction changed across the school year, Aileen maintained the morning work all year.

Aileen's writing goals. Aileen's writing goals included an emphasis on her own organization of writing instruction, consistent and extended instruction in phonemic awareness, and getting her students to write a paragraph by the end of the year. Because this was Aileen's third year of teaching, and she had a new, clean classroom to move into, she felt like she would be able to get started on the right foot, and that she would be able to maintain her instructional goals. Because she had changed classrooms after four weeks of school during her second year, she felt like she played "catch-up" the entire year. Her first year was a whirl-wind and she struggled to implement everything she wanted to. Aileen had high hopes for staying organized this year – which to her meant keeping her instruction sequenced and regular (i.e. consistently occurring each day), and moving children along at an appropriate pace –things that she felt did not happen in her first two years. Aileen worked on meeting this goal during the entire school year. She taught writing almost every single day (exceptions were half days, and days when the whole school focused on math, science and

technology). She often commented to me that she was glad I was coming in regularly because it kept her focused on and organized for writing instruction.

Aileen believed that children needed certain skills in order to learn to write. These included concepts about sentence structure, letter formation, and punctuation, but also a heavy influence on phonemic awareness. Aileen made sure that she taught phonemic awareness every day, and often she taught it in many ways across each school day. She did this through modeling during Morning Message and Journal Writing, through spelling lists, word games and charts, phonics worksheets, oral language exercises, and nonsense word lists. Aileen believed that children needed to be able to write the words they could say in order to become writers, and she felt that teaching them phonemic awareness would help them learn to write words. For many of Aileen's students, transfer did not happen until near the end of the year, and so she persisted in purposefully building in time for phonemic awareness instruction.

From Aileen's overall goals, she identified getting students to write a paragraph by the end of the year as the particular aspect of her practice that she wanted to focus on during this study. This goal was directly linked to the other two goals – she felt if she were more organized and focused heavily on phonemic awareness, her students would be able to write paragraphs by the end of the year. Aileen purposefully selected Morning Message in the fall as her primary method of writing instruction because she felt it would allow her to model the writing skills she believed her students needed – phonics, punctuation, concept of a word, letter formation, vocabulary, fluency, capitalization, sentence

structure, and high frequency words. As the fall semester progressed, Aileen realized that some of her students were able to chant along and spell some of the words, were making fewer and fewer mistakes with punctuation and capitalization, and were able to edit the morning message easily. It was at this point, that Aileen began talking about switching her instruction to Journal Writing.

In the morning seatwork, Aileen also noticed that children were getting very good at writing complete sentences in answer to specific comprehension questions from the short stories they were reading. She began to vary the morning work so that students were answering more complex questions and constructing their own sentences. In addition, she also had students write original stories for Thanksgiving, and construct original sentences during science activities. As the year progressed, Aileen selected more difficult texts for reading, longer passages with more high frequency words, and which asked for more complex written answers.

How did Aileen learn to teach writing? Aileen learned to teach writing as measured by her students' abilities to write paragraphs by the end of the year, by relying on her past experiences, observing her students and moving on when they seemed ready, and by reflecting on conversations with other professionals, professional readings, and a workshop of modeling journal writing. Aileen's past experiences included her years as a volunteer and paraprofessional at her sons' elementary school in Franklin, as well as her internship and first two years of teaching. She often claimed that she knew what she needed to do, she just needed to get organized enough to do it in a coherent way. Aileen knew a lot

about her students, who they were as literate beings, and what they could do as readers and writers – both collectively and individually. She paced her writing instruction based on their needs and the long term goal she had of getting them to write paragraphs by the end of the school year. Finally, Aileen was a reflective practitioner. She thought about her conversations with other teachers and me, she read from professional journals regularly, she attended district sponsored workshops and a state level reading conference. She was constantly focused on improving her practice, and she used the wealth of ideas already existing and reflectively made instructional decisions based on these ideas. In particular, the workshop she attended in January on how to model journal writing was just the push she needed to move from Morning Message to her own version of Journal Writing. She had been talking about changing her instruction, because she could see the children were ready to do more of their own writing, but the workshop, where she saw journal writing modeled, was the push she needed to improve her writing instruction.

Bethany's Writing Instruction

Bethany taught writing to her fourth grade students via writing workshop and with the main purpose of preparing her students for the MEAP test. Bethany believed that modeling was crucial for helping kids learn to write and she consistently and regularly modeled writing for her students at the beginning of each writing workshop. Bethany assessed student writing using a four point rubric that was created by teachers in her building and that drew heavily from the rubric used to assess MEAP writing by the state of Michigan. Bethany also

connected writing to reading through the use of comprehension strategies such as visualizing and inferring. The Visual Training Strategy program that focused students on understanding and interpreting art (because of the performing arts magnet status of Bethany's school) also provided Bethany an opportunity to engage her students in creative writing.

Bethany's writing goals. Bethany maintained that she wanted her students to perform well on the MEAP test. This building goal conflicted with her personal goal of establishing an effective writing workshop. The climate at Parkside Elementary School included a strong focus on MEAP preparation, which Bethany recognized almost immediately. During the first week of school, she was provided with templates (i.e. graphic organizers) and rubrics that were to support and guide her writing instruction, so that by the time I interviewed her in mid-October, she had internalized the goal of MEAP preparation. As she talked about how she would meet the goal, she included ideas of modeling and process writing. As we continued to talk, Bethany described a perfect writing workshop where "everyone [is] working on different things, at their own pace, and [where I'm] doing a mini-lesson" (Fall Interview, p. 17). Bethany believed in the writing process and one of her embedded goals was to teach her students the process and to successfully bring them through the process – from drafting to publishing – across the school year. She expressed uncertainty about achieving this goal given the focus on MEAP preparation, but in October, felt like this was an attainable goal.

When I pushed Bethany to identify one particular element of her practice that she wanted to really focus on during the year – since her goal of bringing kids through the process of writing in a workshop format seemed too broad - she identified writing conferences as the thing she most wanted to learn how to do. She felt that if she could conference successfully with her students, they would become better writers. Bethany's vision of conferences included purposes of both revision and editing, and were to occur after a student had completed a rough draft and in preparation for publishing. During the year Bethany worked on this goal, meeting with students in small group conferences at the conclusion of several writing projects. Because Bethany kept her students in similar places in the writing process, many of them were ready to conference at the same time, and Bethany determined that small group conferences would be most effective.

During the conferences Bethany experimented with students reading their own piece, with group members offering feedback and suggestions, and with doing mini-lessons as needed (e.g. using a thesaurus to vary language). Because of a number of issues, Bethany concluded that she would read each student's work aloud, but softly, and then she would indicate several places the student needed to revise or edit. In some cases (depending on the ability of the student), Bethany made notations on students' papers, other times she let the students mark on their own work. Bethany decided to have students stay at the table as they made their revisions and corrections, and then she would read their papers a second and third time as necessary. She felt good about the speed with which she conducted her conferences, because she wanted the students to

be engaged with revision and not just sitting idly by, waiting for her. Students were able to publish several pieces across the year, in a variety of formats such as on a bulletin board in the hallway, as notes to parents, through a quilt, and in small books placed in the reading corner. In this way, Bethany met her goal of learning to conference more effectively with her students.

How did Bethany learn to teach writing? In the fall semester, because the MEAP preparation was in high gear, Bethany learned to teach by modeling her instruction after the instruction and advice of Suzy, her mentor and reading teacher colleague. She also drew from ideas she had gleaned from her LIFT classes and the texts they were reading for that class (e.g. Fountas and Pinnell's book on Guided Reading). After the MEAP test was given in January, Bethany learned to teach through critical self-analysis and reflection. She began to question me and the texts she had read, and compare these ideas to what she had been doing in the classroom. She drew from ideas presented in a workshop she attended in January focused on writing, and she began to make plans for changing her instruction. In the second semester she adjusted templates, wrote notes to parents describing her writing instruction, created and implemented a narrative addition to her report card, and moved into more conferencing and publishing. Her critical examination of her own teaching practice in the fall led to reflection, discussion, and changes in her spring semester teaching. She relied somewhat on trial and error, but more on reflection and thoughtful planning and implementation of her restructured ideas.

What's Missing From These Descriptions of Writing Instruction

The preceding descriptions of writing instruction in Celina, Bethany, and Aileen's classrooms help us realize how they implemented writing in their classrooms and what they did to learn how to be more effective in this implementation. However, since all three teachers are in their first four years, one wonders what is missing from their writing instruction – in what ways do they still need to continue learning to teach writing? All three teachers defined writing as a set of sub-skills that, when mastered, could be put together to create good writing. They identified similar sets of these sub-skills including mechanics and conventions, sentence structure, word choice, organization, detailed ideas, and fluency. Celina and Bethany identified a process writing approach as the theoretical model they believed in, and that they felt children would best learn a process approach through a writing workshop model. However, using definitions of process writing by leading experts (Emig, 1983; Flower & Hayes, 1980) and those that describe the writing workshop (Calkins, 1995; Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001; Graves, 1983, 1994), this research found evidence that both Celina and Bethany are operating with pseudo-conceptual understandings of process writing and writing workshop.

Process writing, as described earlier in this work, is a non-linear, recursive, although phased, process. This means that writers work back and forth between planning, drafting, and revising. Neither Bethany nor Celina provided evidence that they realized or acknowledged this part of process writing. They moved their students together through the process in a very lock-step manner – first we all plan, then we all write, then we all revise and edit.

Observations of the teachers' discussions with children, and interviews with me failed to reveal that either teacher understood the recursive nature of writing. Writing Workshop models often separate revision from editing, so that child writers focus first on clarity and coherence of ideas before they move towards conventional writing (in terms of spelling, grammar, and mechanics). Celina and Bethany both treated revision and editing as one and the same thing. The terms were used interchangeably in Bethany's classroom and meant – clean it up, both for ideas (clarity and cohesion) and for conventions. In Celina's classroom only the term revision was used, but the revisions Celina discussed were similar to Bethany's – they included ideas of clarity and cohesion, but also of punctuation, capitalization and spelling.

A glaring omission was found in all three classrooms in terms of sharing written work. Much has been written about the benefits of students sharing their writing with their colleagues, including ideas for revising work, affirmation from peers, and motivation to continue writing. Sharing is often done through partners, small sharing groups, or Author's Chair (Calkins, 1995). Students did not share in-process writing in any of the three classrooms. When I asked Celina about this, she simply said that because her students move through the process so quickly and they publish a great number of small books throughout the year, and these books are placed in the reading corner, that she finds that to be a motivator and affirmation for writing. Bethany mentioned Author's Chair in an early interview because she had noticed it in a book she was reading for LIFT. She vaguely commented that it would be nice to have time to do Author's Chair

and that maybe she could try it on Fridays. However, I never observed any public sharing of any kind, and when I revisited this question in the final interview, she had changed her position and said she did not think there was any value to Author's Chair. Because I was a former Writing Workshop teacher, and because I am often in teachers' classrooms who implement Writing Workshop, this omission seemed problematic to me because, like Calkins (1986), I believe that "a sense of authorship comes from the struggle to put something big and vital into print, and from seeing one's own printed words reach the hears and minds of readers" (9). However, for both Bethany and Celina, managing writing workshop meant ignoring public sharing and thereby implementing an incomplete model of writing workshop.

In comparison, Aileen never mentioned process writing or writing workshop. As a first grade teacher, Aileen believed that her students would learn to write if she modeled what good writers do, if she helped them gain phonemic awareness, and if they worked on sentence structure and mechanics. Students wrote single drafts in her classroom, and never revisited entries in their journals. While many writers suggest that young children do not "revise" their writing in successive drafts but rather add on to current drafts (Calkins, 1986) or create new drafts (Dyson, 2003), many first grade students revisit their writing for the purpose of sharing with their peers. However, similar to Celina and Bethany's classrooms, Aileen's students never shared their written work with each other. Aileen's students never actually wrote original ideas until January (except for the isolated Thanksgiving story); instead they observed her writing Morning

Message, letter-word charts, and an occasional language experience story. The morning work, and some science work asked children to write, but the content of the writing came from texts and could be copied. Practitioners like Calkins (1986) and researchers like Dyson (1993, 2003) indicate that children in first grade should write original texts from the first day of school, but Aileen's beliefs about writing instruction did not reveal a similar philosophy. Because she believed in a child development approach to teaching, Aileen believed that the pedagogies she was using to teach writing were developmentally appropriate and she maintained that these methods would be successful (and since all but two of her students were writing paragraphs at the end of the year, one might think they were successful per her own goals). It does cause us to wonder however, how many of her students might have been able to write more than a paragraph if they had begun writing earlier in the year, and had engaged in sharing their writing on a regular basis with their peers.

This discussion about what was missing from the writing instruction of Celina, Bethany and Aileen helps us see that they are indeed beginning teachers and that they will continue to learn to teach writing over the course of their careers. In the next section I answer my first sub question from this study, "What knowledge sources do these teachers draw on?" I present evidence that suggests that the beginning teachers in this study are fairly typical of all teachers in the kinds of knowledge sources they consider and that inform their practice. Further, I hypothesize that because beginning teachers are similar to more experienced teachers in terms of knowledge sources, there must be other factors

that influence instructional decisions for beginning teachers that make learning to teach more difficult, as evidenced by the preceding three chapters that discuss the tensions Bethany, Celina and Aileen faced.

Celina, Bethany, and Aileen Drew From a Range of Knowledge Sources

As described above, Celina, Bethany and Aileen drew from a range of knowledge sources including trial and error, attending workshops, inservices and conferences, talking with other professionals, prior personal experiences with teaching, knowledge of students and their needs, reflection and critical self-analysis and by imitating colleagues. Celina primarily drew from trial and error, attending workshops and conferences, prior personal experiences and knowledge about her students. Aileen relied on her past experiences, her knowledge of her students, and reflection on ideas presented in workshops, books, and through conversations with colleagues. Bethany learned from imitating a colleague in the fall, but then moved into critical self-analysis prompted by attending workshops and conferences and through conversations with colleagues. It is interesting to note that Bethany, with the least amount of teaching experience, did not draw on her past experiences – perhaps because they had been so varied and changed rapidly, and she did not have as many experiences to draw from. Unlike Celina and Aileen, Bethany did not use knowledge about her students and what they could do as writers to inform her writing practice. Rather her decisions were shaped by what the MEAP asked students to do, not whether her students were actually making progress towards effective MEAP writing. All three teachers drew on knowledge they gleaned in

professional development opportunities and from conversations with colleagues. This point will become important in the next chapter when I discuss the implications of this research for induction, mentoring, and professional development.

Teachers' Knowledge and Decision Making

Much has been written about teachers' professional knowledge, where it comes from, and how one acquires it (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Eraut, 1994; Kennedy, 2002; Shulman, 1987; Wilson, Shulman & Richter, 1987). In order to compare the three teachers in the current study to the work of others who study teacher knowledge, it might be helpful to examine one researcher's system for organizing teacher knowledge. Kennedy (2002) described the knowledge that teachers need for teaching in terms of craft knowledge, systematic knowledge, and prescriptive knowledge. In a study of 45 teachers' lessons, Kennedy found that teachers draw on all three sources of knowledge when making instructional decisions. She described craft knowledge as that which is acquired through experience, systematic knowledge as the knowledge acquired through undergraduate preparation, reading journals, and continuing professional development, and prescriptive knowledge as that acquired through institutional policies.

Celina and Aileen drew on craft knowledge as they considered their past teaching experiences. All three teachers were influenced by systematic knowledge as they engaged in professional readings, conversations, and through attending workshops and conferences. Prescriptive knowledge was important to

both Celina and Bethany as they modified or shaped their instruction based on policies such as the MEAP test, standardized testing, and the Reading First grant. The teachers in Kennedy's study were experienced teachers, not beginning teachers like Celina, Bethany, and Aileen. The current study suggests that beginning teachers draw on the same set of knowledge sources that experienced teachers do. However, beginning teachers struggle with learning a lot of new things all at once, and because of the historically unsupported nature of teaching, many beginning teachers leave the classroom in the first five years. A number of studies have found that as many as half of all new teachers leave teaching within their first five years (Hafner & Owings, 1991; Huling-Austin, 1990; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Murnane, Singer, Willett, Kemple & Olsen, 1991). Because the evidence in this study suggests that beginning teachers are faced with tenuous instructional decisions and they struggle with learning to teach, it seems reasonable to suggest that something besides lack of the knowledge needed for teaching is influencing beginning teachers to leave the profession. This takes me to the next section where I discuss the contextual factors that overwhelm beginning teachers and I re-examine the contextual teaching framework in terms of Celina, Aileen, and Bethany.

Comparing Teaching Contexts: Contextual Factors Which Influence Teachers' Instructional Decisions

In this section I compare the three teaching visuals presented earlier for Bethany, Aileen, and Celina. Since this study has shown that beginning teachers draw from a range of teacher knowledge, it makes sense that beginning teachers are also influenced by a range of contextual factors. Examining the differences

in the teaching contexts may help us understand more about how beginning teachers' contextual factors influence their instructional decisions. Table 3 presents the data from each teacher's teaching context, so that the differences that emerged from the cross-case analysis are more easily visible.

Teacher	Extra Large	Large	Medium	Small
Celina	Policy Environments Teaching Tools	Identity Students	Community Colleagues	Materials
Aileen	Identity	Teaching Tools Students	Community Colleagues Materials	Policy Environments
Bethany	Policy Environments	Identity Colleagues	Teaching Tools Community Materials	Students

Table 3. Size of Circles in Each Teaching Context Visual

Size of the Circles

The size of the circles indicates the amount of influence each aspect of the teaching context had on each teacher's instructional decisions. As we can see by Table 3, the size of the circles varied among the three teachers. Celina, with the most experience as a classroom teacher, had two extra large circles, two large circles, two medium sized circles, and one small circle. Compare this to Aileen and Bethany who each had one extra large circle, two large, three medium and one small. Since Celina has two extra large circles (and Bethany and Aileen have one each), it might appear that Celina was able to balance more aspects of her teaching context than either Aileen or Bethany. This makes sense given that Celina has had more practice in understanding the various aspects of her teaching context and in making instructional decisions that reflect those aspects. In addition, you may recall that Celina's teaching context had been

stable over the first four years of teaching, so she was able to make decisions based on the same setting over time, whereas Aileen and Bethany were learning about new teaching contexts since this was the first year in their current school settings. This might indicate that the more familiar a teacher becomes with her teaching context the more she can consider the various aspects of her teaching context when planning and implementing instruction.

Number of Connecting Lines

If you recall from previous discussions, potential connections exist among each element in the teaching context and each other element. By examining the three teaching contexts in this study, summarized in Table 4, we see the number of connecting lines varied between the teachers, indicating that some teachers were able to recognize and handle more connections than other teachers.

Teacher	Total number of connecting lines	Number of harmonious connecting lines	Number of tenuous connecting lines	Connections among which elements of teaching context
Celina	12	8	4	All
Aileen	7	5	3	None to Policy Environments
Bethany	8	3 ⁶	5 ⁷	None to Students or Community

Table 4. Connections in Each Teaching Context

Celina had twelve connecting lines, Bethany had eight and Aileen had seven. In addition, Celina had a line connected to every aspect of her teaching context, whereas Aileen had no connections to policy environments and Bethany had no connections to students or community. This might indicate that Celina has

⁶ Two of these appeared after the MEAP in the spring semester
⁷ Two of these disappeared after the MEAP in the spring semester and the tensions from these relationships no longer existed fro Bethany.

become more competent and capable of recognizing the connections, and is able to juggle more of these relationships at a time. Aileen and Bethany with fewer years of experience, and with unstable teaching contexts, were less able to recognize and handle the connections between all aspects of their teaching contexts. Further, Celina appeared more able to recognize positive connections (she had eight harmonious connections) as opposed to Aileen who had five and Bethany who had three (and two of those only emerged in the second semester). This suggests that more experienced beginning teachers are able to recognize and utilize the positive connections in their teaching contexts to help them manage the more tenuous ones. The number of tensions also suggests that there are only so many negative or conflicting relationships that teachers can effectively deal with at one time. Celina is juggling four tensions, Aileen three, and Bethany had five in the fall, three after the MEAP. Understanding the number of tensions each teacher was trying to manage helps us realize that Bethany was pushing the limits of what was feasible for her to handle and that the progress she made towards her writing goals is remarkable considering that an experienced beginning teacher, like Celina, was only managing to juggle four tensions.

How Can the Teaching Context Model Help Us Understand Learning to Teach?

This research has unveiled the complexities that exist for beginning teachers as they learn to teach writing. While each of the teachers made progress towards achieving their individual writing goals, they also each struggled with one or more aspects of their teaching context. It is also clear that

all three teachers have more to learn before they are considered effective teachers of writing. The teaching context model has helped us understand the nature of some of the complexities and has shed light on where the tensions arise. Realizing that the relationships between the various aspects of teaching context are the potential problem spots – that these are the areas that influence teachers' decisions – helps us think about how teacher preparation, induction and professional development programs might support beginning teachers as they learn to teach writing. These implications will be discussed in the next chapter. How teachers handle these connecting relationships is discussed in the final section of this chapter.

How Do Beginning Teachers Manage The Various Knowledge Sources and Aspects of their Teaching Contexts?

As the third and final sub-question of this study, in this section, I address how beginning teachers work with the various knowledge sources identified earlier and the specific aspects of their teaching context that emerged. Throughout this research I have vacillated among various terms that describe what I observed Celina, Bethany, and Aileen doing in order to learn to teach writing. Terms I have considered include manage, manipulate, balance, handle, juggle, shuffle, massage and navigate. Some of these terms carry negative connotations, others are viewed more positively. Throughout the case study descriptions presented in the previous three chapters, I have also used the terms acquiesce, accommodate, and resist to describe how teachers responded to the policy environments of their teaching contexts. While these terms work to describe the actions teachers take in regards to policy, they do not adequately

describe how teachers work with all aspects of their teaching contexts. My ultimate goal was to identify a term that described how all teachers might work successfully within their teaching contexts and within their various knowledge sources in order to shape effective writing practice. I move now to explore the use of the term “finesse” in helping us see how this might describe the ideal teacher’s actions.

Finessing Teaching Context

Earlier in this work, I introduced the term “finesse” and I have suggested that it indicates times when teachers skillfully manipulated and maneuvered their teaching context to shape their evolving writing practice. While some people might suggest that finesse has negative connotations, and might imply a surface move, rather than a substantial one, I argue that finesse is a finely tuned craft, representing a sophisticated level of skill. Webster defines it as “the ability to handle difficult situations diplomatically” (Agnes, 2002). I believe it takes a certain amount of diplomacy to effectively draw from one’s own knowledge about teaching, balance the requirements of policy and educational reform with the needs of one’s students and still maintain one’s personal identity. During this study, Celina demonstrated adeptness at finessing. She determined that she would give a nod to the mandated basal series and the required 120 minutes of instruction; yet she also maintained a focus on integrated language arts and writing workshop. She drew from her four years of experience in a fairly stable context to teach in a way that she was not only comfortable with, but that she felt her students would be best served by. Aileen demonstrated the ability to finesse

as well, although not to the same extent as Celina. Aileen was confident enough in her own knowledge and abilities to teach in ways that were different from the norm. Much like Celina, she maneuvered her way among her teaching colleagues, materials, and teaching tools in order to stay true to her identity as a teacher and for her students. Aileen was not able to manage as many aspects of her teaching context as Celina, suggesting that learning to finesse takes time and continuity of experiences. Bethany has not yet learned to finesse, which makes a great deal of sense given that she has had an unstable teaching context and she was so heavily indoctrinated into her current setting by her mentor, Suzy. Near the end of the study, Bethany began to show signs that she was becoming more aware of her instructional decisions and was engaged in critical self-analysis and planning for future change. This demonstrated a movement towards finessing. Most likely, if Bethany continues to teach, and if her context can remain somewhat stable, she will learn to finesse her teaching context in much the same way that Celina and Aileen did.

I believe finessing teaching context is a goal that we might want beginning teachers to aspire to. Along the way they may handle, navigate, balance, juggle, and manage – but ultimately, they learn how to finesse. Managing dilemmas (Lampert, 1985) may help teachers in the spur of the moment as frequent decisions need to be made quickly during a normal day in an elementary classroom. But, learning to finesse goes beyond managing dilemmas to actually sorting out and understanding the various interconnections between and among the aspects of one's teaching context.

This work builds on that of Feiman-Nemser's learning to teach framework (2001) in that both describe learning to teach as "involv[ing] continuing growth and development in core aspects of teaching" (p. 38). What this study adds to her framework is a widening of what is meant by the "core aspects of teaching." I presented and hypothesized a teaching context model that, upon examination of the three case studies, allowed me to theorize about the role of teaching context. I now propose that a "core aspect of teaching" is situated within an understanding of teaching context. This is further affirmed by Feiman-Nemser when she states "a powerful curriculum for learning to teach has to be oriented around the intellectual and practical tasks of teaching and the contexts of teachers' work" (p. 38).

The Influence of the Policy Environment

A commonality among the three teachers that impressed and impacted my thinking throughout this work was the influence of the policy environment. For Bethany and Celina, the negative relationships and tensions that existed because of the current policy environment were highly instrumental in their instructional decisions and ultimately shaped their evolving practice. Due to the overwhelming presence of various policies and their influence during this study, I sought out previous research that shed light on how teachers dealt with various policy implications. This led me to the work by Smagorinsky and colleagues and to the terms acquiesce, accommodate, and resist.

The lack of policy environmental constraints for Aileen was just as noticeable, in that it created a freedom of sorts for her, and this obviously

influenced the decisions she was able to make. It seems clear that researchers must get the message out that policy matters and that current policies are informing and dictating what goes on in classrooms. In a study of beginning teachers, Grossman and her colleagues (Grossman, et al., 2001) found that:

[D]irectly and indirectly, district policies teach beginning teachers what to worry about and how to get help. In this sense district policy functions as a curriculum for teacher learning, helping to shape what and how beginning teachers learn about teaching. (p. 2)

My work confirms that this occurs, and I propose that teachers should be taught this prior to their first teaching job, and they should be supported in learning how to manage, navigate and finesse their work with policy while on the job.

Moreover it seems clear that helping teachers acquire the ability to finesse more than just the policy environment – but to figure out how to work effectively with various knowledge sources and aspects of teaching context - is a move towards helping beginning teachers develop effective writing practice. More suggestions and implications that arose from this work are discussed in the final chapter, as well as areas for future research.

Chapter 8

UNDERSTANDING TEACHING CONTEXT THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES OF BEGINNING TEACHERS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Interpreting the teaching context model through the experiences of Celina, Aileen, and Bethany illuminated some of the challenges of learning to teach. We were reminded that learning to teach is a complicated process, one that is influenced by multiple and diverse contexts. This work illustrated that specific tensions and harmonies existed for each teacher within their individual and unique teaching contexts. The hypothesis that I presented earlier in this work was supported and enriched by these three cases. By testing the teaching context visual through the experiences of Bethany, Celina, and Aileen, I moved closer to theorizing about its potential usefulness in understanding how beginning teachers make instructional decisions. However, a close examination and analysis also revealed that it was likely that these teachers were not explicitly aware that they were navigating and managing tensions among the various aspects of her teaching context. To illustrate, and to uncover potential implications for this work, consider how Celina, Aileen, and Bethany may have learned to teach.

Learning to Teach

Apprenticeship of Observation

During each teacher's K-12 education, like all potential teacher candidates, Aileen, Bethany, and Celina participated in an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). Each witnessed teachers using teaching tools, was surrounded by diverse students, and was asked to use a variety of materials.

However, since each teacher was a student during her apprenticeship, she did not develop a deep understanding of any of these aspects, and it is unlikely that she ever really considered her community, the various people within that community, or the larger school and policy environments that governed her education. It is likely, however, that all of these experiences worked to create what became the basis of her teaching identity. However, because this teaching identity was shaped during the time each teacher was a student, the identity was formed with inadequate information and inadequate support, and at best was a weak identity.

Because Aileen's apprenticeship of observation happened many years prior to her teacher preparation courses, it is likely that the influence of these observations faded over the years as she raised her family, worked in the elementary school in Franklin, and lived as an adult. Nevertheless, when Aileen entered the teacher education program in her fifties, it is likely these later experiences contributed, along with her K-12 schooling, to her apprenticeship of observation. Celina and Bethany's apprenticeship of observation took place primarily in the very schools where they were now teaching, and likely added to the authority of their individual apprenticeships. Collectively, these three teachers gleaned information about students, materials, teaching tools, and community during their apprenticeship of observation. Figure 5 provides a visual representation of these elements necessary for learning to teach.

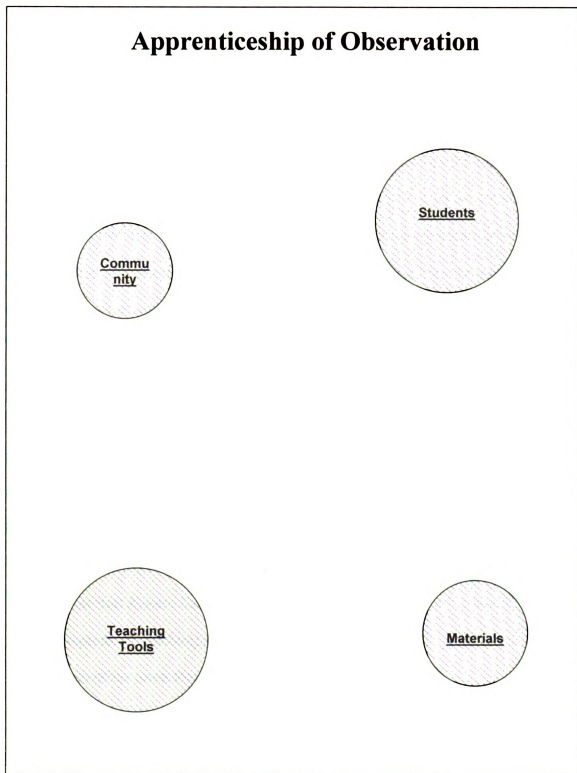


Figure 5. Apprenticeship of Observation Teaching Context Elements

Teacher Preparation

At some point, each teacher entered the teacher preparation at Michigan State University. It may be that one or more of the teachers believed she already knew quite a bit about teaching because of her apprenticeship of observation. The teacher preparation program engaged Celina, Aileen, and Bethany in understanding teaching tools at a deeper level. They were taught more about students and how they think and learn. They were taught to be reflective and to examine her own assumptions; they may have confronted dissonance and been asked to consider alternative perspectives; each teacher's identity was further shaped. The teachers may have engaged in learning about various resources for teaching. They may have heard a bit about school community, institutional governance, and specific policies. It was not the focus of this study to uncover the precise nature of the knowledge and to what degree Celina, Aileen and Bethany learned during their teacher preparation program. Some research suggests that teacher preparation programs make little difference in shaping beginning teachers' knowledge and conceptions of teaching (Wideen et al., 1998). Even if they did learn about the various aspects of teaching context, it seems clear that Aileen, Celina and Bethany were not exposed to how these various aspects of teaching context would inevitably intersect and mutually inform each other once they began teaching.

Celina, Aileen, and Bethany gained different kinds of content knowledge during their teaching preparation. Aileen was taught about developmental pedagogies, learning theories, and children as she pursued a major in child

development. Celina's majors were in History and Political Science, and she took content based courses in history and other social studies to complete her major. Bethany pursued a major in English and a minor in communication, only because she failed a required math class in her first choice of major, mathematics. All three teachers began their education in other institutions, and changed their programs along the way. Aileen began her college education soon after high school, but then put a career on hold to raise a family. Psychology was her initial interest right out of high school, and she had completed enough courses initially to easily add a psychology major to her teaching program at MSU. Bethany spent two full years at a junior college, and transferred to the university for her teacher preparation courses and to complete her major in English. Celina's history and political science majors as part of a teaching degree came after a long personal struggle. She originally went to college, the first in her family, to study communications. Something kept pushing her towards teaching, though, and eventually she chose to pursue a teaching career. Because she changed her mind and also attended a community college first, Celina's college education took six years to complete. Thus we see that each of the teachers in this study brought different kinds of background knowledge into their teacher education program, and departed from the program with different kinds of content knowledge and interests. Whatever the background knowledge however, it focused on content, and therefore it did not necessarily help Aileen, Celina and Bethany realize that they would need information and knowledge

about other factors that would shape their teaching contexts and influence their individual teaching decisions.

Figure 6 represents the various elements of teaching context that Celina, Bethany and Aileen were collectively exposed to during their teacher preparation courses. The overlapping nature of the circles is intentional, since many of these areas are related in overlapping and interconnected ways.

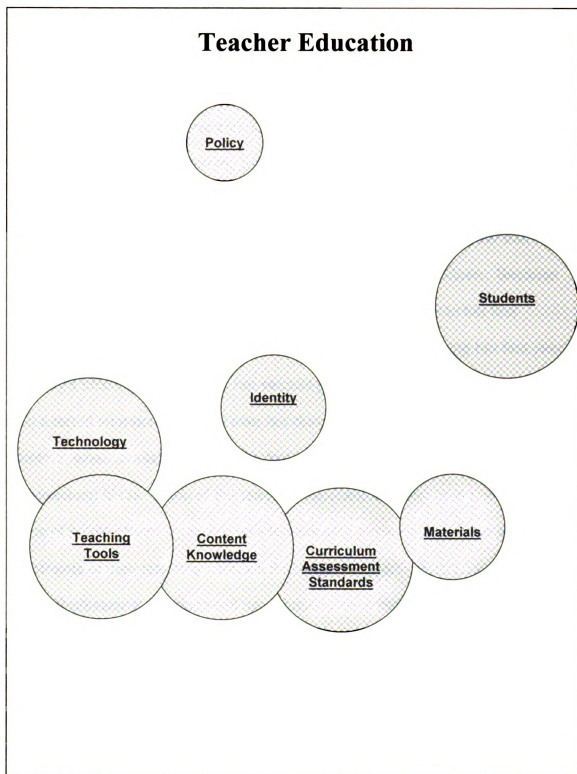


Figure 6. Teacher Education Teaching Context Elements

The First Years of Teaching

Each teacher entered an elementary classroom. Aileen and Celina were given a mentor during their first year – a teacher in the building to whom each could go to ask questions. For Celina, the relationship focused on management – of students, materials, time and content. Celina picked up teaching ideas from her mentor and learned what resources were available in the school and district. Aileen's first mentor went on a health leave in October, her second mentor the next year was rarely in her building. It was not until Aileen's third year that a stable mentoring relationship was established and utilized by Aileen. Because Bethany held two long-term substitute teaching positions prior to her first contractual teaching job, she was never assigned a mentor during her first year. Bethany's official mentor during her second year was Suzy, the reading teacher who exerted so much influence over her during this study. Celina reported that mentors, when available, were expected to work with management, materials, and teaching ideas. None of the teachers reported any help from mentors in terms of helping them figure out how to work with the various policies and other constraints of their teaching contexts that they were confronted with.

Professional development opportunities were plentiful for Celina, Aileen, and Bethany during their first few years of teaching. The Gambell School District provided literacy training by grade levels, in three day workshops, each year. LIFT and other literacy training was available through the local ISD, and the teachers were encouraged (and given released time) to attend local and state conferences of their choosing. All three teachers had taken the LIFT class, either

prior to or during this study, and both Aileen and Celina attended additional conferences during this study. The professional development opportunities primarily focused on teaching tools and materials. When Gambell adopted a new reading basal, teachers were trained on how to use it. When Reading First entered the scene at Crestview, Celina was inserviced on how to teach reading per the National Reading Panel's report and how to give the DIBELS (an assessment connected to the Reading First grant). When Parkside decided to change its instructional focus to implement integrated curriculum, Bethany spent every Wednesday afternoon for over two months learning how to plan and implement an integrated curriculum. Occasionally one of the teacher's principals talked to the staff about the local community as it related to the standardized test scores. The teachers learned about other federal and state policies from colleagues in the building, the newspaper and TV news, and from official school documents. But, the fact remained that Aileen, Bethany, and Celina never heard about all seven areas of teaching context in a purposeful, planned, coherent sequence, nor about how to navigate their interconnectedness in successful ways. Figure 7 represents the elements of teaching context that Celina, Aileen and Bethany likely encountered during their first years of teaching through mentoring (induction) and professional development.

Induction & Professional Development

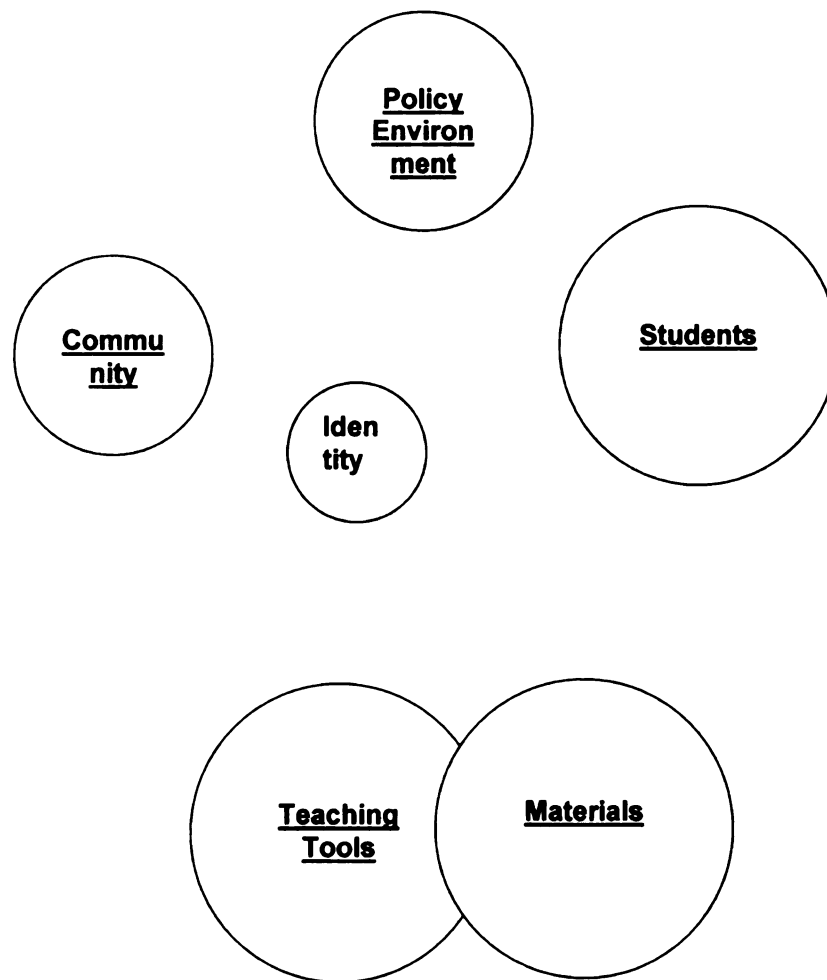


Figure 7. Induction and Professional Development Teaching Context Elements

At times the information the teachers learned in professional development situations conflicted with the information they had learned in their teacher preparation programs. Sometimes it conflicted with their own apprenticeship of observation and their evolving identity. For example, professional development focused on implementing the Reading First grant did not match Celina's prior experiences with teaching reading and writing. Instead of separating reading and writing instruction like the Reading First grant mandated, Celina believed that reading and writing should be taught in parallel and connected ways. Conceptual and ideological ideas could easily become confused during the first few years, because Aileen, Celina and Bethany were not supported in trying to resolve these struggles.

Pulling it all Together

No one helped Celina, Bethany, and Aileen realize the various aspects of a teaching context. They were not asked to consider how this context might change from year to year, school to school, and teacher to teacher, and how those changes might influence their instructional decisions. They did not learn how to recognize tensions among the various factors of their teaching contexts and to determine which tensions to ignore, and which to manage. They did not engage in dialogue nor brainstorm ways to think about the connections among the aspects of teaching context. They did not practice making decisions that foregrounded some aspects of teaching context, and backgrounded others. They were not exposed to concepts like 'finesse' that might have helped them think about how teachers manage the complexities of classroom teaching. If more

beginning teachers knew about these concepts, I suggest that they would feel more supported in their decision making processes.

Since this was Celina's fourth year in the classroom, she was able to capitalize on the harmonies and affordances while managing some tensions, and ignoring others. As a second-year teacher in her fourth context, Bethany was still trying to figure out how the system worked. She was still managing the tensions that could not be ignored, while searching for some kind of harmony upon which to build her evolving practice. It was actually remarkable to me that she did as well as she did, considering the complexity and intensity of so many confounding factors in her teaching context. Without support for our beginning teachers, one wonders how many teachers like Bethany give up each year (see for example, Ingersoll, 2001)? Likewise, Aileen was not supported as she moved from building to building over the first three years of teaching. She was not expected to engage with experienced teachers in order to support her writing practice. No one helped her realize the various tensions that existed within her teaching context. Given her age and life experiences, and the lack of a constraining policy environment, Aileen was able to finesse her teaching context fairly adeptly. But, finding a way to balance the tensions and harmonies seems a crucial step for beginning teachers learning to teach.

These three cases, as a study, provide compelling evidence that realizing, understanding, and navigating context is crucial for beginning teachers learning to teach. Figure 8 illustrates, in an overlapping nature, the areas of the apprenticeship of observation, teacher preparation, and induction and

professional development as discussed in the preceding section. It illuminates that much overlap exists and beginning teachers are often exposed to the various elements of the teaching context. However, it also starkly highlights the lack of connections between the various elements.

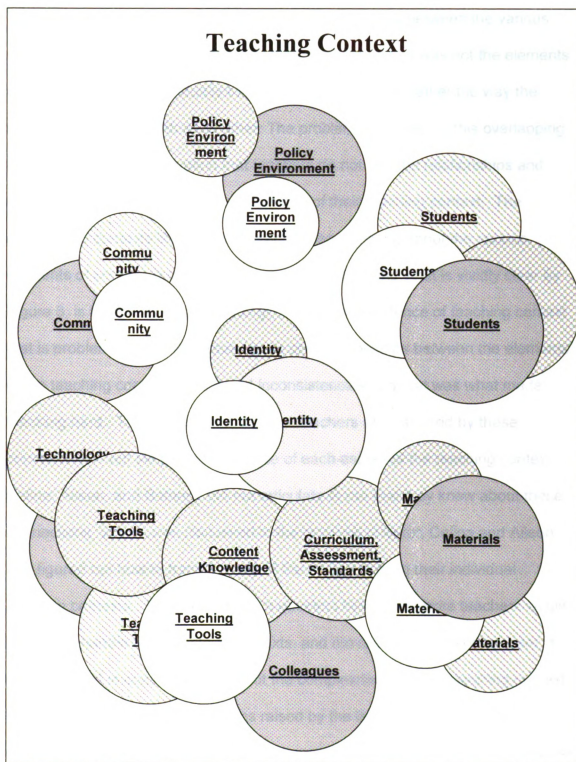


Figure 8. Overlapping Teaching Contexts⁸

⁸ Striped circles indicate Apprenticeship of Observation, plaid circles represent Teacher Education, and dotted circles represent Induction and Professional Development. Darkly shaded circles are the original elements of teaching context.

This study supports the idea that it was the relationships between the various elements of the teaching context that were problematic. It was not the elements of teaching context individually that created tensions, but rather the way the elements interacted with each other. The problem lies, even as this overlapping model illustrates, in the notion that teachers do not see the relationships and connections between the various elements of their teaching context. The overlapping contexts illustrate that teachers are learning about the various elements of context, but what they are not learning, and what is vividly clear by Figure 8, is that the lines are missing! It is not the existence of teaching context that is problematic, it is the connections and relationships between the elements of the teaching context that caused inconsistencies and that was what made teaching hard. The decision making that teachers do is shaped by these connections – not simply the existence of each aspect of the teaching context. Celina, Aileen, and Bethany did not articulate to me that they knew about these connections, yet, as was discussed in the previous chapter, Celina and Aileen had figured out how to handle many of the connections in their individual teaching contexts. This caused me to question how much more teachers would be able to handle their teaching contexts, and move towards finessing them, if they engaged in conversations about the complexities of one's teaching context. Therefore, the issues and concerns raised by the lack of attention to the relationships among teaching context elements suggests implications for teacher preparation, induction, and professional development, and in the next section I discuss those implications.

Implications

Implications from this study are primarily for a teacher education audience, one that is concerned with both initial teacher preparation and induction programs. Implications also exist for policy makers, school administrators, and curriculum directors who are responsible for curriculum and assessment reform including professional development. Finally, classroom teachers might also benefit from this study, particularly beginning teachers as they may find themselves engaged in managing their own tensions and dilemmas. In this section, I discuss the implications suggested by this study, first for teacher educators, and then briefly for policy makers and classroom teachers. Because the findings from this study are based on three teachers, I am unable to make generalizations about what might be the case for all beginning teachers. However, for these three teachers, I found the evidence supported the existence and influence of teaching context on instructional decisions. It therefore follows that helping these teachers realize and learn to navigate these factors might have supported them as they learned to teach. Information about, discussions of, and applications managing teaching context could occur at three levels; teacher education, induction, and professional development.

Implications for Teacher Education

Teacher Preparation

There are several implications raised by this study that might influence teacher preparation. First, learning to teach writing is not easy, and beginning teachers struggle with understanding the conceptual frameworks and the

pedagogy of teaching writing. All three teachers relied on trial and error to help improve their writing instruction. Teacher preparation has traditionally emphasized teaching reading over teaching writing, and when the topic of teaching writing is covered, it is often presented in a Writing Workshop model (International Reading Association, 2003). Courses designed to address the writing process, to look at various approaches to teaching writing, and to investigate how teachers make decisions to teach writing and how they improve practice would address some of issues raised by this study. Additionally, courses might want to focus on standardized forms of writing, high stakes assessments of writing, and the use of rubrics for assessment of writing. Helping teacher candidates to understand the various purposes and goals of writing in elementary classrooms might make them more aware of the choices they will face when asked to teach writing, and can help them build stronger conceptual understandings of what it means to teach writing to young children.

While it is likely that most of these kinds of courses would occur with teacher education departments, making cross university connections by working with English and composition faculty would also support teachers in thinking about writing in terms of decision making and would support the growth and development of teachers' knowledge about writing. When teacher candidates engage as writers in classes in the arts & sciences, they experience writing in different ways, and they learn about writing as a subject matter. This information can also work to support their development of a strong conceptual understanding of writing. Finally, these experiences can help them reflect on their own

experiences as an elementary school writer, and then as a future teacher of writing.

Second, a focus on *NCLB* is emerging in teacher preparation classes, simply because of its presence in the public schools. However, in my experience, this focus is minimal, and is often addressed by referring students to a website. This research suggests that more time, perhaps even a whole course, should be devoted to policies such as *NCLB* that influence teachers' instructional decisions. Examining various policies at federal, state, and district levels could more adequately prepare teacher candidates for understanding and managing the policy environment they will eventually find themselves in. Perhaps the view of "teaching" that currently exists as the norm in teacher preparation courses should be re-examined or broadened to include notions of how classroom teachers work effectively within a policy reform environment. Within this new definition would include multiple aspects of the professional roles that teachers play. A revised view of "teaching" might include ideas of how teachers make informed instructional decisions based on not only knowledge sources, but also aspects of teaching context, in particular policies aimed at shaping curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Teacher preparation courses might address how these various levels of policy work together and how they create tensions for the teachers who are impacted by them. Helping teacher candidates examine the decisions made by experienced teachers through the use of case materials would help them think about actions such as manage, navigate, balance and finesse. While it is

unlikely that teacher candidates could be taught to finesse, it is possible for them to realize that experienced teachers are able to do this, and to provide them with models and examples of how teachers finesse their teaching context. Simply raising teacher candidates' awareness about policy and the role it plays in making instructional decisions seems huge. Beginning teachers, like Bethany, who are confronted with a number of conflicting and constraining policies and who have no prior experience with navigating them, are likely to give in and consequently the policy "functions as a curriculum for teacher learning, helping to shape what and how beginning teachers learn about teaching" (Grossman, et al., 2001, p. 2). If we want teacher candidates to be informed and intelligent decision makers about instructional matters, teacher preparation seems a place where this can occur.

Finally, teacher education courses could introduce the idea of teaching context to students and help them to understand that teaching is more than knowing about children, content, and methods. Teacher candidates are often quite naïve about what it means to teach, and as beginning teachers they often learn about things because they are forced to (e.g. the school's expectation that Bethany would teach in ways that would improve MEAP scores). This is not something that methods courses regularly address. While there is some talk around our teacher education department about helping teacher candidates "play it as it lays" (Bird, 2004) and some instructors are beginning to think about how they can support students in managing the curriculum and other constraints placed on them, more needs to be done. At the very least, introducing the

teaching context model and presenting teaching as a decision making process that involves managing, navigating and finessing one's teaching context would be a small step in this direction.

Induction

This study revealed that mentoring beginning teachers through the induction years is beneficial. While one might argue that Bethany's mentor created additional tension for her, I would argue that Suzy's influence was also instrumental in promoting the reflection that Bethany engaged in during the spring semester. Suzy's ability to influence Bethany's instructional decisions shows the potential that exists for strong mentoring programs. If mentors were to receive regular and consistent training so that they were aware of and informed about the various aspects of a teacher's context, they might be able to help beginning teachers make effective instructional decisions. Costa and Garmston (1994) found that mentors need to be committed and receive training on how to effectively coach and work with beginning teachers. Just selecting the most experienced teacher in the building (in number of years taught) is not always the best way to determine effective mentor/mentee pairs.

All three teachers in the study drew not only from their assigned mentors, but also sought out others to support their work of learning to teach. Developing a thoughtful and comprehensive mentoring program for all beginning teachers makes sense. Care should be taken in making mentor assignments, so that mentors are physically available to support beginning teachers. It makes sense that the mentors teach in the same building as the beginning teacher, so that

they understand as much of the teaching context as possible. Providing time for the mentor and beginning teacher to work together is important as well, and some kind of released and compensated time for mentors might be a good model to pursue because the mentors in this study were full-time teachers, and had little time to meet regularly with their assigned mentee. Aileen mentioned that she and Marlene often talked at staff meetings (which occurred only once a month).

Other researchers have found that successful induction programs provide beginning teachers with mentors who help them think about good teaching, reflection, and decision making – not simply management of materials and children (e.g. see Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Since Bethany, Aileen, and Celina consulted others about instructional materials, it supports Feiman-Nemser's claim that beginning teachers benefit from support aimed at teaching. Strong mentoring programs also draw on networking, where beginning teachers meet regularly to discuss teaching, share resources, and occasionally meet with experts who help the teachers think about their evolving practice (Kelley, 2004; Oakes, et al., 2002). Not only can a strong induction program support beginning teachers' effectiveness in developing practice, but it can also decrease attrition rates (Kelley, 2004), a growing problem in public education today (Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, & Fideler, 1999; Ingersoll, 2001; Oakes et al., 2002). Evidence from this study supports these conceptions of induction programs, and additionally suggests that beginning teachers and mentors should also work with teaching context models where mentors can help beginning teachers recognize, and then learn to finesse, their individual teaching contexts.

Implications for Policy Makers, School Administrators and Curriculum Developers

Professional Development

Professional development opportunities should continue the work that teacher preparation began, and that mentoring and induction programs engaged in – namely, providing support for the learning to teach process. Historically, professional development has focused on materials and/or teaching tools, that is, helping teachers build conceptual frameworks for building classroom practice by applying and adapting a set of pedagogical tools. This research suggests that professional development needs to focus on the additional areas in a teaching context – community, policy, students, and colleagues; and on how to manage and navigate the tensions that arise due to the potentially conflicting nature of the relationships between factors within any given teaching context. This aspect of professional development might function best within schools, with colleagues who have many aspects of their teaching contexts in common. This would allow them to dialogue and reflect on appropriate ways to work in a common environment.

While this is a new area for professional development, it seems to be an opportune time to engage in conversations of this nature, since teacher attrition is high, new policies are emerging, and student populations are consistently becoming more diverse. As the teaching contexts change and shift for all teachers, regardless of experience level, professional development could step up and fill a need for helping teachers recognize and finesse their teaching contexts.

Understanding Teachers' Roles in Times of Reform

Recognizing that teachers understand, acknowledge, and implement policy in a variety of ways may help policy makers in thinking about future policy. Teachers in this study felt alienated by the federal NCLB policy, and were, at time, resistant to its implementation. If policies are to be effective, teachers must have some say, some buy in to the formation and purpose of the policy. Likewise, administrators at the state and local levels need to be aware that teachers do not see all curriculum, assessment and materials policy as set in stone, and that some teachers feel they are not being treated professionally because these policies seemed aimed at making them teach in ways that do not support what they believe is good for their students.

Two policy implications emerge from this study. First, while accountability measures created at federal, state, and local levels do influence teachers instructional decisions, *teachers choose how to interpret and implement these policies*. As this study has shown, a great many factors influence these decisions. Second, because numerous other factors influence the way teachers implement policy, it may be that accountability measures could be improved if *these factors were included in curriculum and assessment policy*. Teachers in this study seemed to have a wealth of knowledge about how to get their students to write well, and how to measure that writing growth. If these collective ideas were sought and valued by those who create accountability measures, the system might be improved.

Teachers choose how to respond. The teachers in this study responded to accountability measures from curriculum and assignment policy in different

ways. This behavior is consistent with other studies (Cohen & Ball, 1990; Cusick, 1992; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Wolcott, 1977) and fits into this description by Cusick: "Teachers accept reforms that come from above. When reform comes down to their classrooms, they make whatever adjustments are needed to fit the reform to their personal style." (p. 208). Tyack and Cuban call this hybridization where teachers blend the old and the new to make their jobs more efficient or satisfying. Celina, Aileen, and, to a small extent, Bethany found ways to hybridize the curriculum and assessment policies designed to make them accountable for student learning, by merging some elements of the new into their existing frameworks. Part of what it might mean to finesse is that teachers are able to hybridize curriculum and assessment policy within the larger context of their teaching context. As described by Tyack and Cuban (1995), "teachers employ their wisdom of practice to produce pedagogical hybrids." (p. 83). Since teachers do choose how to implement policy, it is unlikely that all policy will be enacted in exactly the same way in each classroom. When teachers feel conflicted between what a test wants and what they know is right for their students, many will go with student needs (Calkins, Montgomery, Santman, & Falk, 1998). Celina and Aileen often echoed these sentiments during this study. If policy makers really want to hold teachers accountable for student learning, they will have to look at more than simply mandates advocating standardized testing, such as *NCLB*, since each teacher will likely implement the policy differently and therefore accountability to specific standards and student achievement cannot be guaranteed.

Include other factors in curriculum and assessment policy. Since teachers are likely to interpret and implement policy in unique ways, one way that teachers are more likely to be held accountable to policy is if they have a hand in creating that policy. Tyack and Cuban (1995) discuss the role of the school district and they believe school districts have been caught in the middle between accountability measures enacted by the federal and state governments, and the teachers within their districts. Districts try to involve their teachers in curriculum policy work, yet often their efforts are not recognized by those who create state and federal policy. This study supported this idea as well. Teachers in the Gambell District created the SIMs and the nine weeks tests. While these policies did inform instructional decisions for teachers such as Celina, Bethany, and Aileen, they are not necessarily aligned with the MEAP tests which will be the determining factor for the *NCLB* policy. If the central purpose of reform is to improve student learning (which the *NCLB* policy seems to be about), “policy can set the conditions for effective administration and practice, but it can’t predetermine how those decisions will be made” (Elmore and McLaughlin, 1988).

Unless practitioners are also enlisted in defining problems and devising solutions adapted to their own varied circumstances and local knowledge, lasting improvements will probably not occur in classrooms (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

While this idea was not explored with the teachers in this study, we were able to see that local, social, and cultural knowledge and teachers’ professional and personal knowledge influenced the decisions made by Bethany, Aileen and Celina.

Implications for Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers might find this research interesting and affirming. It might illuminate some of the struggles they have been managing as they try to balance a complex teaching context and conflicting bits of knowledge. Beginning teachers might find comfort from the study by realizing that they are not alone in facing the challenges of a complex and ever-shifting teaching context. They might also realize what is feasible and manageable for them in their first few years. This work might also encourage teachers in the same building or in similar settings to work together to create learning communities that collaboratively engage in conversations about finessing existing teaching contexts.

More experienced teachers might explore their own journey of learning to teach and consider to what degree they finesse their teaching contexts. They may engage in conversations with other experienced teachers to explore the ways they learned how to finesse. They then might meet with less experienced teachers and share their own experiences as a way of supporting newer teachers. Experienced teachers who have explored these notions might become partners in teacher education programs, serving as mentor teachers, or as clinicians in on-campus classes. Finding ways to talk about their experiences with those who are more experienced and knowledgeable might offer additional ways to support the growth of beginning teachers.

Some educators and researchers have introduced the idea of how teachers might work together to advocate change in policy procedures and reform methods (Coles, 2003; Routman, 1996; Taylor, 1998). Some studies

have suggested that teachers can become empowered and thus have a real voice in advocating change at the school level. The current study might help teachers think about how to be more politically active rather than just let policy happen to them. When multiple voices of teachers converge with a common message, it is more likely that policy makers and the public will hear.

Future Research

Teacher Education and Induction

The suggestions discussed in the previous sections as implications for teacher education and induction need to be researched. What happens in teacher education courses where the focus shifts to looking at teaching contextually? What about a focus on writing as a concept? Are students able to make connections between courses taken in English departments and those offered in the teacher education program? What happens in induction programs when teaching context becomes part of the conversation? What happens when mentors use the language and ideas of finesse and teaching context? These are some of the areas that suggest further research in the areas of teacher education and induction.

Beginning Teachers in Other Settings

This research study looked at three teachers. Future research will need to test the teaching context model with additional teachers so that the model can be refined and further validated. Additional studies with beginning teachers across a range of settings will add to the understanding of the community and school district aspects of the teaching context. Studying beginning teachers in charter

schools, parochial schools, and other unique settings would add depth to the teaching context model as well. Situating studies in additional settings can help answer questions such as: How do beginning teachers in rural and suburban districts learn to teach writing? What kinds of factors influence their learning to teach? Can the teaching context model help us explain and understand their instructional decisions? Besides studying teachers in a variety of other settings, more research is needed in other urban districts.

Future research might look at beginning teachers in the same building or in the same grade level. Even though Celina, Aileen and Bethany were in the same district, because they were placed in different schools and different grade levels, we are not afforded opportunities to see how beginning teachers within the same school react to the same set of community and collegial relationships. Grade level also complicated teaching in the current study. A study of beginning teachers at the same grade level might illuminate unique differences in how novices interpret, manage, and learn to finesse a similar teaching context (in terms of grade level). Studying teachers within the same building or grade level might also illuminate the ways teachers move within their teaching contexts, and new descriptors for these movements might emerge (beyond navigating, managing, balancing, and finessing).

This study is situated in a state that has a long history of state level standards work and assessment. The changes it made due to NCLB were relatively minor. Conducting similar studies in other states, where NCLB may have created different kinds of work for teachers, might allow us to see more

about the influence of policy environments on teaching context. Other states have different kinds of standards and assessments, they determine compliance with NCLB in different ways, and some states even choose to maintain previous practices, even with the new federal policy. Future research in other policy environments could add a depth to this facet of the teaching context model.

Beginning Teachers Teaching Reading (or any of the other Language Arts)

Because this study was conducted through the lens of writing instruction, the results can only apply to this content area at particular grade levels in particular schools. Future research might center around the lens of reading instruction, or any other of the language arts. The lens might be broadly defined as literacy practices in general, or as narrowly defined as reading comprehension. Researching how beginning teachers navigate teaching context by focusing on additional content areas would add to the depth of understanding of the teaching context visual, and might provide opportunities for understanding of how subject matter influences learning to teach in ways that merely looking at beginning teaching through the lens of writing could not.

Experienced Teachers and Teaching Context

While I am currently interested in beginning teachers, I am also curious about the how the teaching context model holds up for experienced teachers. Because this work seemed to indicate that the more experience a teacher had, the better she became at finessing her teaching context, it would be interesting to conduct further research with more experienced teachers to determine if and how they learned to finesse teaching context. Examining experienced teachers would

also allow us to delve into the sources of knowledge that supported these teachers as they learned to finesse their teaching context. What do they pay attention to, and what do they ignore? Are there particular ways they were supported as they learned to teach? At what point do beginning teachers begin to finesse? Is the journey dependent on tenure? Stability of context? Or something else? Finding answers to questions such as these would add to our conceptual understanding of the teaching context model.

Student Learning

A final area that provides opportunities for future research is to consider the role of student learning in learning to teach. While knowledge about students is presented as a part of the teaching context model, and Celina and Aileen were influenced by the students in their classrooms, it is unclear what role student learning played in helping teachers navigate their teaching contexts. Celina was most adamant about meeting the needs of her students and in wanting to prepare them for success in the world; but no data was collected on how well her students actually performed on writing tasks across the year or how she understood and documented student learning, and if her chosen instructional methods resulted in successful writers. Investigating and connecting student learning and achievement to how teachers' teaching context shapes instructional decisions and practice would, perhaps, open doors otherwise left unopened.

Next Steps

This research has uncovered a teaching context model, one that helps us realize that teaching context should, at the very least, be placed alongside

knowledge when we consider how one learns to teach. However, it has also raised additional questions about the work needed in order to understand more fully the role of teaching context in learning to teach writing. In reconsidering my revised research question:

What influences beginning teachers in an urban setting as they translate and implement a particular aspect of their writing curriculum into practice?

I recognized that this dissertation helped us situate teacher knowledge within the larger arena of teaching context. It is likely that teacher's knowledge development can only be understood in terms of understanding individual teaching context, and through further exploration of the experiences of beginning teachers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Data Sources for All Participants

Teacher	Pre-Interview	Classroom Observations	Video Observations	Viewing Sessions	Materials Discussion	Post-Interview
Aileen	10-04-03	10-15-04	11-19-03	11-19-03	2-12-04	6-5-04
		2-4-04	1-21-04	1-22-04		
			2-27-04	3-1-04		
			3-31-04	3-31-04		
			5-4-04	5-5-04		
Bethany	10-21-03	11-3-03	12-1-03 (lesson plan provided)	12-3-03	3-16-04	5-25-04
			3-8-04	3-8-04		
			4-26-04	4-26-04		
Celina	10-23-03	11-12-03	12-18-03 (lesson plan provided)	12-18-03	4-20-04	5-18-04
			3-24-04 (lesson plan provided)	3-24-04		

APPENDIX B

Fall Interview Questions

Personal History

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married? (probe spouse name and occupation)
3. Do you have any children? (probe names and ages)
4. How long have you lived in the Lansing area? (probe other places lived)
5. Where did you go to high school? (probe if unfamiliar with geographically)
6. Where did you go to college? (probe if unfamiliar with geographically)

Teaching History

1. What teaching certification do you have?
2. What was your college major? Minor? (probe about what courses they took that might have related to writing)
3. Do you have any additional endorsements?
4. Do you have any college credits past a Bachelor's degree? Explain.
5. How long have you been teaching?
6. At what grades? Where?
7. Do you consider Lansing an urban district? Why or why not?
8. Did you purposefully seek out an urban district? (probe to find out how ended up here)

Writing History

1. How did you learn to write?
2. How important was writing to you as you were growing up?
3. What kind of writing did you do as you were growing up?
4. What kind of writer were you in high school?
5. What kind of writer were you in college?
6. What kinds of writing do you do now?
7. How important is writing in your life? Explain.

Writing Curriculum

1. How do you believe one learns to write?
2. What is the role of the teacher in this process?
3. What do you do in your classroom to enact this belief?

4. What instructional model(s) do you draw from?
5. Describe your writing curriculum.
6. Describe what a typical writing lesson looks like in your classroom.
7. How is writing viewed by the students in your classroom?
8. How do you assess children's writing?
9. Where do you think you learned about teaching writing? (probe for specific things mentioned earlier)
10. How/Does your setting influence the way you think about teaching writing?
11. What area of your writing curriculum are you planning to work on during this school year?
12. What kind of support do you anticipate you'll need in order to do this?
13. What ideas do you have for how you will work on this area? (insert answer from #10) (probe about areas they still want to improve and how they'd go about learning to do that. Do they think they already have the knowledge and just need to work on it, or do they need to 'go get' knowledge?)

Logistical items

1. What time each day do you usually teach writing?
2. When can I come to visit to get the lay of the land, to meet the kids and the principal, and to give student and parent permission letters?
3. Do you want to take a copy now to show the principal, or shall I make an appointment to meet with her?
4. What is your principal's name?

I want you to be thinking about when you might be working on "x" in a way that would be helpful for me to visit and videotape, hopefully this fall.

APPENDIX C

Celina: Video Observation Transcript 12-18-03

Time	Activity
10:24	Transition to floor area
10:25	Lesson begins
Video tape begins 0000	First I'm going to do my TAP. We've been working so hard in writing workshop today, and we have a lot to get done today. So I'm going to do my TAP, and I want to see this on everyone's paper. And today my topic is going to be, I went shopping yesterday and it was so crazy shopping yesterday, so my topic is going to be shopping, Christmas shopping of course. My audience is the class. And I'm going to do a picture plan, like I've been doing. In January though, we're moving into a different kind of plan, and we're going to talk about that.
0068	(Drawing boxes for beginning, middle, ending). My beginning, middle and ending. Beginning, middle, and ending. Yesterday I was at work, and I uh, I had to get a lot of things for my Christmas party. So I was like thinking and thinking. I made a list. Here's Mrs. R (she's drawing), she's at her desk, and I'm making a list of all the things I had to buy for my Christmas party today for all my boys and girls. Here's my Christmas tree. And I have a pen in my hand and I'm making a list. I know that time is ticking, because, second graders, it was 7 o'clock when I left last night. I was thinking I have to get to the store before eight, because I want to make it home in time to do things, so I got to make it home in time. So, here's Mrs. R, I go jump in my car, and it is very slippery out, so I have to be very careful. The streets are very busy. I went last night, I went to two stores. I went to the Dollar Deal, which I really love that store (sh, my story) and I also went to Farmer Jack. Farmer Jack. I went to two stores and these two stores were right next to each other so I was pretty lucky. I went into the store, and Mrs. R, you know what? I'm not stopping anymore, shh.
0207	I went into the store and I got everything on my list. I got candy canes for our party. And I bought some M and M's for our party. And I also bought cookies for our Christmas party. So I bought these three things on our list. Then Mrs. R went home. So, here's my little car. Going to my house. And It was about 8:45 when I got home last night. I was very tired. I quickly got something to eat. I watched a little bit of TV and I went to bed.

0268	So I need to start with my beginning (man you go to bed early). I do. Here's my beginning. On Wednesday, and Wednesday's a tough word, Wednesday night at 7 o'clock, I was in my classroom, getting ready to leave (writing). (rereading) On Wednesday night at 7 o'clock I was in my classroom, getting ready to leave. I just thought of something. I want to put pm, because I don't want someone to think it's am (inserts pm in. reads and tracks again). On Wednesday night at 7 pm, I was in my classroom, getting reading to leave, I'm going to put a comma there, and I remembered that I had to go to the store (writing), period.
0409	(rereading and tracking) On Wednesday night at 7 p.m. I was in my classroom, getting ready to leave, comma, and I remembered, remembered, gotta go back and put the ed, (she adds it in) that I had to go to the store, period. That's kind of a long sentence, but I had a lot to say and that's why I broke it up. (writing again) I, go back up to my picture plan, I made a list of things that I needed, need ed from the store. So here's me making my list, it's still my beginning (she points to her picture plan). I'm going to go back and reread. On Wednesday night at 7 p.m. I was in my classroom getting ready to leave, comma, and I remembered that I had to go to the store. I made a list of things that I needed from the store. Okay, here's my beginning, got my beginning down.
0520	Now I need to start my middle. It was, I'm going to make it kind of interesting. It was very icy outside. I'm going to flip my paper over because it's getting hard to write. It was very icy out; I have to go back to my picture plan. (on second sheet) (writing) So, I had to drive carefully. You know what? on carefully I always forget, is there supposed to be an e? Or not? So I'm going to circle this word and have Mrs. R look at that word. I'm going to go back and look. (she rereads) It was very icy outside so I had to drive carefully.
0600	I went to two stores. I went to... you know what, I don't like that sentence either. I went to Farmer Jack and the Dollar Tree. And I know that it's the name of a store, so I'm going to go back and capitalize that (she had capitalized dollar, but now tree). Farmer Jack. And Farmer Jack needs to be capitalized too because that is the name of a store, so I'm going to go back and look (she capitalizes the f in Farmer).
0673	I'm going to go back and read. Right now I'm still at my middle. (Reading). On Wednesday night at 7 p.m., I was in my classroom, getting ready to leave, and I remembered that I had to go to the store. I made a list of things that I needed from the store. Okay, I got that done (checking her picture plan for the beginning). It was very icy out, that's me being careful (point to

	<p>her picture plan), outside so I had to drive carefully. I went to Farmer Jack's and the Dollar Tree. (writing) I bought candy canes, candy canes, cookies, and I forgot what else I bought, (flips to first page), let me go back and look. Candy canes, cookies and M and M's for my classroom. (reading) I bought candy canes, cookies, and m and m's for my classroom. (writing) I left the store around 8:20 to head home.</p>
0825	<p>I'm going to go back and reread real quick, make sure I'm... I know I'm not finished because I don't have my ending yet, but I don't want to use up all our time. I'm going to have to stop to give you time. (reading). On Wednesday night, at 7 pm., I was in my classroom, getting ready to leave, and I remembered that I had to go to the store. I made a list of things that I needed from the store. It's me making a list (points to the beginning picture in the plan). It was very icy outside, so I had to drive carefully. I went to Farmer Jack's and the Dollar Tree. I bought candy canes, cookies, and M and M's for my classroom. I left the store around 8:20 to head home. Now I'm coming up with my ending, but I'm going to stop here and finish my ending tomorrow. (man it's going to be a long story). It's going to be a long story.</p>
0900	<p>What I want you to do, these are my directions, do not move. People are illustrating today. People are illustrating today and you have three things to do. You're writing, if you're finished with a story, what are you going to do if you're finished with a story? (kids chime in – write another story (1)) Are you going to ask Mrs. R to spell every word? (no..) Circle the word (2). Can you ask a person to listen to your story? (yes) Yes, you may ask a neighbor to listen to your story (3). Quietly go back to your seats and I'm going to tell you who's illustrating today.</p>

APPENDIX D

Bethany: Viewing Session Questions 12-3-03

- Ask first: What is happening in Monday's lesson? How does this fit with your goal of establishing a writing workshop? What have you added to your program that moves you in that direction? (I noticed you called it "workshop" in the notes you made for me)
- I notice you were conferencing with students at the back table. How did you decide to do this? How is it going?
- Have the students published anything yet? How did that come about?
- As we view the tape, stop it at any point that you feel you want to comment – to explain something, to share what you were thinking, to respond to a student, etc. This should help us figure out how you think about teaching writing as you move towards your goal of creating a writing workshop in your classroom.
- Specific questions I might have:
 - What do you think the students are learning and how do you know?
 - Why did you decide to move the desks into clusters rather than rows?
 - Have you left the template writing? Why? What was the progression from the holidays, pets, Thanksgiving writing to this piece on Determination?
 - Are you still working with the grade 3 and 4 teacher? The literacy specialist? In what ways?
 - Is there a writing component to your MEAP camp? What's it like? Who teaches it? Is it mandatory for your students? How many will likely attend?
 - What is the writing club (during lunch Monday)? How did that come about?
 - What is the name of the Faith Ringgold book?
 - Were the students who entered around 12:05 special education? Do they do the writing square?
 - How do you decide if a writing draft is "done" in the conference?
 - How would you conference without an extra adult in the room?
 - What were the goals in the small group? (I notice everyone is engaged because they don't have to wait for each other)
 - How are you feeling about how things are progressing?
 - What are your future goals? Where do you want to go next?

APPENDIX E

Bethany: Viewing Session Transcript 12-3-03

Audio Counter	Video Counter	Question	Response
001		<p>I'd like to begin by asking you what you thought about the lesson Monday and if it accomplished what you had hoped it would.</p> <p>Okay, we can watch for that and see, because sometimes our perceptions are different. I had written down the names of the kids you called on, and I hadn't noticed that, so we'll watch for that.</p> <p>One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight different names on the brainstorming, and I stopped doing it on the other part, so we can watch for that.</p>	<p>Umm...I think the group in the back when I was working with them, I think that went well. But as far as the shared writing part, I don't know if, um, it seemed like it was just a couple kids that were doing it with me. Instead of the whole class.</p> <p>Oh good. That's what it felt like.</p>
009		<p>We're going to start the tape. We'll just kind of, if either one of us wants to stop it, we'll stop it. And I want us to kind of think about, you told me at the beginning of the year that you are hoping to move into more of a workshop format, which yesterday, I mean, Monday, seemed to be a</p>	

		<p>workshop, you had kids working at different places, in the same project, which is what you had talked about that you wanted to do. You had talked about wanting to conference with kids, so you found a way to do that, so, we'll just try to, kind of talk about that</p> <p>Yeah. That was one of my questions. Like what would you do without an extra body?</p> <p>And I noticed when she sat down over here, a lot of kids congregated,</p> <p>and I figured if you were by yourself, there weren't be any reasons for them to gather in one area</p> <p>when they're with each other</p>	<p>The other thing was, I had an extra body in the classroom.</p> <p>Actually to be honest with you, I've done it now without her in the room, because twice now she hasn't been able to come in. It's more quiet, the kids at their seat working, cause um... I mean they're drawing, so yeah they're going to be a little bit more, the volume's going to be a little bit more high, but I thought at least for that time, she has a lot of kids talking, and normally that won't happen.</p> <p>came back to her</p> <p>and they talk more when they're by</p>
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		<p>That's one of the tricky things I think, you have to keep them focused in some area, so they don't keep bugging you while you're trying to help the other kids.</p>	<p>yeah. So, I think I've done it when she wasn't in the room and I called a group back to the table and the rest wrote. Because she wasn't here to help them with the drawing part, I had them, we have a penpal, so I had them write letters if they were done, so that they would continue working on writing.</p> <p>so that just happened to be the day that,</p>
027		<p>What time do you have to break at? Oh, we can see the clock right there, so we'll just stop then.</p>	<p>Yeah.</p>
028	0021	<p>The volume okay? Once you start talking we'll see if you can hear it. They're just getting their things out now. Some times when I first turn the tape on a bunch of kids just stare at it. So,</p>	
032	0050		<p>This has been drilled into their head, I do it every day.</p>
039	0151	<p>Did they, use (tape stops), the other time I was here, they actually used a template to put their notes on. Did they do that?</p>	<p>Yes. This time, when we got together, we read two Faith Ringgold stories. Mrs. P explained the story quilt and how we were going to create it. Instead of them all doing a whole paper on determination, we took, I drew the template up on the board and I explained that they were going to do, just number two box. And that this whole story on the quilt is going</p>

		<p>to longer than four paragraphs. It's going to have an opening paragraph, a closing paragraph, and then it's going to have twenty... there's twenty-two of my regular ed students, it's going to have twenty-two squares in the middle. So, um... I went through and did that then</p> <p>Did they just use notebook paper then?</p> <p>They used, they just folded a piece of notebook paper in half, like top down to the bottom, and they used the top part for their brainstorming, and the bottom was the starting of the writing.</p> <p>So this was just how you modeled yesterday the introductory paragraph?</p> <p>The only thing I did do, which I messed up at the beginning of the project, is when I should have done the shared writing together, and then sent them off to do their one paragraphs, and then come back for the closing at the end. But I, I don't know what happened, I was up there explaining it, and I said we're gonna do this, and I said can everyone think of a time when they were determined. We went through and talked about it meant to be determined. We had a couple kids look it up in the thesaurus, and the dictionary, and then I just sent them off and they started. And the next day, we were already revising, some of the kids that thought they were done. And then I was going to do the shared writing in the</p>
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			<p>middle, when everyone was at different parts and she said, well let's finish, and we finished the paragraphs, only but the 7 kids that I worked with yesterday. So I just thought well I'll just save the shared writing for when you come in. so I did it backwards.</p>
062	Tape off	<p>So what did you think, did it feel thought okay?</p> <p>There was a lot of ideas thrown out.</p>	<p>It felt backwards to me. They've already done the middle paragraphs. Cause they all are middle paragraphs, and I was supposed to do the introduction first. Plus I think if I would have done the introductory paragraph first, well I guess there are some pros and cons. If I would have done it first I think some of the kids who really didn't know what it meant to be determined would have had better idea, because when we did break and go back to the seats, there was about four kids that I had to spend a lot of time talking separately, and going over the same thing, what does it mean to be determined. Then they would write down, well I am determination to do this. And then I had to explain the difference in the words, but I guess the pro would be about coming together at the end, they all know in detail what determination was.</p> <p>they had good ideas. I think if I had done it at the beginning, I would only have got the kids who knew what determined was. Which probably at that point was only three or four of</p>

		<p>I think writers do that sometimes though.</p> <p>They write the body cause you have the ideas in your head what you want to say and then you go back and throw an introduction on.</p> <p>that probably would have worked too</p> <p>you just kind of go with...</p> <p>oh well, you're just learning that's what I think, I'm still learning every day.</p> <p>and I'm sure the kids didn't really think about. Because they think teachers know everything. They don't think about that.</p>	<p>them.</p> <p>Mess up.</p> <p>The other thing I guess I could have done was done the introductory at the beginning. Then after they'd done their middle paragraphs I could have gone back and we could have edited mine, cause then they could have seen the editing process.</p> <p>that would have probably been the best.</p> <p>sometimes you make mistakes.</p> <p>and Mrs. P, the one I'm working with, she said, oh I thought that's what you had planned to do. And I was like no, I made a mistake.</p>
080			This is so different from

		with different teachers?	<p>watching video tapes when I was in college and doing</p> <p>Yeah, I was all over the place then.</p>
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APPENDIX F

Materials Discussion Handout

(Given to each teacher prior to our scheduled discussion)

I'd like to set up a discussion/interview where we examine the materials that inform your teaching of writing. This may include, but should not be limited to:

- sequenced instruction manuals
- curriculum guides
- conference or workshop materials
- notes from inservice meetings or other professional development
- teaching manuals
- reference books
- textbooks
- student work

Think of these set of documents as "anything that helps you plan and/or teach writing".

I'd like you to assemble these documents. I'll come in and we'll talk about them. I would like to copy some of the pieces (I can take them, copy them, and return them OR you can copy them in advance if you'd rather). I anticipate the discussion/interview taking about an hour. We can do this after school, during a "special", or on a Saturday morning if you'd rather.

APPENDIX G

Materials Discussion Protocol

You have assembled a set of documents that help you plan and/or teach writing.

Tell me what you have and how each thing helps you?

Probe...

- sequenced instruction manuals
- curriculum guides
- conference or workshop materials
- notes from inservice meetings or other professional development
- teaching manuals
- reference books
- textbooks
- student work

Probe...role of student work and how she assesses, and/or knows when to move on to something else.

Select those that want copies of.

APPENDIX H

Bethany: Materials Gathered for Materials Discussion 3-16-04

1. 40 Reproducible Forms for the Writing Traits Classroom by Ruth Culham and Amanda Wheeler. Scholastic 2003. This is like a ditto book, with forms teachers can copy to supplement the text (item #2).
2. 6 + 1 Traits of Writing: Grades 3 & Up, by Ruth Culham, Scholastic 2003. This is a text book that shows all 6 + 1 traits on the front cover. Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, conventions, voice, organization and presentation (which is the +1 and is off set near the bottom of the cover). The other six are fit together like a puzzle.
3. Balanced Literacy Notebook – provided by the Gambell School District to all teachers.
4. Workshop Handout – A stapled, 12 page handout from a recent workshop – the 4th grade Literacy Academy – presented by the Gambell School District and required of all its teachers.
5. Student Writing folder - keeps students current work and a record of the writing they've done this year. Also has evaluated work. It's a two pocket folder with in-progress work on one side, work to be edited on the other, and a record sheet in the middle prongs. As she flips through, it looks like graded work is on the in-progress side. (she did not have this piece initially, but goes to get one when she wants to show me how she used a piece from the handout above)
6. Student Papers – a stack of sensory papers the students did where they thought of an event, then listed the five senses at the top and using descriptive words about the event. They then wrote paragraphs describing the event using the sensory words, without actually saying what the event was.
7. Book Report Form and Grade Sheet – an assignment sheet and grading sheet for book reports that she used this year as well as last. (She talked about this in an earlier interview or viewing session). Does not have at the beginning of the session, but goes to get it when she thinks of it during one of her answers – counter #305)
8. Writing Assessment Rubric – the rubric that she uses to assess the children's writing. It's a combination of the 6 + 1 and the MEAP rubric.

9. Writing Template 1 – the four box template that they used at the beginning of the year. She asks if I need the second one – from last week, but she had given me a copy of it then.

APPENDIX I

Bethany: Materials Discussion Transcript 3-16-04

Counter	Question	Response
000	<p>This is March 16. We're talking about materials you use to help you think about planning and teaching writing. You can start anywhere with one of the pieces and tell me what, how it's helpful to you, and how you've used it.</p>	<p>Okay. I'll do these two (she points to #1 and 2). The six traits of writing book is what we use. We started by teaching them, with the MEAP, the four squares and personal experiences. Write about personal experiences. From there once we got them writing, we would start to analyze them, based on just one of the traits, using the rubric. I remember at the beginning of the year I didn't give them a rubric and then after I graded the rubric, graded them using the rubric, they were able to see what a 6 was, and then their writing improved because they knew exactly what it meant.</p>
009	<p>Did you grade each of their papers according to one of the traits? And then they started to see it?</p> <p>So right now, this rubric (#8) you're still using the four traits?</p> <p>Oh I see,</p>	<p>Yup. Now I grade them using all of the traits.</p> <p>It's still 6, but they put two of them together.</p> <p>Content and ideas, then we, we don't use these, we don't use, word choice is in style and voice.</p>

	Oh, I see	<p>Word choice and voice we put together.</p> <p>and conventions is separate, and ideas. We didn't do sentence fluency.</p>
015	<p>How did you make those decisions?</p> <p>I've seen that, the four point, I mean they have four criteria, and then they have six (I'm referring to the MEAP rubric that I have seen). I have seen that.</p>	<p>And we don't do presentation. That's what they grade on the MEAP. Sentence fluency and word choice are underneath style of writing.</p> <p>That's what we've done. So from there I give them like the average of what they had, and then they get a grade based on their average.</p>
019	Oh this is neat – activities to encourage writing at home	<p>And this one, that I got from Scholastic (#1) had a letter to the parents, explaining the rubric, so I sent that home at the beginning, especially for the parents who didn't understand why their kids weren't scoring well with their writing pieces. This I also sent home –</p> <p>Yep. This is ideas to work on writing. And then the last piece I gave them was... I send it home initially (she's flipping through the book)</p>
024	<p>Now, is this something you decided together with the other teacher?</p> <p>About the writing?</p>	<p>No, this was a book I got. And I sent it home because I had parents complaining.</p>

		About their child's writing scores.
027	<p>So at what point did you send this stuff home?</p> <p>So the parents could see exactly what the writing needs to be in order to get a 6?</p>	<p>So this I thought, made it understandable and there's a whole bunch of checklists in here</p> <p>After the first marking period was over and they saw their child's writing grade.</p> <p>This has a breakdown of all the parts, and I sent this one home, and then there's a student one (it's a checklist, organized by the 6 traits, that give the criteria for a good paper) I think, right here, student publishing checklist, that I also sent home.</p> <p>Yup.</p>

APPENDIX J

Spring Interview Questions

Aileen 6-5-04

What have you heard about your position for next year? Have you kept any of your students (if she has a 1-2 split).

Working on Writing Curriculum

1. At the beginning of the year, you told me your goal for this year was to get children writing a paragraph by the end of the year. Have you accomplished this goal?
2. You also identified several skills that you wanted to focus on to support this goal – letter and word formation, sentence structure, and phonemic awareness. How did you do at teaching those skills as they relate to writing? (probe phonemic awareness vs. phonics)
3. A third goal had to do with being more organized and not enduring chaos at the beginning of the year. Were you able to stay more organized? What supported this?
4. What was easy about reaching your goal? Why?
5. What was difficult about this process? Why?
6. At the beginning of the year you relied on morning message. As the year went on you shifted to a journal approach. Explain your reasoning for this, and tell how successful you think it was in helping you reach your goal.
7. You also did some story writing (Thanksgiving story). How often were you able to do that this year? Were you happy with how that went? How does this kind of writing support your goal of learning to write a paragraph?
8. Did you complete all 26 letters of the alphabet on your computer wall? How/did the kids use these words to support writing?
9. What about other environmental print in your classroom – like the word wall and the color words. How do you think about this print? Do you use it for supporting children learning to write?
10. How often do you students write at this point in the year? In what ways?

Identifying Sources of Knowledge

1. What supported you as you taught writing this year?
2. What do you now know about teaching writing that you did not know before this process?
3. What helped you figure this out? (probe)
4. I noticed that you scaffolded your students across the year in various ways, and even individual students in various ways... how do you figure out how to support each child?

5. How do you know what your students need to know and be able to do in regards to writing?
6. What influence does your Child Development background have in how you teach writing?
7. What influence does motherhood and/or life experiences have in how you teach writing?

Urban Context

1. How do you describe the Gambell School District? (probe urban issues)
2. Do you talk to/ explain things differently because of your students race, language, "urbanness"?
3. You mentioned that lack of resources and experiences might be a reason to classify Forest Glen as "urban" (when compared to Elm Street School, for example). Do you purposefully try to give students experiences (virtually or real) to broaden their world knowledge? Give an example. Does this connect with writing? (recall the plane trip to Tennessee).

Policy Questions

1. How have the various policy mandates currently in place in your district influenced how you think about and teach writing this year? (probe NCLB, Reading First, Sequenced Instruction Manuals, Nine Week Tests, Iowa, DIBLES, etc.)
2. How does being a magnet school influence how you think about and teaching writing?

Future Plans

1. What will your writing instruction look like during the remainder of the school year? (probe journaling)
2. What will you do with your writing program next year? (probe instructional model, specific strategies, this will depend on the kinds of things that emerged through the data)
3. How do you think about developing teaching practice?

Miscellaneous

1. What role does a sense of humor play in being a good teacher?
2. How/do you think my presence has influenced your students, your teaching, and your thinking this year?

Student List – go down the list and tell me ADD, ADHD, ODD, ESL, etc.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!

APPENDIX K

Aileen: Data Chart for Morning Message










Why She does it	What skills it includes	What it looks like
I can model phonics every day. 296	Phonics 296	Modeling 296, 277
I can help them learn about complete, full sentences 291	Complete sentences 291, 237	Kids asking the leader a question about a topic and then A writing that down. 291, 276
Most important early in year – some shared writing about a common experience is necessary 290	Learning the 5 w and how words 286	A repeating what a child said, kids laughing because it's not a real sentence 291 "I try to make it as absurd as possible." 260
She can prompt and coach individual students within the group 269 or the leader 242	Periods 285, 237	Person of the day 286 who tells a story as prompted by his peers and the 5 w Q and how 278
Kids mimic the responses for why they need caps and periods, but eventually they internalize it – this is normal. 261	Caps 285, 237	Interactive 278
It covers a lot of benchmark. 252 (but combining sentences is too hard – confusing with full sentence) 222	High frequency words 285, 238	Teacher guided 286
Kids cannot independently do this at the beginning of the year. they need modeling and scaffolding. 241	One-to-one correspondence 275	A says each word as she writes it and rereads as she goes 285
I want them to think in complete sentences, to	Fluency 275, 238	Purposefully missed caps and periods 285, 283
	Decoding 275	Asks class to spell common words with her 285
	Revision and editing 274 (editing consists of caps and periods. Revision of making complete sentences 271)	Kids read entire text with A when it's done. 281, 238 Then class corrects it together 284
	Editing marks – caret and cross out 273	
	Rough draft 272	
	Rules of language 270, 269 (why need a cap or period)	
	Vocabulary (eagle eye) 266, wind up sentence	

<p>capitalize and punctuate correctly and be able to justify why it's correct. 226</p> <p>I didn't start MM right away in Sept. they weren't ready. 225 she told a K colleague, I don't think I'd do this in K – K writing is drawing 224 (she had a K-1 split the year before)</p> <p>She can model and introduce skills before she taught it. ex. Spelling game – “I haven't taught any long vowels yet, or the rule about the magic e, they are just kind of picking it up.” 221</p> <p>When I stopped doing it every day in Jan., some kids forgot the W words – not the high kids, but they just need repeated practice. 118</p>	<p>264, 238</p> <p>Penmanship – when the kids copy it – 263</p> <p>Informal assessment of 5 w Q and how – the leader crosses them off 257</p> <p>Spelling, 218</p> <p>Language 218</p>	<p>A pushes them to explain their changes. 284, 270 working on metacognition 220 “I really try to get them to think about what they are saying, and be correct.”</p> <p>Kids coming up to point out things while the changes happen 282, especially the low kids 221</p> <p>Some revision as incomplete sentences are made complete 282</p> <p>Eagle eye – something wrong 266</p> <p>Whole class comes up and votes on a wind up sentence 264, 239 class votes, if a tie, the leader selects</p> <p>Children copy the mm after it's done 263 it helps them get used to writing longer things 256 works on handwriting, fluency, spelling and language 218</p> <p>A month of caps and periods –then complete sentences – this keeps me moving towards my goal 255, 237</p> <p>Goal is to get the person being questioned to answer in full sentences. They're not there yet.</p>
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		<p>November. 253</p> <p>Still using the W Qs in January 243</p> <p>A beginning sentence that is simple and big idea. The 5 W Qs and how get at the details. 242</p> <p>Kids chime in with spelling of common words in Jan. 240, 227</p> <p>When she asks why, she prompts different kids indifferent ways – scaffolding 237</p> <p>By Jan., pace of MM is much quicker, person responds faster, more full sentences, more kids can help with fixes. 233</p> <p>She's thoughtful about how she writes what the kids say. She wants to be able to model the cap and punctuation fixes 223</p>
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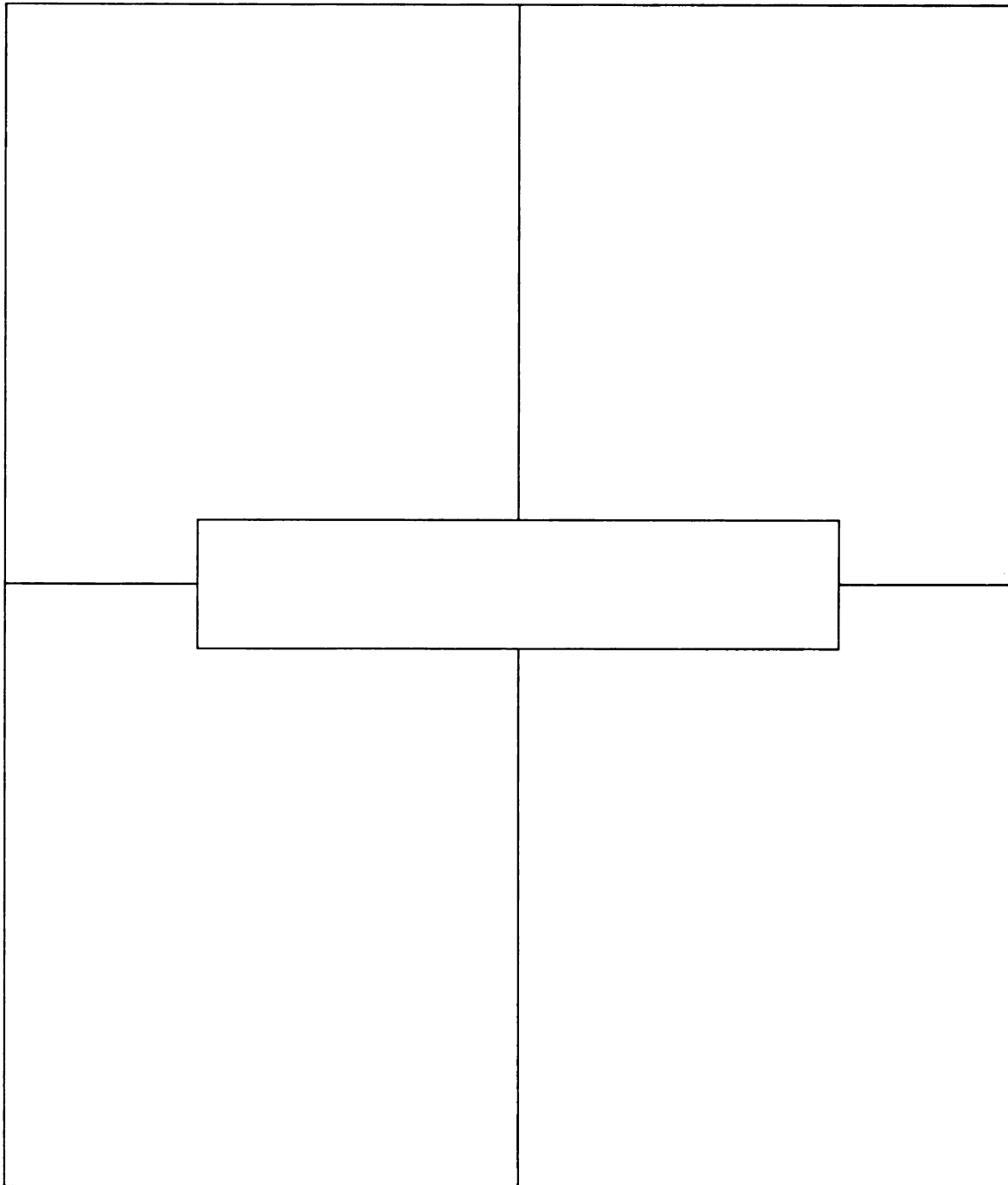
APPENDIX L

Bethany's Five Senses Template

 Who?	Did What? Wanted What? 	 Where?	When? 	Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? 
				
Event 1	Event 2	Event 3		
 How did it look, sound, taste, feel, smell?				
				

APPENDIX M

Bethany's Four Boxes Template



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