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TEACHING WHAT WE KNOW:

PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHING PRACTICES

AND WRITING HABITS OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION INSTRUCTORS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Margaret E. Frazier

Norman, Oklahoma

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TEACHING WHAT WE KNOW:
PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHING PRACTICES
AND WRITING HABITS OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION INSTRUCTORS

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

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

As a freshman composition teacher at both junior colleges and regional universities in the Southwest, I have had the opportunity to meet many different freshman composition instructors and, often, have discussed philosophies and beliefs about teaching college freshman to write and about our own personal writing experiences. I met one instructor who dressed in drag and focussed his class around gender issues. Another instructor believed students should read only Greek and Roman literature because the United States was founded on classical principles. A third instructor referred to papers as "exams" and required that students complete them in one fifty-minute class period. I have talked with instructors who considered themselves writers and instructors who almost seemed to dread writing as much as some freshmen I have taught. Although I knew that no two people would ever teach a course exactly the same way, I was surprised at the diversity of objectives and activities I discovered within Freshman Composition, a class that often has a fairly structured and standard curriculum. I wondered what caused instructors to teach the way they did.

I discovered that even though different instructors

might consider themselves writers, they defined "writer" in entirely different ways. Sometimes, instructors who I considered writers did not define themselves as writers because they defined the word differently than I. For example, one instructor did not consider himself a true "writer" because he had never published in the genre in which he wanted to write. I thought of him as a writer because he was working on novels in that genre and regularly published textbooks. Through many conversations with composition instructors, I began to wonder if there were relationships between the personal writing habits of the instructors and the way they taught. I believed that the fact I viewed myself as a writer influenced the way I taught. I began to consider how personal writing habits could influence how an instructor planned lessons, taught the class, and assessed student work. This study was born out of these musings.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored how the self-perception of being a writer influences three college freshman composition instructors' planning processes, classroom activity selections, and assessments of student essays. When participants did not view themselves as writers, equal attention was paid to that self-perception and its

influences on their classroom practices.

My primary research question in this exploratory study was how does viewing oneself as a writer influence a composition instructor's planning of lessons, classroom activities, and assessment. From this focus, other questions emerged. (1) How do instructors who view themselves as writers have different expectations for their students than instructors who do not view themselves as writers? Do these two kinds of instructors tend to value student responses differently? (2) What influences do the instructors believe that being a writer or not being a writer has on the teaching process? and (3) Other than personal writing, what factors influence composition instructors' processes of teaching writing?

Because this study closely examined issues of teacher thought, the word "writer" was primarily defined as someone who perceives himself or herself as a writer--someone who "thinks" they are a writer. The person may or may not have published material; however, there was the assumption that they did, in fact, have artifacts of their own writing. This writing could take any format that they considered to be "writing" (Goldberg, 1986; Romano, 1995). For example, the writing could be any form of academic or nonacademic discourse (Troyka, 1996; Romano, 1995; Walters, 1994).

Theoretical Background of the Problem

I believe that several factors related to perceiving oneself as a writer might influence a composition instructor's choice of teaching practices. First, perceiving oneself as a writer could influence the way one thinks about teaching in general and writing specifically. Second, this perception might influence the kind of writing instruction the teacher provides and the kind of writing he/she values. Finally, social and cultural influences on the instructor could influence teaching freshman composition. The following sections discuss theories which appear to influence how the perception of being or not being a writer relates to a freshman composition instructor's teaching practices.

Teacher thinking theory.

Because reporting on personal beliefs and actions is a self-reflective practice, teacher thinking theory is a valid theory base for a study on the influence of personal writing habits on composition instruction. Teacher thinking theory has been defined by Clark and Peterson (1986) as "the thinking, planning, and decision making of teachers [which] constitute a large part of the psychological context of teaching. It is within this context that curriculum is interpreted and acted upon; where teachers teach and

students learn. Teacher behavior is substantially influenced and even determined by teachers' thought processes" (p. 255).

Clark and Peterson (1996) state that teacher thinking theory involves both teachers' thought processes and teachers' actions and the observable effects of their actions (p. 257). The actions include both teachers' and students' classroom behavior and student achievement. The thought processes include thoughts about pre-instructional, instructional, and post-instruction activities, along with the theories and beliefs that drive these actions. Clark and Peterson find that a two-domain model consisting of teacher's actions and their theories has recently emerged, and both components are necessary to understand how and why teachers believe and act the way they do.

Historically, however, the kinds of practical knowledge teachers have learned while teaching, have not been as valued as formal knowledge. Kessels and Korthagen (1996) write that "twentieth century thinking has been dominated by a strong inequity between theory and practice" (p. 17). They say abstract knowledge learned as college students has been more valued than the concrete skills learned on the job and a basic knowledge of good work that instructors acquire through the process of teaching. Pajares (1992) concurs,

saying that the beliefs of both teachers and teacher candidates should serve as a focus of educational research, informing educational practices in ways that prevailing, more abstract research agendas cannot.

Olson (1988) finds that personal practical knowledge can provide insight into why teachers teach the way they do, but he warns against simply creating cognitive categories based on what the teachers report about what they do as a way to explain and judge the practice. He believes that a backdrop to place these comments against must be created. Teachers' reports of their practice reflects their culture and must be understood within a cultural, interpersonal setting. "The personal knowledge of the teacher and his or her thoughts during action reflect a teacher's understanding of the culture to which he or she belongs" (p. 169). Olson further defines personal knowledge as teachers' explanations of how they respond within cultural settings.

One important area of research within teacher-thinking theory related to my study is the difference between formal and practical knowledge. Konopak and Wilson (1995) define formal knowledge as knowledge generated by researchers of teaching. Practical knowledge is knowledge generated by the teachers, themselves. Konopak and Wilson say that these two types of knowledge can work in harmony. "Formal knowledge,

as learned in university classrooms, provides a basis for examining issues and practices in teaching and learning. Practical knowledge, acquired in school classrooms, provides a context for framing and reframing these issues and practices in real situations" (p. 1).

Teacher thinking theory proved to be a valuable theory base for my study because I found that nearly all of the actions of my participants centered around their personal beliefs about writing and composition instruction. Although formal knowledge certainly influenced some of their ideas, the formal knowledge that they chose to accept was congruent with their personal beliefs and practical knowledge. Although the participants' practical knowledge was based on many things, one important element which seemed to be manifest in nearly all of their classroom practices was their personal writing habits.

Theories of writing instruction.

Formal and practical knowledge work together to shape composition instructors' theories of writing. Instructors have perspectives on writing which are widely varied; however, several theorists have developed categories of types of instruction. These classifications should not be seen as black and white, but rather, encompassing many types of instruction within them.

Berlin (1987) defines three categories of rhetoric instruction, or composition instruction, used within twentieth-century college composition classes as objective, subjective, and transactional. Objective teaching has a positivist epistemology and asserts that reality is located in the material world. Berlin says that the dominant form of the objective approach is called current-traditional teaching. Here, the role of an observer is to be objective, and social, psychological, and historical preconceptions must be eliminated. Berlin believes current-traditional teaching focuses on modes of discourse, especially emphasizing exposition and its forms. Because language must not distort, language use must be precise.

Berlin describes his second classification as subjective theories, those theories which locate truth either within an individual or in a realm only accessible by an individual. Within subjective rhetorics, truth is located in an unchanging realm of ideas, and because of its location, truth cannot be directly communicated. Berlin (1987) states that the goal of rhetoric in such a scheme is to correct errors in discourse between speakers as the mistakes are exposed through the dialectical interchange (p. 12). The educational process is complicated in such a model because from this perspective, the teacher is not able to

teach a student to write. Instead, the instructor can provide an environment for the student to learn, encouraging "private versions of experience couched in original metaphors" (p. 13).

Berlin's third classification of teaching is transactional theories. Here, truth arises out of the interaction of the elements within rhetorical situations. Subjects, objects, audiences, and language all work together to create truth. The truths of this rhetoric are uncertain and subject to debate because they are socially created. Scientific discussion is only one piece of possible transactional discussions. Emotional, aesthetic, and ethical discussions can also become part of the dialogue.

Hillocks (1984) developed a model of classroom practices consisting of four modes of instruction. The presentational mode, which Hillocks also believes is most frequently practiced in composition classrooms, often deals with rhetorical writing techniques, lecture and teacher-led discussion, the study of models, imitation of models, and teacher feedback. The natural process mode uses general objectives, free writing, writing for peers, positive peer feedback, student interaction, and revision. Hillocks' individualized mode employs individualized instruction through tutorials or programmed materials; its focus depends

on the goals of the instructor. Finally, the environmental mode focuses on clear writing objectives, materials and assignments chosen to facilitate the objectives, and group activities to further the objectives. These four categories could be one model from which to examine current composition instructors' practices.

Berlin and Hillocks both found the most common method of instruction is the current traditional model. Other composition researchers (Emig, 1971; Applebee, 1981; Goodlad, 1984) agree with Berlin that historically, the primary method of composition instruction has been "presentational," a term employed by Hillocks to describe a model in which the instructors give instruction to students primarily through a lecture format. Many researchers were troubled by these findings and offered suggestions for instructors to consider other methods.

Emig (1971) offered an alternative model, calling for the need for more "reflexive" writing by the students. Emig considered reflexive or free writing to be writing which was meaningful for the student. Csikszentmihalyi (1982) echoed Emig, saying that writing needed to be intrinsically motivated by the student, not extrinsically motivated by the instructor. However, this either-or model of instruction created a black and white model which seemed limited

(Smagorinsky, 1986). Hillocks (1984) as part of his classification suggested that instructors move from the presentational approach to the other three approaches he listed. Hillocks found that the transactional model seemed to be an effective method of classroom discussion.

Theories of writing instruction were important for me to investigate because the participants in my study held differing perspectives on the purposes of composition instruction and the role of the teacher in the classroom. The models suggested by Berlin, Hillocks, and Emig provided me with a framework in which to begin to examine the beliefs about composition instruction held by my instructors. This framework provided a foundation from which I could analyze how personal writing practices influenced the theoretical beliefs, classroom practices, and role(s) that the composition instructors held.

Sociocultural constructivist theory.

The term, "sociocultural constructivist," does not have a single definition. The way the term is applied contextually to different theories or studies helps to determine its definition. Bazerman (1994) finds social elements of constructivism to be a sociological movement, "looking into the social formation of everyday knowledge and assumptions upon which our understanding and actions rest"

(p. 114). Bazerman goes on to say that when studying constructivism, researchers should not concern themselves with the accuracy of any one reality system, but rather examine the processes by which the reality system is produced.

As suggested by Olson (1988), a sociocultural-constructivist perspective provides a framework in which to examine how composition instructors view the role of personal writing in composition instruction. Vygotsky (1986) holds that thoughts reflect the thinker's cultural practices, and the culture is manifested when thoughts become actions. Vygotsky states that without a culture in which to frame thought and speech, the acts become meaningless. A sociocultural constructivist perspective has often been used to examine composition instructors' practices (Au, 1990; Bazerman, 1994; Beach, 1993; Diaz, Neal, & Amaya-Williams, 1990; Smagorinsky, 1995). This precedent helps justify using a sociocultural perspective in my study of the influence of personal writing habits on composition instruction. I believe that examining the relationship of thought, culture, and action provides insight into why composition teachers hold certain beliefs about writing instruction and personal writing habits.

Because words can be defined differently, both the

terms "social" and "cultural" should be clarified. Beach (1993) defines and discusses both social and cultural influences. Beach suggests that social influences most directly concern themselves with the roles individuals hold in certain situations. Both the role of an instructor and the role of a writer would be social roles. Beach (1993) defines cultural influences as those institutions in which individuals exist. Class, gender, economic, political, and other such groupings are all cultural influences. These elements influence all instructors to varying levels. Cultural influences could be especially interesting for those instructors who do not view themselves as writers because they could show other possible reasons for classroom activities.

These three theoretical perspectives shaped my study on the effect of perceptions of personal writing habits on classroom instruction. By combining a teacher thinking perspective with theories of composition instruction, a deeper understanding of relationships between personal writing and instruction developed. The study was examined within a sociocultural-constructivist lens because both writing and teaching occur in social and cultural worlds.

Significance of the Study

The literature suggests that many factors can influence

the classroom practices of college composition instructors because teaching writing is a complex task (Fulwiler, 1989; Au, 1990; Grossman, 1990; Hillocks, 1995; et al.). The beliefs about personal writing habits that composition instructors hold may be an important component of the influences on their teaching practices. By examining the beliefs about writing habits of classroom instructors, we can begin to develop a knowledge base about the relationship between personal writing and classroom instruction.

Some debate exists about the importance of personal writing by composition instructors. The National Center for Research on Teacher Education (1991) suggested that being a writer did not assure an instructor could successfully teach others to write. However, other researchers (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1983; Murray, 1980; et. al.) believe that one must be a writer to successfully teach writing. The dialogue seems to focus on the effectiveness of the instructor's teaching. Because my study did not examine how the students learned or improved their writing from the instructor's teaching, issues of the effectiveness of the instructors will also not be discussed in this paper. Instead, I sought a perspective on the relationships between perceptions of personal writing and classroom instruction.

The perspective could be valuable to both researchers,

as suggested above, and classroom teachers. If composition instructors were made aware of their own writing, would they make applications of their beliefs about personal writing into their teaching that they currently do not? Would it help them see limitations or ways they could expand their current teaching styles? Finally, could this awareness help English education majors develop an approach that incorporates their personal writing beliefs into the complex act of teaching composition?

Limitations of the Study

Conducting any qualitative study with a small number of participants creates limitations that are common to this kind of research. First, many interesting findings that do not relate at all to the research question must be saved for a future study. Second, the small sample precludes generalizing the findings to a larger population. Individual differences of opinion will strongly influence the data outcome. However, because there are fewer participants, rich and varied data can be gathered from them (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Responses given by the participants could be further explored in a follow-up study with a larger number of participants if desired. Third, qualitative data is often self-reported through interviews, think-aloud protocols, and retrospective accounts. However, using

multiple data gathering techniques and triangulation lessens the possibility of inaccurate findings. The reliability of the findings is further strengthened by combining the self-reported data with classroom observations.

However, my study also had specific limitations. First, I gathered data at one location. To examine how the culture of the participant influenced beliefs about personal writing and composition instruction, it might have been interesting to have gathered data at more than one university. Second, I only observed one unit of instruction for each participant. To gain a more complete understanding of the beliefs of composition teachers, observing an entire semester could provide richer results. Finally, I specifically chose instructors of approximately the same age and level of experience. I would be interested in examining how the influence of beliefs about personal writing changed with the level of teaching experience.

I do not believe that these limitations suggest that my study was not valuable. Indeed, I gathered almost more useful data than I could use, and the results that I discovered were interesting and surprising. However, for future studies, the limitations might want to be considered.

Summary and Conclusions

Many personal, pedagogical, and sociocultural factors

can influence a freshman composition instructor's planning processes, classroom activity selections, and assessment of student essays. This study examined how the self-perception of being a writer was one of those influences. The theory bases of teacher thinking theory, theories of writing instruction, and sociocultural constructivism provide a compatible perspective from which this issue could be studied. The question of the influence of personal writing on composition instruction is critical because the central focus of freshman composition is writing; however, the word "writing" is defined by the instructor. Thus, different perspectives and beliefs of the teachers will have a dramatic effect on the focus of the class. This study could be interesting to different groups of people. First, the instructors who participated in the study and other composition teachers might find it interesting to examine their own beliefs as a metacognitive exercise. I found the study interesting because I am both an educational researcher and a composition instructor, and the findings made me consider how my beliefs about writing influenced my class. Finally, the educational research community, in general, could be interested in the study because it examines an area that has not been exhaustively researched (Fang, 1996).

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Teaching composition can be divided into three stages: planning lessons, classroom activities, and assessment/feedback. Teacher thinking, sociocultural constructivism, and theories of composition instruction all directly influence this process. Through teacher thinking, researchers can gain insight into what teachers believe themselves to be doing during their composition class planning, instruction, and assessment (Brown & Rose, 1995). Sociocultural constructivism influences the teaching of freshman composition because the social roles and cultural climate of the institution, the classroom, and the students impact the way instructors plan, complete, and assess freshman composition activities (Varnum, 1994; Bridges, 1993). Finally, theories of writing instruction underpin nearly all teaching of writing activities, whether instructors are aware of their own theoretical perspectives or not because all instructors have beliefs about the way to teach freshman composition (Berlin, 1987; Hillocks, 1984). For this study, I began by examining the related literature about these elements of composition instruction.

Related Literature

Lesson planning of composition instructors.

The first stage of freshman composition instruction I examined in my study was lesson planning. Researchers have found that different instructors plan lessons in different ways and with different goals (Masiello, 1993; McCutcheon, 1980; Kagan, 1992). Some take a very structured approach to lesson planning, and others take a more open-ended approach. The research on lesson planning that follows a teacher thinking perspective provided a valid background for the part of my study on the instructor's perceived impact of personal writing on their planning of lessons.

Clark and Peterson (1986) state that "research on teacher planning provides a direct view of the cognitive activities of teachers as professionals" (p. 267). In other words, the way teachers think influences their planning processes. However, Clark and Peterson hold that to study a teacher's planning process, the researcher must look beyond the empty classroom and to the social and cultural context which is the teaching environment. They believe that social and cultural elements strongly impact lesson planning through additions, deletions, changes in order and emphasis, and interpretations.

In my study, Clark and Peterson's observation was interesting because writing has both social and cultural significance, as discussed earlier in Chapter One. By

examining lesson plans within the social and cultural context of being/not being a writer, a more complete picture of the instructors' thought processes becomes possible.

Kagan (1992) finds that it is possible to gauge the growth of teachers' thoughts and beliefs through the activities that they plan. The plans they create are a reflection of their beliefs, and as teachers' beliefs change based on social and cultural experiences, the teachers' planning processes reflect these changes. The planned activity structures appear to be the vehicle through which the teachers' beliefs are translated into classroom practices. Again, this ties to my study in a similar way to Clark and Peterson's (1986), except that here, as the social and cultural beliefs of my participants changed so did their classroom practices.

Although not a primary focus of their study, Walvoord and McCarthy (1990) discussed how instructors in different fields had different expectations in their lesson plans when they were teaching writing. Although each instructor's goal was a written product from their students, they approached the teaching of writing differently, and they had different expectations for what they wanted their students to master. The lesson plans reflected the differences. Just as instructors in different disciplines approach the planning

process uniquely, so do instructors in the same field but with different foci of interests. In this way, my study is similar to Walvoord and McCarthy's because the different approaches to personal writing caused my participants to view their planning processes differently.

Classroom activities of composition instructors.

Freshman composition instructors use numerous activities in their classes to facilitate their students' writing processes (Hillocks, 1987). Research has shown correlations between instructors' planning processes and their classroom instruction (Clark & Elmore, 1981; Carnahan, 1980). From a teacher thinking perspective (which is underpinned in sociocultural constructivism), the instructors' reasons for choosing certain activities over others is a socially and culturally determined deliberate act (Fang, 1996; Ross & Dereshiwsky, 1993). The purposes they see for freshman composition and writing assignments (Ballenger, 1992) are social and cultural decisions. Also, the control they retain over their students' activities is socially related (Martin & Baldwin, 1996). Studies which focus on activity selection as a social and cultural process provided good background for the section of my study on the influence of personal writing on classroom activity selection.

Vanderbilt & Nicolay (1995) found that peer consultants were valuable to freshman composition students as they negotiated the meaning of instructors' assignments. At times, the social and cultural roles of the instructors caused the students difficulty in understanding assignments. When these students worked with other undergraduate students, the more experienced writers seemed to be able to explain writing requirements in a way the freshman students could relate. This study related to my study because one of my participants, Jackson, used both individual conferences and peer revision. Also, another participant, Jenny, discussed the differences in her culture and the culture of her students in great detail.

Applebee's (1986) discussion of the influence of the writing process on composition instruction examines how the concept of "a writing process" has been implemented unsuccessfully in certain contexts. The writing process was developed in an attempt to avoid product-oriented assessment. By having students employ a writing process and supervising their work in progress, instructors hoped to avoid simply grading final drafts. Applebee claims when he studied the effects of the process on students, sometimes in practice, the writing process proved to be more of a hindrance to students than a benefit. When the students

felt they must first go through a mechanical process, then actually write the essay, they missed the value of prewriting activities and revision.

Applebee believes that for the writing process to be successful for students, instructors must reconceptualize their assignments and make them truly a process, not just create exercises to be completed before the real writing begins. In other words, the activities should naturally grow out of a process approach to writing. For the students to have success with the activities, they would need to employ all the steps of the writing process, not complete the final essay first and then write the drafts later. Applebee's study seemed useful to my study because my instructors who viewed themselves as writers took a different approach to the writing process than the instructors who did not view themselves as writers. Also, the participants each used the writing process uniquely, stressing different parts of it. This, too, seemed related to their perceptions of themselves as writers.

In Hillocks' (1987) meta-analysis of the effectiveness of different composition classroom techniques, he and his colleagues reviewed approximately 2,000 studies of classroom practices. Their goal was to "provide a guide for developing more effective writing curriculum" (p. 71).

Through the meta-analysis, Hillocks et al. identified six different instructional foci which consisted of a) grammar/mechanics, the study of formal grammar and punctuation, usually through worksheets, b) models, the presentation of model compositions which demonstrate the instructors' definition of good writing, c) sentence combining, providing the students with two or more sentences to be joined in prescribed manners, d) scales, presenting students with criteria sets for revising and evaluating essays, e) inquiry, teaching students strategies to transform sets of data into writing, and f) freewriting, asking students to write about their interests in a non-judgmental fashion.

The researchers found that grammar and mechanics have a negative impact on students' writing ability. Freewriting had the smallest increase, followed in order of increasing effectiveness by models, sentence combining, scales, and inquiry. The inquiry method had a significantly higher effectiveness rating as a classroom instruction technique.

Hillocks' study was interesting in relation to my study because it enumerated many different teaching styles/activities possible in a composition classroom. Although my study is not addressing effectiveness of instruction, Hillocks' categories provided me with a framework from which to examine what was occurring during my

classroom observations.

Shull (1991) conducted a study in which she studied how reading autobiographical-like literature served as a prompt for freshman composition students. From this prompt, the students wrote about their own lives. Shull found that personal narratives seemed to provide a format in which students' writing improved and helped them define themselves as individuals. Shull's study was interesting to my study because one of my participants, Jackson, focused on personal narratives, while the other two, Jenny and Liza, avoided narrative-style essays.

An issue within the assignments composition instructors make for their students is the level of control the students are allowed to retain over their essays (Martin & Baldwin, 1996). Control is an issue congruent with sociocultural constructivism because the role the instructor chooses affects how much control they want to retain with their classes. Hunzer (1995) found that students felt more apprehension about their writing when they had freedom to make decisions in the assignments. Hunzer recommended that to avoid student writer's block, instructors should structure assignments more at the beginning of the semester and less at the end. This study related to my study because through the findings, the issue of control of the instructor

in essay assignments became an issue.

Assessment of essays by composition instructors.

A third stage in the teaching of freshman composition is assessing student essays. The question of how instructors choose criteria for evaluation and how they mark the papers is a critical function of their beliefs about the purposes and practices of composition (Nespor, 1987; Brown & Rose, 1996). The literature does not appear to specifically address the relationship between the self-perceptions of the teachers as writers and the way they assess essays; however, several articles concern themselves with assessment and the theoretical perspectives I have taken in this study.

Campbell (1993) discussed the relationship between the planning of freshman composition instructors and paper assessment. She discovered that even though instructors often planned how they would assess papers by creating a rubric, when they were actually grading the papers, they did not refer to the rubric. Instead, the papers that were easy to assess were done quickly, and the instructors struggled with how to grade the less successful essays. As a result, other issues seemed to affect how the instructors made their decisions. I included this study in my literature review because one of my questions was how my participants assessed

papers and the issues that influenced their decisions.

Bazerman (1994) acknowledges the scholarship on assessing essays but says that the way instructors read student essays has remained a hidden experience. He believes that it is important for instructors to question their goals and beliefs when assessing papers. The instructors should realize that their reading is a contextualized activity that is influenced by outside factors; students will respond to the cues the instructors send and, ultimately, adjust their writing to match the signals.

Bazerman feels that instructors have tried to distance themselves from assessment by encouraging peer editing and citing outside policies; however, Bazerman says that ultimately, the instructors are nearly always the readers of the produced text. As a result, instructors must carefully consider their assessment practices, and sociocultural researchers must examine both social and cultural influences on the instructors' decisions. Bazerman's study seemed useful to my study because I am examining the implications of self-perceptions of personal writing on assessment. The social and cultural considerations of being a writer and personal writing could impact the instructors' decisions when grading papers because they could cause the teacher to

focus on criteria that is consistent with their beliefs.

Nespor (1987) agrees, claiming that belief systems are important motivating factors in evaluation. Teachers can be influenced by feelings, moods, and subjective evaluations when assessing student papers. Thus, instructors' opinions of students can affect their evaluation of the students' work.

Nespor also finds that teachers' conceptions of the curriculum influence the way they evaluate student work. In her study of teachers' beliefs, she found that the values the teachers placed on the course content affected how they taught the content and how they evaluated the work generated from the content (p. 319). Because writing is the central focus of a composition class, teachers with different perspectives on writing would also evaluate student work differently.

Fulwiler (1989) discusses decisions composition instructors must make concerning assessment in her study of journal assessment. She came to study journals because she stopped all other forms of writing assignments in her classes. In place of varied writing assignments, she assigned "dialogue journals" which the students would keep during the semester. Fulwiler describes journal assessment as a slippery task. If journal writing is to be accepted as

a legitimate discourse form in the community of a university English department, she believes some method of assessment must be developed. From a study she conducted on her students, Fulwiler offers a model which assesses the rhetoric of journals (including such features as personal voice), cognitive activities occurring during the composition process (focusing on thoughts of observation, speculation, and doubt), and document features of the journals themselves (including frequency of entries, length of entries, and clippings from other sources).

Fulwiler's study of the assessment of journals provides an interesting perspective into college composition classroom assessment practices. Fulwiler's practices are consistent with a sociocultural-constructivist perspective because she realizes the impacts of a student's culture on the writing and realizes that to assess her students on their knowledge, she must allow them to write from their own social and cultural norms. Her study was interesting to me because all of the participants in my study discussed the influence of sociocultural elements on their students. Each participant tried to allow their students a certain degree of freedom in choosing writing topics; however, they did not agree in how much freedom the students should have.

Another common assessment in freshman composition is

portfolio assessment, a practice where the semester's work is considered more holistically. Horning (1997) found that when the students engaged in reflective writing over individual essays, they achieved higher portfolio assessment. Bishop & Crossley (1993) believed that portfolio assessment was not only a way of assessing student work, but it also had implications for the instructor. They found that by using portfolio assessment, the instructor's role in the classroom changes. The concern with multiple roles for instructors is congruent with the impact of social roles as defined in this study, and one of my participants, Liza, mentioned portfolio assessment several times during her interviews and retrospective accounts.

The literature suggests the planning processes, classroom activities, and assessment practices of composition instructors are influenced by teacher thinking, sociocultural influences, and theories of writing instruction. Within these same theory bases, the literature also shows how the self-perceptions of personal writing influence teachers' classroom behaviors. However, as the next section explains, the present literature on this subject has several gaps.

Increasing the Dimensions of Present Literature

Fang (1996) discusses how the study of the impact of

the beliefs of composition instructors on their students' writing ability is a new field in need of further research. Fang examined how a fourth grade teacher's beliefs of what constituted good writing affected the students' performance and found that the instructor's beliefs about writing have a strong influence over the students' understanding of writing. My study examines the beliefs of writing instructors at the university level and adds to Fang's study the dimension of perceptions about personal writing.

Reflective, self-reported narratives (i.e., Krest, 1990; Nathan, 1991; Robbins, 1992; Wyatt, 1990) provide interesting data about the writing practices of composition instructors; however, they follow an "action research" format where the participants were studying themselves, and the data gathering techniques were informal. Because I worked from a teacher thinking perspective, my study added to this body of self-reported literature by examining the personal writing habits of instructors from an outside perspective using more formal data gathering techniques.

Zancanella (1991) conducted a study similar in format to my study that examined reading teachers and their reading habits. Although my study follows the form of Zancanella's, the focus on writing and writing instruction differs sharply from Zancanella's concern with reading and reading

instruction.

White (1994) also completed a study similar to mine; however, she studied the relationship between high school English teachers' approaches to writing and their writing instruction from the perspectives of teachers' belief, theories of writing instruction found in the public school, and practical knowledge. Because I am examining college freshman composition instructors, many differences between the content of the two studies exist because of social and cultural differences between a high school environment and a college environment. For example, in White's dissertation formal lesson plans and achievement testing are areas of focus; in my study, lesson plans were informal, and achievement testing was not an issue. Also, my attention to sociocultural constructivism and teacher thinking theory could augment White's study by expanding the theory base to incorporate a broader range of beliefs.

Masiello (1993) included the planning processes of composition instructors in a discussion of methods of teaching writing seminars. However, Masiello limited his research to planning for peer group activities. My study builds on this by discussing the planning processes of complete units of instruction. My participants planned group activities; however, they also planned lectures,

writing assignments, and assessment activities.

Walvoord and McCarthy's (1990) study demonstrated how lesson plans take varied meanings to different college instructors in four disciplines: business, history, social science, and biology. To examine the similarities and differences in instructors' objectives when teaching writing, Walvoord and McCarthy viewed the classrooms as discourse communities where students learned reading and writing in sociocultural ways appropriate to the instructors. All four instructors viewed their students as "professionals in training." They wanted their students to realize the writing requirements of the careers and how to increase in professional proficiency. Each teacher had a second goal which was to help their students differentiate between levels of written responses. They taught their students to discern between good, better, and best writing within the field. However, both the role of "professional in training" and the "good, better, best" criteria took a different meaning for each instructor. Because the instructors focused on different criteria, they selected different tools to teach writing. The nature of different disciplines (biology, history, etc.) influences what technical tools are selected by the instructors when teaching writing. The teachers selected the tools to teach

writing based on the fact that they saw their students as different types of professionals. Thus, social and culture aspects of the instructors' professions affected their teaching strategies.

I narrowed the focus of Walvoord and McCarthy's study by looking at expectations of instructors in the same field (freshman composition) and examining the sociocultural implications of instructors who view themselves as writers and those who do not. Walvoord and McCarthy's analysis of instructors' objectives prior to classroom instruction is similar to what I am studying, and I found the teaching logs, interviews, workshops, and classroom observations used as data gathering techniques by Walvoord and McCarthy appropriate for the kind of data I gathered. However, I expanded my analysis of teachers' lesson plans with the moment by moment thought process provided by think-aloud protocols completed by the instructors as they create their lesson plans.

Hacker (1994) did a study in which he compared what he called "traditional" peer groups with peer groups who received the additional training of individual instructor/student conferences over the students' essays. Hacker found that the students who had been exposed to the conferencing modeled the behavior they experienced and

conducted far more extensive peer analyses of the literature than the students who did not experience the conferencing. In my study, Jackson, one of my participants, also used instructor/student conference and peer conferencing extensively, and my study builds on Hacker's because it not only discusses conferencing but looks at the reasons instructors use conferencing and the influence of personal writing on the conferencing process.

Freedman (1987b) surveyed 560 K-12 writing teachers and 715 students about writing instructors' assessment. The teachers were chosen from the National Writing Project's recommendations. Freedman found that the most effective student responses to assessment occurred as the work of writing was in progress. The instructors also spent considerable time with the students discussing the essays prior to the students' writing process.

Although Freedman's instructors were at the elementary and high school level, the issue of perspectives on assessment seem applicable to college composition instructors. However, rather than examine Freedman's large number of teachers, I examined the beliefs and practices of a smaller number of instructors in detail from a more specific theoretical perspective. Because of this limited number, I conducted interviews, think-aloud protocols,

stimulated responses and observations with my participants.

Summary and Conclusions

My study examined how an instructor's beliefs about his or her personal writing influenced lesson plans, classroom activities, and assessment. By reviewing the literature which discussed teaching composition from teacher thinking and sociocultural constructivist perspectives, I have created both a background on which this study is built and discussed the gaps which this study can attempt to address. According to the literature, composition teachers plan lessons, create activities, and assess papers based on their personal goals for the class, which are derived from their personal beliefs about writing and composition instruction, and the social and cultural context in which they teach. The perceptions of the instructors about the influence of their writing habits on their teaching are related to personal beliefs and sociocultural context because self-perceptions are based on beliefs, and writing is a social and cultural activity.

Chapter Three: Research and Data Analysis Methodologies

Introduction

The research and data analysis methodologies that I used in my study on how the self-perception of being a writer influences a teacher's composition instruction practices are organized into the following sections: First, I discuss how I selected my sample. Then, I explained the data gathering techniques I used in my study. I began with the techniques that I believe contributed most to the study; however, all of the data gathering methods provided unique information. After a theoretical discussion of data gathering, I discuss specifically how I used each method in my study. Through these data gathering techniques, I was able to achieve an interesting perspective on how beliefs about personal writing influenced the practices of composition instructors.

Selection of Sample

I gathered my data at a regional university in the southwestern United States. The university is not as large as the two state universities, but it has approximately 13,500 students and 600 faculty members. The English department in which all participants were members offers English and English Education bachelor's degrees, an English master's degree, and a creative writing master's degree.

Of my four original participants, one participant has a master's degree in English, one has a Ph.D. in English, one has a Ph.D. in education, and one has an Ed.D. One of my participants (who has the Ed.D.) was retiring at the end of the semester and was unable to complete the study. I chose the participants because of their varied educational backgrounds; however, more importantly, they were selected because of their different attitudes toward writing. Before I asked them to take part in the study, we talked informally about writing and teaching composition. Of the three remaining participants, one believed he wrote prolifically; one felt she wrote more occasionally, and the writing was primarily social in nature; and one did not consider herself a writer, but wrote only when necessary and viewed her role as an assessor. I felt these different views would provide different perspectives on the importance of personal writing in the teaching process of a composition instructor.

Data Collection

The process of examining how composition instructors' beliefs about their own writing processes influence their classroom practices is a complicated process which should employ many different data gathering techniques because each technique provides information that other techniques cannot provide. Clandinin (1986) and Kagan (1992) discuss how

indirect methods of determining instructors' beliefs, including interviews, think-aloud protocols, observations, and retrospective accounts have emerged as viable data gathering procedures. I used these complimentary data gathering methods to provide more information than simply one data gathering technique. Interviews allowed direct contact with my participants where they could tell me what they believe about their teaching practices, a method compatible with teacher thinking theory. Think-aloud protocols provided access into the thought processes of participants as they completed tasks. Observations allowed me to observe the instructors' teaching first hand and attempt to discover whether what they believed was happening in their classes was, in fact, occurring. Finally, retrospective accounts gave participants a forum to explain their actions during think-aloud protocols and also provided them with an opportunity to expand on interview data.

Interviews are a data-gathering technique consistent with a teacher thinking perspective (Copeland et al., 1994; Elbaz, 1991). Interviews can provide data on how composition instructors perceive the influences of their own writing practices. Chin (1994) discusses two types of interviews: structured and unstructured (or open-ended). Structured interviews have pre-formulated questions which

the researcher follows exactly for each participant. Unstructured or open-ended interviews may also have pre-formulated questions; however, the topics may be modified to allow the participant flexibility in the response.

Following an open-ended format, Elbaz (1991) holds that one way of gathering interesting data about the teaching process is to listen to teachers' stories. The stories can provide an effective way to present rich and voluminous data. However, they can also be a methodology in themselves. Elbaz finds the stories can be told as a result of open-ended interview questions and can show the relationships between teacher thought and action (p. 3).

Copeland, Birmingham, DeMeulle, D'Emidio-Caston, and Natal (1994) described their methods for employing interviews in their study of the cognitive processes in aspiring teachers, experienced teachers, and their peers. After having the twenty-eight teachers of four levels of experience watch a videotaped example of teaching, they questioned the teachers about what they observed and their interpretation and evaluation of the classroom. Copeland et. al. explain that they tried to remain non-intrusive, allowing the teachers to discuss any part of the tape. The interviewer's only verbal remarks were occasional positive remarks (uh huh, yes) to what was being said and to be

certain the teachers said all they wanted about the tapes. This open-ended interview process allowed the teachers to explore the issue in many different ways and show how different levels of experience reflect themselves in the instructors' observations and comments.

There are many differences between the thoughts of an on-going process and thoughts of a completed process. Ericsson and Simon (1984) call these two types of protocols retrospective (completed) and concurrent (on-going). Concurrent protocols are also called think-aloud protocols (Ericsson and Simon, 1990). Think-aloud protocols were employed to study cognitive elements in the composition process by Flower and Hayes (1980, 1981). Witte and Cherry (1994) hold that Flower and Hayes' early work was valuable because it laid the foundation upon which other studies in composition cognition were based. Scardmalia and Bereiter (1986) found that the research into the composition process was enhanced by having participants think-aloud while composing essays. Because a think-aloud process consists of talking (usually into a tape recorder) about an activity while actually performing that activity, the activity helps show the cognitive processes employed by the participants during the activity.

Think-aloud protocols have been endorsed for use in

teacher thinking theory by Clark and Peterson (1986). They say that teacher thinking theory relies heavily on self-report (p. 259). In teacher thinking research, the think-aloud protocols completed by the instructors consist of what the instructors believe to be occurring in their classroom. Ericsson and Simon (1980) find such short-term memory reports an acceptable method of data gathering because when instructors complete think-aloud protocols soon after completing an activity, their memories of the event have seemed to be representative of classroom actions. Clark and Peterson (1986), however, believe to help ensure the accuracy of the think-aloud protocols, the data gathering method should be combined with other methods, including interviews and observations (p. 259).

When gathering data about the influence of writing practices on composition instructors, a third method to employ is observations. Since the researcher can observe a class without being a direct part of the action (Lauer & Asher, 1988), observation can provide information less influenced by the instructor than interviews or even protocol analyses. This outside perspective is necessary because often, what a teacher believes is happening in the classroom, as reflected in interviews and protocol analyses, may not be happening.

Successful observation involves gathering data in as many mediums as possible. Field notes should attempt to represent the happenings, although the choice of what to record is based out of the researcher's theoretical perspective. Field notes should also be specific, avoiding general adjectives (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Sometimes, a checklist can be employed while observing a situation (Moll, 1992). Finally, unobtrusive tape recordings can provide a transcript which may enrich field notes (Herrington, 1985).

Russell (1989) employed observation followed by interviews in his study of change in beliefs of teaching practices and teaching theory by instructors of different levels of experience. He followed a case-study approach with five participants, gathering data from observing the teachers in the classroom and then questioning them about their beliefs and practices.

Retrospective accounts provide a fourth method of data gathering. They can take the form of face-to-face interviews conducted with participants in which the researcher asks either open-ended or structured interview questions about what the participants wrote or said in another data gathering technique (Greene & Higgins, 1994). For instance, a participant could provide a detailed account about why they provided certain information in a think-aloud

protocol (DiPardo, 1994). One of the greatest strengths of retrospective accounts is that they can answer the "why" questions that often arise in the mind of the researcher (Greene & Higgins, 1994). They can also help the researcher understand the social, linguistic, and cognitive elements at work in the participants lives (DiPardo, 1994).

For retrospective accounts to be the most reliable, the retrospective interviews should be conducted near the time of the original process, the questions should be designed in ways to tap the participants short- and long-term memories, the researcher should have a clear purpose for conducting the retrospective interviews, and the researcher should report data in a way that makes clear the path from data to claim (Greene & Higgins, 1994).

DiPardo (1994) used retrospective accounts in her study of student writing. She found them useful in eliciting information about complex relationships in her participant's lives, and they provided a way to gather detailed information. However, she expressed concern with evaluating the importance of those artifacts to which she returned, and she worried from an ethical perspective if she should remind her subjects of potentially embarrassing discord and struggle. However, her final conclusion was that it provided important information available through no other

data gathering technique.

The strongest argument for using retrospective accounts is that if teacher thinking attempts to understand why teachers behave in certain ways, then accessing their thinking as clearly as possible can provide the best information attainable. Sociocultural elements and beliefs about theories of writing instruction could also be made more clear with this follow-up method of data gathering.

Multiple data gathering methods provide a more complete picture of the influence of personal writing on a composition instructor's classroom practices. Each of the above described data gathering methods provided different perspectives on the activities of my participants. A more complete description of the actual procedures of my data collection can help other researchers understand how each method contributed to the study.

Procedure of Data Collection

For my study of the perceived influence of instructors' personal writing in the instruction of freshman composition, I gathered data using observation, interviews, think-aloud protocols, and retrospective accounts. I selected what I observed and how I analyzed it through the lenses of sociocultural constructivism, teacher thinking theory, and theories of writing instruction. I was honest with my

participants about the basic nature of my study because gathering data in these ways cannot be done invisibly; instead, I tried to remain inconspicuous and portray a positive attitude toward the instructors so I could witness a more honest (and not intimidated) representation about how they teach their classes. The following description details how I gathered the data for this study.

Interviews.

The interviews for my study were semi-structured in nature, somewhat similar to Seidman's (1991) three-interview model of focused life history, details of the examined experience, and reflection on the experience's meaning. As Seidman suggests, the questions within the interviews were, to a certain degree, developed from the information the participants provided, making the interviewing process more inductive than deductive. However, each interview had a purpose, and certain kinds of questions were asked to give the participants a chance to address issues and then continue the discussion based on their experiences. The first interview with my participants was informal; we became more comfortable with each other as I gathered demographic and background information about the participants (see Appendix A).

The second interview with my participants examined

their classroom practices that relate to planning lessons, selecting classroom activities, and assessing of student essays. I asked them how people learn to write, what influences their selections, and how they make decisions about composition instruction (see Appendix B for a list of questions and Appendix E for an excerpt of an interview).

The third interview covered the composition instructors' beliefs about themselves as writers, in what kinds of writings they are engaged, and if they believe their own writing practices influence their composition instruction (see Appendix C for a list of questions and Appendix F for an excerpt of an interview).

These three interviews allowed me to learn about social and cultural influences on my participants, for instance, the impact of their educational background, prior teaching experiences, and the university setting; derive a sense of their beliefs about writing instruction, like what writing is and how students can learn to write; and gain a perspective on their thought processes about teaching and their own personal writing, how they see their personal writing habits influencing their classroom behaviors.

Think-aloud protocols.

In my study of how viewing oneself as a writer influences a composition instructor's planning of lessons,

classroom activities, and assessment, I intended to use think-aloud protocols in two different areas: First, I was going to have my participants conduct think-aloud protocols as they planned the unit of instruction that I observed. However, my participants did not make formal lesson plans, or they had completed them at the beginning of the semester. So I changed my methodology to study lesson plans from think-aloud protocols to retrospective accounts.

Second, I had my participants conduct think-aloud protocols as they assessed the papers/essays/writings that resulted from the unit that I observed. I asked them to explain why they made the assessment choices they did while reading the papers. The instructors taped their reactions to student essays with a tape recorder that I provided for them. I let them complete the protocol whenever and wherever they usually graded papers, without my being present, so the data would be as typical of their grading practices as possible. I requested that they provide as much verbal information as they could by reading the papers aloud as they graded, explaining what they were writing on the papers and why they felt their comments were important, and telling me what the final grade was and why it was given. By having the instructors explain their beliefs and actions, the gathered information was compatible with

teacher thinking and sociocultural constructivist theories. (See Appendix D for the think-aloud prompt and Appendix G for an excerpt.)

Observations.

I used observations in my study as a way to see directly what happened in the instructor's classroom. To accomplish this end, I observed one complete unit of instruction (approximately two weeks) of each participant. I gave the participants the option of choosing the unit that I would observe. Two participants, Liza and Jenny, suggested units; the last participant, Jackson, told me I was welcome any time. In their classrooms, I took field notes, looking generally at the delivery method the instructor used, what kind of student answers were asked for and what were supplied, the tone of the classroom, how the students responded to the instructor and other relevant actions. For example, in Jenny's and Liza's classrooms, I observed lectures, group activities, and individual work. Jackson's unit consisted entirely of one-on-one conferencing, with students working individually at their desks. Because of this, I taped every conference that Jackson conducted during the unit and based my observation on these notes and on the notes I took in the classroom. I also looked specifically for any references to the

instructor's personal writing. I compared the notes I took in the classroom with the information the instructors provided in the interviews and think-aloud protocols. From a teacher thinking theoretical perspective, I tried to gain insights into whether what the instructor believed to be happening in the classroom was actually happening. Observations also gave me first-hand information about the kinds of theories of writing instruction that the instructors used in the classroom.

Retrospective accounts.

I used retrospective accounts in two ways. First, after I conducted the interviews and listened to my participants' responses, I used retrospective accounts to provide my participants with a forum to discuss the interviews and think-aloud protocols that they completed and supplement the information with further explanation. I also asked clarifying questions that emerged when I read the transcripts. Second, as I said earlier, I used retrospective accounts to discuss the lesson plans most of the instructors had previously completed. The two instructors who had previously completed their lesson plans explained their goals for the unit I observed and the reasons they made their decisions. For the one instructor who did not create formal lesson plans, we used the forum as

an opportunity to discuss how he made decisions about what his goals were for his class.

Data Analysis Methods

Many forms of data analysis have gained acceptance by sociocultural researchers (Chin, 1994; Grossman, 1990; Peshkin, 1991). However, this acceptance does not suggest the methods are perfect; just as in data gathering techniques, each method of analysis has its own strengths and weaknesses. By employing different methods of data analysis, researchers can obtain a more complete picture of the phenomena than possible from one just one analytic perspective. In my study of the influence of the writing practices of composition instructors, once I coded the interviews, think-aloud protocols, retrospective accounts, and observations I analyzed them through verbal data analysis.

Coding consists of dividing a transcribed discourse into pieces containing essential elements (Witte & Cherry, 1994). These elements are then labeled and categorized into a system designed by the researcher. This coding process is a subjective act (Hillocks, 1994). Smagorinsky (1994) calls the coding system "the instrument that represents the import of the data" (p. 7). He goes on to explain how different researchers could code identical data in differing ways,

leading to radically disparate interpretations of a study. Therefore, it is imperative for a coding system to be designed from a specific theoretical perspective, and that perspective must be appropriate to the study.

Interviews, think-aloud protocols, classroom observations, and retrospective accounts can all be analyzed through coding. Each of these types of data was divided into manageable units or codes. Studies having a similar focus (of teachers' writing as it relates to the composition classroom) or following similar theoretical perspectives (teacher thinking, theories of writing instruction, and sociocultural constructivist theory) provided some initial ideas for codes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Elbaz, 1991; White, 1996).

Although previous studies can serve as guides, rarely can a coding system from a previous study be utilized in another research project (Hillocks, 1994). For my study, the coding system included issues of how teachers believe their personal writing habits influence their lesson planning, classroom activities, and assessment processes. The data also suggested codes that dealt with the definition of writing and a writer, how students learn to write, the social and cultural influences on writing instruction, intertextuality of composed texts and texts of others on

composition instruction, and the importance of the teacher's personal writing in composition instruction.

Once I coded the data, the interviews, observations, think-aloud protocols, and retrospective accounts were analyzed through verbal data analysis: a more qualitative, descriptive data analysis method that looks for emerging themes. Verbal data analysis is a way of looking at verbal data in ways that are not simply quantitative, but rather examines the language and word choice of the participants through language, not numbers. For example, the interview transcripts were described in methods similar to those employed by Grossman (1990), where she used interviews to verbally describe the differences in teaching styles between beginning teachers with teacher education and those without teacher education.

Hillocks (1994) believes verbal data analysis is useful when developing a coding system of complex verbal discourse. It also serves as both a foundation and as a support for the conclusions drawn about the role of personal writing in composition instruction.

Conclusion

To achieve a more complete picture of how college composition instructors perceive their personal writing habits influencing their classroom planning, activities, and

assessment, I found multiple methods of data gathering and analysis useful. By combining interviews, think-aloud protocols, observation, and retrospective accounts, I was able to achieve a more complete perspective on the instructors' practices than would have been possible through simply one data gathering technique. Through my most useful method, interviews, I could provide the participants with a forum in which to discuss their beliefs about composition instruction and personal writing. Because the questions did not suggest correct or incorrect answers, the participants felt free to discuss what they believed about their ideas and their classes. Think-aloud protocols were useful because they allowed me insight into how the instructors graded student papers. They explained what they expected from the essays, how they marked both strengths and weaknesses of the papers, and how they derived a grade. The observations allowed me to experience their classes first hand and look for relationships between discussions of personal writing and composition instruction. Finally, the retrospective accounts gave me an additional forum to clarify information I had gathered earlier and gave them a chance to explain anything they felt was confusing or misrepresented. Through verbal data analysis, I found that the rich text possible in qualitative research created a

detailed perspective on the practices of composition instructors. The codes I created allowed me to analyze the data in more detailed ways than I expected and illuminated findings that surprised me.

Chapter Four: Context and Analysis

Introduction

The codes I developed to analyze my data also proved to be useful section dividers when discussing my findings. As a result, each major code has become a heading, and sub-codes have become sub-headings. By organizing the chapter in this way, related themes emerge and become more apparent. First, I discussed the context of my study. The context was comprised of the researcher's role, the university setting, the participants, and the participants' classrooms. Then, I discussed the beliefs about writing held by my participants. This included beliefs about what writing is, beliefs about what a writer is, and beliefs about self as a writer. The third major code I developed was beliefs about teaching writing. This was comprised of how people learn to write, the process of writing, purposes of freshman composition, student writing assignments, personal writing and lesson planning, personal writing and classroom activities, and personal writing and student paper assessment. I also analyzed both social influences on writing instruction and cultural influences on writing instruction. Finally, I examined the intertextual influences on writing instruction which I divided into influences of self-composed texts on writing instruction and influences of composed texts of

others on writing instruction.

Context of the Study

Before I began to examine the influence of personal writing habits on composition instructors' classroom practices, I had to make several decisions. First, I had to determine how I would approach my study; that is, I had to determine what role I would take in the research process. Once my role was settled, I had to choose the place where I would conduct my study. I knew I wanted to study college freshman composition classes, but given that, I had several locations that would have been both successful and convenient for me. Finally, once I knew where I would conduct the study, I had to decide who within the university's English department would participate in the study. I had to determine how many participants I wanted, allow for participants to drop out of the study, and choose instructors who might hold relatively different perspectives on writing instruction. I knew that before I could complete my study, I must carefully choose the context in which I would situate it (Varnum, 1994; Bridges, 1993).

Researcher's role.

I came to this study from a history of being interested in both writing and composition instruction. I have been interested in writing, specifically creative writing, for as

long as I can remember. I have written stories, poetry, and truly bad novels since I was nine or ten years old. In college, this interest in literature became a degree in English education, followed by two years of teaching eighth grade English. I returned to graduate school and completed a master's degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing. Then, I began Ph.D. course work and realized that I was more interested in studying the teaching of writing than I was in literature.

As most underemployed Ph.D. candidates, I looked for work anywhere I could find it. I began teaching freshman composition in 1990, and today, eight years later, I believe freshman composition is one of the most important classes that undergraduate students complete. Writing is a skill that most jobs require in one form or another, and students who learn successful writing strategies have an advantage over students who do not. As a result, I think that freshman composition instruction is an important area of research. I do not believe that there is only one (or even just several) successful ways to teach freshman composition; every instructor brings a unique background and set of beliefs to his or her classroom. These backgrounds and beliefs can be examined to help researchers understand more completely how composition instructors complete their task

of teaching freshman to write. My interest is not in the end result of student writing, although this would be a valid study. I am also not looking at issues of "success" when teaching composition. From teacher thinking theory, it follows that each instructor could look at success in a different way (Olson, 1988). Instead, I am seeking a perspective on how composition instructors make decisions about how they plan lessons, implement classroom activities, and assess student papers.

I chose to limit my study to how instructors make decisions about classroom practices through the lens of how they perceive their own personal writing, the writing they complete either as part of their career or because they simply enjoy writing. Personal writing is of interest to me, and I thought it would be interesting to see how other instructors viewed the influence of their personal writing on writing instruction. Beginning this study, I did not believe that only instructors who view themselves as writers could be successful composition instructors, and through findings I did not expect, which I will discuss later, I believe this more strongly now.

I approached this study as an observer who tried to stay unobtrusive, although knowing that I could not be truly invisible, I did not attempt to be. Through my data

gathering, I attempted to stay non-judgmental, allowing the participants to tell their own story. Their stories have provided a rich source of information from which I wrote this study.

University setting.

Pine Valley University (PVU), the regional university where I gathered my data, is located in Pine Valley, Oklahoma, with a student population of approximately 14,000 students and 600 faculty members. The student population consists of traditional students, approximately eighteen years old, who graduated from high school the previous year; international students who have come to this university for an affordable United States' education; and nontraditional students who have worked, often a number of years, before returning to school. The mean student age is twenty-six. There is limited student housing, primarily occupied by the international community, and most of the students live off campus and commute to the university. Pine Valley University offers bachelor's and master's degrees in many programs; however, because it is a regional rather than a state university, there are no doctorate programs. Although most of the faculty have doctorate degrees in their fields, some faculty teach with only a masters' degree.

Unlike larger state universities, most of the Liberal

Arts College is located in one building at Pine Valley University. The English department offices occupy approximately one-quarter of the available space in the building, and the offices are located in several adjacent suites. As a result, several of the participants commented on how everyone in the department tends to know everyone else. This closeness seemed to lend itself to a feeling of comraderie between faculty members.

Although the university utilizes graduate assistants and adjunct instructors to help in teaching freshman composition, all full-time faculty also teach the freshman classes. The instructors teach an average of twelve hours per semester, and teaching takes precedence over research. Conference participation and publication are a part of the department, but not as strongly as one sees at a state university.

Because most of the student body commutes and many of them work, classes are primarily offered in the morning and in the late afternoon and evening. The university is quite empty between two and four-thirty in the afternoon. Classes in the English department are offered in either a Monday-Wednesday-Friday/Tuesday-Thursday format or once a week at night. The department does not offer Saturday classes, and telecourses are extremely rare.

I chose a regional university for my study because I teach Composition I and II in an English department at a comparable university, and I am interested in how self-perceptions about personal writing habits influence the teaching practices of the instructors. I can apply what I discover to my own teaching practices. I have also discovered that most of the literature on the beliefs of teachers and their writing habits has focused on the public school level, leaving the influence on university level instruction largely unexamined.

Participants.

For this study, I wanted to select participants with different backgrounds, so I could gain independent perspectives about the influence of personal writing on composition instruction. To begin, I met with many instructors informally, talking about writing, teaching writing, and the personal writing in which they engaged. I initially limited my pool to experienced instructors, so I would not have to deal with issues of experienced versus inexperienced composition teachers. After talking with the instructors, who were all willing to participate in the study, I narrowed the pool to four instructors because of the detailed data I wanted to gather from each one. Halfway through the study, one of the participants dropped out of

the study due to other time constraints; however, the remaining three provided me with such detailed, varied information, I do not believe this adversely affects the study. Because this is qualitative research with a limited number of participants, I would not have been generalizing the findings either way. The three remaining participants willingly allowed me to interview them and observe their classes, and they agreed to complete think-aloud protocols and provide retrospective accounts.

The first participant, Liza, was an African American instructor. I selected Liza because she did not originally see herself as a writer, but rather as a teacher of writing. She received a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from a neighboring state university. She had two areas of specialty in secondary education, English and French. Later, she completed a Master of Arts Degree in English and earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration with an emphasis in English.

Liza's teaching career began in 1971 at a middle school in a large metropolitan area, where she taught three classes of ninth grade English and two classes of French. She began teaching at Pine Valley University in 1980 and taught primarily freshman composition, American literature classes, and ethnic literature classes. She also taught the English

methods class, the education methodology class required for English Education majors.

My second participant, Jackson, was Caucasian and the Chair of the English Department at PVU. I selected Jackson because of his strong interest in freshman composition, the conferencing method which he used in his composition classes, and the amount of personal writing he had completed. In 1974, Jackson received his Bachelor's degree in English/Pre-Med at a large university located in the southwest. He continued at that university to receive a Master of English in 1977. By the time he started his Ph.D., he said he knew "what he wanted to be." He was just afraid there would be no jobs. He completed his Ph.D. in English at a large university in the South in 1981.

Jackson began his teaching career as a teaching/research assistant during his graduate studies. He began teaching at Pine Valley after his graduation and was responsible for the remedial writing classes. At the time of the study, he taught primarily composition, advanced composition, American literature, and occasionally, he instructed creative writing classes. He became chair of the English department at PVU in 1994.

Jenny was my third participant, and I selected her because of her unusual background, her enthusiasm for

teaching freshman composition, and because she said she wrote really great Christmas letters. Jenny was Caucasian and had a Bachelor of Interior Design with a minor in English from a large state university. After she married, she and her husband were stationed on Guam. The village needed an English teacher, so she began teaching high school English. She said her students ranged in ability from very bright, to whom she taught Shakespeare, to very slow because of the intermarrying within the village. She believed that her students' varying levels of ability taught her to be more effective with wide ranges of learners.

After she returned to the United States, Jenny received a Master of Arts in English and began teaching at Pine Valley University in 1985. She taught freshman composition. Three years before my study, Jenny was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent surgery and radiation. During the semester I gathered my data, Jenny was a breast cancer survivor with no intentions of giving up.

The three participants of my study had one characteristic in common--they all seemed dedicated to teaching their students to be effective writers. However, they also had many things that they did not share. They viewed their personal writing through decidedly different perspectives, and they taught their classes in very

different ways. It was their dedication to their jobs and their different beliefs that encouraged me that these three could provide fascinating data about teaching freshman composition.

Participants' classrooms.

The three classrooms of my participants were an important part of the context of my study. I spent approximately two weeks in each participant's classroom because I observed a unit of their instruction. I gave the participants the opportunity to decide what unit they wanted me to observe. It was easy to begin to see differences in the three participants just from observing the way they taught.

I observed Liza teach a short story unit which culminated in a writing assignment. Liza's classroom was usually arranged so that she was in front of the students, and the students sat in rows. Liza primarily conducted interactive lectures with her students, where she would speak, and they would answer questions or ask questions. Her tone with her students was professional, but still warm and friendly. Because the students were working on short stories, Liza explained elements of the short story and symbolism. During her lecture, she wrote on the board, providing definitions and examples. Then, she had the

students apply the lecture to the story they had just read, "Young Goodman Brown." After this, the students worked in groups finding the elements of the short story and symbolism in several stories that they had previously read. They applied the lectures and group work to individual essays that they wrote. They could choose one of several stories, and she explained to the students what elements the essay needed to include. She provided the thesis statements; then, the students supported the statements with specific examples from the text. After the essays were completed, Liza completed a think-aloud protocol as she graded the essays.

Jenny's classroom was also usually arranged in rows with her standing in the front. I observed the unit in which she introduced and discussed the research paper for several days. After her students understood the elements of the research paper, she taught a literature unit and returned to the research paper from time to time. I observed her class those following days in which she discussed the research paper.

The first day of Jenny's unit, it was snowing, and approximately half of the class was absent. The students who were there seemed to have an extremely good rapport with Jenny, and she seemed to genuinely like them as well. She

explained that they would each select a novel and the corresponding video made from the book based on a list of novels and movies that she provided. If a student wanted to research another book, Jenny usually approved it. She told the students that they would read the novel and discuss it from the perspectives that they had discussed in class-- theme, symbolism, genre, etc. Then, they would compare and/or contrast the novel to the video.

The next class period, Jenny reviewed MLA bibliography format with them, even though they had been using documentation in earlier writings during the semester. After they had been reading for approximately two weeks, Jenny devoted a class to the papers, and the students explained their tentative thesis statements in class. The next class period, Jenny led a discussion of methods for supporting a thesis statement. She told me that most of this was review for the students, but she contextualized it to the research paper.

A few weeks later, Jenny canceled classes and met individually with all of her students to conference about their research papers. I observed this, and she worked with her students about persuasive thesis statements, information that supported the thesis, and clear writing. Jenny's attitude toward her students was always enthusiastic, she

willingly answered questions, and even if a student was having great difficulty writing the paper, if they were willing to spend time on their research, she would also work tirelessly to help them. She also completed a think-aloud while grading the final essays.

Jackson's class was unlike either Liza's or Jenny's. He explained to me before I came to the class that he rarely lectured. He went over some basic grammar information at the beginning of the year and showed his students where to find it in their handbooks. He also discussed the importance of rewriting drafts to help student essays improve. As will be explained in more detail later, his students spent nearly all of the semester writing. They wrote a series of paragraphs over topics of their own choice. The first third of the semester, they wrote and revised paragraphs by themselves; the rest of the class, they wrote by themselves and revised in groups. During the class, Jackson sat at his desk and called students' names in alphabetical order or reverse alphabetical order (he alternated). He went over every paragraph with every student every class period.

During the unit I observed, the students were not working in groups. The class was completely silent. He told me before I observed him that if two students wanted to

talk about something, they were welcome to do it; they just needed to go out in the hall for the discussion. Amazingly, for two weeks, I saw freshman composition students sit and write and write and write while he worked at his desk with the students individually. When he called their names and they didn't want to show him something at that time, he went on. Then, after he finished all the students, he called the name again. I never saw a student refuse a conference. I taped the conversations he had with the students, and they sounded more like a mentoring process than a criticism process. If students made a grammatical mistake, he asked them if they saw something wrong. If he could not get them to see the error on their own, he gave them a page number out of the book, asked them to read the page, and then talk to him about it again during the next class period. He often asked questions like, "Why did you write the paragraph this way?" If the student could not answer, he would encourage them to think about it, decide if it was the best way to write the paragraph, and if it wasn't, develop another method. I never heard Jackson say that a student had written a paragraph incorrectly; instead, he seemed intent on helping the student make that paragraph the best he or she possibly could. When Jackson was convinced the student could do no more and the paragraph was acceptable,

the student received an "OK." That was the only grade in the class, and final grades were determined by the number of "OK's." (This system is discussed in more detail later in the study.)

The context of my study was important for me to establish so I would be in a position to gather the kind of data I wanted (Kagan, 1992; Clandinin, 1986). My role as a researcher was to observe my participants' teaching, not evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction or the student learning. I selected a setting that was similar to my own teaching background and had a large enough department that I could choose participants with different perspectives. The participants were my most difficult decision because many instructors were willing to take part in the study, but I wanted participants of similar ages who viewed writing and teaching differently. By describing the units I observed at this time in the study, I established a context from which to discuss my findings.

To serve as a frame of reference when reading the transcripts and notes, I developed a series of codes from which to analyze the data my participants provided. Each code ties to my research questions established in Chapter One, and together, they provide interesting, and sometimes unexpected, findings about how personal writing habits

influence composition instructors' practices.

Beliefs About Writing

The first major category of coding that I want to address in this study concerns itself with the beliefs about writing held by my participants. My research questions addressed how the perception of how being or not being a writer influenced a composition instructor's classroom practices. Before I could directly address this issue, I needed to develop a base of information from which to discuss being a writer (Troyka, 1996; Romano, 1995; Goldberg, 1986). First, it was important to determine the beliefs of my participants on what writing is. Second, I needed to gain perspectives on what my participants believed a writer is. From this, we talked about how they viewed themselves as writers. Because much of the theory base of this study is founded on teacher thinking theory (Konopak & Wilson, 1995; Pajares, 1992; Olson, 1988), I needed to attempt to discover what my participants believed about writing.

Beliefs about what writing is.

The first code I investigated was the beliefs of my participants about what writing is. Because teachers behave in ways congruent with their beliefs, and their beliefs are individual, I thought it was important to provide my

participants with a chance to define writing. Before I could study how composition instructors viewed their personal writing, I needed to establish first what they believed writing consisted of.

Liza believed writing to be primarily an activity leading to a specific goal. Although she acknowledged creative forms of writing, like novels, poetry, and stories, she believed that most of the writing she and her students completed had a utilitarian purpose. She said, "Writing is a form of communication--a necessity. [It's something] people usually complete for a specific purpose." Liza's beliefs about writing manifested themselves in the kinds of writing she tried to help her students produce. She explained, "I want my students to find the purpose, the audience, what it's for, and get to the point. . . .There are other purposes of writing, to inform, persuade, soothe, and entertain, but most of the focus [in freshman composition] should be on informative writing."

Jenny defined writing within the context of her composition classes. She said, "Writing is communication on paper. That's writing in a freshman sense. I only focus on this because I only teach freshman." Jenny believed that good writing was writing that was thoughtful and communicated with the reader. She said, "Writing is altered

by who the audience is. If an audience expects something from the writing, then the writer must be responsible for that and make the writing live up to the expectations." She also included many types of writing, including letter writing, as legitimate forms of writing. She did not limit writing to essays or works of fiction.

Jackson saw writing as something that needed to have significance for the writer. He said, "The first thing that these people are divorced from in the traditional classroom is their own experience. They have this wealth of fascinating information, but they have been taught somehow that it's not interesting. They have no confidence in their own ability to express their own lives, which is a tremendous tragedy." He said that for real writing to occur, this confidence must be returned to the writer. Writing can only exist when a writer takes ownership of the product. Otherwise, it is simply another worthless exercise.

Each of these participants defined writing by focusing on different aspects. Generally, Liza believed college writing should be succinct and to the point, Jenny wanted it to be interesting and clear, and Jackson felt it should be meaningful. These three perspectives were interesting because of where they put control of the text. Both Liza

and Jenny tended to give more authority to the reader of the text, while Jackson wanted the writer to retain control. I found that their definitions strongly influenced the way the instructors viewed composition instruction, a later series of codes. Their definitions also led into what a writer is and what the role of a writer should be.

Beliefs about what a writer is.

Just as the three participants held different perspectives on what writing is, they also had opinions about what comprises a writer. Their perspectives were closely related to their beliefs about writing.

Liza defined a writer as "someone who has a message. Or, to borrow from Robert Frost, someone who has a lover's quarrel with the world and wants to get an idea into some kind of word form. [He or she] expresses his/her dissatisfaction with the way things are. Or maybe just an expression of beauty." She also differentiated between nonacademic writing and academic writing. She seemed to hold nonacademic writing as more legitimate "writing" than she did academic discourse. In other words, real writers wrote fiction; as a result, she was not a writer because she wrote nonfiction.

Jenny limited her definition of a writer to writers in a freshman composition class. She said she did not feel

qualified to define the word outside of the context in which she used it. In this way, she believed a writer is, "somebody who can make sentences come together. They write an idea in a way that simply wakes it up. That's a writer to a freshman. Someone who can communicate on paper."

Jackson said, "I think [a writer] is somebody who feels he has real confidence. A writer is somebody who has confidence in his or her ability to shape the utterance on paper. . . .A simpler definition is somebody who [has] published writing that he/she has done. However, I think it's simpler than that. Since I'm a composition teacher, I tend to look at it as somebody who sees the act of writing more as an interesting challenge than an impossible chore."

However, Jackson tended to define a writer differently when he discussed writers outside of the context of his freshman composition class. When talking about himself as a writer, he defined a writer as someone who had success in publishing the kind of writing that he wanted to publish. Therefore, it would be up to individuals whether or not they were a writer.

It was interesting that when the participants discussed their students as writers, they had one definition of a writer, yet when they talked about themselves, this definition often altered. It appears that asking the

question "What is a writer?" is not sufficient. It should be supplemented with "If X group were writing, how would you define being a writer?" Based on the three participants' responses, the definition of a writer appears to be tied to social roles and cultural expectations. Being a writer is a role one can choose or not choose, and often, the surrounding culture influences the decision. If the culture encourages writing, one is more inclined to choose the role of a writer than if the culture is critical of writing.

Beliefs about self as a writer.

The progression from a discussion of the definition of a writer to beliefs about the self as a writer was natural. Often, the two codes nearly merged into one category; however, they were kept separate because of the different kinds of definitions of a writer that the participants explained, as described above.

Liza explained that she did not view herself as a creative writer; instead, she saw herself as a utilitarian writer. "I don't ever write out of creativity; I write out of necessity. I don't just pick up a pen. I don't write in journals. . I only write when I have to. I cut to the chase when I'm writing and just try to get to the point. Kind of like Hemingway." She saw her writing as academic in nature, explaining that she wrote papers, reports, committee

reports, and similar writings. However, she acknowledged that it was important for instructors to explain to their students that writing has different purposes, and instructors should refine their own writing as well. However, she said that she did not write poetry, short stories, or novels.

I asked Jenny if she considered herself a writer. She replied, "Yes, I do consider myself a writer, but I don't work at it. I don't get paid for it. I love the written word and the writing. It goes together in sentences, paragraphs, etc. I think I have a good eye for good writing because I can see so many mixed constructions in my students. When I do conferencing work with them on that research paper, it's amazing how little effort they put into writing. I want to be informative; I want to have something that is worth saying. I expect that same [dedication] from my students."

Jenny saw herself as a writer who wrote a great deal in many genres, but she was not seeking publication. "I'm not going for publication, but I write letters; I write poetry. I write Christmas letters that are sent to over seventy-five people, and they just seem really to like them. That's really the only way I write" Jenny indicated that she valued all kinds of writing, both nonacademic and academic.

She admitted that most of the writing she had done since her graduation had been nonacademic, but she had completed some academic writing. "I did write a paper last summer because they asked me to and gave it at the convention held at Pine Valley University. It was kind of fun because it was exactly what I expect out of my students. I saw how long it took me, how much effort I had to put into it, and how much I worked. I see how remote some of my students are from the process because they aren't willing to commit to it." Jenny felt that it was good for her to have to write under pressure, so she could more easily understand her students' processes.

Jackson began by talking about the kinds of writing in which he engaged. "I write notes to my daughter. I have been doing a lot of E-mail lately. The computer allows you to mimic in your fingers processes of the human mind that we couldn't do earlier. The fact that you can change an utterance, you can change a sentence or a word. Nobody ever knows you did it. That changes the whole equation in some odd way. I don't know that it makes it better, but it facilitates certain processes that the teaching of writing of the last thirty years have told us. . . .It [E-mail] is much more intimate than other kinds of writing." Jackson went on to say that although E-mail and letters are similar,

letters require more substance, while E-mail more expresses the emotion of the moment.

Jackson mentioned that the day before the interview, he had put a novel in the mail. When I asked him what kind of novel, he responded, "Probably an unpublishable one." He then went on to explain that it was a comic novel about the legal profession that he had co-written with a lawyer. He also said that he had three textbooks being published that year that analyzed and explained writing in different academic disciplines.

When I asked Jackson if he considered himself a writer, I was astonished when he replied, "No." I asked him how he could say that when he had three textbooks being published in one year. He responded, "Well, that's funny because there is something else in a definition of a writer that you have to take into account. Different people value different kinds of writing. I don't consider myself a writer. The reason is because I've never had much luck publishing the kinds of things I think I would need to have published in order to consider myself a writer. Textbooks don't count." I asked him what he would have needed to publish to be a writer, and he said that when he was in college, he wanted to write poetry, fiction, and that kind of thing. He explained that in the last twenty years, he had published

one short story and about twelve poems. He shrugged, "That's it! I haven't had the kind of recurring success at publication that in my mind legitimizes me as a writer. I'm an aspiring writer. Now, I think my definition is bogus, but it's bound up in how you see yourself, an identification. . . .I think that you determine who you are based on what you think you have accomplished as well as what you are capable of doing. I think I may be capable of writing good books that can get published, but I haven't done it yet."

My three participants held markedly different perspectives of themselves as writers. Liza saw herself as a writer of necessity, Jenny saw herself as primarily a social writer who did some academic writing, and Jackson, who wrote and published more than both of them, did not consider himself a writer. I think that his explanation of why he did not consider himself a writer provides important insight into why most people do and do not view themselves in specific ways. He saw a potential within himself that he was not fulfilling. From a teacher thinking position, this is interesting because it is that how we think about something impacts our relationship to it. If we view ourselves in a certain role, then in our own minds, we become that role; however, if we do not view ourselves as being within a

certain role, very little can change our minds.

Beliefs About Teaching Writing

Because the focus of my study is how self-perceptions of personal writing habits influence composition instruction, one of the most important categories I had to create was beliefs about teaching writing (i.e., Walvoord & McCarthy, 1990; Hillocks, 1987; Applebee, 1986; Emig, 1971). I looked at this category from two different perspectives. First, I wanted to get a general perception of what my participants believed about teaching freshman composition. I did not start by limiting their responses to how they related teaching to their personal writing. However, once we had discussed their general beliefs and practices when teaching composition, we specifically related these beliefs to their personal writing habits. First, I discussed the beliefs about composition instruction held by my participants. I divided this code into the sub-codes of how people learn to write, the process of writing, purposes of freshman composition, and student writing assignments. Then, I discussed how planning, classroom activities, and assessment were directly influenced by the instructors' personal writing habits (Brown & Rose, 1995).

How people learn to write.

To begin to discover what my participants believed

about composition instruction, I asked Liza, Jenny, and Jackson how people learn to write. I felt that this question was important because their answers could begin to provide insight into some of the underlying assumptions about learning that influenced the way they taught composition.

Liza believed people learned to write because of "fear, dread, and necessity. Fear of the empty page--an object in one's hand and knowing that because we are dealing with a concrete object, something has to be produced. You just cannot sit here, or you will end up with a blank page."

Liza's response was interesting because it seemed to correlate with her beliefs about her personal writing. From what she said earlier, Liza seemed to see writing as a task to be completed, not as something one would necessarily do as recreation. Her belief that people learn to write because they are afraid of having nothing on paper tied with the concept of writing as an assignment. Writing was something that "has to be produced."

Jenny found that people learned to write by writing. "Trial and error. I think most good writers had someone back in the third grade that stood over them and molded their habits." I asked her if she thought she could do that at the college level. She replied, "No, I don't. I stand

up at the board about three times a semester and say, 'You don't say womens.' I have four students who still say womens. Now, whatever they have got in their minds beats me. Women is singular. . . . Some of them, most of them, can't spell. I don't know. I think that once some habits are formed, I don't know that you can do anything about it."

Like Jenny, Jackson believed that habits formed early. "The research says that they [students] have learned ninety percent of their grammar before they learn how to speak. They learn it in their home environment. I do think that home environment has a tremendous amount of influence here.

"I think one of the reasons I learned to write is that I had parents who wrote. My father, being a minister, wrote all the time. My mother was a teacher who had taught the whole spectrum. She taught in grade school, high school, middle school, and college. She got her Master's degree in secretarial skills. She taught shorthand, typing, and that sort of stuff at a nearby university. Looking at my own experience, I began to realize that there was some real use in knowing how to do this right. I figured out that what you had to do is challenge yourself instead of intimidate yourself. I think I did that from watching my father and being a reader. If you read, I don't see how, eventually, the idea can't come to you to try and write. I think it's

early experiences."

Jenny's and Jackson's responses interested me because they both involved the importance of early family life. They both saw that most of what is basically involved in writing had been taught to their students years before they arrived in freshman composition. Jenny saw writing instilled through the culture of an elementary school, while Jackson saw writing develop through the social roles of the family. Both also believed that deficiencies in the respective cultural and social institutions led to problems in later writing skills.

The process of writing.

Once the participants established ideas of how writing developed, I asked Liza, Jenny, and Jackson about what was actually involved in the process of writing. This question helped to illuminate their beliefs about what writers, specifically their students, had to go through to complete writing tasks.

Liza discussed the importance of planning writing before actually beginning to write. She thought it was important for her students to have "a lot of pre-thought planning and pre-thought associations. Putting those pre-thought associations in symbols, written words, and ideas. Then, getting those ideas into some kind of organized

coherent thought and into some kind of finished product. Many people, however, just begin writing and think of that not as a recursive activity but as one final product. We [the class] see writing as a process, a series of stages rather than one final product."

Liza explained that when she was in college, writing was not taught as a process, but rather as a product. She said that much of her teacher training focused on writing the same way. She said it wasn't until her graduate work and later workshops that she came to see how writing could be a process that students worked through, rather than just a finished paper.

When I talked with Jenny about the process of writing, she said that she taught her students skills in shorter assignments and then had them apply those skills in longer writings. She said that she began by explaining that much writing can be done according to a formula. She said, "'If you hate English, that's fine. If you can do math or if you are musically inclined, you understand plugging into a formula, and this is the formula for writing a paper. You can use this [formula] in any class.' I tell them that you have a catchy title, and you have an introduction that's a lot of good bull. You have to have good bull for an introduction. Then, you have to have a basic thesis because

if you do, that tells the academic graders, who are trained to teach, write, and read essays, that hey, you know what you're talking about, even if you don't.

"For instance, if you go into a final in history class and you have the choice of writing an essay on the Civil War, you can pretty well get through that if you will sit there and organize your thoughts. Outline them on paper if you can't keep them in your own head. Say something to the effect of--or a good bull introduction is--'The Civil War was the most deadly war in the history of the United States. Brother killed brother. The nation was divided.' Etc., etc., etc. Then, your thesis. You are writing to a history teacher. You say the main cause/causes of the conflict were social, economic, and philosophic. Then, you go into the social issues, the slavery, etc., etc., etc. You go into the economic--that the North was industrialized; the South was agricultural. Then, you go into the philosophical, where the Southerners wanted the gentry system that came down from the Middle Ages. They wanted to be knights in shining armor and have a social order, whereas the individuals in the North believed anyone could become what he/she--well, he at the time--wished to be with his own luck, encouragement, and hard work. So if you can put an essay together like that, the professor will look at it and

say, 'Wow, this person knows what he's talking about.' If you have good bull, then you're in good shape. But the essay is what I go about teaching."

When discussing the process of writing, Jackson said that research has provided helpful information for composition instructors on this question. "People, especially [those] who have focused on revision, believe everything is involved all at once. That's what's so confusing about it. It's a recursive process, but it's also a simultaneous process, which means while you are thinking of the next sentence, you are revising this sentence before--you stop and go back. There is revision, prewriting, and there is writing. They are happening all at once. You can't separate them. I taught for years that the thing to do is to break these down into discrete activities. You prewrite, and then you write, and then you revise. I couldn't understand why it didn't work, and the reason it didn't work is writing is just a sloppy process. What's involved in writing is everything. It's memory, it's being able to locate. . . , it's discovery, and it's invention. It's everything at once. As much as anything, it's training you to be an opportunist. It's creating a tremendous wreck and then seeing what bobs up."

I asked Jackson, given this "wreck," how he helped his

students deal with the chaos. "They [the students] do everything [prewriting, writing, revising], but they do it all at once. You can break it down. I found, myself, that when I write, I'm constantly frustrated when I set myself a goal of prewriting first. I'll start going, and then, I'll think, 'Oh, I think there is paragraph one, or there is paragraph three.' I want to go over here and write that paragraph, but if I'm in the prewriting mode, I need to keep going. I will write a few notes over here, and then by the time I got to the paragraph, my energy was gone for it. What I tend to do is really just do it all at once. The great thing about a computer is that you can do everything all on the computer at the same time."

Jackson went on to say that he thought having students work with each other helped them to see how prewriting, writing, and revising are not individual steps. "I do believe in peer editing. I think that one way to build a kind of continuous development is to go from one [step of the process] to the other. In the second third of my course, I do peer editing. I put them in groups and try hard to get them to do the kinds of things we [Jackson and the individual students] are doing."

My three participants showed very different perspectives on the process that people go through when

writing. Liza taught her students to follow what has commonly been called "the writing process," and she seemed to focus on the prewriting part of this recursive activity. I think it is interesting that she explained that this was not how she had been taught to write; rather, the writing process was something she studied later and embraced because she believed it was effective.

Jenny believed that writing is a formula, and if the student follows the formula, the writing will be acceptable. It is interesting to notice that Jenny's "formula" was little more than an explanation of elements necessary in an essay: interesting introduction, thesis statement, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. However, the way she approached it, she almost seemed to be convincing the students that she had a shortcut for them. Some might criticize Jenny for teaching one standard way of essay writing, but it should be remembered that she contextualized everything about writing within the realm of freshman composition. And usually, freshmen are trying to develop a way to write acceptable, undergraduate papers. Jenny's goal was to help them accomplish that.

Jackson took a position quite different from Liza and Jenny. He did not believe that writing could be successfully accomplished when divided into individual

steps, even if those steps were recursive. Instead, he saw the steps of writing occurring simultaneously. Rather than wanting to help his students recognize the steps, he wanted to help them manage the chaos. By doing this, he gave more control of the writing to his students. This relates to my earlier findings about who had control of the writing. Both Liza and Jenny made strong attempts to assist the processes their students took while writing. Jackson, on the other hand, expected the writing process to be chaotic and only tried to help his students understand and manage this.

Purposes of freshman composition.

I queried Liza, Jenny, and Jackson about the purposes of freshman composition. I wanted to discover why they thought freshman should have to take two composition courses and what the student should learn

Liza replied, "Hopefully, the goal of freshman composition is to get the student into thinking that communication is very important, and that it doesn't matter what profession a student enters, that written communication will be a viable part. This is really a last shot at trying to get the students to thinking about organization and content. They need to be able to organize that content for effective communication."

Jenny believed that freshman composition had two

different goals: literature and writing. "I think it should be to give them just a sampling of literature. It should be to encourage their study of poetry and drama and short stories. To enjoy reading and find something that they read is worthwhile." However, Jenny also felt that good writing skills were critical for her students' later success.

"Whatever they do in the future, they're going to have to communicate. The better they can communicate on paper, the more effective they will be. I also encourage them to be very vocal. They are not a bit shy, but I have them jumping up right now reading their last essays to the class. The class listens very attentively because they think they are going to have some of this on the final. They listen to each other better than to me."

When I asked Jackson about the role of freshman composition, he responded, "What English people were taught was the reverse of what they needed to be taught to teach composition. They were taught how to treat a text as a product. Here's the text; now, let's cut it apart and see how it works. Dissect the text, and you see what the parts were and how they fit together. There's nothing general about that. What we had to do is find out how to take whatever tangle was in their minds and in their fingertips and help them put it together for the first time. We were

taught wrong. We were taught the techniques of analysis rather than synthesis. That's why for generations, we made such lousy writing teachers."

The goals that Liza, Jenny, and Jackson had for freshman composition were closely related to their beliefs about their personal writing and writing instruction. Liza, who acknowledged that she did not write creatively, said that the purpose of freshman composition should be clear communication. This goal ties to what would likely be the goals of her own writing because she said she wrote only within the academic requirements: memos, reports, and papers. Jenny also thought that clear communication was an important goal, but she also believed that helping students understand literature was valuable because this was the last time they might be exposed to it. This was related to her belief that today's culture does not encourage reading for pleasure, and that if students didn't have to read for a class, they might stop reading altogether. Jackson believed that the goal of freshman composition was to help students untangle the thoughts they had in their minds and help them put them on paper. The synthesizing process he described corresponds to his teaching methods where he helped students synthesize what they had written and tried to help them devise the best way to organize the material. His criticism

of analysis was interesting because it showed his metacognition toward composition instruction, and based on all of his data, he always seemed to think through his composition instruction carefully.

Student writing assignments.

Once the participants and I discussed the composition class in general, we talked about specific student writing assignments. I asked Liza, Jenny, and Jackson if they chose subjects for their students' essays. I told them I was interested in their influences on their students' writing, whether that was specifications about the types of essays assigned or actual paper topics.

I asked Liza if she chose her students' subjects or if they chose the subjects themselves. She said, "I try to get them to select a celebrated cause--some issue that they would like to maybe improve or maybe individually protest. Have a platform about or against it. From the celebrated cause, we generate ideas for a letter to the editor--persuasive writing, so to speak. Then, using that same subject, the students are able to develop ideas for definitions, compare/contrast, etc. We use that one celebrated cause for ideas of writing." Liza said that by having the students select causes that are important to them, they are more interested in the writing, and they more

enjoy writing the different kinds of papers.

Jenny said that she focused her writing around literature. "I have worked into a deal . . . that I really like, and probably nobody else can ever understand it, but I do three-prong literature. I do short stories for six weeks, I do drama, and I do poetry. After each section, I give a quiz, and in that quiz, I ask them or give them a choice of four or five things. I ask them to tell me about what they have chosen (like Gothic) in three of the stories read and give me three specific quotes from each story. This means they have to get into that story and be able to quote the gothic because that's where you teach the research. That's how you teach them documentation--by doing it in short stories. Then, they can always use the book."

Jenny went on to say that for her students' research papers, they selected a book that had a video adaptation. If a student wanted to do a book that Jenny had not read, she would usually read it and watch the video. Then, for their essay, the students created a documented essay talking about historical and literary aspects of both the book and the movie. By allowing the students to select the book, she hoped that they would be more interested in the paper than if they could not. "Assigning this research paper is painful. There are always two or three people every

semester who say that they have never read a book prior to this. It's like a whole new world." Jenny included the video as part of the assignment to capture the interest of what she called "the television age."

Jackson explained that he did not choose types of essays or paper topics for his students; instead, they chose the topics. He said that if instructors choose paper topics or modes, that's another way of imposing an outside authority on what the students are doing. I asked him what he meant by that. He responded, "There is a sort of rights for students. There are privileges that they should be allowed to enjoy when they are writing. If we don't watch it, we take over their writing. Frankly, they want us to because then it means less work for them. If they can get us involved in an abstract question or a problem about theory so that we eventually see our way clear to putting an OK [or grade] on this or toward telling them what exactly to do here, then their job is done. That's what I mean by removing authority. We don't want to do that. The first place it happens is when you limit the things they can write about.

"Now, I do limit. I tell them it has to be real stuff, not fiction. I don't want them to write fiction. If they want to write fiction, then they need to go to the creative

studies program. You can almost always tell when it's fiction. Sometimes it's not, and sometimes, there might be one about how this person got up yesterday morning--the alarm, the shower, and this sort of thing. You think, wow, this is really good, and they spring it on you that it's made up. I tell them that it's not fiction. They can't tell me that they never did any of that stuff. What I mean by fiction is, 'The spy walked out of the shadows and aimed and fired.' That sort of thing. Some of them will try that and say that they didn't have anything interesting to write about. This is another way of saying to me, 'Please take responsibility away from me.'"

Liza's, Jenny's, and Jackson's assignments continued to reflect the ideas they had exhibited in the previous code analyses. Liza and Jenny both took more control over their students' work than Jackson did. Liza focused her students' papers around a cause in which they took a personal interest, while Jenny planned assignments around combining literature with related movies. Jackson, on the other hand, forced students to take complete control over their paper topics. He also put little structure around how they wrote about their topics. These findings appear to correlate with the theme of who had control in the classroom and why. Liza took control of the general writing prompt but allowed

students to choose specific issues of interest to them. Then, she controlled the kind of writings they completed. Jenny took a similar perspective: she maintained general control over writing about literature, the students chose the novel, then she guided the way they responded to the literature. Jackson's students controlled their writing, but he insisted that it be realistic, and students did not appear to have the option of writing about literature in his class. It seemed to be limited to personal, life experiences.

Once we had discussed writing and composition instruction, I wanted to narrow the focus to the planning, classroom activities, and assessment of the three participants. I was especially interested in how personal writing influenced these three elements of composition instruction.

Personal writing and lesson planning.

I asked Liza if she thought her personal writing habits influenced her planning of classroom activities. She said, "My writing becomes part of my planning. I write very sketchy. I write shorthand notes to myself rather than to sit down and write formal sentences about what I plan to do as an objective. I more or less write shorthand notes-- fragments and phrases rather than complete sentences."

I asked her if she wrote out a plan for every day. She responded, "I write to myself in notes and phrases, not complete sentence. It's not formal. Just notes to myself."

Jenny and I discussed how she thought her personal writing habits influenced how she planned her freshman composition classes. She said, "Well, I don't know, but I feel that writing is so important that I make them write for the first six weeks, every single day in class. It's a headache to grade, but I'll pick something about the symbolism of a short story they just read and make them write about that symbolism and give specific quotes from the text to show that they do, indeed, understand the value of that symbol and what they think it means. They use the author's words, so they are looking carefully at what the author said or how the author puts it together."

I asked Jenny what her goals were for this plan of daily writing. She responded, "We are reading and writing, which is what the class is about. If they are paying attention, they can do something with it. They have to be reading to come up with a comprehensive quote. It shows me who is paying attention and who is just trying to get by with as little effort as possible."

When I asked Jackson how his personal writing habits influenced how he planned his instruction, he responded that

he was a very sloppy writer. "I'm very undisciplined. I can manage in the course of a year to put myself on a writing schedule for short bursts of time. There are other times when there is nothing in the world I need to do more than to sit down and write--to revise a manuscript. I'm doing that all the time with these textbooks. Yet, no matter how desperate I am, no matter how badly we've missed the deadline, there are times when I just won't do it. I will not do it. I used to beat myself up for this something awful. But I've learned to a little tolerance for myself and my own failings.

"Now, as far as students go, I believe you can talk and talk and talk about the importance of setting deadlines. Just like I talk to myself about it. But it won't do any good. You have to force them to experience their lives. You have to give them several [deadlines] in the course of a semester. None of them is itself sufficient to destroy a student's grade. But rather, to give them a sense of what they have to do and how they have to do it.

"The only way that keeps people establishing schedules, to budget their time, and all that is to put them in a situation that they have to do it, or they will blow the course. Therefore, rather than trust them to discipline themselves to do it, I establish three deadlines in a course

of a semester. I establish formal deadlines, but I have a lot of informal ones. I will talk to a student about a particular piece of writing. I ask them to show me this again by [doing] such and such. I am a great believer in finding help for them. There must be wonderful writers who can discipline themselves to do it all together--to do it all by themselves. I don't know any of them. I know people who trick themselves into deadlines, and I believe that. I'm trying to trick these students into an awareness of how important it is to keep deadlines. One of the nice things about the conference method I use is that it gives them a series. You can consider each class a deadline. It gives them a chance to improve their writing incrementally and to have that improvement or lack of improvement judged on a daily or every other day basis."

I asked Jackson if he made formal lesson plans, and he said no. "I find that my memory is such that I can remember a draft. When I get the next draft and I see it, I can remember what I told them on the previous draft. I can remember a particular student and two or three papers over a course of two or three weeks even."

As I explained in Chapter Three, I had planned to have my participants complete think-aloud protocols while they planned their lessons; however, none of the participants

created formal lesson plans. Liza wrote herself notes, Jenny seemed to have planned her semester holistically and did not create day-to-day plans, and Jackson conferenced daily and relied on his memory to keep his students' papers straight. Liza's note writing seemed to be consistent with her belief that writing should be utilitarian. She saw the need to create notes for herself, so she wrote them. Jenny did not tie her planning to her personal writing, but she said instead that she had her students write because she thought it was so important. Jackson was the only one who directly tied his plans for his class to personal writing, saying that he gave students deadlines because he had trouble keeping deadlines, himself. At first, I wondered about this lack of daily lesson plans, but I think it may be a result of having limited my participants to experienced composition instructors. Perhaps if they had not taught freshman composition for a number of years, they would have had a more specific sense of their lesson plans.

Personal writing and classroom activities.

I asked Liza how her personal writing habits influenced the activities she used in the classroom. She said that just like in her planning, she wrote many notes to herself. "For example, for activities, I might need the record player, the VCR, or the overhead. Again, nothing is in

formal sentence format."

I asked her how her writing influenced the activities she chose. She responded, "I do several small group activities that are geared to that same simplified [writing] method [of the writing process]. When they write a formal essay, I expect it to be well thought. They have to follow all the rules of paragraph, thesis sentences, concrete examples, quotes to back up [ideas], generalities, concluding sentences, etc. I've had two complaints this year about my tests because they are objective and simply recall. I believe that the students apply their knowledge of literary terms and how well they understand through their essays."

I discussed how Jenny saw her personal writing habits influencing her classroom activities, and she made no direct connection. Instead, she explained how today's culture influenced how she thought she should teach. "Well, visually, this is a television age, and you can't lecture, and you can't do anything longer than fifteen minutes because no one has an attention span past fifteen minutes. I try to mix up a whole lot of other things, like visual aids, with just the reading and writing. Today, we saw two videos of the dramas that are in the book. I figured if it's a drama, it's appropriate, so we watched it."

I asked Jenny how culture had impacted composition instruction. She answered, "I think that literature is a dying art form because we have so many other things that we put value on, like video games and the computer. I ask the first day of class how many of them will ever take another English class, and there is rarely ever more than two people in class who will raise their hands. I tell them that I feel that it's their very last shot at literature and reading and writing. I just go at it like a crusader. This is the last chance they are going to have, and I want them to at least get a shot at Faulkner, a shot at Flannery O'Connor, Edgar Allen Poe. And then, when you look at those authors and their work, you have something to talk about rather than a comparison/contrast of what they have been doing in earlier writing classes. . . . I don't know that I really look at it as a writer. I look at it as a crusader that these kids will never again take another [English] class.

"It's almost a dying form of communication to write about something you see or read or experience because we have so many short cuts. We are not readers any more because we're not writers. Assigning a research paper and getting them to read a novel is, like, painful. There are always two or three people every semester who say that they

have never read a book prior to this. It's like it's a whole new world. It's sad. I just keep trucking, forcing them to read the plays. I make them get up and act them out. If they don't act them out, they will rent the video and talk about all the characterizations and symbolism and that stuff. They have to read [the novel], or they stand in front of the class and make fools of themselves. I'm pretty effective at getting them to do what I want them to do."

I asked Jackson how his personal writing affected his classroom activities. He said, "It allows me to be tolerant when somebody comes to me and says that they just don't have it. 'I just didn't do it.' I think I'm more tolerant of these people because I feel the same way. Sometimes, it seems that there are so many deadlines that I can let two or three slide, so long as I keep a kind of generalized pressure up. I let them know that this is okay, but. . ."

Jackson paused and then continued. "On the very first day, I explain to them that it's basically no skin off my nose that they get anything [turned] in or not. I'm not going to be the one who is going to fail the class. I put on the board, 'It's your neck.' I have them say it. I give them a count down of three, and they all say, 'It's my neck.' Every once in a while in the course of a semester, we do that and kind of chuckle. It is their necks on the line.

I'm tolerant with them within the parameters I set up. Outside of that, no. One of the ways I maintain deadlines is incrementally limiting their access to me. In the first two or three weeks of a segment of the class, they can come and show me their papers at any time they can find me. I am in my office for a certain number of published hours. If they can't make those hours, I'm available to set up appointments for them to come in and see me. There is a deadline point beyond which I won't look at their papers in class.

"I didn't do it for a while, and one of the reasons I didn't was that it allows the deadline to creep up on them all at once. They don't pay enough attention. I would get people two days before the deadline or the day before the deadline. There would be a huge line outside my office. Well, I don't do that anymore. I say to them that they are going to have to establish some kind of schedule. By this time, it's usually a week before the deadline; I will welcome them to come in. We will talk about the weather or the Yankees, but I won't talk about your paper. I will only look at it in class."

When the three participants discussed how their writing practices influenced their classroom activities, their beliefs about personal writing and writing instruction again

proved to be a strong influence. Liza was very practical, saying that she wrote notes to herself about materials she would need in class. She also specifically mentioned having her students use the writing process in class; Liza seemed to be very concerned that her students not try to write drafts in a single setting, the process she said she learned in her graduate work. Jenny taught literature because she thought it was important for her students to be exposed to things they might not otherwise read. She also seemed to tie her responses more to the importance of making education culturally relevant, feeling that if her students could not relate to the material, they would not be interested in it. Jackson tied his activities directly to his own writing processes. He explained that because he could not always write, he did not expect his students to be able always to write on command, so he built in deadlines they could miss and not jeopardize their grades. All three participants seemed to plan activities in their classes to meet the objectives they had established for their classes. The different kinds of activities they focused on correlated with their different goals, an idea that corresponds to the premises behind teacher thinking theory.

Personal writing and student paper assessment.

I asked Liza if she believed her personal writing

habits influenced the way she assessed her students' papers. She explained, "Most of my tests are objective, recalling, and analyzing. The students want to do more paragraph writing in the tests. I don't have a place for writing in my freshman tests. In upper division tests, they do write paragraphs. Not in my freshman class." I then asked her how she assessed the students' essays. She stated, "Well, sometimes I have looked at several tools throughout the school districts. I studied portfolio assessment, and I, more or less, have pulled certain elements from certain school districts to look at. I'm looking at the essays holistically rather than at specific points--content, style, sentence structure, and many other elements."

In Liza's think-aloud while grading student papers, she explained that for the set of papers that corresponded to the unit I observed, the students were given a thesis statement and had to support it with facts from the text. First, she graded students on whether or not they followed directions and whether they had supplied enough supporting details and quotations from the text. Next, she graded the papers on how thoughtfully the students had chosen the material they used to support what they were saying. Finally, she marked the papers with a system of symbols that told students if they had problems with subject-verb

agreement, punctuation, etc. She gave each paper a number grade and allowed them to rewrite the papers to correct the errors if the paper was not an "A."

Jenny said that she thought her belief in the importance of writing influenced her assessment by having her grade everything her students wrote. "Because I think [writing] is important. . . I grade everything. If they write it, I grade it. I want to see how much they understand what they are reading. If they can tell me what they have read and that they understand what they have read, and that it is meaningful to their experience, then they can relate to it. I grade things numerically, and the research paper is worth three times more than an essay. They also write in journals."

I asked Jenny how she determined her criteria for grading things like journals. She explained that she would ask them to find examples of something specific in the literature. If they found the examples, explained their significance, and backed up their ideas with quotes, then they would receive a 100 on the assignment. Every day, for six weeks, the students do writing that deals with different elements of literature. She believed that by doing this much writing, the students could see how writing could help you make an interesting point that was clearly written and

easy to defend because it was backed up with evidence. She believed that this ability to write thoughtful persuasive short writings enabled her students to approach the research paper with the same skills.

Jenny evaluated student drafts of their research papers while she conducted a think-aloud protocol. During this evaluation, the student was sitting beside her, and she was able to interact with them. Jenny began by focusing on the thesis statements of the papers and whether those thesis statements reflected what the students had intended to say and whether they were supported with the rest of the paper. Her conversations with the students were informal, yet she was very thorough in helping students develop more complete support for their thesis statements, looking for details that were relevant for their topics, and correcting grammar and punctuation errors. If a student was having specific grammatical problems, she gave him/her a page number in the textbook and asked the student to look up the rule and correct it.

I asked Jackson if he thought his personal writing habits influenced the way he assessed papers. He responded, "Well, your own personal habits, of course, can't help but affect it. Your personal habits become the basis for your evaluations. I worry about that. My habits aren't great

habits. Even if they were perfect habits for me, they wouldn't necessarily be perfect habits for everybody in the room. Basically, I spend time guarding against that. The problem in evaluation, especially in the way I do it, is not taking over the student's text. You can do that if you are not careful. So, thank goodness, I see each writing two or three times. After you have seen it once, when you see it again, you have done a little work on it, too. Just like the student has. I'll find cases where in interview number two [the second conference], that I'll say to that student, 'Why did I do that?' I'll tell them I have no idea why I did that, and I'll apologize."

I asked Jackson how he marked the papers that were acceptable. He explained, "I give them an OK or nothing. No U. No unsatisfactory. If they don't have anything on it, then they don't have any credit for it. . . . A grade represents closure to them, and that's what they want. That's the one thing students want at any cost. We have taught them to want that." Jackson said that for students to receive an "A," they had to write twelve acceptable paragraphs, for a "B," they had to write nine, and for a "C," they had to write six.

Jackson also completed a think-aloud protocol while conferencing papers with his students. Like Jenny, Jackson

evaluated the essays with the students present, and his tone was informal. His remarks tended to be non-prescriptive: "I wonder what would happen if. . . ." If the student was having a difficult time with the paragraph, Jackson would offer several ideas and suggest that the student try one of them. If the student had grammar or punctuation mistakes, Jackson would give a page number in the textbook and have the student look up the rule and correct the writing.

When looking at the influence of personal writing on composition assessment, the participants seemed to hold quite different perspectives. Liza did not seem to relate her personal writing to essay assessment; instead, she said she based her criteria from public school research into composition assessment. Based on the think-aloud protocols she completed, she seemed to focus on following instructions, supporting claims, and grammar/punctuation. Jenny also based some of her assessment on whether her students followed instructions and whether they supported their claims with data. Based on her think-alouds, she also focused on clear writing which had something thoughtful to say. She expected her students to correct errors in grammar and punctuation and helped them correct errors through the drafting processes by showing them examples out of the textbook. Jenny did not seem to see her own writing as

affecting her assessment of student papers. Jackson, however, directly tied his assessment to his personal writing, and he believed the relationship might not be a good thing. He was afraid personal biases might cause students not to receive a satisfactory grade when they should, but he believed most of this danger was eliminated with the frequency with which he read student papers. He also felt that giving grades less than acceptable provided a closure for students they should not have. He wanted each student to write as well as they could and not settle for less than their personal best. The three participants' comments on assessment were interesting because both Liza and Jenny seemed to see their own beliefs as more removed from the process than Jackson did. It almost seemed as though Liza and Jenny saw an invisible standard they needed to maintain over which they had little control, while Jackson saw the goal of the assignment as personal growth.

Social Influences on Writing Instruction

As discussed earlier in Chapter One, I am defining social roles as those that people hold under certain situations (Bazerman, 1994; Beach, 1993; Olson, 1988). For instance, the role of being a writer could be seen as social because there could be situations in which a person viewed himself or herself as a writer and other times where the

person held a different role. Although some could argue that writers are writers all of the time, it is possible that being a writer is a role that some people choose to hold all of the time. Being an instructor can also be seen as a social role because outside of the classroom, most composition instructors do not seem inclined to correct spoken grammar or informal written discourse. Also, the role of a composition instructor could be perceived differently by individual writing teachers. I was interested in the social influences on my instructors because roles are held by different people in different ways, and the ways my participants viewed their roles as writers and instructors could influence how they taught their classes.

Liza saw herself as a composition instructor who provided knowledge and correction for her students. She did not appear to view herself as playing other roles. She saw how that role changed as composition instruction has changed over the last twenty-five years. She explained that when she was learning to teach, the writing process was not part of composition instruction; she was introduced to the process orientation of writing during her graduate work. "When I attended college, writing was thought to be not a process; one just wrote. It's only lately, since I

graduated, that we started thinking that writing was a process. Most of my introduction in the writing process has come through independent studies and teaching." She said that even though she had taught for six years before her graduate work, she was not familiar with how students really compose and the writing process they go through.

When I asked Liza how else she thought her role as a teacher had changed, she said she believed that as she has matured as a teacher, her teaching practices had become less stringent. I asked her why she believed this had happened, and she responded, "More humaneness developed over the years." She explained that she was more likely to allow students to revise poor essays to assist their learning process and to allow them to receive a higher grade.

Jenny took a slightly more diverse approach to the roles she had as a composition instructor. She explained that because she was an adjunct and only taught two sections of freshman composition, she had more time to spend on individual student essays. Thus, she saw her role as an adjunct as an advantage in her ability to teach successfully. She also said she saw herself as a champion of the cause of writing and English more than she saw herself as a writer. "I don't know that I really look at it as a writer. I look at it as a crusader [because] these

kids will never again take another [English] class."

Jenny went on to explain that she saw her role of crusader more influenced by the belief that writing is a dying form than by educational theory. She said that she believed that educational theory, as she had experienced it, had little relevance to freshman composition. Her beliefs on this will be discussed further in the next section, "Cultural Influences."

Jenny believed that her role as a teacher modified from semester to semester, depending on her students. She felt that as the culture in which her students live changed, her role as an instructor must also change. She believed that she should, at least to a certain extent, try to meet her students' expectations. Because composition instruction in high school had changed over the years, her teaching needed to make similar adjustments because if the students did not accept her as an instructor, she could not effectively teach them to write.

Finally, Jenny said she saw her role as a composition instructor as a retaliation against what she believed many believed the role of a cancer patient should be. As explained earlier, Jenny was a breast cancer survivor, and she said that one of her roles as a composition instructor was not to appear to be a cancer patient. She felt this

position was a good model for her students and helped with her own coping skills and survival.

Like Jenny, Jackson saw himself in many roles as a freshman composition instructor. One of the roles he saw himself in was the role of the actor. "I think watching actors helps. It sounds fake, but it's not. When I was evaluating [graduate student instructors], I realized that everybody has a routine. We have all polished it over the course of the years. Some of us are just smoother than others. I think that if you know you do, and you work on yours, you can make it better." Jackson later said that he thought the role of a television talk show host like Johnny Carson had similarities to teaching composition. No matter what the students said in a conference, he could not overreact or under react to what they said or the problems they had. "I have to figure out with each new task and each new person what they need to see me do."

Jackson also said that he used the role of acting when reading drafts of student papers in front of them. He explained that the students watch him read their papers, and they look for any cues from him as to whether or not they think he will approve their papers. He said that it is important to act in a way that the students don't misread his cues. "I'll be reading this paper, and I have a

terrible habit of doodling on their paper. This is bad; I'm trying to stop or break myself from this. But I'll reach over to pick up my pencil. Sometimes, I just want to hold the pencil in my hand. When I pick it up, I hear this sigh or groan. The point is that they are watching. You can have the best rules in the world, and you can really want conferencing, but it's not going to work if you display an attitude that is not conducive to gaining their trust."

Jackson said that he saw his role as an editor more than a dispenser of knowledge. His goals were to try to help students make their papers better. And he explained that in his system of reading papers, he usually saw a paper at least three times. He said that he offered suggestions, like trying something the student hasn't incorporated, but the students did not have to take the suggestions. If grammatical or punctuation errors existed, he provided the page numbers in the book for the students to find the errors themselves and correct them. Jackson said that he was further influenced by the role of a psychologist when reading student papers. He explained that he wasn't discussing formal psychology, but rather the ability to read people. He said that it was important to understand how much criticism a student could withstand and have the results remain productive. He explained, "Often, you can

see a real difference between the first draft and the third one. If this person is pleased, you have to decide if you can trade on this person's sense of well being to make [them] go the extra mile and get rid of those comma splices. Usually you can."

Jackson went on to say that composition instructors have to guard against being just a keeper of the wisdom that students are trying to learn and criticizing them every time they make a mistake. "We demonstrate our superior knowledge by trashing their paper in all these different places. . . . It's like winning a game that you are playing with your child. You have been playing it all your life. You know the answer; you know how to hit that ping pong ball so it's going to spin off that corner. You also know they don't know it. Yet you go ahead and stomp them. Now, how much good does that really do them? Does it really help you feel good? No! You do it because you know you can." He went on to explain that when instructors destroy student papers, it destroys the trust between the student and the teacher. The student will guard against writing anything they have any investment in, and their writing will remain stagnant.

The influence of the roles played by composition instructors is important because through their roles, their beliefs about composition instruction and writing are

revealed. Liza acknowledged that through her teaching experience, the role she views herself in as a composition instructor has changed from a product assessor to a process teacher who allows revision. Jenny felt that her role evolved through the changes in culture that had occurred during her teaching years. As her students expectations and abilities changed, so did her teaching. Jackson perceived more that he held many simultaneous roles while teaching: entertainer, editor, and counselor. All the instructors readily acknowledged that they had roles in their positions, and all seemed unified in believing that if students found these roles to be violated, learning to write became more difficult.

Cultural Influences on Writing Instruction

In Chapter One, I defined cultural influences as institutions in which my participants exist (Olson, 1988; Beach, 1993). The most obvious cultural influences on my participants were the university where they taught and the English department in which they were members. The beliefs of the university and the English department could influence the instructors' perceptions about themselves as writers and how they teach their classes. Other cultural factors including adolescent popular culture, perceptions of higher education, and socioeconomic concerns were also influences

on composition instructors' beliefs. Without understanding these cultural elements, I had a more limited understanding of my participants' writing and teaching practices.

Liza acknowledged that several cultural factors influenced her teaching. First, she believed she had been very influenced by the culture of public education and higher education. As discussed earlier, she told me that her entire approach to teaching composition had shifted with the introduction of the writing process into the culture of composition instruction. She also said that she had looked at assessment tools used at several nearby school districts, and she had utilized elements of portfolio assessment "so I'm looking at essays holistically rather than through individual points. [I consider] content, style, sentence structure, and many other elements."

Liza also believed that her personal cultural background and the cultural background of the other Pine Valley University composition instructors influenced the way she taught. "We have been brought up in an upper-class background. Of course, our teaching is going to be a little different from that in a lower class, and we tend to see that our way is the only way. It is one-sided, without taking into consideration a student's home language ability, and that there are different tones and voices and different

audiences for successful writing. It is not always so highly formalized. We need to start thinking about diction, audience, and tone and grading it so that we are not bringing so much of our subjectivity and our background into our grading. Of course, there has to be some kind of rule or standard, but we can also take other things into consideration."

Finally, Liza believed that the culture of her students further influenced her composition instruction because she tried to encourage her students to research subjects of interest to them. She explained that as her students' interests changed over time, the paper topics she received changed, and their approach to subjects also changed. She commented that her students' positions on issues changed with the prevailing culture.

Jenny also commented extensively on the impact of the students' culture on her composition instruction. She explained that it influenced the way she taught because our culture, which included her students, has a short attention span. "I learned in graduate school that no one can stand up and say anything longer than fifteen minutes because our culture tends to go to a commercial break. I have made the rule that no one, including myself, should ever talk longer than fifteen minutes about anything."

Jenny went on to say that culture influenced the way her students responded to works of literature and cultural issues. She said that she could teach novels today that used to be considered controversial and inappropriate, like Catcher in the Rye. She explained that as long as the students could choose the controversial novels and weren't required to read them, she never had any complaints. She said that this open-mindedness also influenced student responses to issues like homosexuality and AIDS. She said that often, students who were usually quiet in class would discuss these issues and often helped other students in the class understand them and not be as critical.

Finally, Jenny explained that certain instructors she had studied with in college had showed her how not to teach because they were not part of contemporary culture. "The people into Shakespeare were the funniest. They were all wearing polyester suits and white shoes. They just never got into the story after 1965, and they were all talking about Elizabethan culture as if they were living in it. I wondered if any of them knew there was another Elizabeth on the throne, and she had children." Jenny said she believed that if an instructor does not appear to be part of contemporary culture, students quickly lose interest and do not listen to what the instructor is saying.

Jackson believed that the culture of the university and, specifically, most composition programs had a negative impact on students' motivation and ability to write. As discussed earlier in the study, Jackson believed that many composition instructors strongly controlled their students' essay topics and were extremely critical of their students' writing. He believed that the culture of English departments and universities fostered and encouraged these teaching methods because too many times, they saw themselves as keepers of knowledge.

Jackson said that when he began teaching through conferencing, he felt compelled to justify his methods to other composition instructors. "I'll tell you, I felt that way for years here--that I would get found out. So what I did from the first semester I was here was try to give seminars to my colleagues about what I'm doing. I would say to them, because they always made jokes about how much older they were than I was, 'I'm going to give up. Let me give a little seminar to show how this comp. thing works.' I gave two or three of them. Four or five people maybe would show up, and they would make guarded comments. Then, they all would wind up saying, 'I'd like to do that, but I'm scared.' Frankly, they have invested their lives in grading forty essays over the weekend, every other weekend, for forty

years." He explained that only with time at the university did he begin to feel more comfortable that he would actually be able to keep his job and teach the way he felt was most effective.

The influence of culture on composition was thought to be strong by all three participants. The influence of the popular culture of the students and the educational culture of schools seemed to be recurring themes for Liza, Jenny, and Jackson. However, the impact of culture was seen to be both positive and negative. Jackson and Jenny both found elements of the educational culture to be weaknesses, although neither seemed to think that the environment was truly bad or completely unproductive. Jackson was, by far, the most critical of the three. Liza, on the other hand, found many positive elements to the educational culture which she applied in her classes. None of the participants seemed upset by the popular culture of the students; they simply believed they should adjust elements within their teaching to help their students relate more to the instruction.

Intertextual Influences on Writing Instruction

Intertextual influences can be defined as outside texts which impact the text that is being created. Beach (1993) said that for researchers, the interest of intertextuality

lies not only in the texts the participants select but also in the reasons the texts were selected. The ways in which the texts are appropriated by the reader/listener provide insight into their thought processes. For this study, I divided intertextual influences into self-composed texts and composed texts of others. The word "text" means a written product, but it is also often expanded to include verbal and visual elements. When I examined the influence of self-composed texts on composition instructors' classroom practices, I asked them to include any artifacts that they had previously created that influenced the way either they viewed themselves as writers or taught freshman composition. Composed texts of others included writings, courses, workshops, lectures, and similar items that the instructors had read or in which they had participated which influenced the way they viewed their writing or taught freshman composition. By realizing that all texts are related and previous texts influence current texts, it is possible to achieve a greater understanding of how beliefs are formed and how they change. Examining intertextual influences is consistent with a teacher thinking perspective because at the center of the influences of outside sources is the perceived effect of these sources (i.e., Clark and Peterson, 1986; Pajares 1992).

Influences of self-composed texts on writing
instruction.

When I talked with the participants about artifacts they had written, they all explained how the things they wrote and the way they wrote them influenced their composition teaching. They felt that drawing from their own experiences made them better composition instructors

Liza reiterated that her writing was academic, not creative. She said that when she was a student she completed writing for her classes and class projects, much like her students. As a professor, she wrote papers and committee reports. She explained that it is important for freshman composition instructors to write in the ways that they are trying to instruct their students: informatively, persuasively, and entertainingly. She felt that it was important for instructors to refine those skills, so they can demonstrate them for their students.

Jenny felt that things she had written influenced her teaching because she explained that in her own writing, she tried to be informative and have something worth saying. She said that she expected that same level of dedication from her students. She also mentioned again how writing the conference paper she had presented had helped her better understand the process her students went through when

writing. She said first that it reminded her how much work writing a paper really entailed. She also explained that when she knew her writing would be read by outsiders, she was more nervous about what she was saying. She said this experience helped her understand the fear her students sometimes exhibited when they had to turn in their papers.

Jackson took a different perspective on the influence of his writing on his composition instruction. Although he discussed in great detail how his writing process influenced his composition instruction, he did not talk about how specific things he had written affected his teaching. Instead, he saw how the things he had not written influenced his instruction. As discussed earlier, Jackson did not consider himself a writer because he had not written the kinds of things he felt legitimized his writing. He compared himself to a visiting lecturer at Pine Valley who was a novelist. Jackson said that he could not discuss his writing in the same way as the lecturer because the lecturer had achieved success in those things he wanted to write. However, he felt this lack of success had a positive impact on his composition instruction because it made him more understanding of his students' difficulties and frustrations.

When talking about the influence of their personal

writing artifacts on their composition instruction, Liza, Jenny, and Jackson continued to explain things that seem to be consistent with the total picture of their beliefs about their composition instruction. Liza and Jenny continued to emphasize elements that they had discussed earlier, but Jackson's discussion of his writing failures was an interesting perspective on intertextuality. He saw the absence of an artifact as just as important as its presence.

Influences of composed texts of others on writing instruction.

Liza, Jenny, and Jackson all saw where texts of others had influenced their composition instruction. However, the interpretation they gave these other writings varied from instructor to instructor.

Liza based her definition of a writer from a text by Robert Frost: someone with a lover's quarrel with the world. This definition impacted her opinion of her own writing skills because it suggested to her that real writers wrote fiction. Liza also based much of her composition instruction on texts she had read from others. She explained that for years, she read essays which did not have what she considered substance. She said in reaction to this, she changed the way she taught the research paper by stressing that her students must have supporting evidence to

back up their claims. Liza also based her composition instruction on articles she read and lectures she heard about the writing process in response to the way she learned to write. She explained, "English, years ago, used to be reading. It was reading of literature, and the professors and instructors assumed that everyone in the class knew how to write. There was no one-on-one conferencing, we were expected to understand the comments on the paper. We really weren't given a lot of receptiveness for coming to the professor to discuss what was wrong with our writing." She said that in her graduate program, she had been exposed to the process approach toward writing as a graduate research assistant, and she believed it was a better way to teach composition. Finally, Liza said she partially based her assessment practices on articles she had read and lectures she had attended on portfolio work.

Jenny said that her composition instruction had been strongly influenced by both effective and ineffective English and education professors with whom she had studied. She believed that too many times, once professors had their Ph.D.'s, they either became arrogant with their knowledge or too wrapped up in their own world to be good instructors. She explained that she had taken a few education classes but had found that the professors had not been in the classroom

for many years, and their classroom instruction was not effective. She also had little confidence in their theories because she said they made no sense to her. When I asked her which theories, she was not certain. Jenny went on to say that in some graduate English classes she had taken, the professors were more interested in looking intelligent than they were in teaching their students. However, Jenny also praised many of the English instructors she had studied with, claiming one had showed her how to teach the research paper and another had mentored her through her graduate work. She said this latter professor had shared his office with her when she needed a place to store materials and had conducted several literary trips to the South, where a group of students, including herself, had studied southern American writers. She credited his instruction with her love of southern Gothic novels and William Faulkner.

Jackson also believed that the texts of others had influenced his composition instruction. Jackson seemed to be able to support every idea he had about freshman composition with theory. He grounded his beliefs about the first person narrative style in which his students wrote on James Moffett and the idea that from a behaviorist perspective, students have an easier time writing about their own lives. As they mature as writers, they can write

about things further removed from their egos. He also explained that he was friends with Erica Lindemann, and from her, he had learned about the writing process. Finally, he explained how he learned to conference by studying the writings of Donald Murray. Jackson's appropriation of the texts of others was very specific, deliberate, and thoughtful; this led to a purposefulness in his teaching that was quite amazing.

Liza, Jenny, and Jackson each appropriated the texts of others and applied them to their freshman composition instruction. Liza gathered her texts from professional writers, students, and theorists, and she explained how each text had caused her to make modifications in her own teaching. Jenny seemed to learn from both bad and good examples, avoiding the practices of those who were arrogant and out of touch and focusing on the skills and interests she had gathered from those whom she perceived as effective. Jenny's practices strongly mirror the concepts of teacher thinking because once she believed her instructors were ineffective, she could not learn from them. Finally, Jackson based nearly all of his practices on theory. He recognized that other theory bases and paradigms for teaching freshman composition existed, but he believed his model was effective, and like Jenny, his belief translated

into action.

Conclusion

The series of codes I developed to analyze the data provided by Liza, Jenny, and Jackson allowed me to gain insights into their perspectives on writing, composition instruction, social influences, cultural influences, and texts produced both by themselves and by others, and I was often surprised at the results. Although I had anticipated a relationship between personal writing and composition instruction, I was surprised at the pervasiveness of the relationship. Everything about the participants' composition instruction seemed to tie to their personal beliefs about writing. I was also surprised at how my research questions became more problematized as the study progressed. For example, although my primary research question discussed composition instructors' personal writing habits and lesson planning, classroom activities, and assessment, much of the related data, like contextualized definitions of a writer and different perspectives on the goals of freshman composition, actually proved to be more interesting. A detailed discussion of the findings of this study occurs next in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Comparative Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

When I began this study, I wanted to investigate one primary research question and several closely related ones from the perspectives of teacher thinking theory, theories of composition instruction, and sociocultural constructivism (see Chapter One). My major research question was how does viewing oneself as a writer influence a composition instructor's planning of lessons, classroom activities, and assessment. The related questions were (1) Do instructors who view themselves as writers have different expectations for their students than instructors who do not view themselves as writers? Do these two kinds of instructors tend to value student responses differently? (2) Do the instructors believe that being a writer or not being a writer influences the teaching process? and (3) Other than personal writing, what factors influence composition instructors' processes of teaching writing? These questions seemed straightforward at the beginning of the study; however, after the study was completed, I realized they were not. The entire question of viewing oneself as a writer or not proved to be far more complicated than I anticipated because of the many definitions of "writer." I also discovered that some of my secondary questions about

theoretical beliefs about writing instruction and sociocultural/intertextual influences actually provided me with more interesting data than the primary question.

When I originally wrote my research questions, I thought I was simply comparing instructors who viewed themselves as writers with instructors who did not believe they were writers. The first realization I discovered was that the definitions surrounding writing and being a writer were far more complicated than I had anticipated. Lisa felt that most writing was a necessity--a utilitarian function to produce a specific goal. She believed that she produced these kinds of writings, and these were the kinds of essays she taught her student to produce. However, Lisa did not believe she was a writer; her definition of a writer was someone who expressed beauty and emotion. She felt this writing was outside the academic community, while her writing was within it. Even within the academic setting, Lisa wrote only what was necessary. Jenny defined writing as she taught it--thoughtful communication for a reader. She said she held the same standards for her own writing, whether it was academic or nonacademic. She also limited her definition of a writer to one in freshman composition, and she believed a writer was someone who could illuminate ideas. She felt she was a writer who was not seeking

publication. Jackson defined writing as something that had significance and importance for the writer. Jackson held two definitions of a writer: For his students, he believed a writer was someone who had confidence in their ability to shape ideas into words; for himself, he believed a writer was someone who had success publishing the types of writing they wanted to write. Although Jackson fulfilled the first definition, he did not consider himself a writer because of his lack of publication of the kind of writing he wanted to write. This finding shocked and fascinated me, and I did not agree with Jackson, although I never told him this because the focus of this study was on self-perceptions. However, where I needed to analyze the participants from the perspective of being a writer, I considered Jackson a writer.

Although all of my participants actually created written artifacts, they did so with varying levels of enthusiasm. Liza wrote when necessary, Jenny wrote sporadically when she wanted to write, and Jackson wrote frequently. Within the definitions of writing and writers that the participants provided, I found that Liza's, Jenny's, and Jackson's self-perceptions had a profound influence on their composition instruction. Nearly everything they said seemed contextualized by these core

beliefs, as will be shown in the following sections.

This chapter will discuss the findings of my study question by question, and my major question of how viewing oneself as a writer affects a composition instructor's planning, activities, and assessment, will be addressed last. After the questions are addressed, I will address future possible studies that emerged from the data I gathered. Finally, a comparative summary of all of the findings concludes the chapter.

How do Instructors Who View Themselves as Writers Have Different Expectations for Their Students Than Instructors Who Do Not View Themselves as Writers?

My three participants seemed to hold different expectations for their students based on their beliefs about their personal writing habits. Their perceptions of writing influenced the kinds of assignments they gave their students and their expectations for their students' papers.

Liza saw her own writing as a necessary, utilitarian process. As a result, she focused her composition class around the types of writing she felt her students would have to complete. Liza primarily taught her students to write papers appropriate for a college setting. She concentrated her teaching toward clear, persuasive thesis statements with well developed supporting ideas, rather than focusing on

creativity. When Liza read student work, she focused on these elements through a set of guidelines she had developed from writing and educational research. She expected the students to follow her instructions and not make grammatical or punctuation errors. She graded the students' work numerically, focusing on clear, specific thesis statements and information which supported the main ideas.

Jenny believed that the most important goal she had for her writing was for it to be thoughtful and interesting, and she expected the same from her students. She also believed that within her students' culture, writing and reading were dying arts. As a result, she tried to incorporate popular videos and literature into the writing assignments to help hold her students' interests and encourage their writing. She believed that for the most part, students had learned the fundamentals of writing at a much younger age; however, she felt that she was a crusader for writing and reading because most of her students would never take another English class. She also believed that writing was a skill that her students would need in the professional world, and she tried to prepare them for it. Jenny insisted that her students give thought to their thesis statements, and she looked for writing that had something to say and which said it clearly without grammar and punctuation errors.

Jackson felt that real writing was meaningful, and that the writing in which writers had invested themselves must mean something at least to them. As a result, he insisted that his students choose their own meaningful topics based on things that could have happened to them. He tried to force his students to retain control of their work, something he said they did not want to do, by only giving acceptable grades or asking for revisions. Jackson's students wrote in class while he conducted individual conferences with them. Although correct grammar and punctuation were part of what he looked for when assessing papers, he focused more on how much the student had improved the writing. Jackson saw writing more as a series of revised papers rather than a finished product.

Based on the three participants of my study, it appears that Jackson, who wrote the most, focused on different goals than Jenny or Liza. First, Jackson had his students write from between six to twelve paragraphs depending on the grade they wanted, and nearly all of the class periods were spent with the students writing. Liza and Jenny both had their students write often, but their classes consisted more of a combination of lecture, group exercises, and individual work. Jackson felt that successful student essays were meaningful to the writers, while Liza and Jenny focused

their teaching more on instructor-created criteria. Jackson continuously stressed revision in his classes, while Liza tended to focus on prewriting skills, and Jenny focused on interesting content. Also, Liza, who stressed the writing process to her students, and Jenny, who insisted her students write a rough draft which she read, seemed to be more final product oriented in their grading than Jackson. Jackson often graded students on improvement. Finally, Jackson also did not give letter grades on essays; he gave "OK's," while Jenny and Liza both gave numerical grades.

What Influences do the Instructors Believe That Being a Writer or Not Being A Writer Has on Their Teaching Processes?

The beliefs about personal writing habits of the three participants appeared to affect the way they viewed why people learned to write, composition instruction, and how they taught their classes.

Liza said that she and other people learned to write based on a fear of the blank page. To help her students avoid this fear, she believed it was important for students to go through a prewriting process before they tried to write a final product. Although Liza did not engage in creative writing, she explained that she had to complete professional writing in her position as a college professor.

She felt that freshman composition was an important class because just as she had to write in her field, she believed that written communication was necessary in every field. Through these discussions echoed Liza's views of writing as a necessity. She seemed to believe that freshman composition taught a skill that was necessary although not necessarily very enjoyable. As a result, she taught students composition techniques, like freewriting, to help make their writing processes more efficient and effective, qualities she sought in her own writing.

Jenny thought that both she and other people learned to write through trial and error, and that most of the basic writing skills were learned in elementary school. She tried to help her students improve their writing by having them learn the skills of research in short projects before they applied it to their term papers. She felt that in freshman composition, her students could learn effective persuasive communication and could be exposed to literature they might not otherwise read. Because she believed that reading and writing were not part of contemporary culture, she incorporated videos as part of her composition instruction to interest her students and to help them relate more to the writing process. She believed that her personal writing was not as much of an influence on her teaching processes as was

her view of herself as the last exposure her students might have to writing instruction and literature appreciation.

Jackson believed that grammar patterns were formed early in the home environment, and that parents who wrote inspired children to write, and he cited his own family as an example. However, Jackson believed that college freshman could learn writing skills, and he felt that the way to accomplish this was to help students understand that the steps of the writing process tended to occur simultaneously and chaotically. He explained that his own writing processes could not be limited to distinct steps; it was a wreck which he had form into a polished piece of writing. He believed the goal of freshman composition was to help students untangle their thoughts and express them on paper in a manner effective to them. Because of this, Jackson focused on synthesis skills rather than analysis skills because he believed that analyzing a piece of writing tore it apart, and the goal was to put one together. He also believed that because his own writing needed to be meaningful to him, his students should be free to write about things in which they had a personal investment.

Liza's, Jenny's, and Jackson's beliefs about their personal writing seemed to influence their ideas of composition instruction by causing them to focus on issues

central to their own writing. Each participant saw the goal of freshman writing differently, and this translated into unique approaches to composition instruction. Liza believed that writing was a necessity, and she taught her students practical ways in which to write clear, supported essays. Jenny believed that writing should be interesting and culturally relevant. And Jackson believed that writing should be meaningful for the students. The specific details of lesson planning, classroom activities, and assessment will be discussed separately from this overview.

Other Than Personal Writing, What Factors Influence
Composition Instructors' Processes of Teaching Writing?

When I devised my study, I thought it would be possible that at least one of my participants would not consider himself/herself a writer or engage in personal writing. As a result, I thought that one question that should be part of my study was asking what factors other than personal writing influenced composition instruction. Although all three of my participants did, in fact, produce artifacts of writing, they viewed their personal writing habits with different perspectives, and two of them did not consider themselves writers. As a result, I thought this question of other influences on composition instruction should be addressed to add another level of depth to the study. In fact, Liza,

Jenny, and Jackson all felt that social, cultural, and intertextual factors influenced their teaching processes.

Liza believed that her composition instruction was influenced by the changes in her role as a teacher brought about by changes in composition theory with the introduction of the writing process. She explained that when she was a college student and when she began teaching, composition instruction focused on finished essays, not the process the students went through to write the papers. Further, she said the shift in focus from product to process changed the culture of secondary and higher education composition instruction because the goals and roles of the instructors changed, and this also modified her teaching. Finally, even the intertextual influences that Liza mentioned dealt with the changes in composition instruction, and she explained that she learned about the writing process through her graduate work and through lectures she had chosen to attend and articles she had chosen to read.

Jenny found that her instruction was impacted by the role she had to assume as crusader because she believed that most of her students did not read literature or write by choice. She thought that this was a result of the popular culture of her students and the video age with its commercial breaks. She believed that she should stay in

touch with her students' culture to be an effective instructor. The intertextual influences she saw on her composition instruction also dealt with issues of culture. Jenny said she believed her teaching had been positively influenced by lectures of college professors whom she saw as culturally relevant. On the other hand, Jenny said she learned little from professors who seemed to her to be living outside of popular culture.

Jackson saw the roles of actor, psychologist, and editor affecting his composition instruction because he believed each role was necessary to help his students' writing. However, he acknowledged that his composition instruction often ran against the culture of college composition instruction and its continuing focus on product over process. The intertextual influences on Jackson's composition instruction were primarily composition theorists who provided him with a theoretical backing to support the way he felt composition should be taught.

As can be seen in Chapter Four, Liza, Jenny, and Jackson provided more outside influences on their composition instruction than what I described above; however, these recurring themes were very prevalent in the influences they described. I found it interesting that each participant created such a related set of outside

influences, and these similarities seem to suggest that although each participant valued different kinds of influences, they were consistent within themselves. This consistency was a characteristic I had not fully anticipated, and I believe it suggests that at least for my participants, their personal belief systems about composition instruction were the strongest influence on their behavior. Their belief systems seem to have formed from both formal and practical knowledge, and the participants appear to have discarded knowledge that did not fit within their schemas.

How Does Viewing Oneself As A Writer Influence A Composition Instructor's Planning of Lessons, Classroom Activities, and Assessment?

Although this final question was the major question in my study, I chose to discuss it last because every other question influenced this one. The strongest finding I discovered during this study is that teaching composition is an extremely complicated matter, and the more the act is examined, the more problematic it becomes. Based on my findings, planning, activities, and assessment are the most obvious tasks of a composition instructor, but these tasks are influenced almost entirely by the instructor's perceptions about the acts of writing and the acts of

teaching. Although I had studied the ideas of teaching thinking theory and found it to be a valid position from which to examine my topic, I was quite amazed when I discovered just how focused into their beliefs my participants were. Regardless of the questions I asked or the tangents the interviews took, each participant tended to return again and again to the same recurring themes. I thought it was also interesting that the three participants held quite different opinions even though they taught in the same English department for quite a few years.

Liza's planning, classroom activities, and assessment were all strongly influenced by the fact that she viewed her writing as functional, and she believed her students' writing should have the focus of effective persuasive prose. Jenny's planning, classroom activities, and assessment all appeared to be driven by the beliefs she had for her own writing: that it should have something to say and be relevant to the culture who will be reading it. Jackson's planning, classroom activities, and assessment reflected his own concerns with ownership, revising, and trying to shape pieces of writing into the best they can be.

Through comparing the planning, classroom activities, and assessment of the three participants, both similarities and differences in teaching practices are manifest. All

three participants, Liza, Jenny, and Jackson, did not produce formal lesson plans. As I suggested in Chapter Four, this may be because all three were experienced composition instructors. Perhaps if they had not taught the same class for several years, they would have been more aware of a planning process. In class, both Liza and Jenny lectured to their students, gave quizzes, had the students complete in-class group work, and write papers. I never saw Jackson lecture to his students; he claimed he had done a little lecturing the first two weeks of the semester. Instead, his students sat and wrote while he conducted individual conferences with them. As he said, he saw himself less as an English teacher and more of an editor. Finally, Liza and Jenny tended to assign and assess papers more similarly than Jackson. Both Liza and Jenny tended to keep a fairly close control on both what and how their students wrote. Although the students could choose topics, they did so within careful parameters established by the instructors. While Jenny and Liza were always very much the instructor, Jackson tended to avoid that role and focus on improved writing. Jackson gave his students freedom to write creative nonfiction in nearly any way they chose. Liza and Jenny also graded numerically and had specific deductions for kinds of errors. Jackson, on the other hand,

approved papers or suggested rewriting strategies, and his grading focused on improvement. I cannot know if Jackson taught the classes differently than Jenny and Liza because he also wrote more than they did, but it would be possible. Although he would not call himself a writer, Jackson said he taught composition in a way that corresponded to his theoretical readings and his personal writing habits.

Personal writing habits seem to influence the planning, activities, and classroom assessment practices of my participating composition instructors because they focused on the same things in the preparation of their classes as they focused on in their personal writing. Interestingly, the themes that surfaced in the actual teaching practices also tied closely to the themes of issues outside of writing that influenced composition instruction. Whether or not the findings from these three participants are representative of other composition instructors cannot be said, but Liza, Jenny, and Jackson each held concurring beliefs for the purposes of writing, writing instruction, and external influences on their instruction.

Beyond the Questions

The findings of my study left me with many ideas about composition instruction that would make interesting, related studies. Fang (1996) suggests that the area of how the

beliefs of writing teachers influence their students' perceptions of writings is an area of research that should be explored because it could be revolutionary. Although I did not look at students' perceptions in this study, the findings of the beliefs of writing teachers on their teaching practices would lead easily into an analysis of the impact of their actions on their students.

Based on my findings, questions about writing and being a writer are highly contextualized within the composition instructor's personal belief structure. This contextualization would make an interesting study on its own. I would like to conduct a study with other participants and discuss their views of composition instruction and personal writing without focusing so specifically on activities they completed for class. I would be interested in seeing whether other composition instructors held as unified of positions as my three participants. I also believe that a longevity study with Jackson would be interesting to track his teaching over the course of a semester rather than just a two-week unit. Finally, I think it would be interesting to compare composition instructors from different universities to see the degree to which the university cultural setting impacted the composition instruction.

Comparative Summary of Findings

Beliefs about Writing

Beliefs about what writing is.

Liza: Writing is an activity that leads to a specific goal.

Jenny: Writing in a freshman sense is communication on paper.

Jackson: Writing needs to have significance for the writer.

Beliefs about what a writer is.

Liza: A true writer is a nonacademic writer who has something to say or wants to express beauty.

Jenny: A freshman composition writer is somebody who can make sentences come together.

Jackson: A student writer is somebody who feels he/she has real confidence. For me to be a writer, I must have success in publishing what I want to publish.

Beliefs about self as a writer.

Liza: I am a writer of academic necessity, not creativity.

Jenny: I am a writer not seeking publication who loves words.

Jackson: I am not a writer because I have not had

success publishing the kinds of writing that would legitimize me as a writer.

Beliefs About Teaching Writing

How people learn to write.

Liza: People learn to write through necessity because they are afraid of the empty page.

Jenny: People learn to write by trial and error in grade school.

Jackson: People learn to write at a young age if their home life encourages writing.

The process of writing.

Liza: Planning ideas is extremely important.

Writing is a recursive process.

Jenny: Writing skills can be taught through short assignments. Much writing can be accomplished through a formula.

Jackson: Writing is a recursive process where prewriting, writing, and revising are occurring at the same time. Writing is a sloppy process.

Purposes of freshman composition.

Liza: Hopefully, students leave freshman composition understanding that writing is important and that all careers involve written communication.

Jenny: Freshman composition should teach clear communication on paper and introduce students to literature.

Jackson: Freshman composition should teach synthesis of a written text, not analysis of the text.

Student writing assignments.

Liza: Students choose a celebrated cause and write papers over that topic.

Jenny: Students write about literature.

Jackson: Students write about anything they have experienced.

Personal writing and lesson planning.

Liza: I write utilitarian, shorthand notes to myself about what we will be doing that day.

Jenny: I plan the class in a way that they write every day for the first six weeks because I believe that writing is important.

Jackson: I plan my semester as though I were the student, and because I can be an undisciplined writer, I build deadlines into the semester to keep the students focused.

Personal writing and classroom activities.

Liza: My writing is part of my classroom

activities because I always list what we will be doing and what materials I should bring to class.

Jenny: I believe that the students' culture influences my classroom activities more than my personal writing.

Jackson: The knowledge of my personal writing habits allows me to be more tolerant when students have incomplete assignments.

Personal writing and student paper assessment.

Liza: I use assessment techniques which I have learned or clarified in seminars.

Jenny: Because I think writing is important, I grade all the writing the students complete.

Jackson: I worry that my personal habits might affect my grading. I only give an OK after the paper is acceptable.

Social Influences on Writing Instruction

Liza: Changes in writing instruction have brought about changes in my role as an instructor; however, the primary role is still to provide information and correct assignments.

Jenny: The primary role is to champion writing and literature because freshman composition may be their last exposure to these skills.

Jackson: My roles include actor, talk show host, editor, and psychologist.

Cultural Influences on Writing Instruction

Liza: I have been influenced by the culture of public school and higher education, personal culture, and culture of students.

Jenny: I have been influenced by the culture of my students and my own instructors who either were or were not part of contemporary culture.

Jackson: The controlling culture of the university and many English departments often has a negative effect on composition instruction.

Intertextual Influences on Writing Instruction

Influences of self-composed texts.

Liza: My personal writing is academic, not creative. This leads to teaching writing as a utilitarian function.

Jenny: My writing should be informative and have something worth saying. I expect the same from my students.

Jackson: Lack of success at publishing my creative writing makes me more understanding of the frustrations of my students.

Influences of composed texts of others.

Liza: I organize composition instruction around writing theory and my graduate study of the writing process.

Jenny: I have been influenced by effective and ineffective college professors.

Jackson: I have been influenced by composition theory and psychological theory.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Interview #1

1. What is your full name?
2. What is your educational background?
3. How long have you been teaching writing in any form?
4. How long have you been teaching freshman composition?
5. In what schools or universities have you taught?
6. What else about your personal background would you like to share for this study?

Appendix B: Interview #2

1. How, in general, do you think people learn to write?
2. What is involved in writing?
3. What is the process people go through when writing?
4. What type of background experiences (such as courses, workshops, or in-services) in teaching writing have you had?
5. What do you feel you have gained from these?
6. What do you have students do when you are teaching writing? Why do you do these things?
7. Do you have a process or procedure you follow when teaching composition? Describe it.
8. What prior influences do you draw from when you make decisions about how to teach writing?
9. With what types of writings do you begin the semester? Why?
10. What criteria do you use when choosing subjects for writing assignments?
11. How often do students do some form of writing in your classes? Do you get to choose this, or is it a departmental standard?
12. How do you respond to students' writings?
13. Do you respond to every student writing assignment the same way?
14. What modes of writing do you stress the most? Why?

15. What do you consider your major writing assignments?

How do you prepare students for these? What purpose(s) do you feel these assignments serve?

16. What type of writing skills do you expect students to have by the end of the year?

Appendix C: Interview #3

1. How do you define the term "writing"?
2. How do you define the term "writer"?
3. In what kinds of writing do you engage?
4. Do you think it is important for a freshman composition instructor to engage in different kinds of writing? Why or why not?
5. What formal training have you had in writing (workshops, classes, etc.)?
6. Do you consider yourself a writer? Why or why not?
7. Do you believe that viewing yourself (or not viewing yourself) as a writer influences your composition teaching processes?
8. To what extent do you believe your personal writing habits have affected your lesson planning?
9. To what extent do you believe your personal writing habits have affected your classroom teaching?
10. To what extent do you believe your personal writing habits have affected your assessment of student work?
11. What things other than your personal writing do you see influencing the way you teach writing? Do you believe they play a major role in how you teach writing?

Appendix D: Directions for Assessment Think-Aloud Protocol

Please use the enclosed tape recorder and to tape your comments as you grade the student essays related to the unit I observed. As you are grading, read the essays aloud and note any comments that you write on the papers. Please explain your reasons for making these comments. Also, please tell me the grades the essays received and why you evaluated the papers that way. Please try to provide at least forty-five minutes of grading. If you could complete both sides of the tape, that would be appreciated! Thank you for your help!!

Appendix E: Excerpt from Interview #2, Jackson

Q: What do you draw from when teaching writing?

A: Well, I draw from [theoretical] sources, and I guess I draw from my own experience. By now, I've been doing this, my first freshman class was in 1977. Next year will be my twentieth year.

Q: What sort of writing do you begin the year with?

A: I think I have already mentioned this, but one of the best conceptual books that I have found is James Moffett's, Teaching the Universe of Discourse. He suggests that we use the model that behaviorists have come up with for how we all mature. What you do is focus on the go and on the central cell first. Then, you expand to include others, into including material that's further away from your own immediate interest. I start by telling them to write what they know about intimately--which is their experience. That's it. The first day, I'll construct a paragraph for them. Depending on how I feel on the first day, I'll ask them to give me a list of topics they can write about. I'll do it [write my own list] and put them on the board. I'll find a topic on my list and ask them to talk about this. It's usually a funny story, something about my convertible or my dog. They see me accessing my memory in a way that they can do too. So you provide them a model of how it's

done, not so much what it is but how it's done. They can't believe it. They ask if that's all they have to do. They will come in with journal-type stuff. They will come in and take an entire paragraph and crunch it. The first sentence will be the intro. The next three sentences will be the body, and the final sentence will be the conclusion. There is a lot of repetition in there, and so I try to get them to. I guess what I'm really teaching at the beginning of the class is what will conform to the body paragraph. I tell them that a paragraph does two things. This is true of all writing. It sets up an expectation, and it satisfies that expectation. That's all they have to do. I explain to them that the easiest way to do it is in the first sentence. Give us something to expect. My car is the ugliest car in the world. Now, I will ask them, 'What do you have to do?' You have to show them how or why the car is ugly. That's what we do. That's where we start. We start with their immediate experience or memories that are related to an immediate experience because they continue to travel back to them.

Q: What criteria do you use when choosing subjects for writing assignments?

A: I don't choose them. They choose them. If you choose them, that's another way of imposing an outside authority on

what they are doing.

Q: What do you mean by imposing authority? The fact that you won't mark on their papers?

A: I try not to. I do, but I try not to. There is a sort of bill of rights for students. There are priveledges that they should be allowed to enjoy when they are writing. If we don't watch it, we take over their writing. Frankly, they want us to because then it means less work for them. If they can get us involved in abstract questions or a problem about theory so that we eventually see our way clear to putting an 'OK' on this or toward telling them what, exactly what, to do here, then their job is done. That's what I mean by removing authority. We don't want to do that. The first place it happens is when you limit the things they can write about. Now, I do limit. I tell them it has to be real stuff, not fiction. I don't want them to write fiction. If they want to write fiction, then they need to go to the creative studies program. You can almost always tell when it's fiction. Sometimes it not, and sometimes, there might be one about how this person got up yesterday morning. The alarm, the shower, that sort of thing. You think, 'Wow, this is really good.' And they spring it on you that it's made up. I tell them that's not fiction. They can't tell me that they never did any of that

stuff. What I mean by fiction is, 'The spy walked out of the shadows and aimed and fired.' That sort of thing. Some of them will try that and say that they didn't have anything interesting to write about. This is another way of saying to me, 'Please take responsibility away from me.' I do mark on their papers. What I meant by that is that I try not to. I try not to be too prescriptive. Frankly, right now, I'm teaching a basic writing class, and so I have to put SP. This is a reminder. This will tell them that they need to check the spelling again. If I don't put anything on it, they will forget what I told them to do.

Appendix F: Excerpt from Interview #3, Jenny

Q: How do you define the term, writing?

A: Somebody who can make sentences come together. Someone who creates an idea that simply wakes up. That's the writer in the freshman sense. Someone who can communicate on paper.

Q: Would you have a different definition outside of the freshman sense?

A: No. Because I only work with freshmen.

Q: What kinds of writing do you engage in?

A: I'm not going for a publication, but I write letters, I write poetry, and I write Christmas letters that are sent to over seventy-five people, and they just seem to really like it. That's really the only way I really write. I did write a paper last summer because they asked me to give it at the convention held here on campus. It was kind of fun because it was exactly what I expect out of my students. I saw how long it took me, how much effort I had to put into it, and how much I worked, and I see how remote some of my students are from the process because they aren't willing to commit to it.

Q: Do you think that it is important for a freshman composition instructor to engage in different kinds of

writing?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because, you know, you have to stay fresh, and you have to stay with it. I read a lot more than I write, but everyone gets stale if you just experiment and don't work at something.

Q: What kind of formal training do you have in writing?

A: Graduate school.

Q: Your masters is in what?

A: Just basic literature. I don't think anybody ever thought I'd finish it, so I just kept taking classes I wanted, and I think they kind of fit. A degree to fit all the classes I took.

Q: What sort of writing did you do for a grade?

A: Well, you know, all those papers that you write. I didn't do a thesis. I did the exam. I guess I'm not that big-time writer.

Q: What classes did you take?

A: You picked someone who has two education classes under my belt which I took in 1965 from two sons of bitches who had Ph.D.'s and never had any classroom experience. I have the experience; I just didn't have the education, and I still don't, to teach. . . . Yes, I do consider myself a

writer, but I don't work at it. I don't get paid for it. I love the written word and the writing. It goes together in sentences, paragraphs, etc. I think I'm pretty good at it. I think I have a good eye for good writing because I can see so many mixed constructions in my students. When I do conference work with them on that research paper, it's amazing how little effort they put into writing.

Q: So you think that writing should take effort?

A: Yes, I want to be interesting to my reader. I want to be informative. I want to have something that is worth saying. I expect that same from my students.

Q: So you believe that good writing should be interesting?

A: Well, I don't know, but I feel that writing is so important that I make them write for the first six weeks, every single day in class. It's a headache to grade, but I'll pick something--the symbolism of a short story--they just read and make some comments about the symbolism and give specific quotes from the text to show that they do, indeed, understand the value of that symbol and what they think it means. They use the author's words, so they are looking carefully at what the author says or how the author puts it together.

Appendix G: Excerpt from Think-Aloud Protocols, Liza

Good morning! This is the sleepy Dr. Liza Smith getting ready to grade a set of essays. The students had guided electives. They were given seven questions and were to select one of the seven. The questions were: (1) Oedipus is a tragic hero because he has hamartia, a tragic flaw in experiences and recent discovery and goes through a reversal of fortune. (2) Jocasta waivers in her belief in the gods when she hears the prophecy of Apollo and when she hears the warning from Teiresias and learns of the Corinthian messenger. The first two questions were based on the reading of Oedipus the King. . . . Those were examples of thesis sentences that the students selected. They were given thesis sentences; however, they were given the freedom to develop those in a manner of their choice as long as paragraph two had two subtopics, paragraph three had two subtopics, paragraph four had three subtopics, and of course, paragraph one was the introduction in which they were to have some kind of general part leading to the complete name of the author and the name of the work, tailoring down to a thesis sentence. The conclusion, of course, is the reversal of the introduction. . . . There was only one student who selected a question from Oedipus the King. The first thing I noticed is that she has put

quotation marks around the title of the play. So I'm going to mark that 30L from her grammar text, Simon and Schuster's Handbook. 30L means that names of plays should be underlined. I think I'll read aloud as I grade it.

"According to Aristotle, the tragic hero must experience a reversal of fortunes, or fall from a high position to a low position of anonymity. One of the best examples of a tragic hero is given by Sophocles in Oedipus the King. Oedipus, his father Laius, and his mother and wife took the custom and tried to do all that is possible to defy the gods and keep a prophecy from coming true. Unfortunately,"

I'll stop here and mark that 24A, meaning we set off introductory words with commas.

"in all their efforts to keep the prophecy from coming true, they,"

And I'm going to stop and mark that 10A, meaning unsure antecedent.

"help it come into focus. Oedipus is a tragic hero because he has a hamarcia spirit and,"

And I'm going to mark that 22A, which means misspelling.

"undergoes a great fall."

I'm going to write a comment: Excellent intro. and

thesis. New paragraph.

"The first trait of a tragic hero is a hamartia tragic flaw."

And then I add that she must show this. Topic sentence is okay.

"Oedipus hears a rumor that his parents are not his true parents. In order to know his destiny"

I'll just put a little carrot mark there and write 24A.

"Oedipus goes to the Oracle to find out the truth. The Oracle tells him that he will murder his father and lie with his mother. To keep this prophecy from coming true, he leaves. Oedipus tells Jocasta of this experience at the Oracle about his leaving. 'When I heard this, I fled. I fled somewhere,' da, da, da. Line 18. Oedipus misunderstood the Oracle. He did not know the people."

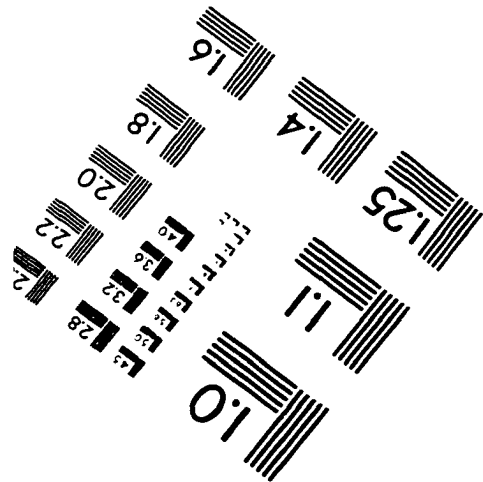
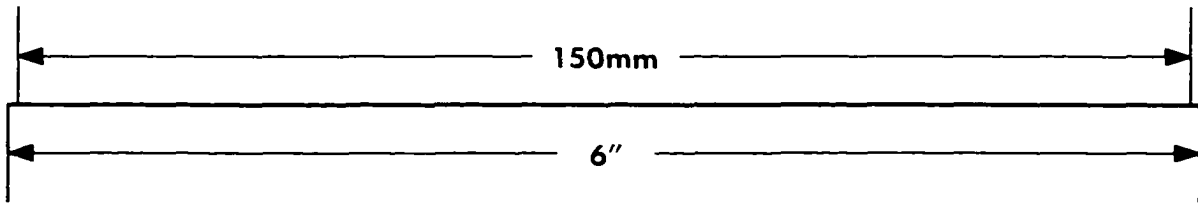
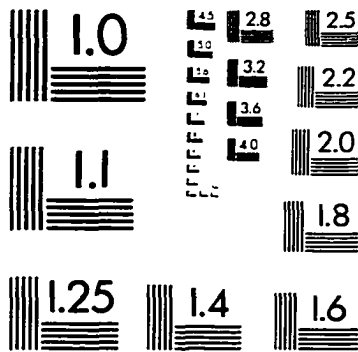
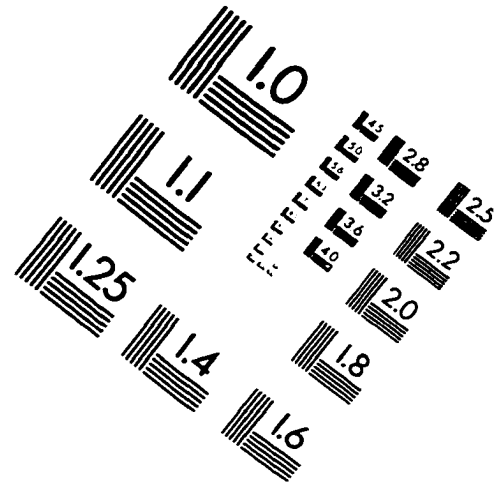
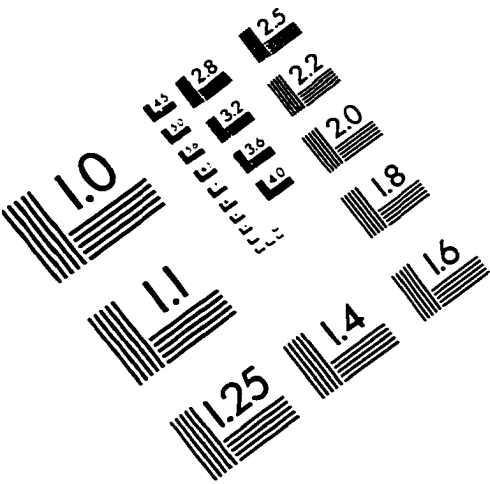
Okay, what she's done here is a good paragraph, but it doesn't address two specific discoveries of Oedipus. What did he discover? That he killed his father? Married his mother? . . .

[Liza continued through the essay this way.]

Okay, and then we have a concluding sentence. Now, because this was non-developed according to the assigned format, I'm going to assign this essay, because the students are able to rewrite, hopefully, an 85 and can rewrite. Now,

she must rewrite. If she doesn't choose to rewrite, she must correct all of those coded grammar errors. And I'm going to write a note: Not enough subtopic development.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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