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Quiet on the Set!: Writing Socially in an Elementary After-School Video Club

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QUIET ON THE SET!: WRITING SOCIALLY

IN AN ELEMENTARY AFTER-SCHOOL VIDEO CLUB

BY

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ABSTRACT

The research presented is a qualitative case study of an after-school video club for elementary age students. The focus of the project revolved around one main question: *how do students socially read and write videos?* The broader goal of the question was to understand how students socially read and write multimodal texts with video as a subset. The study was approached from sociocultural approach to literacy that recognizes videomaking as a new literacies practice. As a literacy practice, videomaking incorporates multiple authors, multiple communicative modes (visual, spatial, aural, gestural, and linguistic), and involves complex and dynamic social interactions between both readers and writers of texts. Using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, one site (the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club) was studied for a complete school year. There were 23 participants in the study including 20 4th and 5th grade students, two adult volunteers, and a participant/researcher.

The findings of the study outline how participants at the site socially read and wrote videos: by inventing, revising, and following a socially established videomaking

process (pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution), by behaving in ways that were influenced by sociocultural contexts specific to videomaking at the site (protocols, roles, tools, products), and interacting in specific and identifiable ways (inquiring, instructing, suggesting, and evaluating) to both "solve" and "find" problems during literacy events. Videomaking required multiple authorship and, depending on how students responded to the sociocultural contexts, the opportunity for democratic writing was made possible and sometimes inevitable. Through the study of social videomaking, the research deomonstates the social nature of all literacies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Video is seemingly *everywhere*— on every computer screen, TV, phone, and tablet. On YouTube alone, over 4 billion hours of video is watched each month and 72 hours of video is uploaded every minute (YouTube, 2013). And this is only one video hosting site in a vast landscape of Internet and broadcast media. Where is all of this content coming from? Mainly from *us*— regular folks using the cameras that are built into our phones, tablets, or computers. While there is a growing community of amateur filmmakers (see NoFilmSchool.com) producing work that is surprisingly professional on affordable consumer grade equipment, the vast majority of videos on YouTube are from everyday people tinkering with the medium, pointing their lenses at anything interesting or of note or just because they can. The vast majority of this video is uploaded as single uninterrupted and unedited shots. So while video is plentiful, most of what is available is amateur, unplanned, and *un-produced*.

Video production— the process of writing with the video medium by capturing moving images and creating combinations of parts of these clips in post-production— is not something that is generally taught in schools, especially elementary school, and for good reasons. Video production is a complicated and time consuming process that requires special skills in order to use videomaking tools well. Perhaps more than anything, it is a collaborative process that involves multiple authors, specialized roles, and the coordination of a crew of people with the ability to organize each other, objects, resources, and overcome countless problems and obstacles. These are not tasks we expect our 9 year olds to master. Especially not in school.

Videomaking is complicated but that is not the biggest obstacle for educators. As

you will see in this study, young students can actually produce wonderful video texts all

on their own. The biggest obstacle is that we don't know exactly what students are doing

during the videomaking process and even if we did, we're pretty sure that the way

schools are currently configured, these processes wouldn't fit. Schoolwork is generally

based on individual achievement and students are required to be proficient in all

"subjects" not just the ones they choose to specialize in. This makes collaborative and

social writing a non-starter in schools and as a result, in an age of video, our schools have

chosen not to seriously address the writing involved in videomaking.

In this study, I look to better understand the videomaking process by paying close

attention to the social aspects of reading and writing these texts. I discuss how reading

and writing videos is a collaborative social activity that involves both conventional and

new technological composing tools. As unique and new as these practices are

(particularly in schools), I argue that writing video texts is an activity that is grounded in

what we already know about traditional and conventional literacy such as written print.

To do so, I will outline a sociocultural perspective of literacy, explain developments in

our understanding of literacy (New Literacy Studies, new literacies) that involve multiple

authors, multiple modes, and multiple literacies and how recent technological

developments have helped change contemporary literacy practices. These new literacies

practices make us question many of the assumptions we have concerning reading,

writing, and literacy. More than anything, what video production seems to reveal is the

social nature of all literacies.

Statement of the Problem

The research presented is a qualitative case study of an after-school video club for

elementary age students. I entered the project with one main question: *how do students socially read and write videos?* I asked this question with the broader goal of understanding how students socially construct multimodal texts with video as a subset. As a literacy practice, videomaking incorporates multiple authors, multiple communicative modes (visual, spatial, aural, gestural, and linguistic), and involves complex and dynamic social interactions between both readers and writers of texts. Through the study of social videomaking, I look to better understand the social nature of all literacies.

Rat Boy

Rat Boy was a typical student production and one of the first videos to be completed in the video club. Produced (written, shot, and edited) by elementary age students, the script was written in a single session by a fifth grade boy, Thomas (all names in this study are pseudonyms), with the express idea that he would play the lead title character. The one page script (Figure 1.1 below) is surprisingly complex. (Note: all writing errors in student work including typos, misspellings, and deviations from standard conventions are left in the original.)

```
INT.HALLWAY

We see a girl run out of a closet. Then a man jumps
out of the closet and grabs her.

                    GIRL
          Let go of me!

                    MAN
          You're coming with me pretty girl!

The girl screams and we see a silhouette behind them.
```

```
                         RAT BOY
              I'd leave her alone if I were you.

      Still holding on to the girl, the man turns around and
      sees a boy in a rat costume.

                         MAN
              It ain't halloween yet kid.

                         RAT BOY
              Ill give you one more chance.

      Rat Boy leaps at the man and we see a close up of Rat
      Boy's fist (in slow motion) punching the man's face at
      the same time he spits out blood. The man lets out a
      slow motion scream.

      The girl looks at Rat Boy surprised but happy.

                         GIRL
              You saved me.

                         RAT BOY
              No bigee.

      Rat Boy leans in closer and looks at her she looks at
      him creeped out. He leans closer. We see the girl pick
      up her purse and pull out a can. Then we see her spray
      pepper spray out of the can into Rat Boys eyes.

                         RAT BOY
              Ahhhhhhhhhhhh! My eyes

      Rat Boy falls to the ground and then we see the girl
      run away.
```

Figure 1.1. Original script for *Rat Boy*.

The pepper spraying of the character "Rat Boy" was a surprise twist that artfully

bends the superhero genre that the script relies on. We learn that Rat Boy is not a hero but

an *anti-hero*, one that we want to root for but we know we shouldn't. The bad character

("Man") was still the villain but the victim (the "Girl") ended up taking charge of her

destiny. In this way the script is quite clever as nowhere in the text does it *tell* us that the

character "Rat Boy" is a pathetic non-hero but the script (and final video) *showed* this.

The intended conclusion was for the viewer to make and viewers consistently took away

this meaning. After reading the script, even the title takes on new meaning— he's a "rat" after all. How could we have not seen this coming?

After the script was finished, Thomas chose a director who assembled an initial crew to shoot the video including a cameraperson, markerboard operator, actors, and (in this case, two) editors. Thomas wanted to play Rat Boy himself so he did not direct the video and interestingly he chose not to edit it later. *Rat Boy* needed two other actors, "Man" and "Girl", both of which had more screen time than Thomas as Rat Boy. Directing a video meant making all kinds of authorial choices such as locations and actors' movements. When problems came up, the director— along with the production crew— was expected to solve them, not the scriptwriter. Thomas watched as the crew went about filming and stepped forward when his shots came around. After filming ended, the two editors of *Rat Boy* added a couple of transitioning shots to connect some ideas better but their "final cut" stayed very close to the spirit of the script. So while Thomas was the scriptwriter and lead actor, ultimately an additional 8 students co-authored *Rat Boy* with him. The final video was a collaborative and socially constructed text and while Thomas, naturally, took ownership of the video, so did others including the director, the other actors, and the two video editors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how elementary age students socially made videos such as *Rat Boy*. I was interested in examining videomaking as a multimodal reading and writing practice that involves social interaction in all stages of production. Videomaking is an activity that involves reading and writing texts in multiple modes. Bezemer and Kress (2008) define a mode as a "socially and culturally shaped

resource for meaning making" (p. 171). Modes are design elements used in meaning-making processes. Kress (1997; 2000) asserts that there are six modes: aural, visual, linguistic, spatial, gestural, and the multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to one another. Video incorporates these multimodal patterns of meaning making. *Rat Boy* incorporates all of these modes: visually through Rat Boy's costume (all in pink and grey), the sounds of Rat Boy's pain as he is pepper sprayed, the spatial framing of shots, the wild gestures of the chase scene, and of course the linguistic mode via dialogue.

Video also involves multiple authors. As we saw in *Rat Boy*, no one person could do each task so the final product was always socially constructed by multiple authors. In videomaking, students communicated and negotiated ideas, accepting some and rejecting others. They learned how to clarify and compromise, interpreted directions, made decisions, and participated together towards a shared or common goal— making the video itself. The process appeared to be messy, loud, chaotic, and complicated. The purpose of this study was to examine these processes and begin to understand how multiple participants socially interacted during the reading and writing of these videos.

Rationale for Conducting the Study

For many years, as a classroom teacher and then as a graduate student researcher, I had been interested in video as a writing medium. In 2007 I started an after-school video club that would eventually become the site of this research. I was motivated to conduct research on social videomaking because I felt it provided new insights to aspects of literacy that are fairly established. Videomaking is a relatively novel literacy practice in that it isn't common in schools, however, it can inform our understanding of other

literacy practices by highlighting the social, technological, multimodal, and "evolving" aspects of all literacies. Videomaking, as a literacy practice, aligns itself well with what the field has already learned about literacy. Here I elaborate the rationale behind the study. Each part of my rationale is built upon a component of literacy.

Texts are socially read and increasingly written by multiple authors (*social component*). From a sociocultural perspective on literacy, reading and writing practices are considered as transactional and social activities (Rosenblatt, 1978; Goodman, 1982a; Heath, 1983; Bloome, 1985) and the social nature of reading and writing is clearly evident in videomaking. In the video club, productions were completed through a fascinating system of cooperation, negotiation, and compromise. After watching the process, it was clear that no video was completed alone. Video production at the site naturally employed a master/apprentice model and the teacher was only one of many people in the process who helped others. Within these social interactions were important moments where students gave feedback, assistance, and criticism to each other and moved the production in specific directions. Composing and reading video texts, which were expressly written to be displayed on big screens and sizable speaker systems, was intensely social.

Writing involves using technological tools (*technological* component). In the long history of writing there is also a parallel history of technologies that are influential to the production of these texts, each of which brings new possibilities to literacy (Gaur, 1984). The development of the typewriter, computer, video camera, video editing software, and the entire digital environment of contemporary writing, all significantly influence the kinds of writing that the children in the video club do and the products they

produce. Like all forms of writing, video production involves the use of technologies as tools in the writing process— tools that must be learned, leveraged, and experimented with.

Texts have always been multimodal but more overtly as of late (*multimodal component*). Video production offers students uncommon opportunities to express themselves in a variety of modes— visual, spatial, aural, gestural, linguistic, as well as combinations of these (ex. "speech" is both aural and linguistic, and on screen gestural). This is one of the reasons why video is so powerful— it engages the viewer in multiple ways. Employing the affordances of each mode like a language, complete with grammar systems or "patterns of representation" (New London Group, 1996, p. 78), students collaboratively write, compose, and design these texts. The videos are imagined, discussed, inscribed, performed, captured, reworked and each of these transformations involve different modes (print, speech, gestures, video, sound).

Literacy practices grow and evolve to adapt to new and emerging contexts creating *new literacies* practices and *new mindsets* towards literacy (*evolving component*). Videomaking is a new literacies practice that subsumes the above components (an emphasis on social writing, new communicative and informational technologies, and the production of multimodal texts) but also helps to shift and evolve participants' mindsets or "ethos" towards literacy (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Videomaking is a practice that requires participants to change the kinds of social and cultural relations they have with readers, authors, and texts to one that is more participatory, collaborative, and distributed (Jenkins, 2006) and less published, individual, and author-centric (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). These changing mindsets

towards literacy are ever-evolving and always in relation to new contexts and situations.

Research Goals

The main research question that guides this study is: *How do students socially read and write videos*? This question addresses the overall social interactions of the students as they negotiate and work through the videomaking process. Specifically, I studied how children interacted while reading, writing, studying and making the variety of multimodal texts produced during video making including scripts, enactments, and video texts. By studying the words and behaviors of the students, I was able to better understand their motivations and intent. From a sociocultural perspective of literacy, these words and behaviors are only the outside manifestations of larger and more significant inner development (discussed in greater detail in chapter five).

This study examines video making as a literacy practice with social interaction as an inherent, significant, and essential aspect of the writing process. I entered the study with the perspective that video making *is* a social activity; even when it appears that students were working alone, they were composing, revising, and editing for an immediate audience. This literacy practice was explored by studying the specific observable literacy events (the social interactions that center around a text of some sort) and activities that occur during video making. It is clear that students in the video club socially interact with one another to make their videos. The question is how is this done?

Sub-questions were derived from Goodman's (1994) three ways of studying the linguistic transactions in literacy events: how texts are written by authors, how readers make sense of texts, and how the characteristics of texts are examined by readers and writers. In chapter two, I explain in detail what the specific literacy events in video

production are. From a sociocultural perspective, writing and reading activities

(expressive and receptive processes) are completely interconnected and this was evident

in videomaking. While these sub-questions appear to separate writing from reading, the

three ways for studying linguistic transactions are actually interrelated. The last sub-

question addresses the important role that writing tools play in the interactions between

participants as they socially read and write videos.

Sub-questions included:

- How do students socially *write, design, or produce video texts*? (the
  writing)

- How do students socially *read, view, or make sense of texts* created in
  video production? (the reading)

- How do students socially address the *characteristics of the texts*
  (symbolic, structural, and semantic) in video production? (text analysis)

- How do the *tools* students use while making video *mediate the social
  interaction* of the participants?

Significance of the Study

Kist (2005) notes that new literacies such as videomaking are generally not taught

in schools. I would argue that this is even less so in elementary school classrooms. When

video is addressed, it is often a supplement to conventional literacies with the content

decided by the teacher. Compared to conventional print, video is a relatively new form of

writing. As a new literacies practice, it involves new ways of learning that are more

collective and less individual (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Video cameras are

increasingly common (nearly every contemporary phone can capture passable video) and

capable computers are in all but the poorest schools. The next step is to understand not

just how to work with the medium but how participants interact while they socially

engage in videomaking as a literacy practice. This study provides insight into the all

important social interactions in new literacies writing processes.

Incorporating new literacies into school settings is difficult (Kist, 2005), so much so

that Alvermann (2008) proposes that researchers should accept new literacies for what

they appear to be, "something apart from formal schooling and best not co-opted by

[teachers], no matter how noble our intent" (p. 9). While the setting of this study was an

after-school program, it took place *at* a school and involved a mix of in-school and out-

of-school social environments that questioned what were acceptable behaviors and

practices when students collaborated. Outside of school, the "screen" is becoming an

increasingly dominant focus of literacy activities (both expressive and receptive) while

in-school tasks tend to center much more on the "page." In addition, schools exclusively

assess individuals and these collaborative productions don't fit well with this traditional

arrangement. Nevertheless, these video projects— how they originate, get produced, and

are shared— all resemble the way the world outside of school engages with

contemporary texts.

The introduction of video production in schools as an *official* form of writing may

alter the way we understand, teach, and assess literacy. The findings of the study has the

potential to unveil the complex social writing practices involved in the composition of

these texts. As a new literacies practice, the unusual writing tools and output forms make

video look different— but the processes of video making may prove to be quite similar to

conventional literacies. This gives educators, teachers, parents an opportunity to rethink how we perceive reading and writing. I am not suggesting that video will make traditional writing forms obsolete or irrelevant but that video may allow us to expand our notion of literacy to one that resembles a sociocultural perspective.

Outside of schools, video has transformed into a viable and respected writing medium however it is only one of many developing new literacies texts. Contemporary multimodal texts— websites, TV shows, film and documentaries, video games, advertising campaigns, and more— are all big productions collectively composed by multiple people, sometimes hundreds of people, in very specialized roles. In this study I attempt to make sense of these writing contexts by researching what children do in similar situations. I don't want to suggest that the multimodal, non-academic writing that occurs in out of school contexts is better than conventional print writing, but in the future students will need to be able to contribute to productions in which they must collaborate with others and don't control all of the variables. Findings from this study, particularly the chapters that address sociocultural contexts (chapter five) and democratic writing (chapter six), may be important to future literacy instruction in schools.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

The study was a qualitative case study rooted in the sociocultural environment of a very specific site, and as a result, the conclusions from the analysis are not generally transferable to other contexts or cases. In short, external validity was the largest limitation in the study but this was not unexpected as, Merriam (1998) argues, "a single case or small nonrandom sample is selected precisely *because* the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many" (p.

208, emphasis in original). Still, case studies, much like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions (Yin, 2009), though not to populations or other cases. Through "analytic generalizations" (Yin, 2009), the researcher "strives to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory" (p. 43). This was the best case scenario for my work and throughout the study I created relevant analytic generalizations that are grounded in the data.

In addressing the limitation of external validity with case study research, Merriam (1998) has noted that several scholars have reframed the idea of "generalization" to reflect assumptions underlying all qualitative inquiry, three of which include *concrete universals* (Erickson, 1986), *naturalistic generalizations* (Stake, 1978), and *reader controlled applicability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Walker, 1980). Erickson (1986) suggests that the production of generalizable knowledge is an inappropriate goal for interpretive research and that qualitative research generates "concrete universals" (versus "abstract universals") that are useful. Just as no classroom is identical to another, no two cases are identical yet we can still generalize knowledge from one situation to another from the particulars of a foreign case. It is the basis of learning vicariously. Similar to concrete universals, Stake (1978) talks about "naturalistic generalizations," where full and thorough explanation of the particulars allows one to see similarities in new or contexts. For example, one isn't required to be a drug user to learn about drug culture; a complex and complete study can give a reader sufficient knowledge to learn something from it. In "reader controlled applicability," Walker (1980, in Merriam, 1998) suggests that the reader, not the researcher, is the ultimate decision maker if the case and its findings are applicable to their own lives and experiences. These three reframings of generalization,

consistent with qualitative inquiry, suggest that my own study, while a unique case, is still

potentially generalizable to external cases. My specific case of research participants (the

students in the video club) socially producing and consuming video texts in this context

could have implications for other after-school programs and even classrooms. This could

happen through "analytic generalizations" (Yin, 2009) or through reframing the idea of

generalization to include vicarious and constructivist learning situations.

Description of the Chapters

In chapter two I discuss the theoretical framework for the research and in chapter

three I describe the research site and research methods used in the case study. In chapter

four I detail the videomaking process in the video club documenting one video

production, *The Attacks*, from its conception to the final editing. Chapter five addresses

the sociocultural contexts involved in videomaking and in chapter six I examine the

groupings, interactions, and tenors involved in democratic writing. In the final chapter

(seven), I briefly summarize my findings and discuss the implications for future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In this study, I examine videomaking from a sociocultural perspective of literacy. In this chapter I outline sociocultural theory and its relationship to literacy. I explain how literacy from a sociocultural perspective incorporates semiotic representation beyond print and speech, includes multiple modalities, and leads to multiple literacies (or "multiliteracies") specific to contexts with their own textual forms. I then explain how videomaking fits within this perspective paying special attention to the burgeoning field of new literacies. Last, I explain how literacy events can be used to study particular practices from a sociocultural perspective and the ways literacy events in the video club were approached.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory, largely influenced by the work of Vygotsky, has three general themes. The first is that individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources. Rogoff (2003) argues that "people develop as participants in cultural communities (and) their development can be understood only in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities" (p. 3). These cultural practices are dynamic and evolving, requiring participants to constantly refine their understanding of the world. Even small children, who are less capable and knowledgeable, are guided in participating in cultural communities (Rogoff, 1990). We see elements of guided participation when mothers have conversations with their infants, teaching them via participation the form and functional properties of verbal language (Halliday, 1975). In his work on reading, Smith (1986) argues that children learn language and its functions simultaneously. Humans learn by becoming a member of a group, as a part of a social

activity. One becomes "literate" by joining the metaphoric "literacy club" (Smith, 1998), the large collection of people who read and write including experts and novices; with my own students, they literally join a "video club" and learn from a variety of people including other students with more experience than them.

A second theme of sociocultural theory is that human action is mediated by tools and signs and there is a significant relationship between internal development (thought, cognition) and external development of tools and semiotic means. A socially provided tool kit of semiotic means (Wertsch, 1991) provides support for internal mental functioning and, in return, social thought helps advance semiotic invention. It is a reciprocal relationship where humans create the tools and the tools help create the human. "The concept of semiotic mediation is essential to the sociocultural view that the process of internalization is transformative rather than transmissive" (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996, p. 194). While Vygotsky identified language as only one of many semiotic means, most sociocultural researchers place language in the central position. A key element of new literacies is a broad and non-hierarchical understanding of semiotics. Visual or aural signs are no less important than printed words or speech. John-Steiner (1997) advocates for a pluralistic approach towards semiotic importance and suggests there is a diversity of representational codes and that language is but one of several symbol systems that constitute human thought. These languages of the mind she calls "cognitive pluralism" (John-Steiner, 1997, p. xvi). We may think in images or language or even sounds, music, mathematical computations and others. There is a diversity of inner representational modes just as there is diversity of expressive means (John-Steiner, 1997). Expressive tools are often oriented towards a particular mode (such as a guitar or

word processor) and there is a relationship between these tools and thought and

cognition.

The third theme of sociocultural theory is that the first two themes are best analyzed

from a developmental or "genetic" perspective. Vygotsky (1978) used the term "genetic"

analysis to describe the focus on process, interconnectedness, and origin of the

phenomenon studied. Research from a sociocultural perspective attempts to understand

not just the observable behaviors but the origin, history, and development of those

behaviors. Concerning new literacies and multimodal texts such as video, there is a need

for studies that describe and explain the textual features and social contexts of new media

genres children use because there are so few. By relying upon sociocultural theory, we

may be able to gain insights into how and why children engage with, construct, and

critique these new texts and genres in specific contexts (Nixon, 2003). I will be studying

how children make video by considering visible processes such as the interplay between

participants, tools, and communicative modes. From a sociocultural perspective, these

visible (and audible) processes may lead to an understanding of internal processes.

Sociocultural Theory and Literacy

A sociocultural perspective of literacy is nested in sociocultural theory and thus

recognizes the significance of social and cultural sources, contexts, and the interplay

between participants and semiotic tools. Literacy is studied from thought, to inner speech,

to semiotic outputs such as verbal utterances, print, visuals or other sign systems. Early

theories of literacy viewed reading and writing as strictly psychological tasks with

profound consequences (Goody & Watt, 1968). These behaviorist models stressed the

significant influence of writing technologies to restructure thought (Ong, 1986) and that

writing itself alters consciousness (Olson, 1995). The sociocultural approach to literacy

acknowledges the cognitive and mental dimensions but emphasizes the centrality of

social sources in human development and not the technologies or modes themselves.

From a sociocultural perspective, literacy is a practice within a context— a literacy event

(Heath, 1983). A study of any literacy event must take into consideration the

interconnectedness of individual cognitive development, semiotic systems, and social and

cultural contexts. Studying the literacy events of the video club is the heart of the study.

     Concerning conventional print literacy, Rosenblatt (1938; 1978) is one of the first

reading scholars to include all of these elements of sociocultural theory into a single

model of reading known as a "transactional model of reading." Influenced by reader-

response theory, she argues that reading is a "transaction, a two way process, involving a

reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances" (Rosenblatt, 1982, p.

268). Meaning originates from the interplay, the interconnectedness of the reader, the

text, and the social context. Two researchers applying sociocultural theory to reading are

Goodman (1982a) and Bloome (1985). Goodman (1982a; 1994) describes his reading

model as a transactional socio-psycholinguistic model of reading, writing, and written

texts based on miscue analysis. Using Halliday's (1975) sociocultural theory of human

communication (and specifically his method of understanding of understanding the

situational descriptions of texts: the "field," "tenor," and "mode"), Goodman looks at

reading from multiple dimensions: the content area (field), the social and pragmatic

relationships between writer and reader (tenor), and the language form and medium

selected for the event (mode). While he argues that all texts have graphic, syntactic, and

semantic features, Goodman stresses the importance of the social context of reading.

Highlighting the social and cultural properties of reading, Bloome (1985) argues that

reading is a social process with three specific dimensions: a social context, a cultural

activity, and a socio-cognitive process. How and what we read is shaped by social and

cultural contexts and, in turn, what we read shapes us as people. Grounded in

sociocultural theory, Bloome implies the semiotic mediation between texts and readers.

Bloome and Goodman both limit their work to written text, though the transactional

socio-psycholinguistic model has the potential to be expanded to semiotic systems

beyond written text. The next advancement in a sociocultural perspective of literacy is to

consider symbolic representations more broadly than just written print and speech to

include other modes.

New Literacy Studies (NLS) refers to a body of work that approaches the study of

literacy not as an issue of measurement or of skills but as social practices that vary from

one context to another (Street, 2005). The goal of NLS is to make visible the complexity

of local, everyday, community literacy practices and challenge the domination of school

based literacies over non-school based or vernacular literacies (Barton & Hamilton,

1998). While NLS examines the multimodal properties of social practices and includes

technological aspects of literacy, the field is different than the concept of "new

literacies" (to be discussed in detail later in this chapter).

Applying sociocultural theory to literacy, Street (1995) distinguishes between two

models of literacy, the *autonomous* model, which is the dominant commonsense notion of

literacy, and the *ideological* model, his sociocultural contribution that argues that literacy

is not simply a technical, decontextualized, and neutral set of skills with universal

application, but instead a social act that is shaped by the context and function of the

people involved. NLS scholars have expanded the field by reframing understandings of

literacy especially in relation to identity and Discourses (Gee, 1996). Gee defines

Discourses as "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words,

acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body

positions, and clothes" (Gee, 1989, p. 526).

     A sociocultural perspective on literacy recognizes that today's literacy practices

involve multiple modes of communication and very diverse cultural and linguistic

features. Traditional language based approaches are inadequate at describing these

practices and a much broader view of literacy is needed (New London Group, 1996). A

way of negotiating these multiple modes, Discourses, and linguistic and cultural

differences in our society is to see literacy as *multiple* (New London Group, 1996; Gee,

1996). The term "multiliteracies" describes this pluralistic approach to literacy. Barton

and Hamilton (1998) theorize "literacies" in the same pluralized fashion when they

explain that:

> …literacy is not the same in all contexts; rather, there are different literacies. The
>
> notion of different literacies has several senses: for example, practices, or
>
> secondary Discourses, which involve different media or symbolic systems, such
>
> as a film or computer, can be regarded as different literacies, such as in film
>
> literacy and computer literacy, as well as in academic literacy or work-place
>
> literacy, and they are associated with particular aspects of cultural life. (p. 10-11)

Meaning making is highly contextual and, as a result, literacy takes on forms that are

dependent on these multiple situations. In their groundbreaking ethnography on the Vai

of Liberia, Scribner and Cole (1981) demonstrate that particular writing systems and

particular reading and writing activities fostered particular, specialized forms of thinking. Refuting earlier claims that literacy was responsible for great shifts in mental functioning, they instead made the case that not all literacies are the same (Scribner & Cole, 1981). Specialized forms of reading and writing, both in school and out, have specialized and distinctive effects, even in an information age (Hull & Schultz, 2001).

  Multiliteracies have modes beyond just print and speech texts. Multiple modes are not unique to contemporary digital literacies. Kress (1997; 2000) conceptualizes six design elements of the meaning-making process: audio, visual, linguistic, spatial, gestural, and the multimodal patterns of meaning that relate the first five modes of meaning to one another. Written print generally has linguistic, visual, and spatial elements to it. Video usually incorporates all of the above mentioned modes. While the modes generally appear integrated in video, it is important to separate them for study because each mode has different affordances (Janks, 2010) as each mode shapes meaning in unique ways. Authors consider the best choice of mode or combinations of modes to express their meaning as well as think about how those choices will be received by viewers depending on the medium in which the viewers receive the message (Sheridan & Rowsell, 2010). Kress (2003) argues that educational systems in particular and western societies more broadly have over-emphasized the significance of writing and speech as the central, salient modes of representation. "The processes that we have valued in language arts— reading, authoring, inquiry— need to be developed as the ability to work flexibly across all sign systems" (Berghoff, 1998, p. 522). A sociocultural and pluralistic approach to literacy is needed to understand complex processes such as videomaking.

  New Literacy Studies scholars highlight the dangers of reifying schooled notions of

literacy. "School literacy," or the ability to read, write, and compute in the form taught

and expected in formal education (Ogbu, 1990), is often viewed as the only valid literacy.

NLS counters that literacies are multiple (New London Group, 1996) and must be studied

in their social, cultural, historical, economic, and political contexts, both in and out of

school (Gee, 1996). Accordingly, I examined literacy practices of students in an after-

school program, and in this new context, the practices themselves were different than

their in-school counterparts. However, it is important to stress that this research is not a

comparative in-school versus out-of-school study.

New Literacies in a Sociocultural Model

Not to be confused with New Literacy Studies, "new literacies" is an emerging field

that examines literacies with contemporary features that look and feel different than

conventional literacies. New literacies are indeed different but only when viewed from a

narrow definition of literacy that sees conventional print as the benchmark. From a

sociocultural perspective of literacy, the newness of new literacies is overstated. To make

this case, I first give an overview of the field of new literacies. I describe two areas that

new literacies scholars argue as key ontological differences between new and

conventional literacies (post-typographic features and new mindsets) and demonstrate

how these "new" features consistently fit within a sociocultural perspective— a

framework that sees literacy as social, multimodal, and pluralistic to begin with.

An overview of new literacies. "New literacies" is an umbrella term that covers

concepts addressed under a variety of developing fields including 21st century literacies,

internet literacies, digital literacies, new media literacies, multiliteracies, information

literacies, information and communication technology (ICT) literacies, and computer

literacies (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu 2008). When discussing new literacies, the most logical question is what exactly is *new* about them (Kist, 2005; Street, 2003)? Depending on the source, the differences between new and conventional literacies are either massive or marginal. In the most general sense, new literacies are collaborative and social communication practices using networked, often digital, technologies (DeVoss, 2009); however, there is a heavy focus on the multimodal, social, mobile, and technological elements of new literacies that differentiates the field from New Literacy Studies (NLS). Further emphasizing the difference, Lankshear & Knobel (2006) argue that new literacies are ontologically different, both physically and conceptually, than conventional literacies; still, there are clearly similarities between the two.

Studies of new literacies practices in classrooms and schools are difficult to find (Kist, 2005) though the field is growing rapidly (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu 2008). Kist defined new literacies classrooms as having five characteristics: 1) ongoing, continuous usage of multiple forms of representation, 2) explicit discussions of symbol usage currently and throughout history, 3) ongoing meta-dialogues in an atmosphere of cognitive pluralism (John-Steiner, 1997), 4) a balance of individualized and collaborative activities, and 5) evidence of active, engaged students (Kist, 2000, p. 712). Seeking classrooms with these characteristics, Kist (2005) found that even in schools with an abundance of advanced technology, most classrooms only taught the functional or operational (Green, 1988) components of new literacies. These classrooms still took an informational versus relational approach to new literacies. They made videos, used the internet, published online, created non conventional texts but didn't examine what was new or different about them. Students often used high tech tools to do the same tasks they

did with low tech tools: the slideshow becomes a Powerpoint presentation and the letter becomes an email. Stuck in Green's (1988) operational dimension of literacy (the rudimentary "basic skills" of any literacy), students were very often only learning how to use the technologies and not given the opportunities to examine the sociocultural and critical elements of their literacy practices. Incorporating new literacies into school settings seems to be difficult, so much so that Alvermann (2008) proposes that researchers should accept new literacies for what they appear to be, "something apart from formal schooling and best not co-opted by (teachers), no matter how noble our intent" (p. 9). Her proposal alludes to how literacy is generally viewed in schools (from a transmission model versus the transactional model) and for this reason, new literacies may not fit well within school structures.

Outside of the structure and politics of school, new literacies practices are more abundant. Studies of after-school and out-of-school new literacy practices are growing (Hull & Schultz, 2002; Vasudevan & Hill, 2008) and tend to focus on the social and cultural dimensions of new literacies such as online identity construction (Thomas, 2007), instant messaging and social identities (Lewis & Fabos, 2005), and local knowledge and video production (Brass, 2008). For example, in a study on cell phone use by Japanese youth, Ito, Okabe, and Matsuda (2005) conclude that in this context the phone is "a snug and intimate techno-social tethering, a personal device supporting communications that are a constant, lightweight, and mundane presence in everyday life" (p. 3). They describe the personal, portable, and pedestrian qualities that make the cell phone such an important, even vital, aspect of these young people's lives. Nothing in their work directly studies the operational aspects of using a cell phone— like adding a

contact, navigating the menus, adjusting the settings. Instead, their work looks at the

social implications of *keitai* (portable) culture.

      Situating new literacies in a sociocultural perspective of literacy. In the

following section I argue that new literacies practices such as videomaking are dialectic,

an inseparable mix of both new (innovative) and conventional literacies characteristics.

Like all literacies, new literacies are social, multiple, and in a range of modes appropriate

to situated contexts. From a sociocultural perspective, I argue, new literacy practices are

an innovation in literacy, variations of other literacy practices that are quite old and

established. Knobel and Lankshear (2005) contend that new literacies are ontologically

different than conventional ones in two ways— post-typographic characteristics of texts

and new mindsets of new literacies practitioners— and that these differences matter a

great deal. Here I detail these differences (post-typographic characteristics and new

mindsets) while centering on the main question of "degree," or *how* different are these

characteristics and practices than conventional print-based literacies? Different or not,

new literacies play an important role as a way of challenging and interrogating

transmission models of literacy that constitute conventional literacy practices, particularly

within schools.

      Post-typographic characteristics of new literacies. New literacies are marked by

post-typographical forms of text and text production in which there are distinct changes

in the ways of producing, distributing, exchanging, and receiving text via electronic

means (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Here, I will examine post-typographical (physical)

features of new literacies texts: *digital*, *remixed* and *remediated*, *multimodal,* and

collaboratively produced (DeVoss, 2009). Every text won't necessarily have all of these

qualities; for example, a whole genre of picture books for children have sprouted in the last 15 years that are multimodal, remixed, and collaboratively produced but are not digital (Hassett & Curwood, 2009).

Digital. Computers are essentially digital counting machines, much like our fingers. In fact the term "digital" originates from the Latin "digitus," meaning "finger or toe." In the most simplistic terms, computers have lots of switches that are either "on" or "off." Using our fingers to count digitally, we'd say that the finger is either up (and counted) or down (and not counted) regardless if the digit is extended but slightly bent or completely straight. It is either up or down, "on" or "off". Computers are digital and thus precise because of this discrete and clear characteristic. Preceding digital, there was only "analog," a continuous representation of a value. Counting on our fingers to count in an analog manner, a finger could be a *third* up or even 44/47th up. Technically, analog is more accurate; but digital, especially with the number of computations a contemporary computer is able to add up, is more precise, more *exact* and as result, reproducible.

New literacies texts tend to be digital, which offers several affordances or potential uses of a given object (Gibson, 1979) that analog counterparts lack. The first is the *portability* of texts. Digital texts can be distributed incredibly quickly over vast distances. Digital texts of nearly any size— 140 character Twitter (Twitter.com) messages to entire feature films in high definition— can be sent and received at unprecedented speeds. Digital networks such as the Internet and cell phone tower systems have made some communication systems completely obsolete (witness the ad campaigns by the US Postal Service attempting to stop the loss of business they've experienced in recent years). Digital texts can render analog counterparts problematic and some even lose their value

because the network of distribution is in digital format. To use analog images and

documents in digital networks and settings, they can be digitized (ex. scanned), and they

often are.

A second affordance of digital texts is *multiplicity*. While the metaphor for Internet

use is "visiting" a website, the reality is the reader stays put and the information "visits

us" (technically it comes to *stay*) in the form of a perfect copy. Being connected to digital

networks means downloading copies of lots and lots of digital texts. The multiplicity

feature of digital texts has vastly changed entire industries including music (Dubber,

2007), film, and publishing (Lessig, 2008) by bypassing traditional distribution channels

such as stores and mediums (CDs, DVDs, books, periodicals, etc.). The sharing economy

of the Internet is creating a whole new genre of criminals who see copyright from a

different perspective than the current law (Lessig, 2008). The term "copy and paste," the

essence of the digital world, means far more than its original metaphoric meaning in the

analog world. In digital networks, to "copy and paste" is to participate.

Nearly all the compositions that students produce in the video club are digitally

produced: images, graphics, sounds, the videos themselves. Even the scripts are typed in

computers using specialized scriptwriting programs but this "digitalness" is invisible to

the students. The screen (digital) and the page (analog) are arguably not as different as

they first appear. While portability and multiplicity are taken advantaged of, often

moving an image from one screen (computer) to another is just as cumbersome as it is in

the analog world. Students also learn to use analog techniques such as "resampling"

audio and images to circumvent the protection of digital texts. We can see in video

production a mix of analog and digital texts in use. A printed out script is useful on

location but the ability to make changes on multiple copies instantly is a real benefit.

Props and costumes, as well as performances, are analog but ultimately digitized in the

videomaking process.

 Remediated and remixed. The affordance of multiplicity allows digital texts to be

altered and redistributed with astonishing speed and precision. Remediated texts are texts

that are *translated* from one form, or medium, to another. The text retains its essence, its

original meaning, however it is now in a new form which has its own affordances and

limitations. Examples of remediated texts include movies turned into comics, music

videos of songs, and books turned into films. Remixed texts, on the other hand, are

transformations of texts that clearly alter the essence of the original text. "Remixing" is a

contemporary writing practice in which writers take cultural artifacts and combine and

manipulate them into new kinds of creative blends (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). While

all texts are inherently intertextual, explicitly or implicitly referring to and getting part of

their meaning from other texts (Lemke, 1985; Bakhtin, 1981), intertextuality is a key

element to remixing. The ability to get digital copies of practically any conceivable text

makes remixing quite viable. The term "remixing" comes from the audio world where

DJs ("disc jockeys") and producers would "dig" for obscure and interesting music and

sounds to mix together creating new songs and styles. Searchable digital networks make

"digging" extremely easy. Internet search engines can get users almost any imaginable

digital text. Combined with software that can manipulate any form of digital text such as

word processors, video editors, digital audio workstations, and image editors, writers can

alter any source to say new things.

 As people learn to write, design, and construct digital texts, there is a tendency to

appropriate and recontextualize texts, like any new writer might (Dyson, 1999). Spoken

language has always had this hybridity; we are all textual borrowers (Bakhtin, 1981),

dipping into the metaphoric shared pool of language. In the digital world, this sharing of

texts is extended to include anything that can be digitized. Just as a speaker can use a

word freely, remixers can use an image, a sound, a color, a logo, any chunk of text and

remix it into a new context. This kind of intertextuality has huge implications for both the

individual remixing and society who experiences the recontextualized remix. For

example, when I listen to "oldies" stations, it is difficult for me to hear the songs without

imagining all the commercials that the songs have been used in. Knobel and Lankshear

(2008) stress that there is an "endless" quality to the hybridization of remixing, that the

associations are never fixed. Lessig (2008) argues that culture as a whole can be

construed as remix.

In the video club, texts were constantly remediated and remixed. Scripts were

remediated into performances which were turned into video clips. Images, sounds, and

music found on the Internet were appropriated for new uses. Popular books, films, and

even songs were remixed by students. One example is the student production *California

Nerds Music Video*, a remix of the Katie Perry song "California Gurlz" (Broadus et al.,

2010). Scratch projects (animation) were downloaded and tweaked by students to take on

different features and meanings.

Multimodal. New literacies texts are marked by their multimodality, often featuring

combinations of linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, and spatial modes. Each mode lends

different affordances of each signifying system (Janks, 2010). Computers have gradually

shifted from text based interfaces (imagine the "Disk Operating System" or "DOS"

interfaces of the 1980's) to today's graphical user interfaces (GUIs). To operate a

computer is to navigate a visual and spatial world. Computers and other electronic

devices are increasingly capable of reading and writing multimodal compositions whether

they be websites, video, animations, instant messaging, music or others. The old "Sony

Walkman" has evolved and merged with the computer and phone to create the "smart

phone," a do-anything device that operates on all modalities and allows the user to take

pictures and video, send and receive email and text messages, browse the web, play

games, input textual information, and countless other activities. The smart phone has

become a mundane everyday item, a lifeline of information and disposable appliance, all

in one. Every evolving technologies, the phone has become a computer and the computer

has become a phone (Ito et al., 2010).

Despite being born with these gadgets present all their lives, students in the video

club still need to be made aware of the multiple modes that video offers them: sounds,

words, speech, gestures, print, visuals, and spatial arrangements. When composing

videos, students sometimes over-rely on dialogue (words and speech) and at other times

ignore the inherent emotional appeal of sounds. With so many modes to address and

balance, it is easy to be lost. Yet, everyday analog life is full of the same choices—

speech, gestures, sounds, visuals, spatial arrangement— they all impart information to be

made sense of. Digital compositions tend to represent everyday life with greater ease, and

at times, with better resolution than analog counterparts.

Collaboratively produced. New Literacies texts are collaborative constructions and

encourage a culture of participation (Jenkins, 2006). Texts tend to be produced by a large

number of people. Web 2.0 sites— ones in which visitors are able to both read/view the

site as well as contribute— such as Wikipedia, Facebook, and YouTube are regularly the most popular sites on the Internet (Alexa, 2013).

Video/film and music are often considered the most collaborative arts. In film, hundreds of people are involved in the creation of a production including a dozen or more key authors— scriptwriters, director, producers, actors, cinematographer, art directors, editors, special effects creators, colorists— as well as an endless number of names scrolling by in the end credits. In the world of music, we think of a songwriter alone in a room composing a song or maybe a lyricist and a musician composing together. This vision of composition only recognizes the very beginning of the creation of a musical text. The actual production of a music recording involves a large team of people: the songwriter, supporting musicians, producers, sound engineers, tape-ops, mixing specialists, mastering engineers, not to mention graphic designers, photographers, printers, media duplicators, promoters, distributors, and a host of others to actually get the music into people's hands.

Nearly all texts produced are collaborations to a certain degree. Even the solitary novelist pecking away at the word processor alone has to work with editors, copyeditors, publishers, graphic designers, printers, and more. Each person, including the presence of everyone they've read (Bakhtin, 1981), makes an impact on the final text. With contemporary texts, the number of authors is just more visible and accepted. Our video club deals with multiple authors on a regular basis knowing that changing one member of the team alters the outcome of the film for better or worse. Their work and input actually matters.

New literacies and technology. The Internet, in conjunction with information and

communication technologies (ICTs), are the most significant technologies for new

literacies (Leu, 2005). New technological tools are creating a shift from the medium of

the "book" and "page" to that of the "screen" (Kist, 2005; Warschauer, 2006). Together,

the characteristics of new literacy texts (digital, remixed and remediated, multimodal,

collaboratively produced), along with the new tools and functions that ICTs provide

people, are changing literacy practices. This change is consistent with a sociocultural

perspective of literacy in that the signs, symbols, and tools of literacy are expected to be

dynamic. The interaction between human development and texts are a central theme of

sociocultural theory. The new typographical differences that characterize new literacies

are seen as a matter of semiotic innovation (van Leeuwen, 2005).

   New mindsets of new literacies practitioners. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) argue

that the most significant characteristic of new literacies involves a different "ethos" or a

new way of thinking about the world that is greatly influenced by new and changing

technologies mentioned earlier. This new ethos or "new mindset" attempts to explain the

difference between how some people are at ease participating in new literacies practices

and some are not. The new mindset manifests in changing identities and conceptions of

space. In the section above, I explained the post-typographical characteristics of new

literacy texts; in the following section, I look into the social and cultural characteristics of

new literacies that are consistent with a sociocultural perspective of literacy. Vygotsky

(1986) believed that human development is mediated by signs, symbols, and texts and we

see this in action with new literacies.

   New mindsets. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) identify two mindsets that people

have of the world: "Mindset 1"— the world is much the same as before only now it is

more technologized, or technologized in more sophisticated ways and "Mindset 2"— the

world is very different from before, largely as a result of the emergence of digital

electronic inter-networked technologies. These two mindsets involve a qualitative degree

of change. Lankshear and Knobel (2006) would argue that those with Mindset 1 believe

that the world has changed a *little bit* and in *superficial* ways and those with Mindset 2

believe that the world has changed *a lot* and in *fundamental* ways (see Table 2.1) The

catalyst of change are new technologies, particularly the computer and the Internet. This

is not the first time there have been communication revolutions and an historical pattern

has shown that all new technologies are heavily criticized prior to adoption (Davies,

2003). The communication scholars Ong (1986) and McLuhan (1967) observe that

changes in communication technologies transform consciousness. In doing so, these

technologies alter the way we live, learn, and conceptualize our world— a new "ethos."

Table 2.1

Variations between mindsets (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 38).

Mindset 1	Mindset 2
The world is appropriately interpreted, understood and responded to in broadly physical-industrial terms	The world cannot adequately be interpreted, understood and responded to in physical-industrial terms
Value is a function of scarcity	Value is a function of dispersion
An industrial view of production: • products as material artifacts • a focus on infrastructure and production units • tools for producing	A "post-industrial" view of production: • products as enabling services • a focus on leverage and non-finite participation • tools for mediating and relating
Focus on individual intelligence	Focus on collective intelligence
Expertise and authority "located" in individuals and institutions	Expertise and authority are distributed and collective; hybrid experts

Space as enclosed and purpose-specific	Space as open, continuous and fluid
Social relations of "bookspace"; a stable "textual order"	Social relations of emerging "digital media space"; texts in change

Comparing the two mindsets, Lankshear & Knobel (2006) write:

> the *more* [emphasis added] a literacy practice privileges participation over publishing, distributed expertise over centralized expertise, collective intelligence over individual possessive intelligence, collaboration over individuated authorship, dispersion over scarcity, sharing over ownership, experimentation over normalization, innovation and evolution over stability and fixity, creative-innovative rule breaking over generic purity and policing, relationship over information broadcast, and so on the *more* [emphasis added] we should regard it as a new literacy. (p. 60)

A key term used in the above quote is "*more*." Implied is the idea that people have elements of *both* Mindset 1 and Mindset 2 and literacy practices are a combination of old and new. There are not clear divisions but a question of degree. Even the most "new" practices, practices that have *all* of the above listed characteristics, are still a bit conventional in the sense that "centralized expertise," "individual possessive intelligence," "individuated authorship," "ownership," and all the others listed never go away in a Mindset 2 world. They are just reduced.

Despite the implied qualitative nature of defining new literacies, there is a tendency to create a dichotomy or binary between those who understand and use new literacies practices and those who don't understand them. This binary is seen in the language used to describe people who are proficient in new literacies practices and those who are not:

insiders vs newcomers, Mindset 1 vs Mindset 2 (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006), and natives

vs immigrants (Barlow, 1995; in Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). The participants in the

video club should all be "insiders" since they were born after 2000 but this isn't

necessarily true because they all have a mixed level of experience using contemporary

communication tools. In addition they have also spent a great number of years learning

conventional literacy practices (in and out of school). Applying a sociocultural

perspective of literacy, students (despite their age) may or may not have learned the new

literacies Discourse (Gee, 1989) while some are well versed in both new literacies and

conventional literacies practices.

　　　Mindsets and Discourses. The formation of two mindsets creates a false dichotomy

of insiders and outsiders which, from a sociocultural perspective, can better be described

as Discourses or ways of being in the world (Gee, 1989). Lankshear and Knobel (2006)

describe people practicing new literacies as "insiders" while "outsiders" are newcomers

who are new to the practices *but not entirely without knowledge*, novices who are

learning the Discourse. People are capable of learning more than one Discourse. Gee

(1996) describes literacy itself as learning a secondary Discourse, and from this vantage

point, nearly everyone has to work at acquiring the insider's mindset as a secondary

Discourse the same way that all literacies are acquired. The acquisition of this secondary

Discourse will be easy or hard depending on how close our primary Discourse is to the

secondary one.

　　　Contesting Gee, Delpit (1992) states that the way to learn any new secondary

Discourse is imitation. For example, in learning high level academic Discourses, even

middle class white students who have experienced school success all their lives must use

strategies to acquire these new literacies. Students may have to mimic academic

discourse for a good while until they develop a true knowledge of the register

(Bartholomae, 2001). In Gee's model of Discourse, these are apprentices learning to

become fluent (Gee, 1989). While Delpit agrees with Gee that if you're not born into a

dominant Discourse, then it is exceedingly difficult to learn it, she also stresses that this

view has a dangerous kind of determinism to it. Instead of being locked into your place

via genes, you get locked in via your Discourse. Delpit (1992) believes that one can

"cheat (the system) by directly teaching the Discourse that would otherwise exclude them

from participating in and transforming the mainstream" (p. 301). Applying this to

competing mindsets, acquiring the insider secondary Discourse of Lankshear and

Knobel's Mindset 2 may be a lot more difficult than it first appears. Currently it is

complex to gauge how significant the Mindset 2 Discourse is. Ideally, an individual will

have acquired *both* mindsets and can switch between them depending on the context.

This is particularly important for those who historically have not had access to the tools

and technologies that are applicable to Mindset 2 Discourses, typically the poor and

minorities (Jenkins, 2006).

    Identity. When the idea of shifting mindsets is connected to Discourses, identity—

real or virtually constructed— becomes a primary concept in new literacies, mainly by

changing where the sources of identity come from. Online and networked communities

are increasingly becoming a significant place for mining, developing, and enacting new

identities (Thomas, 2007; Turkle, 1995). New literacies practices involve taking on and

playing with identities, where the user or practitioner has real choices and opportunity to

reflect on the relationship between new identities and old ones (Gee, 2007). The key

element of new literacies is the centrality of the user, not the apparent newness of the

practice (New London Group, 1996). Conventional literacies can also, and do, have these

opportunities for identity reflection, for example, when we take on the identity of

"scientist" in school (Gee, 2007).

I found that students put a great deal of their personal identity into films (Jurich &

Meyer, 2011). They developed projected identities (Gee, 2007) and used video as a way

of playing with the possibilities in their lives. Identity construction begins with

conventional scripts, where children write themselves (usually thinly veiled) into familiar

situations and contexts. Later they either cast themselves in these roles, acting out the

scenes themselves, or direct another student to play the role, using the actors like a child

would use a doll.

Virtual and social spaces. The two mindsets outlined above have different

conceptions of space. These differences can be described as the differences between

"atoms," in the physical Newtonian world, and "bytes," in the virtual world of

cyberspace. Mindset 1 lives in the world of atoms where space is enclosed and purpose

specific while Mindset 2 lives in the world of bytes and sees space as open and

continuous (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). Often the spaces of atoms and bytes overlap

more than people might think as when in video games such as T*he World of Warcraft*

(Blizzard Entertainment, 2010) and *SecondLife* (Linden Lab, 2003) the real and virtual

economies blur (Dibbell, 2003). Real people pay real money for virtual currency, land,

and property.

Literacies have spatial components to them. "School learning" is learning for

school while new literacies and social practices associated with technology are being

invented on the streets, in bedrooms, seemingly everywhere *but* the classroom (Knobel, 1999). In schools, the new literacies Discourse of the "insider" is generally marginalized and ignored and new technologies are used to recreate the same Discourse practices of the older technologies, for example, stories are typed into the computer as a "published" version of the handwritten one. The influence of a space on the literacy practice can be substantial. Street (2005) argues that classroom space and the objects present in schools help stabilize and guide pedagogic interaction. Leander (2005) describes a US high school that appeared to adopt new technologies by making available wireless access to the Internet and giving laptops to all of its pupils. Difficulties arose when material spaces were privileged over access to texts in virtual spaces. Traditional pedagogies clashed with new mindsets and new literacy practices. He describes the conflict as a "contradiction of spaces" (Leander, 2005), where school processes override the processes of new literacies practices as a function of the location of the event.

The video club was at nexus of in-school and out of school spaces. It took place in a school computer lab, the same one in which students did conventional school tasks, but the work they produced after-school was clearly different. In addition, the students had access to places that they'd never have during a school day including classrooms, the teacher's lounge and workroom, and even filming in the principal's office. School personnel often interrupted video productions due to what they believed was excess noise or inappropriate behaviors only to find out that the kids were merely acting and shooting video. Sometimes the school staff repealed their requests but usually they awkwardly insisted on maintaining in-school rules out of school. As the club sponsor, occasionally I was the one who brought in-school features to the out of school space through conducting

whole group mini-lessons on videomaking, behavior management techniques, and

monitoring content for age-appropriateness. The space of school influenced expectations,

behaviors, and in subtle ways, even the content of videos.

Literacy Practices and Literacy Events

New literacies have affordances that authors may find attractive. Situated within a

sociocultural perspective of literacy, these new practice are innovations in literacy using

the technological writing tools of the day to socially produce texts in new forms. The next

step is to study these literacy practices in ways that resonate with conventional literacy—

by examining the observable "literacy events" taking place. In this section, I will examine

literacy events, a concept that originates from sociocultural theory and helps guide the

study by focusing on the interplay of the participants, tools, texts, and contexts of

videomaking.

Two concepts used to describe literacy within a sociocultural perspective are

literacy practices and *literacy events*. They are inter-related concepts but not

interchangeable. A contribution from New Literacy Studies (NLS), Scribner & Cole

(1981) were the first to introduce the idea of "practice" to conceptualize literacy. They

define practice as "a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular

technology and particular systems of knowledge" (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 236).

Literacy practices center on the cognitive interplay between activities and technologies.

Similarly, a "literacy event" is any occasion in which a text is integral to the nature of the

participants' interactions and their interpretive processes (Heath, 1983). Barton &

Hamilton (1998) talk about literacy events as "activities where literacy has a role…

observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them. The notion of

events stresses the situated nature of literacy, that it always exists in a social context" (p.

8).

      Literacy events and literacy practices are not the same thing. Hornberger (2001, in

Hull & Schultz, 2001) offers a useful distinction between the two by looking at bedtime

story reading in U.S. middle class homes as a *literacy event* (Heath, 1982). In contrast,

these individual and repeated events are explained and encompassed by a set of *literacy*

practices or conventions and beliefs about the value of reading to young children,

assumptions about parent-child relationships, normative routines around bedtime, and

more. Thus, literacy events are manifestations or enactments of literacy practices.

Researchers can study literacy events; they are observable. When literacy events are

studied, researchers can better understand the literacy practices which they fit. Street

(2001) distinguishes between the two explaining that one could photograph an event but

not a practice; events are repeated instances where interaction surrounds the use of text

but practices are models and belief systems.

      In the Midway Elementary School Video Club, I was able to video record students

engaged in literacy *events* because they involved specific observable acts: writing a

script, shooting a shot, constructing a costume. The literacy *practice* of videomaking,

particularly at this site, was different in that it was understood only by interpreting the

observed literacy events. For example, when a pair of students wrote a script there was an

invisible set of expectations that guided their writing: visuals (or "action") should tell the

story versus dialog, the story should be told in a linear manner, the story has continuity

and should be easy to follow, the scriptwriters will use screenplay formatting (and a page

roughly equals one minute on the screen), since others will read the script writing

conventions (ex. spelling and capitalization) mattered, the "finished" script was malleable and will probably change in small (or large) ways by the end of post-production, and countless others. These beliefs, values, expectations, and assumptions were part of an unspoken framework that was slowly learned by the video club participants. They learned these practices by engaging in literacy events themselves.

In videomaking, a variety of social literacy events took place as two or more students interacted with each other while writing—or, perhaps more accurately, *composing*. Each literacy event in videomaking focuses on a different kind of "text." Some texts are fairly concrete and conventional (ex. scripts, props, costumes) but others, such as a "take" are more abstract. A take exists in two forms: as a fleeting but real life performance right in front of the participants and also in a more durable but virtual form digitally recorded in the camera as a video clip. Each participant in a literacy event had a unique understanding of what happened. For example, a cameraperson saw the performance through the camera lens. If she accidentally "chopped" off the head of the actor by misframing the shot, the performance was rejected by the cameraperson even if the actor was perfect. Directors may accept or reject a performance depending on what they were looking for. In post-production, the takes of the performances were viewed again by editors with another unique set of evaluating criteria. Table 2.2 presents the stages of videomaking and also shows the activities that occurred and the types of texts produced and examined during each stage.

Table 2.2

Literacy events in videomaking.

Stage	Activity (Literacy Event)	Text or "Product"
Pre-production	• Creating, writing, and/or revising a script • Deliberating on the merit of a script (reading) • Designing props or costumes; locating or deciding on a setting or location	script script prop/costume/set
Production	• Setting up a shot • Evaluating the merit and quality of a take	script/set/actors take
Post-production	• Viewing/reading video clips for the first time • Evaluating and selecting a take of a shot while editing • Evaluating a video sequence (multiple clips together) • Evaluating a cut of a video (completed sequences)	video clips video clips sequence cut

Analyzing literacy events. A way to better understand literacy from a sociocultural perspective is to analyze the literacy event— key socially and culturally situated activities that are observable. Literacy, as a socially orientated practice, "is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use" (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 236). This suggests that literacy events involve texts (in a variety of modalities) that have functional aspects to them.

Goodman (1994) argues that the linguistic transactions in literacy events can be viewed from three vantage points: 1) look at the characteristics of texts, 2) look at the process by which readers make sense of texts, and 3) look at the process by which writers produce texts. These three positions put the "text" in the center by focusing on how they are written (constructed, designed), how readers make sense of them (read, engaged with), and their specific characteristics (symbolic, structural, and meaning systems). From a sociocultural perspective, the social context of the literacy events must also be addressed. In addition, the methodology of the analysis must come from an historical and

developmental perspective. But first we need to know what a "text" is from a

sociocultural perspective.

A text is "any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of

situation" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 10). Texts are basic semiotic units of meaning in a

context. They are "semiotic" in the sense that they exist in some symbolic form (written,

spoken, drawn, combinations of modalities). A text must have unity, represent a coherent,

cohesive and comprehendible message (Halliday, 1975). Meaning is not a characteristic

of text and meaning does not pass between writer and reader; it is represented by a writer

in a text and constructed from a text by a reader (Goodman, 1994). Texts do not exist in a

vacuum, apart from the social world, in fact, Halliday and Hasan argue that contexts

come before texts, "the situation is prior to the discourse that relates to it" (Halliday &

Hasan, 1985, p. 5). They use Malinowski's (1923) concept "context of situation" (or "the

environment of the text") to anchor their definition of context as meaning that comes with

the text. Thus, texts and contexts are intertwined. To examine texts requires an

examination of the sociocultural and critical aspects that come with any text.

Returning to Goodman's three vantage points of studying the linguistic transaction

in a literacy event, I will first look at studying of characteristics of texts, then I will

examine the process in which readers make sense of texts, and lastly I will look at the

process in which writers produce texts. Throughout these sections, I will demonstrate the

importance of social and cultural factors in text analysis.

Studying the characteristics of texts. Studying the characteristics of texts involves

the examination of the internal workings of language and limitless interpretation rather

than the expression of author's intention. This is relevant to the present study because,

from a sociocultural perspective, texts are marked by both deliberate and unconscious choices, and both shape the potential meanings of texts. Language is studied in order to understand how it works but also to understand what people do with it (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). This means that we must study the parts that make up texts but also the functions that texts perform. Analysis of texts through their characteristics involves a close examination of the three textual language cuing systems: *symbol*, *structural*, and *meaning*. As stated earlier, texts are more than just linguistic (such as spoken and written language) but also include visuals, audio, gestures, spatial and combinations of modalities (Kress, 1997; 2000). A sociocultural perspective of text analysis examines the function of texts as well as the sociocultural context.

The most concrete of the three language systems is the symbol system— the semiotic forms that texts take on. Texts are made of building blocks, symbols and signs, or "semiotic" elements. Semiotic forms vary depending on the modality of the text, for example, in written language the symbol system involves orthography (the shape and location of letters from an alphabetic language) and for the hearing populace, phonology (sounds of letters when the language is produced orally), and phonics (relationship between these semiotic systems) (Goodman, 1994). The symbol to sound relationship is arbitrary but socially constructed and learned (ex. in English the letter "c" can be pronounced /k/ or /s/ depending on the context). The semiotic forms of images include color, shape, lines, and perspective and, when used in combination, a viewer can determine a variety of meanings. The first use of the term semiotics comes from Saussure who called it "a science that studies the life of signs within society" (van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 3). "Semiotic resources" (which comes from Halliday [1978], a resource for making

meanings) are not restricted to speech or print. For example, different ways of walking—strolling, military march, runway fashion model— have semiotic resources in which meaning can be constructed from. Each way of walking has individual signs and characteristics to them. In the video club, students were perpetually looking for ways to reliably communicate complex personality traits of characters through gestures, words, props, and actions.

The structural language system involves how the symbols and signs of texts are systematically arranged, sequenced, and structured. In written print and speech, the structural system is often referred to as "syntax" or "grammar," however in sociocultural approaches to literacy, the term "grammar" is also used to describe structural features of visual texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The structural system provides rules or guidelines between symbols (the signifier) and their meanings (signifieds), as it is the structure that often dictates whether a semiotic resource has a particular meaning (van Leeuwen, 2005). In a student video about soccer, the color of the main character's shirt may take on significant meanings; the same shirt used in a video about friendship may not.

The goal of all literacies is to construct meaning from texts and one of the language systems deals with this process directly: the meaning system of language, or semantic system. The semantic system can be broken into two main components: the situational descriptions of texts (or the "environment") and the functions of texts (or the "uses") (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Summarizing Halliday and Hasan's "environment" of texts, Goodman and Goodman (2011) state: "we use language that we understand to fit within the context (field), as appropriate to the individual(s) with whom we are engaging (tenor),

and via certain modes (oral, digital, etc.)" (p. 24). Halliday and Hasan (1985) describe texts' functions as *experiential*, *interpersonal*, and *textual*, with "function" not just the use of language but as "a fundamental property of language itself" (p. 16). Describing the functions of language, Goodman and Goodman (2011) describe experiential meaning as the factual experiences that the writer is trying to convey including inferential meanings and knowledge that comes from specialized background. Interpersonal meaning includes both the relationships within the text and between the author(s) and readers; textual meaning is embedded in how the text itself is used including the form, mode, style, and more. The "environments" and "uses" are heavily related and the redundancy between the two is one reason why participants are able to make useful predictions. The context of situation works almost like a familiar schema, giving participants a good deal of information before any information is actually exchanged. As Goodman and Goodman (2011) argue, "the context disambiguates the language" (p. 38) in a language system that is seemingly full of ambiguity. In sum, functions are activated by the context of situation features (Halliday & Hasan, 1985):

> *experiential* meanings are activated by features of the *field* of discourse
>
> *interpersonal* meanings are activated by features of the *tenor* of discourse
>
> *textual* meanings are activated by features of the *mode* of discourse (p. 36)

All languages, whether they are linguistic or visual, involve both social and personal meaning making (Goodman & Goodman, 2011) and a way to understand the semantic system of languages is by looking at the environment and uses of language as well as the relationship between the two.

  Studying how readers make meaning from texts. A second way of studying a

literacy event is through the process in which readers make sense of texts. Literacy is about meaning making; making meaning from texts is the goal of all reading and writing (receptive and expressive) tasks. In this study I name all meaning-making activities that involve the senses "reading." Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) use the term "reading" to discuss how humans make sense of visual texts. Visual texts have symbol systems, grammars, and semantic systems, and as a result, viewing (or listening) is a reading activity— making meaning out of a variety of semiotic resources, structural arrangements, and semantic systems using the senses. Writers, consciously or not, use these same features to create texts in a variety of modes.

There is precedent for expanding the notion of "reading" in sociocultural theory and a critical literacy framework. Freire and Macedo (1987) believe that reading the *word* is only part of the concept of literacy and that, alone, this traditional conception of literacy will not change the material or spiritual condition of the supposed illiterate. The individual must learn to read the *world*, a situation that arguably "afflicts" the middle and upper classes as much if not greater than the lower classes. Freire (1970) expands the term "reading" to mean much more than decoding print but understanding, comprehending the world. As Aronowitz (in Freire & Macedo, 1987) explains, literacy from this perspective is far more socially, culturally, and politically conscious:

> The real issue for the "functionally" literate is whether they can decode the messages of media culture, counter official interpretations of social, economic, and political reality; whether they feel capable of critically evaluating events, or, indeed, of intervening in them. (p. 12-13)

From this perspective, illiteracy takes on new meaning: "the functional inability or

refusal of... persons to read the world and their lives in a critical and historical relational way" (Giroux, 1987, p. 12, in Freire & Macedo, 1987). These "inabilities" that Giroux highlights are kinds of *miscues*.

Through studying miscues during the reading process, the work of Goodman (1982a; 1982b) centers on understanding how readers make sense of texts. Goodman viewed deviations from the text not as mistakes but "miscues"— opportunities to see how readers made sense of the cues that texts offer readers. Miscues are the points in oral reading where the observed response (OR) doesn't match the expected response (ER). Miscues provide windows on the reading process, because they show the reader attempting to make sense of the text. They reveal as much about the reader's strengths as they do about their weaknesses (Goodman, 1996). In understanding the nature of texts, we can consider how text features influence reading. Miscue analysis has helped him study text influences.

Miscues can happen in many modes. Depending on the ability and experience of the receiver, the sound of a flute can be thought to come from a bird and a doorman can be confused for a soldier. Writers who are unclear (and don't provide redundancy of cues in their texts) make reading the texts even more difficult. In the video club, a consistent lack of "professional" props often caused miscues for viewers. For example, a character intended to be a monkey was continuously confused as a mouse until a bigger tail was constructed (Jurich & Meyer, 2011). Students acting in traditional adult roles (ex. "principal," "mom") needed to incorporate other cues (such as a sign on a desk saying "Principal" or an apron to appear like a mother) to indicate who their character was supposed to be.

All texts have cueing systems that help a reader efficiently and effectively make sense of texts, if the reader engages strategically and has sufficient prior knowledge. These cuing systems come from the three language systems discussed earlier: symbol, structure, and meaning. Ideally, readers use the cuing system that is the most efficient, with efficiency defined as getting to meaning with the least amount of time, energy, and visual input (Goodman, 1996). Readers use a combination of cues to make sense of texts and effectively construct meaning. For proficient readers, semantic cues are the most powerful because of how meaning is constructed.

Table 2.3 presents a breakdown of cueing systems in two modalities. With print, the symbolic cuing system encompasses graphophonic language characteristics while the structural cuing system involves the syntactic or arranging of these features. The meaning system incorporates Halliday and Hasan's (1985) functional concepts texts: the ideational (the ideas and content), interpersonal (who is taking part and what roles and actions are taking place), and textual (what part language and texts are playing in the meaning). With visual texts, the same curing systems are in place (symbolic, structural, and meaning) only with different textual elements at work.

This is important to the study because in the video club students work with many modes while seeking meaning or trying to make meaning. Students start work on their videos in the print world (scriptwriting) and then shift to gestures (acting) and then visuals (capturing video and working with the shots). Throughout the process, they subconsciously work with the various cuing systems. Print and image are only two of them.

Table 2.3

Cuing systems in two different modalities.

	Print Modality (Goodman, 1994)	Image Modality (Albers, 2006; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996)
Symbolic	*Graphophonic:* orthography (shape of letters) phonology (sound of letters) phonics (relationship between semiotic systems)	*Graphic:* color shapes lines perspective
Structural	*Syntax/Grammar:* order of functions wording inflections function words	*Visual Grammar:* organizational structure layout, (left-right, top-bottom, quadrants) size volume vectors
Meaning	*Semantic/Pragmatic:* ideational interpersonal textual	*Semantic:* realism-abstract intertextuality

Semantic cues are the most "efficient" of all the cuing systems— using the least amount of time, effort, energy, and cues from the text to construct meaning that is reasonably consistent with the meaning the author has intended to communicate (Goodman & Goodman, 2011)— however, the "invisibility" of semantic cues, versus the visible nature of the symbol and structural systems, makes them problematic (Moustafa, 1997). When proficient readers read well, we can't see the invisible systems at work. Parents and teachers often don't understand the invisible systems of language despite the fact that they readily use them (Moustafa, 1997). Miscue analysis is a solution, making the invisible systems visible. Goodman (1982a) argues that the miscues that readers make are vital in understanding what readers are doing with texts. He challenged the

assumption that readers who make errors are simply being sloppy. They are applying a

cue in order to construct meaning from the text and sometimes the cues don't help the

readers. Texts are rarely read verbatim, knowingly or not (Goodman, 1993), and

regressions demonstrate that readers recognize the failure of a cue to support the

construction of meaning.

The most theoretically sound concept that makes a text easy to comprehend is not

its relative complexity or readability but is predictability (Goodman, 1994).

Differentiating between prediction and inference, Goodman writes, "a prediction is an

assumption that some information not yet supplied will become available later in the

text... (but) an inference is supplying information not yet produced in the

text" (Goodman, 1994, p. 1120). Predictability is based, to a great extent, on the prior

knowledge the reader of the text brings to the text. Though prediction isn't the only tool

readers have, Halliday and Hasan (1985) argue that the redundancy that marks text

functions and features make texts generally quite predictable. The videos that students

produce in the video club are intended to be quite predictable borrowing from pre-

established genres (horror, superhero, newscast), offering redundant cues (angry face,

loud voice, and hurtful words), and using standard film story structure (ordinary world,

inciting incident, call to adventure, obstacles, success) (Vogler, 2007). Or, as the famous

director and scriptwriter Billy Wilder said, "Don't be too clever for an audience. Make it

obvious. Make the subtleties obvious too." Be very predictable.

Studying how texts are produced. A third way of studying a literacy event is to

examine how texts are written, composed, designed, and constructed. In many ways, this

is the combination of the first two in the sense that authors make decisions about both the

features of texts and how they are read when composing. In the world of video, this is

especially true. From a sociocultural perspective of literacy, the process of becoming

literate involves learning to deliberately manipulate language in order to participate in

culturally valued literacy events, however texts are written in a complex social context

involving the individual, roles, social groups, and ideologies of ideas, signs and words

(Bakhtin, 1981). The challenge for writers is to learn how to turn inner meanings into

external meanings using available signs, symbols, and words, but also to navigate the

social implications of employing these ideas. Dyson (1997) describes this situation by

using a model of two axes crossing. "(O)ur texts are formed at the intersection of a social

relationship between ourselves as composers and our addressees and an ideological one

between our own psyches (or inner meanings) and the words, the cultural signs available

to us" (Dyson, 1997, p. 4). This model describes the complexity of writing by

highlighting both the key dynamics involved (writer and audience, inner meanings and

signs/symbols) and the relationships between them.

In the setting of the after-school video club, the students socially constructed

multimodal texts. Incorporating the other vantage points of examining literacy events, the

students looked to make readable videos, even "predictable" videos in the way Halliday

describes texts. I sought to understand how students socially designed scripts, shots, and

videos using symbols, signs, and language. In their productions, students

recontextualized, appropriated, and remixed texts and symbols constantly. A key idea in

new literacies texts is the idea of intertextuality. Bakhtin (1981) argues that we are all text

borrowers; we don't invent words and ideas but recontextualize them, re-voice the

common language that belongs to everyone.

Chapter 3: Research Site and Method

In this chapter, I discuss the context of the study and the research methods used. The study depended heavily on the uniqueness of the case and knowing more about this particular context with these particular students is essential. In the first section I describe the site of the research including the school site, the video club and its history, and the participants of the study. In the second section I explain the details of the research methodology including how the data was collection and analyzed.

Research Site

The school site. The site of the study was the after-school video club that took place at Midway Elementary School (all names are pseudonyms), a public elementary school located in a large city in the southwest. The school was medium sized with approximately 400 students enrolled and located in a relatively dense area of the city with a mix of commercial and residential activity. Built in the mid 1950's, the school was once on the edge of the city with uninterrupted views all the way to the eastern mountains. The city has since grown around it and now the school sits, more or less, in the center of the city. In the year of the study, 47% of the school's students were eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Midway Elementary provided basic technological resources for teachers and students. Every classroom teacher was issued a technology "kit" including a laptop, LCD projector, document camera, digital still camera, video camera, computer speakers, and more. Many classrooms had interactive white boards. Some teachers had yet to take these items out of their boxes but others used them daily. The school had been one of the district's early technological adopters; for example, in the mid 1990's the school was

wired for networking and internet access by parent volunteers (and has since been

rewired professionally) and had wireless capabilities, school-wide, as early as 2003.

The Video Club. I started the Midway Elementary School Video Club and served

as club sponsor in the 2006-2007 school year. In my last year as a classroom teacher (5th

grade) I had begun to introduce video as a writing form for students and was interested in

learning more about it. I started going to graduate school full time the following year and

asked the principal if I could start up an after-school video club program. He agreed and

that first year, we had approximately 8 students, all girls. Since then, the club has grown

each year in numbers of students as well as the quantity and quality of videos. In the

2011-2012 school year, I collected the data for this study. The video club had 21 students

and we had to turn children away due to space restrictions and lack of adults available to

supervise the students. Students at the school in grades 4 and 5 were eligible to

participate. There was an application to join that asked about student interest, motivation

to make videos, as well as commitment and ability to work with others (see Appendices

B and C for the video club application and letter to parents). Many of the fourth graders

reapplied in fifth grade becoming knowledgeable experts to help newcomers along.

The club met directly after school twice a week for approximately 90 minutes

each session. Students met in the school computer lab due to the availability of space

(classrooms are teacher "owned") and because of the proximity to technological

resources such as computers, video cameras, digital still cameras, LCD projectors,

headphones, hard drives, cables, printers, portable digital sound recorders, and other

technological tools. The location was not ideal: there were no tables to sit at and have

production meetings, there was little space to create any video production sets, and it was

difficult to do anything whole group because of sight barriers and distracting computers.

The computer lab had built in and unmovable furniture including four rows of computers

that the students worked at. The layout was excellent for individual work but was

awkward for anything involving group work (see Appendix A for a map of the computer

lab). When students arrived, they went to their computer with their own personal login

account. An advantage of having their own computer was that students were free to

create, work on, and store their projects without worrying that someone else might

disturb their work. It also provided a place for students that was "theirs." A negative side

effect was students tended to spend down time tinkering with online games for children,

mostly alone, rather than spending time together thinking of new story ideas. While these

computer activities kept students occupied, the tasks generally didn't have much to do

with video making and the projects they created were rarely used in videos. Ideally,

students would work in a space that had large tables for them to meet at, an open space

for filming, and a number of computers that were specialized for certain tasks such as

scriptwriting, video editing, or audio overdubs.

There was no official curriculum or scope and sequence and students learned how

to make videos "on the job." Once they knew how to do a task such as camera operation

or specific video editing moves, they were expected to teach their classmates. I rarely had

to repeat myself because information was learned in a "just in time" and "need to know"

basis (Gee, 2007). In addition, there were 20 "instructors" (the students themselves) in the

class and we all knew different things. Data collection took place in the club's fifth year

and at that point the video club was fairly established. Some of the video club members

had older siblings participate in prior years. Teachers at the school generally knew what

the club was, what the kids did, and were familiar with the camera crews that wandered

the campus yelling out the iconic commands such as "Camera!" and "Action!" and most

definitely "CUT!" Many teachers volunteered their classrooms for students to use as

settings for movies and had seen first hand what film crews do.

    Participants. Participants in the study included students who were in the video

club (20 total, all of whom had parental consent and gave individual permission to

participate in the study) and adults who volunteered to help run the club (3 total). Due to

space and supervision requirements, there was a limit to the number of students the club

could accept: 20 students total. We ended up accepting 21 that year and one student had

to withdraw from the program (and study) in the first weeks due to transportation issues.

A second student stayed with the club until the Grace break and then had to withdraw

from the program because of other after-school responsibilities. For several years

beforehand interest in the club had exceeded capacity; to address this, there was an

application to join the video club (see Appendices B and C). With the help of the

applications and consultation with the fourth and fifth grade teachers, the adult volunteers

and I settled on the final 21 students. Our number one priority in selecting students was

commitment to attending the program every session, through this was difficult to predict.

    Only video club members were asked to join the study and applying to the video

club (and being accepted) did not imply participating in the study; there was a separate

consenting process for joining the study which came after students were admitted into the

program. Only one video club member declined to participate in the study and that

student worked in the club, interacting with others no differently than the students who

had given consent. None of that student's work was used as data in the study. Adult

volunteers— teachers, parents, or university graduate students who helped out with the

club and provide supervision of the students— were invited to participate as well. As

with the students, adults were not required to participate in the study in order to engage in

video club activities. Adult volunteers in the study helped run the club by supervising

children, assisting students during videomaking activities, and tending to equipment. One

volunteer, a classroom teacher at the school, was particularly helpful as a school liaison

between myself and parents.

The demographic breakdown of students in the video club generally matched the

school's own diversity with about half of the students self-identified as "Anglo" and half

as "Hispanic" or "Other." While data on race or ethnicity of the participants was not

collected nor was it a focus of the study, it was important to note that video club

participants were typical of the school population. Disproportionately more girls joined

the video club than boys (13 girls to 8 boys) during the year of the study.

A few variables were instrumental in the social interactions between the students

throughout the year. These variables, elaborated upon below, included: gender, grade

level, which classroom teacher they had, video club experience in the prior year, and the

physical proximity to each other while in the computer lab.

Gender. The video club had 13 girls and 8 boys. In general, boys tended to work

with boys and girls with girls though there were no social consequences in mixed gender

interactions. Video club activities often felt like "play" and, at the elementary school

level, boys and girls had different interests and divided themselves along gender lines

while playing. If anything, this might be considered "normal." Gender homogeneity was

most common while in pairs and duos but as the groupings became larger, mixed

gendered crews were both common and inevitable. While casting for videos, scripts often required an actor of a particular gender. Mixed crews were the norm though a few times an all girl crew existed.

Grade level. The Video Club had 13 fifth graders and 8 fourth graders. In general, fifth graders were more comfortable in the space and produced more but like gender, there was little to no discrimination shown to fourth graders (which can be a common occurrence on the playground). In fact, very little attention was paid to the grade of the child and I didn't once recall hearing someone mention the grade of a child in relation to ability, access, or privilege.

Classroom teacher. The students arrived to the video club directly from their home classroom right at the school day and as a result, they brought their histories— including their friendships, problems, moods, and more— with them each day. A total of six classrooms were represented in the video club. Kids from the same class tended to spend time together and worked together. Common classroom teacher was as much of an indicator of who worked together as gender, though it was probably influenced by grade level as well since only one of the classes was multi-age. One of the fifth grade teachers was also an adult volunteer (Jasmine) and her presence often provided an aura of school authority to the generally wide open video club atmosphere. While she was a teacher, she was also a rather unconventional teacher who incorporated a great deal of video production in her classroom and even let kids bring popular culture texts such as songs into classroom. Jasmine had seven students who were video club members (a third of the group) and they'd often arrive with her in a group a few minutes later than the rest of the kids. This wasn't an issue as the formalness of the school day, including time constraints,

were loosened in the video club.

Video club experience. There were 14 children new to the video club and 7 with one year of experience. The experienced students had a huge advantage at the beginning of the year for a couple reasons— they could work at the same computer they did last year (which had the body of work they produced the previous year including scripts and movies of varying levels of completed-ness) and they knew exactly what to do from the first day. Returning students had scripts ready to film within the first couple sessions. They also took on the roles with the most control and responsibility such as directing and editing. Experienced students were expected to assist the new video club members which put the video club students into "master" and "apprentice" roles.

Physical proximity to each other. The layout of the computer lab was in four fixed rows of six computers each (see Figure 3.1). There were two walkways between the rows and students sitting next to each other had the ability to see what was on each others screens which was sometimes a positive (students could learn from others around them) or a negative (lack of privacy may have limited experimentation). In addition, kids sitting behind each other often ended up in the videos being made on the built in cameras in the computer. The camera, at times, acted like a kind of rear view mirror. Creative "duos" (see chapter six) with strong established friendships tended to sit next to each other, often by plan, as they picked their seats on the first day and wanted to make sure they sat next to their best friends. At the same time new friendships developed between students who just so happened to be sitting near one another.

When all of these factors— gender, grade level, classroom teacher, video club experience, proximity to one another— were combined, it was easy to explain why some

children ended up consistently working together. Still, large crews required the assistance

of a lot of people who wouldn't have had interacted otherwise and interesting new

combinations emerged. In videomaking, students depended on one another and it hardly

mattered if the person who could do the job was a fourth grader, a girl, or in another class

during the school day. They were all in *this* class now and by the end of the year everyone

had something to offer others.

In the next section I introduce both the students and adult participants in the study.

The students will be presented by classroom teacher as their social interactions were most

influenced by this factor. I identify some of the other characteristics listed above which

helped explain how the students fit within the video club context. After their name (again,

all pseudonyms) I list in order their gender, grade level, and experience in the video club.

While reading, it might be beneficial to reference the map of the computer lab (Appendix

A) because it indicates their proximity to other students while working in the computer

lab.

Students in Ms. Russell's class (Jasmine): Katie (female, 5th grade, new) and

Pilar (female, 5th grade, new) were inseparable best friends from Ms. Russell's class who

did absolutely everything together. Katie was incredibly productive and at times it could

be difficult to discern Pilar's contributions in their collaborative work. Their relationship

was one in which Pilar's role was to both encourage and validate Katie's ideas, a kind of

"supportive collaboration" (John-Steiner, 2000). Katie and Pilar produced two

documentaries, *Midway Today* and *Walking Billboards* (a brilliant piece where they asked

students what they were wearing on their t-shirts and why), as well as the screenplay for

The Attacks (see chapter four). The two were so close that if one were absent, the other

would often wander around the computer lab unsure what to do next.

Naomi (female, 5th grade, new) was a student that had a powerful role in the video club as one of the arbitrators of what was "cool." She was very involved in the video club and spent most of her time either acting or directing (*The Attacks*). Naomi never wrote a completed script, though she tried out scriptwriting, and her only editing experience was a music video she put together for a Nicki Minaj song.

Ella (female, 5th grade, returning) was an extremely focused East Indian student who preferred to be behind the camera making a name for herself as the video club's most capable and accomplished video editor (*The Attacks*, *Cheese*, *Should Have*, *Whatever*, *Ratboy*, and others). Methodical and efficient in her work, students often named her the editor without her even knowing that she was given the job. She dabbled a little bit with scriptwriting but never put a script in production. A very likable video club member, she was also one of the most mature and was a reliable, productive, and positive member of any production crew. Ella was not as comfortable in front of the camera. This was particularly surprising after Jasmine and I were invited to watch her perform at a Hindu dance recital. She not only danced confidently but commanded the stage with grace. Ella's video editing plate was full most of the semester and she didn't experiment much with anything else. During any down time, she would work on her homework before playing a video game.

Renee (female, 5th grade, new) loved to be in front of the camera and was, by video club standards, an excellent actor specializing in creepy characters and voices. She preferred to act and wrote only one script, *Prom*, in which she chose to play the main character instead of taking the more common path to director. She eventually edited the

video, her first time in that role, and it was screened.

Roland (male, 5th grade, returning) and Luke (male, 5th grade, returning) were two close friends who also sat next to each other. They were not particularly productive which was a disappointment considering they were both returning video club members. They worked on a variety of self-produced (unofficial) pieces including the series *Hunting Chipmunks* but created only two official scripts between the two of them. They would accept offers to work on other crews but in general took very little initiative. Roland (with surprising skill) directed *Rat Boy* but then took a couple of months off before accepting another major role. A script that Luke wrote (*The Recruiter*) languished endlessly in pre-production— he could not get others interested in shooting it— before filming finally started with only five days left in the video club. The video was only completed and screened because of the substantial "eleventh hour" efforts of other video club members who finished editing the video for Luke.

Students in Ms. Castillo's class. Michael (male, 4th grade, new) and Gil (male, 4th grade, new) were two friends and often collaborators. They were less mature compared to the other students and had to be checked upon frequently or they'd get sucked into playing online video games on the computer. While together they were particularly silly, joking around endlessly and falling out of chairs laughing. Several directors were at their wit's end with them, unable to control the two of them between takes. Michael directed *Zumbatomic* and at times handled the responsibilities well but only with support from the producers (adults). As a director, Michael could be "bossy" and students generally didn't respond well to that disposition. Gil, on the other hand, worked well with others when separated from Michael.

Students in Ms. Lawrence's class. Katrina (female, 5th grade, returning) and

Sophie (female, 5th grade, returning) were two highly accomplished members of the

video club both in their second year. They sat next to each other in the video club two

years in a row and were exceptionally close friends. They were able to write scripts, act,

and edit exceptionally well. Very self-directed they were involved in countless

productions and were just as comfortable doing camera work as they were acting or being

the markerboard operator. While they both had experience directing, they seemed to

prefer not to. Sophie had high expectations and had little patience for students who fooled

around. She behaved more like a teacher than a 10 year old child but she couldn't

command the authority of an adult. She was focused and would often inform me when

other kids were off task or playing video games. While the two of them were best friends

with similar abilities, they had no problems separating and working with others when

needed. While outside the scope of this study, the two of them created countless

"unofficial videos" and recorded improvisations.

Charlotte (female, 5th grade, new) was in the video club for only half the school

year because of conflict with other after-school obligations. She was a confident girl with

lots of ideas and an easy going disposition. She was the markerboard operator on an early

production and did the task with such fervor and quality that she singlehandedly

transformed the role from a lowly regarded one to a fun and interesting task. Charlotte

never wrote a script, nor did she ever edit a video, but was still involved in many

productions as cameraperson, markerboard operator, or actor. Towards the end of the

school year, I came to the school during the day to help students complete a video which

Charlotte was one of the principal actors. At the end of the year Premier Night she sat

with the other kids to enjoy the screening of the productions together.

   Students in Ms. Jackson's class. Mindy (female, 4th grade, new) and Grace (female, 4th grade, new) had a lot in common: they were in the same class during the school day, both 4th grade girls, sat next to each other in the video club, and were both younger sisters to other video club members (Chloe and Pilar, respectively). With all of those commonalities, it was surprising that they didn't collaborate more during the school year. Mindy spent a lot of time wandering around the computer lab visiting others and mostly did acting roles. Towards the end of the semester she worked on a couple of scripts including a collaboration with her sister, *The Phone Call*, that turned out to be the one of the best productions of the year. I was uncertain how much Mindy contributed to the script since her older sister was one of the best scriptwriters in the video club but Mindy was clearly capable on her own, writing the wonderful script *Fork and Spoon* all by herself (though it didn't go into production). Like her older sister, Mindy had a whispery talking style and ability to explode into action while acting. Mindy lacked her older sisters' focus and ability to follow through.

   Grace did a lot of production work in the beginning of the school year writing and directing *Bad Girl*, one of the first productions of the year. Another one of her productions was a touching personal documentary on her life at home entitled *My Life*. She checked out cameras throughout the year, took them home, and recorded nearly two hours of footage of life around her house which she wearily edited down to about three minutes in length. Grace sat next to her older sister Pilar but didn't interact with her much as Pilar was completely occupied with her best friend Katie at all times.

Student from Ms. Green's class. Armando (male, 4th grade, new) was an autistic student who behaved differently than others around him and was sensitive to noise and other environmental conditions. While he interacted with others often, Armando preferred to work alone. He produced two stop animation videos entirely on his own that were highly regarded. When he was on task, he worked exceptionally fast and methodically but he had a difficult time getting started and staying on videomaking tasks. He loved the online video games that were available to students (there could be a lot of downtime in the video club and the games served a well needed function of something to do when you might be called upon any moment to be part of a shoot). In groups and particularly on sets, Armando could be difficult to interact with and he took instructions from student directors poorly, generally needing special consideration. Armando was almost always the best actor on the set throwing himself into roles but he would often stay in character the entire session which alarmed the other students. He wrote several scripts and one, *Zumbatomic*, was produced and considered one of the better videos made that school year.

Students in Mr. Campbell's class. Mr. Campbell's class was a 4th and 5th grade 50/50 bilingual classroom (Spanish and English) and students in the class could be divided into two groups: native *Spanish* speakers learning English and native *English* speakers learning Spanish. Jaime (male, 5th grade, new) was a native Spanish speaker who, out of all the kids in the video club, had the most limited English ability. He could communicate but struggled with pronunciations and often asked for further explanations because of language barriers. Jaime was absolutely fascinated by the whole videomaking process but favored acting over all the other roles. In the end of the year fifth grade

graduation ceremony, Jaime stated that when he grew up he wanted to be an actor— the

only video club member to mention anything about video or filmmaking in their future

plans. Jaime was stylistically "cool" with gel in his hair, black rim glasses, and often

wearing his collar up, or "popped." He was exceedingly polite to adults and had a

perpetual smile on his face.

A second native Spanish speaker was Cruz (male, 4th grade, new). He had much

greater English ability than Jaime. As a result, he acted as the video club's unofficial

translator particularly for the numerous parents who spoke Spanish only. Cruz was prone

to joking and kidding and loved to sneak into other people's pictures and make faces in

the background. He had an admirable eye, paid attention to visual details exceptionally

well, and enjoyed the creative options involved in video and sound editing. Working on

the video editing for the film *Rat Boy*, Ella mentored him a great deal and Cruz picked up

a lot of skills from her. They made an odd combination: 4th grade Hispanic male who

liked to wear t-shirts with professional wrestlers on them and 5th grade East Indian girl

who'd rather do her homework than play video games.

Native English speakers learning Spanish included Ariel, Thomas, and Chloe.

Ariel (female, 4th grade, new) was an interesting Video Club member because she was

one of the few students who could consistently cross gender boundaries. She was the

smallest kid in the video club but arguably the toughest. Ariel was an accomplished

gymnast and had striking and visible muscles but was also so blonde that her hair was

practically white. Easy to get along with and always with a sunny and smiling disposition

she handled every social obstacle with patience and grace. In the video *The Killed*,

essentially a three minute fight sequence, she was the only female who took part in it—

and stole the show. She was also an "auteur" (see chapter six) writing, directing, and editing *Ruth Wakefield*— a charming silent film in black and white that tells the mostly fictionalized story of the invention of the chocolate chip cookie.

Thomas (male, 5th grade, returning) was a spirited student who identified himself as an actor first but participated masterfully in other roles when needed. Thomas wrote quite a few scripts including *Cheese*, *Rat Boy*, the *Nerds Music Video*, and a couple of others that were never produced. He had substantial editing abilities and did some interesting last minute editing work with *The Recruiter*. Thomas was so serious about acting that he had actually signed up for a casting agency and showed all of us his profile with impressive head shot ("my mom's a photographer…") We all laughed when he read the bio out loud: Martial Arts skills? "None." Driving Skills?: "I am too young to drive a car but I do know how to ride a bike and skateboard." He, unfortunately, didn't receive any calls during the school year.

Chloe (female, 5th grade, returning) was an a quiet student who was a prolific scriptwriter, talented video editor as well as a surprisingly good actor and director. She was one of our few "auteurs"— students who saw a production out from original idea to script to filming to final cut in editing. She could do everything. During day-to-day activities she practically whispered however if a scene required a powerful voice she could deliver it perfectly in the first take. Afterwards she'd cover her face and giggle, wildly embarrassed. In the frantic activity of a video club session, Chloe would often find a good spot hidden away in the Tech Teacher's area and work with a level of focus and concentration that exceeded anything around her. As the director of *The Phone Call*, she would go around methodically giving directions in her super quiet voice to the

cameraperson, then the actors. It took a trained eye to even see who the director was.

The adult volunteers. Jasmine was a 5th grade classroom teacher at Midway Elementary School. Seven of her students were in the video club. Jasmine had volunteered on occasion in prior years and wanted to learn more about the videomaking process to apply to her own classroom teaching. More progressive than her peers, she welcomed popular culture texts and alternative production forms in her classroom. As a classroom teacher, she represented the "school" in ways that the other adults didn't but she also provided access that was extremely valuable.

Tracey was a masters student in education at the local university. She had a couple of different careers before going into education including air traffic control and her own cookie business. She became interested in working with the video club when she was told about the program from a professor at the university. She came to visit the program and was particularly impressed that the students themselves were performing all of the production roles including scriptwriting, directing, and editing. Tracey was the only one in the video club with prior film/video experience and had a degree in film specializing as a "Producer." She had worked on several films as producer and production manager and was even listed in the Internet Movie Database (IMDB.com). Tracey was the first to notice that teachers/adults functioned as producers in the video club— a huge breakthrough for all of the adults working creatively with children.

Club Sponsor/Volunteer/Researcher. I (Chuck Jurich) was the founder of the video club program in 2007 and worked continuously with the program until the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Before conducting this research, I was a classroom teacher for 8 years including six at Midway Elementary School. Through my prior experience as a

teacher at the site I was able to get access to form the the after-school program. I had no official experience with videomaking, never worked on a "real" set or touched a camera more expensive than an iPhone, however, I did have an extensive background in audio production having produced and/or engineered over 40 musical albums at the time of the study.

Before my work in the video club, I had very little experience with video. Only in the last semester of my last year of teaching (Spring of 2006) did I work with elementary age students and video. Admittedly, I didn't have a positive attitude towards the medium of video and believed that if students had some experience making these commercials, they might learn a bit about how messages in the media are constructed and ultimately how to *shield* themselves from these messages. I had a protectionist approach to media literacy (Buckingham, 2003) that didn't acknowledge the power and agency that comes with production. I personally did not own a TV until 2008 and I believed that video and film were essentially inferior to print, perhaps even "dangerous" to one's health. Before starting the video club, I had not done much if any reading on new literacies, multimodal texts, or visual discourse analysis. I had not yet considered that learning media production was a way of naming and acting upon the world (Freire, 1970) in words, images, sound, and gesture.

In 2006, my fifth grade students and I learned the most rudimentary technical aspects of writing scripts, shooting video, and editing the shots. In addition to our simple commercials and public service announcements (PSA) often involving a mere 3-5 shots, we incorporated video production into science by creating non-fiction videos about the human body similar to the popular "Bill Nye the Science Guy" series (McKenna &

Gottlieb, 1993). This supplemental use of video in the classroom was clearly teacher directed. I chose the topics, put the production crews together, and gave specific requirements for their work.

The following school year (2007), I created the Midway Elementary After-School Video club for fourth and fifth grade students. The first group was very challenging because the students (all girls) had great difficulties working together and for the first time I started thinking about the social aspects of video making more than the technical ones. I found this a very significant and compelling shift in focus. Our greatest successes were the harmonious collaborations of students who historically battled and fought for control of any situation. Over the next four years I watched each batch of students work together and began wondering more and more about the social aspects of reading and writing video.

I recognize that I was one of the most significant members of the club and this has influenced the research presented here. The case was uniquely suited for the research because of my influence. I played many roles: club sponsor, teacher, researcher, videomaker. I recognize that each role gave me a different position of power and I could switch between them if it helped me such as turning into a teacher when addressing behavior problems or transforming into a videomaker when the writing was engaging. I also took responsibilities to protect the participants in ways that went beyond IRB safeguards such as making sure students got picked up after each session and backing up their work in the computer lab. I was not a researcher sitting afar, observing and writing fieldnotes but a participant researching making videos with the other club members. I am not afraid to say that my original score for the silent student production *Ruth Wakefield*

was one of my most proud musical accomplishments.

Method

   The methodological approach of the research was a case study using qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Specifically, it was a *single instrumental case study* (Creswell, 2007); "instrumental" because I was focusing on an issue or concern and "single" because I was using one bounded and unique case to illustrate and interrogate the concern. Essentially, the "case" was the vehicle to better understand the issue at hand: how students socially read and write video texts. The case that I selected was bounded by *place* (the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club), *time* (one school year), and *group* (the 20 4th and 5th grade student participants and the three adult volunteers who worked with the children). The case study was a "within-site" study as it was located at a single geographical location.

   Mode of inquiry. In order to answer the research questions, I developed a method of studying the participants at the site. An overview of the procedures I took in conducting the research includes: 1) the purposeful selection of the case, 2) data collection, and 3) data analysis (including analysis of themes and interpretations of meanings from the case).

   Purposeful selection of the case. A key element of a case study is the purposeful selection of both the case to study and the sampling of information used within the case (Stake, 1995). I selected this particular case— the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club— because it had developed into a hospitable environment where children can work on their own video productions with a substantial amount of liberties in subject matter, pace, groupings, and process. Students were allowed to work with whoever they

wished (or avoid those they wished to avoid) and they assumed only the roles they were

interested in or comfortable taking on. These flexibilities provided an atmosphere that

was conducive to the purposes of the study in ways that a typical classroom was not. In

addition, the site provided physical resources and spaces that were a real advantage in

that a new and capable computer was available to every student and we had access to an

entire school building to film. Further, this case was singularly suitable to the study

because of my own involvement in the club in the prior four years. The individual

students in the case mattered but so did the history of the club which included

institutional knowledge such as traditions, rituals, procedures, policies, rumors and

folklore, and past work. Some of the students in the case had been in the program the

previous year or had siblings who were in the program in prior years. This history subtly,

but significantly, influenced the present case. The ages of the students in the case were

important because they were academically mature enough to work with the tools

competently but young enough to not have had much experience working with video.

They were fresh yet capable. Admittedly, it was a convenient case but only because of

the background and prep-work that had been done over the last four years.

The second part of purposeful selection involved the careful and directed sampling

of information used within the case (Creswell, 2007). For this study, it was important to

collect and select data that helped answer the research questions. From the start, I

examined the entire case but as the study progressed, I found myself following certain

productions closely and centering on a particular crew or individual. In both of these

situations, I narrowed the case from the entire club to something more specific but was

still clearly within the broader context of the case. I was flexible with my sampling in

order to answer the research questions and reacted to the data being collected. So while I

had a bounded case, the study was designed to be flexible to a variety of possibilities for

purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007).

Data collection. In the study, data was collected during one school year, from

September 2011 through May 2012. Many qualitative forms of data were collected

including recordings, fieldnotes from participant observations, and documents and

artifacts (all discussed in detail below). Data collection was comprehensive and

systematic; for example, all of the daily sessions were video recorded, fieldnotes were

written for every session, and artifacts were collected from computers on a schedule. As

the study continued and early data analysis started in earnest, I became more purposeful

in what to collect and recognized that several studies existed within the collected data.

Recordings. A significant type of data collected were recordings of the daily

sessions. These recordings were made on a small video camera positioned either

statically around an event in progress or dynamically situated by myself, student, or other

adult. Most of the time I was the one capturing these recordings (framing the shot,

redirecting the camera angle, etc.) and thus was in a good portion of them. Other times, I

left the camera running while pointed at students at work without any adult interaction. In

the video club, students were used to having cameras present, recording, and even

pointed at them. In addition, students had historically made mini "documentaries" of the

video club, capturing footage of children in various stages of the video making process.

Aside from the first few weeks of the club, there was very little "hamming" or

"posturing" in front of the camera. While the cameras never "disappeared," in this

environment, they were more transparent than in other typical school settings.

Video captures data in multiple modes including aural, linguistic, gestural, visual, and spatial. Audio recordings capture linguistic and aural information but video recordings allowed me to see the subjects' body language (gestural, spatial) when they interacted. Another important aspect of the recordings was capturing how students worked with objects and tools and how these objects mediated their interactions. For example, when students were shooting video, the director talked to the cameraperson about how she wanted the action to be captured with the camera. Actors were told to do their acting in relation to the objects in the set (ex. "stand in front of this pole and then move out the door") as well as the camera ("turn your body and face the camera"). With a video camera, I was able to see not just what the students said and did, but what they said and did in relation to the objects that were used in video making.

The particular moments that I was most interested in capturing were times when two or more students were together working on some aspect of videomaking, whether it be reading, writing, or studying the characteristics of a text: videomaking literacy events (Heath, 1983). Each literacy event in videomaking focuses on a different kind of "text." Some texts are fairly concrete and conventional (ex. scripts, props, costumes) but others, such as a "take" are more abstract. A take exists in two forms: as a fleeting but real life performance right in front of the participants and also in a more durable but virtual form digitally recorded in the camera as a video clip. Each participant in a literacy event had a unique understanding of what happened. For example, the cameraperson saw the performance through the camera lens. If the take was performed "perfectly" but she accidentally chopped off the head of the actor by misframing the shot, the performance would be rejected by the cameraperson even if the acting had been great. Table 2.2 (in

chapter two) presents the stages of videomaking and also shows the activities that

occurred and the types of texts produced and examined during each stage. I recognized

that these literacy events were all "official" (Dyson, 1999) moments in the video making

process. I decided early in data analysis that I would reserve studying unofficial

videomaking and the literacy events that accompany those practices for a separate study.

This decision was made in order to further bind the case and give the study greater focus.

   To record students working at computers, I sometimes positioned the data

collection camera over the shoulder of the students facing the computer screens. In these

situations I was able to hear the students but also see what they are referring to, as the

content of the screen could be a central object of the discussion. This gave me the ability

to see the sequence of what the students did on the computer while writing or editing as

well as hear their interactions and make sense of the decision making processes they used

to write the script or edit the video. At other times the camera was positioned facing the

students as they worked because their facial expressions and gestures could be telling.

   After each session, video recordings were transferred from their original medium,

Secure Digital High Capacity (SDHC) memory cards, to video files on computer hard

drives. They were initially viewed to make notes for memos, attribute coded to tag their

factual content (date, stage of production, people involved), and methodically stored on

an external computer hard drive. This hard drive was then regularly backed up to two

additional hard drives and stored in separate locked locations.

   I was not able to video record every child working every day, though more than one

camera was available for data collection. As a result, I had to selectively sample what

was collected. My goal at first was to get a range of literacy events with a variety of

participants and groupings at different stages of the video production process (pre-production, production, and post-production). More purposeful sampling occurred when data analysis led me in specific directions: particular productions, peculiar student interactions, filming sessions where I was not present. Ultimately I collected an enormous amount of video recorded data and with careful fieldnotes and logging the video recordings of the sessions were managed. I didn't want to be drowning in data but I did want to be able to take advantage of the fact that video cameras in the video club were everywhere and students paid them little mind.

These recordings were technically observations in the sense that I was using the recordings as a way of observing what was happening in the daily events of the club, however, because I was also participating in these events, my perspective on them was different than someone viewing the event live (no recording) or someone just watching the recordings (didn't see anything live). I was in a unique position as participant observer with the ability to rewind and have multiple viewings of the event.

Participant observations and fieldnotes. As a participant in the site, I was present for all sessions. I carried along a small writing notebook in order to make any "jottings" or quick notes but found I had little time during the sessions to jot down anything. Directly after the video club session I wrote down these jottings, sometimes just a word, that triggered a series of observations to be elaborated upon later (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Using my jottings as a guide (but before logging the recordings), I wrote up elaborated fieldnotes of the events that happened. These fieldnotes were different than a researcher's journal in the sense that they were attempts to inscribe any experienced or observed realities by writing what I observed and how I made sense of what I saw at that

moment in time (Emerson et al., 1995). As a result, fieldnotes reflected both my

perspective and effectively captured and represented *members' meanings*— "the

perspectives, understandings, concerns, and voices of those studied" (Emerson et al.,

1995, p. 215). The process of writing up fieldnotes started with the jottings (begun

directly after the session) and were elaborated upon a couple hours after the video club

session. Jottings were turned into fieldnotes while the memories were still fresh. The

form of the fieldnotes were mainly chronological but also focused on peculiar incidents.

Turning jottings into fieldnotes was an active process that involved very early analysis of

the data (Emerson et al., 1995). I made decisions such as ordering events and deciding

what to include and what to leave out. In some ways a jotting was a kind of code— a

word that succinctly described and signified a situation or event from a specific point of

view.

At a more advanced level of analysis, I followed strategies suggested by Emerson et

al. (1995) for depicting observed and remembered events including ways of describing

basic settings using concrete details and avoiding visual clichés, labels, and stereotypes.

When presenting dialogue between subjects, I attempted to use direct quotation as often

as possible to preserve character traits and clues to the identity, social status, and personal

style of the speaker (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 74). The video recordings were helpful to

confirm or change quotes after the initial fieldnotes were written. When verbatim

quotation was not possible (can't remember, no recordings), I used indirect quotation

over paraphrasing (ex. "She said 'whoa, you're crazy'" versus "she thought he was

wrong") in order to capture the tone of the participant's language instead of just my

interpretations. An important task of the fieldnotes was to characterize the main

individuals as three-dimensional people (Emerson et al., 1995, p. 79). It was done in the

notes by *showing* how the person lived their life versus telling the reader their traits.

Extended entries used organizing units such as sketches (describing a "still life" scene

with detailed imagery), episodes (an account of action over time) and fieldnote tales (a

series of related episodes) (Emerson et al., 1995, pp. 84-85).

The fieldnotes were stored in the same information analysis database as the logged

video files for easy tagging and coding. They were reread periodically throughout the

data collection process in order to write memos (Charmaz, 2006) and to look for patterns

and events that might influence and shape how I observed subsequent sessions or collect

future data. Fieldnotes from observations were also useful for cataloging what had

happened in the club by addressing questions such as: what did we do? who worked on

what? which crew went to out to shoot? They also acted as a log for the club. Like the

recordings, fieldnotes were stored on external hard drives and securely kept in my office

at the university or at my home.

Artifacts and documents. In a video production environment, many artifacts and

documents were created. In the scriptwriting stage, there were pre-writings, screenplays,

and drawings. For many of these, there were multiple drafts with handwritten notes all

over them. Screenplays were "blocked" (a term invented in the video club in which

"blocks" of text were grouped together in pencil to represent individual shots to be

filmed, see chapter four), erased, and re-blocked. During shooting, there was raw video

footage consisting of multiple takes of each shot and physical items such as handmade

props or costumes. In the post-production editing process there were multiple edits of the

same video, title sequences, inserts, added effects, sound files and overdubs, and, of

course, the final completed video. Afterwards, posters to promote videos and the premier

were produced, duplicated, and hung up around the school. Lastly, a DVD was made for

all who were involved.

All of these artifacts and documents had multiple authors and were examples of

collaborative social writing and were collected for analysis. (Note: the *production* of

these artifacts may have also been captured in the recordings of the daily sessions. The

camera couldn't capture every single action that occurs in the club.) Sometimes an

electronic copy was collected; at other times the documents were photocopied or

scanned. For large and unwieldy documents such as constructed props and costumes,

photographs were taken. All documents and artifacts were eventually digitized and stored

on the same hard drives as the recordings and fieldnotes. They were described, attribute

coded— date produced, author(s), video project it was associated with— and analyzed.

Data analysis. Through data collection, I developed a detailed description of the

case and the social processes of videomaking in the video club (see chapter four). This

was relatively uncontested data (Stake, 1995) in the sense that there were fewer

interpretive aspects involved and more detailed description. Next, I focused on key issues

of the case through the analysis of themes in the data. The most significant qualitative

data analysis method used was *categorical aggregation* which involved the sorting and

rendering of information into large clusters of ideas and providing details that supported

the themes (Creswell, 2007). Specific strategies of accomplishing this included writing

and summarizing fieldnotes, identifying codes in the data, reducing codes to themes,

memo writing, relating categories to one another, and relating categories to analytic

framework in the literature. All of these strategies will be discussed further below. In the

final interpretive phase, I reported how the case answered the research questions (chapter

seven).

Data analysis is a dynamic and non-linear process that is interconnected with data

collection and management, what Creswell (2007) calls a "data analysis spiral" (p. 76).

As new data was collected, I systematically managed it through tags, names, labels, and

back-up procedures. All analog documents were transformed into organized digital files. I

began "First Cycle coding methods" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 43) by reading the data and

beginning early coding processes in which I described, classified, and interpreted the data

using specific coding methods (discussed in detail below). Sometimes this stage is

referred to, generally, as "initial coding" (Charmaz, 2006) or "open coding" (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967). I wrote analytical memos that helped capture thoughts about the data and

facilitated possible insights (Maxwell, 2005). Beginning "Second Cycle coding

methods" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 149), I created initial categories of codes, looked for patterns

between categories and codes, made comparisons, and revised categories. This Second

Cycle is similar but not identical to "focused coding" (Charmaz, 2006) or "axial

coding" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). From these categorizing strategies, I ultimately created

three main themes ("Sociocultural Contexts," "Problem-Solving Interactions," and

"Democratic Writing") for the write up. Inventive forms (such as figures) for representing

the data were created. When describing this reiterative process of data analysis in text

form it appears linear but it was not. The analysis process was one that shifted directions,

"spiraled," and eventually progressed towards a valid conclusion.

Four key elements of this process will now be discussed: First Cycle coding

methods (attribute, descriptive, and process coding), analytical memo writing, Second

Cycle coding methods (pattern and focused coding), and lastly, interpretive and

connecting strategies.

   First Cycle coding methods. In qualitative research, the goal of categorizing

strategies such as coding is to crack the data into chunks and arrange them into categories

that facilitate comparisons between things in the same category (Maxwell, 2005).

Charmaz (2006) describes coding as "naming segments of data with a label that

simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (p. 43).

Saldaña (2009) describes a code as a "word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a

summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of

language-based or visual data." (p. 3). Codes and the coding process help in organizing

the data into broader themes as well as the development of theoretical concepts. The most

important aspect of coding is to establish patterns by looking for a correspondence

between two or more categories to create a small number of categories. Patterns can take

on a variety of characteristics including similarities, differences, frequency, sequence,

correspondence, or causation (Saldaña, 2009).

   First Cycle coding methods are early data analysis strategies. I used three methods:

attribute coding, *descriptive coding*, and *process coding*. Some of these methods were

applicable to all data formats while others were used for only certain kinds of data.

Together, they provided a detailed and reliable record of what was inside the data.

   Attribute coding. Attribute coding logs essential information about the data such as

the participants, date, time, and data format for future management and reference. In

many ways attribute coding is similar to the general data management techniques such as

naming, tagging, and labeling, however, the difference is that attribute codes can be used

to not just locate data but, when connected to other codes, give context to information.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) classify this type of coding as "setting/context codes." In this

study, all data was attribute coded and I specifically looked to code the data by date (in

numerical "year month day" form), data format (ex. video, fieldnote, artifact, video),

stage of production (ex. scriptwriting, video editing, shooting), participants involved, and

name of production (ex. *Rat Boy*). Attribute coding was done in a specific software

program (Journler) and the codes were recorded as part of the metadata attached to each

datum. Metadata types included titles, categories, flags, check boxes, dates, and tags.

Attribute coding was done with all data formats and occurred when I viewed the datum

for the first time, though I did amend the codes later if something was missed. This

process helped me get acquainted with the data and was done before any of the more

interpretive coding processes took place. It was good data management and provided

excellent context indicators when I was searching for patterns in codes later.

   Descriptive coding. Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase (most

often in a noun) the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data (Saldaña, 2009). It is

important that descriptive codes are identifications of the *topic*, not abbreviations of the

content. Clarifying the difference between the two, Tesch (1990) describes the topic as

"what is talked or written about" and the content as "the substance of the message" (p.

119). The goal of descriptive coding is to understand what the subject of the data is and

assist in answering the basic question "what is going on here?" (Saldaña, 2009).

   Selected data was descriptive coded. I had collected over 4,000 pieces of data and

needed a way of narrowing this pool of data so during this part of data analysis I made

the decision to separate "official videomaking"— the complex, collectively made videos

that were tracked on the video club production board (see chapter four) from "unofficial

videomaking" which was more experimental and improvised work by individuals and

small groups. Data that described official videomaking was descriptive coded.

Usually coding is done with data in conventional print or text form, however, the

vast majority of the data that was collected in this study was in video form which

included multiple modes of representation including visual and audio data, as well as

linguistic, aural, and gestural forms. In some ways, video tape of a typical daily session

was similar to observations only with limited vision. The video club was a dynamic space

where topics switched rapidly and unpredictably. Descriptive coding of the video

recordings— coding by topic— was helpful in organizing this seemingly chaotic

environment.

Process coding. Process coding focuses on the action and interaction of participants

in response to situations or problems (Saldaña, 2009). These interactions are often done

with the objective of reaching a goal (ex. getting a shot or completing a movie) or dealing

with a problem or issue (ex. difference of opinion or missing crew member). Process

codes exclusively take on the form of gerunds (verbs used as nouns) and can suggest or

capture the processes taking place in the data. In this study, documenting the variety and

quality of interactions between the participants was extremely important because social

interaction was embedded into the research questions. In addition, videomaking in the

club was an emotional experience and process coding helped address and document the

emotions of the participants.

Much of the data in the study was visual data in which we can see simple activities

such as "writing" or "talking" but process codes were used for more conceptual actions

such as "scheming" or "rejecting advice." In addition, the sequence of the processes were very important to note. During analysis and memo writing, the sequenced codes created a kind of narrative (often cued by transitional indicators in participant language such as "then," or "and so") in which the codes can be read like a plot developing— "setting up the shot," "disagreeing on camera placement," "pulling rank," "dragging her feet," "yelling," "quitting"— and each code helped construct and develop the storyline.

Potential problems with coding. Charmaz (2006) identifies a variety of potential coding issues including coding at too general a level, identifying topics when looking for actions and processes, overlooking how people construct actions and processes, attending to disciplinary or personal concerns rather than participants' concerns, coding out of context, and using codes to summarize but not to analyze. The potential risk at this stage was in condensing something that was not particularly accurate or worked out. By stepping away from the data itself and instead dealing with the codes created in initial coding, there was a danger of misrepresenting and/or overstating what has happened in the field. To avoid this, it was important to have a whole-to-part approach to data analysis (Erickson, 2004; Agar, 1980) where the entire context was kept in mind while considering detailed micro-actions.

Together, these three First Cycle coding methods— attribute, descriptive, and process coding— helped to create a workable and manageable record of the data. While coding, I followed the guidance of Charmaz (2006) by: remaining open, staying close to the data, keeping my codes simple and precise, constructing short codes, preserving actions (particularly with process codes), and moving quickly through the data. Predetermined "organizational categories" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 97) were used (particularly

in attribute coding and, to a lesser extent, in descriptive coding) to describe broad areas or

issues that were anticipated (ex. "scriptwriting" or "obstacles"). First Cycle coding

helped answer "who," "what," "where," "when," and (to a certain degree) "how?" In

order to get a deeper understanding of "how" and "why," further analysis of the data was

needed. Nevertheless, these three coding methods provided essential groundwork for

further analysis and interpretation that took place during analytical memo writing and

Second Cycle coding.

    Analytical memo writing. Analytical memo writing was a pivotal intermediate step

between First Cycle and Second Cycle coding methods. It is a data analysis tool and

process with the purpose of helping develop analytical insight by prompting the

researcher to examine and reflect on the data and codes early in the research process

(Charmaz, 2006). Unlike fieldnotes (which in this study was the documentation of

participant observations), analytical memos are opportunities to create and record new

insights through the act of writing, thinking, and revising. Analytical memos are rooted in

the data and in them I reflected on my coding process and code choices, how the process

of inquiry was taking shape, and any emergent patterns, categories and subcategories,

themes, and concepts (Saldaña, 2009).

    Memos in this study varied in content but I followed the advice of Charmaz (2006)

who recommends any of the following as suitable topics to be addressed: define each

code or category by its analytic properties; spell out and detail processes subsumed by the

codes or categories; make comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes and

codes, codes and categories, categories and categories; bring raw data into the memo;

provide sufficient empirical evidence to support your definitions of the category and

analytic claims about it; offer conjectures to check in the field setting; identify gaps in the

analysis; interrogate a code or category by asking questions of it. Adding to this list,

Saldaña (2009) suggests the following topics to reflect upon in memos: how I personally

relate to the participants and/or the phenomenon; my study's research questions; possible

networks among the codes, patterns, categories, themes, and concepts; an emergent or

related existing theory; problems with the study; personal or ethical dilemmas with the

study; future directions for the study; the final report. It was expected that memos written

in the early part of the study were going to have quite different content than those written

in the later months of data collection, when analysis was well on its way.

Second Cycle coding methods were greatly enhanced by analytical memo writing

because they served as an additional code and category generating method. As Saldaña

(2009) argues, "by memo writing about the specific codes you've applied to your data,

you may discover even better ones" (p. 41). This interpretive and analytical process

helped me render the data, develop fresh ideas, create new concepts, and find novel

relationships. These are the central reasons why memo writing is situated in data analysis.

The memos helped link data collection with data analysis and report writing.

Second Cycle coding methods. Second Cycle coding methods are advanced ways

of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through the First Cycle methods (Saldaña,

2009). It is an opportunity to create a coherent synthesis of the entire body of data. The

primary goal during Second Cycle coding is to develop a sense of categorical, thematic,

conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of First Cycle codes. This

involved the creation and reworking of "coding schemes" (Lewins & Silver, 2007 in

Saldaña, 2009) which included categories, sub-categories, and codes in a tree-like

configuration. As a whole, Second Cycle coding is a rendering process: "First Cycle

codes (and their associated coded data) are reorganized and reconfigured to eventually

develop a smaller and more select list of broader categories, themes, and/or

concepts." (Saldaña, 2009, p. 149) Two methods used in this study were *pattern coding*

and *focused coding*.

Pattern coding. Pattern coding is a process that helps create explanatory codes that

identify a theme, order, or explanation through the development of "meta-codes" that

summarize and condense large numbers of First Cycle codes (Saldaña, 2009). The

process not only organizes the data but attempts to attribute meaning to that organization.

Many pattern codes are captured in the form of metaphors because they can synthesize

large blocks of data in a single term or phrase (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As stated

earlier, looking for patterns isn't just about identifying similarities between codes but also

included examining for differences, frequency, sequence, correspondence, or causation

(Saldaña, 2009). Pattern coding can be used to develop major themes, search for rules,

causes, and explanations, examine social networks and patterns of human relationships,

and understand and form processes, all of which are applicable to my study. Pattern codes

are hunches (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and the process, while not always successful, is

important because it allows the researcher to play with the data in creative and inventive

ways to find patterns.

Focused coding. In focused coding, the most significant and/or frequent earlier

codes are sifted through in order to develop categories of codes. Focused coding is a

directed, selective, and conceptual process and requires making decisions about "which

initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize your data incisively and

completely" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57). Like pattern coding, this part of the data analysis

process condenses and manages the data. It is where I looked for relationships between

codes and larger categories. Theoretical categories appeared here as I attempted to make

sense of the codes and categories in relation to a more general framework, in this

particular case, a sociocultural theory of literacy.

 Saldaña (2009) refers to focused coding as a "streamlined adaptation of grounded

theory's 'Axial Coding'" (p. 155). Axial coding is a method of sorting, synthesizing, and

organizing large amounts of data (through its codes) and reassembling them in new ways

(Creswell, 2007). Data fits around the "axis" of a defined category. The difference

between the two is axial coding specifies the properties and dimensions of a category

(Charmaz, 2006) while focused coding is a less restrictive and more dynamic process in

which "categories are constructed emergently from the reorganization and categorization

of participant data" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 158). Data similarly coded (exact matches are not

required) are clustered together and reviewed to create tentative category names with an

emphasis on process through the use of gerunds (like process coding discussed earlier).

 Interpretive and connecting strategies. The last stage of data analysis involved the

use of interpretive and connecting strategies. These strategies operate differently than the

categorizing strategies of First Cycle and Second Cycle coding methods explained earlier.

"Instead of fracturing the data into discrete segments and re-sorting it into categories,

connecting analysis attempts to understand the data… in context, using methods to

identify the relationships among the different elements of the data" (Maxwell, 2005, p.

98). It is a creative process that plays with (in my case) pattern codes and focused codes

in an attempt to conceptualize relationships that connect statements and events within a

context into a coherent whole. Data is pulled apart and put back together in more

meaningful ways (Stake, 1995). Used skillfully, connection strategies may refine my

work with analytical insight and make my analysis coherent and comprehensible.

While coding and categorizing data, I certainly made judgements however these

codes were malleable labels that didn't, themselves, say anything particularly new. The

connecting stage was different; it was a risky but essential aspect of data analysis that was

interpretive. I attempted to answer the research questions of the study based upon the data

that was collected but it required human interpretation of the data. Much like a thesis in

an argumentative essay, I made assertions that were inventive, creative, and insightful but

also logical, compelling, convincing, and rooted in the data.

Two specific interpretive connecting techniques used in this study were *pattern*

matching and *explanation building*. Pattern matching (Yin, 2009) involves comparing

empirically based patterns with predicted ones such as the study's theoretical framework,

outside theories and frameworks, and/or rival explanations. Explanation building (Yin,

2009) is, as the name suggests, the process of analyzing the data in order to build an

explanation about the case and develop a theory (Merriam, 1998). The major difference

between these two techniques is pattern matching looks outside of the study to compare

the data and findings with other sources for correlations and similarities while

explanation building speculates on new understandings and new theories. This study was

grounded in a sociocultural perspective of literacy but this framework is broad, allowing

for a variety of theories to be juxtaposed with the initial findings. This stage required

careful attention to my research questions.

While searching for patterns in the data that connect to outside theories or building

explanations about the case, I tried to avoid potential pitfalls by making sure: 1) the

interpretations accounted for all available evidence, 2) all major rival interpretations were

addressed, 3) the most significant aspects of my case were studied, and 4) my own prior,

expert knowledge was used in the case (Yin, 2009). While these overlap slightly with

validity concerns (addressed later), they provided a good guide during data analysis.

Closing Thoughts on Methods

Through the data collected, I was able to identify and describe the videomaking

process as well as analyze student interactions while writing together in the video club.

Anyone marginally involved in videomaking already knows about the stages of

production but may not be familiar with the unique literacy events that took place during

these production stages. Beyond standardized processes and protocols, there had to be

other elements, factors, and contexts that were significant to the social writing practices

going on. Based on my participant observations, fieldnotes, video recordings, and student

produced documents and artifacts, In the following chapter, I describe the videomaking

process in the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club and illustrate this process

with examples drawn from a variety of student productions. In addition, I describe in

detail one student production, *The Attacks*, from start to finish.

Chapter 4: *The Attacks* and the Video Production Process

Videos produced in the Midway Elementary School After-School Video Club took anywhere from a two to eight months to complete. They involved many students in a variety of official roles using a range of technological tools including video cameras, computers, editing software, and more. Students produced video texts in a three stage process similar to the one used in major motion pictures: pre-production (writing, conferring, revising, and reviewing scripts), production (shooting the video), and post-production (video editing, sound work, titling. and credits). In addition to these three stages, there was also a final "distribution stage" for videos that would be shown to audiences outside of the video club at the end of the year "Premier Night" or via the complication DVD made by members of the video club.

Although this description sounds linear, the actual production process was not. Students often moved back and forth between production stages revising the videos repeatedly. As I will demonstrate later, a completed script was never truly "complete" but instead a plan that was "good enough" to get to the production stage where many of the ideas would be worked out further. Once the students entered the production stage, obstacles emerged requiring the crew to do more pre-production tasks such as prop finding/building or revising the script to work around shooting limitations. For example, the crew for *Bad Girl* discovered that slamming a door to a room (as stated in the script) was impossible because of a mechanism attached to all school doors. Working around the issue, they decided that the character would kick a garbage can on the way out instead. Likewise, students switched from post-production back to production when, while editing, they discovered gaps in the story. Additional footage was needed to make a plot

point clear. Other times editing sparked new ideas and the crew reassembled to get these new scenes.

In this chapter I document, describe, and examine the video production process in the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club by following one student production, *The Attacks*, from early scriptwriting to the final cut. From the extensive data collected as well as my participant observations and fieldnotes, I describe and detail the social interactions between the students while making the video at each stage of production. Every production in the video club was unique and on occasion I include examples from other student productions as further support and to show the range of obstacles and experiences that the students worked through together.

The Attacks

The Attacks is a four minute psychological thriller about a girl who escapes from an insane asylum and, out of convenience, goes after the two unsuspecting protagonists. In a twist, they are saved by a second girl who, it turns out, is seeking her *own* revenge for the hurtful taunting the protagonists did to her many years earlier. In the end, the protagonists survive but learn that they shouldn't have been cruel, the "Insane Attacker" is taken to prison, however the "Revenge Attacker," perhaps out of justice, manages to slip by unpunished. In the eight months it took to complete *The Attacks*, 13 different authors in a variety of roles contributed to the making of the video. Each person's input was sizable and through thoughtful deliberation and compromise the video went through a number of significant changes and negotiations from the first idea for the script until the final cut.

In the 2011-2012 school year, *The Attacks* was one of 24 "official videos"

produced in the video club, where "official" meant the video went through the production

stages (pre-production, production, and post-production) with a "producer" involved in

its progress and completion. "Unofficial videos," which numbered in the hundreds, were

a mixed bag of self-produced, casual, quick, and regularly incomplete video experiments

that were often discarded after they were shot, much the way a scratch pad is used for

rehearsal. Official videos were far more complex, involving the interaction of many

people and taking months to complete. All official videos were screened at the end-of-

the-year "Premiere Night" in front of an audience of over 100 people and were included

on the DVD.

The Pre-Production Stage

In pre-production, students wrote a scripts, conferred with other experienced

student members or adults, constructed casts and crews to shoot the script, and held

production meetings with all cast and crew involved where they read the script out loud

and got everyone familiar with the story. Data collected for *The Attacks* showed that pre-

production started in September of 2011 and continued until shooting began in January of

2012.

Scriptwriting. Productions began with scripts that were written using a few

different formatting styles. The vast majority of student productions were fictional

narratives and thus started with a standard screenplay format. The screenplay format

developed with the advent of the typewriter and is essentially different than other kinds of

published documents. "What the screenwriter pulls out of the typewriter isn't a

manuscript to be sent to the publisher — it's the *final product* [emphasis added]. Over the

years, the tools have changed… but we still expect scripts to look like they came out of a

typewriter." (JohnAugust, 2013). The screenplay doesn't go through any other forms of

typesetting and is not published or duplicated for anyone outside of the production crew.

The main typographical features of the screenplay is the use of a fixed width font (usually

12 point Courier), the selective use of all capitalization, and specific indentation rules to

indicate functions of text. The "typewriter-look" is not cosmetic but to maintain the

curious relationship between the fixed width font, size of a standard page (8.5" x 11"),

and line spacing that results in one page of text to generally equal one minute of screen

time. Thus a 90 page script will equal about an hour and a half on the screen. Even in our

video club with amateur writers, directors, and editors this relationship held true.

Though screenplays look physically different than conventional prose,

screenplays are easy to read in a linear manner and as a result work exceptionally well for

narratives. Writing in pairs and trios on the computer, students used an open source media

production and word processing program called "Celtx" (http://celtx.com). Celtx (see

Figure 4.1) is surprisingly kid friendly but some knowledge of scriptwriting is beneficial.

(For further information on scriptwriting basics, please see Appendix D.) The program

incorporates pull down menus that automatically format text to the seven standard

scriptwriting categories: "Scene Heading," "Action," "Character," "Dialog,"

"Parenthetical," "Transition," and "Shot." All students have to do is know what the

function of each category is and then type. The program then typographically formats the

text appropriately. Errors in formatting can be quickly fixed by highlighting text and

using the pull down menu to re-format it. Students new to scriptwriting discovered that

writing scripts in standard screenplay format on the computer was efficient, flexible, and

even fun and they quickly learned to use the program to construct a script that any

director— from a professional like Steven Spielberg to one of our new fourth graders—

could make sense of and shoot.
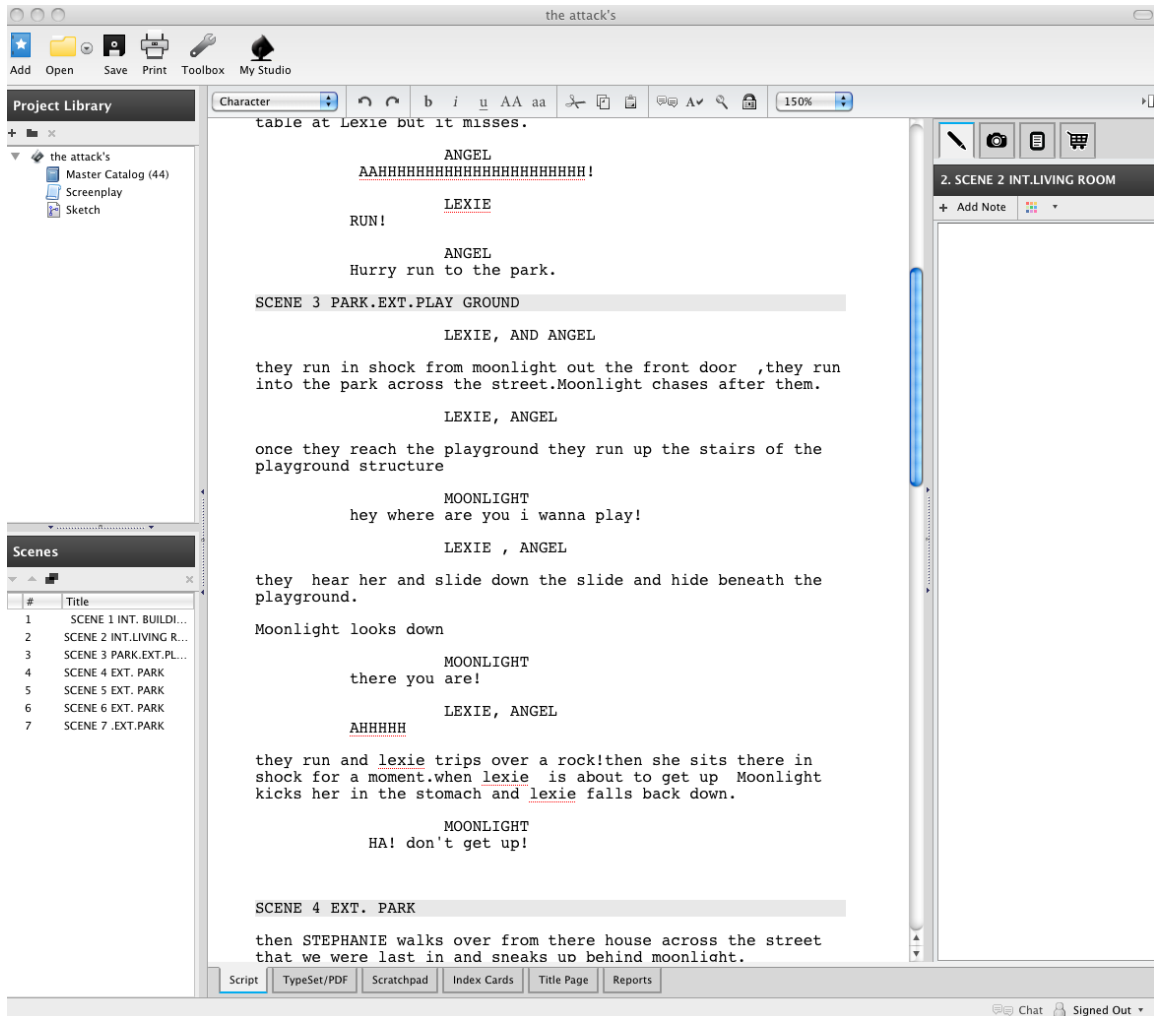
Figure 4.1. The Attacks in the screenwriting program Celtx.

The second kind of scriptwriting formatting used in the video club was the shot

list. Generally used for documentaries, interviews, and music videos, shot lists were

essentially a list of shots that were needed or desired to make the video. Figure 4.2 shows

an example of a shot list; while this one is formatted as a paragraph, it still lists all of the

shots that the cameraperson hopes to capture. Shot lists worked best for non-fiction

videos and for pieces where the crew could not (or chose not to) control what people say

or do. If they wished, the students can capture the shots on the list out of sequence or in

any order that was convenient for them.

```
shot me and one of my sisters from an angel then shot me
with a nother show what i do after school then show some of
my family members my frends what i lick to do for fun show
what i lick like my favriet stuff and show my parents and
pepole i now from defrent angels
```

Figure 4.2. Example of a shot list.

The script for *The Attacks* was written in screenplay format by Katie and Pilar,

two inseparable best friends who sat next to each throughout the video club. A third

student, Naomi, was also influential in the content but was ultimately not credited as a

scriptwriter. This kind of tandem (duo) and group writing was typical with ideas being

tossed around and one person typing. The oral nature of the interaction invited others

nearby to both evaluate ("yeah!") or contribute ideas ("and then…."). In the following

example, Katie, Pilar, and Naomi discuss, negotiate, and write the action for a crucial

chase scene in *The Attacks*. [Note: I present video recorded data in screenplay format

which provides a transcript of all speech as well as descriptive actions of the participants.

All names used are pseudonyms. At times, I use the roles of the participants if they are

more informative to the discussion. Please see Appendix D for further details on

scriptwriting format.]

```
INT. LAB, KATIE'S COMPUTER - AFTERNOON - (9/29/2011)

Katie sits at her computer listening intently with one
hand on the computer keyboard. Discussing the scene,
Pilar stands and Naomi sits.

                    PILAR
         She'll follow almost right behind
```

```
                         us and I'll fall off. How about
                         that?

                                   NAOMI
                         No, she, she's gonna be on that
                         little wobbly thing,
                              (gesturing)
                         that goes up and down, the one
                         that goes like that--

                                   KATIE
                              (excitedly with speed)
                         And she looks to the side and she
                         can see that we saw her so we
                         slide down the slide, then she
                         sees us slide down and down--

                                   PILAR
                         Yeah.

             Katie quickly turns to her computer and starts typing.

                                   NAOMI
                         And then she looks back down and
                         says "there you are."

             Katie looks over at Naomi and smiles, liking the idea.
```

In this example, the three students worked out the first draft of a chase scene in which the Insane Attacker hunts down the protagonists. As they wrote, the three of them seemed to have a shooting location already set in their minds (the kindergarten playground area where the "wobbly thing" was) and the challenge for them was describing the sequence of events for the viewer to see on the screen. Katie at first listened to the other two but then jumped in when she heard something she liked, completing the thought. Like a relay race, each took the baton a little further before someone else grabbed it and sprinted off. After a while, Katie had to quickly turn to the computer and type before the ideas drifted away. While she typed, Naomi continued with more ideas and Katie acknowledged their value with a smile.

The "writing" in scriptwriting was mainly done with spoken language and was

clearly a social activity. As we saw in the example, students talked out scenes and

dialogue, questioning continuity between plot points and the plausibility of scenarios.

Ideas that were uttered sparked new ideas and typing out the action and dialogue

cemented them just enough for future revisions. The writing wasn't in the actual

inscription, in this case typing, but in the words spoken and the interaction of the

participants.

Still, an important factor in this interaction involved *who* does the actual typing.

Like the driver of a car, the typist was in greater control over the content than the other

contributors, however, with this control came additional labor and responsibility. With

only one keyboard and mouse, the decision of "who drives" was based on a variety of

factors such as typing ability, experience using the program, and who's computer the

authors were at. Scriptwriters in the video club were between the ages of 8 and 11 and

there was a wide range of typing ability. When adults worked with the students, they

usually took over the typing because, not only could they type the fastest, they also had

the ability to type and process what people were saying at the same time. While speed

might have been the overt factor in place, adults used the position of control to do other

things such as make spelling and formatting changes without the students' input or

permission. The scripts were "alive"— real documents for real audiences— and spelling

mattered. If a reader couldn't understand the author's intent due to misspelling, it had to

be addressed and adults often corrected words when they sensed the temporary spelling

(Cambourne & Turbill, 1991) wasn't sufficient. How much adults contributed to

productions is addressed more in chapter five where the "adults as producers" role is

examined.

Script conference. Script conferences were informal meetings between one of the adults and the student scriptwriters. Script conferences were not required however students perpetually sought out feedback and it was not unusual for one or more adults to confer with scriptwriters multiple times as they wrote. The script conference was both a teaching opportunity for adults and a learning opportunity and students looking for general feedback and help with specific problems. The interaction during the conference depended highly on the needs and experience of the student, their "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978). If a teaching moment was appropriate, inexperienced scriptwriters might learn some scriptwriting basics such as introducing the "ordinary world" and then inventing "inciting incidents" that disrupted these worlds. More experienced writers might learn about building satisfying "character arcs" (the notion that characters must evolve, grow, learn, or change as the story unfolds) and "deserved endings" (probable endings that are built from previous actions in the script).

The focal point of the conference was the script itself, a physical artifact and a tool that mediated the interaction between the scriptwriters and the adults. During a conference, the adult sat down with the scriptwriter(s) at their computer and read the script out loud from the computer screen. Often done as a "dramatic reading," students read one or more of the dialogue parts in character so everyone could hear how the exchange sounded and test out the flow of action and dialogue. As we read together, changes were made by the adult or scriptwriter(s) directly on the screen. Screenwriting form issues (ex. dialogue written in the form of action) or spelling errors that changed meaning were corrected by an adult as he/she read. This was also a chance for adults to give specific encouragement or feedback to students.

In terms of content, the topics of the scripts were chosen by the students and other students (not adults) were clearly the intended audiences. Adults were only concerned with insuring a script was "shootable"— able to be turned into a video without much revising in production— and the intention of script conferences was never to alter the messages in the scripts. Instead we looked for clarity of ideas, basic scriptwriting form, flow, action that let the reader see the visuals on the screen, and a reasonable balance between action and dialogue. Still, the script conference was a collaborative space and adults could (and would) suggest ideas to help overcome plot obstacles. It was the scriptwriters prerogative to accept or reject these ideas as they would with any other student contributor. Ultimately, the adults wanted all scripts to be shootable. As a result, the script conference could be interpreted as an obstacle for students to overcome in order to move their script into production with adults functioning as gatekeepers. In his study of a high school media production class, Reilly (1998) also saw this gatekeeping role during their "script reviews." In the video club, the adults ended up deciding if these official scripts were "good enough" to go into production or "not good enough, keep trying." Scripts that overcame this gauntlet were then printed out to give to potential directors. Printing was a symbolic act that represented the end of the scriptwriting process and the start of other pre-production activities. Changes could still be made to the script, both in the computer and with pen/pencil on the printed paper, but for all intents and purposes the script was "done."

Not every script went through a conference. While some students repeatedly interrupted adults to ask for help with their scripts, a few experienced or focused scriptwriters worked away requesting no help whatsoever. Adults did try to "check in"

with as many students as possible each session, but with a limited amount of time

available some students slipped by without much supervision. Katie, one of the

scriptwriters for *The Attacks*, was a video club member who needed very little help,

preferred to work independently, and had already proven herself to be quite capable with

a record of producing a few admirable documentary videos. As a result, *The Attacks* did

not have a script conference; when Katie announced that the script was complete, I barely

looked over it asking if she thought any parts needed any special attention. She said "no"

and I trusted her opinion. "Great. Start looking for a cast and crew." We discovered later,

in the production meeting, that there were significant problems with the script and

because we didn't have a script conference, the production meeting ended up functioning

like a public script conference with the authors *and* an actual production meeting.

   Constructing the cast and crew. Once a script was completed, other pre-

production tasks needed to be addressed including the construction of the cast and crew.

(Note: in the video club the term "crew" was often used to represent both the cast—

actors and everyone in front of the camera— and crew— the director, cameraperson, and

everyone else who is behind the camera.) The way that the video club generally worked

was the scriptwriters first found a director and then let that person carefully put together

their actors and production crew. Sometimes this procedure was broken and I discovered

that students, especially at the beginning of the video club, preferred to go about

assembling their cast and crew in a much more loose manner yelling out "Who wants to

be camera?!" and assigning the role to the first person who said "I do!" Ability,

particularly at the beginning of the year, was rarely factored into these decisions and,

personally, I found it both alarming and refreshing— alarming because potential

problems could be avoided by choosing a person with skill and experience but refreshing

that everyone was given a chance to participate and learn. When a visually impaired

student (who had some sight but still used a cane) was appointed as a cameraperson, it

dawned on me that the students were wonderfully unbiased in their choices. As the

students gained more experience and the stakes rose (ex. dealing with a long, interesting

script), the kids began to fill key roles such as director, editor, and principle actors more

selectively, taking into consideration the availability of students (some were cast in

multiple videos) and what they could offer the production in terms of skills. Some

students such as Thomas, Jaime, and Renee preferred to be in *front* of the camera while

there were others such as Ella, Katie, and Luke who preferred to be *behind* the camera.

Most students didn't have a preference and enjoyed working in whatever role that was

available. (For more on roles, please see chapter five).

       The Attacks had been partially cast during scriptwriting and well before a director

had been secured. The original script had four protagonist (the final version had two) and

the scriptwriters, Katie and Pilar, had cast themselves along with Naomi and Ella (all fifth

grade girls in the same class) to play the four friends in the main acting roles. During the

production meeting, no director had been settled on yet all of the other cast and crew

roles had been decided on by Naomi, Katie, and Pilar. This breaking of protocols would

eventually cause problems as no one volunteered to be the director, most likely because

the director's power had already been undermined.

       Production meeting. Early in the school year while filming the student film

Zumbatomic, Jasmine asked some of the actors in the video what the video was about and

all of them replied that they didn't know. How could this be? While they acted in the film,

they never actually read the script from start to end, didn't have access to a copy of the script, and on the set did only what the director told them to do (generally recite short lines out of sequence with the story). The actors had no idea how these parts would eventually fit together. This astonished the adults because they, as producers (see chapter five for more on the role of adults as producers), were involved in all the videos and knew a great deal about them. It had not yet occurred to the adults that individual students working closely on a video wouldn't know what the story was about. After further investigation, we were surprised to discover a few video editors who also didn't know what the story was that they were editing, even when they had a script. Video clips were brought to them out of sequence with big gaps in the stories. Methodically, they removed the "heads" (everything before "Action!") and "tails" (everything after "cut") of the video clips. With such focused concentration and with so many missing parts they could only see the metaphoric trees (clips) and not the forest (story).

In order to solve some of these issues, the adults in the club decided that a *production meeting* was needed. The general protocol of the production meeting was based upon an example I had seen in the DVD special features of the Spike Lee film *Do the Right Thing* (Lee, 1989). Lee assembled the entire cast in a circle and they did a dramatic reading of the script. During the reading the scriptwriter/director/actor (Lee) answered questions from the cast and crew, clarified meanings, and highlighted certain parts of the script that were critical to the story. Using this meeting as a model, the general protocol of the production meeting for the video club was established. In our production meetings, just before starting to shoot, everyone involved in the film (both the cast and crew) assembled and received a copy of the script. Collectively the script was

read out loud: the producer (almost always an adult) or director read the action, the editor

read the screen headings, and the actors read their individual parts. The idea was to get a

sense of the entire story and work out any problems that might turn into production issues

later.

Like the professionals in *Do the Right Thing*, the students in the video club posed

important clarifying questions for the scriptwriters in order to perform their roles the best

they could. For example in the script for the student production *The Phone Call*, one

sequence (Figure 4.3 below) relied heavily on the gestures and tone of voice of the actors;

the dialogue alone did not convey the meaning.
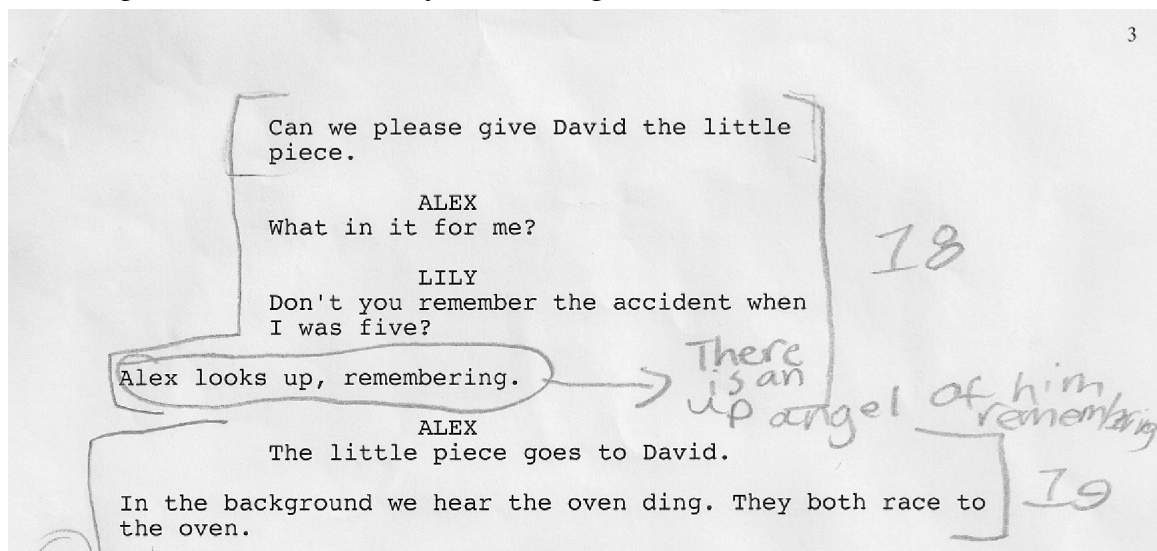
Figure 4.3. Selection from the director's copy of the script *The Phone Call*.

During the production meeting for *The Phone Call*, the two actors playing the scene (Big

Brother "Alex" and Little Sister "Lilly") asked the scriptwriter/director a clarifying

question about the line "Don't you remember the accident when I was five?" In the data

script that follows (dialog and action of the participants of the production meeting),

notice how the "Big Brother" actor tries to make sense of that line and understand the

subtext. (Note, instead of their actual names, the roles of the participants are indicated in

order to add important role information to the discussion.)

```
INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - AFTERNOON - (1/10/2012)

The cast and crew of The Phone Call all sit on the
floor of the hallway right outside the door of the
computer lab. There are scripts all over the floor.

                    PRODUCER
          Director, any comments to the
          folks, anything?

The Director looks up at the roof thinking.

                    BIG BROTHER ACTOR
               (to the Director)
          What was the accident when Lilly
          was five?

                    LITTLE SISTER ACTOR
          Yeah!

                    PRODUCER
          That's important. That way you
          know how to act.

The Director smiles and shrugs her shoulders a bit
then seems to have an idea.

                    DIRECTOR
          Ok--

                    PRODUCER
          What was the accident? We can make
          this stuff up. It's called
          "backstory."

                    DIRECTOR
          She threw up in Alex's bed.

                    BIG BROTHER ACTOR
          Yahhhgth!

The Director laughs. The Producer makes sick faces and
rubs his stomach.

                    PRODUCER
          So, it's little things like that
          you go...
```

```
                                (gesturing)
                     And doing this kind of stuff.

          He acts like he's putting his finger down his throat.

                               BIG BROTHER ACTOR
                     Oh, yeah! That's my thing!

          And the actor sticks his finger down his throat.

                               PRODUCER
                     Yeah! That kind of stuff helps.
                     Excellent question. Any other
                     questions for the scriptwriters
                     and director?
```

Here two actors are trying to understand how to act out a scene by understanding the subtext of the line "Don't you remember the accident when I was five?" Interestingly, it was not the actor *saying* the line that inquired about it but the actor that had to *react* to it— "Alex looks up remembering." Remembering what? He asked the director for additional information, something that the script did not overtly say but he as an actor must convey. Without knowing the term, the actors were trying to learn/invent the "backstory" so that they could understand the motivation of their characters and perform their roles better. Chloe, one of the scriptwriters and the director, did not know the answer to their question so she made up the backstory on the spot and they all found it to be suitable. When they eventually shot the scene, the actors all imagined the backstory but never once mentioned vomiting.

The production meeting for *The Attacks* took place in Jasmine's classroom and, because we had multiple adults present that day, both Jasmine and I were able to be a part of the meeting. From the first line read out loud, we discovered small problems— some students had different versions of the script and we had to share copies of the latest one. In particular, I (identified as the "Producer" in the data sample below) had a lot of

questions concerning clarity and pointed out numerous screenwriting form issues to be

fixed. In my attempt to save time avoiding a script conference for *The Attacks*, a lot of the

issues that would have already been discovered had to be addressed. At times, the

production meeting functioned more like a public script conference than an actual

production meeting, though production meeting goals were met. Still, our system worked

because the script issues were identified and uncovering these problems during the

production stage would have been even more time consuming. In the following excerpt

from *The Attacks* production meeting, we can see small form issues addressed as well as

a subtle struggle between the Actor/Director and the Assistant Producer concerning who

will control and direct the video.

```
INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - (11/29/2011)

The entire crew for The Attacks sit around a table.
They concentrate on the scripts in front of them while
the Producer reads out loud.

                    PRODUCER
          "June, Lexie, Paisley, Angel, they
          all run in shock from Moonlight
          out the front door. They run into
          the park across the street.
          Moonlight chases after them."
               (beat)
          Can we stop for a second? If
          they're across the street it's a
          whole new setting, a whole new
          scene, right?

                    MARKERBOARD
          Not if we chase them with the
          camera.

   There is some giggling but the Producer continues.

                    PRODUCER
          Well think about this for a
          second. "They all run in shock" so
          they all run out the front door so
```

                    they're someplace else.

                         ACTOR/DIRECTOR
                    (realizing)
               Oh yeah...

                         PRODUCER
               Ok, they run into the park so....
               I'm going to scribble this in
               here...

The Producer writes on his script.

                         PRODUCER
               "Exterior... Park."

The scriptwriters at the table scribble and make notes
on their copies.

                         ACTOR/DIRECTOR
               So this would be scene three?

                         PRODUCER
               Don't worry about scenes one, two,
               three-- you have no idea what
               that's going to be eventually. I'm
               just going to put down here "EXT.
               PARK."
                    (reading)
               Ok, "Moonlight chases after them."
                    (pause)
               Wait, there's the park. Basically
               we just have to move this part up.

                         SCRIPTWRITER 1
               Yeah.

                         PRODUCER
               Alright. Again. "June, Lexie,
               Paisley, Angel. Once they reach
               the playground, they run up the
               stairs to the play...

Everyone turns the page of their script together. A
big rustle of papers.

                         PRODUCER
               Ground?

                         SCRIPTWRITER 1
               Playground. Play...structure.

Lots of voices around the table as the exact word is
being searched for.

                         ACTOR/DIRECTOR
               The equipment. The jungle gym.

The Producer is writing.

                         PRODUCER
               Thank you. Jungle gym will work as
               well.
                    (reading)
               "They run up the stairs to the
               play structure.
                    (beat)
               "Moonlight."

                         VILLAIN ACTOR
                    (reading in a creepy
                    voice)
               "Hey! Where are you? I want to
               play!"

Smiles all around the table.

                         PRODUCER
               "June, Lexie, Paisley, and Angel
               they all hear her and slide down
               the slide and hide beneath the
               playground. Moonlight looks down."

                         VILLAIN ACTOR
               "There you are."

The Assistant Producer interjects.

                         ASSISTANT PRODUCER
               Well, instead of "beneath the
               playground," do you mean "behind"
               the play structure?

The Actor/Director is confused but hesitant.

                         ACTOR/DIRECTOR
               She looks down...where would we
               be...?

                         ASSISTANT PRODUCER
               But beneath is under. Do you
               mean--

The Assistant Producer gestures with her arms.

                         SCRIPTWRITER 1
               Yeah, like on the kindergarten--

```
                    ACTOR/DIRECTOR
          What about that little bouncy
          thing, you know, how you can see
          people down there. I thought--

                    SCRIPTWRITER 1
          Yeah.

                    ACTOR/DIRECTOR
          Yeah, that's what we were thinking
          on the script.

                    ASSISTANT PRODUCER
          Well the more specific you are in
          your writing, the more control you
          have over that, especially if
          you're letting go once you've
          written it. Right?
```

At the start of the example, a new scene heading was needed because, when

shooting, the director will have to move both people and equipment from one location to

another but the scriptwriters didn't indicate this. Creating a scene heading was a small

issue, easy to fix, but it would help make shooting the script out of chronological order

much easier. As stated before, issues like these issues were addressed during a script

conference and discussing them in a production meeting was helpful to only the

scriptwriters (who made lots of notes on their scripts).

The bigger issue was that the script/production was still constructing a cast and

crew, as a director had not yet been secured. As a result, there was tension between the

Actor/Director (Naomi) and the Assistant Producer (Jasmine). Jasmine believed that

Naomi was the best candidate to perform the directing role because she knew a great deal

about the script and seemed to already have ideas on how it should be shot. The problem

was Naomi didn't want to take on the role, preferring to be one of the main actors. The

subtext was that Naomi might end up directing by proxy with another student as a mere

figurehead. Jasmine wanted to prevent this. In the example above, I wrote out Naomi as

"Actor/Director" because while the crew did not have a director at this time, she

functioned as one during the meeting. She was the only person who paid attention to

directing organizational features such as scene numbers ("So, this would be scene

three?") and had thought out answers for location questions ("The equipment. The jungle

gym."). Historically, the video club had never had an Actor/Director (like Spike Lee or

Woody Allen) and had discouraged the practice both out of fairness (other kids could

perform one of these important and coveted roles) and practicality (perhaps too much

responsibility for one person to do well). In private, the producers told Naomi she would

have to choose one role or the other but it was obvious that the entire production was

relying on her to be the director.

       As we can see next, even more substantial issues arose that would take

compromise, negotiation, and eventually significant script revisions to solve. The

production meeting continued:

       INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM – CONTINUOUS – (11/29/2011)

       The Assistant Producer finishes her thought and there
       is silence for a moment.

                         PRODUCER
               And I have a problem with the
               script and that is... there's
               June, Lexie...

       Counting on his fingers. A little exasperated.

                         PRODUCER
               Paisley, Angel... There's <u>so</u> many
               characters, and they're all doing
               the exact same thing.

       He looks around the table but there is silence.

                         PRODUCER
               Are they ever going to do

something different? Or are they
always together?

                    SCRIPTWRITER 1
          They do stuff different. I think
          the...a few pages...

Scriptwriter 1 flips through the script and a few
others flip through theirs.

                    ACTOR/DIRECTOR
          They get tied up, right?

                    PRODUCER
          As viewers, we can't pay attention
          to that many people.

                    MARKERBOARD
          Nope!

The Producer looks over at the Markerboard,
acknowledging her, pleased.

                    PRODUCER
          We just lose interest.

The Producer puts his hands up in the air and then
looks at the Markerboard and gives her a thumbs up.

                    PRODUCER
               (to the Markerboard)
          Thank you for your affirmation.
               (continuing)
          Alight! Let's see here. "She looks
          down, 'There you are!' All the
          girls say...

Four of the actors halfhearted read the line in
unison. Looking at each other guiltily.

                    FOUR ACTORS
          Aaaaahhhhh.

While the Producer reads, Scriptwriter 1 looks at
SCRIPTWRITER 2 and Actor/Director.

                    PRODUCER
          "They all run and trip over a
          rock."

The Producer is in playful disbelief.

                    PRODUCER
          All of them?!

The entire table erupts in laughter.

>   PRODUCER
>   "Then they sit down..." All of
>   them...
>   (beat)
>   You know what would be kind of
>   neat is if they just moved like
>   one unit.

Actor/Director puts her hand to her face. She's not
into the idea already.

>   ACTOR/DIRECTOR
>   Oh, my god... But--

The Producer gets up from the table. Lots of
chattering at the table.

>   PRODUCER
>   (pointing)
>   The four characters, stand up, but
>   in a line, face that way.

The girls get up shifting around and finally in a line
facing in one direction.

>   PRODUCER
>   Now, when you walk, move your
>   right foot...

They all move their right foot one step except for
Scriptwriter 2 who is last and she moves her left foot
but then quickly corrects. The whole group erupts in
laughter. The Producer claps.

>   PRODUCER
>   Then your left foot.

The four girls move forward closely packed together.

>   PRODUCER
>   Right foot. Left foot.
>   (beat)
>   See how they're moving like one
>   machine? Wouldn't that be funny if
>   they all fell, acting like one--

>   MARKERBOARD
>   Kind of like dominos!

>   PRODUCER
>   That would be interesting. Four
>   characters that would be <u>exactly</u>

                        the same. Especially if they all
                        wore purple one day and then the
                        next day you all wore green.
                              (beat)
                        So what would happen then is the
                        viewer would watch this and they'd
                        think to themselves--

                              MARKERBOARD
                        O-M-G!

Laughter all around.

                              PRODUCER
                        And what else?

A long silence.

                              VILLAIN ACTOR
                        Uh...

                              ACTOR 4
                        This is shocking!

                              PRODUCER
                        What else?

                              MARKERBOARD
                        Kind of weird.

                              PRODUCER
                        They can't be separated.

Lots of random comments around the table: "Like
dominoes." "I don't get it." "Let's just try it."

Everyone sits back down again and returns to their
script.

I objected to having four main protagonists arguing that it was awkward and no

viewer would be able to follow that many main characters. The scriptwriters were serving

their real world friendships by putting them on screen together as best friends in the

video. I thought the story suffered for this and my compromise was to keep all four actors

on the screen but have them act as one unit— not an entirely original idea as a variation

of this exists in the film *Heathers* (Di Novi & Lehmann, 1989). The idea was appreciated

by some students particularly the Markerboard operator who provided valuable support

for the idea however the Actor/Director objected and was not convinced even after the

four of them demonstrated walking as one unit. In the next example, which comes some

15 minutes after the last example, we can see that the Markerboard operator was still

thinking about the four characters as one idea and Scriptwriter 1 (Katie) could see that

support for the idea by other members of the cast and crew was beginning to build.

```
INT. EMPTY CLASSROOM - 15 MINUTES LATER - (11/29/2011)

The group is still around the table reading through
the script.

                    PRODUCER
          "June, Lexie, Paisley, and Angel"
          apparently "all freak out." And
          again, that's action.

Scriptwriter 1/Actor looks around at the others in the
room somewhat defeated.

                    ASSISTANT PRODUCER
          Are they saying anything there?
          What does "freaked out" mean?

                    SCRIPTWRITER 2/ACTOR
          Maybe they're in shock and
          they're--

                    SCRIPTWRITER 1/ACTOR
          They don't know what to do.

The Markerboard is leaning back in her chair thinking.

                    MARKERBOARD
          Alright. Remember when Mr. Jurich
          had that idea how they're all
          moving as one? And like maybe when
          they get shocked--
               (hedging)
          it's just an idea-- they go
               (motioning with her
               hands to her face)
          "O!" then the next "M!" and the
          next "G!" and the last "ahhhg!"
```

> The whole crew laughs loud and there's a flurry of
> approving comments. Several people are acting it out.
> The Producer notices that the Actor/Director isn't
> into it.

>   PRODUCER
>   Naomi doesn't like it, though. Why
>   don't you like it?

>   ACTOR/DIRECTOR
>   I don't know, it's like...weird.

> There is laughter and lots of side conversations.

>   ACTOR/DIRECTOR
>   It wouldn't be "The Attacks" but
>   "The Robot Machine."

>   PRODUCER
>   So the meaning changes a great
>   deal.

>   ACTOR/DIRECTOR
>   Yeah.

>   PRODUCER
>   Well lets just keep this in mind.
>   Let's just read the rest and see
>   about changes.

The Markerboard operator, still thinking about the "four characters as one" idea some 15 minutes later, embellished it further by adding the "O-M-G!" idea to great praise from others in the cast and crew, however, the idea doesn't win over Naomi (Actor/Director). She argued that it changed the entire meaning of the film, essentially saying that it turned the thriller into a satire. It was a good idea but not the right one for the tone of the video. The Producer acknowledged this point and left it to the two scriptwriters to decide what to do. Ultimately, Katie and Pilar revised *The Attacks* to have only two protagonists and put greater emphasis on the two villains. They rejected the "four characters as one" idea keeping the original tone of the piece. Interestingly, they also dropped their acting parts to move on to a different project after the rewrite. Nevertheless,

they took great pride in seeing the video footage come in and were very pleased with the final cut of the video. Naomi became the director, a role she was clearly meant to do, and also abandoned her acting role. After these changes, two new students, Chloe and her sister Mindy, were cast as the protagonists.

The Attacks production meeting was unusual in that it combined the functions of two processes— the script conference and the production meeting— into one. As a result, the meeting could be seen as centered around the two producers who were trying to sort out multiple obstacles including script issues, settling on a cast and crew, and constructing a good story for a viewer. I would argue that the meeting centered around the *script* and not on any person. The goals for the producers were the same: to insure a shootable script and give everyone involved in the video a chance to get familiar with the story and understand their role well. Though unusual, this production meeting demonstrated the complex social interactions between multiple participants with different roles and needs. In a regular script conference, which is only between the scriptwriters and the producer, the scriptwriters would not have had to contend with the input and contributions of so many others including the markerboard operator ("O-M-G!") who very nearly transformed the entire mood of the script. In the end, *The Attacks*' scriptwriters solved the issues that were brought up in a quick revision and the crew moved on to the next tasks.

Props, costumes, and sets. After the production meeting, scripts were examined for any necessary props, costumes, or particular sets. Props and costumes were particularly crucial to the making of a film because they lent believability to stories and characters. They had to be either made in the video club or brought from home. In a prior

school year, a full body gorilla suit was used to transform an actor into a "monkey-girl,"

half monkey and half girl. This costume was central to the video but it had to go through

a few revisions before it was finalized.

> When the actress put on the suit the first time, the club members were impressed
>
> by the look but there were issues. 'She looks like a bear, or maybe a giant mouse!'
>
> one student commented. Summer [the director] took the costumed actress down
>
> the hall for fresh opinions asking any available students or teachers, 'What animal
>
> is she?' A consensus could not be found and the crew decided that a tail was
>
> needed. At the next session, a wiry brown one appeared. The tail was changed
>
> again, half way through filming, for a much fatter and more pronounced one.
>
> (Jurich & Meyer, 2011, p. 275).

A key part of costumes and props was making sure the observable objects, the

"signifiers," helped the authors create the intended signified meaning (van Leeuwen,

2005). The suit itself, even with the thin tail, wasn't enough to signify "monkey;"

however the fat tail was able to reliably conjure the right meaning for test audiences.

Sets were another pre-production concern for crews and all kinds of questions

could come up: How exactly will that driving scene be shot? Do we need an actual car?

Will the school library be free or will there be a meeting there? Locations for shooting

needed to be secured and permissions granted. This was where adults were important

because they had access and could negotiate with other adults to secure locations.

Students could sometimes provide access as well. Students ended up in many interesting

locations around the school that they would never have been allowed to be in such as the

school basement, teachers' lounge, cafeteria kitchen, staff workroom, "adults only"

bathrooms, and the principal's office. Ella, the editor for *The Attacks*, arranged for a

couple scenes of the video to be shot in her home which was directly across the street

from the school. Students learned how to successfully ask teachers for room access by

being polite, informative, and demonstrating appreciation. Before going out to secure a

location, students checked with the adults and sometimes even role played the interaction

with them. The adults in the video club wanted students to be prepared to answer a few

standard questions— what will they be doing?, how long will it take?, will the class

environment would be completely restored?— and students got good at building answers

to these questions into their initial location pitch.

Pre-production usually ended when the urge to actually film got too great. The

"low hanging fruit" philosophy— "lets get these easy shots first and we'll worry about

the rest later"— propelled the students into action.

The Production Board

The Production Board was unique to our video club; it was a public working

document, invented a few years earlier by myself when the producers and directors

needed some basic visual way of seeing what was going on in the video club at any given

moment. For every video production, a card was created with the title of the video on the

front and on the back was a record of the individuals that were part of that production

team (see Figure 4.4 for *The Attacks* production cards). Later, this information was

helpful for students while creating the credits for videos. The board itself was a bulletin

board in the computer lab, conveniently located next to our video club materials cabinet

which housed the cameras, tripods, cables, marker boards, props and costumes. No one

was using the bulletin board so we appropriated it. For students who attended classes in

the lab, it was visible for all to see with interesting titles and decorated with movie

posters. The Production Board proved to be a valuable tool that everyone in the club had

to consult and negotiate on a daily basis.
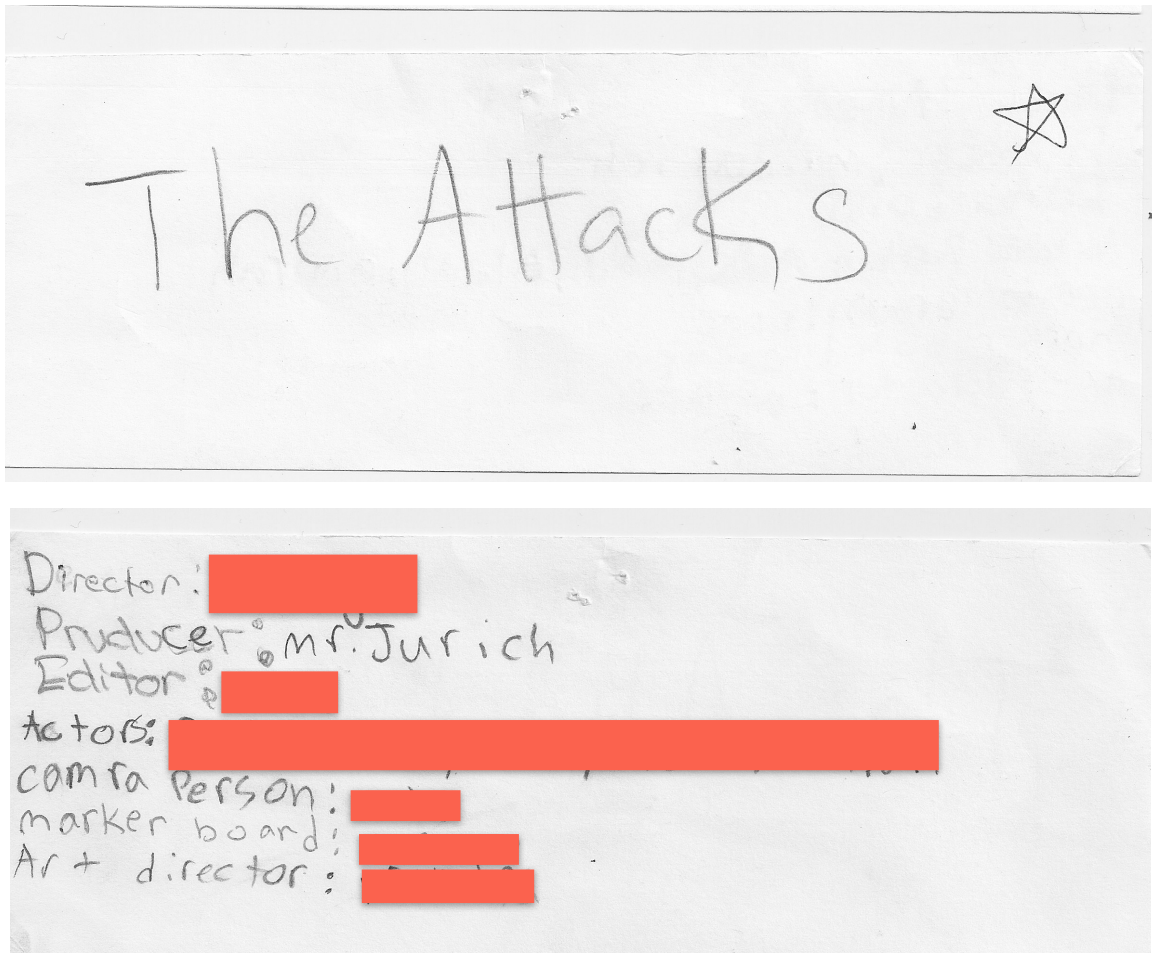
Figure 4.4. Production cards for *The Attacks*, front and back.

The board (see Figure 4.5) had four categories that corresponded to different

stages of production: pre-production, production, and two levels of post-production

(video editing and sound editing). Cards representing the videos were moved as they

entered and exited each stage. Over time protocols surrounding the board evolved and

developed to meet the needs of the video club participants. For example, between 2008

and 2010, the board included *all* scripts that were in progress, even if a script was just an

idea. At the time so few scripts existed that the board could accommodate them all. By

the 2011-2012 school year, the board would have been swamped over with cards in the

first three weeks of the video club because the students were so prolific. We decided

collectively, both adults and kids, that we were no longer interested in tracking scripts at

any level of completeness. Instead, we only wanted to track scripts that were *done* or

nearing completion. To make it on the production board, the script had to be ready for

review by others, thus "readable" with a beginning, middle, and end.

Figure 4.5. Video Club Production Board.

Starting in the 2011-2012 school year, scripts in the "Pre-Production" category of

the board had already gone through script conferencing and were ready for casting and

crew finding. Directors (though it was common for scriptwriters to want to direct their

own scripts themselves) walked around the computer lab seeking out volunteers to fill

acting and production roles and recording commitments information on the back of the

cards, essentially "pitching" the story to others in the video club. While the adults might

have found a script perfectly acceptable to shoot, the students alone had to get the

productions moving forward. The script had to be compelling enough for students to

commit to being a part of it. If the director was unreliable or bossy students might pass on

participating. Some scripts stayed in the Pre-Production category for a long time unable

to stir up enough interest. In short, scripts had to be "sold" and only rarely was turn-

taking a factor. Sometimes an adult would advocate for a film by saying to another

student, "this is a good script, look it over," but in general it was up to kids to figure out

what got produced.

Not only did the Production Board create some visual order to what was happening

in the video club, but it also provided a systematic and fair way of organizing videos for

the production stage. If more than one script was ready for filming, the club needed to

know which crew got first priority to go out and film and the board was used to keep a

running order of videos to go out and shoot. If the director or main actor for a video was

absent, they couldn't film that day. Using the Production Board, we saw which

production was next in line and the director checked to see if *their* crew was ready to

shoot. If for some reason they couldn't film, we went to the next one in line. This kind of

flexibility was important because when a video was in the production stage, it required an

enormous amount of resources compared to the other stages. A crew might consist of

some 7-12 people in addition to adult supervision. A film that was in the top production

spot got priority as well all of these resources. Their task was to finish as quickly as

possible and let the other films behind them get to production. The Production Board eliminated the possibility that a script could be written one week and then filmed the next, essential skipping the other videos.

Students knew that this line existed but a few times students tried to circumvent it. Katie and Pilar were students who made a couple of documentary films that didn't require a big crew. They had gotten used to a certain level of freedom and tried to skip the line by making a game show that was a clever variation of the *Newlywed Game* only for best friends instead of married couples. They thought they could film immediately since it didn't have a traditional script but the amount of resources they needed to do a "live" show was huge: six contestants, a host, three camera operators, a director, producer, markerboard operator. The filming would have disrupted every other production and thus it required a card on the Production Board. They ended up not filming because their idea was created in April and their place in line never came up. While this was unfortunate (the idea was an interesting one and kids wanted to participate), it was also fair. Without the Production Board, I am certain that Katie and Pilar would have started filming immediately— and other videos would have had to wait for them to finish in order to continue progress.

The Production Stage

In the production stage, students shot the script often leaving the computer lab to film at various locations around the school. A production crew consisted of (at minimum) a director, cameraperson, one or more actors, and a "marker" or *markerboard operator*— the person who documents on a dry erase board what scene, shot, and take the crew was currently shooting and displaying it in front of the camera before each shot. Larger

production crews may have included numerous actors, producers, art directors, extras, costume and prop handers, and even the scriptwriters. If students wanted or needed to shoot outside of the computer lab, they needed an adult to go with them for supervision. Sometimes a classroom teacher in the school, especially if the crew was using their room to shoot, could be counted on to do this but in general one of the adults in the video club accompanied the students while they shot their footage.

It took a long time and considerable amount of effort to get a video shot (and even more to edit it). In many ways writing the script was the easy part in that changes could be made to a script quickly and without issue while shooting a mere 10 seconds of video might take 30 minutes. Shooting was a sizable investment for students and they were careful about what projects they chose to be a part of. A weak script could be a nightmare to film and kids were cautious about agreeing to be part of a production with little sense of direction. Shooting time was limited but scripts were plentiful and students knew that everything they wrote would not be filmed; they would have to self select. Students like Chloe could write quickly, pumping out quality pages each session, but in the end only two of her scripts were actually put into production because of limited resources, particularly time and assistance from others.

Creating a "Shooting Script." When all the positions were filled and pre-production tasks were nearing completion, a critical detail had to be done: the director had to make a "shooting script," basically a plan on how to shoot the script. The club had gradually developed a process for approaching this task. In early years students "winged it" with the crew shooting from the beginning of the script and making up their shots as they went. Overwhelmed and confused, crews often came back without much to show for

their time. Without some plan, it was impossible to shoot scenes out of script order so any

obstacle grounded all production until it was solved. For example, if an actor was absent,

the crew was unable to shift to a scene in which she wasn't in and continue shooting. A

new technique developed which the video club called "blocking" or carving out and

marking specific shots from "blocks" of text from the actual screenplay. In the example

of a blocked script below (see the blocked director's copy for *The Attacks* in Figure 4.6),

the director squared off in parenthesis individual shots and gave them each a shot

number.

 (Note, our term ("blocking") was invented and does not mean the same thing as

the official film term "blocking" which is generally understood as the arrangements made

for the composition of a scene, especially the placement and movements of the actors and

camera. This demonstrates how the video club, without knowing, invented— and named

— solutions to problems that had already been solved by others a long time ago. We at

the video club "blocked" scripts while the professionals created "shooting scripts." They

"blocked" out scenes while we merely positioned actors.)

 Directors usually blocked one scene, shot it, then returned to the script to block

the next logical one to shoot. Blocking helped kids focus on one task at a time and create

an efficient shooting schedule. For example, if a needed setting was unavailable, the crew

could still shoot a different scene by blocking out the shots for that setting (ex. Scene 4,

Shot 1). Even after the script was blocked, the realities of the location often required

additional changes to be made on the fly thus "decimal shots" naturally developed (ex.

"Shot 6.1" would be between "Shot 6" and "Shot 7"). Decimal shots were interesting

because they indicated that a director was making authorial decisions on the set, perhaps

correcting an inadequate blocking scheme or adding new shots that the script didn't

cover.
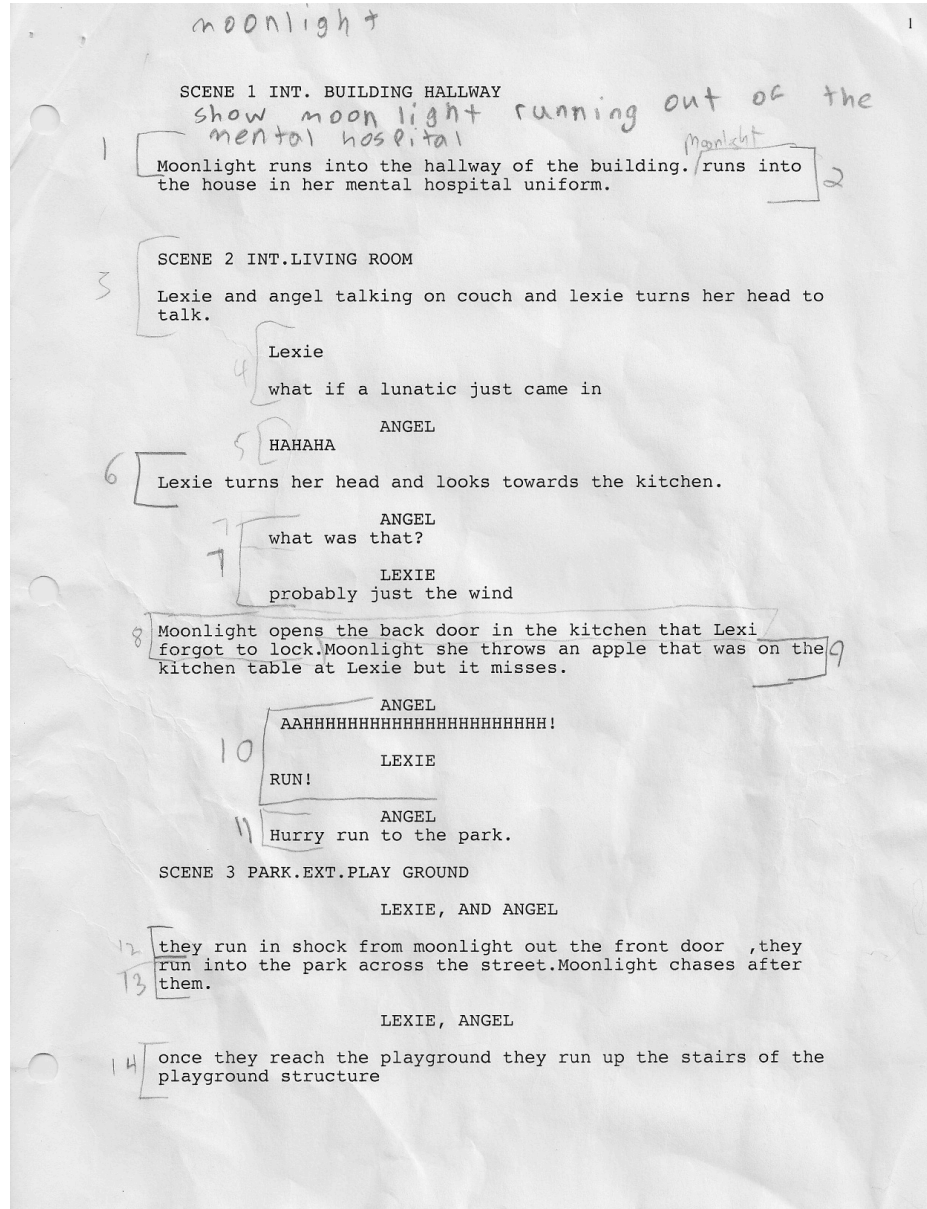
Figure 4.6. Sample of a "blocked" shooting script (director's copy) for *The Attacks*.

Shooting. After a location was settled on, the crew assembled and made their way

to the set and began shooting. Shooting involved setting up a shot, recording a take,

making and evaluations and adjustments, recording additional takes and then repeating

the whole process for the next shot. Setting up a shot in particular took the longest

amount of time to accomplish. Sets had to be arranged, camera placement needed to be

negotiated, and the director had to situate actors, directing them on how to move or say

their lines. The cameraperson had to address any issues that might come up such as

unwanted backlighting or awkward actor positioning. In setting up a shot, there was a lot

of negotiation between the various roles and after a take was attempted everyone seemed

to have an opinion or suggestion on what to do next. The whole scene could also look

quite chaotic: actors goofed off while waiting, there was a lot of noise, and laughter after

errors could last seemingly forever. Because setting up a shot disproportionately took up

a great deal of time, multiple takes were encouraged, even for takes that seemed quite

good a director might request, "one more time, just in case."

Technically, the director was in charge of both the crew and the direction of the

shooting but everyone contributed often outside their designated roles. An actor may have

co-written the script and was in a good position to comment on the direction. In the first

couple years of the club, I discouraged this feedback thinking that it was a form of

"micromanagement" by scriptwriters or "back seat driving" by actors but I started to see

the importance of this dialogue between students. It was critical feedback, real input that

changed the outcome of the final products. Still, some directors were quite firm in what

they wanted while others were more open to ideas. Directing styles ultimately didn't

matter as long as shooting was socially harmonious and the crew stayed reasonably

efficient and productive. How directors communicated with their crew was important and

may have been one of the biggest determinants of how successful the production team

was.

Shooting for *The Attacks* began in January of 2012 and lasted for a couple of

months. They shot in a variety of locations around the school including outside of the

school grounds for the the first time in the video club. The editor, Ella, lived directly

across the street from the school and got permission from her parents to have the crew

film two scenes in her living room and kitchen. They finished those shots in one efficient

session and even had time left over which Ella filled by making the whole crew snacks.

In the following example, *The Attacks* crew was shooting in the computer lab. One actor,

Jaime, was an English Language Learner (ELL) and had a difficult time saying the word

"emergency." We can see how the crew socially interacted to solve this issue and how

each person contributed both within as well as outside of their "official" roles.

```
INT. COMPUTER LAB – AFTERNOON – (2/7/2012)

The Attacks crew is shooting a scene. The Actor is
sitting in a chair with a telephone next to him while
the Markerboard operator holds the clapperboard in
front of his face. The Director is looking over her
copy of the script which has notes all over it.

There is a large audience of kids around the
perimeter, chatting, watching, and waiting.

                    MARKERBOARD
          Quiet on the set!

The room quiets down.

                    DIRECTOR
          Camera... Markerboard.

                    MARKERBOARD
          Shot 48, take 2.

The Markerboard snaps the clapperboard and the
Cameraperson positions himself in front of the
viewfinder.

                    DIRECTOR
          Action.
```

                              ACTOR
                        (slowly, with a Spanish
                        accent)
                    Hi, this is po- police officer
                    Joe. What's your e-- e-- mer--
                    gency...

The actor smiles, spinning slightly in his chair.
There are suppressed giggles in the audience.

                              DIRECTOR
                    Cut. Ok...

The laugher around the room floods out. The
Markerboard erases and then writes something on the
board.

                              CAMERAPERSON
                        (joking)
                    Wait, stop failing!

                              ACTOR
                        (smiling)
                    Sorry! I get confused with the
                    English.

                              CAMERAPERSON
                    Well say in Spanish then, I can
                    translate it.

                              DIRECTOR
                    Noooo...

The Markerboard has the clapperboard ready in front of
the actors face again. She talks to the actor.

                              MARKERBOARD
                    Just say "Hi, this is Police
                    Officer Joe. What's your
                    emergency?"

                              ACTOR
                    E-mer-gen-cy... emer-gen-cy...

                              CAMERAPERSON
                    Just say "problem,"
                        (to the Director)
                    how 'bout we say "problem"?

                              MARKERBOARD
                        (thinking)
                    Yeah! Just say "problem"!

                         CAMERAPERSON
                    (playfully)
          What's your <u>problem</u>, fool!

Lots and lots of laughter by everyone in the room.

                         DIRECTOR
          No! No!
                    (to the Actor)
          Say "What's your problem?" but not
          "What's your problem, fool!" Don't
          listen to <u>this</u> fool right here.

She points to the Cameraperson and everyone laughs.

                         DIRECTOR
          Ok. Camera. Markerboard.

                         MARKERBOARD
          Shot 48, take 3.

She slaps the clapper and scoots out of the way.

                         DIRECTOR
          Action.

                         ACTOR
                    (slowly, calmly)
          Hello, this is Police Officer Joe.
          How can I help you?

Several students in the audience look around at each
other surprised and a little confused.

                         DIRECTOR
          Cut.

There is still silence. Unusual. Then a few people
clap which builds up to everyone clapping.

                         MARKERBOARD
          That was pretty good.

The Actor stands up, bows repeatedly, and starts to
walk off.

                         ACTOR
          Thank you, thank you, thank you.

                         DIRECTOR
          Sit down, Jaime. One more.

The Markerboard erases and writes. The Actor sits back
down smiling. A student slips behind the actor

```
                          ACTOR
            One more?

                          CAMERAPERSON
                  (to the student)
            Hey! Get out of the shot.

                          DIRECTOR
            Mindy! Sit down.

                          MARKERBOARD
            Quiet on the set!

                          DIRECTOR
            Quiet on the set, please.
                  (beat)
            Camera. Markerboard.

                          MARKERBOARD
            Shot 48, take 4.

                          DIRECTOR
            Action.

                          ACTOR
            Hello, this is Police Officer Joe.
            What's your..e--mergency?

                          DIRECTOR
            Cut. Good.

      The Markerboard looks over at the Cameraperson and
      nods approvingly.

                          MARKERBOARD
                  (to the Director)
            So what is this now? Shot 49?

                          DIRECTOR
            No, no, no...

      And she looks at her script, flipping pages.
```

Two competing suggestions were made to the actor and, interestingly, neither

came from the director. The markerboard operator's proximity to the actor gave her

access for a quick "one-on-one" coaching session. She repeated the line to him, offering a

model for how to say the words. While practicing, the cameraperson suggested he replace

the word "emergency" with "problem" but in his joking he revealed that the word

"problem" might change the meaning of the scene too much because the phrase "What's your problem?" has multiple connotations. This idea was appraised by the crew but the decision to use it was for the director to make. "Problem" may not have been the ideal word but they were willing to experiment in order to make progress. "Direction" for the actor came from multiple people.

During a subsequent take, the actor took the initiative to revise the dialogue further by substituting the common phrase "How can I help you?" for "What's your problem?" While the crew was surprised, they didn't reject the take outright and slowly warmed to it. The actor delivered the line cleanly but was the meaning appropriate? "How can I help you?" was a phrase that could be heard in a store or some other kind of "customer service" context but for a 911 call? Perhaps. One of the protocols that developed in the video club was to capture a take that was "good enough" and then, if time allowed, do one more to see if they could get an even better one. We can see this protocol in place when the director said "one more." The "How can I help you?" take was acceptable and now they would try one more take to get a superior performance. It was implied that the actor would try the original dialogue. If it didn't pan out, the crew already had an acceptable take tucked away in the camera. After the take was over, the markerboard operator knew it was time to move on ("So what is this now? Shot 49?"). For this shot, the production crew's job was done and it would be up to the video editor to figure out which take to use.

Shooting is perhaps the most visibly social of all the production stages. The process was full of noise and movement. The crew perpetually asked questions, gave feedback, voiced evaluations, and made decisions based on negotiation and compromise.

In later chapters I discuss the sociocultural contexts such as protocols, roles, tools, and products (chapter five) and the democratic writing (chapter six) that was a central aspect of official videomaking in the video club. I will explain the ways in which these multiple voices were integral to a democratic way of composing via collective authorship as an ongoing and organic process.

The Post-Production Stage

There was a significant overlap between the production and post-production stages in that post-production began the moment the first footage was brought to the video editor(s). Post-production involved importing footage, video editing, sound editing, creating credits, and other titling tasks. The last stage of videomaking, it was a time where videos were aggressively constructed, polished, and honed.

Importing. The cameras the students used recorded video on DV (Digital Video) cassettes— linearly onto magnetic tape. Having grown up in the non-linear world of computer "files," the students had to be regularly reminded that they had to "rewind" the cassette in the camera in order to import their footage. After rewinding the camera, the shots were "dumped" (our term) into the computer using a video editing program, in our case "iMovie HD" (Version 6.0.3). Aside from the cameraperson, this was the first time students had the opportunity to see any of the video footage. As a result, many heads huddled around the computer monitor to see the video being imported into the computer in real time. They laughed at the mistakes, commented on interesting camera angles, and gave approval to certain shots. It was always an interesting moment because the movie was still being figured out and everything they saw was generally out of sequence. For students not in the crew, they had no idea how these shots fit together.

Video editing. The "magic" happened in the editing and I was often floored by the transformation these raw takes go through. (There were many non-linear video editing programs available but we used iMovie HD, Version 6.0.3, to do all of our video editing. The program was old but very simple to learn and even more powerful and capable than contemporary versions of the program.) At this stage, the editor began to sequence the best clips of each shot into a narrative. They metaphorically chopped up the takes, removing the "heads" (loosely everything before "action!) and "tails" (more or less everything after "cut!") of the clips and a story started to emerge. In reality, the takes are non-destructively edited; any clip can be returned to its original form with a couple mouse clicks. See Figure 4.7 below to see a screen capture of the program.
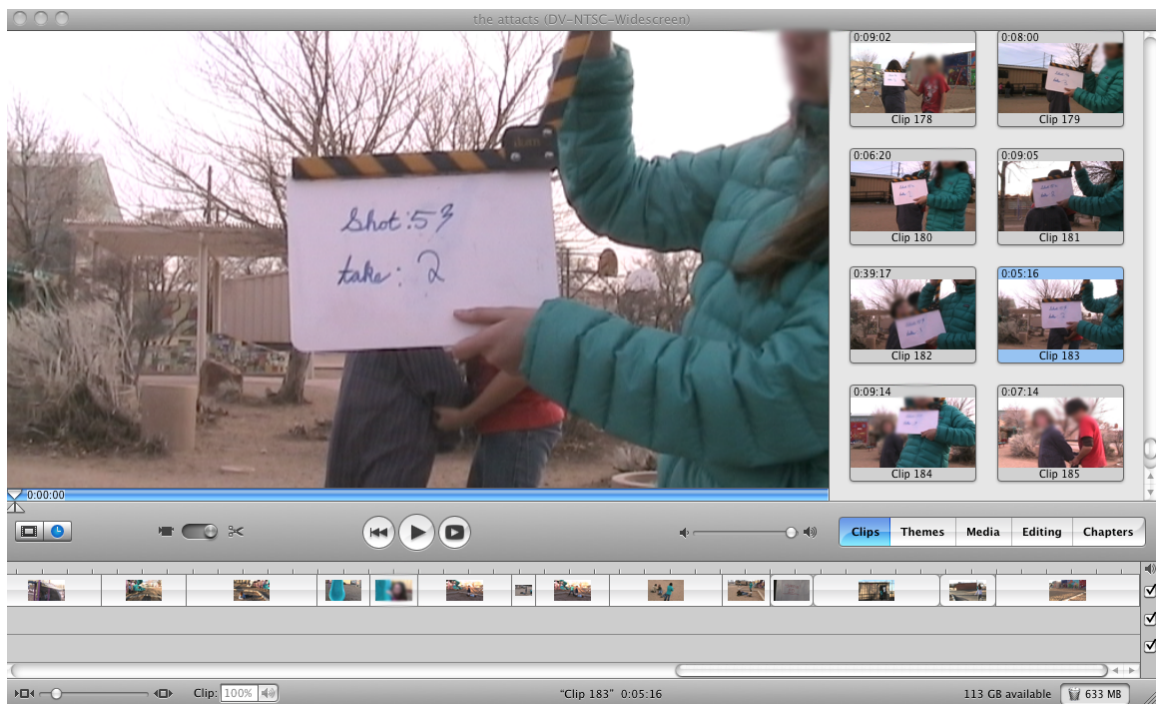
Figure 4.7. Video editing *The Attacks* in iMovie HD (screen capture).

Editing involved a methodical work flow. The best editors were students who could work step by step while keeping an eye on the big picture. Working with the script,

editors placed one clip in front of the other to form sequences that start to tell story. Next, they cut the heads and tails mentioned earlier and began to do "refined editing," looking for continuity and rhythm. A well edited video should feel smooth and transparent. The editors' most powerful tool is "cutting," making clips into smaller and smaller pieces like a sculptor. Refined editing can involve cutting maybe ten more frames— a mere third of a second— and noticing that it actually made a big difference. Some editors chose to work alone with headphones on silently immersed in their work while others preferred to work with a partner, taking turns controlling the computer and constantly discussing each editing move.

Sound editing. Once the visuals were "locked down" and no additional visual editing was done, the editor moved on to sound editing. Here the editor added layers of sound and aligned the sound clips with the action on the screen. Some of the possibilities in sound editing included adding voice overdubs (to re-record an inaudible dialogue line of a character, perhaps even changing the line), sound effects, and music. The editors either used the two additional tracks in iMovie HD (in Figure 4.7, note the two blank audio timelines near the bottom of the screen, below the video timeline) or ported the entire project over to the digital audio workstation (DAW) program Garageband (Apple) for more elaborate sound editing options. One of the biggest advantages of Garageband (see Figure 4.8) was the program provided a large number of "loops" that students could use to create original music. Working with sound and music was surprisingly time intensive but also the major difference between amateurish and more slick productions. *The Attacks* had substantial use of music and sound effects, particularly a subtle low note drone over entire scenes to create suspense and a sense of dread.
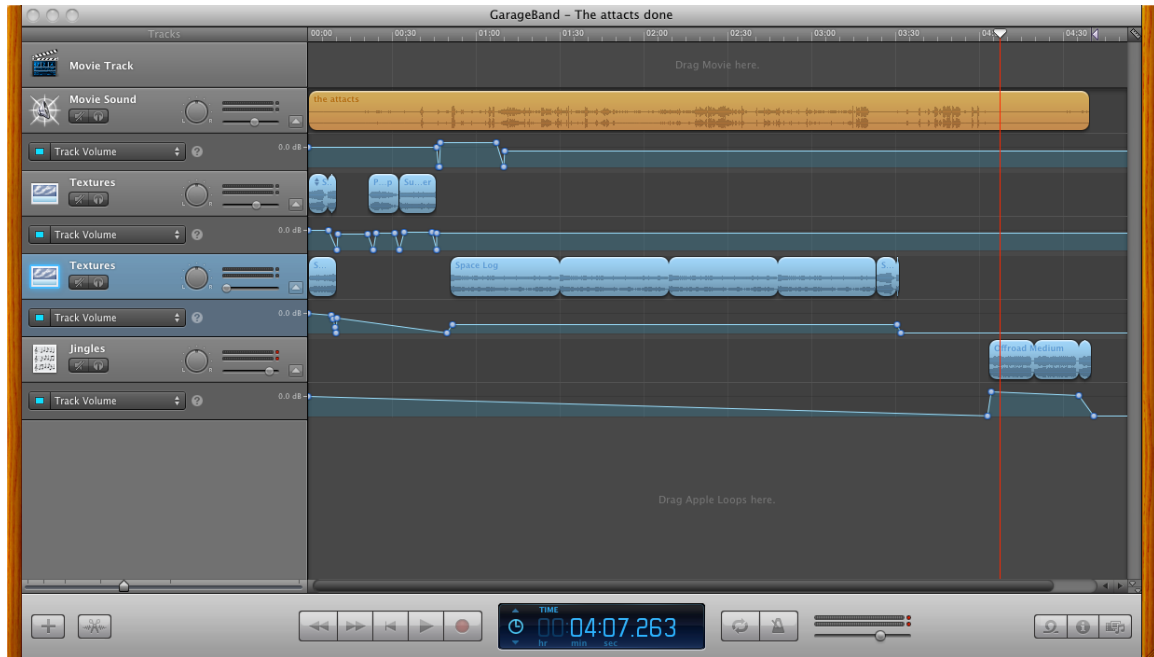
Figure 4.8. Sound editing *The Attacks* in Garageband (screen capture).

Performing voice overdubs was particularly difficult because the editor had to

solve a myriad of problems that came up when negotiating between technological issues

and human needs. Voice overdubs required a quiet space to record and the video club had

developed two solutions. In the first, the editor would yell out "Quiet on the set!" and

wait for the room to become silent for a moment and the actor would do their take. This

worked well for quick and simple fixes of a line. The second and more elaborate solution

was to move the whole computer close to our "sound isolation booth" which was a closed

off area under the counter for the actor to crawl into and say their lines into a microphone

(see Appendix A for a map of the computer lab). The small space could fit two students

and had cloth draped all the way around it to reduce sound reflections. A key feature of

the booth was a computer monitor which mirrored the screen of the editor's above,

providing visual feedback for the actor (they could see what the editor was doing and it

helped in the timing of their lines) as well as some needed light to see their scripts. The

sound isolation booth was a great tool but it involved a bunch of plugging and

unplugging of cables and was only worth doing if there were a large number of overdubs

needed. In both cases, the editor needed to be able to quickly cue up the editing software

to record actors while they waited. The editor, like a director, needed to communicate

what she needed from the actors— talk faster, louder, softer, with more expression— and

be able to identify quickly if she got the right performance from the actor. She had to be

ready when the actor was ready and be sensitive to the fact that no student wanted to

repeat the same phrase over and over endlessly.

      Titles and credits. Titles and credits were done about the same time as sound

editing. Opening title sequences were generally quite basic with either the name of the

video over a still image or perhaps the customization of a titling template from iMovie

HD. End credits were more elaborate and almost always had catchy and upbeat music

playing as the names scrolled, hopped, or twisted by on the screen. An innovation in

credit design for the video club (started by Chloe) involved the actors introducing

themselves and what role they played, a whole production in itself. A surprising amount

of time could be spent on titles and credits and it was one of the few opportunities for

editors to be creative without having to rely on the footage that was brought to them by

the production crew. The editors could shoot their own video footage, search out and use

images from the Internet as backgrounds for their text, and work with kinetic type in

creative ways. Ariel made a breakthrough by layering kinetic type *over* a clip with kinetic

type already on it. Her results were unique and no template could reproduce what she

accomplished.

      In post-production, a great number of problems reared themselves: a voice was

too soft, a clip seemed to be missing, all the takes of a particular shot were flawed or, the atomic bomb of problems, "the *whole thing* doesn't make sense!" This was when those working alone sought out feedback and solutions from others. Post-production solutions generally involved a combination of creativity and the creative use of technological tools. For example, poor footage could be overcome by creatively using parts of two or more poor takes. If the footage brought in didn't tell the script's story well enough, the editor could abandon the script in order to create a revised version of the story. At times, the easiest solution was to get out the camera and reshoot or add a shot, stepping back into production momentarily. It was not uncommon for a second student to come in and take over editing or refine a rough cut. Fresh eyes were sought out to see if the video said what the editors thought it said. Finally the video was done— or as done as it will be because other productions awaited. The video was polished once more before shown to kids, parents, and the school community at the Premier Night, the culminating event at the end of the year.

The Distribution Stage

Once a video neared completion, distribution stage processes started up. These included the making of posters for individual videos, preparing for and hosting Premier Night, and the making of the end of the year compilation DVD. The distribution stage, where videos were either promoted or shared, involved a form of public evaluation that extended beyond the video club itself.

Posters. Poster-making was inspired by the movie posters of major motion pictures. Professional posters are produced to market the movies and ours served a similar function, placed around the computer lab (where the rest of the school came to do

work throughout the week) and the school. Unlike the large posters of blockbuster

Hollywood films, the posters in the video club were on standard 8.5" x 11" paper, though

still in color. Students enjoyed making the posters and proudly made copies to take home.

Posters were also made for "Premier Night" itself, indicating the date and location, and

put around the school a few weeks before the event.

Only a few elements of Hollywood posters were copied. Student poster makers

usually used a notable still image from the video and added the title of the video in an

engaging or suitable font on top of it. They rarely included the distinguishing "fine print

credits" at the bottom of the document but at times did include the names of the main

actors. Some posters had a bit of teaser text or "tagline" such as this one from *The Phone

Call*: "Who is the mysterious caller the children fear?" More than one version of the

movie poster could be made for a film so anyone who got the urge to make a poster

could, even for a video they were not a part of. A poster demonstrated that the video was

valued and as a result, no one objected to the production of a poster by anyone in a non-

principal role (such as a scriptwriter, director, or editor; more on these roles in chapter

five).

The poster for *The Attacks* was made by Sophie (who was the markerboard

operator) and Katrina (who played the Revenge Attacker) and was composed using the

program Pages (Apple), a word processing program that allows for flexible layering of

text, shapes, and images. Interestingly, the poster makers did a special photo shoot to

create the two images used. The focal image is of the Revenge Attacker holding a chain

around the neck of the "Insane Attacker"; a second smaller image depicts the Insane

Attacker holding her prison number (Figure 4.9 shows *The Attacks* movie poster. Note, I

have intentionally blurred the faces of the students to de-identify the participants.) The

girls wanted the poster to have a "tabloid" or newspaper look to it. Working with the

genre, they put the title of the video as a headline at the top, an image below it and lastly

a newspaper like tone using a fixed with font (Courier) in two columns to write the body

of the piece. While an odd choice for a movie poster, every element of it was intentional.
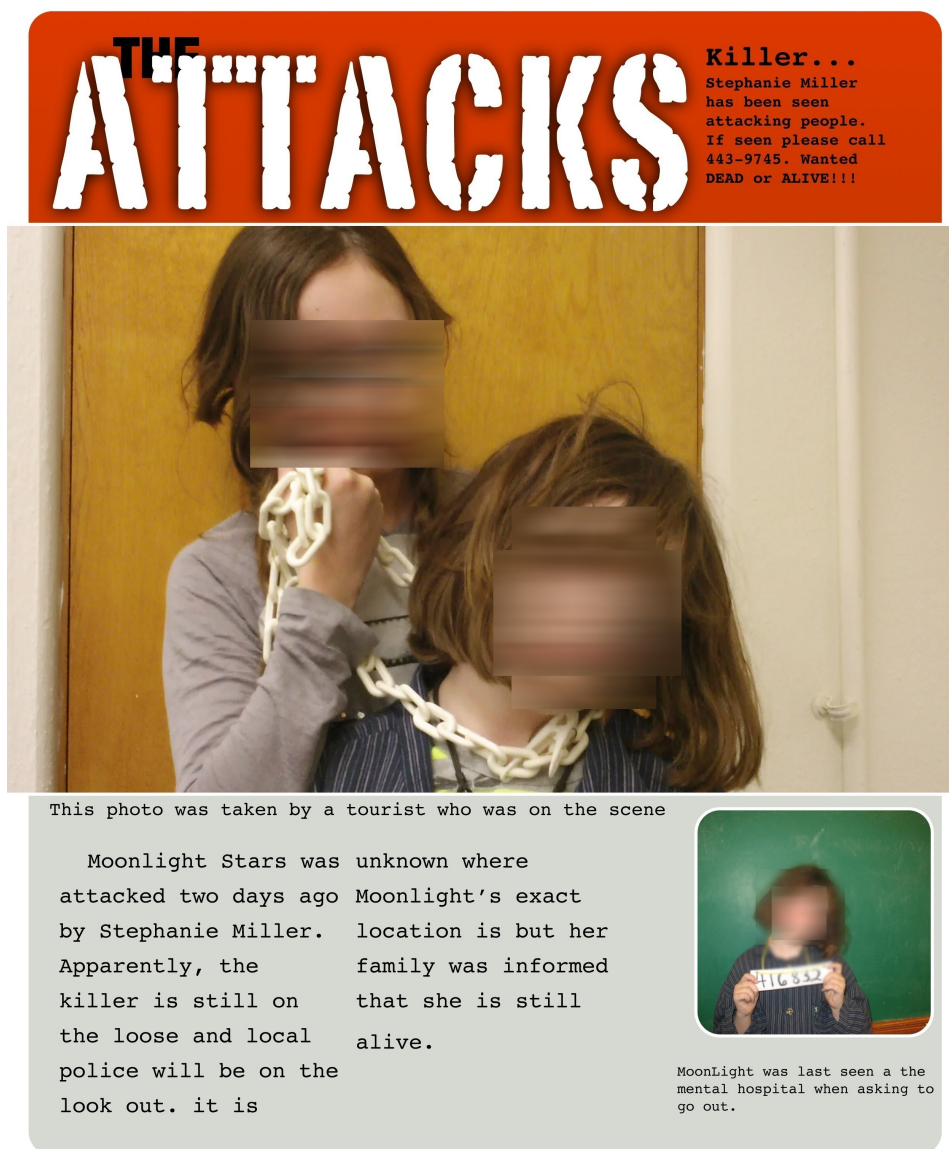
Figure 4.9. Movie poster for *The Attacks*.

The poster turned out to be controversial. A teacher at the school saw the poster

and found it objectionable for its violent inferences and thought it was violent towards women in particular. She approached me and voiced her objections to the represented images, even requesting that I take the posters down. I responded that I could not do it— I didn't put them up nor was I going to censor student work. I invited her to talk to the students who made the poster, Sophie and Katrina, but instead she went to Jasmine (who also teaches at the school) to see if she would take them down. Jasmine refused with more vehemence than I. Oddly, the offended teacher never went to the students. The intriguing poster won the praise of other students at the school and irked at least one authoritative adult figure. The example demonstrates that students made the videos that they wanted to make for an audience of their peers. Adults did not choose the topics and the ongoing philosophy of the producers (adults) that helped run the club was that they would not censor or influence the content of student work.

"Premier Night." Premier Night was the big end-of-the-year night in which students showed their video productions to a large public audience. Attendance that year was well over a hundred people though no official records were kept. Premier Night was important because it was the only official public screening of the videos. Audience members were generally parents, siblings, extended family, friends, teachers, and administrators. Hundreds of small videos and experiments were made throughout the year but the only videos shown the Premier Night were the ones that had gone through the three production stages and were tracked on the Production Board. This was an unspoken rule, a protocol, that had developed over the years (protocols are discussed further in chapter five).

Premier Night was held in the school cafeteria in an evening in May after one of

the Parent Teacher Organization meetings. We used an LCD projector to project the

visuals on a blank white wall and a public address (PA) system to play the audio. A

microphone hooked up the PA was used to make introductions and for students to explain

some of the videomaking stages and processes to the audience — something they

nervously enjoyed doing. 24 videos were screened, the most we ever had, and it took

nearly two hours to complete. Video club members almost exclusively sat on the floor

directly in front of the screen munching on popcorn and basking in the moment together.

Responses from the audience were overwhelmingly positive, though the violent content

of a few videos (in particular, *The Attacks* and *The Killed*) took the group by surprise.

      The compilation DVD. Like a conventional Hollywood movie, the DVD was

assembled, designed, duplicated, and distributed after Premier Night. It was

collaboratively produced: I managed and copied all of the completed videos onto a

master computer in the computer lab that was used for duplication, Ariel designed the

menu and graphical interface using a template as a starting point and then customized it

to her liking, and many of the video club members participated in the time consuming

duplication process. Initial rendering of the DVD— transcoding all of the different

movies, menus, transitions, and music into the proper format for the disc— took some 14

hours and had to be done overnight. Afterwards, each DVD took another 38 minutes to

burn and was done during the school day. Video club students in Jasmine's class took

care of the task of inserting a blank DVD into the master computer, labeling the disc,

returning to their classroom, setting a timer, and then repeating the process. Every student

who participated in the club, including the two students who had to withdraw from the

video club during the school year (one joined a swim team, another had transportation

issues) received a copy of the DVD. Copies for the principal, adult volunteers, and a few classroom teachers who requested one were made. All together, some 40 DVDs were made and distributed.

Summary

Making a video in the after school video club was a long and complex social process involving multiple people performing a variety of roles. In this chapter, I documented the making of one such video, *The Attacks*, and highlighted how students socially interacted throughout the multiple production stages. The example demonstrated how 13 different students participated and contributed to the final cut of the video. From its early beginnings in September of 2011 to the final screening in May of 2012, the final composition was truly multi-authored and perhaps far more collaborative than any other text students wrote during the school day.

In pre-production, I demonstrated how students collaboratively wrote scripts and showed how even students who appeared to write alone had significant social interactions with others during script conferences and production meetings. Scriptwriters were especially willing to share their work with others because scripts are meant to be turned into videos and production requires the cooperation and approval of a lot of other people. While scripts were being written, to a certain degree they were also being "marketed" to others and this competition for limited resources (production time) forced students to create high quality scripts that were complete, viable (shootable), and interesting and attractive to students who would be involved in the making of the video. Script conferences and production meetings were times for scriptwriters to share their work with an interested and engaged audience and scripts were socially revised in both collaborative

activities.

Production was a particularly social stage where students contributed in formal ways (within their roles) as well as informally (outside of their roles). Shooting required the cooperation of large number of students in specialized roles working together with a bevy of specialized tools. With all of this social interaction, sets were seemingly chaotic spaces but there was a great deal of order within the noise and movement.

Post-production, at first, appeared to be a more solitary production stage especially with just one editor working on a video (as was the case for *The Attacks*) however social interaction did happen, just in more subtle ways. Post-production overlapped substantially with the production stage and editors often asked directors for additional shots such as specific close ups or other "coverage" shots that helped bridge two shots that were not able to be connected well. Using the script as only a guide, the editor tried to sequence shots together to tell the story but she also needed the help of scriptwriters, directors, actors, and producers to make sense of the shots that were being delivered to her. Late in the stage, the editor constantly showed her work to others (director, actors, non-crew) in order to get feedback and make final decisions on the edit.

In all of these stages the key element is the social interaction between the students as they wrote together. Throughout the process, the text itself— the artifact or "product"— was substantially transformed, revised, and re-authored along the way. The ideas were recorded into a script, the script was turned into enactments, performances were captured into video clips, and video clips were edited into a complete final cut of the video. In each translation, students worked with a variety of text modes including speech, print, image, sound, video, real world objects (often as symbols), and digital texts. In the

next chapter, I address products as well as the protocols, roles, and tools used to make the

videos.

Chapter 5: Sociocultural Contexts of Official Videomaking

In this chapter I examine the social and cultural context of official videomaking at the site. Making a video required the cooperation and collaboration of multiple people behaving in ways that fit the context of the situation. Each person was a specialized author with their own unique writing tools, for example during the production stage, the cameraperson worked with a camera, the director used a script, and the actor had props. Still, authors often broke the official protocols and stepped out of their roles contributing in unplanned ways. The process can appear random and even chaotic. What exactly is happening? Who is in charge? A close examination of the sociocultural context is needed to better understand how multiple authorship works in videomaking. The sociocultural context of official videomaking is made up of individual elements: *protocols, roles, tools,* and *products*. In this study I call these four elements "contexts" because they both individually and collectively make up the overall videomaking environment. These contexts are important to consider in understanding the kinds of social interactions students engaged in. While they can be examined separately, the contexts make more sense when they are viewed as interconnected parts of a larger system.

As discussed in chapter two, Halliday and Hasan (1985) describe *context* as "what comes with text." They use Malinowski's (1923) concept "context of situation" (or "the environment of the text") to anchor their definition of context as meaning that which comes with the text. These are the things the readers and writers need to know *before* they actually engage with any texts. Texts do not exist in a vacuum, apart from the social world; in fact, Halliday and Hasan (1985) argue that contexts come before texts, "the situation is prior to the discourse that relates to it" (p. 5). In the video club, students

didn't just start making official videos— they did it in the context of the video club and how the video club did it. They learned to do it a specific way using established processes, protocols, tools, roles, with expectations for how the variety of texts should look/sound like. Thus, texts and contexts are intertwined. To examine texts requires an examination of the sociocultural and critical aspects that come with any text.

I begin the chapter by detailing the differences between "official" and "unofficial" videomaking. Next, I describe the official videomaking process, highlighting the stages of making a video in the club. I then examine how protocols fit within the various stages of production. Next, I address the videomaking roles of the participants as well as the tools that students use including technologies, objects, and sign systems. Last, I examine the videos themselves, the "products," as they sit at the center of official videomaking activities.

Official Versus Unofficial Videomaking

I use the term "official" to describe both the processes ("official videomaking") and the products ("official videos") created in the video club. Official videomaking processes were marked by: standardized protocols and ways of doing things, standardized uses of writing tools and technologies, an emphasis on the creation of a final product, having an adult "producer," and a problem solving orientation during all stages of production. Official videos were tracked on the video club Production Board and were intended to be shared with a larger audience at the end of the year Premier Night and/or DVD. Unofficial videos tended to have the opposite characteristics: non-standardized protocols and ways of doing things, an emphasis on processes (and ignoring of products) of videomaking, student-produced, and a problem-finding orientation (Sawyer, 2003a).

Unofficial videos were usually incomplete and not intended for any audience other than their creators. They were often experiments to be watched once and thrown away afterwards.

In some ways official videomaking, particularly the standardization of processes, resembled school-like activities much more than the loose nature of self-produced unofficial videomaking. In her studies involving writing and popular culture, Dyson (1999, 2003) uses the term "official" to describe "school texts" with "unofficial" meaning texts that come from outside of schools, especially from popular culture. While the adult producers did not control the content of official videos, the student writers knew that these videos were going to be viewed by a larger audience. As a result, official videos— products— had slightly more official content (in the Dyson sense) than unofficial videos which were generally wacky improvised comedic scenarios. Official and unofficial videomaking processes were not the same but they did have some commonalities. I collected data on both official and unofficial videos and videomaking processes however in this particular study, I report almost exclusively on the official ones. This is because unofficial videomaking practices were unusual variations of official practices, innovative and experimental but with fewer patterns present. I wanted to first understand the official practices and then in future work examine how unofficial videomaking works. In chapter seven I argue that official videos, at times, had unofficial elements to them and it would be beneficial to study both.

In front of students, I never overtly stated the terms "official" or "unofficial" but students knew the difference between them: official videos were the ones that were on Production Board and the ones that the adults (as "producers") pushed to get completed.

In my unusual role as teacher/researcher/producer/guide, I permitted the students to play and experiment a great deal with the videomaking tools but when it was time to work on an official film kids were expected to drop what they were doing and serve the project that they volunteered to do. It was an unspoken rule that "official" videos took precedent over "unofficial" ones. They could leave an unofficial project incomplete (and most were) but official videos required a commitment of sincere effort and the desire to finish the project. They had a job to do and were expected to do it the best they could.

Official Videomaking Processes

In chapter four I documented the important activities that make up the official videomaking process at the site. I focused on how one video production, *The Attacks*, was composed. One of the key ideas was that every official video went through a variety of production stages including pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. The Production Board (Figure 4.5) was a tool that helped document where the productions were in the process. Ideally, students went through each stage in a linear manner because of the efficiency involved in not having to revisit prior stages; however, in the video club, productions often jumped back into production or pre-production in order to solve problems, work out issues, and to make their movies better. Figure 5.1 shows a simplified and linear version of the processes for each production stage.

Figure 5.1. Video production processes.

In this study, I talk about process as a course of purposeful activity however the term "process" is problematic because it is a noun and thus represents a "thing."

Processes in the video club were not things that could be borrowed, lost, or possessed.

Processes were active and alive, expanding and evolving— more "verb-like" than noun.

Using Burke's (1969) "dramatistic pentad" (act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose) as a

framework for examining how authors are motivated to compose rhetorical products,

Halbritter (2013) defines the term in a way that recognizes that "process" depends upon

some form of "doing":

> An active process needs a few things in order to be a process: 1) it needs *an*
>
> *action* or a series of discernable actions, 2) it needs *a person* who has designed/
>
> employed/participated in these specific actions, 3) as *a means*, 4) and in a
>
> particular *context* or *scene* of action, 5) for accomplishing a particular *purpose*.
>
> (Halbritter, 2013, p. 24, emphasis in original.).

Through this more verb-like definition, "process" is active, suggesting a kind of grammar

in action. At every production stage, videomaking processes involved context specific

activities and people, leveraging tools as well as their roles, to accomplish some purpose.

As an example for how this fits with videomaking, in production (scene), filming (an act)

was performed by various members of the crew (agents) using the tools of filming

(agency) to create the shots to be edited into a film (purpose). The *purpose* of each

process was always tied to the creation of a "product" of some sort: scripts,

performances, takes, clips, sequences, and final cuts. Videomaking processes are the

grammar or how these five parts fit together.

Protocols

The "actions" in videomaking (scriptwriting, shooting, editing) all involved

protocols, or contextually agreed upon ways of doing things. One such protocol, enforced

by the director, was that students would get one "good enough" take and then shoot one more to see if they could improve it. Another protocol during shooting was that students never re-viewed what they just shot on the camera but instead waited until the footage was imported safely into a computer. Video club members used older digital cameras that recorded linearly onto digital tape making re-viewing of shots difficult and the risk of erasing one's footage dangerously high. It was much easier for a crew to capture additional takes and let the video editors in post-production watch all the shot video clips over and over to decide which to use. This way of working, influenced by the tools available, became the official working protocol of the production stage.

The club was a closed social group where experienced members taught newcomers the ways of videomaking but in the video club, students also *invented* videomaking practices. This is (at least partially) true because the club members were quite isolated from the world of videomaking that existed outside of the site. The participants were very young, between the ages of 8 and 11, and had no prior experience with videomaking nor did they have much access outside of the club to equipment such as cameras, microphones, editing software, or even phones or personal computers that have videocameras on them. While we had Internet access, our connection was restricted with nearly every video hosting site blocked. Attempting to access YouTube, for example, yielded an official warning from the school district stating that the user had attempted to access a restricted site and their IP address was recorded. When a local TEDx Conference organizer came to our club to see if the kids would like to write and shoot a 60 second commercial for their event, the representative was frustrated that she could not show any sample promotional videos via our Internet connection. Thus we operated in an isolated

production world where the only way to learn how to make videos was from each other,

relying on the collective experiences of the club and the established protocols in place.

While students had significant experience watching TV and movies, they had practically

no prior knowledge of how these texts were produced. The adults knew a little bit about

filming (particularly Tracey who not only had production experience but had also gone to

film school) but we only offered specific help and guidance when they asked for it.

     I highlight this isolation because two important ideas came out of it. The first was

that students ended up, not just *learning,* but *inventing* the videomaking processes. We

created terms such as "blocking" scripts which have no exact equivalent in the actual film

world (there is a "shooting script" but it doesn't involve blocking chunks of text with a

pencil and writing a shot number next to it). We used "markerboards" because they

helped identify shots later when they were in the computer. We called them

"markerboards" because they marked the shots and it was the important attribute (able to

write, erase, and rewrite quickly) of the tool. A traditional slate clapperboard, which is

traditionally used to synchronize audio with video, had little significance to us since we

never recorded sound externally or outside of the camera itself. The Production Board

was another tool that video club participants created and used regularly because we

needed to track the progress of productions as they moved through the stages. I don't

think anyone stopped and wondered if such a thing existed in outside world production

companies.

     The second idea to come out of our isolation was that only we in the club judged

the merit of a video and these products were judged in relation to the other videos

produced in the club that year and in previous years. The only outside audiences were the

people who came to the end of the year Premier Night and anyone who had the

opportunity to see the videos on the DVD. No one posted their work on the Internet.

Elementary schools are places where student identities (and thus their work) are always

protected from the outside world and this policy didn't change in the after-school

program. In the video club, only the students and producers decided on the relative merit

of scripts, takes, cuts, and final videos. When completed videos (final cuts) were shown,

they became the benchmarks for future work to be judged by. Student practices

influenced future student practices and video club work influenced future video club

work. For example, when a student editor discovered a titles template in the video editing

program, this template became the "in" look for many subsequent student made videos.

This is how protocols developed: *in house*. Figure 5.2 shows the video production

processes with each stage of videomaking having specific protocols that helped guide the

making of the videos.

Figure 5.2. Video production processes with protocols.

Roles

Videomaking involves very specific roles and these roles take on meaning in

relation to the social interaction and contexts of people performing them together. In

other words, if someone were working on a production all by themselves, video roles

wouldn't mean much. The individual, performing a role, must be considered to be a part

of a larger complex social system. From a sociocultural perspective, there is a dialectic

interaction between individual processes and social processes (Sawyer, 2003b) and roles

help us understand this relationship. In addition, roles sit at an important junction between social processes and tools. Individuals are the agents who put tools to use and fulfill responsibilities (roles) however the roles are also pre-defined with historical and cultural expectations built into them.

In the video club we had many official production roles including scriptwriter, art director, prop and costume handler, director, assistant director, cameraperson, markerboard operator, principle actor, supporting actor, extra, video editor, audio editor, poster-maker, and producer. While a few students specialized, most took on many different roles during the school year. They could also switch rapidly between them and it was not uncommon for a student to take on several different roles in one session. For example, Chloe edited *Bad Girl* while waiting for the crew of *The Attacks* to get everything prepared to shoot. When they were ready, she switched roles and became a principal actor, filming a couple of scenes. When they returned from the shoot, she switched roles yet again and began blocking the script for *The Phone Call* (as the director) in preparation for the next session.

Students volunteered to take on specific roles, some of which had extensive responsibility and authorial power and some that simply resembled "helping out." I break down roles into two categories: *major roles* and *minor roles*. I separate them based on the idea of control and responsibility. Students in major roles were the ones who were in charge of the production and the principal author at any given stage. Those in minor roles were assisting the principal authors, adding significant contributions to videos but without as much control and responsibility for the productions.

Major roles. Major roles were characterized by having significant responsibilities

during a particular stage of production and included scriptwriter, director, principal actor,

editor, and producer. At the end of a production— when the final cut was completed— if

you asked "whose film is this?", students in major roles claimed ownership. A second key

indicator of a role's importance was what happened when a person performing the role

was absent: if a director was absent during filming, the crew didn't even assemble and the

production resumed upon their return. If an extra was absent, the crew just got another

person to fulfill their role and carried on. Figure 5.3 shows the major roles in each stage

of videomaking. In pre-production, the scriptwriters were the principal authors with the

most responsibility and decision making power. In the production stage it was the director

and main actors, while in post-production it was the editors.
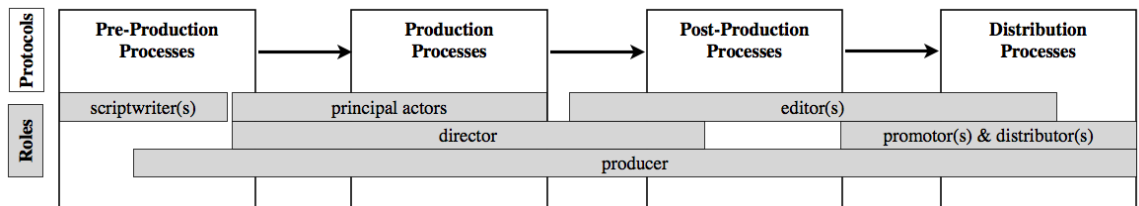
Figure 5.3. Videomaking production processes with protocols and major roles.

Scriptwriter(s). During the pre-production stage, the scriptwriters generally drafted

in pairs or alone but even solitary writers got substantial feedback from others nearby

including adults during the script review. Nearly every student in the video club had a

script in progress during the school year and some students worked on several at a time.

Chloe was a particularly prolific and gifted scriptwriter who could quickly write several

quality pages every session. Early in the school year I asked her if she would write a brief

scene, no more than a page, that was set in the computer lab. Students needed to have

adult supervision when they wanted to go shoot outside of the computer lab and if Tracey

or Jasmine could not make a session we were stuck in the computer lab and no crew

could go out at all. Her short script could be shot without leaving the lab and kids could

get experience. Chloe composed *The Misunderstanding* in about 20 minutes. Figure 5.4

shows her script in it's entirety.

1

```
INT.COMPUTER LAB- NIGHT

We see Steve chasing after Bob. Bob has a bag in his hands.
Then around the corner we see a police. He trips Bob. Bob
gets stuck on some glue. He can't get up. The police takes
the bag away from him. The police opens the bag. There is a
piece of paper all wrinkled and wet.

                    POLICE
          Ha! I caught you red handed, Bob!
          Thank you for the help chasing after
          him, Steve.

The police straightens it out and reads it aloud.

                    POLICE
          "Now that you found this note I will
          tell you where the treasure is. It
          is in a black bag. It is about
          medium sized. You can't miss it."

The police puts his hand in the black bag and pulls out a
box. He opens the box and he finds golden coins.

                    POLICE
          Oh my gosh!! I'm rich!

Steve clears his throat.

                    POLICE
          I mean we're rich!!

They run away leaving Bob and the box.

                    BOB
          Aren't you forgeting something?!?

The police and Steve come back.

                    STEVE
          Oh yeah!! We forgot the box!

Bob groans. The end.
```

Figure 5.4. Commissioned script: *The Misunderstanding*.

Scripts set the stage for the rest of the production. In this brief script, Chloe wrote just the

ending of a story, the final chase and conclusion. Through the title, we are led to believe

that things aren't what they appear to be. Certainly Bob will be innocent, caught in a mixup involving the law. The "misunderstanding" might be that the treasure is actually nothing. Instead, the scene plays out straight and Bob is in fact guilty and caught. The misunderstanding is that we viewers believe that the police officer is "good" when he is not ("Oh, my gosh!! I'm rich!"). In this regard the script is not unlike *Rat Boy* in chapter one. Chloe wrote several scripts where the viewer was left on the edge not knowing how the story would end until the last lines of the script. This payoff can only be achieved through a careful setup. Here, she skipped the setup entirely using schema (police officer, gold coins, mysterious boxes) to lead the viewer in the desired direction. The work of scriptwriters (the scripts) were the central documents that guided productions. Scriptwriters created the story, the tone, and set the course for the rest of the production. Not only did scriptwriters have to produce a good story but the scripts had to be told clearly, almost *obviously*. If it wasn't, the directors or editors would alter the story, sometimes radically, to maximize clarity.

   Director. During the production stage, directors took the script and were in charge of turning the pages of text into video clips to be edited. Arguably, their job was the most complicated because they had to deal with an enormous number of obstacles and problems, some anticipated but most not. In addition, they had to work with a large number of (unpredictable) people. With all of this responsibility on their shoulders, some students rose to the occasion while others really struggled. Directing was a fascinating role in which students' personalities came out. We had an interesting variety of yellers (Michael) and whisperers (Chloe), micro-managers (Sophie) and task-distributers (Naomi), methodical goal-setters (Ariel) and passive under-achievers (Luke). As a

producer, some directors were easier to corral than others.

Every director had a different demeanor but also faced different conditions. While filming *Bad Girl,* the fourth grade director, Grace, paid a lot of attention to small details such as precise wording and was generally inflexible to any kind of improvisation. One of her actors, Jaime, had limited English ability and often stumbled on words. He once replaced "Go to the principal's office, young lady!" with "Go to the principal's office, you young girl!" and Grace had to be convinced by the entire crew that Jaime's take was fine. The crew felt that doing any more additional takes was unnecessary and she was being tedious. In comparison, in shooting *Ruth Wakefield,* a silent film with only a piano score, the director (Ariel) was able to talk to the actors while they were acting because the audio would not be used. This unique advantage helped the director and the crew communicate better and they were incredibly productive and innovative on the set.

Principal actors. Principal actors were another major role during the production stage. As the "stars" of a film, principal actors represented the "face" of the video, thus their ownership was distinctly different. During Premier Night, viewers unfamiliar with the videomaking process could only see the contributions of actors, as the work of the scriptwriter, director, and editor was invisible to them. A principal actor, as the face of a video, was particularly irreplaceable. For example, Charlotte, was a principal actor in *The Lock In* but had to withdraw from the video club in the middle of production because of a conflict in after-school obligations. The crew was just halfway done when she left and they had only a few options: replace her and start shooting all over again, abandon the production completely, or film with Charlotte during the school day. They decided to do the latter spending a lot of energy negotiating with a variety of teachers to get students

out of their classroom to film. The director (Pilar) asked me to come in during the school day to supervise them and ultimately the video was completed. All of that effort was needed because Charlotte could not be easily replaced.

Nearly every student in the video club appeared on camera at least once. A solid performance was appreciated and a few students took their acting roles very seriously. We didn't work on acting as a skill much; none of us had any special insight into the process though we knew good and bad acting when we saw it. The directors tried to coax the best performance out of each actor but it wasn't a major priority. As long as the actors said their lines clear enough and hit their marks (moving from one designated spot to another) with some mild success, the directors were happy. Still, acting in the video club had improved quite a bit over the years. Perhaps the scripts, directors, and actors were better. Props and costumes had become more detailed and it was possible that they helped get an actor more into their character. It was possible that production meetings helped actors learn some of the nuances of the role and provided the scriptwriters an opportunity to clarify aspects of the script. Maybe students got to practice their acting while making the numerous unofficial videos throughout the school year. Most likely it was due to all of these reasons and more as no single individual could be attributed to the improvement.

Editor(s). The editor was the principal author during post-production (as well as distribution). The editor had ample latitude to piece together stories any way she wanted. Using the script as a guide, editors used the footage that came to them to create a story out of the footage. While they were limited by what was given to them, they had the flexibility to select, reject, and cut the clips to their liking. Their most powerful tool was the "cut," the ability to reduce and shrink video clips. Good directors knew that editors

would rather have more footage than less (thinking like an editor) so after a take they would often delay saying "cut" in order to give the editors more to work with. Poor directors tried to act like a both a director and an editor all in one, yelling out "action" and "cut" exactly where they thought the actual cuts of the clip would be.

Ella was a returning club member who strongly identified herself as an editor. She had substantial experience and superb work habits and became known as the person to go to for editing help. She coached Cruz (a fourth grader) throughout the entire editing process as he cut *Rat Boy*. Cruz turned out to be quite good at editing. His first cut of *Rat Boy* was straightforward and true to the script but he was bothered by some of the shots that the crew had given him and he wanted to fix the problem. In one sequence, Rat Boy announces his presence to the Bad Man ("I wouldn't do that if I were you.") in a *hallway* but when Rat Boy punches the man, they are *outside*. The crew had to film the punch shot outside because of the fake blood and water flying out of his mouth. After the punch-up sequence, Rat Boy is back in the hallway with the Girl. Cruz wanted to make these two transitions to make more sense so he got the idea to add a "fade to black" shot in order smooth the transition between the scenes. As it faded, Rat Boy would say "Let's take it outside" and when the shot faded back in, they'd be outside. The same transition could be used to get Rat Boy back into the hallway leaving the Bad Man outside on the ground. Editors did this kind of "fixing" of technical problems all of the time in attempts to provide additional clarity.

Producer(s). One of the signature qualities of "official" videos in the video club was that the producer was almost always an adult. Producers were involved at every stage of production, providing materials, organizing groups of people, and controlling

resources including the biggest resource of all: time. But producers were also creative

contributors and this was often difficult for the adults/teachers to reconcile because they

had traditionally viewed themselves as outside the work that the students did. The three

adult producers in the video club valued kid work and made it a specific goal to not

influence the quality and content of student made videos but this was ultimately a futile

endeavor. A producer had knowledge, experience, and ideas. They also established

standards and expectations that the rest of the crew was expected to uphold. The fact that

they contributed was acceptable; to ignore, or worse, hide these contributions was not. It

was a big breakthrough when the adults realized their collaborative role in collective

writing. Like all participants, the adults had to make sure they didn't overstep the

boundaries of the role and when we did, it was usually because we behaved as "teachers"

and not as "producers." Jasmine was a teacher at the school and the classroom teacher of

a third of the video club. I was a teacher at the school for six years prior to the video club.

In many ways we represented the school and influenced students to behave in "school

ways." As producers we tried to serve the productions but as teachers, we also tried to

serve the school.

   This discovery— that teachers were "producers"— was significant for the adults

involved and for me in particular. In the previous four years that I had been a part of the

video club, I knew that I did things for the student videomakers but didn't know what my

role was exactly. Sometimes I was a "teacher" which included providing supervision and

structure as well as managing student behavior. Other times I was a "master" to

"apprentice" videomakers, guiding students into using the tools and fulfilling roles. It was

only when Tracey joined us (with her experience in film) that our role as producers

became obvious: we were producers. Production was something that children could do but they often didn't have the "capital" to do it well. This is similar to why everyday folks can't produce a Hollywood film— regular people do not have the access to money, talent, scriptwriters, locations, etc. Still, it was possible for children to produce and Katie and Pilar self-produced two official documentaries *Midway Today* and *Walking Billboards*, the latter which I didn't see at all until Premier Night.

    Minor roles. Minor roles did not have the same responsibilities or control over content as major roles. They were instead a network of people with knowledge of videomaking willing to help out at any given time. Students in minor roles provided opportunities for "distributed collaboration" (John-Steiner, 2000), informal and voluntary interaction based around some affinity. These kinds of collaborations were dynamic and fleeting. Minor roles included costume and prop handlers, markerboard operators, supporting actors, and "extras" (non-speaking roles, for productions that just need a crowd). If, for example, a markerboard operator was absent, someone else, who had nothing else they'd rather do, stepped up and volunteered their time and energy. Doing so was absolutely optional.

    In the video club, some roles such as camera operator or sound person could either be major or minor depending on the student in the position. In the professional film world, the cameraperson (known as the "Director of Photography") plays a very significant role but in the video club, the camera was nearly always utilized in a basic way. Students mostly framed the shot the best they could and pressed the start/stop button. Often the director chose the framing for the camera operator and there was little if any attention on camera movement, depth of field, or lighting. Sound was another

potentially important role practically ignored during the production stage and generally left to the editors in post-production where they addressed voice overs, additional dialog recording, sound effects, and music. Despite my multiple reminders, only a few times did productions crews utilize a sound person. This person's job was to take an external microphone and either place it or hold it near the actors while running the cable all the way back to the camera. Often the cable was not long enough to reach the camera and, ironically, these were the times the crew needed the external microphone the most since this is when the actors were far away from the camera. Wireless microphones would have been very helpful but we didn't have any nor could we afford them. Perhaps the role would have been taken more seriously if the equipment to do the job well had been available. Figure 5.5 shows an external microphone in use during a shot. While the microphone is visible, it was unlikely that a viewer would detect its presence under normal viewing conditions.

Figure 5.5. External microphone and cable visible in a shot.

The terms "major" and "minor" were never mentioned in the video club to describe roles but students certainly knew the range of responsibility and control each role entailed. In the professional film world, major and minor roles are often indicated through the placement of their names in the credits. Major roles are usually credited on the screen at the *start* of the film under individual titles while minor roles are generally indicated at the *end* of the film in a long scrolling block, grouped together. Video club students usually placed all of the credits at the end of the video listing actors first and then the rest of the crew, regardless of major or minor roles, following. Of course, in major motion pictures, major roles may be indicated by who gets paid the most, though money played no part in the video club.

Roles and power. Depending on the role, students had access to certain tools and spaces, control over others, writing ability (authorship), and responsibility. Thus, roles empowered students with major roles having more power than minor roles. Professional film crews are highly specialized collectives with unequal power relations. In the article "The 7 Dumbest Mistakes You Can Make on Your First Day on Set" Luzi (2012) writes about the protocols newcomers on professional sets should never break— "mistakes"— and the first four are all related directly to roles in relation to power: 1) "thinking you should be directing," 2) "touching gear without permission," 3) "avoiding the chain of command," 4) "assuming your boss is your friend." The last three mistakes are social conventions: 5) arriving to set late, 6) not introducing yourself to anyone, 7) thinking you know everything already. All seven are production stage protocols and work habits that are highly frowned upon.

The way film crews operate — at least in the American system — is intensely

hierarchical. The various departments on a film set are each led by a key crew

member. In turn, that key department head has their own key crew member who,

in turn, has their own go-to guy and so-on and so forth. There is very little

horizontal power on a film set — almost all of it runs vertically until you get to

the key department heads. (Luzi, 2012, n.p.).

The chain of command comes from power relations between those in different roles with

some roles having large amounts of power and some with little. "Thinking you should be

directing." and "avoiding the chain of command" highlights the importance of the

hierarchy of roles on a set with the director at the top of the chain.

In the video club there were parallel situations, mistakes a crew member should

not make, but much less of a "chain of command." In fact, participants in the video club

rarely followed such vertically orientated guidelines for two reasons: 1) the crews were

so small that everyone involved was a "key department head" and thus worked

"horizontally" and 2) students switched roles between productions and did not specialize

enough to garner authority. Major roles such as director and video editor were often

assigned based on prior experience and expertise but most roles were distributed without

regard to student ability. Students learned "on the job" and, especially at the beginning of

the year, had little or no experience with the writing tools or videomaking processes.

Assistance on sets may have come from anyone present regardless of their role. There

was a greater sense of equality and while individuals respected roles they also respected

the contributions of each other.

When productions were running smoothly and productively, they were more

likely to work *horizontally* and when things went wrong more likely to work vertically or

cling to a chain of command mentality. In *The Attacks* shooting example (chapter four), students broke out of their roles often making some of the "mistakes" that Luzi refers to. In particular, two students (markerboard operator and cameraperson) made contributions that might be considered as the job of the director. It was not the responsibility of the markerboard operator to coach the actor on how to say his lines nor was it the task of the cameraperson to make up new lines to be said. Still, these horizontal contributions did not disrupt the flow of the crew because everyone was helping out and ultimately the director still made the decisions, though sometimes merely repeated what someone else had said to confirm that *she* agreed with the decision, as when the cameraperson ordered a stray student to "get out of the shot" the director told her to "Sit down!" The chain of command amongst "key department heads" was maintained with horizontal contributing and vertical decision-making.

Roles and identity. There is an interplay between the roles that students take on and the identities that students build. Each role that they assume has some contextual characteristics— actors are "dramatic" and "eccentric," directors are "responsible" and "in-charge," editors are "methodical" and "organized." Certainly one doesn't have to have these characteristics to perform a videomaking role but some of the roles may resonate with the personalities of individuals. When this happened, students specialized and their own individual identity became wrapped up in the role. But even students who did not specialize could form a new identity when taking on a role. In the video club, students had many opportunities to take on a variety of roles and just *performing* a role could transform an individual, for example, by putting on a cowboy hat a student became a cowboy. Likewise, participants became a particular someone by performing a film role:

you *are* if you *do*. You are a scriptwriter if you write a script. You are a director if you

direct. You are an editor if you edit. Unlike most professions, competence (or licensure)

was not required in taking on an identity. A few students started to identify with one role

more than others and started to specialize. For example, Thomas identified himself as an

"actor" while Ella identified herself as an "editor." Thomas took acting very seriously.

While he wrote scripts and did some editing, his central focus was on being an actor, so

much so that he signed up for a casting agency. It was his central identity. Ella had

noticed the brief logos and jingles at the end of TV shows stating the name of the

production company. She, as an editor, made her own logo with sound effect: a black

screen with a star shooting off to the upper left (Figure 5.6). She put the logo at the end of

all of the videos she edited. While this was different than what the mentor logos

represented (production companies), her logo showed that she very much identified with

editing and she wanted her work to have a specific mark or brand.
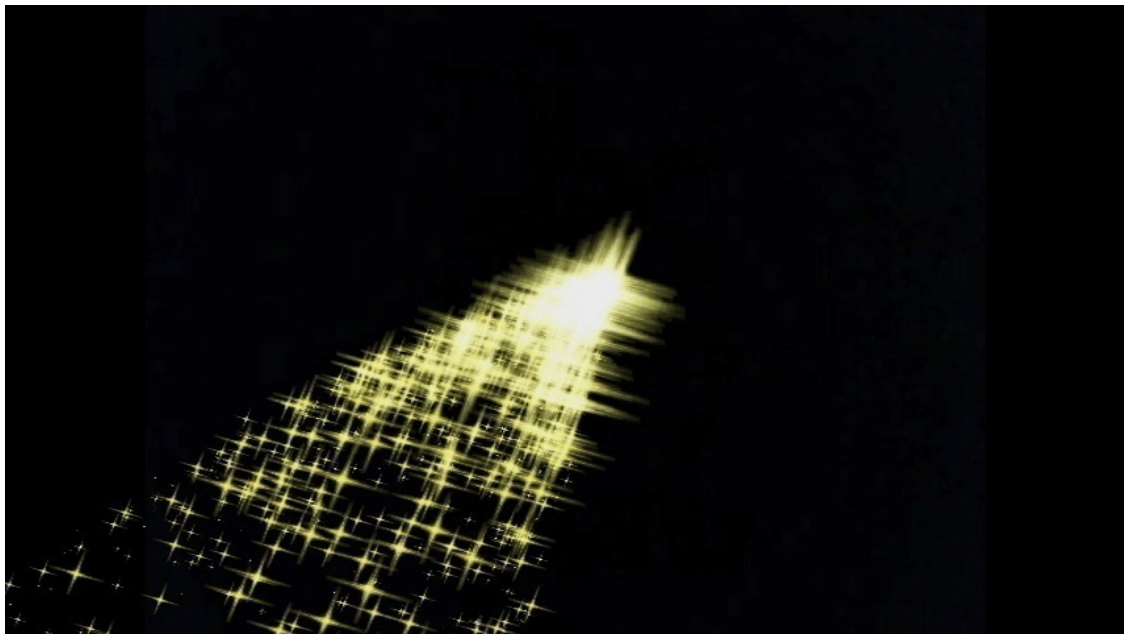
Figure 5.6. Still of Ella's editing logo.

Tools

Like all forms of writing, video production involves the use of technologies as tools in the writing process including pencils, paper, scriptwriting software, printers, video cameras, tripods, dry erase boards, still cameras, keyboards, mice, video editing software, audio editing software, speakers, headphones, microphones, digital sound recorders, batteries and chargers, cables, the Internet, and a variety of stage props and settings. Some tools were simple and conventional (pencil and paper) while others were complex and specific (non-linear video editing software). There were obvious tools (video cameras) as well as "secret" tools (audio compressors). From a sociocultural perspective, every tool, not just the ones with microchips in them, is a technology. For example, dry erase markers and small whiteboards were useful for writing down information that could be quickly changed. Their portability and inexpensive nature made them the perfect tool for the task. Professionals often use more elaborate clapperboards with built in electronic timecode readouts and many independent productions are currently using iPads equipped with suitable software to perform similar functions but for our needs, our basic whiteboards (which were dropped countless times) were perfect.

The writing tools in videomaking were specific to certain roles: scriptwriters used scriptwriting software, camera operators employed video cameras, actors engaged with props and sets, directors worked with scripts and people, film editors used computers and video editing software. So specific were these tools to roles that some kids who specialized in certain roles never handled other videomaking tools such as cameras or props at all. Tools, in combination with roles, helped divide up the labor and

responsibilities involved in videomaking. Mastering the writing tools of videomaking

could be the most complicated and technically challenging aspect of the process. Video

editing, for example, is one of the more complex tasks one can do on a computer and

even the most accessible software has a fairly steep learning curve. Video cameras have a

dizzying number of options and submenus to choose from. Taking on a role meant

learning how to use the tools that accompanied that role. Figure 5.7 summarizes some of

the central tools used in videomaking and shows the relationship between who uses the

tools and at what stage in the process.
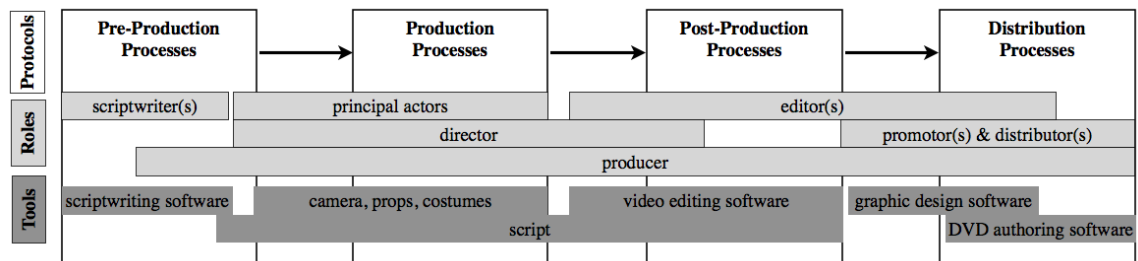
Figure 5.7. Videomaking production processes with protocols, major roles, and tools.

Tools have to be learned and, in the video club, writing tools were never overtly

taught in whole group settings. Instead students learned to use a tool on a need-to-know

basis, quite resonant with Gee (2007) as he illustrates the way video games teach players

to use tools at the appropriate level that demands that skill. The "explicit information on-

demand and just-in-time principle" (Gee, 2007) describes how in video games learners

are given explicit information both on-demand (help menus) and just-in-time (pop up

hints), when the learner needs it or just at the point where the information can best be

understood and used in practice. In the video club, tool use was taught the same way

because when students were not actually editing a piece, video editing tools were

absolutely worthless. The same can be said of learning to use a video camera— if you're

not behind the camera in a real setting ready to shoot, it was practically impossible to learn to use the tool.

Students learned to use tools both vicariously and directly from other classmates and it was one of the most remarkable aspects of the video club. Throughout my fieldnotes this revelation was evident:

> On a side note, I worked with her (Grace) briefly while she and her sister waited to get picked up. She was editing *Zumbatomic* and was doing the cuts fine— how does she know how to do this? *I* never taught her.... (Fieldnotes 10/11/11)

At other times, students learned on their own because the work they were doing was meaningful to them. While just "messing around" (Ito et al., 2010) with the digital audio workstation Garageband (Apple), Ariel inadvertently influenced others to create a video.

> Soon she put that project away and opened up Garageband. She started singing something silly about "chicken and rice" and using the voice transformer plug-in in Garageband. All I heard was a child's voice singing, which is precious as it gets, but everyone else was getting to hear the "transformation" part via the headphones, which apparently is hilarious. And contagious. *Everyone* wanted to do this. She taught Thomas next to her and then Jaime and others. Eventually Thomas created his own song, including beats— something that Ariel then added to her work. You could see them evolving every idea and then spreading it. Thomas even wrote down lyrics. He asked for quiet so he could sing it. It was kind of like a rap song but it had a chorus, "crackers and cheese", and Ariel sang it with him, planned. Hilarious. "I want to make a music video for it," Thomas

said. He apparently lost his lyrics (paper copy) for *California Nerds* and

[Microsoft] Word wouldn't open up the file any more. (Fieldnotes, 2/9/12)

I often looked over and saw a child doing something fairly complicated, like writing a

script in screenplay format, and I then realized that I did not teach the child to do this.

Naomi is writing a script and I helped her with some formatting things. It has

finally dawned on me that I haven't direct taught anything on scriptwriting.

Surprisingly, a good number of the students just learn it on their own. (Fieldnotes

12/6/11)

Where did they learn it? When? I took a university course to learn how to write scripts. I

read books on it. These children did neither yet there they were writing scene headings

and action. Another example of the explicit information on-demand and just-in-time

principle occurred on the first day of the video club. I never told the students what the

password was to log in to the "Video Club" account on the computers. The 13 students

who were new to the club simply picked up this information from the experienced

members around them. Nor did any kid forget or give away the password to non-club

members as this was useful information that got them into their accounts and kept others

out. So tools had to be learned but they were learned in contexts, sometimes with the

direct help of others (including adults and students), and often on their own while

tinkering and experimenting.

Tools were also dynamic. The script was a peculiar tool with an interesting and

curious life. It started as a *product*, created by scriptwriters using screenwriting software,

however, at the end of the pre-production stage it was transformed into one of the most

important *tools* used extensively throughout the rest of the production. For the director,

the script was a plan that guided her on what to shoot and where. For actors, the script

informed them what to do and say (and how). Editors used the script to make sense of

video clips that were brought to them in piecemeal and all out of sequence. After the final

cut was done, the script was discarded or abandoned by everyone involved; its worth was

gone, which was ironic considering how a missing script at any earlier stage would shut

down an entire production until it was located.

   Tools mediate social interaction. As explained in chapter two, tools mediate the

social interaction between participants (Vygotsky, 1978). An example of this was how

students interacted while using computers. Students in the video club worked at the same

computer everyday that we met and stored their work on these machines. The graphical

desktops (layout of files and folders as well as the background images, see Figure 5.8)

were customized by students. This led to a feeling of personal ownership over the

machines. These factors contributed to making the computer a *personal* tool, a "*personal*

computer," and any video club writing activity involving a computer, like video editing or

scriptwriting, could seem like a personal or solitary act but it wasn't. For example, video

editing (especially with headphones on which was more or less required in the crowded

video club setting) can be viewed as a lone activity but editors socially interacted with

others a great deal. They worked with the production team as new footage was brought

into the computer (the raw material of editing) and takes were evaluated and explained.

While editing, they needed to interact with other members of the production team

including the director, actors, scriptwriter(s), and producers to both get feedback on early

rough cuts as well as request additional footage (ex. "I need a close up of Renee on the

playground"). Editors also needed the fresh eyes of people who were *not* on the

production team as they acted as test audiences for late cuts of the videos. During these

points of interaction, the computer changed from a personal tool to one that encouraged

sharing. Headphones were unplugged, and lots of heads crowded around to take a look.

This transformation brought forth a new set of social interactions that moved from

anticipation and prediction to interactions that confirmed or disconfirm effects and

meanings.

Figure 5.8. Example of the customized layout of a student desktop.

Computers generally have only one set of controls— one keyboard and one

mouse— and as a result, a single person controls the machine while others can only

watch. One person, the editor, became the "driver" but others could "ride" along,

watching and engaging with what they saw and heard. If while editing a "rider" wanted to

highlight something or make an edit, they could go about it a couple of different ways: point to the screen ("make the cut right here, right where the character leaves the frame") or take over the controls, the mouse and keyboard. In the first method, onlookers gave feedback or directions but do not have the actual power to do the editing moves themselves (continuing with the metaphor, "backseat driving"). At best this would be helpful information and at worst it could be annoying. In the second method, the "riders" took over the "steering wheel," briefly turning into the editor. At best, this could be viewed as sharing the workload and at worst a potentially serious power conflict.

Not only are tools important to specific roles, they also mediate the social interactions between the multiple roles. In the production stage, the video camera was a central tool and it mediated the interaction between the director, actor, cameraperson, as well as the minor roles. The actor performed in front of the camera, her most important audience member. The cameraperson understood the scene in relation to what he saw in the viewfinder. The director set up shots with only the camera in mind, telling an actor to move and speak in relation to the tool. The camera itself was the physical dividing line between the front stage (what's on the screen) and the back stage (what's behind the scene) (Goffman, 1959). Figure 5.9 depicts this relationship. Actors knew that they were not to look at the camera directly— breaking the "fourth wall"— because by engaging with the viewer directly the relationship between the viewer/reader and the character on the screen is altered. Non-actors and other bystanders had to restrict their behavior in relation to the camera: they had to limit how loud they could talk (or not talk at all) and they couldn't be in the frame, standing behind the camera at all times as their presence changed the believability of the action. In general, when the camera was pointed at an

individual, they regularly changed their behavior either performing, becoming shy or
self-conscious, or even speaking to an imagined or fictional audience.
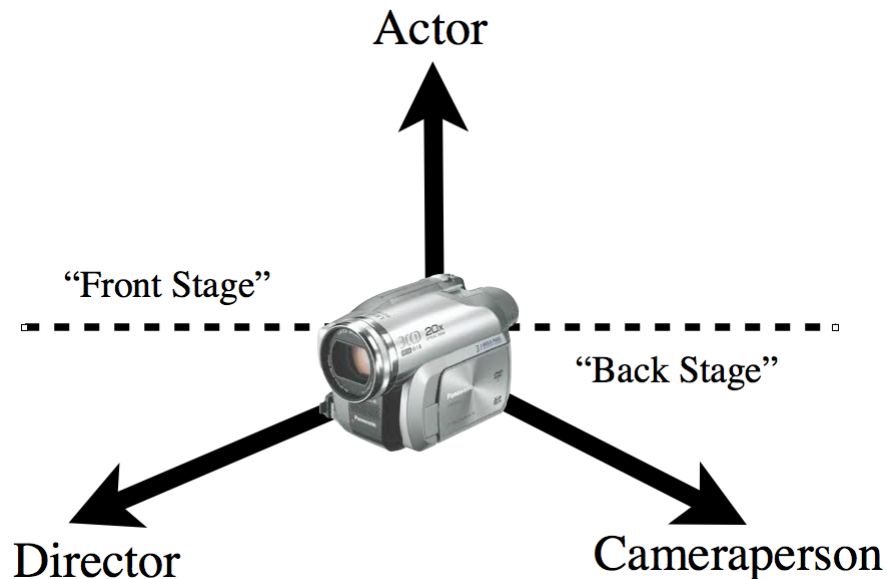
Figure 5.9. Camera mediates social interaction between roles.

Other writing tools mediated the interactions between the various roles as well.
The script was a tool that both "guided" and "controlled" the director and actors,
providing them a plan but also limiting options. Like roads, the script could lead people
places but not *anywhere*. It was both definitive and flexible depending on the perspective
of the director. Since scripts were written down, it gave the director power to settle
disputes (in chapter six I share a very relevant example in which a scene for *Rat Boy* was
being filmed and a student solves a misunderstanding by saying "give her a copy of the
script"). The script was also a malleable tool for the director in that it was merely a plan
and could be altered if needed. For example, in filming the "Police Officer Joe" scene for
The Attacks, the director was convinced that a line should be changed and the actor
altered it even more. Though neither change strayed far from the original idea, the

example shows the flexibility of scripts. Directors regularly added and removed shots if they felt it was necessary. In post-production, the tools of the computer and video editing software mediated the interactions between the video editor and the other members of the crew (producer, director, actors). While others got to watch clips, sequences, specific editing moves, and even make suggestions, the editors generally got the final word on editing decisions mainly because of the firm control they had over the tool.

In the video club, tools also influenced individual behaviors because they were able to give participants the ability to monitor their actions. The computer screen acted as a mirror, offering students visual feedback. Sometimes this feedback was immediate and they could see themselves as they acted. At other times, the feedback came with a delay in time. They saw their performance later when dumping the footage into the computer. While on set, the other students in the production acted as their monitor, interpreting a performance for the actor. This feedback occurred with other tools as well; for example, headphones allowed students to monitor their own voices as they did voiceovers.

Tools, signs, and the internalization and externalization processes. Vygotsky (1978) rejected the notion that individual cognitive development occurs in internal predetermined and accumulated stages instead characterizing it as "a social process mediated through signs and tools that forms and integrates psychological functional systems that change over time" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003, p. 65). A key idea is that individual development involves both internal *and* external factors. Emphasizing the social, Vygotsky argues that internal development is culturally mediated and done through two primary forms: tools and signs. Tools make changes in external objects, whereas signs make changes in mental processes (Vygotsky, 1968/1997, in Moran &

John-Steiner, 2003).

I observed this in the videomaking process where students used tools to create (write) external representations and made internal meanings (read) from signs and symbols. In both of these reading and writing processes an important transaction occurs between the individual and the social and cultural field. Individual cognitive development is dependent on the signs and symbols found in multimodal representations, but, at the same time these representations are created by individuals using tools to make changes in external objects. The mediation processes of internalization and externatization are cyclical where individuals can communicate internal meanings via external objects, signs, symbols, and representations created by the careful use of tools. Tool use becomes paramount to the writing processes. Being able to read signs and symbols becomes essential to reading processes.

An example of this cyclical process is the student production *California Nerds Music Video*. Thomas, the main force behind the production, was inspired by the comedic children's espionage-thriller *N.E.R.D.S.: National Espionage, Rescue, and Defense Society* (Buckley, 2009) and Katy Perry's *California Gurls* (Broadus et al, 2010). Through an Internet search, he found lyrics that address being a proud "closet" nerd. With the digital audio workstation program Garageband, he created the music for the song by using the loops built into the software. Thomas then recorded his voice and used a "voice transformer" plug-in (a kind of audio filter) to obscure the lyrics which were a bit risqué for a 5th grader. For the actual music video, he created a shot list, a list of shots he wanted to get to make the video (Figure 5.8), written in paragraph style.

Figure 5.10. Shot list for *California Nerds Music Video*.

　　　Thomas had a challenge to visually represent "cool hat" and "nerdy shirt." This

writing dilemma highlights the Vygotskian mediation processes of "internalization" and

"externalization" (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). In internalization, readers make internal

meanings out of external signs and symbols. In externalization, writers turn internal

ideas, via tools, into external representations. While writing the shot list, Thomas

depicted the character as "cool" and then transformed him to "nerdy." Thomas had to

know what these attributes ("cool" and "nerdy") looked like in a particular social and

cultural context. For "cool" the character wore a jacket which conveniently covered up

his clothing underneath it. As a nerd, the character wore a collared shirt with buttons up

the middle, suspenders, and glasses. The female characters wore glasses, pants pulled up

as high as they could go, and hair in two pigtails coming out of the sides. Sunglasses and

eyeglasses were common tools used in the video club to create characters. Vygotsky

noted that artifacts, such as glasses, are objects that contain past knowledge and

experience. As a result, attributes such as "cool" and "nerdy" can only be represented

using the signs and symbols that others in society contextually agree upon to be as such.

In addition, what is "cool" to a 9 or 10 year old child will certainly be different than what

a someone in their 40s might believe. Who is "cooler": professional wrestler John Cena,

James Bond, or "The World's Most Interesting Man" from the Dos Equis beer

advertisements? It depends greatly on who you are and how you have internalized the

concept of cool.

Products

　　　　While this was a study that addressed the social *processes* of videomaking, the

products played a key role as the purpose of the activities in place. Figure 5.11 details

how products fit within the videomaking processes and other contexts of official

videomaking. Concerning the relationship between processes and products, Sawyer

(2003b) describes products as "stable end points of process" (p. 7). Products in

videomaking (scripts, props, costumes, takes, video clips, sequences, cuts, final cuts,

DVDs) led to new writing processes and the production of new products until the last

product (final cut of the video screened or on the DVD) was completed. "A focus on

process still requires a consideration of the end points of the process, but [in a

sociocultural approach], the focus is on how the end point emerges from the process,

typically by using detailed microgenetic studies of how the process unfolds from moment

to moment" (Sawyer, 2003b, p. 7). Examining the literacy events in videomaking I was

able to see how the process develops towards the creation of a collaborative written

product.

Protocols	Pre-Production Processes	Production Processes	Post-Production Processes	Distribution Processes
Roles	scriptwriter(s)	principal actors	editor(s)	
		director		promotor(s) & distributor(s)
		producer		
Tools	scriptwriting software	camera, props, costumes	video editing software	graphic design software
		script		DVD authoring software
Products	script	takes	sequences	posters
		video clips	early cuts	final cut
		props, costumes		DVD

Figure 5.11. Videomaking production processes with protocols, major roles, tools, and

products.

During the videomaking processes, significant literacy events took place when

two or more students interacted with each other while reading, writing, or studying the

characteristics of a text. "Texts" of some sort were at the center of the activity. A way of

understanding how products fit within the literacy events in videomaking is to look at

Figure 5.11 and draw a vertical line anywhere along the figure. The vertical line crosses

each sociocultural context of the videomaking literacy event. The line represents a

moment in time, a literacy event, in the (official) videomaking process. Where the line

crosses shows which sociocultural contexts are in play during that literacy event. In

Figure 5.12, the literacy event involves an editor and producer (in major roles) using

video editing software and the script to create the products of sequences and early cuts.

The product ties together the purpose of the interaction, whether it is to make sense of the

product (reading) or to create meaning via a product (writing).
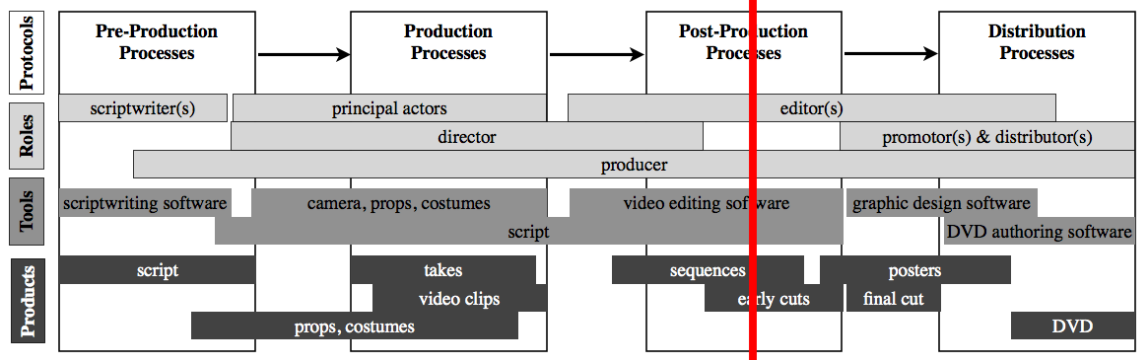
Figure 5.12. An example of a literacy event in the sociocultural contexts of videomaking.

Some of the texts at the center of the literacy events were fairly concrete and

conventional (ex. scripts, props, costumes) and others, such as a "take," were more

abstract. A take, for example, exists in two forms, a "real life" performance right in front

of the participants, but also in virtual form recorded in the camera as a video clip. While

filming the "Police Officer Joe" scene in *The Attacks* (chapter four), the students

evaluated the merit of the takes as they existed in their minds with each person

witnessing it from different vantage points depending on their physical position and

assumed role. A good performance was necessary but it also had to be captured by the

camera well and while everyone on the set had an informed opinion on the merit of the

take, only the cameraperson could gauge the quality of the video clip captured. Following

the protocols of shooting, she would only see the take once. As a result, the collective

crew "studied" the take but individuals could not. Later, the video editor, with the power

to watch the clips over and over, would ultimately decide which was the best clip.

Planned products. An essential aspect of the videomaking process in the club was that official videos were well-planned and *scripted*. Using the completed script as a tool and a guide, the shooting process could be described as solving the problem of getting a single shot captured into the camera and then repeating the process for the subsequent shots. Some shots were easy to get while others required creativity and compromise. The editor tried to create the story in the script with the video clips provided to her. At times, she asked the director for some additional shots that were not on the script, perhaps to establish where the scene was ("establishing shots") or to fill in gaps between shots ("coverage shots"). Still, the editing process, like shooting, was very planned and not much new content was created during these stages.

In the video club detailed scripts with notes on how to shoot it were common. Figure 5.13 shows a page from the director's copy of *The Phone Call*. Here, Chloe not only "blocked" the script (chunking text and putting shot numbers next to them) but she also noted what kind of camera angles she was going to get ("close up of Alex"), who we will see in each shot ("gets inside screen we see all three of them"), and even camera movement ("does NOT follow him get out"). In a sense she created a textual version of a storyboard, a specific guide to how viewers should see the video on the screen.

2

LILY
(sarcasticly)
Oh. I am sorry Alexa.

4

Alex gets up and looks mad.

5 —— *we see both of them in the screen,*

ALEX
Why did mom even name you Lily if
shes alergic to them.

we see Lily's back on her left

David comes over to them.

6

DAVID
Break it up. I'm feeling like I'm
the oldest.

7 —*gets inside. screen. We see all three of them.*

They look at him for three seconds like he is very strange.
Lily puts her hands on her hips.

8

LILY
Says the person who started the
whole seven months of kindergarten
wearing a diaper.

David yells and storms out of the living room. They hear the
telephone ring in the background.

9

Does NOT follow him get out!

ALEX
Whoever doesn't get to the phone
first gets the smallest piece of
pizza.

10 *Close up of Alex.*

LILY
You're on. Better hope your still
not hungry after dinner.

11 *Close up of Lily*

Both of them run to the phone. Alex pushes Lily out of the
way. He answers the phone while its still ringing.

12 *we see them in the original angle. Then 4 seconds later they run*

ALEX
Hello?

we just see Alex. 13

16: *we see the tele[...]*

CALLER
(creeplily)
I'm in your mom and dads building.

ALEX
Excuse me? Who are you?

14

The phone hangs up. Alex puts the phone down. He shakes his
head in disbelief. Lily gets up and looks angry. She walks
towards her brother.

15

We here the beep.

17

LILY

9 8 16

walks start

Figure 5.13. Page from the director's copy of the script for *The Phone Call*.

Chloe's textual storyboarding is very close to the visual storyboarding done in

professional films. The director Alfred Hitchcock was known for his detailed pre-production storyboards and commented, "The writer and I plan out the entire script down to the smallest detail, and when we're finished all that's left to do is to shoot the film. Actually, it's only when one enters the studio that one enters the area of compromise" (Interview with Roger Ebert, 1969). Figure 5.14 shows the first 18 shots (out of approximately 90) for the well known shower scene in *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960). The storyboard was composed by the notable graphic designer Saul Bass. While the final edit closely resembles this planned sequence, Hitchcock also recognized that the actual filmmaking process often deviated from plans ("the area of compromise") and was flexible to adapt to the changes and needs of production. Marrying these two ideas he was known to shoot alternate takes of scenes as to give himself and the editors options in the post-production stage (Krohn, 2003). Likewise, the video club directors such as Chloe made careful plans based upon the scripts but also compromised while shooting and the final cut of the video shows some of her plans followed closely and also some deviations.
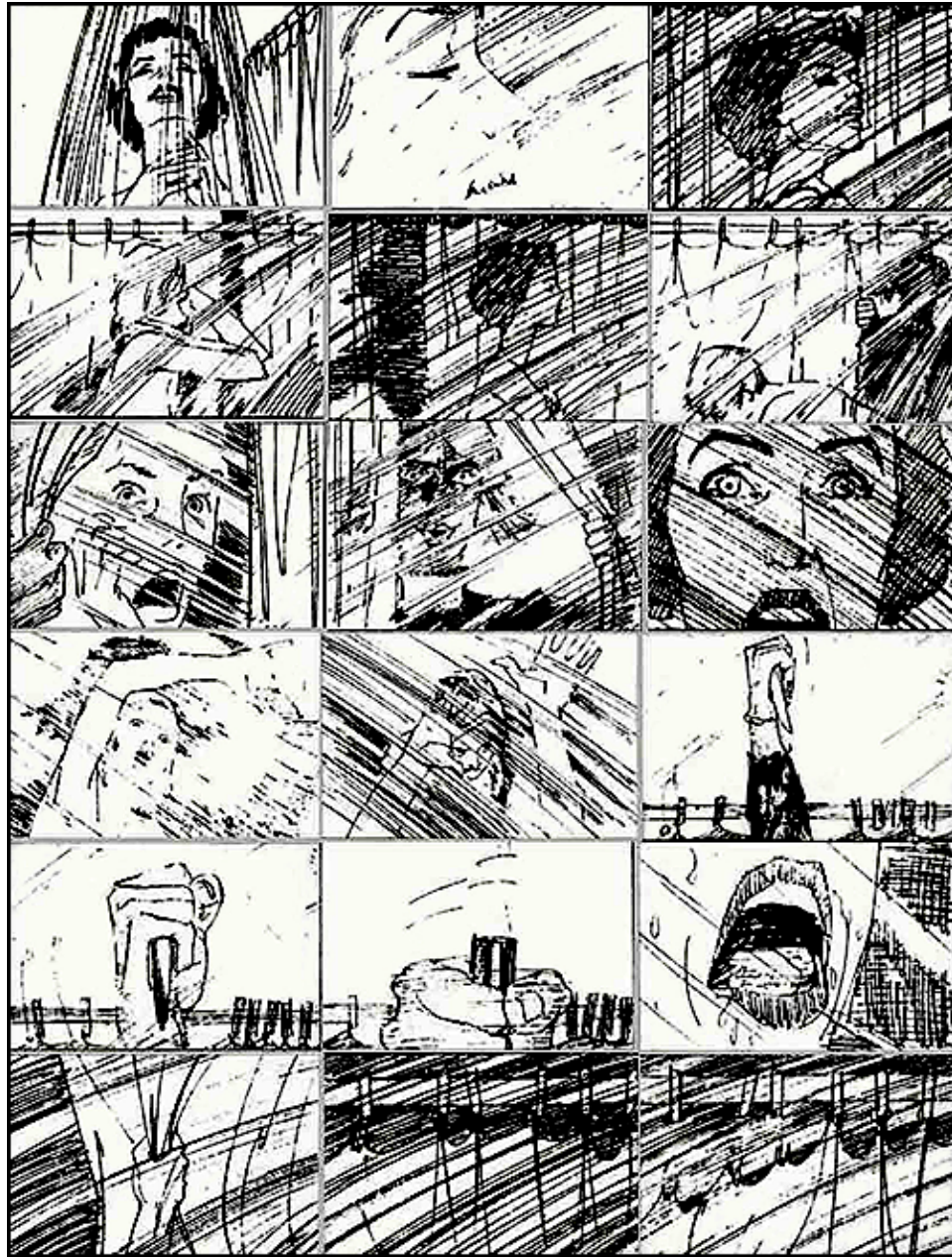
Figure 5.14. Selected storyboards from the motion picture *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960).

At the end of shooting, it was fascinating to watch the directors discard their copy of the scripts. At that point in the process, it had no more worth. The tool was used up—written all over, rolled up, dog-eared, missing pages, smudged, and left on a table somewhere. Classroom teachers at the school often found the scripts and dutifully

returned them to the computer lab thinking that the script itself, an impressive document on its own, was the final product to be saved and valued. These teachers didn't recognize that the scripts were only a product for a brief time; most of their life was as a tool to create other products in the same regard that Hitchcock's storyboards for *Psycho* are interesting to look at but ultimately a tool to make the final film.

Summary

In this chapter, I focused on four major sociocultural contexts to official videomaking in the video club: protocols, roles, tools, and products. The contexts are change at each stage of the videomaking process. These contexts are important to note as they helped shape the kinds of interactions that students had while collectively reading and writing. Examining the protocols, roles, tools, and products led to a certain amount of predictability and as we'll see in chapter six, when these contexts changed or were disregarded— breaking protocols, disregarding roles, irregular use of tools, ignoring or neglecting products— the kinds of social interactions changed as well.

Chapter 6: Social Writing as Democratic Writing

In this chapter, I argue that videomaking is an opportunity for *democratic* writing, allowing multiple voices and contributions to be included, forming and creating the various texts produced throughout the videomaking process. In chapter five I described the sociocultural contexts of the official videomaking process. These contexts— the protocols, roles, tools, and products— shaped how video texts were read and written in the club. While acknowledging these contexts, the next step is to understand the social environment and interactions involved in videomaking. During the study I observed how group writing in videomaking challenges the "*author*itative" stance of traditional writing where a single author commands over and controls the entire content and process. In addition, democratic writing moves away from conventional independent school writing and resembles more of the social and collaborative composing that occurs in out-of-school contexts such as broadcast media, video game design, webpage design, and more (Sheridan & Rowsell, 2010). I begin by examining multiple authorship in video productions. I then identify and describe the kinds of interactions that participants had while writing together. Next, I discuss the different groupings that formed during student interactions. Last, I examine the "tenors" or moods of the interactions and groupings.

Multiple Authors and Social Writing

Official videomaking involved multiple people, many acting as principal authors. No official video was completed alone, even when one person took on all of the major roles. Of the three main stages, the production stage was probably the most collaborative (as the camera operator, director, and actors worked as a team to capture the shots), however, even during scriptwriting and video editing students rarely worked alone. At

other times, students worked collectively over time by passing on completed products for other authors to work on. In either case, there were many opportunities for students to contribute to a production and their contributions mattered. I describe these two kinds of multiple authorship in videomaking as *synchronous* or *asynchronous*. In *synchronous* multiple authorship, students worked together— reading, writing, and analyzing texts— at the same time. They interacted in real time, making decisions as a group, sometimes confined by their roles, experience, or skills but writing together. In *asynchronous* multiple authorship, students worked together by passing on products (texts) to another group of authors. The students collaborated and wrote together but over time and through the products themselves. Unlike an "exquisite corpse" (the surrealist creative technique of different authors producing a collective work based on very limited knowledge of how the parts fit together), the video club students contributed to the work while being conscious of the whole, transforming the work from one medium to another: scripts were turned into enactments, enactments into digital video, and in the digital realm, the videos were further reworked and crafted.

In the following examples, I show how the students who worked on the video *Rat Boy* wrote together both synchronously and asynchronously. In the first example, the production crew was setting up a shot— in fact their first shot of the first day of shooting. The group consisted of six students and myself representing five roles (three actors, director, cameraperson, markerboard operator, and producer). Thomas wrote the script and played the lead role of "Rat Boy." Roland was the director and Thomas had to be particularly careful not to overstep his role and infringe upon Roland's. After the example I will explain how it highlights the multiple authorship in official videomaking. [Instead

of using the names of the students I use their roles as they are more informative to the

discussion. Please see Appendix D for further details on scriptwriting format.]

```
        INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - AFTERNOON - (11/8/11)

        The crew for Rat Boy is assembling in the teacher's
        lounge close to a small room with a phone in it. The
        Bad Man Actor (Jaime) and the Victim Actress (Naomi)
        are poking around the small room waiting for
        directions from the Director (Roland). Another actor,
        Thomas, is in his Rat Boy costume walking around.

                        PRODUCER
                Roland, Roland you are the
                director so you need to guide us
                now. Set up the shot please.

        Roland looks at the Producer for a moment and then
        around the set.

                        DIRECTOR
                    (to the actors)
                Alright, so... are we going to...?

                        VICTIM ACTRESS
                Don't ask us.

        The Bad Man Actor wears dark sunglasses and a black
        "hoodie" that only half covers his head. The
        Cameraperson (Katrina) and Markerboard (Sophie) notice
        this.

                        CAMERAPERSON
                    (to Bad Man Actor)
                Jaime should have his hood all the
                way over.

        The Actor puts the hood all the way on.

                        DIRECTOR
                    (to Rat Boy)
                What I need for you is to stand
                behind the camera.

        The Victim Actress laughs.

                        RAT BOY
                Behind the camera?

        The whole group says in a chorus "behind the camera"
```

```
          and Rat Boy moves out of the way.

                              DIRECTOR
                    So, Katrina, I think I'm going to
                    need you like, over here.

          The Cameraperson starts to move into position.

                              MARKERBOARD
                         (to the Bad Man Actor)
                    Pull down your sleeves.

                              CAMERAPERSON
                    Yeah. Criminals don't have their
                    sleeves up.

                              DIRECTOR
                    Ok now, you guys go in the
                    closet... Jaime...

                              MARKERBOARD
                    We should probably move the phone.

                              DIRECTOR
                    We're not doing it inside the
                    closet.

                              MARKERBOARD
                    Ooops!
```

Setting up this first shot, most of the crew was unclear what they were supposed to do. These were crucial moments because without clear direction or a sense of vision, particularly from a principal author such as a director or lead actor, the crew could lose focus, become unproductive, and potentially fall into conflict. The crew members were just beginning to sort out what their roles required of them and the "mood" of the *Rat Boy* crew was being established (more on moods and tenors later in this chapter). As they arrived at the location, I reminded the director (Roland) that he needed to take charge and set up the shot. He was not particularly prepared at first, even stalling and asking the crew "Alright, so… are we going to….?" before one of the actors retorted "Don't ask us." Despite her curtness, she actually empowered him and showed deference to his role. A

key moment that indicated that Roland was indeed in charge of the crew was when he

told Thomas, the scriptwriter and lead character, to move out of the front stage area of the

set telling him "what I need for you is to stand behind the camera." The confirmation

from the rest of the crew was enough to prevent Thomas from becoming the de facto

director.

A couple of times participants broke their established roles and tried to do others'

jobs. This was partially because students wanted to be helpful and partially because tasks

needed to get done and no specific role was assigned to do those tasks. Someone had to

step up and do the work. For example, the markerboard operator and cameraperson did

impromptu costume directing with Jaime in his "Bad Man" role. They felt that his hood

should be completely covering his head and the sleeves pulled all the way down. His

hooded sweatshirt was something that he typically wore on any given school day but

usually with the hood off and the sleeves up. Through these few details the girls helped

turn an everyday piece of clothing into a costume. Later, the markerboard operator

wanted to help the crew by suggesting that they remove the phone from the closet not

knowing that the way the shot was composed, the camera would not even see what was in

there.

At this point in the shoot, the crew settled into a location and sorted out their roles

but they still had to get the actors prepared for the shot and position the camera. They

continued:

```
INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS - (11/8/11)

The Director holds the door to the closet open while
The Bad Man Actor continues to adjust his costume. The
Victim Actress goes into the closet.
```

                         DIRECTOR
                    (talking to the two
                    actors)
               So we start out with, we start out
               with, you open the closet--

The cameraperson turns on the camera and it makes a
beeping sound. The director stops and turns.

                         DIRECTOR
                    (to cameraperson)
               You didn't start filming, did you?

                         CAMERAPERSON
               No, no, no, nah.

The director returns to the actors.

                         DIRECTOR
               So what you do is--

                         RAT BOY
                    (joking)
               She's filming!

                         DIRECTOR
                    (ignoring Rat Boy)
               And you see a hand go out like
               that.

The director reaches out with his hand.

                         VICTIM ACTRESS
               He grabs me?

                         DIRECTOR
               No, he tries to and you run out.
               And run....
                    (thinking)
               Like that way.

He points away from the camera.

                         VICTIM ACTRESS
               But, but the script says "let me
               go."

                         DIRECTOR
               That's late-- that's like, oh
               yeah...let's see you turn back--

                         RAT BOY
               Why don't you give her the script.

```
          The director gives her a copy of the script.

                              VICTIM ACTRESS
                    Yeah, cause it says
                         (reading)
                    "We see a girl run out of a
                    closet. A man jumps out of the
                    closet and grabs her."

          The Victim Actress looks directly at the Director to
          emphasize her point.

                              DIRECTOR
                    Ok, so you throw open the closet
                    door and he jumps--

                              VICTIM ACTRESS
                    I throw open the door and he grabs
                    me.

          She hands the script back to the director.
```

In the production stage, opportunities for synchronous multiple authorship were plentiful. Here the production crew was still trying to figure out how the shot should look and even before the first "real" take was attempted, multiple students influenced the plan. The example also demonstrates the powerful role tools played during the interaction of multiple authors in videomaking. When Roland attempted to direct the actors, he was stymied due to discrepancies between his direction and what the script said. Instead of jumping into the directing role, Thomas told Roland to give the actress a copy of the script. The script was a valuable tool that expressed authority without Thomas (the scriptwriter) himself needing to be authoritative. The document helped solve the crew's issue without undermining the director's role. Later, the markerboard operator suggested that the actors be repositioned sensing that it was "really weird" that they were both coming out of the closet. It was a good idea that added clarity but because the script explicitly said that the two were both in the closet, that's how it was going to be shot. The same tool that got the production settled and rolling also nixed good ideas that

contradicted it. Having come to a (near) consensus on what should happen, they

continued, this time rehearsing what they discussed.

> INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS - (11/8/11)
>
> The Victim Actress hands the script back to the
> director.
>
>   DIRECTOR
>   Yes. Practice. Practice, not real.
>
>   CAMERAPERSON
>   Hold on, hold on. I wanna see--
>
> The cameraperson is trying to get ready for the shot.
>
>   VICTIM ACTRESS
>   It's just practice.
>
>   CAMERAPERSON
>   I know, but I just want to see how
>   it looks. Wait, watch out Roland.
>
> The Victim Actress goes into the closet and closes the
> door behind her. In a moment she walks out smiling
> looking over her shoulder and the Bad Man Actor jumps
> out and grabs her by the shoulders.
>
>   BAD MAN ACTOR
>   Like that?
>
>   VICTIM ACTRESS
>   Not like that!
>
>   CAMERAPERSON
>   That was all bad cause Naomi
>   walked out all "la la la la la."
>
> Lots of laughter.
>
>   CAMERAPERSON
>   (to the Bad Man Actor)
>   And then you came out all
>   "raaahr!"
>
> The Markerboard is moving around in front of the
> camera. She is looking at the closet door.
>
>   MARKERBOARD
>   (to Bad Man Actor)

              Why don't you be like here and
              like then jump out--

                    RAT BOY
              No, because he has to be _in_ the
              closet.

The Markerboard walks away looking extremely doubtful.

                MARKERBOARD
               (softly)
              That's really weird...

                 DIRECTOR
              Alright, another practice. Action!

The two actors continue with their rehearsal, coming
out of the closet and again he grabs her. They all
seem to talk at once.

                 DIRECTOR
               (to the Cameraperson)
              Except you gotta, like, turn the
              camera--

                CAMERAPERSON
              You want me to turn it?

                 DIRECTOR
              The way that they're going you
              gotta keep up--

                VICTIM ACTRESS
               Ouch!
               (to the Actor)
              You gotta be right behind me cause
              then I'm just standing there.

                 DIRECTOR
               (continuing with the
               Cameraperson)
              First of all, you gotta be able to
              see them.

The two actors head back to the closet.

                VICTIM ACTRESS
              We're not filming, are we?

                 DIRECTOR
              No... Alright...
               (to the actors)
              Ok, now do you guys have this
              down? Except you're supposed to

```
                        say "let me go."

                              VICTIM ACTRESS
                        I know.

                              CAMERAPERSON
                        Just tell me when you're ready.

                  The Director digs through the script flipping pages.

                              DIRECTOR
                        Hey Jaime, do you know your first
                        line? Read your first lines over
                        first.

                  The Bad Man Actor looks at the script silently for a
                  moment and then hands it back to the Director

                              BAD MAN ACTOR
                        Ok...

                              VICTIM ACTRESS
                        And Jaime, don't grab me by my
                        neck, grab me by my arms.

                              PRODUCER
                        Are they practicing still, or is
                        this going to be real?

                  The Director nods yes and The Markerboard moves into
                  position in front of the camera.
```

The importance of rehearsing can be seen here and the example highlights the

angst, struggle, and joy that is experienced during transmediation. Moving from written

text to performed composition demands energies, thinking, and negotiations to stay true

to meaning and intention while also changing mode from written to performed piece.

This is true for everyone involved and even the cameraperson wanted to practice, "just to

see how it looks." After the initial public group evaluation of the actors' performance

("That was all bad cause Naomi walked out all 'la la la la la.'"), the markerboard operator

made a suggestion on where the actors should be positioned. Though the markerboard

operator's idea was ultimately rejected, the situation shows how many individuals paid

attention to the whole, breaking out of their roles to comment on the general performance

and the setup of the shot.

After a second quick practice take, two simultaneous and more specific

discussions occurred. In the first, the cameraperson and the director talked about the

tracking and framing of the action ("except, you gotta, like turn the camera"). In the

second discussion, the two actors talked about how to coordinate their action ("You gotta

be right behind me cause I'm just standing there.") These examples show how the crew

was specializing and getting into their specific roles. After the director and actors created

what they thought the script wanted them to do, the actors worked together to improve

their actions while the director and the cameraperson worked on how to best capture the

action. These two discussions were different than the commentary after the first rehearsal

because they were more private, specialized topics of conversation between people in

specialized roles.

The next example examines asynchronous multiple authorship during post-

production. Here, video clips from the *Rat Boy* crew were imported into the computer and

the two editors, Cruz and Ella, discussed and evaluated the shots with the producer seeing

how they fit together. A "master" and "apprentice" team, Cruz was learning how to edit

and Ella was the person who he could turn to for help. Some of the *Rat Boy* production

team were around to watch the clips come into the computer so it was an opportunity for

people to critique performances and takes asynchronously.

```
INT. COMPUTER LAB, CRUZ' COMPUTER – AFTERNOON –
(11/15/11)

The Editors, Cruz and Ella, are dumping shot video
into the computer for editing. The Producer (Mr.
```

Jurich) and some of the crew including the Victim
Actress (Naomi), New Cameraperson (Gil), and Old
Cameraperson (Katrina), watch the clips come in on the
screen.

> PRODUCER
> I like the zoom in but it chops
> off his head.

> NEW CAMERAPERSON
> Ooopsies!

> PRODUCER
> (to the New
> Cameraperson)
> Is that you?

The Old Cameraperson moves in closer.

> KATRINA
> Of course that's not <u>me</u>, Mr.
> Jurich.

Another clip comes onto the screen. Rat Boy is on the
floor and another actor is acting like she's going to
kick him. The Producer laughs.

> PRODUCER
> (to the New
> Cameraperson)
> And now you're recording when you
> shouldn't be recording.

A series of takes of one particular shot are shown
including several acting miscues. In almost all of the
takes the Director says "cut" directly after the
Victim Actor says her line.

> "MASTER" EDITOR
> The "cuts" too fast.

> PRODUCER
> Yeah, the "cuts" <u>way</u> too fast.
> (to Victim Actress)
> We <u>totally</u> told him that. Next
> time yell at him because I'm the
> only one who's yelling.

> VICTIM ACTRESS
> <u>I'll</u> yell at him for you!

Everyone laughs.

PRODUCER

`Good!`

This literacy event (examining new footage come into computer) was different than those during shooting. Seeing the clips for the first time, the participants were making initial assessments, mental notes of which takes were acceptable and which were flawed beyond use. The post-production crew— the producer and two editors— were evaluating the "video clips" while the production crew, earlier, evaluated the "performances" or "takes." The video clips were the cumulative efforts of all the members of the production team: actors, cameraperson, director. The clips had problems that the producer and editors spotted immediately, in particular, shots that were mis-framed and cut too soon after the completion of the action. The post-production team was fortunate to have a few members of the production crew present to hear the feedback. For example, I commented that while on set I "yelled" at the director for saying "cut" too soon and I needed some support from the rest of the production crew so he would understand that it was indeed a problem. Now that some of the crew members saw what kinds of problems the practice caused, one of the actors said she'd help out.

This kind of criticism was a way in which the production crew could improve their performance, a form of asynchronous multiple authorship. While the actors tried to *enact* the best possible performance and the cameraperson the director tried to *capture* that performance, the post-production team were looking for the best of both— a good enactment that had been captured well. As principal authors of the post-production stage, they worked with clips that were given to them and their unique position as editors, able to see everything at once and replay the takes over and over for close examination, allowed them to see how miscues by any member of the production team could ruin a

take. In the example above, they saw acting, camerawork, and even directing miscues. Later, Cruz spotted even more miscues including one of the actors, who shouldn't have been on the screen, creep into the corner of the frame. Editors were limited by the footage that was given to them but they also had ample latitude to make significant contributions. While there was little social interaction between principal authors across stages, synchronous collaboration continued with other members of their team, for example Cruz and Ella collaborated with each other as well as the producers and with actors doing voice overdubs (when Cruz had to get Thomas as Rat Boy to say "Let's take this outside").

Interactions

When examining the kinds of interactions that occurred between videomakers, it was important to keep in mind the differences between synchronous and asynchronous multiple authorship. Goffman (1959) describes *performances* as synchronous situations and *exhibitions* as collections of asynchronous artifacts. I connect this idea to the way that participants in the video club interacted and the products produced during these interactions. Students both *performed* and created *exhibits* of past performances. An example of a synchronous performance is the interaction during shooting (in the production stage). The actors were certainly performing, acting from the script's directions, but the rest of the crew was also performing, just not in front of the camera. We can see performance by the whole crew where the *Rat Boy* production team was setting up their first shot. When the actors were directed to rehearse their scene, the cameraperson also wanted to practice by tracking and framing the action. Later, when they were filming "for real," the markerboard operator had the whiteboard placed in the

right spot and correctly called out the shot and take number and the director was

positioned and observant, like a referee prepared to make a judgment of the take.

Together, the crew created the video clips and the shortcomings of any crew members'

performance could result in a poor take. Performances (such as in shooting or

scriptwriting) were thus synchronous situations or synchronous forms of multiple

authorship.

An example of an asynchronous exhibit (Goffman, 1959) was when students

worked across production stages (in the *Rat Boy* example, from production to post-

production) writing together but not via a shared performance but instead through

collections of artifacts. While performances happened in real time, particularly during the

production stage, "exhibitions" such as working with collections of video clips (artifacts)

to create a final cut, regularly occurred in post-production. Here, editors turned digital

video clips into something different, something *curated*. The clips were sorted, the best

takes were used, and the ones with miscues were put aside. For acceptable takes, the

backstage elements— anything that happened before "action" and after "cut" (such as the

showing of the markerboard that identified the shot and take number)— were removed.

Clips were cut further to heighten action or hint at ideas. Next, clips were sequenced to

help guide viewers to specific intended meanings. The final cut was crafted, curated, and

turned into an *exhibit*. Highlighting this curation process in films, the French neo-realist

director François Truffaut commented "What is drama, after all, but life with the dull bits

cut out." Considering that my research questions focus on social writing, I center on the

synchronous performative interactions more than the asynchronous interactions in

creating exhibits. These synchronous interactions were present throughout the entire

official videomaking process but most common during the production stage.

      How participants interacted. Participants in the various videomaking literacy events socially interacted with one another in specific ways. I observed that these literacy events had three reoccurring parts where participants: 1) read, watched, listened to a text (collective receptive processes), 2) socially interacted with one another concerning the text, and 3) wrote, performed, composed, or took some form of creative action taking into consideration the group interaction (collective expressive processes). This is similar to Goodman's (1994) three vantage points of studying the linguistic transaction in a literacy event: studying the process in which readers make sense of texts, studying the characteristics of texts, and studying the process in which writers produce texts (discussed in greater detail in chapter two). Literacy events could begin with writing but reading was a far more common starting point. The middle "interaction" time, between reading and writing, was particularly complicated because it involved multiple people interacting with each other all at the same time.

      Literacy events also involved elements of both *internalization* and *externalization* (Moran & John-Steiner, 2003). In internalization, readers make internal meanings out of external signs and symbols; with externalization, writers turn internal ideas, via tools, into external representations. Participants made meanings both alone and as a collective group. When I coded these moments of interaction, the most common behaviors students demonstrated were *inquiring*, *instructing*, *suggesting*, and *evaluating*. Other behaviors certainly took place but these four were the most prevailing. Figure 6.1 shows a model of participant interaction during literacy events in the videomaking process. Participants read a text together and then interacted concerning the text (inquired, instructed,

suggested, evaluated). From here, the participants might return to reading or shift to collective writing activities. In the production stage of videomaking, students might view a performance (collective reading), discuss the merit of the take and/or make changes (interact in relation to the text), and then do another take (collective writing). There is definitely overlap between reading and writing processes as students also read as they write. The four categories of interaction in the middle "Collective Interaction" section are discussed below.
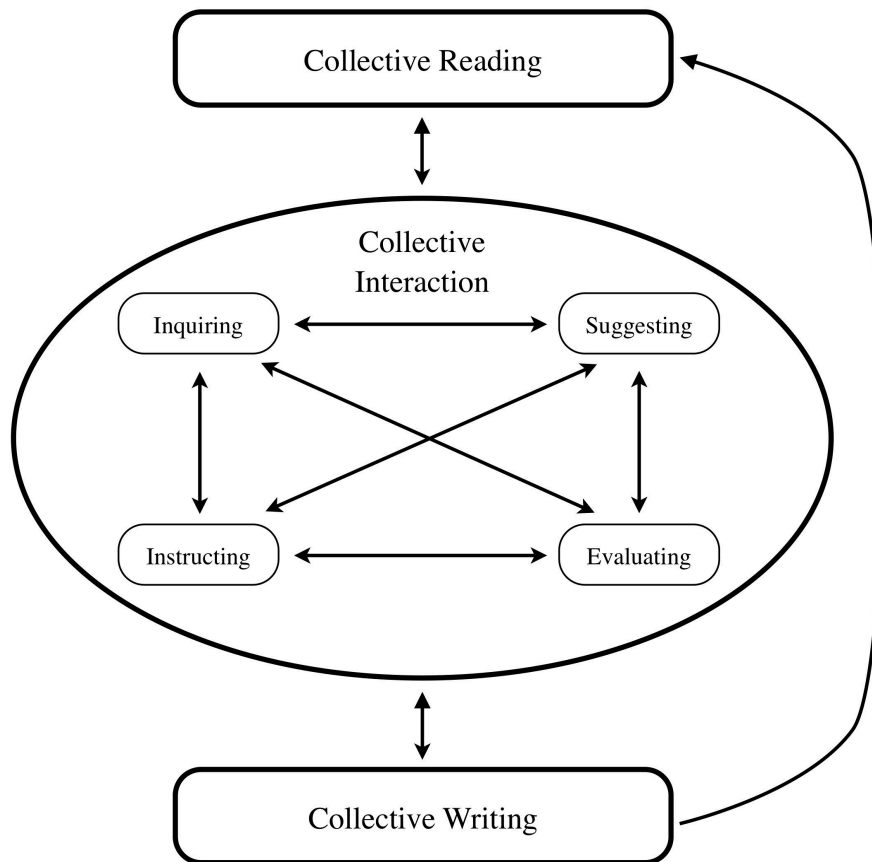

Figure 6.1. Model of literacy events in the videomaking process.

Inquiring. Many collective interactions began with *inquiring*, when participants posed questions to one another. Codes that fit under this category included "asking,"

"questioning," "inquiring," and "requesting." Not all questions were the same as an

inquiry could be posed with different motivations in mind. For example, some questions

were asked in order to seek unknown knowledge or information while others were posed

to make suggestions, judgements, or statements all phrased in question form. Table 6.1

shows a range of questions asked moving progressively away from inquiry towards

statements. Aside from the occasional rhetorical question, inquiries demanded some kind

of response via words or actions and as a result naturally led to the other three categories

(instructing, suggesting, and evaluating).

Table 6.1

Variations of the category "inquiry."

Inquiry as...	Example
looking for information	"How do I insert the clip?"
getting permission	"Can we use your room to shoot?"
deliberating or being hypothetical	"How can we film the car scene?"
confirming	"Should I get the microphone?"
suggesting	"What if we did it in two shots?"
doubting	"Are you sure you want to do one more take?"
instructing or commanding	"Is everyone ready?" (implied: "Everyone needs to be ready.") "Can you change the markerboard to Shot 20?"
making a statement	"Why on earth would you do that?" (implied: "You shouldn't have done that.")

Instructing. In *instructing*, participants gave directions or information to others.

Numerous codes fit under this category including "guiding," "telling/informing"

"explaining," "demonstrating," and "correcting/clarifying/confirming." Each of these

codes suggested slightly different versions of *instructing*, hinting at differences of power

and control each participant had in the interaction. For example, "ordering" is the most

authoritarian while "guiding" allows for more choice for the person being guided. In

addition, the mode of instruction could vary as "demonstrating" meant expressing or

showing through action while "telling" was done through words alone. Instructing

naturally resulted from inquiries (particularly in scenarios involving some kind of

teaching or master/apprentice interactions). Principal authors at all stages, especially

directors and producers, instructed but just about anyone involved in videomaking needed

to guide others at some point in the writing process. Table 6.2 shows the variations of the

category "instructing."

Table 6.2

Codes within the category "instructing."

Instructing Codes	Definition and Example
guiding	Advising or showing the way to others: "We'll record some silence in the car, no radio, no talking, nothing. We'll just hear the hum of the engine, cars passing. Then we can use that as a background sound when doing the overdubs."
demonstrating	Showing by doing (action): "Say, 'Whoa! what happened?! Were you mad?'"
explaining	Describing in more detail: "You have to understand, an image is an image and you can change the length, but once it starts moving it becomes a video that you can *only* clip (shrink)."
instructing	Teaching or directing others: "Go up.... I like that one! Press 'Command C' to copy.... Go up."

correcting/clarifying/ confirming	Communicating that someone is wrong (and correcting them), somewhat correct (and clarifying), or right (and confirming): "Wait, we're supposed to cry?" "Just be scared." (clarifying)
telling/informing	Communicating information or facts through words: "You have to make the Tweety Bird clip longer if you want it to work."
ordering	Authoritative command: "Gil, get over here!"

Suggesting. *Suggesting* meant proposing an idea for consideration by one or more members of the group. Suggestions were widespread, occurring at all stages of production and by everyone despite their roles. They were a key feature of democratic writing— that all students could contribute and suggest at any time. Other codes that fit within the category included "contributing," "advising," and "recommending." Suggesting was different than instructing in that the merit of a suggestion was assumed to be still up for debate while instructions came from someone in either a position of experience, knowledge, or authority. Suggestions were a bit "softer" and more about ideas while contributions had a hint of instruction to them. For example, suggestions often started with "Maybe…" or "How about…" while contributions started with an implied subject: "Cross your arms." and "Try a different cable." Recommending and advising could appear to be very similar to instructing but the person being advised had full power to reject the advice. Suggestions and contributions were common and often came in rapid fire succession leading to a series of responses in the form of evaluations. Table 6.3 shares definitions and examples of the category suggesting.

Table 6.3

Codes within the category "suggesting."

Suggesting Codes	**Definition and Example**

suggesting	To put forth for consideration: "Maybe we could start close up and then when she walks away zoom out."
contributing	Giving one's view or assistance: "No, no, no that's sad, not mad." "Cross your arms." "Come on, get mad! I killed your parents!" (Contributions to an actor on how to look "mad" from various crew members.)
advising/ recommending	To put forth for implied approval: "You might want to save, Katie. Command S."

Evaluating. In *evaluating*, participants formed judgements and opinions on texts and performances. Other codes fit within the category including "judging," "assessing," "critiquing," and "giving feedback." In addition, there were numerous other codes that implied evaluation with some kind of negative or positive connotation including "disagreeing," "agreeing," "complaining," "scolding," "admiring," and "complementing." The codes within the category of evaluating ranged from the informal and loose "judging" to more formal "assessing" which were direct comparison to some standard or measure. Table 6.4 shows the codes within the category of evaluating and gives definitions and examples. Sometimes an evaluation *and* suggestion could be implied all in one, for example, the phrase "I think we need to do another take" was regularly said implying that the take in some way was not good enough and another one was needed. Evaluating could lead to further suggesting, inquiring, or instructing but it was also a common launching point to collective writing activities such as scriptwriting, filming, or editing.

Table 6.4

Codes within the category "evaluating."

Suggesting Codes	**Definition and Example**

judging	Forming a loose opinion or conclusion: "That was good."
giving feedback	Expressing a reaction to a text or performance: "What do you think?" "Charlotte might have been in the way when I turned it (the camera)."
evaluating	Forming an idea of something's value: "Yeah, that doesn't make too much sense."
critiquing	Expressing an analysis of the merits or faults of something: "Don't point because when you do that I can't see the Principal's Office sign."
assessing	Evaluating based upon some standard or measure: "That take was much better (than the last one)."

"Problem-solving" and "problem-finding" scenarios. I describe the interactions

between participants during official videomaking as coming in two different general

forms: *problem-solving* and *problem-finding*. In problem-solving scenarios, participants

started with a relatively detailed plan and then worked to execute that plan. As described

in chapter five, official video productions were scripted processes with extensive plans in

place. Participants solved problems that stood in the way of achieving the desired results.

Problems and obstacles were plentiful and never-ending. Students' progress could be

impeded by a lack of knowledge or skills (to use a tool or technique, to fulfill a role, to

follow protocols), missing or needed resources (correct cable, charged batteries, working

dry erase markers, locations to shoot in, costume or prop to make, absent crew members),

dealing with obstacles (noise, disinterest, time, miss-takes and miscues, interruptions),

dealing with limited resources (adults to supervise crews, time), and all of the difficulties

that come about when people have to work together. The production stage was perhaps

the most problem ridden because so many people, tools, and roles were involved but

problem solving scenarios existed at all stages of production.

Problem-finding, in contrast, was an improvisational style of creation (Sawyer, 2003a). The participants searched for a "problem"— a situation, an inciting incident, an idea to pursue. In problem-finding, there was no distinction between planning and executing the plan; students created without any plan in place (the "plan" is that there is no plan at all). Highlighting the creative elements in problem-finding, John-Steiner (1997) noted that many insights come about while working with the tools and materials of one's domain. Problem-finding in the video club occurred when students created and wrote the initial ideas for the script, imagined and blocked scripts, and poked around locations figuring out how shots will be performed and captured. In problem-solving situations students made products; in contrast, in problem-finding situations, students created what Sawyer (2003a) calls the "emergent"— the creative results of complex moment-to-moment interactions between collaborative groups. Dramatic elements emerged from the dialogue and interaction of the video club members and through their collaboration they produced ideas that were greater than the sum of their individual parts. (I present an example of a problem-solving later in this section.)

To demonstrate this difference, I re-present the *Rat Boy* production crew setting up the first shot in their video (Figure 6.2). Here, they are on their second rehearsal— they figured out what they're supposed to do, now their challenge was to solve the problems of following the scripted plan. In some ways they were both practicing and evaluating a take or performance. Off to the side of the data script I show the categories that describe the participants' words and behaviors.

```
                              The two actors continue with their rehearsal, coming out
                              of the closet and again he grabs her. They all seem to
                              talk at once.

                                              DIRECTOR
                                        (to the Cameraperson)
evaluating/instructing        Except you gotta, like, turn the
                              camera--

                                              CAMERAPERSON
inquiring                     You want me to turn it?

                                              DIRECTOR
                              The way that they're going you
instructing/suggesting        gotta keep up--

                                              VICTIM ACTRESS
                              Ouch!
                                        (to the Actor)
                              You gotta be right behind me
evaluating/instructing        cause then I'm just standing
                              there.

                                              DIRECTOR
                                        (continuing with the
                                        Cameraperson)
instructing/suggesting        First of all, you gotta be able
                              to see them.

                              The two actors head back to the closet.
```

Figure 6.2. Problem-solving scenario: Setting up a shot in *Rat Boy*.

The interactions in this problem-solving scenario included all four interaction

characteristics though much of their instructing was actually suggesting because they

were still negotiating how the shot would look. At this point, there was very little inquiry

(just a confirmation question) and the participants were mainly evaluating and suggesting.

Like all creative processes, video club activities had a balance between problem-

finding and problem-solving. What is significant here is that in both problem-solving and

problem-finding scenarios, the same four interaction categories (inquiring, instructing,

suggesting, and evaluating) were present, but they varied in sequence and frequency. For

example, in a literacy event students could alternate back and forth between suggesting

and evaluating but that looked very different than looping between evaluating and

suggesting. The difference in the sequence was important. For example, the "suggest-

evaluate" loop is a problem-*finding* scenario, where students are trying out ideas and creating through interaction. The "evaluate-suggest" loop is a problem-*solving* scenario where students are evaluating a text according to some planned idea and making suggestions to get to that desired result.

In problem-finding scenarios, the participants attempted to create an "emergent" or a collectively created idea. Scriptwriting was a common problem-finding process because students were creating the initial story. Problem-finding scenarios were complex interactions where participants often switched out of their official roles making suggestions and contributions to create. In the following example, three students were creating the script for *The Attacks*. Figure 6.3 shows the data script with the codes describing their words and behaviors on the left-hand side.

```
INT. LAB, KATIE'S COMPUTER - AFTERNOON - (9/29/2011)

Katie sits at her computer listening intently with one hand
on the computer keyboard. Discussing the scene, Pilar
stands and Naomi sits.
                         PILAR
                She'll follow almost right behind
                us and I'll fall off. How about
                that?

                         NAOMI
                No, she, she's gonna be on that
                little wobbly thing,
                     (gesturing)
                that goes up and down, the one
                that goes like that--

                         KATIE
                     (excitedly with speed)
                And she looks to the side and she
                can see that we saw her so we
                slide down the slide, then she
                sees us slide down and down--

                         PILAR
                Yeah.

        Katie quickly turns to her computer and starts typing.

                         NAOMI
                And then she looks back down and
                says "there you are."

        Katie looks over at Naomi and smiles, liking the idea.
```

suggesting (PILAR block)

evaluating / suggesting (NAOMI block)

evaluating / suggesting (KATIE block)

evaluating (PILAR)

suggesting (NAOMI)

evaluating (final)

Figure 6.3. Problem-finding scenario: Scriptwriting *The Attacks*.

In the above example, the interactions between the three collaborators consisted entirely

of switching between suggesting and evaluating. Their suggestions were the result of

evaluations of prior suggestions making a "suggesting-evaluating" loop. Though inquiry

and even instructing could happen during problem-finding scenarios, the suggesting-

evaluating loop was common.

Groupings

The social and democratic nature of videomaking implies that students will

interact— reading and writing together— in different kinds of groupings. These

groupings in the video club varied in size from simple pairs to large groups. Once, while

shooting *Live Soccer: No Mercy vs. Devastators*, the production team needed every member of the video club to shoot but this was unusual. During the video club, I observed four consistent kinds of groupings: "Professionals," "Crews," "Duos," and "Auteurs," each explained in greater depth below. These groupings were characterized by a variety of factors including the number in the group (Professionals and Crews were usually three or more, Duos were twos, and Auteurs were alone) and the power relations between those interacting. While some groupings were more common at different production stages (ex. scriptwriting Duos during pre-production), all were accepted and positive kinds of assemblage and none of them were preferred over another or considered "ideal." Groupings formed organically in order to fit the needs of the participants. As I will demonstrate later, groupings had the potential to "dissolve" into a negative form of itself. Here I discuss the characteristics of each grouping.

"Professionals" (dissolving into "Bureaucrats"). The professionals were characterized by a group of people interacting in precise relation to their defined film roles: scriptwriters wrote scripts, directors directed, actors acted, camerapeople worked the camera, and so on. These participants were generally competent and some were even brilliant at their roles. In many ways, Professionals were a natural grouping for official videomaking and, when done well, students performed their assigned roles quickly and with skill while at the same time allowing others to do their tasks without interference. There was a sense of efficiency and professionalism to their work and I would often praise a job well done by saying "that was very professional," meaning their work was done to the standards of a working pro. Through a history of consistent professional work, students could develop a positive reputation for a variety of roles.

Professionals dissolved into "Bureaucrats" when a critical mass of the group demonstrated limited ability to perform their roles *but still clung to the power of their rank and position*. These students tended to refuse help from others because they felt that it would diminish their power. If there was one common refrain of the Bureaucrat it would be "Don't tell me how to (action), I'm the (role)!" Even with poor performance, students had power through their roles and titles and could maintain this power if they insisted that procedures and processes be followed. There was a pecking order of roles, both major and minor, and only the producer could usurp a major role. Despite the maddening atmosphere that a disorganized director created, replacing them was never done and instead producers (adults) "traded out," temporarily relieving one another and sharing the burden.

Bureaucrats weren't always incompetent; skilled Professionals could turn into a Bureaucrat by using their role as a way of controlling others or tactfully addressing time consuming suggestions. For example, a director might dismiss an idea (even a good one) because it is too complicated to deviate from the script. We saw this in the filming of *Rat Boy* earlier this chapter. The markerboard operator offered the idea of repositioning the Bad Man character outside of the closet when he attacked the Victim Actress. It had already taken the crew a good while to figure out where everyone should be and to accept her idea meant even more time would be needed. Instead the director replied, "No, because he has to be *in* the closet." At other times, I saw directors ignore the misbehavior of a friend on a set knowing that the producer would take care of it. Avoiding a potentially hairy social situation, the director maintained her friendship and also got her production crew in order.

Professionals/Bureaucrats were a common grouping in all three stages of videomaking because of the specialization of roles in videomaking. Each professional role had a function that was different than the others but collectively the various roles fit together to complement one another. Participants in these various roles understood how these roles were integrated and knew how each person contributed. Together they were committed to the project or the common endeavor— making the video. This same kind of specialization occurs in massive multi-player video games such as *World of Warcraft* (Blizzard Entertainment, 2010) where "cross-functional teams" (Gee, 2005, p. 37) made up of specialized players each has different set of skills such as a "Warrior" or "Druid." In videomaking, actors know that their gestures and expressions are being captured by the cameraperson so they perform for the camera. Still, they have to trust that the cameraperson captures the images well and editors will cut the clips in a way to make the most of the performances.

"Crews" (dissolving into "Ship of Fools"). Crews were a unique, wonderful, but fleeting kind of grouping. [Note: I capitalize "Crew" to refer to this specific kind of grouping versus a lower case "crew" to indicate the traditional term for a film work group.] One of the main characteristics of Crews was that they *ignored* the assigned professional roles all together. While everyone started with an official role such as director or cameraperson, once they got working, Crews more or less abandoned their roles and everyone contributed to whatever needed attending to. Everyone contributed to the directing, huddle around the camera to see what was being captured, or an idle actor may take over the markerboard position while the markerboard turned into an extra. Crews were the most democratic and energetic kind of grouping but they were also

tenuous and fragile. Often, disagreements quickly changed the mood and students

generally fell back into the safety of their roles, particularly if it was a major one. The

shooting of the "Police Officer Joe" scene in *The Attacks* (chapter four) demonstrated

moments of a Crew in action— the cameraperson suggested line changes and the

markerboard gave feedback on takes while coaching the actor— but ultimately, they

returned to their professional roles.

When a Crew worked well together it was majestic and uplifting, a real

brainstorm of activity and possibility however, when they failed the Crew dissolved into

a classic "Ship of Fools" where everything seemed lost: focus, tempers, inhibitions,

manners, time, and spirit. It was as if the students were temporarily afflicted with a kind

of "madness." Foucault (1965) explains the historical roots of the phrase:

> Renaissance men developed a delightful, yet horrible way of dealing with their
>
> mad denizens: they were put on a ship and entrusted to mariners because folly,
>
> water, and sea, as everyone then 'knew', had an affinity for each other. Thus, "Ship
>
> of Fools" crisscrossed the sea and canals of Europe with their comic and pathetic
>
> cargo of souls. Some of them found pleasure and even a cure in the changing
>
> surroundings, in the isolation of being cast off, while others withdrew
>
> further." (Foucault, 1965, pp. vi-vii)

Seeing a group of students turn into a "Ship of Fools" was a cause for great alarm for a

producer because the playtime atmosphere went against everything that a producer/

teacher wanted: discipline, order, responsibility, turn-taking, manners. Students "aboard"

the Ship of Fools responded in a variety of ways. For some it was a wonderful playtime

with costumes, wigs, props, and cameras to perform in front of. Their roles and tools

empowered them to do things they'd never do in usually forbidden settings such as the

teacher's lounge or the spooky school basement. It was extremely pleasurable to yell,

scream, joke, and laugh. As much as we adults rewarded their professionalism when we

saw it, the students were still kids, after-all. Intense play might be regarded as a kind of

fantasy or madness in itself that is not easily reigned in. On the other hand, some

students, particularly the more focused ones, found it difficult, even *maddening* to deal

with students who were "out of control." They needed an adult, a producer, to take over

for a moment (perhaps to be the "bad guy" so they didn't have to be) and get the group

back together. That was precisely what a producer was supposed to do: refocus directors,

reign in prima-donna actors, or fire and replace irresponsible crew members. For

example, the production crew for *The Lock In* was filming in the library setting up a shot

in which the two main characters will be sleeping in the "story pit" on a pile of bean

bags. They started out as a Crew, setting up the shot and moving the bean bags in place

but Renee (an actor) said "watch this!" and she jumped from the steps onto the bean bags.

There was great laughter and everyone else wanted a turn. They ended up jumping onto

bean bags for the next three minutes— every member of the crew including the director.

After Jasmine (the producer) told them "ok, let's start filming now…" they resumed

setting up the shot, sneaking in additional jumps for another four minutes. They briefly

got settled into putting on a costume for a character when Charlotte refocuses their

attention back to the bean bags.

```
INT. LIBRARY – AFTERNOON – (12/1/2011)

The production crew for The Lock In are in the
library. A couple of students huddle around an actor
as they try to put on her elaborate costume.
```

Charlotte stands at the top of the stairs to the story
pit. There are four bean bags at the bottom.

                    CHARLOTTE
          No, no, no! I'm the teacher right
          now. Ok...

She points with her hands, acting like a teacher and
the other kids on the crew are her audience. Her voice
changes.

                    CHARLOTTE
          To do a proper free fall... this
          is what you do.
                (beat)
          So first, you gotta spread your
          legs out.

She spreads her legs and slaps her knees.

                    CHARLOTTE
          Stick your arms out.

She extends her arms out parallel to the ground.

                    CHARLOTTE
          You got to squat down real low...

She bounces by bending her knees.

                    KATIE
          Spring it!

                    CHARLOTTE
              (to Katie)
          Yeah, spring it, you got it!

With her arms outward and springing. She is smiling
from ear to ear a little out of breath from bending.

                    CHARLOTTE
          So once you got your bounce
          on...just...
                (whispered)
          Fly...

She pauses for a moment.

                    CHARLOTTE
          Like this, ready?

Then Charlotte launches herself high into air. She
plops onto the bean bags and it makes a loud pop.
Charlotte groans when she hits. Students laugh.

                         KATRINA
          And you have to tuck your arms in!

                         CHARLOTTE
          Yeah!

                         JASMINE (PRODUCER)
                    (a bit of sarcasm)
          That was beautiful.
                    (beat)
          Alright! So, no more jumping.

                         KATIE
          We're getting the girl's mask up
          on.

                         JASMINE (PRODUCER)
          And then what.

                         KATIE
          And then we're going to start
          shooting.

     There is a pause of silence and Katie walks over to
     her script. Charlotte starts to slowly get up from the
     bean bags.

                         CHARLOTTE
          And <u>that</u> was a proper free fall!

                         KATIE
                    (to the rest of the
                    crew)
          Ok, so we're going to, we're
          blocking this, so we're going to
          need....

From the data camera, the production crew shot their first *take* 23 minutes after

arriving on set. Some of that time was used setting up the shot but over half of it was

jumping onto bean bags, playing with the costumes, and poking around the library.

Charlotte's teaching demonstration (the "proper" way to free fall) was clearly fun for the

group but also marked the end of the Ship of Fools grouping. Katie (who was the

director) took the cue from the producer and got the group back in order. Charlotte made

one last pitch for play "Now *that* was a proper free fall!" but Katie ignored her and

commented that she and another student will be blocking the script.

It was a slippery slope between a highly collaborative and creative Crew and an out-of-control Ship of Fools and often it was hard to tell the difference between the two. There was something wonderfully equal about Crews but at the same time outwardly chaotic. Similarly, Cambourne and Turbill (1991) noted that first time observers of whole language classrooms could only see the chaos. It took a careful eye to tell the difference between a productive and engaging classroom and one that was "out of control." Film sets were comparable settings that felt either incredibly democratic or like a mob depending on one's perspective.

"Duos" (dissolving to "BFFs"). Duos were pairs of students who worked together, sometimes inseparably. At the site we had many persistent and recurring creative Duos such as Katie and Pilar, the scriptwriters for *The Attacks*. Duos almost always: 1) sat next to each other in the video club, 2) were in the same class during the school day, and 3) were of the same gender and grade level. These characteristics, some by luck, some by choice, made the creative collaboration a comfortable one for the two. Similar to the pairs John-Steiner (2000) outlined in her study of notable creative collaborations, Duos could be unbalanced, where one offered support for the other such as verifying a good idea, or balanced with two equals working together and experimenting outside of their own comfort zone. Duos could cultivate power by reinforcing each other's ideas and encouraging one another. Their "private" one-on-one relationship helped them exclude the public making them insiders while everyone else was an outsider. As a result, a Duo such as two editors or scriptwriters could reject contributions and ideas from other members of the production team far more easily than a

single editor or scriptwriter could.

Friendships played a significant role in these working relationships and Duos could dissolve into "BFFs" (the acronym comes from the text messaging shorthand for "Best Friends Forever"). BFFs worked together, not for the exchange and deliberation of ideas while videomaking, but to be together as friends before everything and anything else. Their relationship took on supreme importance and they were in a constant verifying and soothing process ("I'm ok. Are you ok?") that could be a serious burden especially if something difficult occurred during the school day. Official video roles were a hindrance as they could hurt the relationship if the power dynamic wasn't equal. If one member of a BFF was absent, the present member might walk around the computer lab lost, unable to find her fit in other projects or groups.

"Auteurs" (dissolving to "Dictators"). Historically, the film term "auteur" (French for "author") is used to describe specific kinds of directors that use film as a medium for expressing their personal and artistic ideas as a standard of reference and these ideas continue and even progress from one film to the next (Bazin, 2004). While the title of "auteur" is a subjective one, it is generally given to directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Ingmar Bergman, Francois Truffaut, Woody Allen, Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee, Tim Burton, and David Lynch. I use the term in a slightly different manner to describe students in the video club who, instead of working across *films*, worked across the various *stages* of one production keeping the work consistent in content and style from stage to stage. These students wrote the script, transformed into the director during production, and then edited the video in post-production, developing an idea from start to end throughout the videomaking process.

Auteurs appeared to work entirely on their own but from careful observation, the auteur worked in relation to the other groupings. For example, Chloe wrote the script for *The Phone Call* with her sister as a Duo (though there was ample evidence she did most of the work) and then worked with the producer in order to get the script approved for shooting. While on the production set, Chloe turned into the director working with Professionals as they operated the camera, acted, created costumes, etc. Sometimes the Professionals on the set turned into a Crew where everyone but the Auteur herself discarded their roles. Last, Chloe edited *The Phone Call*, seeing the project from start to end. Chloe wasn't the only Auteur in the club— Ariel was a rare fourth grade Auteur creating *Ruth Wakefield* and Jaime not only wrote, directed, and edited *The Killed* but was also the lead actor. It was common for scriptwriters to take on another principal author role (director, actor, editor) at other stages of production but Auteurs were different in that they were, effectively, a producer of sorts, advocating for the production all through the process. For Auteurs, the project tended to be near to their heart, but they also had to be focused and skilled, able to adapt to the demands of every role. While the Auteur was a kind of lone genius, one of the ironies was that they had to have the ability get the support of a lot of people and work well with them.

Auteurs dissolved into "Dictators" when they couldn't let go of any control and micromanaged others. While self-directed, the Dictator was authoritarian to the core and rarely took into account other peoples' ideas, opinions, and wishes including the producers. Dictators were certainly undesirable, not just because they were non-democratic but because they tended to be impossible to work with. They often forgot that people mattered. Auteurs recognized that other students also had good ideas or special

skills (for example, an eye for visual detail). Other times, Auteurs just needed a body to press a button or stand around in the background. Auteurs appreciated these people and their contributions while Dictators demanded others to do tasks and were visibly disappointed by the results, wishing they could have done it themselves: the Auteur appreciated while the Dictator resented.

An example of this involved the production *Live Soccer: No Mercy vs. Devastators*. Thomas was an Auteur who eventually turned into a Dictator. In pre-production, he organized a soccer game carefully making teams. In production, he was the main actor (the star soccer player) and played in the game. In post-production, Thomas wanted to edit it down to the "highlights" but when he saw the footage he had a problem.

> Thomas took a look at the shot footage of *Live Soccer* and commented that "I can't use this, it's all shaky." Little does he know, he HAS to use it. That's all he's got. Well, he has three cameras worth of footage but there will be MANY times in which he won't have much to choose from in terms of footage. I wonder what he'll do. (Fieldnotes, 11/3/11)

Thomas used everyone in the video club to go out and shoot. In short, everyone put everything aside for the whole day to dedicate themselves to his project but the quality of the clips was not to his satisfaction and did not meet his vision. Without looking at the footage twice, he scrapped the whole project. This was a big disappointment to the other kids, particularly the camera operators (three of them) who worked hard to shoot the action but didn't really know what the "Dictator" wanted. Additional contributions from the Crew, such as the player introductions and post-game interviews, were clever and

interesting but Thomas threw away this footage too. For the participants, it all felt like Thomas wasted their time. Instead, Thomas blamed the camera operators for screwing up *his* video.

From a teacher's perspective, it was hard not to admire Auteurs. They came across as talented visionaries, highly motivated, capable of performing multiple roles, able to see the entire process, and battle through the obstacles to to get their film completed. These were the skills that were needed to do well in schools and classrooms. Still, Auteurs were generally the least "democratic" in that they took on all of the most important and influential roles. In the production *Live Soccer: No Mercy vs. Devastators*, Thomas took on all of the major roles but couldn't do the camerawork which turned out to be shaky and hard to watch. If he had let go of some of these roles, such as not acting in the soccer match or getting a director, the production would have been better for it. An outside director would have guided the camera operators during filming, fixing shaky camerawork early, but a director would also have made other contributions and that wasn't acceptable to Thomas. Instead, he became a bit of a Dictator and his desire to control everything became the downfall of the production.

"Democratic" Versus "Authoritative" Authorship

From the many examples shared in this study, I've argued that official videomaking at the site required a complex mix of multiple authors (in different roles) interacting (using specialized tools) in a variety of groupings in order to produce a series of related texts. A byproduct of this complexity was the opportunity for *democratic* multiple authorship. During literacy events, participants had to engage with each other, closely reading, writing, debating and evaluating texts, ideas, and products. They

contributed and compromised and in democratic writing, *everyone* was able to contribute. Contributions came from random individuals of a large group (such as the cameraperson inventing new lines in *The Attacks* filming example) but also predictably through assigned roles such as editor, actor, or director. In a democratic writing environment, a good idea was considered regardless of who it came from. Multiple authorship in the video club was practically a requirement because of the difficulty and awkwardness of making an official video all by oneself. Even a film with one single actor needed a cameraperson for anything but static shots. A large crew was often a difficult and unwieldy group to control however a lone videomaker was limited to what they could do on their own and paralyzed by the complexity of the tasks involved.

Authoritative single authorship— the conventional notion of "author," controlling every aspect of the storytelling and every line of dialog— was exceedingly rare in videomaking at the site. Still, the desire to control all aspects of the videomaking process, especially by focused Auteurs or overbearing producers, was still present. Democratic writing was achieved through the checks and balances of major roles, the limitation of tools and other resources, and the varying individual abilities of everyone involved, all which drastically influenced the final products. Rigid scriptwriters resistant to the ideas of others often found their scripts were changed by directors, actors, and editors *anyway* in later production stages. Roles permitted individuals to have authorial power even when they lacked experience or skills (though outside help was usually accepted.) Thus in the video club, there wasn't a binary of democratic versus authoritarian group writing but a continuum, a question of *how democratic*, or *how authoritarian* the process was. Figure 6.4 shows this relationship.

(Authoritarian)   (Democratic)

Figure 6.4. Continuum of authoritarian versus democratic group writing.

Contextually Acceptable Behaviors

Like democratic and authoritative authorship, students working together in the video club performed and behaved in a range of ways that were both appropriate and inappropriate to the sociocultural contexts in place. For official videomaking at this site, these contexts were the production processes (stages), protocols, roles, tools, and products (discussed in detail in chapter five). Sometimes students adhered to the conventions in place and sometimes they did not. Like democratic and authoritative authorship, behaving in contextually acceptable ways was not a black and white situation — there was a range of acceptability— and as a result, contextually appropriate and inappropriate behaviors fit on a continuum with *how* contextually appropriate or inappropriate were the behaviors (Figure 6.5). For example, markerboard operators were supposed to put the board in position before each shot, call out the shot and take number, and quickly exit the camera frame. Some operators hammed it up a bit while performing their role because they were briefly in front of the camera. For example, Gil once used the clapper board to simulate the opening and closing of a mouth, putting his head between the parts and acting like the board was eating him. His performance was for the audience of the cameraperson. Usually this wasn't a problem but on a couple of occasions a student got sassy and intentionally made errors (calling out the wrong shot numbers) or took an inordinate amount of time to do the task and move out of the way of the camera..

Contextually, Gil hamming it up was endured (unacceptable behavior that was tolerated) while the operator who continued stalling was replaced as soon as possible (unacceptable behavior that was not tolerated).
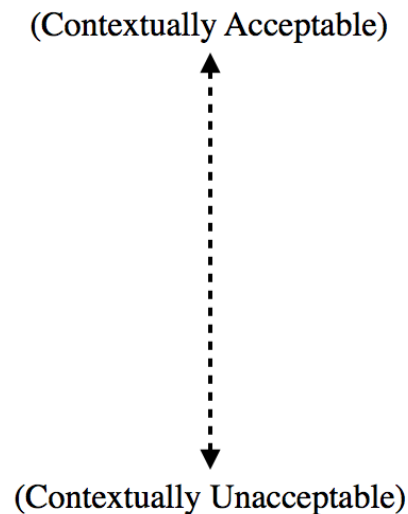
(Contextually Acceptable)

↑
⋮
⋮
⋮
⋮
⋮
⋮
⋮
↓

(Contextually Unacceptable)

Figure 6.5. Continuum of contextually appropriate behaviors.

On the *contextually acceptable* end of the continuum, participants went about their work behaving in ways that were suitable to videomaking situations. Contextually acceptable behaviors meant serving the production and being aligned with contextual expectations. This meant following the videomaking production stages. It was possible that participants had to jump back into a prior stage of production but, in general, contextually acceptable meant the process flowed from pre-production to production to post-production and not in some random sequence. Official videomaking protocols were adhered to and when they didn't work for the context, new ones that served the production were invented. Roles were observed and respected. It was possible that students could temporarily assist other in their roles blurring the boundaries between them but this was not a rejection of roles altogether. Tools were used appropriately and

sometimes in creative and innovative ways. Contextually acceptable behaviors led to the

creation of products throughout the videomaking process including scripts, performances

and takes, video clips, sequences, and cuts.

On the *contextually unacceptable* end of the continuum, participants disrupted the

flow of videomaking behaving in ways that were unsuitable to videomaking situations.

There were countless ways that students could behave in contextually unacceptable ways:

production stages might be ignored (ex. shooting without a script), the authority of roles

could be disrespected or rejected, tools could be misused and abused (ex. purposely

recording when they shouldn't be), products could be abandoned of left incomplete due

to neglect or lack of follow through. Sometimes the exact same behavior could be

regarded as appropriate or inappropriate depending on the context. A classic example was

acting errors or what I call the acting "miss-take." This was when an actor made a poor

performance and the take was unusable. Miss-takes can be categorized several ways:

forgetting a line, mispronouncing a line, talking too softly, poor body positioning, poor

movement, poor timing, laughing mid-take, wrong emotion or expression, tripping/

falling, and many many more. Miss-takes were common and generally accepted but some

miss-takes were excusable while others were less so. Forgetting a line happened to

everyone but when actors forgot a line over and over, or spoke so softly that no one could

hear them (after repeatedly being told by the director to speak up) the miss-takes became

the fault of the actor. The worst, most unacceptable miss-take an actor could do was do an

intentional miss-take, essentially trying to create a "blooper" on purpose. Thomas was

prone to doing this, purposefully running into chairs or signs during a take, and he was

warned by adults several times to stop. It wasted everyone's time and completely

ridiculed the videomaking process. In response to purposeful miss-takes, Sophie included

subtitles saying that the bloopers included at the end of *The Lock In* were all "real."

Joking and kidding, extremely common in the video club, was another kind of

behavior that could fit under both contextually appropriate or inappropriate behaviors.

When shooting the "Police Officer Joe" scene in *The Attacks*, the ribbing from the

cameraperson "Stop failing!" could be viewed as inappropriate— insulting an actor for

miss-takes that were commonplace. On the other hand, it could also as an appropriate

way of keeping the atmosphere light and positive when an actor struggled to perform

well. In *The Attacks* example the two kids were close friends and perhaps the "insult"

wasn't taken as such. When Thomas on the *Rat Boy* set yelled out that "She's filming!"

his joking was inappropriate because all it did was add additional obstacles for the crew.

His words were ignored by everyone, mostly because the production crew was all on task

and focused.

Students in the video club had tacit understandings of how they were supposed to

work together but also regularly broke these unspoken behavioral rules and expectations.

This was common for collective improvisational performances which, I believe,

videomaking was a form of. In his study of improvisational jazz, Becker (2000, in

Sawyer, 2003a) describes the numerous expectations of the musicians as the "etiquette of

improvisation," drawing an analogy with the informal and implicit rules of good social

conduct. These expectations include things such as playing in a certain key, knowing a

body of jazz "standards," knowing that solos would last 32 bars each, not embarrassing

other musicians by surprising them with challenges they couldn't meet, and many others.

As Sawyer (2003a) notes:

(F)or jazz to work, the participants have to share a set of social conventions

learned through a process of professional socialization. These conventions are

typically not written down, but are the tacit practices of an oral culture…. These

rules, both explicit and implicit, both formal and informal, are what defines a

genre of improvisation. They emerge informally in a community of practice, over

the years, with continual experimentation with what works and what doesn't

work. (p. 52)

Students in the video club, by being a part of the club, also went through a process of

"professional socialization" developing what Csikszentmihalyi (1988) refers to as a

domain or a collective body of rules and conventions of a creative field. "The domain

includes the 'raw materials' available to the creative individual and the rules and

procedures which can be used to combine them" (Sawyer, 2003a, p. 52). In official

videomaking at the site, I call this etiquette "contextual acceptability." Faced with

specific videomaking sociocultural contexts, students were expected to behave in these

contextually appropriate ways. Similar to improvisational jazz, the rules and expectations

for the video club were unwritten and learned through socialization.

Figure 6.6 shows the combining of the authoritarian/democratic multiple

authorship continuum with the contextually acceptable/unacceptable continuum. The

blending of these two creates four quadrants that are integral to the explanation of tenors

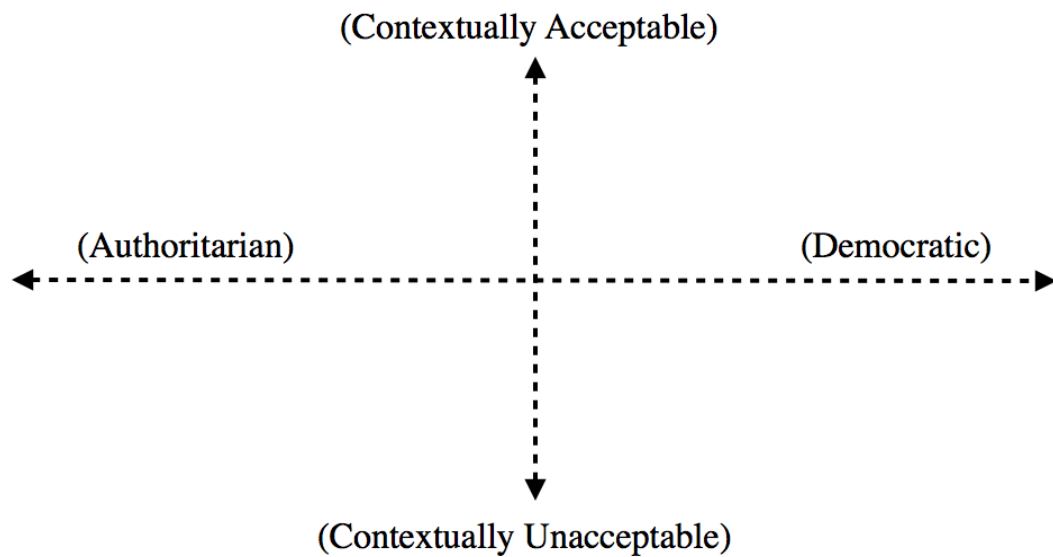or moods of collective writing in the next section.

(Contextually Acceptable)

(Authoritarian)   (Democratic)

(Contextually Unacceptable)

Figure 6.6. Contextually appropriate behaviors and authoritative/democratic authorship.

Tenor of Interactions

While I observed that students socially worked together in patterned interactions

and groupings, the engagements didn't always "feel" the same. Their interactions had a

certain "tenor" to them that seemed to matter a great deal. I use the term "tenor" to

describe the social and pragmatic relationships between writers and readers (Goodman,

1994). Tenor refers to the interpersonal functions of situational contexts: who is taking

part, the nature of the participants, and their statuses and roles (Halliday & Hasan, 1985).

Some groups argued a lot, while others were more inclined towards cooperative work.

Some groups couldn't find their focus, while others tinkered and experimented their way

to innovative results. From the data I consistently observed four interactive writing

tenors: *cooperative*, *collaborative*, *conflictive*, and *listless*. (A description of these tenors

as well as examples from the data are presented in the next sections.) Each tenor was

influenced by how democratic (or authoritarian) the participants were while engaging

with the writing and how individuals approached the sociocultural contexts in the

videomaking process. A model of this relationship is depicted in Figure 6.7 below. The

vertical axis is the dividing line between primarily authoritarian versus democratic

writing environments; the horizontal axis is the dividing line between contextually

acceptable versus unacceptable behaviors in any given sociocultural context. These

contexts include production stages, established protocols, official roles, tools, and

products being produced. The four tenors fit into the four quadrants formed by the

intersection of these two continuums. I discuss these tenors in two groups: the

authoritative tenors (cooperative and listless) and the democratic tenors (collaborative
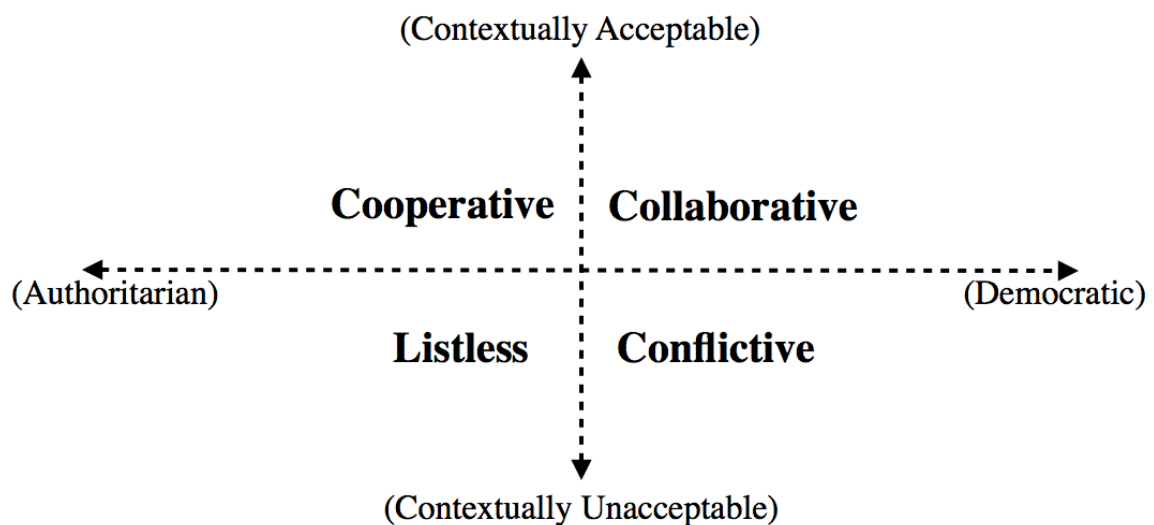
and conflictive).

Figure 6.7. The tenor of interactions model.

The authoritative tenors: cooperative and listless. The *cooperative* tenor at first

appears positive because cooperation furnishes a well-behaved and pleasant ambiance but

in a democratic writing context like videomaking it was a sign of compliance to some

authority. In the production stage, individuals did whatever the director or producer told them to do and then patiently waited around for the next set of directions. Their own ideas and contributions were not as valued as their cooperation. The *listless* tenor had the same authoritarian feel but without the cooperation of the crew. The least desirable tenor, listlessness had behaviors that were neither democratic or contextually acceptable. Not surprisingly, it was never a productive atmosphere and producers (adults) routinely intervened.

An example of a listless tenor switching to cooperative was the filming of *Prom*. This was one of the last videos to go into production and the director, Luke, was both disinterested and unprepared to do the job. To compound the difficulty, he had a limited amount of time to get the video shot as there were only a few more days left in the video club and another video (interestingly, a script that Luke wrote) had to be shot as well. Luke was specifically chosen to direct *Prom* because the scriptwriter thought he'd work fast— certainly he would be motivated to finish quickly to act in his own film— but he just wasn't up for the task. My fieldnotes from the last of the filming sessions documents the listless tenor of the crew and my own authoritative intervention. (Note: at the time, I hadn't theorized the concept of tenors nor their names but in the fieldnotes some of the ideas were developing.]

> I was surprised to see Jasmine return to the lab. She was "out of patience" with the crew and Luke in particular. Luke is one of her students so she knows him well but he just wasn't stepping up…. So we switched places. I arrived with one of the other students, Jaime I believe, and we had to knock on the door because all of Jasmine's doors [where they were filming] were locked. Someone came close

to the door but refused to open it— classic goofing around— finally the student opened it and I stormed in. I kind of had to. The next 12-15 minutes I proceeded to take over the entire filming. This was a pure "crew"— no leader, nothing happening, easy to fall into complete chaos. Unlike some "crews" (particularly girl crews) where kids all come up with ideas and while things may not be efficient, interesting and creative things happen, this crew was a classic "ship of fools" (OC: is there something here? Foucault writes about a ship of fools in *Madness and Civilization*….) where they could wander for entire sessions, weeks, the whole year, and no one would be concerned. Well, someone might get work done but so many others would just socialize as if there wasn't much to this whole enterprise.

Yeah, I had to take over and while I'm not proud of it, part of me knew that that was the only thing to be done. They had to finish so that the next films could move forward. There was no more time to waste. Luke argued that they had only been shooting for "something like two or three days" and I said, almost exasperated "I'm sorry, but that's all you *have*!" That's why we are using multiple cameras, to capture as much as possible and give it to the editors. We have no time. We have only a little bit more time left. He does have a point, though. In terms of fairness, so many of the other films had the top filming spot for not only weeks but months. They took their sweet time and now these folks are paying for it. Who can we blame?

"Where's the script?" Earlier I had sent Ariel to the *Prom* set to give them the director's copy of the script which I found in the cabinet. Apparently Luke

blocked two of them (scripts). Actors didn't know their lines, or hadn't practiced

them at all. No prep work at all. I then got them moving forward as quickly as

possible but that meant being the demonic director from hell. So be it. Luke

literally sat on a table and swung his legs back and forth. The truth of the matter is

he never wanted to direct this thing to begin with. Every person has to be a

seriously invested soul. This is why I admire the "auteurs" in the video club. So

we put together a few things and Roland actually stepped up and said his lines

fairly convincingly. The "hug" scene at the end required more than one take since

they were afraid to touch one another but, hey, everyone lived.

In all honesty, I hated stepping in there and taking over but I had to. Luke

couldn't wait for someone to take over. Interestingly, some kids switched from the

"rogue crew" to "cooperative crew" quite well, Thomas in particular. He did

whatever I asked of him immediately and was fine when not needed. Jaime

seemed to still be in "crew" mode where suggestions might actually get you

somewhere. He, almost, couldn't figure out that the switch had been made and he

wasn't dealing with a disinterested, wishy-washy Luke but a crazed, 6 foot 3 inch

power director that was going to get this thing done NOW. Roland switched.

Renee switched. Grace switched. Luke looked guilty and defensive which is

natural and Jaime was the only one contesting me. He didn't get far. We ended up

shooting the last page. Done with *Prom*. I'm guessing we're done but they said

that was it. Fast, yes. But we had to. Truthfully, I think Renee should edit it.

(Fieldnotes 4/24/2012)

At this point in the study I was starting to develop some of the language

concerning tenors using terms such as "rogue crew" and "cooperative crew." I wrote that

"(t)his was a pure 'crew'— no leader, nothing happening, easy to fall into complete

chaos" and bring up the concept of "Ship of Fools" for the first time to differentiate this

kind of group compared to the productive "Crews" where roles disappeared but

interesting and engaging collaborative work was going on. With the lack of time as a

prime motivator, I took over the listless Ship of Fools by demanding their cooperation. I

got it from everyone but Jaime who I noted "couldn't figure out that the switch had been

made." The "switch" was a switch in tenors. Jaime, as a cameraperson, was making all

kinds of suggestions outside of his role which would have made the writing democratic.

This would have been fine in a collaborative tenor but not in this cooperative one.

Instead, my interactions with him were conflictive in nature: "Jaime was the only one

contesting me. He didn't get far." In retrospect, I'm embarrassed by my authoritative

actions. Even then I repeatedly tried to defend myself ("In all honesty, I hated stepping in

there and taking over but I had to") and wrote about myself in negative terms ("that

meant being the demonic director from hell.")

The example demonstrates the two authoritative tenors. The production crew

switched from the listless tenor ("someone came close to the door but refused to open it

— classic goofing around") to a cooperative one where crew members "did whatever I

asked of (them) immediately and (were) fine when not needed." While we were more

productive and even finished the shooting of the video, we were hardly democratic.

Authoritarian tenors were usually not the result of a single domineering person on a quest

for power. More often they originated from a person taking responsibility and control

over a large group of passive, docile, incompetent, and/or compliant individuals. The

power was not so much "seized" but more often handed over to whoever was willing to do the work or overcome obstacles. Luke was slightly embarrassed but happy to no longer be in charge (the director). After the problems were solved, it could be difficult for club members (or adults) in power to relinquish control and accept outside contributions again. We can see this when Jaime's suggestions were not seen as positive and useful contributions but instead as points of contention.

The democratic tenors: collaborative and conflictive. *Collaborative* and *conflictive* tenors shared the key democratic writing feature of embracing multiple authorship. Their differences rested in the contextual acceptability of how the students interacted. The collaborative tenor was ideal in that participants valued the contributions of others and wrote together following the contextually appropriate behaviors for any given videomaking situation. The conflictive tenor was also an environment where everyone's ideas mattered but *how* participants may have expressed their ideas may have been inappropriate. For example, in order to improve the story, an actor might suggest additional shots to film— during post-production— long after it was convenient to do the shooting. The idea was possible but very disruptive and difficult. Many behaviors, including breaking production stage sequences, breaking out of assigned roles, trying out new protocols and practices, using tools in unconventional ways, altering the tone or genre of a character or video, and many more could cause serious conflict for a production. On the other hand, this conflict could also create substantially innovative processes and products.

Conflict, especially in school settings, is generally viewed in a negative light and to be avoided; however, I don't view the differing ideas, opinions, and ways of doing

things in democratic writing as such. Conflicting "readings" (perspectives,

interpretations, and understandings) of the world around us and the texts we read/view/

hear are natural and serve as starting points for *dialogue*, an act of creation by people

who authentically want to understand one another and solve problems (Freire, 1970).

Though challenging, I believe that the dialogue between multiple and diverse

participants, even if it at first appears as conflict, is a key productive resource for

innovation. Ideally, students worked towards a collaborative tenor that encouraged

respectful and appreciative dialogue but slipping into conflict at times wasn't

catastrophic.

I felt that collaborative tenors were the most exciting moments in the video club,

where participants created together open to and working off each other's ideas. A

wonderful example of a collaborative tenor in action was the "birth" of the video *The

Killed*. Unlike most productions, the original idea for the video began in the production

stage. My fieldnotes from that day documented the collaborative interactions between the

multiple authors as *The Killed* became a video.

> Back in the room, something was starting to brew. Jaime had the camera on Photo
>
> Booth [a program] open and was composing a scene, a fight scene that explodes
>
> from two people bumping into each other. The thing is as he and, I believe,
>
> Roland started composing the thing, others got interested. Thomas came by. Then
>
> they got Ariel involved with the big fork. They did a couple takes and expanded
>
> the scene, shooting the whole thing with the computer camera. After each take,
>
> they'd watch a bit or critique.
>
> Frankly, I was a bit nervous because they were making the fighting sounds

and were clearly physical. At one point, Jaime kicked Roland in the stomach hard.
I couldn't really believe it and let them finish the take before I intervened. "I like
what you're doing but it's getting violent. Jaime kicked Roland in the stomach."
"No, we didn't do it for real! I hit my leg with my hand when I kicked him. It's
fake." I was kind of stunned. It looked real. Really real. I have to say I was
impressed, though it still made me nervous. That's how real it looked.

The whole action sequence was negotiated through logic, excitement, and
yelling. To be honest, I don't know how Ariel ended up with the final piece— she
kills the big bully who has defeated both Thomas and Roland by putting the big
fork right through his stomach. It's a nice touch, a bit comical, because she's the
tiny girl and they're the tough boys in black.

They did a few more takes and Thomas said that the camera wasn't getting all
of the action. I told him "why not use a few more cameras." I pointed to other
computers and the cameras in the cabinet. They went all in. They got three
computers going and one portable camera on a tripod with Gil running it. Getting
the whole thing started was kind of funny as Thomas would say "camera" and
then four cameras would be triggered by four kids. Then.... action! They'd fight
for a while, always the exact same sequence and moves then they'd cut it.

After looking at some of the shots, they realized that one computer camera
wouldn't work because it was showing the filming on a different camera across
the way. They were breaking the 180 rule [see note below] but that wasn't their
concern, it was seeing the footage on the screen at the same time. Technically,
they could have "hidden" Photo Booth while filming (I didn't think of it at the

time) but they decided to go to three cameras, which probably works out better because they would eventually have to edit all of these shots and it gets complicated with so many cameras. They worked with the scene five more times. One of them was aborted early but still, they got an awful lot of footage in a short amount of time. And good footage.

They would have done this all day but I told them "last take" on number five. The clock was at five and it was time to organize these things. Next step was to dump the footage from the second computer to the editing computer as well as the footage off the camcorder. This is still an iffy step for most kids. We managed, using an SD card to transport the clips as well as the conventional firewire cable. There was a bit of a debate on who would do the editing. Both Jaime and Thomas wanted to do it but it made more sense to import all the clips to Jaime's since a third of them were already on his computer and he was the originator of the idea. Another plus is that he'll learn how to edit (and Thomas can help him not to mention Ella sits right next to him). (Fieldnotes, 1/12/2012)

[Note: In filmmaking, the 180-degree rule is a basic guideline concerning the on-screen spatial relationship between characters and/or objects within a scene. An imaginary line (the "axis") connects the characters; by keeping the camera on one side of this axis for every shot in the scene, the first character will always be on the right of the second character, who is then always on the left of the first. If the camera passes over the axis, it is called jumping the line or crossing the line, effectively breaking the 180-degree rule. (180-Degree Rule, n.d.)]

This example demonstrates the thrill that comes from multiple people contributing

to the making of a text. As I described in the fieldnotes, "(t)he whole action sequence was negotiated through logic, excitement, and yelling." The "logic" could be observed in how students applied what they knew about videomaking to the act of creation. The four students employing multiple cameras, multiple takes, and developed a story out of action and visuals. As improvised as it looked, they still developed a solid narrative with a beginning (the instigating bump), middle (the fight), and end (Ariel stabbing the bully with a gigantic fork). The ending was both unexpected and lighthearted: "It's a nice touch, a bit comical, because she's the tiny girl and they're the tough boys in black." They loved their work, watched the clips over and over, and even fought over who would edit it.

However, the students broke a lot of the protocols of official videomaking. While they developed a sequence of events and actions that coordinated everyone's on screen behavior, they essentially skipped pre-production, filming without a script. They had no assigned roles which led to some excited arguing whenever decisions had to be made. While the original idea was Jaime's, Thomas called out "camera" like a director normally did instigating a mini power struggle which would return when deciding on who would edit the clips. The group used the cameras built into the computers out of convenience; these cameras produced video clips that were inferior in quality compared to the camcorders that were available. In addition, the cameras were more difficult to control and position as they were literally tied to the tables. The group used no planned sets or costumes and, aside from the three foot tall wooden fork, no props were used. While they attempted to clear people out of the framing of the shots, bystanders can be seen in some background.

The Killed eventually became a three scene video with the fight in the computer lab (and the big fork stabbing) as the final act. They built a story around this initial idea even writing a script for the first and second scenes. The crew frequently jumped between all the production stages letting the editing influence what they would film next. Roles were blurry and when putting the credits together Jaime was lost on who to list; it seemed like everyone ran the camera at one time. The production team broke numerous official videomaking conventions switching continuously between the collaborative and conflictive tenors (and briefly in the cooperative tenor) but were extremely open to the contributions of everyone involved.

Dynamic nature of tenors. The dynamic nature of group writing meant tenors could switch rapidly, but I observed that the tenors only switched between two neighboring quadrants and I never saw tenors transition diagonally (ex. cooperative to conflictive). As a result, if I sensed that a group was collaborative, I could guess that with strong direction from the director it could transition to cooperative, or, with the presentation of an obstacle or problem, switch to a conflictive tenor. The model can't predict what will happen next but helped explain why some groups lingered in a certain tenor and why others changed frequently. In *The Killed* example, students were very collaborative but their unconventional work habits caused many problems. Conflict was part of their process but it worked for them.

The *tenors of interaction model* helped explain the producers' uncomfortableness with the listless and conflicting tenors and the guilt that accompanied their authoritarian involvement in cooperative interactions. For example, I generally intervened in listless situations (like in the shooting of *Prom*), particularly during shooting, because I couldn't

tolerate the waste in time. Time was always limited and other productions needed to get done. I either temporarily assumed control over productions, asserting myself in an authoritative way and demanding their cooperation through my sizable power, or the crew lapsed as a group into a conflictive, but democratic interaction, sorting out the issues (like in *The Killed*). In order to explain complicated and volatile situations that appeared to change tenors rapidly (switching between all four), the group might be interacting near the center of the model, or at the crossroads of both axes. This meant that the productions were partly democratic and partly authoritarian and participants were sometimes behaving in concert with the videomaking contexts and sometimes breaking the conventions.

An interesting example of how productions switched tenors rapidly through careful prodding was the beginning of the filming for *Rat Boy*. Earlier in the chapter I shared how the students were setting up the first shots for that film in the teacher's lounge. The following data script shows what happened *before* they started setting up the shot.

> INT. HALLWAY – AFTERNOON – (11/8/11)
>
> The crew for *Rat Boy* is walking down the hallway.
> Katrina wheels the camera along with Sophie by her
> side.
>
> INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE – AFTERNOON
>
> Mr. Jurich holds the door open and the kids file in.
> Roland, the director, carries copies of the script.
> Naomi is the first to enter and Jaime follows her.
>
>   NAOMI
>   It smells like food in here.

                    SOPHIE
               (joking)
          Because it's <u>payday</u>! No, no,
          nevermind.

                    JAIME
               (practicing)
          "It ain't Halloween yet, kid."

They congregate around the door of a small room and we
can see two "teacher's bathrooms" on the other side.

                    KATRINA
          Ohh! It stinks!

                    ROLAND
               (pointing at the small
               room)
          They used this room for...

                    SOPHIE
               (excitedly)
          Yeah! They used it in that video--

                    ROLAND
          The Ingenious Four Year Old!

                    KATRINA
               (dramatically)
          The <u>Ingenious</u> Four Year Old...

Thomas, in Rat Boy costume, runs over to the teacher
whiteboard and writes something in the corner. Mr.
Jurich spots him.

                    MR. JURICH
          Thomas, if you do that one more
          time, I'm going to have to ask you
          to sit down until we're ready.

Thomas nods and adjusts his rat whiskers. Mr. Jurich
erases his marks.

                    KATRINA
               (holding her nose)
          Oh, that stinks right there!

Sophie laughs. The others start to giggle.

                    JAIME
          That's the men's--

                    THOMAS
          You're smelling it from the

```
                    woman's bathroom!

        There's more laughter.

                         MR. JURICH
                    Roland, Roland you are the
                    director so you need to guide us
                    now. Set up the shot please.

        Roland looks at the Producer for a moment and then
        around the set.

                         DIRECTOR
                       (to the actors)
                    Alright, so... are we going to...?

                         VICTIM ACTRESS
                    Don't ask us.
```

As the *Rat Boy* crew assembled, they talked about everything but the video itself.

To a certain degree, this is understandable because the group was transporting themselves

to the set, settling into the location, and naturally wanted to look around for a moment.

Thomas saw the whiteboard with all kinds of official teacher business on it. A prankster,

he couldn't help himself and wanted to write something on the whiteboard. The small

room was investigated and students made the connection to a film produced two years

earlier that used that location. The teacher bathrooms emitted a smell of some sort that

was objectionable. Again, this was all understandable but totally off-task at the same

time. As a producer, my instinct was to get the kids back on track: a warning to Thomas

for behavior that was inappropriate (writing on the teachers' whiteboard) and a gentle

reminder to Roland, the director, to get the production crew going. Through a simple

poke, the production crew switched from this listless tenor to a conflictive one ("what I

need for you is to stand behind the camera" and "But, but, the script says 'let me go'") to

collaborative ("That was all bad cause Naomi walked out all 'la la la la la.'") to

cooperative ("Except you gotta, like, turn the camera—" "You want me to turn it?") all

within a few minutes. In videomaking, the key for the producer was to encourage the right person, in this case, the director. In other cases it could be an actor or even the markerboard operator because in collective writing anyone can change the tenor of a grouping.

The four tenors described here could have been divided by "contextually acceptable" behaviors (cooperative and collaborative) and "contextually unacceptable" behaviors (listless and conflictive) as these characteristics are, above all else, what is valued in school settings. Instead, I wanted to challenge the desire for "good behavior" at all costs and reframe writing in terms of its democratic potential. Contextually appropriate behavior is certainly important in social writing, but I'd rather emphasize the significance of multiple authorship, synchronous and asynchronous, in videomaking. Grouping the tenors by authoritative and democratic is a way of accepting conflict in the videomaking process. The challenge of having multiple authors is *dealing* with conflict, not *eliminating* it, as conflict is an inevitable aspect of social interaction.

While the collaborative tenor appears ideal, each one had its place. Sometimes being cooperative was the most efficient way to operate, especially when time was tight. There was nothing wrong with Professionals assisting one another and following standardized procedures. At times, conflict could be an effective route towards innovation. In general, listless never felt positive but there were times when the collective listlessness of a group was an indication that the ideas and projects on the table were just not worth pursuing. As I stated earlier, the tenor of participants interactions were dynamic and, thankfully or regretfully, no atmosphere could be expected to last forever.

Summary

In this chapter I examined the world of multiple authorship and described how participants in the video club interacted and grouped themselves while socially writing together. I also explained the tenors of their social interactions. Early in my work with the video club participants, the tenor of the group was the *first* thing that I could recognize, though at the time I didn't know if they were important nor had I developed the language to describe these feelings. Still, the "moods" of participant interactions were on my mind. In my fieldnotes I regularly wrote about my emotional responses to the interactions, being "energized," "frustrated," "impressed," or "nervous" concerning how participants interacted. While the concept of tenors is located in the last section of this study, as a kind of conclusion, it is important to note that for practitioners— those writing together and producing a video— everything *starts* with the tenor, with a *feeling*.

After studying multiple authorship and videomaking, I can begin to explain the relationship between these initial emotional responses and the complexities of the official videomaking process. The tenors were shaped by the democratic/authoritarian elements of multiple authorship and how the participants responded to the sociocultural contexts of videomaking. The numerous interactions between participants (particularly *inquiring*, *instructing*, *suggesting*, and *evaluating*) as well as the groupings of the multiple authors helped influence the tenor. Tenors changed with new contexts and responses to those contexts. If the multiple authors were made aware of these findings, socialized to observe contextually appropriate behaviors and taught to recognize when they were adhering to them and breaking them, could they learn to navigate the tenors, switching between them for their own benefit? I believe so. In the next chapter, I consider some of the implications of this work and ponder future steps.

Chapter 7: "Quiet on the Set!"

From my year of observing and interacting with young students in the video club reading and writing together, the social nature of videomaking was hardly a surprise. Through studying the works of Vygotsky, Rosenblatt, Smith, Goodman, and Bloome, as well as New Literacy Studies scholars such as Gee, Heath, and Street I recognized the powerful role social sources play in individual development and acknowledge that the reading and writing that the students engaged in were heavily influenced by social contexts. Earrly in the fieldwork I recognized a significant social component to their work however, I did not know specifically how the social elements fit within videomaking. I still had to learn what influenced social interactions during videomaking. An odd incident in January helped me gain insight into these questions.

"Quiet on the Set!"

In late January, the production crew for *The Attacks* was impovising a scene in the computer lab that was not in the script (although it did eventually became the final shots of the video). The scene depicted the "Insane Attacker" being processed before taken to prison, complete with her being fingerprinted and photographed with prisoner number hanging around her neck. The scriptwriters (Katie and Pilar), along with the lead actor playing the "Insane Attacker" (Renee), cameraperson (Katrina), and director (Naomi) were all actively involved creating and negotiating the scene. While the crew was problem-finding and creating the content of the shot, the rest of the students in the lab worked on various video club projects. As was normal, there was quite a bit of movement and noise in the room. During this time two teachers at the school entered the noisy computer lab and began to use the scanner, talking and laughing. *The Attacks* crew

continued to rehearse the scene and after a few more tweaks and additions to the

sequence they were ready to shoot it.

```
INT. COMPUTER LAB - AFTERNOON - (1/26/2012)

The crew for The Attacks is in a corner of the
computer lab. Renee has a card with numbers on it hung
around her neck by a piece of yarn. Her back is to the
wall and four other students, Katie, Pilar, Katrina
(cameraperson), and Naomi (director) surround her out
of the camera view.

Students work at their computers alone or in pairs
while Mr. Jurich and Tracey circulate around the room
helping students. Two teachers are using a scanner and
talking to each other above the noise.

                    CAMERAPERSON
          Quiet on the set!

The students settle down and gradually get quiet. The
adults keep talking.

                    DIRECTOR
          Quiet on the set, please!

The students are all silent but the teachers keep
talking. One laughs loudly. The crew looks over at Mr.
Jurich and Tracey, eyes wide.

                    TRACEY
               (looking at the
               teachers)
          Quiet on the set!

The teachers continue to scan and talk, not looking up
from their work. The director looks back at the crew
and shrugs.

                    DIRECTOR
          And... action.

                    KATRINA
               (to Renee)
          Turn!

Renee, acting, looks annoyed and slowly turns showing
her profile.
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                              KATRINA
                            (with anger)
                    Turn!

            Renee turns the other direction, glaring into the
            camera. The teachers continue to talk in the
            background.
```

My initial reaction to the two teachers was anger— couldn't they see the rudeness

of their behavior? The kids were filming! Later, while writing about the episode in my

fieldnotes, my anger turned to curiosity: *why* did they keep talking? It was easy to dismiss

or excuse their behaviors by reasoning that they were simply busy professionals working

after-school to get an administrative task completed. If asked, perhaps the teachers would

plead ignorance, explaining that they didn't know what was going on, naive and

inexperienced to the practices of videomaking, and thus unaware that their behavior

effected the students' work. Maybe the teachers thought that the students were just

playing and their own talking was inconsequential to what the students were attempting

to accomplish. I assumed that the teachers respected students and student work and the

reason they ignored the student videomakers was not because they didn't care.

Examining the episode as a literacy event, I understood the behavior of the

teachers as a "miscue"— they responded to the cue "quiet on the set" in a way that was

inappropriate to the context of videomaking. They miscued because they didn't know the

language of videomaking. Smith's notion of learning through club membership (1986) is

relevant here because the participants in the video club, students and adults,

metaphorically joined a specific learning club— the club of "videomakers"— that

extends beyond the Midway Elementary After-School Video Club and includes everyone

who makes video and film. The disconnect between insiders (club members) and

outsiders (those who have not joined the club of videomakers) manifested in differing

responses to the phrase "quiet on the set." For those who understood the videomaking

practices in place it meant something significant; however, for the two teachers who were

not part of the Midway Elementary Video Club nor Smith's metaphoric club of

videomakers, the cue had no meaning and was ignored.

     For those who make video, for those who were learning to read and write using a

videomaking language to create meanings, "Quiet on the set!" was a specific contextual

cue that demanded a contextually appropriate response. By not recognizing the cue

(knowing the language of videomaking) or responding appropriately to the cue (knowing

the writing processes of videomaking) we can see the disconnect more clearly. In the

following sections I elaborate on the significance of this miscue.

     Literacy events. The teachers didn't recognize that there was a *literacy event* in

progress and this observable event arose from videomaking literacy practices that

involved them. They could see that there were children in the room doing some activity

but they didn't recognize how their own actions influenced the text (the creation of a

video clip). Relatedly, the two teachers didn't recognize *the need for everyone's*

cooperation. On a videomaking set, participants included everyone present. By ignoring

the request, the two teachers did not cooperate. While the teachers can plead ignorance,

they can't change the fact that they are part of the social and cultural space. This is

similar to standing for the national anthem at public events. The national anthem may not

even be yours but there is still a literacy event going on and the appropriate response to

the cue "please rise for the national anthem" is to rise.

     Space. The teachers didn't recognize that *spaces are dynamic and have multiple*

uses. When the cameraperson said "Quiet on the set," the computer lab transformed into a

"set." Other students also worked in the same space and for them it was an editing suite or scriptwriting space. They knew that the space could rapidly change and when it did they changed their behavior to match the new function of the space. For the two teachers the computer lab was static, always a computer lab, and thus they didn't change their behavior. In conventional print writing in schools, writing spaces are generally confined to a desk, piece of paper, and increasingly a computer. Videomaking spaces are much more expansive and unconventional. The video club filmed in hallways, closets, bathrooms, basements, and even the principal's office. The students were regularly reprimanded by school officials for running or yelling in hallways, spaces that during the school day were restricted to walking and quiet voices. Shocked, the students responded, "but we're filming…" The students recognized the dynamic nature of spaces while the teachers did not.

Keyings and frames. The teachers didn't recognize that *"Quiet on the set" was a specific code or keying* (Bateson, 1972) *that triggered a change in frames*, or basic cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of reality (Goffman, 1974). After the keying was uttered, students changed into actors and characters (Renee became the "Insane Attacker"), a director, a cameraperson. Angrily yelling out "Turn!" during this brief period of time makes sense if you understand the appropriate frame. The two teachers heard the keying but didn't change their frame (from professional teacher to film set bystander). What makes this a miscue is the teachers were not alarmed by the aggressive voices of the students. They must have perceived the students actions as "play"— it was not conflict *nor* a writing environment. At the end of a take, video club members usually say "thank you" or "all done" in order to provide a keying that everyone

can change back into their original frames. It also indicates that they appreciate their silence and recognize that their silence was a form of participation. Both of these keyings were misread by the teachers.

Sound. The teachers didn't recognize that *quiet matters because in videomaking sound matters*. Sound is a major element of the multimodal language of videomaking. The microphones (tools) that the students used can not selectively capture the voice of an actor talking in front of the camera but not a teacher talking behind the camera. Tools are specific to writing practices and through practice and experience, videomakers learn how to use the tools, figure out what they are capable of (affordances) and what they are not capable of (limitations). People inexperienced with microphones may forget to speak loudly when using them thinking that the microphone will perfectly capture any and all sounds uttered nearby. Experienced singers understand the importance of proximity and will pull the microphone away from their mouth during powerful notes to balance the volume of their voice to match quieter sections. Likewise, a politician testifying in a Senate hearing may pull away from the microphone and whisper into his attorney's ear to prevent anyone from hearing their conference. The teachers showed a lack of understanding of how the tools worked and didn't recognize that in videomaking *quiet* mattered because sound mattered.

Roles. The two teachers didn't recognize that *there were roles in place and that in videomaking roles matter.* The cameraperson asked for quiet. When she didn't get it, the director asked for quiet. When she didn't get it, she appealed to the producers who also asked for quiet. All of this indicated that there was a complex (and understood) chain of command known to members of the club but unknown to nonmembers. The two teachers

only heard a *fifth grade child* yell out a phrase and did not recognize that a *director* on a set was giving a command. They didn't recognize the significance of *who* was asking for quiet. In chapter five I discussed roles in detail noting how at any given production stage there were principal authors who had the most responsibility and authorial power. Though it might have been difficult for the teachers to figure out who was who, those involved in the videomaking process at the club knew a great deal about the productions. Roles were dynamic (Naomi was an actor in *Rat Boy,* in *The Attacks* she was a director) but experienced videomakers, watching a crew for only a few seconds, could quickly figure out who the director was. Even if the teachers could figure out the roles, they may not have responded to the cue appropriately. If a principal asked for "quiet," certainly they would respond quickly and appropriately but a student director carried little respect.

    Inconspicuous learning. The two teachers didn't recognize that *learning/writing is inconspicuous and happens all the time*. It happens after-school, outside of classrooms, when it is noisy, when participants are laughing, when authors are experimenting. It happens anytime and all the time. The loud and seemingly chaotic computer lab did not match the teachers' model of how "official learning" environments should look (Smith, 1998). The teachers misread the movement, talking, variety of activities, and pleasure of the students as an unstructured, non-learning environment. The two teachers didn't recognize how the students were writing or learning.

    Agency. The two teachers didn't recognize *the power and agency of students as they participated in new literacies practices*. Any student could ask for "quiet on the set" at any time, whether they were an experienced fifth grader, a brand new fourth grader, an adult volunteer, a director, or even a markerboard operator. The only requirement was

that they *needed* quiet. Everyone who was part of the club of videomakers granted them this silence because it was important, essential to good videomaking. The inconvenience was brief and most people involved in videomaking were interested in watching the performance anyway. The power was universally shared and, remarkably, never abused. This same agency could be seen during scriptwriting as students wrote about whatever interested them. In filming, they had access to spaces they'd never have during the school day. The students did all of the work in the video club (writing, shooting, editing) but the extensive responsibilities also gave them control.

Structure. The two teachers didn't recognize *the structure that was in place*. Before asking for quiet, the crew went through a tremendous amount of planning and preparation. Scripts were written, pre-production tasks were completed, production meetings, casting, rehearsing, setting up the shot, staging of actors. Even improvisations from the script were worked out ahead of time and needed a great deal of order and orchestration. Similarly, the two teachers didn't recognize that *what the students were doing involved a complex writing process*. It may have appeared to them as a single moment in time during which some children were interacting in an after-school club but members of the club knew that the event, indeed the single four word statement ("quiet on the set"), was a signifier that a huge amount of collaborative composing was taking a critical step towards a penultimate piece of work. While it might have looked like free-form play, it wasn't. There was a process in place.

        In short, the teachers were not professionally socialized (Sawyer, 2003a) to know how to read the contexts of this particular videomaking literacy event. Everyone else in the room *was* professionally socialized. The teachers had not joined the video club— in

the literal sense as well as the metaphoric videomakers club— and they were not learning

to read and write using the *language of videomaking* to create meanings and a

videomaking writing process to guide the multiple authors.

Videomaking Confirms a Sociocultural Perspective of Literacy

From a sociocultural perspective of literacy, videomaking at the site was a literacy

practice and in many ways the literacy involved was no different than conventional print

reading and writing. Participants read, wrote, examined texts, used tools, created

meanings, composed texts, critiqued texts, revised, re-read, edited, and more. The

complexity of these literacy practices, including the social elements, mirrors that of what

readers and writers do with conventional print. In this regard, I found that videomaking

literacy practices at the site confirmed much of what scholars already know about literacy

and learning.

Learning starts where the learners are (Dewey, 1916). In the video club there

was a range of experience, ability, and interest. Some students were in the club for a

second year while others were new. Some students were fluent writers in certain modes

(linguistic, visual, gestural) while others were just beginning to learn to work with them.

Some students preferred certain roles such as acting or editing and specialized in them,

further developing their skills while passing on other roles. This range of ability was

considered natural and normal as learning began wherever the student was at. Related to

this, learning in the club occurred within a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky,

1978), a potential of learning just beyond what a person currently knows. Students in the

video club built upon what they already knew and with the support of a teacher, peer,

tool, or social group they learned (and at their own pace). Ella mentored Cruz in the

editing of *Rat Boy*, however I supported Ella in the editing of *The Attacks*. Still, I was a

novice editor myself, learning a great deal online in websites and forums, as well as

through friends with more experience and through watching video. Texts, such as video

clips with performance miscues in them or well composed "mentor" texts, taught the

participants as much as individuals did (Meek, 1988).

Learning by doing (Dewey, 1916). Participants in the video club learned how to

make videos *by doing it*, by participating in videomaking activities. Applying Halliday's

(1975) systemic functional grammar to the videomaking language, the participants

learned videomaking, learned through videomaking, and learned about videomaking. The

language, activities, and learning were all interwoven. For example, no one learned the

term "blocking" without actually "blocking" a script. As noted in chapter five, students

learned to use the tools of videomaking by engaging with them and seeing what they do.

This experimentation or "messing around" with tools (Ito et al., 2010) was important but

even more significant was using the tools to meet some kind of rhetorical or artistic goal

— to use the tools of videomaking to make videos. I was often surprised to see a student

editing video (a complicated task) without any initial teaching. Their interest and

motivation to learn videomaking was built from the desire to communicate something in

the medium.

Teaching as mediation (Vygotsky, 1978). "The teacher supports the learning,

provides new experiences, and mediates the transactions between the learner and what is

being learned, but it is the learners who own the learning" (Goodman & Goodman, 2011,

p. 23). "Teachers" were both adults and students, helping one another when the help was

needed. It is important to note that teaching was not intervention, and as a result, the

adults in the video club did not perform whole group direct teaching instruction. We

discovered that even two minute "mini-lessons" at the start of the session were only

relevant to a handful of students, a disruption to the learning of most students.

Meanwhile, "off-task" activities such as playing video games (during waiting periods)

were full of opportunities for mediated teaching as students gave each other tips and

guidance to get past obstacles and move to higher levels of play. Teaching in the video

club resembled this kind of assistance— tips and guidance by socially and culturally

connected participants— more so than any kind of "lessons."

Learning through club membership (Smith, 1986). Students learned how to make

videos by literally joining a video club. In the club, the activities were quickly revealed

and on the very first day everyone directly experienced the videomaking process.

Everyone, newcomers and experienced members, volunteered to participate and no one

was coerced or demanded to do any task. There was no formal, tedious, and untimely

group instruction. Struggling beginners never received a low score nor did experienced

members get high marks for masterful work. Teaching and learning was inconspicuous

and, in the video club, never systematic or direct. There were no "obvious" or

"intentional" times in which participants were expected to learn nor any form of testing to

assure that learning had occurred. Inconspicuous teaching and learning was the result of

engaged participants making videos that were meaningful to them. That was the central

and driving idea that defined club membership.

While videomaking confirmed a great deal of what scholars have taught us about

literacy and learning, there was still a conceptual disconnect between the participants in

the video club who were learning to read and write video and those at the school who

were *not* part of the club. This distinct gap made videomaking at the site a marginalized

literacy practice. I demonstrated this disconnect in the "Quiet on the set!" example while

shooting of *The Attacks*. The findings of this research may bring well needed awareness

to new literacies practices such as videomaking and help expand a sociocultural

perspective of literacy.

Videomaking Expands a Sociocultural Perspective of Literacy

The findings of this research help expand a sociocultural perspective of literacy by

documenting and analyzing videomaking as a new literacies practices. I have argued in

this study that new literacies practices are an *innovation* in literacy, variations of other

literacy practices that are quite old and established and that new literacies practices such

as videomaking are dialectic, an inseparable mix of both new (innovative) and

conventional literacies characteristics. Like in all literacies, the literacy events in

videomaking were manifestations of videomaking literacy practices, a set of values,

assumptions, beliefs, and conventions that were shared by those who make video. These

practices were unveiled through the observable literacy events in the video club and when

people joined the video club, they began to learn these practices. Focusing on the

similarities between conventional and new literacies, videomaking is an opportunity to

rethink how conventional print literacy is taught as *all* literacies are social, multiple, and

in a range of modes appropriate to situated contexts.

However, the "Quiet on the set!" example also demonstrated the conceptual

disconnect between *conventional school literacy practices* and the *new literacies*

practices that took place in the video club. The texts that the video club students

produced were typographically different than conventional school texts and included

performances, props/costumes, video clips, video sequences, and even the scripts looked

different than the texts made during the school day. Videomaking texts were generally

digital, multimodal, and re-mediated. Even more important, the videomaking writing

process, developed and changed over time in response to the sociocultural contexts that

influence videomaking, was invisible to the two teachers visiting the computer lab and

required authors to adopt a new mindset towards literacy and learning (see chapter two on

mindsets). Expertise was distributed amongst multiple authors, collective intelligence

was valued over individual intelligence, collaboration was commonplace and expected,

experimentation and innovation was crucial for problem solving, and social relationships

were developed and respected. This research helps make these processes— particularly

the social processes— visible, revealing the learning that was happening, and showing

that videomaking *is* a literacy practice.

Research Questions Revisited

The overarching research question for this study was:

- *How do students socially read and write videos?*

Students at the site socially read and wrote videos by: inventing, revising, and following a

socially established videomaking process (chapter four), behaving in ways that were

influenced by sociocultural contexts specific to videomaking at the site (chapter five), and

interacting (inquiring, instructing, suggesting, and evaluating) to both "solve" and "find"

problems during literacy events (chapter six). Videomaking required multiple authorship

and, depending on how students responded to the sociocultural contexts, the opportunity

for democratic writing was made possible and sometimes inevitable (chapter six).

Expanding on the overarching question, I asked four subquestions:

- How do students socially *write, design, or produce video texts*? (the writing)

- How do students socially *read, view, or make sense of texts* created in video production? (the reading)

- How do students socially address the *characteristics of the texts* (symbolic, structural, and semantic) in video production? (text analysis)

- How do the *tools* students use while making video *mediate the social interaction* of the participants?

Early on in the study I began to discover that I would have some difficulty addressing these sub-questions because they were too specific. The questions separated the processes by which readers made sense of texts (reading) from the processes by which writers produce texts (writing or composing). In addition, looking at the "characteristics of texts" was its own question, further separated from the processes of reading and writing. These three questions positioned the texts at the center, focusing on how they are written (constructed, designed), how readers make sense of them (read, engaged with), and their specific characteristics (symbolic, structural, and meaning systems). This kind of "micro" analysis is valid and studying how participants engaged with texts (products) is certainly worthy of study however, in studying the *social writing* of videomaking, I needed to look at the process of videomaking, interactions amongst the participants, with the text as only one aspect of the context. I found reading, writing, and studying the characteristics of texts to be interwoven. The best way to address these connected questions was to step back and observe the "macro" activities that included all three practices. While I did look at specific interactions (inquiring, instructing, suggesting, evaluating), their importance was in relation to how they influenced the tenors of interaction. Likewise, I found it

difficult to separate the reading, writing, and text analysis from the way tools were used

during the literacy events. Tools mediated the social interactions of the participants and it

was difficult to separate the tools from the people who engaged with them (and the roles

they performed) and the situations in which they were used. Instead of looking at small

parts of the social writing in videomaking, in this study I focused on the whole process.

Implications for Practice

It is my hope that this study contributes to the work of scholars and educators as

we re-imagine literacy practices in schools, providing support for this idea that all

literacies are multiple and situational, embedded within an expanded range of social

practices. Increasingly, the kinds of writing that students do in schools will be influenced

by new literacies practices such as videomaking. This means that students will be

working on larger projects that involve multiple authorship, multiple stages of

production, and situationally specific social interactions, all of which are heavily

influenced by the division of labor and responsibilities that accompany roles and the

mastery of different writing tools. Projects such as podcasts, website design, video game

design, and videomaking all require a host of specialized talents that single individuals

may not have on their own. In addition, some writing tasks simply require multiple

people to accomplish (such as shooting video). Educators might prepare themselves for

these changes in how students write by becoming aware of the sociocultural contexts

involved in composing this way. In videomaking the contexts include the protocols

developed, roles participants take on, tools they use, and products produced. Democratic

writing— collaborative multiple authorship— requires a new mindset (Lankshear &

Knobel, 2006) to accommodate these new literacy practices. In the following sections I

explore three areas as implications for practice: the role of teachers as producers, how educators assess students and their collective work, and the dangers of standardizing writing practices.

       Teachers as producers. An implication for practice involves the roles of teachers as "producers" in videomaking. When teachers take on the role of producer, they become part of the creative and productive process. While embracing this creative role, teachers should be cautious of overstepping their role and aim to be a democratic member of the production team. In the professional film world, the producer is an extremely powerful person. Likewise, in the classroom teachers are powerful figures who control nearly every aspect of students' lives at school. In addition, they are typically the only adult present, the oldest, and (usually) the biggest person in the room. They have every power advantage and can easily succumb to being the most authoritarian figure in the videomaking process. It can be difficult for a teacher to let other roles make decisions when they feel they know better, but it is imperative to be a model of democratic authorship.

       The implications of teacher-as-producer are significant and this relationship effects how we both support students and their work as well as how we assess writing processes and the products produced (assessment is discussed in the next section). Producers give support to projects— tools, materials, knowledge, feedback— and this support radically influences the work that the students produce. In the after-school program, students who wanted to get a production off the ground had to convince producers and other principal authors that the project could be done, essentially selling it in order to get support. Once "sold," the producers supported their work until completion.

In a traditional classroom setting these producer responsibilities are also present. If

teachers "assign" students to make a video such as a short documentary or a silent film,

they need to be able to support the students, as a producer, in their work. To a certain

degree, our success as producers can be measured by how successful the students are

making the videos.

      Assessment. This study has demonstrated that the unique features of videomaking

(multimodal texts, multiple authorship, teacher-as-producer) significantly influence how

we assess videos and videomaking processes. If, for a moment, we consider the final cut

of *The Attacks* or *Rat Boy* and attempt to assess the work, we'd have to consider many

elements of the production including the quality of the script and story, performances,

camerawork, editing, directing, sound design, lighting, props and costumes, set design,

and more. These technical elements can be seen in the artifact itself (the video) but the

text doesn't tell us much about how the videos were made and, in particular, the process

of writing. For that, we'd have to observe the crew in action and see the way the

production team socially interacted while writing together. While I believe that final

products are important, it is almost impossible to make *improvements* without knowing

the process of how the procucts were composed. For example, poor camerawork might

not be the fault of the cameraperson. Directors may have positioned the camera

inappropriate to the shot/scene, actors might have moved away from their agreed upon

position, and editors may have compromised by choosing a take with a shaky camera in

order to get the only shot with an acceptable performance. Multiple authorship

(particularly synchronous multiple authorship) means we can't easily separate one

person's contribution from another's. These complex writing environments involve

multiple authors and even the teachers themselves play an important role as producers.

New literacies texts such as videos require a re-conceptualized form of assessment that addresses more than just the artifact itself. Assessment of writing has focused mainly on the *product* itself and rarely examines the *process* of writing (Bearne, 2009). In videomaking, the final cut is a culmination of countless writing processes by numerous authors using multiple modes of communication. The product can be assessed but the actions and processes of the authors themselves also need examination. Bearne (2009) argues that "(i)n looking to the future of assessment of multimodal texts, the indications are that there will be a shift away from summative assessments *of* learning towards processes of continuing assessment or assessment *for* learning" (p. 19, emphasis in original). The implication of this is that if we want to improve writing products, educators will have to examine writing processes. Eidman-Aadahl et al. (forthcoming) explore how multimodal forms of writing can be assessed when the focus of assessment is to inform and improve learning. They created a framework for understanding this issue which includes a set of five domains— "artifact," "contextual awareness," "substance," "process management and technique," and "habits of mind"— that links the language of assessing multimodal writing with acts that drive the creation and reception of digital and multimodal texts. The domains overlap in some aspects, and no one domain provides a complete account of the writing or composing processes used when creating multimodal artifacts. Only one of the domains is focused on the actual product itself ("artifact") while two of the domains closely examine the processes ("process management and technique" and "habits of mind"). The ability to assess multimodal compositions such as video is only part of the benefit of the framework. The other part is how it assists teachers in how

to confer with authors during multi-stage writing processes, when it is still early enough to make useful changes. Innovative models such as the five domain framework may provide a suitable guide for teacher/producers.

      The dangers of standardization. The implications of this research suggest that the videomaking writing processes at the site were complex and situational. In practice, educators must account for this complexity and not attempt to simplify and standardize the processes. I recognize that documenting the process of videomaking and the specific sociocultural contexts invites the danger of reifying and standardizing the literacy practices of the students in the video club. My goal was not to describe *how* to make a video, providing a step by step sequence of events, but to describe the underlying structures in place that shape the spontaneous and infinite actions of the participants.

      To explain this point further I compare videomaking to the game of chess. In chess, the rules of the game, the roles of the pieces, and the goal of the players are always the same however the *game played* is different every time. This happens because despite the strict limits that the rules impose, the game is complex. The number of (unique) potential games in chess is 10 to the power of 120 (Rasskin-Gutman, 2009)— effectively infinite. Likewise, in official videomaking at the site, the production stages, protocols, roles, tools, and products pursued stayed fairly consistent but every video *production*— how the video was made— was different. With such variability between video productions, one might wonder if it is possible to anticipate participant behaviors. Again, the comparison to chess proves helpful. In chess, the very best players are able to envision future moves and predict countermoves. This ability to anticipate multiple ensuing moves ("if I move this piece here, my opponent will perhaps do one of the

following countermoves") is what separates amateurs from Grandmasters; the best can

look further into the future, however, there are limits to how much in advance one can

predict. In his book *Chess Metaphors* (2009), Rasskin-Gutman points out that a player

looking eight moves ahead is already presented with as many possible games as there are

stars in the galaxy. In videomaking, the same limits exist and the goal is not to reliably

predict the distant future but to be prepared to interact with the near future. There are

indeed limits but this shouldn't stop participants from trying to foresee actions and

counteractions while interacting with others.

While there are established protocols, roles, tools, and products in videomaking,

standardizing the videomaking process ignores the complexity of the art and craft. It is

more important to understand the sociocultural contexts of videomaking, the underlying

structures in place, than any replicate process. The sociocultural contexts are identified in

this study to help participants make sense of what goes on during videomaking. There are

countless ways to make a video and to teach just one way (through a scope and sequence,

whole group direct instruction, and non-malleable protocols and procedures) is like

playing the same game of chess over and over.

Implications for Future Research

The research presented here touches describes and reveals many aspects of social

writing in videomaking. While I have learned a great deal— the videomaking process,

sociocultural contexts, social interactions of multiple authors, the tenors of interactions—

I believe there is still so much more to learn about videomaking and how people engage

with this new literacies practice. In the following sections, I explore three particular areas

I feel are ripe for future research: the social interactions of multiple authors, multimodal

writing, and the role of "unofficial" videomaking practices (such as play, practice, and improvisation).

        Social interactions of multiple authors. The most significant finding of the study, for me, was the discovery of tenors and the development of the tenor of interactions model (chapter six) as it immediately changed how I understood videomaking writing practices. Observing participants at work, I could see how the collective tenor both guided individual behaviors as well as how individuals could influence the tenors. In future work, I'd like to apply this model of social writing and multiple authorship to other mediums and disciplines such as video game design, software development, animation, music performance, music recording, podcasts, theater, website design, and many more. Even conventional texts, such as children's picture books, are made by a team of people including the author, illustrator, book designer, editors, and publisher. I would like to know if the interactions and tenors are applicable to these seemingly disparate contexts. It would be interesting to see how concepts such as sociocultural contexts, groupings, and tenors fit in these other domains.

        Educators and researchers may want to pay closer attention to and study the ways in which collective groups of students interact as they write together. After observing groups working together, we may discover that a group was a collaborative "Crew," a little wild but innovative and productive. Another group might be cooperative "Bureaucrats," participants who didn't contribute much and waited for the next set of directions. In chapter six I wrote about the tenors of interactions and argued that they were the outcome of students in various groupings reading and writing together in the specific contexts of videomaking. These tenors form and shift in recognizable ways in

which we could perhaps leverage, learning to read and consciously respond to the social

interactions of collective authorship. It may be possible to teach students to do so as well.

The social nature of all literacies suggest that making sense of texts— reading—

can only effectively happen when we recognize the social contexts in which the texts are

read and written. This study suggests that multiple authorship may involve contexts that

are not always aligned with school values. Educators in conventional school

environments tend to demand and focus on good behavior and individual excellence over

everything else but with democratic writing, healthy conflict and collective intelligence

may create the most interesting and productive work. While teachers have traditionally

controlled the interactions of students (even separating all students from each other) in

order to minimize the distractions of social interaction on academics, this research

supports the idea that educators might consider social interaction as it supports and

improves learning, knowledge production, and academics. Additional research is needed

to explore these ideas further.

Multimodal writing. From this research, I believe there is a relationship between

the multiple authorship of videomaking and the multimodal characteristics of the videos

themselves. In videomaking, writing done in multiple modes (linguistic, visual, spatial,

aural, and gestural) tended to create specialists, and the principal authors at each stage of

videomaking often worked with some modes more than others. For example,

scriptwriters worked mainly in the linguistic mode but considered visuals, gestures, and

sound when writing their scripts. Directors and actors generally focused on gestures,

visuals, and to a lesser degree sound while performing. Camera operators focused on the

visuals and spatial elements when capturing these performances in video clips. Editors

were unique in that they paid attention to all of the modes but they could only work with

the products (scripts, performances, video clips) given to them. Good videomaking

includes a team of authors who make use of all the communicative modes.

While I believed that the work that the students did at the site was very good,

there was certainly room for improvements. In particular, there was too much emphasis

on the linguistic mode and to a lesser degree the visual mode; this may not be surprising

since the linguistic mode is the one most valued in school settings. For example, I began

to notice that too often videos in the club depicted characters standing still and talking.

While dialogue is not inherently bad, telling stories through words alone (especially when

it was difficult to hear what the characters were saying) doesn't make the most of the

medium. In videomaking, the ubiquitous writing adage "show don't tell" (Goldberg,

1986) is more relevant than ever. Good writing with video demands more efficient and

effective use of the other four modes: visual, spatial, gestural, and aural. This means

taking these marginalized modes as seriously as the linguistic mode. The question for

future research is how can the other modes be addressed in order to develop proficiency,

as defined by Goodman (1982a) and others, as being both effective (knowing and using

tools and strategies to make meaning) and efficient (doing so in a way that orchestrates

tools and strategies in a timely way).

For example, in the video club, two modes in particular that needed to be

addressed were the aural and spatial modes. Sound is exceptionally important but in the

video club it was rarely attended to closely. The most frequent miscue with sound was

volume: loudness of dialogue was imbalanced (too soft then too loud), music blared and

then cut off unexpectedly, and viewers simply couldn't understand what characters were

saying. In future research, it might be revealing to engage students in retrospective miscue analysis during which they analyze where their work was efficient and effective and where it was not. Sound issues were partly due to the lack of quality equipment or poor recording techniques but also because of a biased mindset that saw the primary tool of videomaking as the *camera* while the *microphone* was practically ignored.

Spatial errors were also very common. Students and even the adults were generally unaware of the grammatical components of cinematography and rarely were students overtly taught them. Nearly every camera angle used in the video club was a medium shot level with the actor. There were very few long shots, close ups, and even fewer extreme long shots or extreme close ups. The lack of variety in camera angles caused awkward "jump cuts," during which characters seemed to shift locations in the same background between adjacent shots. In addition, shots were often framed poorly, cutting off the heads of characters or leaving massive spaces with nothing of interest going on in them. Just as the disciplines of art and music have underlying structural rules to them, the "grammar" of cinematography too has been long established. Mascelli's (1965) "five C's of cinematography"— camera angles, close ups, continuity, cutting, composition— is a good starting point for young videomakers. The question for future research is how to teach spatial grammar.

The implications of multimodal texts for future research is that educators and teachers of writing will have to expand their knowledge of writing to include the features of modes beyond the linguistic mode. While writing together, participants in the video club addressed the symbolic, structural, and semantic characteristics of video texts. For example, while setting up the first shot for *Rat Boy*, the kids evaluated practice takes and

made suggestions for improvements. These conversations focused on two modes:

gestures ("And Jaime, don't grab me by my neck, grab me by my arms.") and visuals

("Jaime should have his hood all the way over.") The medium of video suggests that we

expand our notion of writing to include the symbolic, structural, and semantic

characteristics of *all* the modes. Future work might include a detailed description of the

symbolic, structural, and semantic characteristics of multiple modes. Table 7.1 shows an

example of how this could be theorized (though in the figure it is incomplete). Each mode

(linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, and spatial) are broken down into their textual

characteristics (symbolic, structural, and semantic). I have provided some of the

characteristics for the linguistic and aural modes. The challenge is to learn what the

characteristics are of the others. For example, what exactly is the symbolic characteristics

of the spatial mode? At the time of this writing, I have no idea. As writers and teachers of

writing, we may not know how to talk about the characteristics of all modes, such as the

gestural and spatial modes. In future work, I can explore these modes and discover their

language characteristics.

Table 7.1

Structural, and semantic characteristics of multiple modes.

	Symbolic	**Structural**	**Semantic**
linguistic	graphic marks	grammar, syntax	word/concept relationships
visual	?	?	?
aural	pitch, volume, timbre	rhythm, beats, measures, timing, rhyme, repetition	sound/meaning relationships (ex. siren, busy signal)

spatial	?	?	?
gestural	?	?	?

Unofficial videomaking practices. An important area for future research is "unofficial" videomaking practices which included play, practice/rehearsal, improvisation, and experimentation. While these practices occurred during "official" videomaking, they were the hallmarks unofficial videomaking. From this study, I am beginning to believe that unofficial videomaking is not completely unique but instead a sub-section of official videomaking and, as a result, to fully understand official videomaking requires a careful examination of unofficial practices.

Unofficial videos, which numbered in the hundreds, were a variety of self-produced, informal, quick, and regularly incomplete video experiments that were often discarded after they were shot, much the way a scratch pad is used for rehearsal. Mostly improvised, these videos were rarely scripted or planned. They usually *began* in the production stage (versus pre-production). Sociocultural contexts such as roles, production stages, and protocols were widely ignored however tools played a huge role in how the videos were created. For example, the kids nearly always used the cameras built into the computers. Many students talked *to* the camera a great deal, like confessionals, not unlike a performative journal entry. At other times, the camera was a mirror giving feedback to their performances as they addressed a fictional audience.

Unofficial practices sneaked into official practices all the time and the videomaking that was done at the site was ultimately a mix of official and unofficial practices. Embedded within official videomaking, I sensed that unofficial processes

showed up when the plan in place had to be scrapped due to unusual obstacles or when

students needed to create new and interesting ideas through group emergence (Sawyer,

2003a). My hunch is that these processes were quite democratic, centered in the

collaborative and conflictive tenors, but also quite fragile. I'd like to learn more about

how and why participants mixed official and unofficial videomaking processes.

The improvisational aspects of unofficial videomaking make it an excellent topic

for exploring "problem-finding" interactional scenarios discussed briefly in chapter six.

Unofficial videos may be venues to further explore such questions as, *How are new ideas*

developed during interaction? or *What specific activities do participants do?* For

example, students often "played" with (read and responded to) props and costumes such

as a phone or a wig as a point of entry for creating improvised videos that were greatly

influenced by the constrained story-lines embedded within them (Wohlwend, 2009).

Aprons brought forth cooking shows, telephones evoked office scenes, long haired wigs

turned boys into girls. This may lead to the exploring the relationships between play,

practicing/rehearsing, and problem-finding improvisations that are so common in

unofficial videomaking.

In Conclusion

Although this research focused on the videomaking processes of a single after-

school program, one in which I played a significant role, I believe the findings have broad

implications for social and multimodal writing practices in a variety of settings, both in

school and out of school. There is little research that addresses the social interaction

between multiple authors in videomaking and even less involving elementary age

students. Studies tend to concentrate on the use of new technologies, or the post-

typographic characteristics of new literacies products such as their *digital*, *remixed* and *remediated*, and *multimodal* nature (DeVoss, 2009). Instead, I focused my attention on the "new mindsets" involved in new literacies practices which include a heavy emphasis on participation, distributed expertise, collective intelligence, collaboration, sharing, experimentation, innovation and evolution, and creative-innovative rule breaking (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). These characteristics were precisely what the students at the site exhibited during video production.

Developing a new mindset toward literacy practices is a difficult shift for writers. With so much attention to technological aspects of contemporary writing, there is a danger thinking that new literacies are a "fad" of sorts, one that doesn't have to be taken seriously because the technologies will simply change in time. My goal in this research was to downplay the technological and highlight the social aspects of new literacies practices. I wanted to show that these characteristics (distributed expertise, collective intelligence, collaboration, etc.) are not exclusive to new literacies practices. From a sociocultural perspective, I argue that new literacies practices are an *innovation* in literacy. Still, the findings may disrupt established ways of thinking about writing that are commonplace, particularly in formal school settings.

Appendix A: Map of the Computer Lab
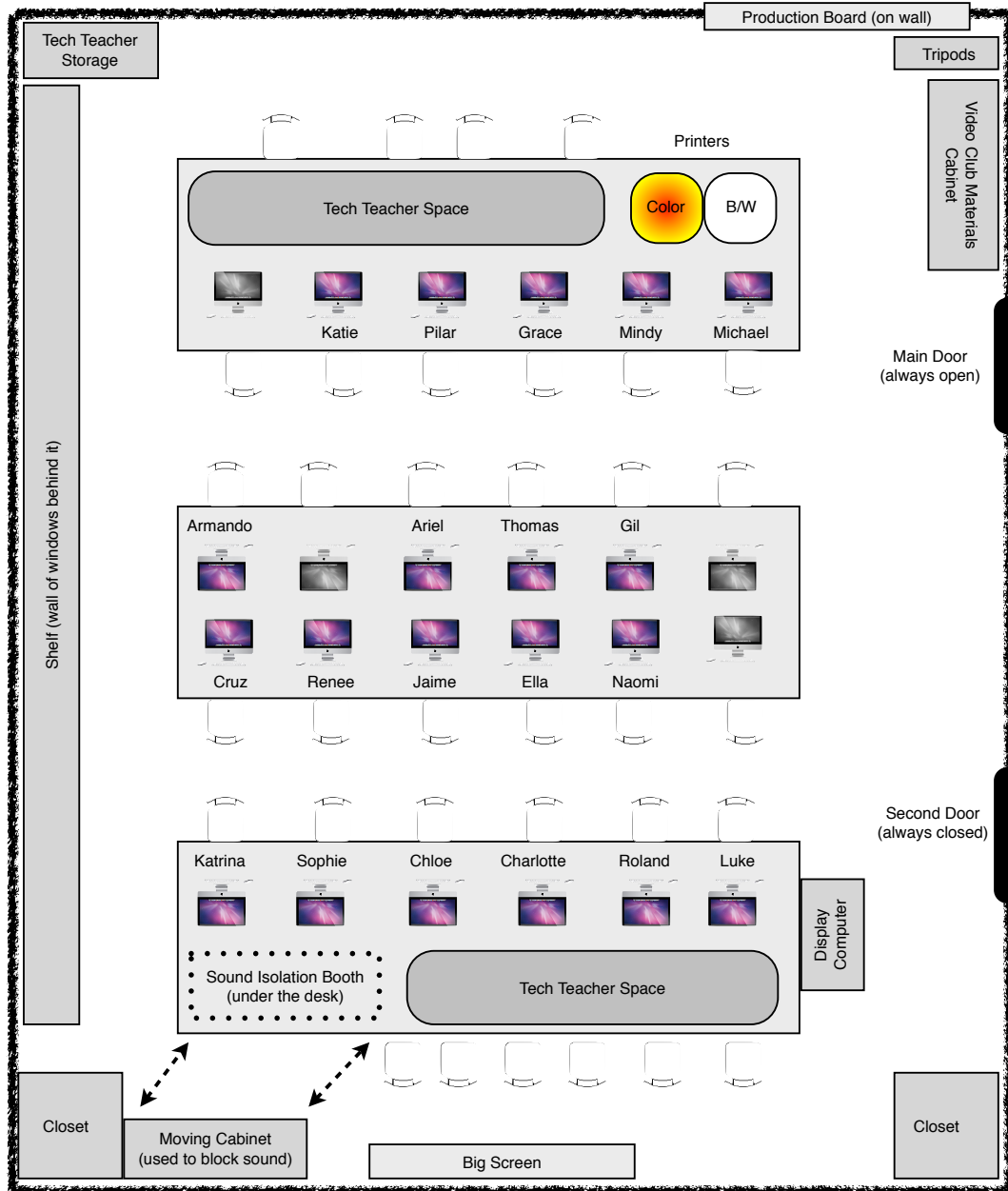
Appendix B: Letter to Parents

August 23, 2011

Dear Students and Parents,

Midway Elementary School will be hosting its after-school Video Club for students in 4th and 5th grades. Now in its fifth year! The club will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays (3:45 – 5:15 p.m.). The club starts Tuesday, September 6, 2011 and will continue until the first week of May 2012.

In the club, students will learn how to use cameras to make all kinds of videos including fictional narratives (dramas, comedies, action), documentaries, commercials or public service announcements, and animations. They will learn how to write scripts, use video and still cameras, act, and edit video and sound. Computers play an important role in video making and students will learn how to use video and sound editing software as well as programs to change and alter images, create storyboards, animations, and even comics. Students will learn about the various roles that make up a production team including the scriptwriter, director, camera-person, marker, actors, producer, art director, and more. Students will perform all of these roles throughout the club learning that to make a good video you must work together.

Video making is a collaborative activity. No single person can perform all the roles, operate the camera, and direct the scene all at the same time. **We are looking for students who want to learn how to make video but who also enjoy working with other students.** Collaboration is often the hardest part of video making for students and while conflict is natural and expected, please be aware that for the benefit of all students repeated uncooperative behavior will not be tolerated.

There is no cost. We have space for 20 students total. We ask that you apply only if you feel like you can commit to coming each session. If you have problems attending the program, we may ask you to make room for another interested student. In addition, this is not an after-school day care program-- behavior issues will be addressed directly and quickly.

The deadline for applying is Tuesday, August 30, 2011. Please look at the attached application and apply early as only 20 students will be admitted.

Sincerely,

Chuck Jurich
University of New Mexico

Appendix C: Video Club Application
Midway After School Video Club
Application

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____   Teacher's Name: _____
In Video Club Before?: _____ Girl or Boy?: _____

Questions for Students

1) Please rank (1st, 2nd, 3rd) what roles you *prefer* to do in the video club. You will learn to do all of them but students usually like some more than others. Tell us what you are excited to do:

Role	Rank	Description
Actor		Plays characters in front of the camera
Art Director		Prepares the scene and actors with props (things) and costumes
Camera-person		Operates the camera and tripod and captures the video
Director		Takes the script and directs everyone into turning it into a video; lots of responsibility and can be stressful
"Marker"		"Marks" the scene and shot on a board in front of the camera before each shot; "Marks" what shots are good and which are poor
Producer		Organizes the entire team, gets equipment and locations; makes sure the video is completed (usually this is Mr. Jurich but some students have done this by themselves)
Scriptwriter		Writes the script to be made into a video
Sound Editor		Creates and edits the sound of the video including voice overs, over-dubs, sound effects, and music (lots of computer work)
Video Editor		Takes all the video clips and, with the script as a guide, puts them together to make the story (lots of computer work)

1) What do you know already about making videos? Do you have any experience? (It is

ok if you have no experience!) You can answer below or on another piece of paper.

1) What are some of your ideas that you'd like to turn into a video? They can be made-up or real life stories. Please list 5 story ideas you have. We may use these ideas in the club.

	Story Ideas
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

For Parents and Guardians

By signing this you are giving your child permission to participate in the club. We will let you know by Thursday, September 1 whether they are admitted or on the waiting list. Please make sure that your child is capable of attending the video club consistently and he or she will have stable transportation. If you are able to volunteer, we'd love to have you-- we could always use more supervision. You don't have to have any experience or knowledge of video production as the kids **always** do the "work."

Student Signature:

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature:

_____

The deadline to return this application is Tuesday, August 30, 2011

Appendix D: Screenwriting Format Basics

Screenplay format developed with the advent of the typewriter and is different than other kinds of published documents in that what the screenwriter creates isn't a manuscript to be sent to a publisher but in fact the *final product*. Over the years, the tools have change but the expectation is that scripts should look like they came out of a typewriter. The screenplay doesn't go through any other forms of typesetting and is not published or duplicated for anyone outside of the production crew. You can buy a published copy of Tennessee Williams' play *The Glass Menagerie* (Williams, 1945) but if you want a copy of Woody Allen's screenplay for *Annie Hall* (Allen & Brickman, 1977), you have to search the Internet for a "bootleg" version. The main typographical features of the screenplay is the use of a fixed width font (usually 12 point `Courier`), the selective use of all capitalization, and specific indentation rules to indicate functions of text. The "typewriter-look" is not cosmetic but to maintain the curious relationship between the fixed width font, size of a standard page (8.5" x 11"), and line spacing that results in one page of text to generally equal one minute of screen time. Thus a 90 page script will equal about an hour and a half on the screen. Even in our video club with amateur writers, directors, and editors this relationship held true.

There are seven kinds of text in a screenplay: scene headings, action, character, dialogue, parentheticals, transitions, and shots. They are explained in detail below; see the figure at the end of the appendix for an annotated example screenplay.

Scene Headings (or "slug lines") have three parts to them: the inside/outside identifier, scene location, and time. Scene headings always begin with either "INT." (interior) or "EXT." (exterior) as all scenes must be set up inside or outside. This

is crucial information for those shooting a scene. Next is the actual location such as "LIVING ROOM" or "HALLWAY"). Last is the time which can be expressed as precise time ("4:42 PM"), relation to the sun ("AFTERNOON" or "DAWN"), or relative time ("CONTINUOUS" or "LATER"). All three parts of the scene heading are separated by a dash.

Action is written in blocks of text flush left and may be broken up into smaller chunks of text using line breaks. Action is anything that the reader/viewer can see and the more "visual" the action is the better. Action is written in a special way in that everything that is put down has to be able to be filmed. A scriptwriter shouldn't write "John thought about it." because "thinking" can't really be filmed. Instead, the writer should visually show what the characters are doing and lead the reader into the intended response. The words "John silently stared out the window" can be filmed and in the right context, we might guess that John is thinking. Action is just that— action, movement, gestures, visuals, spatial arrangements. The action is always written in present tense, like it is happening right in front of us. It also includes any notable sounds but not character dialogue.

Character is the name of the character who is talking. It is written in all capitals and indented towards nearly the center of the page. **Dialog** is simple enough— what the character is saying. When a character is interrupted, two dashes are marked (ex. "Do you mean—") and when a character drifts off while talking an ellipsis is used (ex. "I think the… a few pages…"). The text is also indented (but not as much as Character) and more or less in a centered column on the page. **Parentheticals** provide information on how the character is speaking. It is written in centered parentheses below the characters name or

within the dialogue. They should be used sparingly but can be very useful in maintaining the flow of dialogue, for example, important character actions such as a gesture can be written as a parenthetical instead of action. The specific term "(beat)" is unique to scriptwriting and is used to express a brief pause in the dialogue with a shift in ideas.

Transitions are used to describe how the story visually transitions from one scene to another. They were rarely used in the video club and students usually used action to perform this function such as "entering the flashback." Unlike all of the other formatting, transitions are written flush *right* and are in all capitals.

Shots were also rarely used in the video club. Shots describe precisely what the viewer is seeing. It is useful for an insert (ex. "map to the treasure") or a particular kind of shot framing that helps tell the story (ex. "close up on Bill's eyes"). It is written flush left and in all capitals.

There are many computer programs that can automatically format text to scriptwriting format for writers. The industry standard is Final Draft. Students in the video club used Celtx, a freeware scriptwriting program that is very simple to use. For the scriptwriting scenes in this study I used the program Scrivener. All of these programs offer similar ways of formatting text through a pull down menu that arranges the words appropriately depending on the function of that chunk of text. All students had to do was understand the function of each category and then type. The program then typographically formats the text appropriately. Errors in formatting can be quickly fixed by highlighting text and using the pull down menu to re-format it.

Regardless of the program, the final script always looks the same which is important because of the relationship between the form and function of the text. By just

browsing, a reader can tell a great deal about a script. If there is a lot of text in the

middle, the pages are dialogue heavy. If there are large chunks of text that go to the edges

of the margins then it is action oriented. A good script usually has a nice mix of action

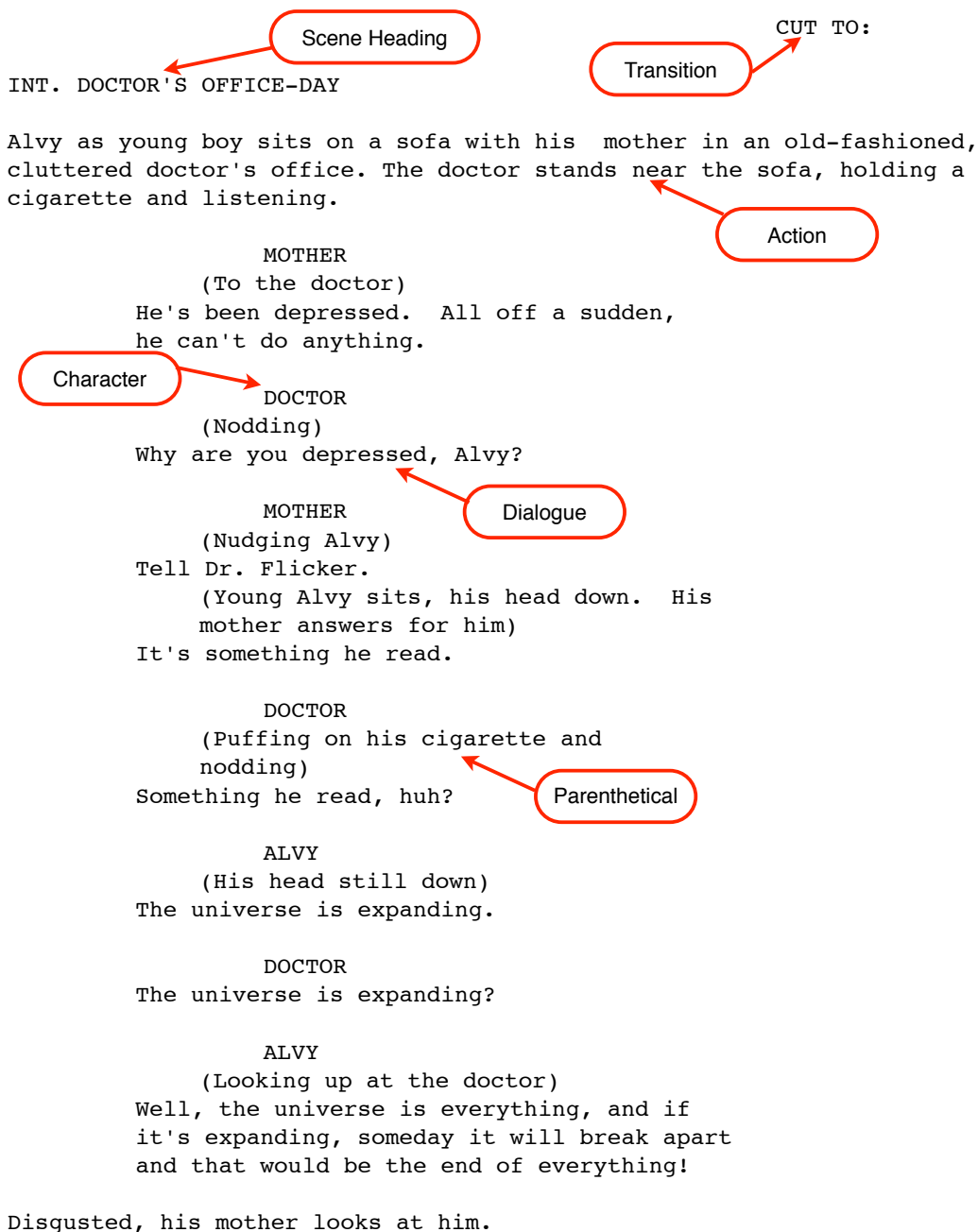and dialogue though this will vary depending on the genre and story.

Scene Heading

CUT TO:

Transition

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE-DAY

Alvy as young boy sits on a sofa with his mother in an old-fashioned,
cluttered doctor's office. The doctor stands near the sofa, holding a
cigarette and listening.

Action

                    MOTHER
               (To the doctor)
          He's been depressed. All off a sudden,
          he can't do anything.

Character

                    DOCTOR
               (Nodding)
          Why are you depressed, Alvy?

                    MOTHER
               (Nudging Alvy)
          Tell Dr. Flicker.

Dialogue

               (Young Alvy sits, his head down. His
               mother answers for him)
          It's something he read.

                    DOCTOR
               (Puffing on his cigarette and
               nodding)
          Something he read, huh?

Parenthetical

                    ALVY
               (His head still down)
          The universe is expanding.

                    DOCTOR
          The universe is expanding?

                    ALVY
               (Looking up at the doctor)
          Well, the universe is everything, and if
          it's expanding, someday it will break apart
          and that would be the end of everything!

     Disgusted, his mother looks at him.

Figure D.1. Example script with annotations: from *Annie Hall* (Allen & Brickman,

1977).

[Note: It is legal to reproduce this excerpt from Allen and Brickman's script because it is

being used for "educational purposes" and not for resale.]

Appendix E: Official Videos Started

Name of Video	Script-writer(s)	Script Comp-leted	Entered Pre-Produc-tion	Entered Produc-tion	Entered Post-Produc-tion	Distri-buted
911 Calls	Gil & Michael	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Abused Elves	Katie and Pilar	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Alisa and John	?					
All Fake	Chloe	yes				
Attacks, The	Katie & Pilar	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Back Today, Gone Tomorrow (sequel to *The Attacks*)	Katie & Pilar					
Bad Girl	Grace	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Bathroom of Doom	Gil					
California Nerds Music Video	Thomas	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Cellar, The	?					
Cheese	Thomas	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Disco Party (animation using the program Scratch)	Luke	no	yes	yes	yes	
Do You Know Your Best Friend? (non-fiction, game show)	Katie & Pilar	yes	yes			
Documentary on Autism (non-fiction)	Katie	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Evil Soccer Ball II	Roland & Luke	yes				
Fork and Spoon	Mindy	yes				
Ghost Hunting	Chloe	no	yes	yes	yes	

Girl Who Stole the Doll, The	Renee					
Going Somewhere	?					
Good Food vs. Bad Food	Sophie	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
How the Students Outsmarted the Lunch Duty	Sophie & Katrina					
Kid Halo	Thomas					
Kidnapped By Aliens	?					
Killed, The	Jaime, Thomas, Roland	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Kindergarten Questions (non-fiction)	Ariel	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Cruz the Awesome	Cruz					
Life as a Triceratops (stop action)	Armando	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Little Bunny Foo Foo	Renee	no	yes	yes	yes	
Live Soccer: No Mercy vs. Devastators	Thomas	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Lock In, The	Sophie	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Midway Today (non-fiction)	Pilar & Katie	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Misunderstanding, The	Chloe	yes	yes			
My Life (non-fiction)	Grace	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Narnia Battle	Armando					
Nicki Minaj Music Video	Naomi	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
No Smoker	?					
Note, The	Chloe					
One, The (in Spanish)	Jaime & Cruz					

Party, The (stop action)	Armando	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Phone Call, The	Chloe & Mindy	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Prom	Renee	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Questions for Ms. Castillo (non-fiction)	Michael	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Questions for Ms. Jackson (non-fiction)	Grace	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Rat Boy	Thomas	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Recruiter, The	Luke	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Ruth Wakefield	Ariel	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Sarge's Revenge (music video, slide show)	Roland	no	yes	yes	yes	
Should Have	Katrina	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Show and Tell	Thomas					
Skateboarding 101 (non-fiction)	Roland	yes	yes	yes		
Substitute, The	Ella					
Tania Brown	Sophie & Katrina					
TEDx Promotional Video	Sophie & Katrina	yes				
Trick is Not a Trick Anymore, The	Grace					
Vampires and Werewolves	Armando	yes				
Walking Billboards (non-fiction)	Katie & Pilar	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Whatever	Katrina	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Zumbatomic	Armando	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Appendix F: Official Videos Screened With Credits

Name of Video	Script-writer(s)	Director	Principal Actor(s)	Editor	Camera	Others Credited
911 Calls	Gil & Michael	Gil & Michael	Gil & Michael	Michael, Gil	Gil, Michael	
Attacks, The	Katie & Pilar	Naomi	Renee, Katrina, Chloe, Mindy, Jaime	Ella	Luke	Sophie (marker-board)
Bad Girl	Grace	Grace	Mindy, Gil, Jaime,	Chloe	Thomas	
California Nerds Music Video	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas, Renee, Sophie, Katrina, Naomi	Thomas	Gil	Thomas (original music)
Cheese	Thomas	Sophie	Thomas, Jaime	Ella	Michael	Charlotte (markerboard), 8 minor actors
Good Food vs. Bad Food	Sophie	Charlotte	Katrina, Sophie	Chloe	Pilar	Katie (art director), Chloe (producer)
Killed, The	Jaime, Thomas, Roland	Jaime	Jaime, Roland, Thomas, Ariel	Jaime	too many to list	Thomas (sound editing), 3 extras
Life as a Triceratops (stop action)	Armando	Armando	none	Armando	Armando	Armando (original music)
Lock In, The	Sophie	Katie	Charlotte, Chloe, Renee, Pilar	Sophie	Katrina	Sophie (marker-board)
Midway Today (non-fiction)	Pilar & Katie	Katie	Katie, Pilar	Katie & Pilar	Pilar	

My Life (non-fiction)	Grace	Grace	Grace, Pilar	Grace	Grace	
Nicki Minaj Music Video	Naomi	Naomi	Katie, Pilar, Renee, Katrina, Sophie	Naomi	Naomi	
Party, The (stop action)	Armando	Armando	none	Armando	Armando	Armando (original music)
Phone Call, The	Chloe & Mindy	Chloe	Ariel, Gil, Michael, Roland, Katrina, Renee, Grace	Chloe	Cruz	Grace (art director), Mindy (assistant director)
Prom	Renee	Luke	Renee, Thomas, Jaime, Roland, Grace, Pilar, Katie, Naomi,	Renee	Katrina, Jaime	
Questions for Ms. Castillo (non-fiction)	Michael	Michael	Michael	Michael	Gil	
Questions for Ms. Jackson (non-fiction)	Grace & Mindy	Grace	Mindy	Grace	Grace	Michael (original sound)
Rat Boy	Thomas	Roland	Jaime, Naomi, Thomas	Cruz, Ella	Katrina, Gil	Cruz (sound editing)
Recruiter, The	Luke	Ella	Luke, Naomi, Renee, Sophie, Thomas, Donvan	Chloe, Luke, Thomas	Sophie, Chloe, Grace, Michael	6 extras

Ruth Wakefield	Ariel	Ariel	Sophie, Thomas	Ariel	Katrina	Mr. Jurich (original music score), 5 extras
Should Have	Katrina	Katie	Naomi, Renee, Thomas, Luke, Katrina, Mindy	Ella	Pilar	Ariel (marker-board)
Walking Billboards (non-fiction)	Katie	Pilar	Katie, Pilar, Grace	Katie	Pilar	
Whatever	Katrina	Katrina	Sophie, Grace, Thomas, Renee, Naomi,	Ella	Luke	Mindy (marker-board)
Zumbatomic	Armando	Michael	Armando, Ariel, Naomi, Chloe, Jaime, Thomas, Renee, Michael, Cruz	Grace, Gil, Luke	Sophie	Mindy (art director)

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