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Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education

Volume 4 | Issue 2 Article 9

2015

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Ann D. David
University of the Incarnate Word, Dreeben School of Education, addavid@uiwtx.edu

Melody Zoch
University of North Carolina at Greensboro, mjpatter@uncg.edu

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Recommended Citation
David, Ann D. and Zoch, Melody (2015) "Understanding Teachers' Perspectives on Being Researched: A Case Study of Two Writing Teachers," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*: Vol. 4: Iss. 2, Article 9.
Available at: http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol4/iss2/9

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Understanding Teachers' Perspectives on Being Researched: A Case Study of Two Writing Teachers

Ann D. David, *University of the Incarnate Word, Dreeban School of Education*
Melody Zoch*, University of North Carolina at Greensboro*

Educational researchers take up the study of teaching and teachers' practices for reasons that include an interest in the phenomena of what it means to teach, to understand the "mental life" of teachers, or to see how teachers make decisions (Shulman, 1992). As researchers, we have both spent time in schools and classrooms, observing and interviewing teachers and students, and much of that time has been spent in classrooms with teachers of writing. Thinking about the particular challenges of teaching writing (Hillocks, 2002; Johnson, Thompson, Smagorinsky & Fry, 2003), our own experience as writing teachers, our work with writing teachers as teacher-consultants with the National Writing Project (NWP), and our own research on writing teachers, we began wondering what those teachers experience when participating in research.

So, after completing individual case studies with two teachers, each of us noticed how our conversations and interviews facilitated the teachers' reflection on their practice. We then shifted our focus to explore their experiences as research participants with the following question: *How does participation in qualitative research encourage writing teachers' reflection on their practice?* In exploring this question we found that, in addition to a heightened reflection in and on practice, the relationships between teachers and researchers matter. We also found that teachers see their participation in research as a way of working to forward scholarly understanding of teaching and writing. This article, then, considers teachers' perspectives as participants in research, particularly the role of the relationship between the teacher and researcher. Better understanding this element of the teacher-researcher partnership ultimately strengthens and informs our own research processes.

This current research grew out of case studies with two different teachers. Each case study was designed independently, though each sought to understand

how teachers' background and personal history influenced their practice, particularly as it related to writing instruction. During this initial research, both researchers had questions about what it meant for the teachers to engage in research. We therefore decided to bring our two cases together into a single case study, retrospectively examining teachers' participation in the prior research. This new exploration afforded the teachers an opportunity to become co-investigators in the new case study, reflecting on their participation in the research process itself.

Perspectives

Qualitative research and participants. The qualitative methodologies educational researchers have to choose from vary in terms of the role participants play in the research—from active (e.g., helping to design the study) to more passive (e.g., being observed). Methodologies inviting active and engaged teacher participation increased through the 1970s and 1980s as "approaches in which the intensity of human actions and their meanings [became] centrally located" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 477). Building on this notion that it is important to consider teachers' participation in the research process, we also recognize that being observed during research changes participants' actions (Labov, 1972). Additionally, the research site changes with the researcher's presence as a participant observer (Merriam, 2002).

Methodologies where teachers, or their students or classrooms, are participants in research—rather than made an explicit partner in the research process—include ethnographies (Heath & Street, 2008), case studies (Dyson & Genishi, 2005), and narrative research (Merriam, 2002). Examples of more collaborative methodologies include action research (Stringer, 2004), design-based research (Reinking & Bradley, 2007), and teacher research (Shagoury & Power, 2012). Each methodology, and the underlying theoretical frameworks, position the teacher participants in differing ways. Ethnography "seeks to uncover meanings and perceptions on the part of the people participating in the research" (Crotty, 2003), whereas case study examines "the richness of the phenomenon and the extensiveness of the real-life context" going well-beyond the perceptions of participants as discussed above (Yin, 2008, abstract). Key to all of these qualitative methodologies is the relationship between the researcher and the researched centered on "[r]especting, listening to, and giving attention to how the research act and process fit with the everyday lived experiences of teachers" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 479). We argue, therefore, that it is important to actively engage teachers in research in ways attentive to the needs and roles of both the teacher, the researcher, and the research.

Teaching and reflection. We also situate our work in the literature about teaching, teacher reflection as an avenue for growth, and the development of writing teachers. Our approach to studying teaching grows from an interpretive perspective where we viewed meaning as socially constructed by individuals at a particular point in time and place (Merriam, 2002). We recognize that teaching is not an isolated, decontextualized event. Teacher practice grows out of experiences (Dewey, 1966)—as a student (Lortie, 2002; Smagorinsky & Barnes, 2015), as a pre-service teacher (Grossman, 1990), through the history of the school and community in which they teach (Heath, 1983), and through the individual histories of the kids in the classroom (Purcell-Gates, 1997). Additionally, practice grows from teachers' own construction of narratives about themselves (Britzman, 2003; Bruner & Weisser, 1991). Our lens on teaching allowed us to think carefully about how the presence of a researcher in the classroom affected the teachers' understandings of their own practice, an understanding often fostered through reflection.

Teacher reflection is a key avenue for learning and growth. Dewey's work has played a central role in how researchers think about reflective teaching (1933, 1938). For Dewey, reflection is active as well as deliberate. It involves a sequence and consequence of one's actions. Similarly, Dewey also wrote of the importance of inquiry in which the inquirer clarifies the problem and then poses possible solutions. Research on teacher education demonstrates the importance of reflection for teacher learning and growth (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Valli, 2009; Zeichner & Liston, 2013). Reflection framed as inquiry holds possibility for teacher development, and therefore is of high interest to teacher educators (Rivera-Muller, 2014). Donald Schön's (1983, 1987) work has been instrumental in shaping how we understand teacher reflection. He distinguished between two types of reflection: reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action. His work has been helpful for teacher educators to think about how to support teacher candidates in reflecting on their unique teaching situations (Valli, 2009). Related to teacher reflection, Fairbanks, Duffy, Faircloth, He, Levin, Rohr and Stein (2010) consider what makes some inservice teachers more thoughtfully adaptive than others. They propose four perspectives to explain this adaptive ability: teachers' personal beliefs and theories, vision, a sense of belonging, and identity.

Reflection research that builds on the work of Dewey and Schön includes examples of teacher reflection to improve teaching (e.g., Howard, 2003; Rich & Hannafin, 2009); classifies different types of reflection (e.g., Jay & Johnson, 2002; Loughran, 2002); or focuses on the content of what teachers are thinking about when they reflect (e.g., Zeichner, 1994). Some studies offer strategies for

increasing teacher reflection, particularly for teacher candidates. Common strategies include the inclusion of action research in course assignments (e.g., Gore & Zeichner, 1991); writing assignments such as journal writing or personal narratives (e.g., Juzwik, Whitney, Baker Bell, & Smith, 2014); being supervised (e.g., McCaleb, Borko, & Arends, 1992); and the use of classroom activities and discussion to stimulate and facilitate reflection (Valli, 2009). Other studies highlight how reflection that goes beyond the instrumental, focusing also on social justice, can result in positive outcomes for students (Fendler, 2003). Reflection, though, is often one component of a larger framework for teacher development. It is within this larger framework—be it a college class or professional development program—that the reflection leads to teacher change.

Teacher reflection that leads to lasting and meaningful changes in practice is often part of a larger structure for teacher development (Craig, 2010; Rivera-Mueller, 2014). As discussed above and widely researched, reflection may take place during teacher preparation as a part of a course or field placement. Other professional development structures that support reflection include informal knowledge communities (Craig, 2009) or professional learning communities (Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008). Within the world of writing teacher development, the NWP is perhaps the most well-known model for professional development. As a professional network (Lieberman & Wood, 2003), NWP connects teachers to one another with the explicit purpose of learning about and reflecting on writing and the teaching of writing. Participation in the experience, particularly the writing, is often called "transformational" to teacher thinking and practice (Wood & Lieberman, 2007; Whitney, 2008). Both authors of this article and the teachers who participated in the research are teacher-consultants with NWP. We all participated in the four-week invitational summer institute, though at different sites and at different times. Our shared experiences as teacher-consultants served as the foundation on which our professional and personal relationships, philosophies about the teaching of writing, and belief in the power of research were built.

Method

This study occurred in two stages. As discussed above, we engaged in individual case studies (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2008) of two teachers with the goal of better understanding their identity and practice as writing teachers. These case studies comprised the first stage of research, and led us to pursue the second stage reported in this article, in which we shifted the focus of our research and interview questions to understanding the teachers' experiences as participants in case studies. This second phase also included presenting at a national literacy

conference, where the teachers were able to participate in a roundtable discussion about this research.

Context and Participants. Data were collected in two different schools within a large metropolitan area in the Southwest. Annabeth and Eva were both experienced teachers (Annabeth with 4 years and Eva with 15 years) in two districts where a majority of students were Latino and received free/reduced lunch. Both teachers were purposefully sampled (Patton, 1990) for the initial case studies and for the current research. The initial data made clear the teachers' existing reflective stances and positions as teacher leaders. They each expressed interest in continuing the work of this research as a way of contributing to the larger body of knowledge around teacher practice. Annabeth and Eva positioned themselves as reflective practitioners and understood the larger purposes and politics of academic research. They both participated in teacher professional networks, including NWP, that supported them in this reflective stance and growing understanding of educational research. Also, both teachers were able to articulate the ways in which the work of research has impacted their practice. What follows are more detailed descriptions of our two teacher participants.

Annabeth. Ann collected data on Annabeth, an eighth grade English language arts and reading teacher at an urban middle school. Her work as a graduate student and with the NWP shaped her understandings of teaching writing as grounded in students' knowledge and experience of the world and how technology can serve the larger goal of helping students become writers. At the time of the study, I [Anne] had known Annabeth for six years. During that time, we were classmates in a master's program in language and literacy studies, teacher-consultants with the same NWP site, and friends. The original research focused on students' digital writing practices during a unit on feature articles shared via a class wiki, both a new topic and a new technology for Annabeth. The newness required Annabeth to rely heavily on outside resources—including the researcher—to move through the planning and implementation of the unit. Additionally, the five-week unit, which should have included twenty-five instructional days, only had seventeen because of testing, professional development release days, field trips, and a variety of other interruptions.

Eva. Melody collected data on Eva, a fourth grade bilingual Spanish/English teacher in an urban elementary school. She was in her fourteenth year of teaching at the same school where I Melody had also previously taught for six years. Eva attributed growing up as a poor Latina as motivating her to leave her home town and graduate college in order to teach students with similar backgrounds. As colleagues, we regularly collaborated on our teaching and co-lead professional development sessions on the teaching of

writing for other teachers in the district. At the time of data collection, Eva was in the midst of writing her memoir. That she was writing her memoir was significant because of how closely she associated her life experiences with her teacher identity. In addition, writing her memoir was extremely important to Eva as she strongly identified as a writer and she wished to make a literary contribution by sharing her experiences as a Latina woman. She asked me to read her memoir and openly shared her plans and information about her classroom and teaching. This research first began with an investigation of how Eva's memoir and beliefs about writing informed her writing instruction before investigating her experiences as a research participant.

Data Sources and Analysis. Our research draws on data from both stages, with the primary sources of data including interview transcripts from the original, individual case studies, as well as follow-up interviews, and sources from the second stage including transcripts, observations, and emails.We used the constant-comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify emerging themes and to focus the follow-up interviews on understanding the teachers' experiences as research participants. We individually engaged in coding the transcripts before combining them for a cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006), in which we identified three themes. We created a matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with direct quotes from the data to support these themes. Table 1 provides an example of the matrix. This cross-case analysis allowed us to broaden our understanding of the individual transcripts, to see where codes aligned or misaligned, and to adjust the thematic understanding of the data.

Throughout the data collection process, the teachers were asked to comment on and deepen our evolving understandings of the data. After the initial work of identifying and defining the themes, the two teachers were invited to examine and comment on them and how they aligned with their own understanding of the intersection of research and their practice (Stake, 2006). These conversations, which occurred informally in person or over email, served as an opportunity for member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This combination of individual case studies via a cross-case analysis enhanced our understanding of the themes present individually in the case studies, and deepened our ability to discuss the meanings and implications of this research.

Findings

What follows is an analysis of Annabeth and Eva's experiences as research participants. They each articulated how being a part of research supported their reflection on their practice, within the context of a trusting relationship with the researchers. The teachers individually located the source of that trust, in part, as shared beliefs about writing and the teaching of writing. Annabeth and Eva also said that participating in research was empowering as they felt they were contributing to a larger research conversation.

Reflective Processes

Participating in research supported Annabeth and Eva in reflecting both in action and on action (Schön's 1983, 1987). Annabeth saw Anne's presence in her class as an opportunity to get immediate feedback and think through her teaching with someone else. For example, the digital writing unit that served as the focal point of the original case study was difficult for Annabeth, and she often asked Anne for direction and advice. These conversations happened in the middle of teaching the unit when she a shared thoughts like needing to move the unit to a different part of the year (field notes, March 31, 2010) or how student absences affected students' ability to engage with their writing (field notes, April 19, 2010). At the end of the unit, she also reflected that, "as a unit, [this was] the biggest wash...I don't think the students learned what I wanted them to...I don't think they were able to get as much done as I had planned, as I had hoped" (interview, April 16, 2010). Anne's presence in the room as a researcher, the side conversations during instruction, and the research interviews afterwards all led Annabeth into moments of reflection, calling her to refine her vision of her teaching. She positioned Anneas a valued resource in the classroom, which supported her in reflecting in and on action.

For Eva, having a researcher in her classroom caused her to be more deliberate with her reflection. She described her participation in Melody's research by saying that, "it also helped me to stop and reflect on what I do because I take a lot of what I do for granted" (email correspondence, February 9, 2010). Eva was referring to interviews during which I Melody would ask her to talk about a teaching moment I observed, either by referring back to my field notes or using stimulated recall (DiPardo, 1994) by playing portions of video for her to talk about. By talking aloud and being explicit about what she did, Eva saw these interviews as an opportunity to reflect on action and think about her teaching in ways she might not have otherwise. She also thought that being

researched meant being thoughtful about doing a good job.

> Knowing that you are being scrutinized and part of the research means you also have to perform. That's what it means to me. And not perform in a forced way but maybe gently prodded...I think about that—someone's going to come watch me, I have to do a good job, I have to be very thoughtful and purposeful about what I want to teach the kids. (interview, October 9, 2010)

This feeling of having to perform heightened her reflection in action and helped her develop her vision for her teaching. She wanted to be intentional about what she was doing.

For Annabeth and Eva, intentional reflection in and on teaching happened explicitly because of the researcher's presence. For Annabeth, having Anne in the classroom was an opportunity to debrief her teaching and the students' learning and get immediate feedback. For Eva, time to talk about the lesson afterwards supported her in being deliberate about her reflection. The interviews, specifically, encouraged attention to their instruction and an awareness of their actions that may not have been present otherwise.

Relationships

Trust and respect. While having us in their classroom elicited reflection, Annabeth and Eva had strong feelings about *who* researched their practice, and valued a trusting relationship with the researcher. The researcher's presence in the classroom was explicitly valued by the teachers because they understood us to be thoughtful, respectful, and purposeful with respect to their practice and the students' learning. Both teachers, though, had experiences with other researchers in their classrooms who were not invited, but placed by administrators, so both compared their experiences with us to that of their experience with those other researchers. In those comparisons, the importance of trust revealed itself.

As evidenced above, Annabeth saw Anne's presence as supportive and my knowledge as a resource, a position which is built on our long-standing personal and professional relationship. I worked to position myself in the classroom in this way, to demonstrate respect for Annabeth's position and professionalism, as well as a desire to have her benefit from the research process. Annabeth, then, did not position me as an evaluator who would challenge her teacher identity. "I try my best and I do my best and … you're not going to think less of me … you understand what teaching is like enough to know that … it's human" (interview, October 29, 2010). Instead of evaluation, in moments where her practice was not what she envisioned it could be, she

thought of my presence as a possibility to reflect on what was less-than-perfect and grow from that reflection.

My "easy integration" in her classroom grew from her belief that our philosophies about teaching writing aligned and were focused on the students. "I know that in every step of the process you would be most concerned about, 'Well, how are the kids going to take this and how is it best for their learning?'" (interview, October 29, 2010). This philosophical alignment, then, served to bolster our trusting relationship. "I trusted you in my classroom and the ideas you had and it helped me feel confident that I could go and mess up and then you would be able to help me see it in a different way" (interview, October 29, 2010). Here again, Annabeth linked the relationship and trust we built together to the ability to reflect on her practice, reconsider particular moments, and move forward with that new knowledge. My presence did not challenge her teacher identity or vision of her teaching, so the relationship grew from the research, which then translated to reflection on her practice that she appreciated.

Similarly, the relationship Eva and Melody had from working together served as a starting point for her feeling comfortable with me in her room. I tried to position myself as a learner in the classroom, letting Eva know that I was there to learn from her about how she approached writing instruction. Eva explained that having a trusting relationship with the researcher was important to her and that in the future, in order to agree to participate in a research study, she would have to know the person already. "I would have to have a relationship with that person. I wouldn't just let anyone in my classroom. In fact I actually get annoyed with people when they come in my classroom if I don't really know them" (interview, October 9, 2010). While Eva was referring specifically to administrators annoying her, this utterance highlights the importance she places on knowing the people who enter her teaching space.

In the following excerpt, Eva described how she viewed my role as a researcher in her room and how her understanding of me differed from her understanding of other visitors to her classroom, because of our relationship.

> Again it goes back to the fact that I knew you and we share the same vision and your vision celebrates. Your vision isn't like deficit thinking. And I feel like I was being punished so many times for teaching outside the box. Any time I see an administrator I think, "Oh no, what did I do wrong?" And I didn't feel like you were going to tell me, "Okay Eva what was that all about, why were you doing that?" You just came in and documented without judging. So I guess, no judging, just pure documentation and letting your subject reflect on it. That's fine. (interview, October 9, 2010)

Because of past experiences she has had with others observing her, and then questioning her teaching, shared vision was incredibly important. While she worried about what administrators were going to say about her teaching, she did not feel the same sort of pressure or stress from having me in her room. She described me as documenting what occurred in the classroom without placing judgement. And she saw this encounter as a way of encouraging her to reflect. Once again she brought up the importance of having a shared vision, specifically one that does not subscribe to deficit thinking.

Uncertainty and a lack of trust. Eva expressed the importance of what she called sharing the "same vision" and being "intellectually compatible" (interview, October 9, 2010) with someone doing research in her room because of her experience as a participant in a study where such a relationship did not exist. She remembered a research study she participated in the previous year. Eva was one of the teachers who was told to participate by district officials, which required an outside researcher conducting classroom observations, administering surveys to teachers, and students taking reading assessments. She described this experience as "weird for me because they never told us the objective, purpose, or goal...You coming in as a researcher, in contrast to the university researcher, was that I knew you, and I knew we share a similar vision and philosophy about teaching and what 'education' should look like" (email correspondence, November 23, 2010). Sharing the same vision and philosophy with the researcher was important for Eva. She said, "I know you share the same vision. You believe in writer's workshop, you believe in the writing process, so it's not like you were coming from a different point of view of how you do writing in the classroom. I felt you're intellectually compatible" (interview, October, 9, 2010). Eva communicated the value she placed on having a similar perspective to the researcher about writing instruction when being the subject of research. She perceived my beliefs about teaching writing to align with what she was doing. From Eva's point of view, researchers should not only share the same beliefs about education with the teachers they research, they should also share the purpose of their research.

Annabeth had similar experiences as a participant in other research. In commenting about another researcher doing model lessons in her room, she said the lessons "aren't working with my kids and they don't work with my philosophy" (interview, October 29, 2010). She also said,

> Whereas...other researchers, or people I'm not familiar with, or I'm not having continuous, consistent conversations with, I feel like they would judge my entire teaching self off of maybe a moment and not understand maybe the series of moments that I've had before that with these students

> … or where we've been or where we're trying to go. (interview, April 16, 2010)

Here Annabeth returned to the key themes highlighted throughout my time researching in her room, but as an example of a negative case. For people with whom she did not have an ongoing relationship, she worried they would not "understand" her vision of herself and her identity as a teacher.

Her understanding was that this researcher was "telling [me] how to do this because [I'm] not doing it well" (interview, October 29, 2009) and these concerns manifested themselves in a defensive stance (interview, April 16, 2010). Annabeth could clearly identify the ways in which this researcher's philosophical understanding of teaching literacy did not match her own.

> I don't believe in what she wants. She believes we need to be reading a whole class texts that's difficult and that makes absolutely no sense in my brain… if they can't read it...then how are they getting critical thinking skills out of it if no one understands it? [frustrated noise] (interview, October 29, 2009)

Important to note here is that Annabeth was reflecting deeply on her practice as she considered this other researcher's work in her classroom, but the nature of her reflection was different from when I was in her classroom. Rather than focusing on her teaching and students, she identified her own beliefs in opposition to this researcher, and understood the ways this researcher did not support her vision or identity of herself as a teacher. Being able to compare across researchers led Annabeth to a more complete understanding of her contribution to educational research.

Annabeth's and Eva's reactions to these other researchers were more guarded, as they did not have a relationship with them and were not always entirely clear about their reasons for being there. They both perceived that sharing the same beliefs about teaching and writing with researchers contributed to their ability to reflect on their practice, rather than feel judged and evaluated. The researchers built this alignment and trust through long-standing personal and professional relationships with both teachers, as well as by explicitly focusing on building and maintaining that relationship throughout the research process.

Contributing to Research

Another area in which Annabeth and Eva spoke similarly of their participation in research was how educational research coming out of their classrooms could be received by audiences beyond their classrooms. For Annabeth, this stance meant being thoughtful about the purposes of the research

happening in her room. Speaking of Anne's research, "if you're getting good stuff then [my students and I] are getting good stuff" was her reaction to my presence in the room, seeing what she understood to be best practice in the teaching of writing. Where as Annabeth stated, "I don't care if [the other researcher] gets what she needs because...I don't believe in what she wants" (interview, October 29, 2010). Annabeth understood the power of educational research, was confident in her philosophy of teaching writing, and responded to her participation in research based on that knowledge and understanding.

She was also aware of the power of the researchers she invites into her room. "I want to encourage open doors since in our past, it's always been closed" (interview, October 29, 2010). However in the same breath she acknowledged "I'm struggling with it and it's really, really hard. I'm not really good at it but I do want us, our profession, to be more open" (interview, October 29, 2010). Because of her status as a graduate student, and her connections to the NWP, Annabeth was aware of the power inherent in educational research. "I'm … selfishly doing it for me. Like, if it goes well for you then it's going to go well for us" (interview, October 29, 2010). In this "us," Annabeth included herself and her current students, as well as all future teachers and students who are influenced by the research that I was doing. Conversely, for researchers who did not align with her philosophy, she had little desire to see them succeed because "I don't believe in what [that researcher is] trying to get and so almost like I'm trying not to get her what she wants" (interview, October 29, 2010).

For Eva, participation was a way of improving understandings of teaching practices beyond her own, networking with other teachers, and supporting research through sharing the findings with others--with all of thes eelements, ideally, leading to positive change in the teaching profession. All of these elements, ideally, leading to positive change in the teaching profession. "And just trying to get inspired by the people who are researching and teaching and reflecting and just always trying to make [teaching] better" (interview, October 9, 2010). This serves as an example of Eva's continual quest to be a better teacher, as well as her sense that she could make a contribution to research.

Eva saw her participation as providing me, the researcher, with a story to tell that was important for others, particularly administrators, to hear. In this way, participating in research gave her a sense of belonging to larger conversations around educational change. She described what she thought the role of researchers should be: "to work more, network more with principals...I think this research should be sent to superintendents. Too many teachers fear change—so go to those who can more quickly bring about change" (email correspondence, February 9, 2010). She saw research as something that needs to

be shared, and she viewed it as something to learn from. By feeling that she was contributing to research, Eva gained a sense of belonging to something larger than just her classroom or her school. She wanted her teaching to be an example that could be shared positively and lead to change.

Participating in research, then, allowed Annabeth and Eva to reach beyond their classrooms. They both had a sense of contributing to educational research, believing in the benefits that research would confer on them, their students, and the profession.

Significance

Through the words of the teachers and their responses to our presence as researchers in their classrooms, we demonstrated how participation in research supports teachers in reflection both in and on action. The long-standing relationships, which began as graduate students or colleagues, between the the researcher and teacher created a trust that supported reflection toward change in practice, and reinforced their vision of themselves as teachers of writing. Additionally, philosophical alignment about the teaching of writing, built through shared NWP connections, support that reflection. This constellation of characteristics of the teachers' participation in the research contributes to the teachers' feeling of belonging to the educational research conversations. In addition to the themes from our examination, Annabeth's and Eva's participation in research demonstrated how participation in research can support teachers in developing as thoughtfully adaptive writing teachers (Fairbanks, et al., 2010).

The first characteristic of thoughtfully adaptive teachers focuses on teachers' beliefs and personal practical theories about teaching. Both Annabeth and Eva talk extensively about the ways in which they see their beliefs about the teaching of writing aligning with their understandings of our beliefs about the teaching of writing. Annabeth understood our shared focus as "how are the kids going to take this and how is it best for their learning." Eva's comment, "Your vision isn't like deficit thinking," stated her understanding of the Melody's beliefs, and implied an alignment with that position. Both Annabeth and Eva had negative examples of researchers not sharing their beliefs about teaching. Annabeth used this opportunity to compare the two researchers who were in her classroom, which served to solidify her own beliefs and philosophy. Eva was not privy to the beliefs or philosophies of the other researcher, but assumed they were different, and chose to explicitly align herself with Melody. This alignment of beliefs contributed to a trusting relationship, which then supported both Annabeth and Eva exploring their vision and identity with us as researchers.

Having teachers participate in research, especially within the context of a trusting relationship with the researcher, can be one way to support them in developing and refining their vision for teaching and as a way of sustaining their teaching lives. Fairbanks, et al. (2010) refer to vision as: "a teacher's personal commitment to seek outcomes beyond the usual curricular outcomes" (p. 163). Annabeth and Eva both envisioned our research in their classrooms as a way of changing education for the better. Annabeth wanted more "open doors" and Eva hoped for "change." Anne and Melody acted as a conduit for Annabeth and Eva to participate in research discussions. This participation, then, increased their sense of belonging to communities beyond their classroom. This sense of belonging strengthened their vision of themselves as teachers.

Even while belonging to this research community, and the NWP community, Annabeth and Eva both experienced moments of not belonging in their school communities. Both experienced administrative mandates to participate in research with which they did not agree, or experienced negative judgement of their practice. This lack of belonging within the school is unfortunate because "For reflection to be a powerful tool for teachers, it should take place within the school community and focus on important school issues" (Valli, 2009, p. 86). Our research, on the other hand, offered opportunities—within their classroom and school—for reflection in and on action. Participation in research with trusted researchers, then, offered another avenue for reflection, without the fear or challenge of evaluation or judgement.

While teacher identity, another element of thoughtfully adaptive teachers, was not a focus of this article, identity is one aspect of reflection that is also worth noting. For example, Sutherland, Howard, and Markauskaite (2010) considered how preservice teachers developed their self-image as a teacher through their "teacher voice" in public, online discussions. The social aspect of making thinking public was similar in our study, though instead of asking Annabeth and Eva to communicate with us digitally, we were present in their classrooms. And the research we did there became public through conference presentations and publications. Based on what we learned from Annabeth and Eva, we think that the reflection teachers do as a part of the research process may also contribute to their sense of identity as effective teachers of writing, which warrants further investigation.

Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

We use this case of Annabeth and Eva to show how teachers respond to being researched. This, in turn, highlights what researchers should consider when conducting research on teachers. First, researchers should engage in research as a

partnership with teachers, even if the research is more traditionally designed with the teacher as a participant and not a co-investigator. While this perspective is not a new proposition (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Reinking & Bradley, 2008), our research illuminates the teacher's perspective on participating in more mutually beneficial research. Teachers' participation in research influences and affects their reflection in and on practice, regardless of the depth to which the teacher is involved in the research. However when the teacher belongs to the research community, that participation leads to reflection in and on practice in ways that support that teacher's vision as a practitioner. Second, researchers should think carefully about how to establish trusting relationships with teachers. Without that trust, which in both relationships grew out of philosophical alignment, the teachers became defensive or unwilling participants, which impacted both their practice and the research. While it is impossible to identify the ways in which the data collected by other researchers was influenced by the relative lack of relationship with the teachers, it is hard to imagine there was no unfavorable effect, especially given the teachers' own words on the subject.

Taking what we learned from Annabeth and Eva, we argue that researchers should take time to establish partnerships and trust with participants. In our case, we had existing relationships with Annabeth and Eva. These existing connections made it an easy transition to forming a research partnership. Even so, we did not assume a seamless transition, but cultivated open lines of communication, negotiating (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 486) our role in the classroom and the teacher's role in the research. We recognize, however, that researchers do not always have an existing relationship prior to conducting research. In these cases, we think it is possible and important for researchers to take time to establish a relationship. Researchers can do so by taking time to get to know participants and sharing about themselves, including beliefs about teaching and learning. When enlisting teachers' help to promote our own research agendas and to contribute to research in a broader sense, developing reciprocal relationships is part of the work. During this work of relationship building, the "researcher and teacher become engaged as joint theorists/researcher in a mutual apprehension and interpretation of meaning in action" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 491).

Thinking about how such deep relationships can affect data and analysis, as well as lead to researcher blindness, continues to be essential work in educational research. Cole and Knowles (1993) outline dozens of questions around this work ranging from technical to procedural to political. The depth and breadth of these questions should not overwhelm researchers, preventing them from engaging in research *with* teachers, and developing the trusting

relationships that can grow out of long engagement together in a classroom. However this knowledge of how much teachers value the relationships they develop with researchers leads us to consider the questions we should ask ourselves about how the relationships we build intersect with the research we do. Further, given the ever-increasing threats to teacher autonomy (Franzak, 2008; Ingersoll, 2003; Read & Landon-Hays, 2013), which come in some part from evaluation driven by educational research, researchers must proceed thoughtfully. However, from understanding Annabeth and Eva's perspectives, we see the possibility that being researched can empower teachers to take back their own practice. And from our perspective as researchers, cooperative research can "better capture and reflect the complexity of classroom life and the individuality of those who constitute it" (Cole & Knowles, 1993, p. 474). More research in this area of understanding teachers' perceived experiences when being researched could only help both teachers and researchers. Our research question is one that researchers can ask of themselves each time they step into a classroom or sit down to interview a teacher:

> *How does participation in qualitative research encourage writing teachers' reflection on their practice?*

Theme	Example from Annabeth	Example from Eva
Reflective processes	"As a unit, [this was] the biggest wash...I don't think the students learned what I wanted them to...I don't think they were able to get as much done as I had planned, as I had hoped." (interview, April 16, 2010)	"So maybe if anything I've been influenced just by reflecting, keep on reading, keep on buying books, keep on networking, keep on talking to other teachers, and always come to the point where I get spurts of energy and passion so that I don't burn out." (interview, October 9, 2010)
Trusting relationships	"I trusted you in my classroom and the ideas you had and it helped me feel confident that I could go and mess up and then you would be able to help me see it in a different way or bring it back to where we were going from." (interview, October 29, 2010)	"Well first of all because you were my teammate for a while so we already had a relationship. I already knew you. It wasn't like you were a stranger." (interview, October 9, 2010)
Contributing to research	"I'm … selfishly doing it for me. Like, if it goes well for you then it's going to go well for us." (interview, October 29, 2010)	"I think educator/researchers have to work more, network more with principals--they are the ones who hire staff. i think this research should be sent to superintendents. too many teachers fear changes-- go to those who can more quickly bring about change." (email correspondence, February 9, 2009)

Table 1: Example of matrix used to pair direct quotes with the three themes.

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