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NEGOTIATING THE TRANSITION:

HOW SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS INTERNS

TRANSFER THEORY TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

A DISSERTATION

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NEGOTIATING THE TRANSITION:
HOW SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS INTERNS
TRANSFER THEORY TO CLASSROOM PRACTICE

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND
ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

BY

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful and exasperating husband, Drew. You have been my head cheerleader and chief critic. Both roles have been vital factors in the completion of this degree. Now that this process has come to an end, I look forward to spending another 35 years traveling life's highways and byways with you.

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First is my family. My husband Drew and my three sons, Nathan, Jonathan, and Micah have been my staunch supporters from the beginning. They continued to believe in me during my greatest moments of self doubt. Any task I asked of them along the way was undertaken without murmur or hesitation.   I will never forget the sacrifices they have made so that I could pursue my dream.

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Abstract

This qualitative research examined and described the process of transitioning from theory to practice as experienced by 7 English Language Arts (ELA) teacher candidates during their student teaching internship semesters. The conceptual framework employed in this study was phenomenology. Two sub-questions were also considered: (1) What is the perception of these interns at a major university in the southwestern United States regarding their preparation for teaching, particularly in the area of writing instruction?, and (2) How do these intern expectations compare to their actual classroom teaching experiences? Over a three semester period the researcher gathered data from the student teacher interns in the form of 14 interviews and reflective journals.

Transcriptions of the interviews and the reflective writings were analyzed and coded into themes. Six major themes related to the internship experience in general emerged: importance of the task, writing instruction expectations, preparation, teaching styles, influence of cooperating teachers, and actual practice. Under the theme of actual practice, six sub-themes related to writing instruction strategies and activities also emerged: focused free writing, grammar instruction, providing model pieces of literature for emulation, in-class writing communities, teacher-invented models, and assessment. These themes and sub-themes were utilized as the structure for description of the experience of the participants and analysis of the data.

The interns in this study described, as they recalled it, several gaps in their program of study at the university regarding writing instruction, which became evident during the course of the semester. Further research is needed to determine whether these perceptions are unique to this group of participants, or if this is an area that may require adjustments in curriculum. This research may also be drawn upon by other English Education programs to guide curriculum development and as a catalyst for their own distinctive courses of inquiry.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

> *Student-Teacher*
> *A Metamorphosis*
>
> *It is a too-abrupt transition,*
> *yesterday, a student,*
> *today, in structured blocs of time,*
> *I am a teacher,*
> *   adult,*
> *   other-worldly,*
> *   omniscient—*
> *   with butterflies.*
>
> *No doubt*
> *my master teacher sees me as*
> *   inept,*
> *   incapable,*
> *   immature,*
> *   all things lowly—*
> *how can I hold up my head!*
> *How to be two-in-one?*
> *(A lesson on the Trinity?)*
> *I am not*
> *   even*
> *   one-in-one—*
> *   neuter.*
> *   (Bradley, 1973).*

Introduction

A few semesters ago I found myself at lunch with one of my new English language arts (ELA) interns. I had never met Lisa before, so I was simply asking general questions about her education, experience, and goals as an English teacher. When I asked what she thought her strength as an English teacher was at this early point, she quickly stated that she felt confident about teaching

writing. Since this was one of my pet areas of interest, I probed for a bit more information.

"What genres of writing do you feel most confident about teaching?"

"Literary analysis," was her reply.

At my prompting, she described how she had taken Advanced Placement English classes while in high school, and had experienced success with her written literary analyses there. As she moved to college, that type of writing continued to be her strength. When I asked her if she ever engaged in other genres of writing, she replied in the negative. Although she'd taken one creative writing class while working on her degree, she hadn't enjoyed it, and particularly had disliked the writing workshop method of instruction the professor had utilized. Lisa's opinion was clear: creative writing finished a distant second in importance to those pieces that she categorized as "serious" compositions.

As a result of that conversation I began some informal investigations into teacher preparation for teaching writing. The Writing Study Group of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Executive Committee (2004) issued a statement which contains the main principles they propose to serve as guidelines for the teaching of writing. The first principle is listed as: "Everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught, and teachers can help students become better writers" (p. 1).   The authors emphasize that what teachers do has a major impact on student writing. The section is wrapped up with a fairly bold statement: "When writing teachers first walk into classrooms, they should already know and practice good composition" (p. 1). Where do interns fit into that picture?

Statement of Problem

At the major university in the southwestern United States where this research was conducted, interns have already graduated with their Bachelor's degrees. They have finished all of the class work that has been deemed necessary to prepare them for teaching. As graduate students they are sent forth as "professionals" into their placements with cooperating teachers, armed and ready to fire. They have taken and passed the required courses in the English and the Education departments, and have fulfilled the required clinical hours in various classroom settings, but do they know how to transfer all of their hard-earned knowledge into successful classroom practice?

I was appalled to hear this declaration from cooperating teacher to intern as we sat together in a mid-term evaluation meeting: "Those professors at the university actually have no clue what goes on in the classroom. I didn't really learn anything about how to teach until I got into a classroom. They spout the theories, but we are the ones who have to figure out what works." My shock at hearing these words come from a recent (within the last six years) graduate of said university was almost palpable. This alignment of "Us" versus "Them" was one I have always been cautious to avoid. As I said what I could to try and diffuse this statement in the mind of my intern without alienating the cooperating teacher, I felt troubled that this voice was the one my intern would hear the most during that semester. The amount of time encompassed in the five or six visits from me and the weekly class with the university professor paled in comparison

with the hours of daily dialogue taking place between this intern and her

cooperating teacher.   How does the harmony between university and classroom

practice take place when attitudes such as this exist?

I was almost startled to see myself as a university supervisor so vividly

described in the NCTE *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English*

Language Arts (2006) as one of the

cadre of graduate students [utilized] almost exclusively to follow the

teacher candidate into the field . . . [who] have had little or no contact with

these student teachers and may or may not be in sync with the ideas and

pedagogy of the English methods classes or other critical experiences that

form candidates' teaching philosophy. (p. 56, 57)

My knowledge has come from my own education, teaching experiences, and

readings. I am essentially an outsider looking in with virtually no reference point

for the interns' perspectives. On the other hand those composition, literature,

and methods teachers will most likely never observe the interns during the

internship. Who will know if these interns actually implement the ideas they have

garnered throughout their college educations, or who will determine if those ideas

can be successfully transitioned from theory into practice? Also, and perhaps

most importantly, do these interns actually exhibit a working knowledge of the

prevailing theories about writing instruction as they create and implement lesson

plans?

McIntyre (2003) indicates that possession of the necessary knowledge of

effective pedagogies in and of itself may not be enough.   She states:

Although students appear eager and willing to implement the . . . teaching practices I introduce them to in class, it has been my experience that once preservice teachers leave the university and enter a public school classroom they become anxious, less willing to take risks, and more likely to conform to the existing classroom structure—even if it differs dramatically from what they were urged to consider in their courses. (p. 35)

McIntyre attributes this anxiety to a variety of factors including insecurity in their roles and institutional demands.

Other aspects that often complicate this problem are the high stakes End of Instruction (EOI) writing tests in place at the 8th and 10th grade levels. Many interns are placed into classrooms where this testing is the shadow that covers the entire English curriculum. They may be asked to stand on the sidelines while the experienced teacher handles EOI test preparation; or conversely, they may be sucked in to the general feelings of angst and attitudes of drudgery that often accompany this type of activity. Interns may also be placed in Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature or Language classes. A major portion of the instruction in these classrooms also centers on writing practice for the AP exams. These high stakes situations surely have some bearing on how the interns are able to implement their ideas into classroom practice.

Research Question

My main research question is: How do selected English Education interns at a major university in the southwestern United States negotiate the transition from theory into practice? I also will consider two sub-questions: (1) What is the perception of these interns regarding their preparation for teaching, particularly in the area of writing instruction?, and (2) How do these intern expectations line up with actual classroom teaching experiences?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study will be the description of how interns take the knowledge they have amassed during their undergraduate experience for writing instruction and transfer it to actual classroom practice during their internships. This study potentially will provide a greater understanding of the opportunities interns have to implement the strategies they have been studying. This can assist in the development of ELA methods courses and the creation of internship experiences.

CHAPTER 2

Examination of Literature

Introduction

This study examines some of the general circumstances that arise during the student teaching semester for ELA interns as well as aspects of the more specific task of writing instruction. In order to accommodate an examination of literature as it pertains to both, this chapter will focus on texts which address the general tensions of the student teaching experience. During the data analysis and conclusions in chapters 4 and 5, I will integrate a summary of literature discussing a number of the methods, strategies and activities which may be involved in the undertaking of writing instruction.

Literature Regarding Student Teaching

Key (1998) states: "the teaching internship often brings a clearer picture of what teaching is about for teacher interns" (p. 2). She asserts that interns often hold exaggerated opinions of their abilities and knowledge which change as their internship experience progresses. Key's research focused on four questions regarding the experiences of two ELA interns:

(1)　What impact do the school climate and classroom atmosphere have on teacher interns' perceptions of teaching and effective practice?

(2)　How do interns' preconceived beliefs concerning the internship experience compare and or contrast to the experience of the internship and the teaching profession?

(3)   How do the interaction and influence of the cooperating teacher affect the internship experience and the interns' perceptions of the best practice in teaching?

(4)   What are the opportunities to practice effective strategies and to learn pedagogical skills? (p. 11-15)

Among the numerous problematic findings she describes is a noteworthy disjuncture in the relationship between the interns and their cooperating teachers.

In examining the secondary ELA teacher program at Michigan State University, Anagnostopoulos, Smith and Basmadjian (2007) found that cooperating teachers often felt that practicum requirements for interns "disrupted their own curricula and endorsed practices counter to their own" (p. 140). On the other hand, professors in the English Education department felt that cooperating teachers limited valuable genuine learning opportunities for interns and modeled less than effective instructional methods.

Many researchers (Anagnostopoulos, et al., 2007;   Grossman, Smagorinsky & Valencia, 1999; Smagorinsky, 1999; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson, 2002) describe a schism between the university and the classroom. They attribute this phenomenon to differences in values and practices. Overall, the majority of English education students in the United States are taught constructivist methods of teaching; while on the other hand, most of the schools where they are being trained to teach adhere to more traditional instructional methods (Smagorinsky, 1999).

Definitions of constructivist and traditional teaching methods are delineated by Smagorinsky et al., (2000) as:

Constructivist:

(1)   Learning and learners are the focus.

(2)   Students' activity is stressed.

(3)   The emphasis on learners suggests attention to diversity.

(4)   Appropriate materials include literature and writing, with meaning constructed by the learner.

(5)   Knowledge is connected.

Traditional:

(1)   Teachers and texts are authoritative.

(2)   Knowledge is fixed and transmitted.

(3)   Teachers rely on textbooks for curriculum and materials. (p. 3-5)

In writing instruction, traditional methods would rely heavily on the text, utilizing workbooks and learning a set of prescribed writing constructs. The constructivist teacher may choose to implement strategies such as writing workshops which allow students to take ownership and control of their own writing. Smagorinsky (1999) explains that many people who choose to enter the teaching profession do so because they experienced success in a traditional school setting and envision themselves teaching in similar environments. A large percentage of these students struggle when confronted with the more progressive pedagogical theories they discover in their university training.

Conderman and Pedersen (2006) assert that "student teachers attribute most of their dispositions and instructional practices to their cooperating teacher rather than their university preparation" (p. 335). Grossman et al., (1999) find

that teachers often tend to conform to the expectations and practices of the institutions at which they are employed, even when those practices disagree with their educational backgrounds. This tension is illustrated in findings by Smagorinsky, et al, (2000). They interview a cooperating teacher who expects her intern to learn to teach by emulating her. She says, "A teacher learns to teach by first, observation . . . Then I'd say the modeling by the teacher consultant" (p. 10). The theoretical knowledge her intern brings to the experience means very little to this cooperating teacher. The intern's response to the situation is one of dissatisfaction:

> At one point she said in frustration, "Sometimes I'm afraid I'm going over to her side." When asked to elaborate she said that because she had been provided so little opportunity to practice the methods learned in her university program, she would lose that knowledge altogether. (p. 10, 11)

There are, however, many more players involved in the internship process than just the cooperating teacher and the intern, and all of these members bring their own beliefs about teaching to the table:

> These varying and often conflicting belief systems and their relative authority and influence over preservice teachers often result in both multiple conceptions of the ideal teacher and multiple environmental structures to guide career development toward those ideals. In short, student teachers often find themselves tugged in different directions, with university faculty, supervisors, mentor teachers, and school systems

encouraging different approaches to teaching. (Grossman et al., 1999, p.

5)

At the university, preservice teachers strive for success in their roles as students, but as interns, they have the often conflicting need to succeed as teachers. Since the ultimate goal of these individuals is to secure positions as teachers, more often than not the expectations of the potential employer—the school system--become more important than the concepts and philosophies of the university (Grossman et al., 1999).

Summary

This portion of the literature survey reveals a tension between the intern, the university, the cooperating teacher, and the school system that must be addressed during the internship semester. The stressful situations an intern may experience during this time have been shown to cause them to make choices for teaching practices based on factors other than the understanding of the theories or the pedagogical and content knowledge they have amassed during their university studies. It suggests that the less confident an intern is in his or her own preparation, the more susceptible he or she is to adopting what ultimately may be less desirable and effective instructional practices.

CHAPTER 3
Methodology

Research Methodology

Realistically, the only ones who can answer my research questions are the interns themselves; therefore, I have determined that a phenomenological approach primarily based on the premise described by Moustakas (1994) will be the most appropriate of the qualitative methods for investigating how student interns convert theory regarding the teaching of writing into classroom practice. The phenomenological method is utilized when a researcher desires to examine the lived experience of the participants (Cresswell, et al, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas explains, "The aim [of phenomenological research] is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (p. 13).

This research design also works well with my own interests in the phenomenon of writing instruction. As a former secondary ELA teacher, an English Education graduate student, and a future teacher of ELA teachers, I have more than a passing interest in the subject. Moustakas states:

> Phenomenology is rooted in questions that give a direction and focus to meaning, and in themes that sustain an inquiry, awaken further interest and concern, and account for our passionate involvement with whatever is being experienced. In a phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever she or he seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon. The puzzlement

is autobiographical, making memory and history essential dimensions of

discovery, in the present and extensions into the future. (p. 59)

My concern for what appeared to be a narrow view of writing instruction as

illuminated by my conversation with Lisa, has grown into this course of inquiry. I

believe it will be a pursuit which is continued in some form or other throughout

the remainder of my career.

Participant Selection

Participant selection for phenomenological research may be classified

as purposive or purposive criterion selection (Patten, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005).

As opposed to random sampling, purposive selection is used when researchers

want participants who fall into a broad category and/or share an experience.

Moustakas describes the "essential criteria" (1994, p. 107) for potential

participants quite simply: they all need to have experienced the phenomenon,

and they need to be willing to share their experience with the researcher for

potential publication purposes. I narrowed my pool of potential participants quite

specifically to secondary English language arts interns who did their

undergraduate work at the university where the research was conducted. This

assignment of additional qualifying criteria is purposive criterion sampling

(Patten, 2005). I solicited volunteers from the secondary ELA interns at the

university during the Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008 semesters. Out of a

pool of 21 potential participants, 7 volunteered: 2 males and 5 females.

Demographic Information

Mitch (all participants have been assigned pseudonyms) was 23 years old at the time of his internship in a 9th grade classroom. His cooperating teacher was in her 11th year of teaching. Emily was also 23, and interned in a 12th grade classroom with a cooperating teacher who had 28 years of experience under her belt. Mitch's teacher was responsible for teaching a regular English I curriculum. Emily's, on the other hand, had Advanced Placement (AP) English classes with only 1 regular English IV class. They interned in the same suburban high school, but during different semesters: Mitch in the fall of 2007, and Emily in the fall of 2008. According to the most recent data available on the 2007 School Report Card, this high school with an enrollment of 1763 is located in a district with a population of 92,730 and an average household income of $50,021.

A middle school in the same district was the setting in which Christine and Hannah, both 23 years old, did their internships. They interned in a 6th grade language arts classroom with the same cooperating teacher; Hannah was there in the fall of 2007, and Christine in the fall of 2008. According to the 2007 School Report Card, the school's enrollment was 919, although the school's web site boasts a current enrollment of 1002.

Cheryl and Ginger, also 23 years old, both interned in the same high school during the same semester. Cheryl's cooperating teacher had 10 years of experience and was assigned to teach 9th grade AP English; Ginger was assigned to a 12-year veteran with 11th grade AP English responsibilities. According to the 2007 School Report card, this suburban high school has an

enrollment of 2,078 and is located in a district population of 117,700 with an average household income of $49,519.

Alan, 27 years old, was assigned to a cooperating teacher with responsibilities for teaching AP English III, who was beginning his 5th year of teaching. This suburban high school has a current enrollment of 1723, according to the web site. According to the Profiles 2007 District Report, it is located in a district with a population of 95,855 and an average household income of $54,602.

Cheryl and Ginger were in a district which operated on a bloc schedule, which means that their day was comprised of four 90 minute class periods. Their students finished an entire English unit in one semester. The rest of the interns served in districts with class periods of 45 to 55 minutes in length, which required 2 semesters for the completion of an English unit. The smallest class had 22 students, and the largest 31, with an average class size of almost 26.

Data Collection

Phenomenology, as all qualitative research, seeks to uncover and explicate the life experiences of human beings. Polkinghorne (2005) explains that the depth of human experience cannot be measured with "short-answer questionnaires with Likert scales that only gather surface information" (p.138), but must be plumbed with data gathered during "intensive exploration with a participant" (p. 138). A lengthy informal one-on-one interview utilizing an open-ended questioning technique is the data collection process most often attributed

to phenomenological research (Moustakas, 1994). Though time consuming, the best access to people's experiences is through their language.

This language data can exist in both oral and written forms.   Generally data originally collected in oral forms through the avenue of formal or informal interviews are saved in audio recordings to be later transcribed into a written format (Cresswell, et al, 2007; Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 2005). Inevitably, although the words can be accurately transcribed, some of the subtleties of meaning will be lost (Polkinghorne, 2005). Although qualitative research interviews have traditionally been taken care of with one extended session with each participant, there are those who feel the depth of information desired can only be achieved with multiple interviews of each participant. Seidman (2006) recommends a series of three interviews. He feels that the initial interview will serve as a time to get acquainted, the second will be a period for in-depth discussion, and the third will be an opportunity for any follow-up questions. After consideration of both strategies, I conducted two one-on-one interviews with each ELA intern participant. The first was at the beginning of the semester. It was semi-structured with a scripted set of questions which I asked each intern in order to ascertain expectations regarding his/her preparation to teach writing. The final interviews took place at the end of the semester. They were unstructured—essentially a debriefing for the semester as far as writing instruction experience was concerned.

Moustakas (1994) asserts that the researcher is responsible for setting the participant at ease, and recommends taking the time for a "social

conversation or a brief meditative activity aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere" (p. 114). I invited each of the participants to select the location for our interviews which for them would be most comfortable. Each chose a local café or deli as our meeting place. We began each initial interview with basic conversations during which we became acquainted and took some time to discuss some general issues surrounding their internships. The actual time spent discussing the phenomenon of writing instruction was only a portion of the first interviews, perhaps 20 minutes of an hour's total conversation. However, the majority of the conversation in the final interviews was devoted to discussion of topics germane to this research.

Written language data includes not only transcribed interviews, but also notes taken during observations and written accounts created by the participants themselves (Polkinghorne, 2005). These often include journals or diaries, letters, and various reflective writings. Polkinghorne also points out that while "self-report[ed] evidence is necessary and valuable for inquiry about human experience, it is not to be misconstrued as mirrored reflections of experience" (p. 139). Human beings possess only imperfect abilities to remember and recount their own experiences. Nevertheless, self-reporting has long been an accepted and necessary method of data collection in qualitative research.

Through intern journal entries Key (1998) ascertained that despite beginning their placements feeling well-prepared by their body of university classroom and practicum experience, in the end interns described a sizeable gap

between initial expectations and actual experiences. They felt particularly unprepared for the rigor required of a secondary classroom teacher.

Semester-long reflective writing may be a primary tool for analyzing this transition from expectations to reality. Stockinger (2007) effectively involved students in keeping a writer's notebook in which they recorded the changes in beliefs about themselves as both writers and writing instructors. Stockinger reported that this arrangement provided an opportunity for students to examine prior epistemological viewpoints as they went through the processes of refinement and adjustment. Evans (2006), who spent a semester implementing new curriculum and writing reflections after each class, also concluded that frequent reflection aids in the improvement of teaching practices.

I asked my participants for copies of the reflective journals they kept as one of the requirements for the Action Research in English Education course in which they participated during their internship semester. These journals included observations about their cooperating teachers, reflections about their own teaching experiences, descriptions of student response and achievement, samples of student work, and even some outlining of their own lesson and activity plans.

I also drew from the field notes of my own observations of the interns in action, which were conducted as a regular part of my supervisory duties. Another source of information was discovered in the syllabus from Teaching Grammar and Composition in Middle and Secondary Schools.

Data Analysis

According to Moustakas (1994) "Every method in human science research is open ended. There are no definitive or exclusive requirements. Each research project holds its own integrity and establishes its own methods and procedures to facilitate the flow of the investigation and the collection of data" (p. 104). When approaching the analysis of data for this project, I personalized several of Moustakas's (1994) methods of analysis--embracing the epoch, horizontalizing the data into units of meaning, clustering the units of meaning into themes, and utilizing the themes to describe and analyze the experience of the interns--to fit the needs of my particular undertaking. Following is a description of how I implemented each of these strategies in the analysis of my data.

As a phenomenological researcher I was the major instrument of research. I conducted the interviews and read the journals. As part of my duties as a university supervisor I observed these interns in action on four separate occasions. I am also the interpreter of what I discovered. "Phenomenology is not only a description but also an interpretive process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of the lived experiences" (p. 253, Cresswell et al, 2007). Much discussion exists regarding the objectivity of the researcher. Moustakas (1994) uses the term transcendental phenomenology to describe the process of the researcher coming to a place of fresh perspective on the phenomenon under inspection. This takes place as the researcher deliberately sets aside her own beliefs and experiences as much as possible.

Implementing this method of data analysis prescribed by Moustakas involved embracing the Epoche:

> . . . a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgment, to abstain from or stay away from the everyday, ordinary way of perceiving things. . . . In the Epoche, the everyday understandings, judgments, and knowings are set aside, and phenomena are revisited, freshly, naively, in a wide open sense. (p. 33)

This is often accompanied by the use of bracketing whereby the researcher begins with a description of her own experiences with the phenomenon (Cresswell et al 2007). I spent 8 years teaching writing in secondary schools. I taught both 8th and 10th grades, during which students in my state are required to take writing CRTs. Over the years, my students did well on these tests, and I always felt that their success was a direct reflection of my instruction.

After beginning work on my graduate degree, I was able to spend 3 semesters teaching Freshman Composition courses. This experience paired with my studies about the theories regarding writing instruction helped to gave me a broader viewpoint of the subject than I'd held as a secondary classroom teacher. When I began supervising ELA interns, I realized that I now possessed fewer notions of what was right and wrong with certain methods of writing instruction, and instead became curious as to how many strategies there were for accomplishing this all important task.

As a university supervisor of ELA secondary interns, the participants were my interns. I made observations as they taught, and wrote evaluations of

their practice as part of the fulfillment of my job requirements. Of course, all participants were volunteers, and I made it clear that the study would have no effect on their successful completion of the intern semester. I sent one email which briefly described my research, asking for any who were interested to get in touch with me. Only those who indicated an interest received any type of follow-up contact. All of the students who indicated an initial interest chose to participate. I believe that the fact that only 7 volunteered to take part in this study of the 21 that I approached, attests to the fact that these interns understood that my research would not affect their internships. However, it is possible that they censored their responses based on their perceptions of my expectations as one of the authority figures involved in their experience.

As I endeavored to "embrace the epoch" I attempted to consciously set aside any of the preconceived notions of right and wrong I have accumulated along the way. I continually reminded myself that I was by no means an expert in the field, but merely an inquirer in search of enlightenment.

Nevertheless, complete researcher objectivity is rarely reached (Cresswell et al, 2007; Levering, 2006; Moustakas, 1994). Carpenter (1999) states: ". . . my voice tells the story. My partiality and positioning are evident throughout the theses in the theory and research I refer to, and in the standpoints I take. I am in the text" (p. 3). As a former secondary ELA teacher, I know my own experience and beliefs have colored my interpretations.

After dealing with the issue of objectivity, I analyzed the data, considering each statement regarding the phenomenon as being of equal

importance. This is the procedure which Moustakas (1994) calls horizonalizing the data, the process of "regarding every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and question as having equal value" (p. 118). This was a time-consuming process which involved a close reading of the transcribed interviews and reflective journals. I marked each statement that had relevance to the research question.

After marking all of the relevant statements, I moved on to the next step where the horizontalized statements were "clustered into common categories or *themes*" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118). I used colored high-lighters and ink pens to begin the process of grouping the individual statements into common categories. From the interviews and reflective journals I was able to identify 6 major themes: importance of the task, writing instruction expectations, preparation, teaching styles, influence of cooperating teachers, and actual practice. Under the theme of actual practice, 6 sub-themes also emerged: focused free writing, grammar instruction, providing model pieces of literature for emulation, in-class writing communities, teacher-invented models, and assessment.

These themes and sub-themes then were employed as the structure that was "used to develop the textural description of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 118) of the participants. The themes of importance of the task and writing instruction preparation emerged predominately from the initial interviews; preparation, teaching styles, and influence of cooperating teachers, were the dominate themes of the final interviews, and the actual practice sub-themes were almost completely contained within the reflective journals. This is the

organizational structure I implemented in the descriptions and conclusions which comprise the final two chapters of this text.

Significance of the Study

This study can be utilized as pattern for similar research to be conducted by other university departments of English education. While the results will differ among institutions, the findings of all will add to the body of research on how interns navigate what has been characterized in the literature as the divide between the university and the classroom. This project specifically focuses on an important aspect of ELA instruction, writing. It should offer helpful insight to all of those involved in the teacher preparation process: university instructors, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and interns, and the hope is, that these insights will lead to an ever more valuable internship experience.

Summary

Because this study endeavored to uncover the actual lived experiences of its participants, a conceptual framework of phenomenology as described by Moustakas (1994) has been adapted for this qualitative research project. Data came from personal interviews and reflective journals collected over the course of 3 semesters from 7 participants, which were analyzed and coded into themes. The 6 major themes and 6 sub-themes which emerged from this data were utilized as the structure upon which the description and analysis was constructed.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

Introduction

As I analyzed the three main data sets—initial interviews, final interviews, and reflective journals—themes specific to each set began to emerge. Although strategies of data analysis as described by Moustakas (1994) were adapted to serve as the boundaries which frame this study, I chose to structure this discussion according to those themes and group them according to the particular data set from which they emerged. While the general term of actual practice was given to the overall theme which emerged from the reflective journals, the discussion focuses on the sub-themes which describe actual activities which the interns implemented in their various classrooms.

Initial Interviews: Themes

The Importance of the Task

Each of the interns felt that the fluent ability to articulate in writing was a vital skill. Christine and Alan spoke in general terms about how writing gives students a "voice" and enables them to have a venue in which to express their opinions and feelings. Mitch emphasized this aspect of writing as well:

> If a kid doesn't understand himself, then he can't position himself in the
> world. So, then if he's frustrated about something, but he can't articulate
> it, then he's just going to lash out and find other ways of venting it. My
> hope is that by teaching [writing to] kids who struggle with articulation, who

have issues that need to be articulated, that it will allow them to get past

the language difficulties and they can concentrate more on fixing things

that may have gone wrong in their home life or whatever.

Mitch also shared from a personal perspective that becoming able to articulate

his message in writing as a high school student was one of the keys to his ability

at establishing and achieving many life-goals.

Cheryl, Emily, Ginger, and Hannah all viewed the importance of writing

instruction through the lens of what students would need to thrive in college.

Emily felt that writing was "the most important thing" students took from high

school, and Ginger agreed, "it's the foundation, especially if they're going to be

going to college," and she further added, "it's a life skill." Hannah described

writing as a vehicle through which students demonstrated their knowledge.

Cheryl summed up her thoughts by asserting, "If you don't know how to create a

sentence—you know, noun, verb—then you're not going to get very far in life."

Overall, these interns saw the ability to write a vital part of their students'

potential to function appropriately in society.

Writing Instruction Expectations

When asked what types of writing they expected to be asked to teach,

all of the interns had similar responses which they described with the general

terms of creative writing, essay composition, and research papers. When

pressed for more specifics, they elaborated a bit more, but the overview still

remained fairly narrow. Creative writing was described as: poetry, short stories,

creative non-fiction, creative fiction, quick writes, and personal narratives.

Essays were given the descriptors: 5 paragraph, formula, timed writing,

persuasive, narrative, and expository. The "read-it-then-write-about-it essay,

literature response" was Alan's contribution. Two of the interns also mentioned

that at some point they would expect to teach their students how to write

resumes.

Each intern answered confidently when asked which genres he or she

felt most prepared to teach. Poetry, short stories, and personal narratives were

mentioned by 4 of the interns with the other 3 citing more formal writing,

specifically essays and research papers as their areas of strength. However,

only one reason for their expertise was mentioned by all, and can be summed up

with Ginger's explanation: "I know that I'm successful at doing these myself, so I

feel like I can teach them." Each intern felt best qualified to teach the genres of

writing at which he or she excelled.   They also shared a similar story as to the

reasons behind their proficiencies: the writing they had been required to do for

their college classes. Most mentioned specific creative writing courses as being

the catalyst for their proficiencies but Mitch, who claimed to be an expert at

essays, said that he had probably written "300 of them" throughout his college

career, which is also the general venue where Hannah and Emily refined their

research paper talents.

Except for Alan, all of the interns also mentioned the same factor as being

most helpful in refining their own writing ability: instructor and peer feedback.

Cheryl shared this example of peer reviews:

I had one class, it was the worst class I've ever been in, but I learned so

much, in that, when we had papers due we would peer edit in class. We

would have writing conferences with our peers . . . and so all of my friends

and I would sit in a group and grade each other's papers; critique each

other's papers. So that really helped me to see how my other classmates

were writing and how to help myself.

The interns spoke positively of the benefit of "feedback and written notes in the

columns and things like that" they had received on their papers from professors

in all of their undergraduate classes. Ginger reflected, "They write all over it, say

'you did a really good job here', and 'there are some things you need to work on

as well,' all that. I think that was very beneficial for me to be able to look at that."

Ginger felt prepared to offer the same service to her own students.

Although Alan considers himself to be a skilled writer now, he confessed

that he struggled in the area of "correctness" when he first entered college. He

said that, "When we'd write a paper and stuff they'd [professors] mark it up a

little, but they didn't really give any instruction about grammar." He found the

help he needed at the university Writing Center. Now he feels, "I'm not like the

master or the know-it-all, but I can make it right when I need to." When asked if

he had a plan for helping his own students improve their writing he responded: "I

feel like I can read it and I can give the feedback on how to make it better."

Final Interviews: Themes

Preparation

The first question I asked each intern at the final interview concerned the preparation they had received from their college classes for taking their places as teachers during their internships. Each of the interns mentioned their various literature classes as being especially relevant to the texts they had encountered throughout the semester. When I specifically asked about the education classes they had taken, mentioning some of their methods courses (Teaching of English, and Teaching Grammar and Composition in Middle and Secondary Schools) by name, their replies ran the gamut. An excerpt from each intern's response is included below. It is important to note that each of these 7 interns completed his or her methods class requirements at different times over the course of 5 semesters.

Alan: Nothing specific, but all the lesson plans I churned out while trying to get my degree, that came in handy so that I could just write up a lesson plan pretty easily. I basically had that template in my head that I could just go through and figure out objectives, procedures, activities, and so on, so it really helped me with organization and being able to just get those things done.

Cheryl: My undergrad experience really didn't help prepare me at all for this. My cooperating teacher had the same experience with her undergrad education as well. We were taught the types of writing, but were not taught how to properly instruct our

students. I look at my notebooks now and it's just like little anecdotes about what to do. It was more classroom management than it was writing instruction.

Hannah: [I learned] strategies on how to teach literature and writing in combination with one another—writing responses to literature, journaling activities, writing letters, writing articles from different character perspectives, and so on. Methods definitely helped with writing lesson plans. I also think that the psychology we learned really helped knowing what to write on a student's paper to help motivate and not discourage them [sic] and things like that.

Mitch: I think that Dr. (X) shaped my perspective on the writing process. And I don't think that I would have had that without my education classes. I think the teaching grammar class is one that we talked about some of the, what I call progressive, strategies for instructing writing [like] free writes, and having students consistently write down their thoughts. The how-to's, as in what works and what doesn't may not be what I learned, but it shaped a very strong theory about teaching writing. I think it was supposed to be really like the bridging of the content of our English degree, the bridging of it to the education part. How to take the literature that we know, and the things we know about producing writing and combine it with the teaching principles we learned; how to take the developmental ideas that we learned in our child development courses and apply those to teaching. There were things that you could infer, but it was never paired extra effectively.

Emily: I used some ideas, [this semester] but not really any of the lesson plans I had created for my classes. But I did have concepts of how to teach certain things. I really can't remember specifically receiving instructions about "how-to" but I had a lot of ideas in mind when creating units. When I did the *Beowulf* unit—a lot of those ideas when creating that unit—I used a lot of anticipation guides and stuff like that. A lot of those exercises in [that] book, a lot of those exercises are really good. I actually used that book for my classes.

Christine: Great content knowledge, and the education program was wonderful, it was, you know, I absolutely loved everything we did in there, but I did not use one of my lesson plans, because they were all for, I mean, the way they were created did not really fit into this school system, the way the day was run. We used a lot of the quick writes, and all that, but it wasn't like I thought it would be. I had no idea what 6th grade material was. First of all, I didn't even know, someone asked me what a predicate was the first day. I said, "Well, let me review, and I'll get back to you." I think that we were prepared for high school; we were prepared for that literature. I could tell them anything they wanted to know about the history of English, but . . . I just keep going back and thinking, "why did we not study this, why didn't we study it for middle school?" Are we just assuming that everyone wants to do high school? Someone has to teach 6th through 8th grade.

Ginger: I think one thing that they were lacking was, we needed a grammar course ourselves to be able to teach it because I feel like when I teach grammar I'm re-teaching myself right along with, right before the lesson. I also think some of the literature

that we read in the education classes helped develop a theory about teaching writing, but it's just different now because I've actually been teaching it for the whole semester, so I really feel like that's been my main development, this semester, not my undergrad classes.

Another important aspect of their English education classes was the sense of community which was fostered therein. They appreciated the time of sharing with their peers that several of these classes offered. Hannah's reflection on this point agreed with the other interns, "It was really beneficial in that most of the things that we were required to turn in we shared with each other in the class. So I learned a lot from my other classmates." These peer-centered discussions appeared to be a significant source of information and ideas as well as a general engineer of the camaraderie which carried over into their internship semesters.

Teaching Styles

With a semester of experience to draw on, the interns were asked to describe their teaching styles. Without exception they described themselves as facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of information. This was further described rather uniquely by Emily's expressed desire not to be, "a sage on a stage." Cheryl and Christine mentioned the regular incorporation of modeling into their practice. Christine also shared her enthusiasm for student directed discussions. Her experiences with these during her internship had been, for the

most part, exceptionally productive so far as student engagement was concerned, and as a result, personally rewarding for her as the teacher.

Alan shared this insight he had gained about himself as teacher from the internship experience:

> My style kind of reflects my belief that the students should be responsible for their own learning. So while I'm there, I know I'm there to give instruction. I've found that I like to give instruction and then step back and let them go after it. I want to be approachable, where if they have a question or anything I definitely want them to come ask me, but I don't over-explain. I don't coddle them; I don't think for them.

Alan was unsure about the benefits of modeling. He confessed, "I only do that when I think they don't get it because I want to let them do their own way. If I give them an example, then what I get back is exactly what I just gave them." He admitted that this style of teaching required more time for activities to be completed than if he had resorted to more direct instruction methods, but he felt the benefit to the students was worth the extra time.

Influence of Cooperating Teachers

This group of interns had a predominately positive perspective regarding the function their cooperating teachers had served in the successful completion of their internship experiences. Cheryl described a more profound influence when she said, "She has been the main inspiration for my instruction, rather than a textbook".

Alan's cooperating teacher also proved to be a great resource throughout the semester:

> I think he was definitely a huge factor as far as, when I was getting started, by being a go-between between the kids and myself. . . And then, as far as the countless tips and advice--like after a lesson I would give, he'd say, "maybe do this," or "try this." And I could go to him and say, "do you think this would work?" or, "what do you think about that?" He was always more than happy to help me out, and if he wasn't there I would have struggled a whole lot more as far as trying to get everything under control in my lessons and stuff.

Even though their teaching styles were not completely the same, Alan felt that his cooperating teacher respected his decisions and supported his efforts.

After describing her cooperating teacher as "a master teacher", and calling her "amazing", Emily readily admitted that she aspired to emulate her. She felt that they had similar beliefs about teaching, but felt that some of the things that her cooperating teacher did, particularly in the area of classroom management, could only be the result of years of experience.

Christine had nothing but high praise for her cooperating teacher as well: "I think, first of all, that I had a perfect fit with my cooperating teacher. She met every expectation, filled every need, answered every question. Now I really do feel prepared to go into my own classroom." She also felt certain that she would emulate her cooperating teacher as she moved into her own classroom.

Actual Practice: Sub-Themes

Reflective Journals

The most revealing information regarding the practice of the student teachers was found in their journals. Christine, Cheryl, Ginger, and Emily recorded many specific reflections which exemplified the manner in which they endeavored to transfer theory about writing instruction into daily classroom practice. The remaining 3 journals were less elaborate, consisting of brief entries regarding the days' events and few details regarding their experiences as writing instructors.

Focused Free Writing

Christine's 6th graders were preparing to read a short story about dragons. As a pre-reading exercise, she found 2 paintings depicting dragons in settings with knights, fair maidens, and castles. These images were projected onto the screen at the front of the class and students were asked to write about them in their journals. Christine recorded some of the things students wrote as they viewed the images. For example:

> The background tells me that the "Land, Far, Far, Away" line would work
> here—I'm not sure if that is a castle in the background and what is with the
> rock?? Is that a cave? What is going on—is the dragon coming out of, or
> hiding in a cave? I wish I knew the background story.

After grading all of the journals, Christine described her satisfaction with the results: "Honestly, they are all great thinkers and reading showed me how far

they can go with thought, and now I see potential for future art inspirations to go along with writing." Obviously, Christine had captured her students' interest with the image. This strategy for teaching writing can be found in a discussion of the inquiry process.

Hillocks (1982, 1984, 2005) found that teaching the inquiry process method of writing was more effective than any other strategy. During the inquiry process, a student observes a phenomenon or is presented with a data set or series of questions, and investigates in order to write. Hillocks (1984) found this method to be more effective than any other method of teaching writing. Students become interested and personally involved in the discovery process, and this interest becomes translated in quality writing.

Inquiry driven writing then becomes a learning event whereby the student acquires knowledge on some other subject along with the improvement of writing skills. Haneda and Wells (2000) assert: "Because they care about the product, they engage fully in the necessary processes, and are keen to learn new ways of making their text as effective as possible" (p. 451). The students' excitement over their discoveries becomes the driving force behind their desire to communicate this newfound information successfully.

Kirby, Kirby and Liner (2004) say that the most important thing a teacher can do when encouraging students to write is persuade them to explore. The students need to explore possible subjects, looking for something that interests them, looking for something they want to inquire into further. They must work to make sense of what they find, and grapple with new ideas as they create their

texts. When students are genuinely interested in discovery, the quality of their writing will improve. Christine found this to be the case with her 6th graders.

These image responses can also be categorized as focused free writes or quick writes. Claggett et al., (2005) state that free writing was originally used as a warm-up activity, or as a way to get non-writers to write, but they feel that it has now become little more than a ritual in many classrooms. They say that teachers must have a definite instructional purpose for the free write in mind, and they must communicate that purpose to their students in order for free writes to be effective. They assert that the main purpose for free writing is to help students become fluent in their writing, and that once students achieve fluency, free writing is no longer useful.

Kirby et al., (2004) disagree. They believe free writing is a valuable process for writers at every level. They recommend that students spend time free writing every day in an effort to develop/refine personal style and voice.

The use of focused free writes—free writing about a specific subject or for a certain purpose—is a good strategy for pre-writing or for the creation of first rough drafts (Claggett et al., 2002; Kirby et al., 2004). Christine's journal contains references to a variety of focused free writes she implemented. Most often these were in the form of "bell work" questions for journal writing.

Emily also utilized focused free writes in the form of reading logs, but was less than pleased with the results. Part of an entry in mid-November reported: "Only 12 of 28 turned in their journals." She went on to wonder if the students

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had not completed the required reading, or if they were unwilling to engage in the writing. A conclusion was never recorded.

Cheryl's students were required to keep a "Writer's Notebook" to which they made weekly focused free write entries. Cheryl included several photocopied examples from these notebooks along with her reflections. Among these is a student-authored poem to which she responded: ". . . she seems to enjoy writing and it comes quiet easily to her since she only had a few minutes to complete this. I wish that all of my students had this level of ability, but alas that would have made my job as a writing teacher a bit boring". Besides just writing, Cheryl would occasionally ask students to draw an image to illustrate their point, explaining, "Tasks like this bring a sense of creativity and choice to students that might have otherwise struggled". Facilitating student creativity through focused free writing assignments was a recurrent theme throughout Cheryl's written reflections.

Grammar Instruction

Although grammar has been a subject for students for nearly 2000 years (Hillocks & Smith, 2003) the debate over the type of grammar needed is still a subject of much discussion.   Traditional school grammar (TSG) emerged as the primary method utilized in schools about 200 years ago as a result of the application of Latin grammar to the English language.

These Latinate grammars taught that nouns are the names of things, that verbs denote actions or being, that sentences are complete thoughts.

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These grammars require that students parse sentences by attending to each word in turn and naming its part of speech, its properties (for nouns these include person, gender, number , and case), and its relationships to other words in the sentence. (Hillocks & Smith, 2003, p. 723)

When questioned during the face to face interviews, the interns expressed their aversion to "old-fashioned" grammar instruction as described here.

Nevertheless, Emily, Cheryl and Ginger all recorded occasions that reflected this type of grammar instruction. Cheryl and Ginger did this in response to school district requirements as a 5 minute part of their daily routine; "Daily Grammar Practice" (DGP) was implemented as part of the preparation for standardized testing. Ginger expressed frustration over the apparent lack of influence this continuous instruction had on writing in her reflection on a personal narrative written by one of they students in her creative writing class:

This personal narrative frustrated me a lot. Mainly, I don't understand how little writing skill this 10th grader has. Have her teachers not tried to improve her skill over the years? How do I grade this? I suppose I'll give her credit, but I am still confused about how to go about correcting the grammar/usage. Maybe I could work with her individually during class?

Even though she specifically refers to grammar problems, neither Ginger nor Cheryl made an explicit reference to the possibility of a disconnect between this district requirement and the actual writing abilities of their students.

Emily, Hannah, and Christine implemented a daily vocabulary word as part of their students' bell work each day. Part of the conversation time in this

activity was devoted to a discussion of the part of speech each word represented. Emily also implemented occasional direct instruction grammar lessons. One example is seen in her journal entry dated October, 23rd:

> Dangling Modifiers/Participle Worksheet. By the end of the hour, I think they got it. As we were going over some, I didn't think to tell them to mark up the page and correct them. I figured they would do that on their own. Sometimes I make assumptions about common sense that don't always pan out. Overall, I think they got it.

Emily provided no indication that she had in fact assessed student learning outside of her impression that "they got it." She also did not report connecting this lesson to any writing assignment.

Schleppengrell (1998) advocates the use of "functional grammars [which] analyze language in terms of what it enables people to do and to mean" (p. 183). The grammar to be taught is dependent upon the genre and context required for the particular assignment. Eighth grade students were observed as they effectively manipulated noun phrases, clauses, and verb tenses in order to write the descriptive paragraphs assigned. This method ties grammar instruction to a specific writing task, giving it an authentic purpose. One of the interns reported the utilization of this type of grammar instruction.

This method of grammar instruction was demonstrated in Hannah's description of a poetry writing assignment into which she incorporated practice with adjectives, nouns and verbs. Her students were writing "I am" poems, and as part of their prewriting activities, they were asked to list at least 5 nouns,

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adjectives and verbs that described things about themselves. These lists were then utilized as the source from which they drew to create their poems. An example of the formula Hannah gave them to follow was: "I am a/an *adjective noun* who *verb* . . .". Although she included this description of the assignment in her journal, Hannah did not include any student examples, nor did she give any indication of the success or failure of the activity.

Providing Model Pieces of Literature for Emulation

Studying published literary model pieces of writing in order to imitate their style is one of the oldest methods of teaching writing, dating back to the ancient Greeks, who made their students memorize orations in order to adopt the stylistic methods for their own (Hillocks, 1984). In his 1984 meta-analysis, Hillocks found that using model pieces of literature for students to emulate was much more successful in improving student writing that the teaching of grammar. Claggett, Brown, Patterson and Reid (2005) specifically recommend the use of models as an effective method for teaching students to write poetry. For example, they suggest that students be given a sonnet with the instructions to replace nearly every word in the poem with one of their own. Beyond that use, they claim that through the use of models, students will begin to imitate the stylistic and literary elements of the pieces they study.

Cheryl and Hannah expressly reported the use of models in this manner when asking their students to write poetry. Cheryl asked her students to follow the format of certain Shakespearean sonnets, and included an example of one of

the best student efforts. Hannah's students were asked to join in a school tradition of writing letters to next year's 6th graders. Drawing on the letters they had received from the current 7th graders, they wrote "a letter about how to survive the 6th grade." Hannah included her opinion that the students had appeared to enjoy writing the letters.

In-Class Writing Communities

Kirby et al. (2004) assert that the creation of writing communities is the key to successful writing instruction. They believe that it is crucial to the development of voice and style. When students write for their peers, they become acutely aware of the audience for which they are writing. As they are exposed to the writing of their peers, they learn voice and stylistic elements that may not be readily learned from teacher lectures. Students are able to assist each other with initial ideas, revision, and editing. Claggett et al. (2005) also recommend the utilization of peer response as an integral part of the revision process.

Dyson and Freedman (2003) found that there can sometimes be difficulty when students begin evaluating each other's writing, but their research also found that peers can do a powerful job of teaching one another, even during informal discussion about writing. The have also discovered that students can establish and build relationships with their peers through writing communities. Classroom writing communities should also include the teacher. Atwell (1998) emphasizes the importance of regular teacher/student writing conferences and

focuses on the importance of establishing a conversational atmosphere in order to obtain optimal student participation.

Bruner (1996) believes that any learning happens best in an enabling community. He goes so far as to state that it is a serious mistake to try and contain all knowledge in a single person's mind. He says that students rise to the level of knowledge and ability within the community in which they interact.

Gee's (2004) theory of affinity spaces centers on a community of learners coming together in an almost unlimited number of ways for the purpose of sharing knowledge. People at all levels of knowledge come together in the affinity spaces to pool their knowledge and then distribute that pooled knowledge throughout the learning community. The bottom line for this type of learning is that it allows people to know far more than they could on their own.

Although all of the interns alluded to their positive opinion of "group work," only Emily, Ginger, and Cheryl discussed particular incidences of the functioning of writing communities within their classrooms. Emily specifically reported the utilization of student/teacher writing conferences. Although she mentioned using this opportunity to correct a few "grammatical/mechanical" problems, she focused the majority of time on what she called "working with style and flow" of the pieces. Emily and Cheryl also provided examples of the peer review guides they expected students to fill out as they collaborated in the revision and editing processes.

Cheryl included an example of the effectiveness of peer assistance which consisted of every step of one student's essay assignment: rough drafts, peer reviews, and finished text. These artifacts were accompanied by this reflection:

This young lady's essay proves how much she grew as an intellectual, capable writer. Her rough draft looked a little shaky as it was only a stream of consciousness. If I had seen this before she turned it in, I don't know what I would have done. Obviously she has some spelling and grammatical errors that I could have helped her fix, but the syntactical mistakes are a bit much for just a 15-minute writing conference . . . I know that I must . . . have peer editing sessions. Those sessions help tremendously in that she was able to fix all of the trouble spots before turning in a final draft.

While this type of peer revision activity seemed to be effective for Cheryl's purposes in this formal essay assignment, Ginger had a different viewpoint.

After implementing 2 peer review activities into a particular formal essay writing assignment, Ginger had this to say:

I think peer revision can be helpful if the students take it seriously. Our first peer revision day didn't go so well. We left no blank space for the students to respond back. They mostly goofed off and put [check] marks wherever they felt like putting them! So, on our second day, I asked specific questions on their revision sheets requiring them to pick out specific parts of the essay they were reading. They also turned them in for a daily grade. I think without the grade, motivation for the second peer

revision would have been just as low as the first revision. I think students

see peer revision as pointless unless there is something in it for them,

grade-wise.

Even though this opinion of peer revision was less than favorable, Ginger was

very pleased with what she called a "group writing" activity in her creative writing

class.

Students were broken into small groups and given the assignment of

writing a group poem. Ginger described the excitement with which this

assignment was completed and felt that this activity somehow gave the students

a new level of confidence in their abilities. This was demonstrated as they

completed the assignment without any assistance from Ginger or her cooperating

teacher. This prompted her to reflect: "Maybe teaching writing doesn't have to

be teacher motivated every time. The respect for the peers in their group

seemed to motivate them, and it helped them learn from each other." While

these two examples of collaboration seemed to contradict each other, Ginger

never addressed that discrepancy in her journal.

Teacher-Invented Models

If a teacher is willing to give students her own pieces of writing as an

exemplar to be imitated, this naturally lends itself to Gee's (2004) cultural

process learning theory. Teachers/masters model behavior while talking about it

and encouraging the students to engage in collaboration in the activity. Students

imitate the modeled behavior as they are provided with scaffolding and other aids

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by the teacher, until they are able to work on their own. An essential element of this theory is for the students to recognize the teacher/master as an expert in the area in which they offer instruction. By offering her own pieces for the students to study, the teacher is able to demonstrate her expertise, and thereby earn her students' respect. Kirby et al., (2004) believe that a subject will seek its own form, and a teacher can demonstrate how this happens by working through writing assignments with her students.

Although Hillocks (1984) found that modeling is significantly more useful than teaching grammar, he also discovered that the exclusive use of modeling for the teaching of writing is less effective than any of the other techniques he studied. Dyson and Freedman (2003) agree that using imitation alone is not enough for students to learn how to write.

Christine regularly utilized modeling during the focused free writes her classes did for bell work assignments. She would write in her own journal along with students, and participated in the sharing times—whether in pairs, small groups, or with the class as a whole. She would often do her writing on the overhead projector so students could benefit from her process: "I let them watch me, watch my mind kind of mess up as I write, and let them see my mistakes." Ginger wrote and orally presented a poem for her creative writing class as an example for them to follow. Cheryl gave students examples of her written poetry to emulate.

Assessment

Without exception these interns gave their students the type of feedback which they had found most helpful: notes written on their papers during the assessment process. Cheryl, Christine, and Ginger all included copies of graded papers with examples of these margin notes in their journals. Hannah specifically credited her English education classes with preparing her with "the psychology" which she claimed, "really helped [with] knowing what to write on a student's paper to help motivate and not discourage."

Margin notes aside, some of the interns still grappled with assessment. Ginger and Cheryl both penned the question, "How do I grade this?" when confronted with a difficult student text. Emily described her feelings of ambivalence over an essay's grade after being confronted by the disgruntled student author.

Cheryl devoted almost an entire page of writing to her perception of grading difficulties:

> I knew that I would have to assign writing . . . but I didn't want to spend
> countless hours on a Saturday afternoon grading essays . . . One thing I
> have noticed during my internship is that we never really learned what to
> look for while grading an essay . . . English Ed classes need to teach their
> students how to grade essays, how to write appropriate prompts, [and]
> how to write rubrics so that our future students know what we'll be looking
> for while reading their essays.

Cheryl finished this journal entry by reporting that her cooperating teacher had experienced this seeming lack in her own undergraduate education as well.

Summary

Adapting strategies from Moustakas (1994) as the framework for this phenomenological study, the data in this chapter was recorded in the chronological order in which it was received. From the initial interviews the recurring themes of the importance of the task and writing instruction expectations emerged. Overall, the interns felt that their job as writing teachers would be vital to the success of their future students, and for the most part, they expected to be able to teach the genres of writing at which they excelled.

The final interviews revealed the common themes of preparation, teaching styles, and influence of cooperating teachers. While they all claimed to have received valuable preparation and information from their university classes, nearly all cited areas of perceived lack. They readily described themselves as facilitators of learning when asked about the development of their teaching styles, but differed on their perceptions of the effect their cooperating teachers had on them.

The reflective journals revealed the most information about their actual classroom practices. Under the theme of actual practice, 6 sub-themes also emerged: focused free writing, grammar instruction, providing model pieces of literature for emulation, in-class writing communities, teacher-invented models,

and assessment.   Specific examples of these activities as portrayed by the

interns were described.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations for Practice

Revisiting the Original Prompt

The conversation that sparked this course of investigation was with an intern named Lisa. I had an opportunity to speak with her again quite recently. After spending a year teaching English in an area high school, Lisa decided to switch her career focus. She has been teaching 8th grade math for the past 2 years. She explained, "I like doing English, but I didn't like teaching it. Math is so much easier." She specifically referred to the difficulties she encountered during writing instruction, particularly in the area of assessment. There was no resemblance to the self-assured young intern who looked forward to sharing her expertise in the area of "serious" writing instruction.

Introduction

Writing instruction has received more consideration as high-stakes testing has cast an ever-growing shadow over education. Often, ELA teachers have lost sight of any other purpose for the teaching of writing. Troia and Maddox (2004) found many teachers were fairly certain their students would have little need for writing in the future, unless they chose it as a profession. It would be easy for teachers with such a limited vision to teach only a form of writing that is specifically focused on making sure their students pass state mandated tests. It would also make grammar workbooks with their fill-in-the-blank easy-to-grade format seem like an easy way to deal with an otherwise complicated subject.

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Future ELA teachers not only negotiate the possible first occurrence of a total immersion experience into their chosen profession during the internship semester, but they also are given the opportunity to implement their hard-earned knowledge about the most effective methods of instruction.

Christine summed up the general pre-experience feelings of nervous excitement that were shared, to different extents, by all of the intern/participants in this poignant statement:

It's so hard at this point. It's like I've heard so many things that like, just kind of make you afraid to do anything, because you think you're going to do it wrong. You hear from teachers who've done it for 10 years who've not done it right, or you hear it from a teacher who's just a great first year teacher, and so you're kind of like, "Which one will I be?" So I don't know. I kind of just want to get in there and actually start doing something; anything, I feel like, would be beneficial. You know, if I just take roll, for crying out loud. I've been writing for a long time and reading for a long time, so I kind of just want to talk now. I want to just feel relational. And, I want to actually have a student as opposed to having an idea.

Does Christine have a realistic view of the opportunities afforded within the parameters of the internship semester?

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English Language Arts* (2006), internship experiences should accomplish 4 fundamental objectives:

(1)   provide realistic teaching experiences that allow student teachers

to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their knowledge of

English language arts and effective pedagogical skills;

(2)   encourage student teachers' continuing professional

development;

(3)   foster a sense of professionalism and collegiality; and

(4)   nurture student teacher-student relationships. (p.64)

The NCTE recommends that a minimum of 10 weeks be devoted to the

completion of these aims; the participants in this study served 16 week

internships.

This research has endeavored to describe how ELA interns deal with the

many options for writing instruction as they negotiate their way through this

transitional period. By conducting a phenomenological study which utilized data

collection methods of face-to-face interviews and reflective journals, I have

attempted to gain insight into the various writing instruction techniques

implemented by 7 ELA interns. Demographic descriptions of the schools where

internships were done were also employed as part of the account. These

descriptions, along with my own observations, indicated that the schools settings

these interns encountered were largely homogeneous. I have utilized the criteria

set forth in the (NCTE) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Teachers of English*

Language Arts (2006) as the standard for prescribed performance by ELA

interns.

When approaching the analysis of data for this project, I personalized several of Moustakas's (1994) methods of analysis--embracing the epoch, horizontalizing the data into units of meaning, clustering the units of meaning into themes, and utilizing the themes to describe and analyze the experience of the interns--to fit the needs of my particular undertaking. An analysis of these data revealed 6 major themes: importance of the task, writing instruction expectations, preparation, teaching styles, influence of cooperating teachers, and actual practice. Under the theme of actual practice, 6 sub-themes also emerged: focused free writing, grammar instruction, providing model pieces of literature for emulation, in-class writing communities, teacher-invented models, and assessment. These themes and sub-themes then formed the organizational structure for reporting the data. This chapter will draw conclusions from the data and offer recommendations for future research and practice.

Reflection on Problem

Hillocks (2005) cites studies (Johnson, Smagorinsky, Thompson, & Fry, 2003; Kennedy, 1998; Smagorinsky & Whiting, 1995) which find that new teachers actually have very little knowledge of how to teach writing which makes it easy for them to embrace the formulas adopted by their school districts. Other researchers (Conderman & Pedersen, 2006; Grossman, et al., 1999; and McIntyre, 2003) have discovered that for various reasons, interns often adopt the prevailing classroom practices of their cooperating teachers and/or school

districts, regardless of how they may or may not reflect the information they encountered in their university classes.

The main question guiding this research was: How does a selected group of English Education interns at a major university in the southwestern United States negotiate the transition from theory into practice? Two sub-questions served to narrow the focus: (1) What is the perception of these interns regarding their preparation for teaching, particularly in the area of writing instruction?, and (2) How do these intern expectations line up with actual classroom teaching experiences? The conclusions and recommendations of this chapter have been developed through a review of relevant literature, analysis of the interviews and reflective journals, and influenced by my own 10 years of experience teaching writing on both the secondary and college levels, and by 5 semesters of experience as a supervisor of ELA interns.

Conclusions

While analyzing the data, I realized that conclusions about some of the phenomena were immediately evident and easy to delineate, while others were more elusive. While it is a relatively straightforward task to determine how certain activities may or may not fit into prescribed instructional methods and theories, by its very nature, qualitative research allows a good deal of latitude for uniqueness of data and analysis because of it's dependence upon unpredictable human sources and interpreters (Polkinghorne, 2005).

This research relies heavily on participant's memories and perceptions, and their interpretations of the same. Regardless of the intent of the professors, or the material presented during the classes, it is the students' perceptions of and receptivity to the material that impacts their actual practice. It is also their interpretation of the successes or failures of those practices as expressed in the interviews and reflective journals. It was my desire, as the researcher, to present as clear and realistic picture of this phenomenon as is humanly possible.

While six different types of classroom practice were employed by the interns, it is important to acknowledge that not every incidence of writing instruction was reported by every intern. Whereas several of the reflective journals were rich with information, the rest offered only occasional tidbits of information about these practices. Even as I am making general conclusions based on the data received, I cannot keep from wondering about the pieces that went unreported.

The Importance of the Task

These interns strongly felt that their ability to teach writing would have a lasting effect on the lives of their students. They did not mention state-mandated, EOI or CRT testing as a factor in discussing the need for writing skills. They were able to see a broader picture, and therefore tap into a more intrinsic motivation for finding and implementing instructional strategies. Manuel and Hughes (2006) found that part of the motivation for young people to choose teaching as a career was the possibility of becoming an "agent of change" (p.20)

in the lives of their students. This aspiration was explicit in the desire expressed by Mitch that his students, "can concentrate more on fixing things that may have gone wrong in their home life or whatever" after they learn how to use writing to articulate their various frustrations, opinions, and thoughts.

This attitude agrees with the NCTE (2006) recommendation under the section entitled "Written Discourse and Composition" that ELA teacher candidates should be able to: "help their students learn not only how to take part in public discussions but also to find, analyze, and use information that empowers them to engage in deciding public issues" (*Guidelines* p.25). As Ginger said, writing is truly a "life skill." I believe this attitude is valuable when viewed as part of what motivates these interns to ensure that their students succeed as writers. If this motivation is maintained, it can be the impetus for continual professional development that offers ever new and effective theories, strategies, and activities for assistance in encouraging the refinement of this crucial ability.

Writing Instruction Expectations

It was expected, but a bit troubling to me that these interns focused almost exclusively on the genres at which they were proficient. It also gave rise to a question which addresses the assumption behind the interns' confidence: Do teachers of writing need to acquire a level of expertise in all of the genres of writing they are expected to teach? These students acquired their proficiencies in fulfilling coursework requirements by completing assignments for various

undergraduate classes, English, education or otherwise. Mitch attributed his expertise in writing essays to the high number he wrote as class requirements.

However, Vavra and Spencer (2007) maintain that developing the ability to write papers,

> . . . that meet . . . a college professor's tastes (an unvarying diet) does not necessarily translate into a robust ability to write effectively for a range of audiences and purposes. Nor does it equip one to teach others to do so.
>
> (p. 5)

I also wonder if pandering to that "unvarying diet" narrowed the number of genres the interns considered as possibilities for teaching. The entire group listed a total of 8 different genres during the initial interviews, yet the syllabus for one methods course provided them with 25 genre suggestions for consideration when carrying out their own multi-genre research projects.

The NCTE (2006) urges ELA teachers to, "practice their own writing skills in a variety of forms. . . [because] teachers who learn about and continuously practice various aspect of writing are better able to teach those processes well to their students" (*Guidelines . . .* p. 26). Without the motivation of a course requirement, it is uncertain as to whether most of these interns will continue refining their skills. Only Cheryl and Alan said that writing for pleasure was something they participated in on a regular basis.

Another genre of writing which went virtually unmentioned is what Yancy (2009) calls "21st Century Writing" (p. 1).   She credits the advent of the personal computer and cellular telephone as the catalyst for a whole new purpose for a

new kind of writing. As a result of these new frontiers in composition, Yancy suggests that English educators are facing three challenges:

- developing new models of composing,

- designing a new curriculum supporting those models, and

- creating new pedagogies enacting that curriculum. (p. 8)

While all of these interns interacted to at least some extent with these new technologies—I exchanged emails and text messages with each of them—they seemed to have neglected the opportunity to address writing instruction from this angle.

Preparation

According to the overall consensus of the interns, while their English education classes were extremely important so far as forming their theories about writing instruction, they felt that material providing actual practice ideas and activities that they could have implemented in their classrooms was limited. Nevertheless, all referred to a pool of basic knowledge of strategies regarding writing instruction from which they created activities and lessons.

These students expressed a sense of disappointment at not being able to utilize entire units or even lesson plans that they had created during their methods classes. They spoke of being able to use, as Christine said, "pieces" of plans. Emily added, "I used some ideas, but not really any of the lesson plans." Hannah described the creation of some "mini-lessons" that were not long enough to fill up an entire class period.

As an experienced ELA teacher, I understand that most lesson plans and units are built from "ideas," "mini-lessons," and "pieces" that come from countless sources. Instead of acknowledging and expanding upon the building blocks they had acquired through their undergraduate educations, most of these interns chose to focus on what they had found lacking. These areas of lack in what might already be a stressful situation, could lead to what Key (1998) described as breeding ground for the creating of "poor habits in the form of survival skills than effective instructional skills and strategies" (p. 11).

Christine specifically felt a lack of instruction specific to 6th grade needs. She felt as if the methods classes had been geared more to the high school grade levels. Cheryl was most explicit in expressing her belief that she had not acquired enough strategies for teaching students how to write or for the grading of that writing. Both of these students relied heavily on their cooperating teachers to make up for these perceived lacks, but felt well prepared to enter their own classrooms at the end of the semester. As Cheryl asserted, "throughout this semester and throughout this experience I've learned so much that I feel comfortable now going into a classroom of my own and teaching writing."

The sense of community which was fostered by their education classes should serve all of these interns well. They were adept at and comfortable with collaborating, pooling their collective knowledge, in order to take advantage of what colleagues had to offer. This prepares them to combine forces with their cooperative teachers, and as they take up residence in their own classrooms,

with other mentors and peers. As the NCTE (2006) states, "Beginning English language arts teachers . . . participate in professional conversations and collaborative endeavors with colleagues to maintain currency and professional efficacy" (*Guidelines . . .* p. 14).

This is also a factor that may affect the attrition rates of these interns. Scherff and Hahs-Vaughn (2008) "found that participation in networking activities significantly seemd [sic] to reduce the odds of teachers leaving teaching by about 90% . . . as compared to teachers who did not participate" (p. 193). Although it is impossible to know the opportunities for cooperation that might be afforded to the interns as they take their first positions, it is feasible that they may take the initiative to seek out such relationships on their own.

This emphasis on teamwork also has the ability to affect how these interns view the communities in their own classrooms. Alan did not connect his endeavors to create an atmosphere conducive to collaboration to writing instruction yet, he conducted his own research into discovering the optimal classroom arrangements for productive student interaction. He obviously understood the value of operating within a cooperative learning milieu.

Teaching Styles

When interns were asked to describe their teaching styles, they overwhelmingly described themselves as constructivists. They viewed themselves as facilitators of learning rather than dispensers of information. They valued student centered classrooms and inquiry-based learning experiences.

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Christine described how she learned to use the discussion of her students as the catalyst for those all important "teachable moments" where the construction of knowledge by the students is the ultimate result.

This passage from Freire and Macedo (1987) describes this style of teaching:

The educator, as one who knows, first needs to recognize those being educated as the ones who are in the process of knowing more. They are the subjects of this process along with the educator and not merely accommodated patients. Second, the educator needs to recognize that knowledge is not a piece of data, something immobilized, concluded, finished, something to be transferred by one who acquired it to one who still does not possess it. (p. 41)

Without exception, these interns looked for and respected the knowledge that their students brought to the table.

Influence of Cooperating Teachers

Although all of the interns expressed positive feelings regarding the support from and influence of their cooperating teachers, three of the interns, Cheryl, Emily, and Christine were quite vocal in their admiration for, reliance on, and intended emulation of their cooperating teachers. Because of her previous relationship with her cooperating teacher, Emily went into the semester with this focus already in mind. Schempp (1987) states, "socialization into teaching begins while teachers are students" (p.2). Emily's attitude is reflective of this

early socialization process which has been described as an apprenticeship of observation by Lortie (1975). Emily spent more years planning to teach like her cooperating teacher than she spent in college earning her teaching degree. It is difficult to determine which has had the most influence on her pedagogical viewpoint.

Because of their perceived lack of certain skills, Cheryl and Christine instinctively turned to their cooperating teachers for survival, and found the assistance and support they needed. These ladies' actions and declarations support the finding of Conderman and Pedersen (2006) that many interns credit most of their teaching strategies to the assistance they receive from their cooperating teachers rather than from the educations they obtained at the university.

Actual Practice

It is one thing to hear what the interns anticipate doing, or to be regaled with their perception of what they have accomplished. However, the reflective journals of these interns provided an invaluable description of actual daily practices. The NCTE (2006) gives the following suggestions for the purposes and standards of writing instruction by stating that ELA teacher candidates should:

(1)   Provide students with informal opportunities for writing to learn and for formal writing opportunities designed to reach an intended audience.

(2)   Use a writing-to-learn approach as a method for reflection through tools such as journals, reading logs, freewriting, nongraded writing

and other informal writing activities that connect writing and thinking.

(3)   Guide students through recursive stages of writing that may include prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing when they are writing for a specified audience or for more formal purposes.

(4)   Provide contexts for authentic writing opportunities that are relevant and make conscious the importance of an authentic audience, purpose, and appropriate choice of language.

(5)   Allow for such writing to be accomplished independently, through writing workshops, through partnerships, or through other collaborative processes.

(6)   Provide students with practice in different rhetorical modes, multigenre research, and traditional and virtual discourse.

(7)   Engage in a variety of different responses to or assessment of writing, such as quick checks, holistic scoring, self-evaluation, peer responses, conferences, portfolios, and analytic scoring via rubrics and performance standards. (p. 46)

How did the interns do in meeting these standards?

Obviously the focused free writes described by Christine, Emily, and Cheryl meet a good number of the requirements of standards 1 and 2. Christine and Cheryl implemented them on a daily basis. Although I observed Mitch and Alan facilitate free writing activities during my observations, they did not include free writing in their discussions of tools for improving student writing. In both instances I observed they used the free writes as an opportunity for students to organize thoughts before class discussions. Hannah and Ginger did not directly

address the issue of free writing in their interviews or journals, and I did not observe either of them facilitate such activities.

Cheryl, Ginger, Alan, and Emily all reported assigning formal essays which required their students to engage in the recursive stages of the writing process, which addresses standard 3. Cheryl included samples of student work which clearly demonstrate this practice. I observed Alan's students as they completed their final drafts and turned them in electronically in the school computer lab.

Hannah provided an authentic purpose for writing as delineated in standard 4 by asking her students to write letters offering advice to the next group to enter 6th grade. Emily recorded her efforts on several occasions to impress the importance of word choice, also a part of standard 4, to her AP students as they engaged in timed-writing practice for the AP exams.

Standard 5 calls for writing to be accomplished through both independent and collaborative efforts. It almost goes without saying that each of the interns gave their students independent writing assignments. In addition, Cheryl, Ginger, and Emily offered detailed descriptions of collaborative writing efforts in their writing classrooms.

All of the interns reported assignments that required their students to write poetry. Hannah and Christine assigned their students MGRPs. Alan, Ginger, Cheryl, and Emily each gave more than 2 traditional essay assignments to their students. While these meet some of the requirements of standard 6, I did not see evidence of any opportunity for students to engage in writing in a virtual

context, and besides those already mentioned, other rhetorical situations for writing were limited.

The various strategies for grading as set down in standard 7 may represent generally, the principal area in which all of the interns encountered varying degrees of difficulty. While Emily, Cheryl and Ginger recorded specific instances of assessment angst, it was a topic for discussion at all of the midterm conferences which included me, the intern and his or her cooperating teacher. As a general rule, interns initially relied on the judgment of their cooperating teachers before taking risks and assigning grades on their own. Initially, interns were willing to write (primarily positive) margin notes on papers while allowing their cooperating teachers to assign the actual grades. By the middle of the semester each intern had established a grading routine, and felt familiar enough with his or her students' abilities to assign grades. However, the variety of assessment measures they utilized was limited. Most often I observed them rely on detailed rubrics for more formal assignments while grading virtually everything else holistically. I assumed this followed the leading of their cooperating teachers. Discussions and written reflections primarily indicated that the use of assessment as a tool for guiding lesson plans appeared to be secondary to the goal of simply assigning grades for the interns.

Recommendations for Practice

I would like to make two recommendations for practice in light of this research. The first has to do with implementing more opportunities for actual

hands-on practice into the curriculum of the methods classes. I believe the participants in this study would have benefitted from practice grading actual student papers. I would recommend that class-size bundles of copies of actual student essays be given to the interns to grade. They would need to see the assignment and any rubrics that had been created for assessment purposes. After they have had the opportunity to grade the papers, they should then have the opportunity to see the actual grades assigned by practicing teachers. Ideally they should have to opportunity to grade papers from several grade levels over the course of the semester.

This would accomplish at least these three things: (1) ELA teacher candidates would gain an understanding of the time involved in grading a large number of papers, (2) they would be able to see an example of the wide range of student writing abilities that may be contained within in a single classroom, and (3) they could be taught how to use their assessments to formulate lesson plans designed to ameliorate problem areas. Additionally, this could provide an opportunity for the modeling of a variety of assessment strategies.

Secondly, I would like to suggest the movement towards the implementation of regular on-going tutoring opportunities into the requirements of one of the methods classes. A program such as this is described by Kelley, Hart, and King (2007) as a "service-learning context" within which preservice teachers can engage in "work that will be expected . . . once they become professional teachers" (p. 107). In their study, preservice ELA teachers gave writing instruction to individual students in 10 weekly tutorial sessions. They submitted

lesson plans to their professors before each tutorial experience and participated in de-briefing sessions immediately afterwards. Among the benefits of this arrangement was the opportunity for the professors to have "immediate feedback regarding preservice teachers' interpretation of concepts addressed within the university classrooms" (p. 107). It was also concluded to be "a powerful way to support preservice teachers as they learn to negotiate the multiple demands that are and will be placed on them in the teaching profession" (p. 107). This would also provide an additional opportunity for preservice ELA teachers to develop and implement specific activities which they can utilize with confidence during their internship semesters.

Recommendations for Further Research

The ultimate goal of these English education interns is to embark upon a career in their chosen field. Four of these participants have already procured positions as secondary language arts teachers in public schools. The others continue to seek employment while working as substitutes when the opportunities arise. Any discouragements they encountered in their internships were not enough for them to back off of their original goals. However this fact alone cannot be used to determine whether or not their internship semesters were successful.

A final determination of whether or not this particular group of interns was successful in transferring theory into practice must be delayed until they have had the opportunity to function for a length of time as teachers in their own

classrooms. Although these interns implemented several practices supported by the NCTE as effective methods for the teaching of writing, the time allotted during a single semester is not enough to see if they have instituted these as a regular part of their repertoires. Also, there is no precise way at this time to determine the amount of influence the cooperating teachers exerted on these interns to choose certain strategies.

A case study which follows one or two of these interns through the first years of their teaching careers would be helpful in determining whether the experiments of their internships evolve into the foundations upon which they will continue to build, or if will they choose different directions when they are free from the constraints of internship. As Alan explained in his first interview, "I'm trying to stay open-minded about everything so I can roll with whatever, because I am the rookie." As they quit feeling the need to "roll with whatever" their true beliefs about the teaching of writing should become visible.

It would also be beneficial to duplicate this research for several semesters in order to refine the curriculum of English Education classes at the university where this research was conducted. These participants mentioned perceived lacks in several areas: (1) A need for a greater number of specific "how-to" activity ideas, (2) Clearer ties between theories and particular strategies, (3) Instruction specifically geared for teaching younger middle school students (6th graders), (4) Practice grading actual student writing, (5) Practice writing lesson plans that can be implemented during the internship semester, and (6) A deficiency of general grammar knowledge. Continued research would determine

if these were simply anomalies confined to a single student or two, or if they are real areas of need to be accounted for at some point in the undergraduate experience. In a general sense, this particular research could be generalized to English Education programs at other universities as a platform from which to conduct research specific to their unique program requirements.

Personal Reflection

As I conducted this study, I began to realize that it would not end with the defense of this dissertation. This pattern for evaluation will be something I will apply to my own classroom practice as I move into my career as a teacher educator. Like all responsible teachers, I want to utilize the instruction time in my classroom as efficiently as possible. With that in mind, I need to constantly be aware of the perceptions of my students regarding the courses I teach. Ultimately, regardless of my intent, it is their perceptions that create their reality. The extra effort it may take to provide avenues for my students to share their perceptions should be rewarded by valuable insight into enhancing the effectiveness of my curriculum.

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Appendix A

Partial Transcriptions of Initial Interviews

Initial Intern (Mitch) Interview *(Male, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 9th grade English class in a suburban area high school.)*

What genres of writing do you think you will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, creative writing, essay writing, um, (be more specific about creative writing) um, creative writing will probably be um poetry, um, I assume it'll be some element of short story writing, creative non-fiction, creative fiction, uh, and then formal writing would be something like resumes, like essays, uh things like that.*

What genres of writing do feel confident about teaching? *Uh, creative non-fiction I'd be really confident about, poetry I feel confident because it's a pretty free genre you can kinda play with it a lot. Um essays I feel really confident in because of my experience with them in college, I've probably written 300 of them. Uh, they seem to be the most formulaic so I can strictly teach step-by-step processes.*

Besides all of those essays, what other factors have contributed to your feelings of confidence regarding these genres of writing instruction? *Um, I would say the formulaic nature of them. The fact that you need you need to introduce an idea, you need a thesis, you need to explain the examples and details of that idea, to prove it, and then conclude—it's a pretty logical structure—it seems like it can be received easily because the structure itself is part of it. Uh, I also feel like in both my literature classes and my education classes it was made clear to me about essays within that structure what works and what doesn't. My instructors in both elements of my degree I think helped me in that.*

How have the classes you have taken prepared you to teach writing at the secondary level? *I say more because of uh, the process of writing for my classes. What I was told about writing was typically in response to what I had written, so I kinda learned by successes and failures. I don't feel like I had enough instruction on how to teach specific types of writing. If there was a class in teaching creative writing, where it was broken into uh the different types of creative writing—how to teach poetry, how to teach creative non-fiction, how to teach these things—I think would have at least given me a basis to go from, and then I could tweak it from there. Uh, the same thing with essays, a teaching essay writing course I think would have been extremely helpful simply because whenever doing it in the classroom, I could have drawn on the experiences even if I disagreed with something, I'd have known that this is the way I don't want to do it.*

What types of writing do you personally engage in on a regular basis? *Uh journal writing, though not much recently, uh, poetry in the past, um, emails, notes, (laugh) uh, that's about it. And essays. (Yeah, for school, right?) Uh huh.*

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What is your personal philosophy regarding the importance of writing instruction at the secondary level? *The thing that I harp on in education, my big kick in education is uh, self articulation, being able to articulate yourself. If I feel like, if a kid doesn't understand himself, then he can't position himself in the world so then if he's frustrated about something, but he can't articulate it, then he's just gonna lash out and find other ways of venting it, so. . . My hope is that by teaching kids who struggle with articulation, who have issues that need to be articulated, uh that it will allow them to get past the language difficulties and they can concentrate more on fixing things that may have gone wrong in their home life or whatever, so . . . mostly, self articulation, kids being able to functionally articulate which helps with jobs, it helps with well-being, whatever.*

Initial Intern (Cheryl) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 9th grade class, pre-AP English in a suburban high school.)*

What genres of writing do you think you will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, pretty much everything. Creative writing, whether it be poetry, non-fiction, essay writing, um, persuasive, narrative, expository, you name it, I'll um, probably teach it. Um, I—yeah.*

What genres of writing do feel confident about teaching? *Um, I'm more the 5-paragraph, persuasive, narrative, expository (unintelligible). Although, I am comfortable teaching poetry simply because I write it. Um, I know I'm very creative, and I know most of my students are, so they'll have, um, a pretty easy time with that. So, I'm very excited to start the poetry unit.*

What factors have contributed to your feelings of confidence regarding these genres of writing instruction? *Um, primarily, um, my high schools teachers, being on the AP track and the pre-AP track, I did a lot of writing in high school and I did a lot of writing in college with the, the papers and the research that I had to do for that.*

How have the classes you have taken prepared you to teach writing at the secondary level? *Um, we do a lot of writing whether it be the, you know, one page responses, you know the narrative expository thing, or whether it be the research aspect, and it, basically you turn it in, and they write all over it, say you did a really good job here, and there are some things you need to work on as well, all that. I think that was very beneficial for me to be able to look at that and say, hey, I need to work on that.*

What types of writing do you personally engage in on a regular basis? *Um, I do journal writing, I wrote a short story back in June, but I don't think I ever finished, though. (laughs) Uh, it was very much into the mystery phase of my life. Uh, but I do a lot of short writings. I don't, you know as a student teacher, I don't have a lot of time to write like I want to.*

What is your personal philosophy regarding the importance of writing instruction at the secondary level? *I think it's very important. If you don't know how to create a sentence—you know, noun, verb—then you're not going to get very far in life because whether it be a resume that you have to write, or a paper for college admission—if they don't see that you can write a proper sentence you're not going to get very far.*
Initial Intern (Ginger) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in an 11th grade AP English class in a suburban high school.)*

What genres of writing do you think you will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, I'm teaching AP class, so we're doing a lot of timed writing essays, um, personal narratives--also teaching creative writing so there's a lot of*

um, freedom with that to kind of do what we want with poetry and personal narratives genre writing.

What genres of writing do feel confident about teaching? *Um, student response, so far, in what I've been doing, and I know that I'm successful at doing these things for myself, so I feel like I can teach them better, if I'm successful. (Is that because you engage in these personally?) Yes, I believe that.*

How have the classes you have taken prepared you to teach writing at the secondary level? *Um, I think the one thing that they're lacking is, we need a grammar course ourselves to be able to teach it because I feel like when I teach grammar I'm re-teaching myself right along with, right before the lesson. Um, I think all the other areas of writing are just fine. I mean Dr. ?'s classes, you know, we've done lesson plans on essay writing, I mean, and units and stuff like that, but I just think the grammar area is lacking.*

What types of writing do you personally engage in on a regular basis? *Um, I do journal writing, I've written some short stories and poetry. Just randomly.*

What is your personal philosophy regarding the importance of writing instruction at the secondary level? *I think it's the foundation because, especially if they're going to be going to college, they need to use it for um, science and political science, psychology for, I mean they, it's a life skill.*

Initial Intern (Hannah) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 6th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

What genres of writing do you think you will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, creative writing, (in creative writing what genres do you think?) um poetry, um paragraph format--in 6th grade? (at the secondary level) OK, uh 5 paragraph essay, formula essays, probably some type of research paper, probably a resume, something like that, uh, I don't know.*

What genres of writing do feel confident about teaching? *Um, probably all of those? Um probably the research format would be at the top of that because I just got through doing that, and I'm doing one of those currently.*

What factors have contributed to your feelings of confidence regarding these genres of writing instruction? *Um, doing it throughout my undergrad degree. I mean we had to do that for part of our English capstone, part of our education capstone, and throughout our coursework in general.*

How have the classes you have taken prepared you to teach writing at the secondary level? *I think they've done a pretty good job. I think a lot of it is practice based in that through repetitive research papers and things like that um, I have been able to learn more about how to write it, uh not through so much specific instruction on guided topics or outlines on exactly how I'm supposed to teach it, but just practice through different classes and how it has been graded and how I have been graded on these research papers. (So, the writing you've done in these various areas has been what has prepared you?) Uh huh.*

What types of writing do you personally engage in on a regular basis? *Um journal writing, I do a little bit of poetry and um, that's probably about it. (Research papers?) Yes. (One pagers for Dr. A?) Right.*

What is your personal philosophy regarding the importance of writing instruction at the secondary level? *I think it's extremely important, um to kids at the secondary level because it shows their ability to read and respond to a number of different things as well as um, um create different types of work, and show their opinions, um create those in an effective why and demonstrate their knowledge, their questions, their opinions, facts, all that—everything that they've learned.*

Initial Intern (Alan) Interview *(Male, 27 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in an 11th grade class in a suburban high school.)*

What are you expecting to do this semester as you student teach? Do you have great lesson plans? What do you think you're going to do? *I think I'm going to observe and try to learn a lot from my cooperating teacher, and I'm really anxious to test out some of my stuff, too. I have a couple of lesson plans, and I like to see if they fit with what they're doing already, or try to maybe adapt something to fit with what they're working on. (Tell me about your best lesson plan.) I have a poetry set, where we look at like some spoken word type of poetry, like the performance-based poetry, and try to take that and to grasp their interest, because you know, poetry is like "oh no". And I'd like to try and start with that and use that as a spring-board into maybe a little bit more of the technical issues about poetry. (So you will have students create their own poems and present them, that type of thing?) Exactly. I'll start out by showing them some videos, then I'll perform one of my own, just to show them. (Are you a poet yourself?) I write poetry, a little bit. (Is that your strong point? What is your strong point so far as the "English" skills are concerned?) I think my writing skills are probably my best. (What kind of writing do you do?) Poetry and short stories. That's what I like. (So what about all the technical aspects? How do you do with that?) Um, the grammar, I do alright with, like, I've got the books and I look it up. (laugh) I'm not like the master or the know-it-all, but I can make it right when I need to. (So what do you think about teaching from that aspect—grammar? Do you think students need to have it taught to them?) Oh, definitely. I think they need to know it. They need to know how to write correctly and need to know correct punctuation and all that. (Did you study grammar when you were in high school? Do you remember?) No. Like when we'd write a paper and stuff they'd mark it up a little, but they didn't really give any instruction about grammar. (Do you think you needed it?) Yes, I do. Especially first going into college, I struggled with correctness and stuff. I went to the Writing Center a lot and they helped out with that. But if would have been easier for me if I had just had more instruction in high school about the basic stuff.*

So, do you have a plan for helping kids become good writers? *I don't think I do. Like, I can read it and I can give them feedback on how to make it better. (So you're going to give them feedback on their writing. How are you going to get them started writing in the first place?) As far as poetry goes, I'm going to demonstrate it, and then ask them to write it, and give them space so far as the topics they want to write about. (So modeling is going to be a big part of that for you. What about other genres of writing? You do short stories, right, so you can model that. What other kinds of writing do you think they'll be expected to do?) Um, I think they'll probably do like the essay, the read-it-then-write-about-it essay. Literature response. And the research paper stuff. (How capable do feel about teaching that kind of writing?) I think I'll be alright with it. I know I can prepare for it, so. . . That's my biggest deal, preparation. Like, I know where to find everything that I need, so. (So you're going to rely on sources to get you*

where you need to go. Are you just going to wait and see what your teacher's doing this semester and find stuff to plug into that?) That is kind of my plan because I really don't know what they're going to be doing, so once I get a glimpse of that I think I can put stuff together that will work with that. I think I do 3 weeks straight by myself? (Yes, it doesn't have to be 3 weeks in a row, but we like you to be able to plan, and then carry out your own unit, if possible.) I wasn't sure about how much creative rein I would have.

What kind of assessment do you think you will feel most comfortable with? *I think I will stay away from just filling in a blank. I'll want them to write me a short essay—maybe 2 or 3 pages to let me see how they deal with the material and what they think about it. (So you would give an essay assignment instead of a test at the end of a unit?) I think so, that's what I would lean towards. That would give me more information than just telling me names, or places or events. (So you're interested in literary response?) You bet. Unless I see that they're not reading it, then maybe I would hit them with a couple of reading quizzes. Like, all the classes that I observed, they just had one class set of the novels, so they'd read like 30 minutes in class, and then only have a couple of minutes to work with it. I'd like to see them do the reading outside of class so we could do things to help with understanding at a deeper level in class. But some of the kids didn't even read when they were reading in the class. They'd just put it down, and I'd think, like, what's the deal?*

So, what do you think about worksheets, how do those grab you? *I guess just from my own experience, whenever I see a worksheet I automatically think "busy work." Here, just do this until the end of the period, don't talk. And I think students think that too, that they're just being given stuff to pass the time. (So what will you do to keep them quite until the end of the period?) (laugh) Ideally, we'll be discussing something that's the idea, but I know that may not always happen. I don't know. I like journaling, like at the beginning of the class or something like that, I really like that, and it's beneficial, not busy work.*

What do you think is the most important thing to help students improve their writing skills? *For me, it's in-depth feed back, like, not just somebody looking at it and saying, "this is good", but actually writing in the margins, like something significant, or tell me like, "right here you should do this or that". I know that's like, really time consuming, especially if you have like 100 students. But for me, if you can't give them all one-on-one time, that feed-back, assuming that they read it, would be beneficial. You have all the different levels and you have to remember that this one came from there to here, and make sure you recognize that, and give them credit for that. I want to take everybody individually and try to figure out how to get them to do significant re-writing. That's major to be able to get them to take their writing apart and re-work it.*

So are you excited and ready to go. *Oh yeah, I can't wait. It's like, I'm nervous and anxious, and like "let's do it." You know, you try to picture it, you run through*

stuff in your head, it's weird. You picture a class in your mind and it's like they're just wonderful and amazing, and the kids are all looking at you like you're some kind of a star, and I know it's not going to be like that, but I'm so ready to give it a shot. I'm kind of scared, it's like the thing I'm worried about the most is the, I'm not a disciplinarian, I know I'll have to do it, but I don't know how.

Initial Intern (Christine) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 6th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

So, you've already taken your methods class and done some lesson planning, you've already done some field experiences and you have an idea of what goes on in the classroom. What are you hoping to be able to do when you get into your classroom? What kind of teaching do you hope to be able to do? Do you have lesson plans already that you're hoping to implement? Do you have certain teaching styles that you're already thinking about? Just talk generally about that. *I think a big part of my beliefs at this point, . . . I am so close to their (my students') age, and I don't want to pretend to be someone that I'm not when I'm with my students. And I'd really like to be able to relate with them at a level that is closer to them, as opposed to pretending like I'm 40 with all of this experience, when they know I have little or no experience. But I want to remain confident as a person, and then be able to use that in my teaching. And so, something that I really liked as an undergrad was young adult literature, and I've read all of these really great texts that I'd like to be able to use in the classroom, you know, in any way I can. So that's something that I've always kind of focused on, and continue to focus on in graduate school. And, I've also really loved hearing about the incorporation of technology, and took a few courses undergrad, and it (technology) was just kind of a whisper, almost, about how to use it. I've gotten to see a little bit of it done, especially in my college courses where we used it all the time. And it would just be so neat to be able to apply that to my own school, whether through grants, or you know. Those are the kinds of things I'd like to use in teaching. I mean, it's all ideal. Half of my whole experience has been in trying to be realistic. You know, it's like I hear all of these great ideas at school, great lesson plans, great ways to implement things, and, it's just kinda like, in reality will I be able to still be realistic. I mean will I still be able to teach the students without . . . even if I don't have all of these toys and texts. You know, even if I don't have all of the novels that I'd like to teach. Will I still be able to get across to them the ideas and important things I want to, so . . . (So do you have a strategy for compensating?) I think half of my strategy has been depending upon the person I'm going to be working with. In this whole process I've just been looking forward to that. I've waited now for 5 full years to be able to be in a classroom and really learn, and see how it goes. So I'm excited about that because all I've been doing for the past 5 years is look at theory. You know, I've been reading these books where people have these great positive experiences, or they have horrible experiences. The people that are middle of the road never write the book. And I feel like I'm that person, so I'm not really sure what I'm going to experience especially in the 6th grade. So I'm going to rely greatly on my cooperating teacher. I've always wanted to teach. With my athletic experience, I think I'd like to eventually teach and coach in high school, but more so right now, I want to focus on the students and my subject and be able to get a grasp on both of those—not just the subject, not just be a teacher for other purposes at all. I've never actually considered being a coach until someone*

asked me recently, and I thought, "Oh, I guess I could do that". But, I still feel like I'm 18, you know, and I'm not sure I can do anything.

So, what do you feel most confident about going into this experience? *Well, I know what they're feeling as students. Because I feel like I still feel that exact same thing. You know, I still feel very . . . either over-confident or threatened, you know it's always one of the two. I either feel like I know what I'm talking about, or . . . And so I think that's where my confidence will come from, is when I see the students I will be able to read their actions, and I feel like I'll be able to relate and understand what they're going through. I mean, (cooperating teacher) was even showing me today the planner that the students have to carry around, and I mean, I lost mine the first day. And I remember doing that, and when I got it again, I remember coloring all over it. And that's just what I did—ripping out pages to write notes to people, you know. I moved around a lot in schools, so I feel like that . . . that is an experience I can bring to teaching. I don't know how much you're supposed to separate yourself, you know, and not pretend to be "one of them". You know, I do have to be in charge. I need to be careful about "the line." I almost kind of hate that my appearance fits the stereotype of high school student. I feel like I have a list of fears, more so than a list of confidences. You know, it's like I'm really fearful that I will be too flexible, or that I'll be too hard. You know, it's like there's the extreme, and I don't want to be the extreme. I feel like with my experiences with a really hard coach, you know, I know what it feels like to be completely brought down, and I don't want to do that, but I don't want to go to the too opposite side of the spectrum either. I don't think I'm afraid, really, of incorporating new ideas, or that I'm afraid of the actual lessons that I'm going to be teaching, or that I won't have the knowledge. I'm just afraid that I won't know how to be a good disciplinarian, that I won't be the right leader. Classroom management is the big buzz word that I've always heard through this whole process.*

OK. That aside, do you see yourself as a writer, or as a reader and understander of literature, or a combination. What do you feel is your strength in those areas? *I really do feel like I have a good voice when I write, and so I like that. But, at the same time, I enjoy reading to kind of further that writing style. That's why I love reading young adult literature, because I feel like I write better when I'm reading that. You know, because I tend to write like, um, those type of authors, you know. When I'm reading those books I feel a lot more open and able to say my words and write them clearer, as opposed to when I'm reading, you know, like works of literature, that, you know, are canonized. I have a harder time, you know. It's like I really enjoy the book, but it's something I can't see myself writing. I can't emulate those voices. So, I enjoy reading as a hobby, but I enjoy writing . . . it's something I connect with more. (So, what do you think you'll do in order to teach your students to write and find their voice? Do you have plans?) I think that will involve connecting them to books. When I read young adult literature, I really tried to keep a log about what I found interesting about the book, or what I found, you know "resource-ful", and so, I'm really trying*

to be smart about that, and hopefully be a little bit . . . if I do have a student . . . I imagine all of these situations . . . but, if I do have a student who has a difficult time writing, I would hope to place them with a book that could, you know, kind of steer them away from getting the grammar and all of that, and just kind of reading what it (good grammar) sounds like. I want to make sure that I'm not giving "how-to" guides. But it's hard. We've always heard that, you don't want to tell them that there is a writing process, you know, technically, but then, there kind of has to be, almost. You know, they need to learn something, whether it's my process, or, a book's, you know . . . So, I think that a big part of it is just getting to know the students, and knowing what will help them. You know, would it be beneficial to give them a workbook? Is that what they need? Are they a type A kind of student where they need to see bullet points, or are they going to be more comfortable with, you know, a book? Or are they going to be more comfortable with me explaining it to them just verbally. I think that a lot of it will be on me. What I think the student will work best with. (Do you see yourself teaching writing as a separate subject in school, or how do you see yourself implementing it?) Fearfully. (laugh) I mean I don't know. It's so hard at this point. It's like I've heard so many things that like, just kind of make you afraid to do anything, because you think you're going to do it wrong. You hear from teacher's who've done it for 10 years who've not done it right, or you hear it from a teacher who's just a great first year teacher, and so you're kind of like, "Which one will I be?" So I don't know. I kind of just want to get in there and actually start doing something, anything I feel like, would be beneficial. You know, if I just take roll, for crying out loud. I've been writing for a long time and reading for a long time, so I kind of just want to talk now. I want to just feel relational. And I want to actually have a student as opposed to having an idea. So I don't know. (So do you have like this great lesson plan you developed in your methods class that you would really like to implement? Do you have a lesson plan that you think, "I'd really like to teach that," or "I hope I get to teach that subject"?) Um, I'm trying to remember, a lesson plan that was created that wasn't centered around a novel. I mean, we just focused everything around novels. Or . . . I mean, one lesson plan that I'd really like to do is a multi-genre research project. And so, we worked a lot with the mgrp during my undergrad classes, just kind of getting that concept down as an idea. How that would look in the classroom. A lot of the texts we read were about that. And I just really like the idea of putting poetry, putting, writing, putting reading, putting all of them together. You know, I did an mgrp, um in my undergrad, and then created a lesson plan for that, and so, that's something that I'd really like to incorporate. That kind of just puts it all together. I have a hard time seeing myself just teaching writing, or just teaching reading, or just teaching grammar. I feel like they have to all come together. (What do you think about grammar?) I'm learning with them. Honestly, I learn something new everyday. I mean I just got told the other day that I use "him" when I should be using "he". You know, and I didn't ever know the rule for that. I really didn't. (Did you learn grammar in junior high and high school?) Yeah, I went to 3 different junior highs, and so I had 3 different grammar "ways." And so I never learned the, um, what is it, that girl's name that everyone knows in

Oklahoma, the "sing-song" grammar lessons? I never learned that. I feel like I haven't had a very good grammar education. I don't remember learning the rules. I remember like, sentence structure, I don't remember like, why him and not he, why her and not she? I don't remember those rules. I honestly think I've just now put them together as I've started writing. When I've done writing for college professors and they've corrected me it didn't help. I still have a problem with past and present tense within a paragraph. Everyday I notice where I'm doing something wrong. I honestly feel like if I was teaching a lesson plan that was given to me about grammar, that I'd be studying it just as much as the students. Which is kind of sad to admit, but I'm not going to pretend that I don't need help with that. (So do you think students need to be taught it like that?) Um, I've learned it from experience, from making mistakes, not from a workbook. I think it is helpful to have those practice work sheets. Obviously, that's what you see on the tests. And, I think it is helpful to write it out, and to see it there. And I still always do it in my head, to try to figure out what tense to use. It's not difficult, but it's something I have to do every time. But, I think you need to show them real life examples, like when they're speaking, not just when they're taking a test. Because then you really connect it.

Initial Intern (Emily) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 12th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

So, when you're writing lesson plans, how are you going to implement group work into your lesson plans? Are you going to have specific structure for them to work within for the group work? *Well, I think, you know giving them some guiding questions or some sort of starting point for a discussion prompt. Because I think that it's tough for kids to just dive in on their own without having some sort of guidance. I feel like, and (cooperating teacher) does a really good job of this, I feel like in the classroom it's really important to be more of a facilitator than a know-it-all "sage on the stage" teacher. (So what does that mean to you on a day-to-day basis?) Um, just to help them in their learning process. Um, to get them going I want to incorporate writing a lot. I haven't decided if I want to do like, have them journaling or free write at the beginning of class, or how I want to work that in. But, I don't think I would want to do that every day anyway, because I think it would get monotonous and the kids would get tired of it, but I think writing skills are one of the most important things you take out of high school. And I think, I have done a ton of writing, but I don't think I was as prepared as I could have been, I don't think.*

So what do you think it takes to prepare a student to be a good writer by the time they leave high school? What do they need to learn? *Practice. Um, obviously grammar skills are important. And I find that a lot of my friends who are very intelligent can't write very well, can't articulate themselves that great, as well as they can speaking. (Because?) You know, I honestly don't know. I don't know if it's a lack of education or, I mean, I know I hated grammar when we just did grammar in high school, but I appreciate the fact we did. And, my mom's a librarian and my dad used to read encyclopedias just for fun, so he's very, he always if I ever misused words, he would correct me when I was younger. So, it's always been deeply ingrained in me. And I think the fact that I read as much as I did made me better able to write. And I think that's one thing that kids don't get as much now. I don't think most kids read as much as we did. (So what are you going to do about that?) Well, I think literature circles encourage students to find something that interests them. So I'd like to incorporate that into my classroom. But, I really didn't get to read stuff that I wanted to read in high school. I know you can't do that all the time. There's curriculums, there's things you have to teach, but I think if they get some kind of choice, even if it's, you know, 5 books, pick one—I think some kind of ownership over that helps them to be motivated.*

So do you have a "pet" lesson plan you're getting ready to implement this year, something you really want to do? *Well, I did a unit plan last spring for my methods class that focused on multi-cultural poetry, and multi-cultural lit is really a big interest of mine. And so definitely some of those smaller lessons from that plan would be fun to do. I actually found—I took the Media as Lit class last summer and we were reading about things like political ads, and there was one*

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about a particular incident in NYC. A man was shot and was pulling like his wallet out of his pocket and was shot like 40 times. He was of Middle Eastern decent. It was in the 90s, and I actually came across a poem about this same event. So I took those two things, or I would like to, that was after, but—and incorporate that somehow. You'd have two different artists to give their interpretation of that event. Um, something like that would be really fun. (What would you have kids do with that?) Well, see that's tough. I think I would have them definitely look at both things, and do some sort of, um writing activity with it? The poem is really short, very compact, so if I had them look at that, and see the image of the political ad, I don't know, somehow, take those two together . . . (And compare/contrast?) Yeah, that would be a good starting point. And then this summer I took Qualitative Research, and I did, basically a lit review of multi-cultural lit, well of teacher's resources, and what's being done in classrooms. And then I also looked at a bunch of lit anthologies to see what all's being included. And it's pretty much the same. There's always the Harlem Renaissance unit with that same core group of authors, and then there's a few scattered here and there. So, what I'd like to do is take some more of the obscure and modern, there's not a lot of contemporary stuff, which I think kids would relate to a lot more. That's definitely a starting point, anyway.

What do you think you'll require your students to do writing-wise? Are you going to ask them to write something every day, are you going to expect them to produce major things every so often? Have you thought about that? *I think a little bit of writing every day would be good. Like I said, I don't know, I definitely won't do a journal every day because I feel like that would get monotonous, but just a little bit of writing every day would be good. Um, whether it's free writing on the theme, or just something that will get them going? (So you like free writing?) Yes, I do. I took a couple of creative writing classes in my undergrad, so it's fun letting yourself go and grow as a writer. I felt like I got more out of those classes for me than I did for my teaching. But, I think a lot of that I might could incorporate. A lot of those exercises in that (book), a lot of those exercises are really good. And I actually use that book for my creative writing classes, interestingly. I think that most kids think they can't write, creatively especially. It's one thing to write a research paper, but . . . And then, I definitely think I'll have, I think in-class writings are really beneficial. I think, I didn't do that anywhere except, well in AP definitely, she does that all the time. But, I guess in a few of the other classes I did . . . but I think that's important. (So, describe and in-class writing. I know what AP in-class writings are.) I think to give kids, you know a passage with a prompt, and maybe 2 or 3 so they get to choose which one they could best answer. (So are you talking about responding to literature?) Right, right. And then they could have whatever, 50 minutes, however long the class is to write as freely as they can, a much as they can. And not concern themselves too, too much with grammar and spelling. But, the first time I had to do an in-class essay exam in college, it was terrifying. Even though I had done that, in AP, but it was still terrifying. And I think that's a really valuable skill that they can be able to take to college—to be able to write like that, and organize it in*

your head. I think when doing in-class writings, I know I was always afraid. I felt like I couldn't brain-storm beforehand. So I think that's so important to be able to jot down a couple of things . . . I don't know that I necessarily believe in a strict writing process, but it's definitely beneficial to get those thoughts down on paper before. (What is the writing process?) See, I don't . . . my writing process? It's different, no matter what I write. So when I'm writing a research paper, I'll do my research, find my quotes, I type up my quotes, arrange them, on the page, based on topic, and then fill in the blanks. That's how I write when I'm writing a research paper. But, when I'm writing creatively I just throw down whatever comes to my head, and don't worry about, or . . . (You don't think about the brain-storming, the writing, the revising, the writing, the revising, the writing, the revising, the editing?) When I do a research paper I do. But, not at the onset. Later on. But when I'm doing creative writing, I just want to get, whatever. . .

What about students doing peer reviews of each other's writing? Do you like that? *I think that's good, yeah, I really do. Um, I think it's really nerve-wracking, for sure. But maybe if you have the students not have their name on their papers, assign them a number or something might make it easier. Because I remember doing that in high school and being scared that someone would . . . (So what's the benefits?) Um, getting someone else's perspective. You know, I was always told growing up that whenever you write something as many people as you can get to read it, the better it is. And I agree with that. Even if "So-and-So" isn't good at grammar, he can still say something that would help you. Whether it's transitions or flow or whatever. So, I think it's definitely, the more I, and even if you don't agree with what they say, it's worthwhile.*

So, you see yourself being a grammar teacher? *Um, (laugh) I'll have to. (Because?) I think it's important. (Because?) To make articulate students. (Articulate written, or articulate orally?) Both. I think if you incorporate it in a more, you know, I don't want to have a grammar unit for two weeks, I think that's horrible, boring. But I think if you incorporate it, you know, day-to-day, as you see something, maybe if you're going through a poem or a novel, and you see some sort of device or something. It would be good to say, "Hey" and point it out. That will be something to see what's most effective, I mean. I don't know what I'll do. (What have you seen the teachers do that you've observed?) Um, I watched (cooperating teacher) as she was teaching a research paper assignment, and she did a lot then. Day-to-day she didn't do much. And since I was there second semester, I'm not exactly sure what she did at the beginning of the year. Um, and then in (X's) class they were writing their big, um big essay of the semester over "Things Fall Apart" and he was getting really frustrated because there were so many weird stupid little mistakes, and the kids weren't even using spell check. Like there were words run together, things like that, and so he was showing them some things on the board he'd written down 4 mistakes. And of course, these kids were so outgoing, they were like, "That was mine. That was mine." (They were really proud of it?) Right, so, but that's how he did that. Just showed them the problems in their work. And I think they responded to that, even though they*

admitted it was theirs, they didn't want it to be up there in the first place, so. I think they were trying to do better after. But I know some teachers, I've heard of teachers doing, especially in EOI years, doing a grammar practice. And just going through that. Just to get through it. (So do you think that you'll do that?) Yeah, I think it's beneficial. It's just hard not to work on it. I'm a grammar nazi. All my friends come to me with their papers and I can't write without correcting myself. So. . . (Even when you free write?) When I was in (X's) class he would tell us to just ignore it, and my brain didn't want to do that, but it was good for me at that time to go through that process.

Where'd you go to high school? (Name of School) I actually had (Cooperating Teacher). So, it's kinda cool. It's a whole different perspective. (So do you think you'll teach a little bit like her?) Yeah, I hope so. I don't know if you know her very well, but everyone that I've told that I'm student teaching with her, they just call her a master teacher. She is amazing. I'm glad I'm starting here with her, um, I'm glad that she's letting me come on Wednesday, early, for the first day of class. So I'm really excited to see how she starts the year. She just has a rapport with her students that I really haven't seen in any of the other teachers that I've observed, any other English teacher I've observed. And, kids keep coming back to her for her opinion. When I was in her class, she intimidated me, when I was in class with her, but now she doesn't. (Why did she intimidate you?) Cause I just thought she was so smart. She was so much more knowledgeable. I felt like I was stupid next to her. But, she's so personable at the same time that I got over that pretty quickly when I was in class with her. She works really, really, well with those AP kids. But, even in her regular class, she has some kids that just, they're athletes and they just don't really care, but she got through to them. I mean, she had to set one of the boys down, and tell him, you know, "You're not going to graduate." And he was wanting to go to OU and play basketball. And he wanted her recommendation. And she really felt like she couldn't and feel right about it. But she finally talked to him and he realized he needed to take everything more seriously. He worked his butt off through the rest of the semester. He needed somebody to say that to him, you know. I think (cooperating teacher) will give me suggestions and will help me, but I think she'll let me do what I want to do, which will be really, really fun.

Appendix B

Partial Transcriptions of Final Interviews

Final Intern (Mitch) Interview *(Male, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 9th grade English class in a suburban area high school.)*

Let's go back to the subject of our first interview which was how well prepared you think those classes you took all those years in college, how well they prepared you to teach writing. Now from this perspective, having this experience under your belt, what would you say about that? How would you address that? *I think that the experience of writing—this kinda sounds like a cop-out, but I'll say it anyway—I think the experience of writing so much in college helped. It's learning to teach by doing, is the way that I have gotten to be able to teach it as good as I can, or as bad as I can. It's based on my experiences of writing. Not to say you have to be a good writer to teach it well, but at least understand the struggles better, uh, so my writing experiences whether it be in education classes or English classes or whatever, um, and whether they were creative writing, like the stories I wrote in my creative writing classes, or formal writing like the essays I wrote for my other classes, I think that helps a ton. But as far as my education classes, my methods courses, um, field experiences, I can't really recall, eh, any meaningful, well, I'm sure there's meaningful experiences in there, but nothing jumps out as a staple of the process that really made it effective, or really took effect on me to teach writing. (So you didn't develop a, kind of, a folder of stuff in those courses that you could go and pull this out, and pull that out and look at it . . . ?) I think that more, yeah . . . I really think that, I can't think of the name of the course, it's one that (X) taught, maybe the teaching grammar course? I think he shaped my perspective, maybe not he, but the class, however you want to put it, shaped my perspective on the writing process. And I don't think that I would have, prior to my college experience, would have had the opinion about writing, or what it does, or how effective it is in student thought development or student idea development. I don't think I would have had that without my education classes. I think the teaching grammar class is one that we talked about, um, some of the, uh, what I call progressive, um, strategies for instructing writing, and that just has to do with free writes, with informal writes, with consistently having students write down their thoughts, whether that is in bell work or whether it's in journaling or time once a week to write whatever you want to write, book reports, whatever it is. (So that's a general concept you took away from that class.) Yeah, it's something that, it's, it was shaped by the conversations that I had in classes typically that (X) was the instructor of. Young Adult Lit, I think was another one because with the discussion of the stories and the books that we read, we talked about how to get students involved or interactive with those texts, and I think that we had conversations about writing responses in that class. I guess maybe I didn't realize, I can't think of a tangible moment, or a tangible . . . uh, class that stands out for sure, but I think overall, the discussions I had in those two classes, uh, (So you're talking mostly about forming your theoretical base?) Yeah, absolutely. (Not necessarily how-to's?) Yeah, actually I think that's how to put it perfectly. (So, you're talking about your theory. This is good because of this, but you're not really talking about "how-to" teach. You're talking*

about . . .) Yeah, that's a perfect way to put it because, I'm still, uh, on trial and error basis as far as what works. I mean I know that the kids that I've taught this semester sort of grumble when they hear, "All right, we're going to write for 5 minutes non-stop." They don't really like that, and maybe it's the way that I've worded it, or the way that I presented it, because I know that it's been effective in a couple of my friends' classes. So, the how-to's, as in what works and what doesn't, may not be what I learned, but I it shaped a very strong theory about teaching writing. (It's shaped what you believe about teaching?) Yeah. I think that's very good. (And so you think your personal writing, has what you've learned through that shaped part of your theory, or ?) Um, I think that my theory has been supported by my experiences with writing. I never used to enjoy writing, I was very intimidate by it, and I kind of romanticized the idea of the writing process, like it was just something that advanced people did, and it was something that only those who had an interesting thing or a unique thing to say did. But I learned that the usefulness of writing is so much more than just the writing process. It is idea articulation, opinion articulation, it validates your existence in your world because it de-formalizes everybody else's opinion, because they go through the same thing, the same process that you do. Whenever I produced a paper, it was a paper along with these other papers that smart kids wrote. So, I understood that my opinion's were just as valid, they were equal in weight and equal in effort to the smarter kids and to the less smarter kids—that we were all just communicating ideas, and that ideas weren't static. They were, they fluctuated and they went through a dynamic process. When you wrote something down, it wasn't set in stone. It can be altered, it can be continually edited. Maybe until it's published, but it still can be edited, you can change your mind. I think that it helped. My writing helped in understanding that opinions were OK, you know, and that the people that I was writing about, if it was a philosophy class, and the philosopher had changed his mind over the years, whatever the case. The writing processes was OK, it was approachable. (Sounds to me like what you're offering your students when you're teaching writing is the opportunity to find their own voice.) Yes, that's 100% correct. Student voice is a big part of the solution to a lot of hang-ups that I see in education. And I haven't been in it that long at all, yet. But, I've been studying it, and whether it's diversification of instruction and applying relevance to under-achieving, under-represented groups of students, it's strongly attached to their association with the academic world. One of the ways I see to bridge the gap between these student groups and the world that is school is for representation of something that they can relate to. I think that they have to be represented in opinion, voice, content, that they have to represented by all those things in the world that is school, and if not, then I think that there's no reason to engage in it. So if we can start with their own voice, with "what you say is relevant, therefore what happens to you is relevant, therefore the things that will affect you are relevant." Then, whatever the student's cultural background is, if they are validated, then I think they begin to engage. So, if we can get them to articulate their own ideas, then the ideas become relevant, and their voice becomes relevant, then all these other things are much more easy to be effective, whether

it's teaching of creative writing, teaching the 5 paragraph essay, the timed writing responses, they will at least validate the perspective of the instructor, if they know that their voice has been validated by that teacher. So yes, student voice, I think is . . . Something that has been just a general observation of mine is that to have an effect on, or be able to manipulate the world you live in, you have to be able to name it, you have to be able to talk about it in a meaningful way. And if you don't have the words to talk about the things that you see right about it, or the things that you see wrong about it. If you notice a phenomenon and you kind of get a guttural response to it, and you kind of grunt and you say, "good" or "bad." Well then you've been keen in your observation, but you've been limited in your articulation. If a person is able to say, "This isn't right," and when the person in power says, "What isn't right?" then they say, "My school has less resources than that other school, and I notice that that school has more tax dollars going into it. What can I do to get my school more tax dollars?" Then that person in power will, at least, have to explain why they're not getting the tax dollars. Yeah, I would say that student voice is, or person, personal voice, allows you to develop an identity, it allows you to name yourself in your world, allows you to have an effect on your world, helps you to manipulate your world. I think without it, you are constantly being acted upon, and you never get to be active.

On the whole, what is your perception of the effectiveness of the English Education program at OU in preparing teachers of writing for the various genres they will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *I feel like it's been effective um, in sort of the common responsive way. Uh, we turn something in and they respond to it about what is good and what is not, um. I do feel like it was a little lacking in uh, training in instruction, like as a teacher, these things are effective, these things are not. As a teacher, um these are basic principles that should always be followed, um these are things that maybe should not. If there was a course in the things that I mentioned earlier, I think it would have helped a lot. In my own comfort level as I begin teaching. I'm sure I'll learn all those things through teaching, trial and error. What we had in our methods course was group discussions, it was sort of a. . . What's funny is it's something that I thought was really good, I really liked at the time, it was just kind of a "cum by yah" sort of time, which was good, I don't mean to down play it—it was a very effective way of discussing ideas, but like I said, there was never, at the end of the day, and maybe it's the nature of education, I didn't feel like I had gained a tangible skill to take into the teaching arena. I think it was like supposed to be, really like the bridging of the content of our English degree, the bridging of it to the Education part. How to take the literature that we know, and the things we know about producing literature, and producing writing, and combine it with the teaching principles we learned. How to take the developmental ideas that we learned in our child development courses, and apply those to teaching. There were things that you could infer, but it was never paired extra-effectively.*

Final Intern (Cheryl) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 9th grade class, pre-AP English in a suburban high school.)*

Now that you've had this semester of experience, reflect back on what we talked about back at the first of the semester so far as the preparation for teaching writing that you had in your college experience. Talk to me about how you feel about it now. *I still feel the same way, that my undergrad experience really didn't help prepare me at all for this. My cooperating teacher had the same experience with her undergrad education as well. We were taught the types of writing, but were not taught how to properly instruct our students. (OK, so what has helped you.) My cooperating teacher's experience, some worksheets that she had created from workbooks that she has received at AP conferences and Pre-AP conferences. She has been the main inspiration for my instruction, rather than a textbook.*

So, none of your classes at OU proved helpful in teaching you about teaching writing? *I had one class, it was the worst class I've ever been in, but I learned so much, in that, when we had papers due we would peer edit in class. We would have writing conferences with our peers. So, if we were in a group, which our class was split—half were English majors and half were English Ed, literally, there was a line down the middle of the classroom. And so all of my friends and I would sit in a group and grade each other's papers, critique each other's papers. So that really helped me to see how my other classmates were writing and how to help myself. (Have you done peer reviews with your students?) Oh absolutely. On our archetype papers which they are working on in my English class, they had a peer editing sheet and were in groups of 3. So they had a chance to peer-edit two papers, and then they had to turn that peer editing sheet in with their final draft, which helped the students more than anything, see how each other, how each of their classmates were writing.*

Overall, what is your perception of the effectiveness of the English Education program at OU in preparing teachers of writing for the various genres they will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, I think that there could have been more instruction on different types of creative um writing. I think research we do that a lot in just our general education classes just through the English department having to write papers and essays and that the formula part is really taken care of through that, but I would have liked to have seen more ways and methods, techniques that would involve creative writing through um, literature in classic works and young adult lit. And to be able to show kids that it is something that is um valuable, and it's something that they can use and something that they could like to do. (So you think that it would be applied in a lot of different areas, not just something separate, but tied to a lot of pieces of literature and that kind of stuff it would have been. . .?) Yes, I wish that there were more creative aspects to what we learned in our education classes on writing instead of just formal things, because I think we got a lot of that. Really, our methods classes were just basic rant sessions. Talk about our day, what went well in the*

classroom and what didn't. But it was never, I look at my notebooks now and it's just like little anecdotes about what to do—it's more classroom management than it was writing instruction.

Have you drawn from your own personal experience while teaching writing? *Oh, absolutely. When we did our biography poems a couple of weeks ago, I wrote one on the board for my students to draw off of. When we did our sonnet experience two weeks ago, we uh, I copied a couple of pages out of my Shakespeare book and had them ready for them. So, yes, personal experience has been a huge help with my instruction. (Do you think your undergrad experience formed your theory, or your philosophy about teaching writing?) A little, but not as much as actually being in the classroom teaching writing, because in the classroom we can actually do the writing conferences and the peer editing and that sort of stuff, and while sitting in a classroom for 3 hours a night, we're not instructed how to teach writing. I don't think I ever developed a philosophy until this semester. (So your philosophy has developed as you have practiced this semester?) Yes. (What is your philosophy about teaching writing?) I believe that writing should start from the ground up. The students need to realize that they're not going to be great writers at the beginning, and that they need the practice, and that they need the constant reassurance that they're doing something right. That they're, you know, even if they're just putting words on a page, that's writing, that's not garbage. I think they need to know that.*

So what do you think, when you start teaching in your own classroom, your own writing, by yourself, without your [cooperating] teacher, how do you think you're going to approach that at the beginning? *I am going to tell them exactly what I just said, that whether you put 5 words on a page or 50 words on a page, you have a wonderful start.*

What about the different types of writing? Do you have approaches for teaching the different types now besides just getting them started? *Yes, the research paper we'll go with is one that I feel the students can delve into, one that has the most topics that can branch off of it. Narrative, expository, writer's notebooks, journaling, all very important because it gets them writing. So, yeah, there's definite lines of where I want them going. (So you have strategies now for teaching that you didn't have when you started this semester?) Right. Exactly. When I started I was like, "Oh my God. How am I going to do this? I have no experience teaching this." And throughout this semester and throughout this experience I've learned so much that I feel comfortable now going into a classroom of my own and teaching writing.*

Final Intern (Ginger) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in an 11th grade AP English class in a suburban high school.)*

Now that you've had this semester of experience, reflect back on what we talked about back at the first of the semester so far as the preparation for teaching writing that you had in your college experience. Talk to me about how you feel about it now.   *Dr. (X's) class prepared us for creating lesson plans, and like coming up with ideas, but as far as like, offering us a million different types of essays to teach, or strategies, not so much. I feel like a planned good lesson plans, but nothing like actually taking the steps to actually delivering the lessons. (What class was that specifically? What was the name of the class?) The teaching grammar, and then the methods class. (So, tell me how you've developed your strategies this semester.) Um, at first I knew for a fact that students should be writing every day to improve, but I really think that the teacher conferences are what . . . my biggest thing is . . . I'm definitely going to use a lot more than I used this semester. That was a part of it that could have been used more. Um, (You mean conferences with students over their writing?) Yes, like making them mandatory instead of optional. (What do you do during conferences that helps their writing?) Um, if their writing's unclear I just ask them what they're trying to say. I don't tell them what's right and what's wrong. I mark what's good, but if something's unclear, I ask them to explain it better. If they're not analyzing, I'll talk about how to analyze what they're trying to say. Stuff like that, not just reading their paper, marking notes, giving back to them. (So you think going over each part of it with them, talking about it . . . So what do you do to actually get them to get stuff on paper?) We usually, mainly my [cooperating] teacher, she'll start, she'll introduce the type of essay that we write, and she'll give them the thesis statement for that particular essay. But as far as like, outlining their paper, she lets that be up to them. So, we'll start out with a thesis statement, and maybe they'll read their intro paragraph, or maybe give us a couple of their main points that they're going to talk about. We usually do one day preparation like that, and then the rest is on their own.*

You've already gotten a job. Is it going to be AP, or just the regular basic English? *Regular English, sophomore.* So what kind of stuff are you going to use there when you're not looking at those AP type essays? *Well, I'm taking over in the middle of the year, and she does a journaling and a bell work everyday, which I've always wanted to do in my classroom, that's not the structure of the class that I'm teaching in now. So, I think journaling is important, and giving them some sort of a writing assignment with each unit whether it's formal or creative. I'm definitely going to do that.*
So, do you think that your undergrad experience helped form your theory, or your philosophy about teaching writing? *I think some of the literature that we read in the classes helped develop that theory, but a lot of it's just different now, because I've actually been teaching it for the whole semester, so that's been my main development, this semester, not the undergrad. (So just actually getting in there and doing it?) Yeah. Actual practice. Out of our three field experiences, only*

one is in our English Ed class, and it doesn't require for us to teach anything, it's just suggested. (So there's not really an opportunity for practice before the student teaching semester?) Right, I mean if the teacher you're observing wants you to, you can, but some of the teachers that you're observing think that you're only there for observing, not for teaching, so it really just depends. My teacher [in the earlier field observation] let me teach like a small part of a lesson on like one or two days of a unit. But as far as like actually starting something and finishing it, there's none of that. (So are you saying your first two field experiences were not in English classes?) Right, yeah. One was in "School in American Culture" which was a terrible class, and one was in the EIPT 3483, the Cognition, Motivation, whatever. (So, where did you observe in those two experiences?) One was in an inner-city school. The second, the EIPT, was in a rural school. I was at Noble, and then the third one was in Norman at the high school with one of the English classes. (So what was the point of those first two field observations?) In the first, it was to observe like the school environment and the cultural aspects, mostly to see how not to be a teacher. The teachers there didn't seem to care at all. Really though, your time there is for mainly observing the surroundings of the school, it's not so much instruction focused at all. And then, the second one, it's about classroom management and like . . . I think we created an essay, it's mainly like motivation and the hierarchy of learning, stuff like that. And that required observation, but I think we just wrote a final paper over . . . for all of our observations. On that last one we had to come up with a mock classroom and write out the rules and regulations and procedures you would use if a student broke a rule. Which, I felt it was helpful, but we didn't get to implement it, so it's just rhetoric, just theory.

How has your personal writing affected the way you teach writing? *I haven't written personally pretty much at all this semester. Well, I mean, I guess I have in my reflection journal, so I mean I guess that, but I mean that was required of me to do. (What about your past personal experiences, have those influenced the way you've taught writing?) Um, yes because, especially through my literature classes, I'm implementing a lot of that stuff in the unit that I'm doing now, so, um, so my college classes, just ideas from those, I'm using actual essays that I wrote and read in those classes in my class right now. I've gotten ideas on like, a lesson, but as far as like, to teach a writing assignment, nothing in my college career, I don't think . . . Yes, and I take it back, I had a creative writing short story class and a creative writing intro to poetry class, and that's exactly what we did. My short story class was in a summer class, so we would write, you know, one, 10-15 page short story per week, and everyone would take it home on certain days, and they would read it, and then we would talk about each story, what we didn't understand here, or what was good. So that's helped like, because I've done the group peer editing in both of my classes, creative writing and AP English, so that helps because I knew that helped me. I did do that.*

Final Intern (Hannah) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 6th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

Now that you've had this semester of experience, reflect back on what we talked about back at the first of the semester so far as the preparation for teaching writing that you had in your college experience. Talk to me about how you feel about it now.   *I think they really have prepared me quite well for teaching writing. Probably some of the methods classes and projects, and especially the MGRP (multi-genre research project), I actually used that for my students perspective writing, I feel like I was really prepared to do that.   What I did with MGRP as well was we went through some research aspects of writing, and just kind of the basics because I am in a lower [grade] level. But, got started on that, and got to analyze their work a little bit, but, you know, just those first steps, again because it was a lower level, but I feel like I did it, and I was pretty prepared to do that. (You talked specifically about your methods class, was there any other class besides the methods class?) Definitely my literature classes, I mean, the English department classes taught me how to write in all those different forms and ways, and how to analyze writing, and how to, um, you know the grammar, sentence structure, all those types of things. All of that practice is what I really pull from.*

How did they teach you how to write? Did they say, "this is how to write", or what did they do that taught you how to write? *Um, some of them told me specifically what to write on and how to write persuasive essays and things like that. Um, argumentative essays, or tone analysis, those types of things. I just kind of, for my kids since they, I mean they're just starting out, I definitely took the basics of that and just kind of shortened it appropriate to their level. (So was it the writing assignments that you did for these classes, you think helped?) Yes. (And did you get feedback from the instructors on your writing?) Yes, very much. That I got. Lots of feedback from instructors which helped, especially in the first years of college that you don't know exactly what they're expecting, so definitely the feedback and written notes in the columns and things like that, definitely helped, which is something that I also do with my kids. (So, you are emulating the way you were instructed?) Yes.*

So what about your education classes do you think helped you in teaching? *Um, definitely the methods classes and, um, . . . (Specifically in your methods class, what did you do, what did you learn, what did you take specifically?) Just strategies on, . . . let me think . . . hold on just a second. . . How to teach literature and writing in combination with one another. (Like writing responses to literature?) Yes, writing responses to literature, journaling activities, um, writing letters, writing articles from different character perspectives, that's how we used the literature most often, is to write from a character's perspective, and from the author's perspective—why do you think the author is writing this way? (What about lesson plans, did they help you with that?) Yes, methods definitely help with writing lesson plans. So did all of the field experience classes—I don't*

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remember the names and numbers off of the top of my head—but those definitely helped with creating lessons. I also think that the psychology of it really helped knowing what to write on a student's paper to help motivate and not discourage them and things like that.

Overall, what is your perception of the effectiveness of the English Education program at OU in preparing teachers of writing for the various genres they will be expected to teach at the secondary level? *Um, I think that there could have been more instruction on different types of creative um writing. I think research we do that a lot in just our general education classes just through the English department having to write papers and essays and that the formula part is really taken care of through that, but I would have liked to have seen more ways and methods, techniques that would involve creative writing through um, literature in classic works and young adult lit. And to be able to show kids that it is something that is um, valuable, and it's something that they can use and something that they could like to do. (So you think that it would be applied in a lot of different areas, not just something separate, but tied to a lot of pieces of literature and that kind of stuff it would have been. . .?) Yes, I wish that there were more creative aspects to what we learned in our education classes on writing instead of just formal things, because I think we got a lot of that. I remember, um, doing more of the things—like we would have like probably mini-lessons on short stories, but they were um, like reading passages and then we would respond. Basically we were doing the activities, but it was a lot of discussion methods instead of, um, specific instruction or um, creative, not necessarily creative, but um, more involvement, or project or rubric ideas, units—things that were longer than mini-lessons, is kind of the methods that I remember are all mini lessons, instead of things that can carry out further than just getting something started. It didn't seem like it was complete at the end. I didn't feel like I could. . . all those mini-lessons ended up I guess, adding to what my unit was, but, I didn't feel as if those mini-lessons would take up an entire class period and that I could successfully teach the class just based off of those mini-lessons. So, I thought I needed more instruction on how to continue that.*

A couple of the other interns have mentioned the teaching grammar class. Did you find that helpful in teaching writing? *Yes, I did, and I actually still have that book and I still look at it from time to time trying to, you know, . . . (What book is it?) I think it was Teaching Grammar. (So does it give strategies?) No. It actually is kind of like a dictionary with all of the grammar terms in it that have ever been made up or exist. (laugh) (So how does that inform your teaching of writing?) Well, uh, if I look at something and I say, "Um maybe that's not exactly right," then I need to go back and refer to that book. Right now I'm kinda at the beginning stages of the . . . this getting my students into writing, um, but I think that it will become very useful, um, at a higher level of teaching writing because it would help them form styles and still be grammatically correct, and things like that.*

So, what would you say your theory about teaching writing is at this point? *I think that, definitely you have to look at the kids that you are teaching, first of all, and the types of learners that they are. If you want to teach novels, you're gonna have to teach a novel at some point, you've gotta also remember that writing is gonna be in there. That's what you're reading is you're reading writing, so take that opportunity to definitely use that as a tool. Also, I think that using language, using common language to teach grammar and to teach writing is a very good tool. Especially for lower level learning students and your top students as well. It's maybe a little easier for them to grasp that than just straight literature. (So why do you want your students to learn to write?) Because I think that they have to. That's what our society is built on is writing and reading, and if they can write, they can read better, if they can read better, they can write better. That combination goes hand-in-hand for me, and I don't think that you should focus just on writing for 6 weeks, and just on reading for another 6 weeks. It needs to be a combination of all of the above. (And that goes beyond academics in your life?) Yes. I know that some of my students won't continue their education [beyond high school], some will, and that's just our world. We have to read and we have to write. There's just no end to it. So for them to be successful human beings, um, they need to be able to do that.*

Final Intern (Alan) Interview *(Male, 27 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in an 11th grade class in a suburban high school.)*

Tell me how the expectations you had at the beginning of this semester were or were not realized as the semester progressed. *I was extremely nervous about entering into that environment where I'm not really the teacher, but I'm not a student. And the way it ended up working out was, the hardest part was getting used to the fact that I was an authority in the classroom, and that I was really scared like, "When I speak, are these students going to listen to me, or know what I'm talking about?" I'm just a kid myself, and I quickly found out that they looked up to me as a teacher, and I had to get comfortable in my role in that, and know that when I speak that they're going to be listening to what I say, and writing down what I say, and doing what I say. So I was nervous about it, but it ended up working out, I was alright. And the fears that I had were unfounded. I was also nervous about my teacher, about how we'd get along, and how that relationship would work, and again, it was . . . I mean it was perfect.*

Go ahead and talk about that a little more, since you brought him up. Do you think that he was a big factor in your success this semester, or do you think that it was simply just good that you got along with each other? *I think he was definitely a huge factor as far as, when I was getting started, by being a go-between between the kids and myself. Letting them know that "this is the student teacher and you should listen to him and act like you do when it's me standing up there." And then, as far as the countless tips and advice, like after a lesson I would give, he'd say, "maybe do this, or try this" and I could go to him and say, "do you think this would work, or what do you think about that?" He was always more than happy to help me out, and if he wasn't there I would have struggled a whole lot more as far as trying to get everything under control in my lessons and stuff.*

Did you actually get to take and implement any of the things from your classes at OU during your internship? *Nothing specific, but all the lesson plans I churned out while trying to get my degree, that came in handy so that I could just write up a lesson plan pretty easily. I basically had that template in my head that I could just go through a figure out objectives, procedures, activities, and so on, so it really helped me with organization and being able to just get those things done.*

After your experience this semester, how would you describe your teaching style? *I think my style kind of reflects my belief that the students should be responsible for their own learning. So while I'm there, I know I'm there to give instruction, I've found that I like to give instruction, and then step back and let them go after it. I want to be approachable, where if they have a question, or anything, I definitely want them to come ask me, but I don't over-explain, I don't coddle them, I don't think. And that's one difference that I saw between myself and my cooperating teacher. A lot of times, I noticed his instructions would be a lot more explicit and elaborate, and I kind of tend to give you a rubric, or give you an instruction and then expect you to be able to do the work. If you have any*

question, then you come back and ask me. I'm a little more laid-back, I think. There were some of the problems that I had with my classroom management at times, where I don't tend to be really forceful or loud, and tell you how I expect you to act or behave, but I expect you to do that. At times I think I need to work on being a little more forceful. (So did you get from students what you hoped to get with your style of instruction? Did you see a difference in what you got and what your cooperating teacher got?) Um, I think he got results, maybe a little more quickly than I did, sometimes looking at it, because I think students should get a chance to grapple with it a little be first, and then if they're having trouble, come and ask me questions, so, of course that takes a little bit longer than if I tell you step-by-step how I want you to do something, and there's a time and place for that, I think, too, where you just need to tell them, just do this, then this, and this . . . But I also believe it's important to let them grapple with things sometimes. (So you weren't dissatisfied with the response that you got from your students?) Usually not, um, there were times when I was like, "you couldn't understand that?" and they were just like, "what, what? I have another question." But, if it was everybody, then I would go back and, because sometimes it would be like, it was so simple but, they just don't get it. That was frustrating. (Do you use modeling? Do you do things and let the students emulate you in certain ways, or follow your lead?) I think I do that usually when I think that they don't get it. I let them try it their way, and then I like, "If I were to do it like this, then . . ." that's the kind of path I take. (So that's more your second line of reinforcement, maybe?) Exactly, because I want to let them do their own way, if that works for them, then fine, but if not, then I'll say, "well, try it this way." (So you don't want to feel like they're just copying you?) Exactly. Like, if I give them an example, and I say like, "Here's an example of how to analyze style in this paragraph." Then, what I get back is exactly what I just gave them, almost, so . . .

What do you think about group work? *Depending upon the situation. I think in can dissolve quickly into just chatter and you can end up getting stuck with one group of students while another group over there is messing around. So I think, with that, it's how you pair them. Like I really wouldn't let them pick their own groups, I don't think. (What kind of assignments do you think can be done in group work?) Like peer reviews of their writing, pairing the stronger ones with the people that are struggling a little bit. And, maybe some reading response. Like, I had a teacher, she does this really interesting group work where she'll pair groups like according to gender or race and see how they respond differently. I don't know if I could do that in high school. Some really sensitive issues came up because of those groupings. She did this other one where she put like 4 people in the middle, and everyone else around them, and those 4 had a discussion while everyone else listened. Then at the end, if you were in the outside group, if you had something to contribute, then you'd kick it in. I think most of it depends on know the students first. Like I wouldn't do that at the beginning of the year without knowing the students and their levels. I don't think group work is necessary, but it has some plusses depending on what you're*

doing. I'm trying to stay open-minded about everything so I can roll with whatever, because I am the rookie, so, (laugh).

Final Intern (Christine) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 6th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

I just want you to tell me how this semester measured up to your expectations coming in. *I think, first of all, that I had a perfect fit with my cooperating teacher. She met every expectation, filled every need, answered every question. And I really do feel prepared to go into my own classroom. (So do you think that if you had not had a cooperating teacher that had not been everything that you said, that . . . ?) It would have been the worst time of my life. (Really?) Yes, because her and I were so close, I mean, I called her the night I got engaged, because we had become so close. I just think that, if I didn't have that relationship with her—I felt completely comfortable to come to her with everything, any question—even about my outside life. You know, because when you have things come up, or you have frustrations, and you go, "Oh by the way, my dog ran away last night too." I needed to know that she was gonna be open with that, and care about me. And I was the same way with her. I think that we developed a very close relationship, so it allowed me to ask all the questions I needed to ask, like "what would you really do in this situation?" or "did I do an OK job?". Every single class period I taught I always grabbed her and I said, "What did you think about, that? Please tell me the honest to God truth." I was so worried about, that, you know, I was missing something. I needed someone just to tell me honestly, "you did good." (So she really made the difference for you this semester.) Yes, I can't imagine doing it somewhere I wasn't comfortable, I don't think I'd want to. I think I would have stopped. And I really think that that's why so many, I'm doing a study right now on first year teachers and the problems that happen, and I think that if no one was there to guide me and tell me the things that I did wrong or right, I think I would hate teaching.*

So tell me, what in your classes at OU maybe was lacking that made you feel you needed her so much? *There was just a lack of a sense of reality about the classroom. You know, you always hear all these people, you always hear "this happens, that happens, expect this, expect that." But, in the end you have no idea what it will be like to sit there for 8 hours and do this, answer this, be prepared for this. . . I had no idea what 6th grade material was, first of all, I didn't even know, someone asked me what a predicate was the first day. I said, "well, let me review, and I'll get back to you." I think that we're prepared for high school, we're prepared for, you know, that literature, we're prepared for . . . I could tell them anything they want to know about the history of English, but when they asked me the common questions or they asked me books to read, and I'm like, "well, let me see, how old are you, and what can you read, what would mom and dad let you read?". And I think that (cooperating teacher) really, really helped. I had to make a connection with those kids, and if I'd tried to give them something that was above their level, I think I would have hated middle school and would have wanted to do something older. But, (cooperating teacher) helped me to see, and I had a passion going into it, but for the older kids. (So, you had good content knowledge from OU?) Great content knowledge. And, the*

education program was wonderful, it was, you know I absolutely loved everything we did in there, but I did not use one of my lesson plans I created, because they were all for . . . I mean the way they were created did not really fit into this school system, the way the day was run. (So, did you use any of your activities?) Yes, we used a lot of the quick writes, we did images, we did all that, but it wasn't like I thought it would be, it was like pieces, and in the end we still had to do the different tests and things for the district. And the questions the kids asked, I don't think I was prepared for, I didn't have many answers. Also the time management of it, I mean, there was just a lot that (cooperating teacher) really helped me through. But, I think that's the purpose of it, of the internship. But, I really did feel like we were . . . like I felt like I was just thrown in, and I was going into it feeling prepared, you know, I wasn't feeling like, "Oh my gosh, I'm dreading this." I was really excited. And I think I was ready, really, I'm mean, I never just sat there like I'm not quite ready for this moment, but there were a lot of times like I would just think, "what am I doing wrong?" You know, I was doing exactly what I had been told to do, but what was I doing wrong, why wasn't it working? And so I think that (cooperating teacher) was able to answer those questions. And also, reading now, classroom management, I just keep going back and thinking, "why did we not study this, why didn't we study it for middle school?" Are we just assuming that everyone wants to do high school? Someone has to teach 6th through 8th grade. It never frustrated me to the point that I was upset, it just made me think a lot. And, that caused a lot of self reflection.

Tell me what you think your teaching style is. *I am, I really like student-led discussion. You and I have talked about that a lot. Like when we're in the class room, and I learned this straight from (cooperating teacher), was just to kind of let the kids go. And not let them go crazy obviously, but really let their questions kind of guide the discussion, because we don't know where it's going to go. We talk about stories, we talk about books, we talk about anything, you know, even grammar, and let them kind of lead it a little bit. Give them some room to answer and ask without just saying, "No, right, wrong." I would describe myself as just more of a facilitator, and I also kind of, I mean we formed the curriculum almost what they were interested in. (Did you use modeling?) Yes, especially with the poetry, I let them watch me, watch my mind kind of mess up as I write, and, you know, let them see my mistakes. Then they go, "Oh, OK, so we can just cross through, so we don't have to erase." And you know, I think that my teaching style is very much that way. You know, we're not necessarily erasing anything that's wrong, we're just kind of crossing over and going to the next thing. (So have you had teachers that gave you that kind of model?) Not any English teachers, but math teachers. But, (cooperating teacher) is that kind of teacher. We're both that way, we were just talking about this today. We don't want them to answer . . . even test questions where we have A, B, C, D, answers, they have to write the letter, and then go back into the text to find a quote to support why they wrote that letter. I think that's just like showing your work in math. It shows the thought process. Because they need to learn how to support their thinking. I think that's something that I do when I'm teaching, is supporting my thinking, and not just*

telling them it's this way, but why. I try to relate it to what they are doing right there.

Final Intern (Emily) Interview *(Female, 23 years old, all undergraduate work at OU, interning in a 12th grade class in a suburban middle school.)*

Tell me how the expectations you had at the beginning of this semester were or were not realized as the semester progressed. *I had a lot of anxiety going in about pretty much everything, but about observations and those things. But, I knew my cooperating teacher prior to my internship, so I think that helped, but I was also anxious about her expectations of me. Does that make sense? Because, I did have her when I was in high school, and then I observed her, recently. So I was worried that I wouldn't live up to, or, you know, I guess that her expectations would be so high, which they were, and she did push me, but in a good way, and it all worked out well. I was also anxious about um, just getting to know the students, how easy or hard that would be and classroom management issues. And that all worked out I feel like as I got to know them and got to know how they responded to me, and to (cooperating teacher), and, um, just how that all worked out. I felt really good about a month in; basically after the first observation, I felt like, very comfortable, and that all those anxieties and fears were irrational.*

Did you actually get to take and implement any of the things from your classes at OU during your internship? *I used some ideas, but not really any of the lesson plans I had created for my classes. But, I did have concepts of how to teach certain things. When I did the Beowulf unit, a lot of those ideas when creating that unit—I used a lot of anticipation guides and stuff like that.*

You had a unique situation in that you were a student in your cooperating teacher's class before you were her intern. How much did her influence factor into your success? *Well, the fact that we knew each other ahead of time, she knew how I was as a student, which translated, I think, into how I will be as a teacher. That basis helped, we didn't have to go through any of that "getting to know you" stuff. So I think it was right off that first day we were a team. And she made sure that the students knew that and knew that I was to be taken just as seriously as she was. And also, this year was interesting in that the other AP teacher in her department was just a second year teacher, even though she was also teaching AP, so we all were sort of a team, and (cooperating teacher) would mention something when I wasn't teaching, she would say something like, "Mrs. F. and Ms. L., and I . . ." I mean it was always like a team effort. So I think just little things, and even when she was teaching almost everyday that she taught, she would turn and ask me a question, and that would incorporate me into the lesson. She teaches seniors, so she would often use me for a reference as to what college is really like, and that sort of thing, so that really helped. And also, every time I taught we would stop afterward and talk about what went well, what didn't go well, and she would always start that off with, "what do you think went well?" And we would talk from there. Always offering me good advice.*

After your experience this semester, how would you describe your teaching style? *(cooperating teacher) and I have really similar beliefs, so I think that helped me. But, I've always heard the term "sage on the stage" and that's what I sort of aspire not to be. So, more as a facilitator, or more as . . . I think it's important for us to see us learning with them, and if there's something we struggle with, it might be good for them to see that. (So, do you do a lot of modeling in your class?) Yes. Just really facilitating instruction. I've done a lot of group work, and I think that works well, especially with the age group I'm with now. We'll see if it still works where I end up, because I've talked to a lot of other teachers of younger students, and they don't seem to think it works very well. I guess it's because they get off task easier, but, it's worked really well for me. And usually it's not like a full hour thing, but just getting them in groups for a few minutes to talk about things before we have a whole class discussion. I also think technology is really important. I've used utube videos, I think that helps get them engaged and focused, and . . . (So you don't see yourself ever as a lecturer or . . . ?) Of course that important, you know, starting out a unit maybe on something that they're not familiar with. Like on Beowulf, I made a powerpoint and lectured the first two days because they needed that background knowledge to be able to understand, but, overall, no.*

So, how do you think your teaching style differs from, or is the same as your cooperating teacher's? *I think, with classroom management anyway, I'm still trying to figure out how. I see how she does it, but I just don't have that presence yet. I think it's the age difference. She can stand up in front of the class and just be silent and they'll respond, I can't do that, and that's also an experience thing. So in that regard I feel like we are different, but the way she does, it works so well, so I think I should keep it in mind as I go on. And, I think we're very similar, teaching-wise. She's been there for like 28 years (my mom works in the district and has known her a long time), but she's always been sort of a front runner and embracing the newer ideas in education and that sort of thing, so I want to keep doing that like her.*