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Teachers as Writers

A report for Arts Council England on the value of writers' engagement with teachers to improve outcomes for all pupils

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Limpet

You call me a limpet

Ironic for a creature without legs.

I'd probably find it funny if I could laugh without falling off this bloody rock.

You retreat at the first sight of the oncoming tide

With thoughtless boastings of Mr Whippy.

I have to sucker up, pucker up and hold on even tighter.

I'm submerged in thunderous white wash

Salt water seeps through my ill-fitting shell and prunes my delicate flesh.

I don't even have skin for God's sake

You whinge about sunburn.

As the waves retreat I hear you.

Chubby tendrils laden with buckets, spades, nets and rods.

Beedy eyes scavenge for holiday souvenirs.

I feel you.

Chiselling, gnawing, and clawing at the edges of my stronghold.

I clamp on tighter but fingernails force themselves under the curve of my shell.

I stare back at you from the sanctuary you unceremoniously upturned.

I see your disgust at my pulpy flesh.

You prod me and push me, smell me and squish me

Until bored and disappointed

You discard me.

Still.

At least this rock pool has a better view.

Ann

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Executive Summary

Teachers as Writers is a two-year research project offering teachers sustained opportunities to write and build co-mentoring relationships with professional writers in order to improve student outcomes. The project set out to determine the impact of professional writers' engagement with teachers, both in changing teachers' classroom practices in the teaching of writing, and in improving student outcomes in writing.

Introduction

Many primary teachers qualify to teach English or literacy through a generalist route, whilst secondary colleagues often qualify through an English literature degree which gives primacy to reading and being a reader. As a consequence, many practitioners are less than assured in their teaching of writing and have less personal experience to draw on.

Arvon, the national creative writing charity, runs an annual creative writing residential for teachers. It offers them an experience of being a writer within a community of writers. The Teachers as Writers (TAW) research project, funded by a research grant from Arts Council England (ACE), investigated the impact of this residential experience and of a follow-on co-mentoring opportunity to work with a professional writer in school, on teachers' identities as writers. The project also explored how the teachers drew on the Arvon experience in their own classrooms, how they worked alongside professional writers as co-mentors and the consequences of these experiences.

> *The way we're learning how to do it here is write quickly in detail and then from that get your idea, get your planning, go back, edit it, make it into a story. Whereas like the way we teach children is - plan it, then write it, then add detail. So it's almost turning it on its head—Teacher*

At the heart of the project was the concept of co-mentoring, where professional writers and teachers work together both for their own mutual benefit (as writers and pedagogues), and in order to support the development of student writers. Teachers and professional writers were engaged together, both as writers during the Arvon teacher-writer residential, and in co-mentoring dialogues in which professional writers shared their expertise in writing and teachers shared their knowledge of pedagogy. In the related Continuing Professional

Development sessions, teachers and writers engaged in further co-mentoring, with the teachers helping the professional writers understand the particular context of working in their school, and their students' needs. The writers shared their expert insights into the writing process. Together they reflected on their co-teaching and how that had impacted on student learning about writing.

> *I used to ramble quite a lot. And now I think about every single sentence I write, like it has to be part of the story…so I'll write a draft, and then I'll think what I don't need…it may work but if it's not relevant to the actual story, it doesn't need to be in there—Year 9*

The co-mentoring built on previous ACE research which argued that in order to 'be effective in helping young people develop their skills, writers need to articulate aspects of the writing process and the working lives of writers' (Horner, 2010:34). Writers need support in making their implicit knowledge, understanding and skills explicit, as recent research evidence also endorses (Cremin, Myhill, Lillis and Eyres, 2015). The TAW project, through establishing a co-mentoring frame, positioned writers as learning partners in collaboration with teachers, and afforded rich opportunities for them to recognise, articulate and share their expertise as writers.

Project aims

There is a strong belief in the value of professional writer visits to schools and of teacher residentials and the opportunities these give teachers to develop their own identities and skills as writers. Yet to date, research into the value of writers' engagement in education and impact on student outcomes has been undertaken on a small scale with mainly qualitative data and a recent review reveals the evidence in this area is not strong (Cremin and Oliver, 2015). The TAW project set out to determine the impact of writers' engagement with teachers in changing teachers' classroom practices in teaching writing and in improving student outcomes in writing.

Project methodology

The study used mixed research methods, combining a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) with a complementary qualitative data set. 32 teachers of Key Stage 2 and 3 classes from schools in areas of disadvantage across the South-West of England were involved.

> *Put in some of your real life, and then whack in a load of your imagination and building it all up and putting it all together—Year 3*

The intervention

The intervention involved teachers attending an Arvon Teachers as Writers residential in April 2016, developing their own experience of being writers. They then worked in a co-mentoring relationship with a professional writer, planning, teaching, and reflecting together on one unit

of work, taught in the summer of 2016. The comparison group was a 'business-as-usual' group, undertaking their normal teaching.

Data collection and analysis

In order to determine students' gains in writing outcomes, pre- and post-intervention writing samples were gathered. The statistical analysis of the RCT used descriptive and inferential statistics and multilevel modelling to explore impact on students' written outcomes.

A significant body of qualitative data was collected to complement the quantitative data.This included: field notes; audio capture of Arvon tutorials; teacher audio diaries; interviews with professional writers, teachers and student focus groups before and after the intervention; lesson observations; and teacher and writer audio reflections. The data were analysed thematically.

> *And what struck me was that art teachers are passing on a craft, they're passing on what they can already do, they can draw and paint. Whereas English teachers, especially in those days, were trained in the art of criticism rather than in writing—Writer*

Descriptive summary of findings

Flexible forms of engagement

Focused yet relaxed engagement: Arvon's supportive ethos facilitated focused yet relaxed engagement and afforded agency to the teachers to participate in ways which suited them. The co-mentoring relationships were also predominantly characterised by ease, mutual respect, some spontaneity and informality in team teaching.

> *I think it's really important, it's not on the curriculum but this power to understand the imagination or explore the imagination and be creative, actually that in itself should be considered an objective of a lesson—Teacher*

Engagement as writers: The teachers were positioned as writers at Arvon. Some expressed initial concerns, but with support, teachers' authorial voices were heard and their agency upheld. During co-mentoring some, though not all, teachers wrote alongside students, perceiving this enabled them to teach from a writerly perspective. As writers, the Arvon tutors and the co-mentors shared the craft of writing, modelled the process and talked about their experience of being a writer.

Engagement as teachers: Engaged as educators, Arvon tutors adopted positions as interested readers, advisers, editors and facilitators of the teachers' writing. Teachers often adopted roles as pedagogues: noting texts and activities for school use and discussing possible pedagogical consequences. During co-mentoring, teachers strongly retained their educational role, which some perceived prevented them from adopting a writer role. Professional writers who had been teachers themselves also occasionally adopted pedagogic roles.

Personal engagement: Arvon tutors openly acknowledged their challenges as writers and the value of drawing on life experience. Teachers tended to write from the heart, exploring their memories and identities. However, the personal dimension of being a writer and reasons for writing were not foregrounded. Some co-mentors encouraged students to connect to their lives, few focused on reasons for writing.

Engagement in a community of writers: The residential created a community of writers - writing, life and published texts were shared and tutors implicitly apprenticed teachers to the writing community beyond Arvon. During co-mentoring, students were positioned as writers and the professional writers' presence helped some make connections to a wider writing community. Although no overt focus on developing community was documented, many co-mentor pairs prompted communal sharing of writing.

> *When we encouraged them to really totally switch off their inner editor and just write - they were producing work that was really extraordinarily fresh and powerful because they lost all kind of inhibitions and self-consciousness—Writer*

New learning through role engagement: Teachers reported they developed new insights about writing and being a writer which they drew upon in school, including: understanding about freewriting, ownership, the social and emotional demands of being a writer, the iterative nature of writing, and to a lesser extent revision. The professional writers reported developing increased awareness of: students as writers, differentiation, the National Curriculum, schemes of work, and the pressures of time and assessment.

Impact on teacher pedagogy

Changed pedagogic practices: The impact of writers' engagement with teachers on their pedagogic practices was particularly evident in the teachers' changed practices in relation to freewriting (entitled 'Just Write' by teachers), creating time and space for writing, the sharing of written work, and in how they handled the writing process.

> *I think she's helping us more by not helping us as much—Year 9*

The Arvon ethos: The ethos of Arvon was widely embraced and the pedagogic practices which reflected this most clearly were the most strongly translated into classroom practice. Some of the students noticed the more collaborative and relaxed classrooms, which they perceived gave them more autonomy and choice as writers.

Explicit teaching: Analysis of the Arvon workshops and tutorials indicates that the professional writers provided quite a significant amount of direct input about writing, such as about story grammars, or about the importance of 'show not tell', or the significance of verb and noun choices over adverbs and adjectives. Surprisingly however, there were no references in the research team's observations to explicit teaching of writing, other than in the revision episodes.

Feedback on writing: In contrast to the Arvon experience, there was little evidence of feedback in classrooms, other than some peer feedback, and during co-mentoring, revision was frequently led by the professional writers. This may indicate a residual lack of teacher confidence in critiquing writing or providing feedback which is not aligned to predetermined curriculum criteria.

Writer and teacher identities

Strong professional writer identities: The writers' identities are highly individualised and diverse, developed in different ways over different timescales. Some writers have multiple writer identities - a public writer identity, aware of publishers, editors, and readers; and a private writer identity, where the writer has more control and freedom about what and how they write.

Secure teacher identities: The teachers consistently demonstrated secure teacher identities both in the classroom and at Arvon. Despite wide experience, demonstrable proficiency and aspirations in respect of writing, before participating in the project few of the teachers confidently held a writer identity.

Shifting teachers' identities as writers: The Arvon residential made a substantial difference to the teachers' writer identities; after it, almost all were comfortable with describing themselves as writers. Evidence gathered in the term after the end of the project found that these writer identities had been sustained and in some cases strengthened, due in part to the experience of enacting them in the classroom.

Positioning students as writers: Most teachers developed more awareness of their students as writers, and began to acknowledge identity work in writing and the role of autonomy, agency and choice in their participation and learning. However, aligning such recognition with prescribed curriculum requirements is challenging.

Impact of the work on students

Effect of the intervention: The statistical results of the randomised controlled tests show that the control group achieved higher writing scores than the intervention group. As with all statistical results, it is important to interpret these with caution, particularly taking account of broader findings in the qualitative data.

> *Children at school, who are they writing for? Are they writing for themselves to develop their self-expression, or are they writing in order to get a really good grade, are they writing for a reaction from someone else? Teacher*

Positive responses: The qualitative interview evidence suggests that the majority of focus group (FG) students felt the project had had a positive impact on their motivation, confidence and writing skills. Some key outcomes appear across many or all student groups: enhanced enjoyment and engagement; an increased sense of ownership; greater awareness of aspects of the writing process; and perceived progress in writing skill. A minority of students identified project activities which they had not enjoyed or found helpful, but nevertheless described positive benefits overall.

Motivation and enjoyment: FG students identified changes to teaching and learning, which they perceived as liberating and 'fun'. They welcomed the introduction of personal notebooks for writing which were not assessed; more opportunities to share and discuss ideas; freewriting activities; and greater choice over topic and form. They attached particular significance to creative freedom, associating gains in enjoyment with less prescriptive writing tasks and more flexible drafting strategies. Some claimed their attitude to writing was more positive as a result or that behaviour and effort generally had improved.

> *Scanning the terrain I could see what might be a cave. Could it be the lair of the evil Grendel? What had happened to the egg he'd stolen? Had it hatched? Most importantly what did he want with it?—Year 5 (story extract)*

Confidence: Many FG students claimed their confidence had improved. Almost all were pleased with their writing, although the percentage who described themselves as 'good' writers was little changed. They attributed confidence gains to more interactive and collaborative approaches to text development and improvement, whereby ideas and writing were shared and discussed at formative stages. They also identified approaches which helped strengthen their sense of ownership and self-assurance, including teachers who shared their own writing and writing insecurities; encouragement and advice of professional writers; writing tasks which drew on personal experience; and more time to reflect on writing, consult and receive feedback.

I liked the part where we just kept writing and didn't stop, because it really let my ideas flow—Year 8

Perceived progress in skill and understanding: Almost all FG students felt they had improved in skill and understanding over the project and there was a marked increase in the number of references to aspects of personal progress. In particular, students cited improvements in fluency and quality of ideas; descriptive writing; vocabulary range; and understanding of success criteria. They were also better able to articulate the processes involved in constructing text, including initial idea generation, the building of drafts over time, and the purpose of editing. Some students claimed to revise their writing more extensively and in more depth than they had done previously, although spelling, punctuation and grammar remained the predominant concern of many.

The engagement of professional writers

The struggle of writing: Writers' accounts of their own writing experiences record clearly and tangibly the struggle of writing - the difficulty of creating texts and the pain of being judged by others. They accept this as part of being a writer, an inevitable element of the process. However, in school they tend to focus on the overtly pleasurable and rewarding aspects of writing with little attention paid to supporting children's understanding that 'difficulties' are normal, not a reflection of inadequacy.

…we do far more talking about ourselves as writers and how it feels. And I think that [it helps] the children understanding that it isn't all easy; writing is quite hard—Teacher

The writing process: Writers articulate clearly their understanding of the writing process as messy and recursive, and describe diverse ways of managing it. There are multiple examples of freewriting to liberate ideas and freewriting of first drafts; and evidence of evaluation and revision occurring throughout, including during composition. This contrasts to children's experiences of the writing process in school which is frequently routinised as a linear, chronological process of plan, draft, revise and edit. There may be lessons for how the process of writing is managed pedagogically.

Craft knowledge: One of the more creative paradoxes of the project was the struggle experienced by writers when asked to define their craft knowledge about writing. This is in contrast to the abundant craft knowledge that they displayed when they spoke about other aspects of their writing life and process. In considering their roles as writers in schools, there was a strong theme of the writer seeing themselves as a model for children, sharing their own 'writer self'. If writers were more consciously aware of their own expertise, might they be better able to share it with children?

Writers in schools: the co-mentoring work highlights the need for teachers and writers to negotiate their respective classroom roles more carefully in order to maximise benefits. Significantly, the experience of co-mentoring triggered sharp reflections on previous school interactions, with substantial evidence of writers changing views about how best to be a writer in school. No longer were writers content to fulfil previously adopted roles which saw them 'parachuting in' or 'doing a show'. Rather, they found themselves more interested in being 'direct' with students about the 'grittier' aspects of drafting. This included utilising their knowledge of receiving and giving feedback, which writers saw as having been central to their own development and growth.

> *I'm also taking back what it feels like to be a writer I think and how hard that can be and what you can do if you're stuck. And also just that it doesn't have to be perfect, you know. It's the enjoyment of it and the enjoyment of creating it… we're going to have to build that culture of actually we're writers in here. We're not doing writing or having writing done to us—Teacher*

Implications and recommendations

The TAW project suggests that teachers' engagement with professional writers is a valuable way to enhance student achievement in writing. With strengthened writer identities, teachers made pedagogic changes which in turn impacted upon students' reported motivation, confidence, sense of ownership and skills as writers. The statistical data did not however reveal enhanced attainment. The professional writers also benefitted from working in co-mentoring relationships which challenged their established ways of working in schools.

> *I just think because the writers came in I know how to maybe write better…instead of just putting like one idea and just sticking with it, you can put multiple ideas and then choose whatever one you want, and edit it—Year 8*

In terms of teaching, learning and research it is therefore recommended that:

• Follow-up research examines the causal pathway from teacher-writer engagement to impact on student attainment more closely, paying attention to practice implications;

• The implicit craft knowledge of professional writers is made explicit as a framework to develop teachers' subject knowledge and support their teaching;

• Teachers re-examine the writing process and professional writers' descriptions of this, considering whether their handling of this constrains students' writing experiences;

• Teachers offer time and space for freewriting, integrating 'Just Write' sessions and sharing into the writing process;

• Teachers write alongside students, acting as role models, sharing struggles and reflecting upon the differences this role position affords;

• Teachers pay increased attention to students' writer identities and to fostering their autonomy and agency as writers;

• Teachers make richer use of feedback and peer-editing to support revision;

• Teachers explore the personal dimension of writing, alongside the social and emotional demands involved;

• Teacher-writer engagements foreground co-mentoring in order to maximise the educational potential of professional writers' work;

• Teacher-writer engagements encompass more of the writing process, attending to editing and revision as well as generating writing;

• Teacher-writer engagements include close attention to pedagogical follow-through and sustained professional support.

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Chapter 1: The Introduction

Teachers as Writers (2015-2017) was a collaborative partnership project between Arvon, the Open University and the University of Exeter. It was funded by Arts Council England. Original and significant it sought to address several concerns of relevance to our understanding of the impact of arts and culture on education and offered new research and practice insights.

There is a strong, even commonsense, belief in the **value of professional writer visits to s**chools and in the value of teacher residentials which develop their own identities and skill sets as writers. With over 40 years' experience delivering creative writing courses, Arvon regularly receive feedback from teachers indicating that their courses are inspirational and influence their professional practice. To date however, research into the value of writers' engagement in the education context and impact on student outcomes has been undertaken on a small scale with mainly qualitative data. Some projects indicate impact on teachers' skills, knowledge and confidence in facilitating creative writing (Redmond, 2010), others show impact on pupils' attitudes and engagement as writers (Wilson, 2010). None are able to attribute causality, and most, as Cremin and Oliver's (2016) systematic review of the field argues, are over-reliant upon self-reporting without observational evidence to triangulate the perspectives offered. Indeed, as the ACE report identified: 'the purpose and nature of evaluation is often not well understood and evaluation then is inadequate and precise impact rarely identified' (Horner, 2010: 5).

The project therefore set out to determine the impact of writers' engagement with teachers in changing teachers' classroom practices in the teaching of writing and in improving outcomes for students. It was both large-scale and mixed method: combining a robust randomised control trial and qualitative data gathered in naturalistic contexts to evidence the nature of such impact**.** The use of a mixed methods approach was a relatively novel approach in arts contexts: it sought to establish not just causal relationships between artistic activity and educational benefit, but rich and nuanced understanding of the ways in which that artistic engagement is multiply realised in different learning contexts. In this way it sought to improve the evidence base around the impact of writers' engagement with teachers and to widen contemporary understanding of the educational and artistic value of this work.

At the heart of Teachers as Writers was the **concept of co-mentoring** where professional writers and teachers work together for *both* their own mutual benefit (as writers and pedagogues) *and* in order to support the development of student writers. Professional writers engaged as co-writers in the Arvon teacher-writer residential, and also in co-mentoring dialogues in CPD opportunities with teachers and in the classroom. The teachers' appraised the professional writers of their own contexts and their students' needs, and the writers shared their expert insights into the writing process. As the ACE report recognises in order to 'be effective in helping young people develop their skills, writers need to articulate aspects of the writing process and the working lives of writers' (Horner, 2010:34).

They need support in making their implicit knowledge, understanding and skills, explicit, as recent research evidence also endorses (Cremin, Myhill, Lillis and Eyres, 2015). Thus the project, through establishing a co-mentoring frame, sought to position writers as learning partners in collaboration with teachers, and afforded rich opportunities for them to recognise, articulate and share their expertise as writers.

Research further suggests that **teachers' identities as writers** are powerfully affected by past experiences, and that many express low self-esteem as writers, do not write for creative purposes, have worryingly negative attitudes towards writing, and express concern about teaching writing (Cremin and Oliver, 2016). Some scholars assert that if teachers write, there are beneficial impacts on classroom practice and on learner outcomes in writing, but there is very little evidence and larger-scale, systematic evaluation was urgently needed. On the basis of inspection evidence Ofsted assert that 'teachers who are confident as writers themselves and were able to demonstrate the compositional process taught it effectively'(2009:5). Although research suggests that teachers who choose to position themselves as writers in order to support younger writers often experience conflict in so doing. Their identities are influenced not only by the wider institutional/policy context, but by their interactions with students and, significantly, by their relationships with their unfolding compositions (Cremin & Baker, 2010; 2014). Nonetheless, ACE recommend that 'training is provided where teachers themselves write; this is one of the most effective ways of improving understanding of the teaching of writing' (2010: 6). The Teachers as Writers project thus offered sustained opportunities to write and follow the teachers through to the classroom where in a co-mentoring relationship they worked with writers to improve student outcomes.

With regard to **students as writers**, it is widely recognised that those students who lack confidence in writing will find it a struggle to engage with the curriculum, and that this will hamper both their exam success and later their employment. In response to this and the Warwick (2015) report's findings with regard to children born into low-income families being the least likely to engage with and appreciate the arts, culture and heritage in the curriculum or beyond, the project targeted school communities in the South West which represent both rural/coastal and social disadvantage.

In light of the above challenges for writers, teacher and students, **the research questions** which framed this study sought to investigate the co-creation by writers and teachers of educational benefit from the arts, especially for disadvantaged students. Specifically, the study investigated the impact of writers' engagement with teachers on: a) teachers' identities as writers; b) teachers' pedagogic practices; c) students' outcomes in writing, d) students' motivation, confidence and skills as writers and e) what the writers reveal about writing and the impact of the project on their understanding of the potential role of writers in school?

In undertaking this work, the research team recognised that writing is one of the most cognitively complex activities that humans engage; unlike many other skills we acquire, it does not become easier as we become more expert, because our expectations and authorial intentions increase as our proficiency increases, and at the same time self-awareness of the

writing process grows. The team drew on an interdisciplinary conceptual framework: on sociocultural understandings of writing as a social act within communities of practice (Dyson 2009; Cremin and Myhill 2012) and psychological representations of writing as recursively cycling between planning, text production and reviewing (Alamargot and Chanquoy 2001). They employed this framework to examine the impact of professional writers' engagement with teachers, both at the Arvon residential and in co-mentoring relationships.

In what follows, the report offers details on the methodology and then presents each of the data sets related to: the Arvon residential; the teachers' identities and their pedagogic practices as writers; the co-mentoring relationships; the students' outcomes and sense of motivation and confidence; and the data about the professional writers. The penultimate chapter focuses on the research questions before the conclusions across the project are drawn.

For the full and designed Executive Summary, see http://www.arvon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Arvon-Teachers-as-Writers.pdf. To read the ongoing project blog, see http://www.teachersaswriters.org/blog/

Firewood

You saw the potential in me
You drew me from the pile
Recognise the smother. More pliant side hidden
By an armour of rough bumps
And jagged edges.

They went first,
Too easily, it seems,
I burned for you,
Bending and curling
To your will, your desire,
Succumbing to every stroke of the flames.
Ignited by just one spark.

You basked in my heat,
My beauty – my contentment
I bestowed so freely.
I glowed, humming
As you tended me.

All too late, I remembered myself.
As I wither away to nothing
Consumed entirely by you,
I remembered the dream;
I could have been a beam,
Part of a sturdy structure,
Built to last,
To endure.

Now I see the truth.
You split me in two when I wasn't looking,
My golden rings reduced
To half-moons waiting in the embers.

Ellie

Chapter 2: The Methodology of the TAW Project

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for the project: all data collection instruments are included in the Appendices 1-26.

2.1 The research design

At the heart of this study is the 'Teachers as Writers' residential which has been run by Arvon for many years, and which gives teachers the opportunity to be tutored by professional writers at one of Arvon's three residential centres. The residential sets out to build teachers' confidence as writers themselves, with the hope that this will also change their practices in teaching writing in school.

The research was a mixed methods study, combining a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) with a complementary qualitative data set of observations and interviews, to evaluate and understand the impact of an Arvon 'Teachers as Writers' residential experience, and subsequent working with professional writers in schools.

The research questions below inform the purpose of the study and were used as the basis for the research design:

1. What kinds of engagement enable writers and teachers to work together?
2. What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on teachers' identities as writers?
3. What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on teachers' pedagogic practices in the teaching of writing?
4. What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on teachers' efficacy in supporting students to develop motivation, confidence and writing skills?
5. What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on student outcomes in the teachers' classes?

6 What do the writers reveal about writing and the impact of the project on their understanding of the potential role of writers in school?

2.2 The Arvon residential and co-mentoring experience

The project explored the impact of two complementary experiences: the Arvon 'Teachers as Writers' residential and a co-mentoring experience, working with professional writers. The Arvon residential took place at in April 2016 at the Totleigh Barton Arvon Centre and involved creative writing workshops led by two professional writers, one-to-one tutorials, time and space for writing, and the sharing of writing. Following the residential, each teacher was partnered with a professional writer, and both the teachers and the writers participated in two Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days to work together in co-planning a creative writing unit of work and co-teaching two lessons. This was framed as a co-mentoring relationship, recognising the complementarity of the professional writers' 'writerly' knowledge, and the teachers' pedagogical experience.

2.3 The sample

For the RCT element of the study, 32 teachers were recruited from schools in the South-West, targeting schools with a high percentage of Pupil Premium students (required by the funders), and targeting a balance of primary and secondary schools. The final sample comprised 26 schools, some with two teachers involved in the project: in order to avoid within-school crossover effects, the randomisation was conducted at school level rather than teacher level, so that wherever there were two teachers involved, they were in the same group.

School	**Year Group**	**School**	**Year Group**
Intervention Group: Primary		*Intervention Group: Secondary*	
School A	6	School G	7
School B	4/5/6	School H	9
School C	3	School H	8
School C	6	School I	8
School D	3	School J	8
School D	5	School K	9
School E	5	School L	8
School F	3/4	School M	7

A summary of the Intervention Sample

School	**Year Group**	**School**	**Year Group**
Comparison Group: Primary		*Comparison Group: Secondary*	
School N	3	School S	7
School O	6	School T	9
School O	6	School U	8
School P	6	School V	9
School P	6	School W	9
School Q	6	School X	9
School Q	6	School Y	7
School R	6	School Z	8

A summary of the Comparison Sample

The total final student sample included in the RCT was 711. In addition, 16 teacher-selected focus groups of 6-8 students were formed, stratified by gender and by writing attainment (low, medium, high).

The professional writer sample comprised the two Arvon writing tutors, and eight professional writers who engaged with the teachers in the co-mentoring. As one of the Arvon tutors was also a co-mentor, the total writer sample is nine.

2.4 The Randomised Controlled Trial

The RCT component involved all 32 teachers, following standard principles for RCTs, and adopting a pre-post-test design, with a measure of writing attainment gathered before and after the intervention. The RCT is described more fully in Chapter 7.

2.5 Qualitative data collection

2.5.1 Arvon residential data collection

During the Arvon residential, a comprehensive dataset was collected to document the experience. This included audio-capture of the five writing workshops; audio capture of both of the one-to-one tutorials per teacher (29 tutorials); teacher audio-diaries; end of residential teacher interviews; interviews with the writing tutors; and field notes written by the observing researchers.

2.5.2 Teacher interviews

In addition to the teacher audio-diaries and end of residential interviews which both set out to capture the teachers' responses to the residential experience, a series of four teacher audio-captured interviews were conducted with each intervention teacher through the lifespan of the project, either by phone or face to face, (See Appendices 7, 9, 10 and 12) as outlined below:

- Initial teacher profile interviews in February 2016: to establish the teachers' experience, confidence and identities as writers and teachers of writing; how they currently taught writing; and their experiences of working with writers;
- Interviews post lesson observation in March 2016: to explore teachers' observed ways of teaching writing;
- Interviews post lesson observation in May 2016: to determine any changing views of writing or teaching writing following the Arvon residential;
- Post-intervention interviews in the autumn term 2016: to determine any changed views of writing or teaching writing after the co-mentoring experience.

2.5.3 Focus group interviews

Two audio-captured focus group interviews were conducted with each focus group: the first immediately after the Arvon residential intervention to elicit their perceptions of writing and how it is taught, and their understanding of the writing process; the second after the teaching unit was complete, eliciting any changed perceptions of writing and how it is taught or any new understandings about writing (See Appendices 16 and 17).

2.5.4 Writer interviews

In addition to the writing tutor interviews conducted during the residential, each professional writer co-mentor was interviewed twice. The first interview, prior to meeting their partner teacher, sought to elicit their perceptions of writing and the writing process; how they make their tacit knowledge of writing explicit; and their experiences of working in schools. The second interview, after the intervention, elicited any learning gained through the co-mentoring experience and their critical reflections on it (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6)

2.5.5 Classroom observations

Two classroom observations of each teacher before and after the intervention were conducted and audio-recorded to determine how they taught writing at the outset and whether it changed after the Arvon residential and co-mentoring (See Appendix 8).

2.5.6 Co-mentoring data

To understand the co-mentoring relationship, one observation of a co-taught lesson was undertaken, followed by an interview with the teacher and writer together, exploring their pedagogical decisions and co-mentoring relationship. Following the second co-teaching lesson, the teacher and writer recorded a shared discussion, using prompts, reflecting on their co-teaching (see Appendices 13, 14, and 15).

2.6 Data analysis

The qualitative analysis adopted an inductive process of open and axial coding, using NVivo, where an initial coding was undertaken to establish a working set of codes, which was then iteratively developed, refined and cross-checked by the coding team, and grouped into thematic axial clusters. Each data set had at least two coders, and the iterative process ensured that there was constant comparison of codes and coding decisions. A final check of each analysis was undertaken to ensure that utterance attributed to each code had been consistently applied. The tables of codes and their definitions are listed in Appendix 26.

2.7 Ethics

The project had full ethical approval from both the University of Exeter and the Open University. See Appendices 18-25 for the information sheet sent to schools and writers and the consent forms.

Dressing Up

Our call to play was tootled, cajoled and insistent
Back then oversized garments prompted us to perform
Alternative futures by intertwining our imaginations.

Now I rescue our suitcase of childhood
Tossing and shaking it free
Clothes cascade down from the heaven of our house.

Smiler, Locket, Pickle and me
Sisters behind closed doors in the living room
Rummage through the jumble sale of our lives.

Smiler grimaces at the thickest of yellow mackintoshes
Heavy on the shoulders
With the power to transform any child into a waddling goose of jealousy.

Pickle digs through the pile
Wanting one last moment with the swimming costume she buried in the sand
The tide has never returned it.

Locket hugs tight to the navy blue of the cotton
Nautical jumper with cork toggles and collars that sweep along the shoulders
The matching stripy leggings are overlooked.

I precipitate a change of tactics
We sisters launch onto the mountain of memories
And become a laughing staircase to the top.

Emily

Chapter 3: The Arvon Residential

3.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the data analysis from the Arvon week. The data set comprises observations of 9 workshops, 30 tutorials, a session focused on any consequences of the week for classroom pedagogy, end-of-week teacher interviews and 12 audio diaries. Analysis of writing workshops, one to one tutorials is presented and attention is given to the time and space to write. There are four strands to Arvon experience: time and space, workshops, one to one tutorials, and sharing writing. The fourth Arvon strand is analysed within the first two strands. Finally an analysis of the teachers' intended pedagogical consequences is presented. Each includes an explanation of data sources, analytic method and themes. The data tools employed were designed to probe the following constructs: writer identity, teacher identity, content subject knowledge, pedagogical practices and knowledge/experience of the writing process.

3.2 Arvon workshops

3.2.1 Workshop data collection and analysis

Teachers experienced a total of 10 hours of workshops across the week. All were observed and digitally audio-recorded. Workshops were analysed by two researchers who had attended the residential. Data sources comprised field notes and photographs. One researcher focused on the tutor, the other on the teachers. Extracts for closer attention were transcribed. See Appendix 3 for the Arvon Timetable.

The process of analysis included separate compilation of field/ reflective notes, cross reading of a sample of two workshops, discussion of inductively derived themes leading to analysis of the remaining workshops using the agreed themes and noting any further patterns. During the coding process, sub-themes were developed for larger themes. For the final set of codes see Appendix 26.

3.2.2 Ethos and atmosphere

From the outset, the welcome to Totleigh Barton was warm and authentic; **an invitational and supportive context for writing** was established. Mary, the centre manager's personal welcome set a relaxed informal tone. The physical layout of the barn, sofas, blankets and coffee tables also encouraged the teachers to relax and the tutors' manner and framing of writing activities created a calm yet focused context for writing. This was described by Beth as a '*shoes off atmosphere'* which she felt implied *'I'm staying here and I'm taking my shoes off and I'm relaxed in my writin*g'.

The sessions themselves, whilst 'led' by the tutors, were not dominated by them; their approachable styles sought to put the teachers at ease and create safe spaces for writing, with Steve noting '*writing is a process, you don't have to get it right first off…be kind to yourself'* and '*give yourself permission to play'.* Considerable teacher engagement and strong sense of focus and concentration on writing was observed, as Bridget noted:

> *I think by physically being in the room in itself, it sort of develops this kind of mood and atmosphere and pace that I wouldn't have if I were running [writing] on my own… I would find something that I liked and stick with it.*

This atmosphere was partly shaped by tutors and teachers openly sharing life experiences, these triggered affective involvement, laughter and empathetic affirmation. For instance when Steve noted '*there are three rules for a novel: conflict, conflict, and conflict'* and that '*conflict is the driver of narrative'*, Jacky observed '*with so much conflict it's like the Archers'* prompting much laughter. There were also moments of pathos when writing prompts triggered painful memories.

Specific support for sharing was evident; tutors were aware and respectful of any trepidation teachers might be feeling about composing and/or sharing writing. Alicia observed on Monday, '*For anyone at any age the experience of sharing writing can be like taking your clothes off in public – and sharing all your flabby bits'*. Tuesday's initial invitation to share was met with some nervousness, no pressure was applied. Nonetheless teachers may have felt 'obliged' by the context to share their writing. Many found this difficult: Ruth commented she felt herself *'going really red like being back at school again',* Tina that 'I *was hyperventilating at the thought of* sharing' and Karen '*I was only going [voicing] into the void of silence'.*

Tutors offered support through sometimes eschewing sharing, and sometimes inviting only sharing of lines, phrases, or themes. Frequently they left the sharing space open, no individuals were specifically invited. It was recognised that once shared, the writing became open to scrutiny. Tutors took the teachers and their writing seriously and nearly always offered affirmative feedback as well as constructive criticism. Over time trust built and a wider range of teachers more confidently read their writing aloud to tutors and their attentive peers.

3.2.3 Workshop pedagogy

The workshops provided structured space and time for the teachers to write, to be supported and encouraged and to learn about writing. Teachers were immersed in a world of writing in which reading texts, personal memories and freewriting took centre stage as pedagogic supports, alongside writing activities. In the process, tutors, often implicitly, shared their knowledge of the craft.

Reading and personal response were core to tutors' pedagogic practices. The re-voicing of written texts served to trigger memories which could be used for writing. Often teachers were encouraged to read the given texts as writers inspecting the craft of another writer and looking for clues about how to construct something similar. Occasionally there were direct imitative links to writing, more frequently themes or styles were focused upon across several texts. Discussion was central and often involved linking to life. The texts read were for adults and links were made to poets and authors regularly studied at GCSE / A level. Some text discussions appeared to be more like extended literary criticisms than preparation for writing. More secondary teachers joined in with these, and made a note of the names of writers mentioned. It may be that these teachers were looking for material to use in school and that they were more assured at analysing texts than their primary counterparts, some of whom reported feeling momentarily excluded from such discussions.

Strong personal connections were often prompted by texts. For example in Wednesday's workshop, Alicia focusing on clothes, drew upon experience of having owned an Ozzie Clarke dress, and linked this to the TV programme 'Don't Tell the Bride' which she acknowledged as a guilty pleasure '*it's always a control freak bride and a hapless groom!*'. Her comments were greeted raucous laughter and she made further observations on the resonance of clothes before reading 'Black Silk' by Tess Gallagher. A focused discussion followed in which she drew teachers' attention to particular lines and then, after making another personal connection, introduced a '*sexy clothes poem by Anne Sexton'*. Sally volunteered to read this and after brief

responses, Alicia read 'A Gentleman's Second-hand Suit' by Thomas Hardy. A writing activity followed:

> *Choose an item of clothing. I wrote about my mother's fur coat….Think of the five senses. When my friend's husband left her she wore his T-shirt to get the smell of him. You've got a quarter of an hour/ten minutes, then we'll do some feedback*.

The use of this trio of poems was typically both cumulative and open, offering diversity for making connections. The focus and response was immediate and afterwards every teacher read their drafts or opening lines: *'This skirt with its ruffled hem making me a girl'* (Paula); *'My wedding dress'* (Bridget, who noted: *I'm very nervous reading it*, but did so nonetheless); '*A Moss Green Fleece- A last resort without form or feature... A symbol of bitterness*' (Sally); '*I greet a box of childhood from the heaven of our house'* (Emily); '*A Raincoat- The January rain hangs heavy my mother said*' (Rosa). The standard of writing was high, a strong sense of personal loss was evident in many and Alicia observed '*These have been absolutely wonderful, sensual, detailed, open and honest. The barriers of self-editing are down'*.

Time to just write and trust what comes: freewriting

At the opening workshop, Steve stated '*we are going to be doing starting points to help us begin to find out what you want to write about'.* As a core part of this, freewriting was employed. Prompted by a supportive trigger, (a text, an object, an oral story, an activity), teachers were encouraged to write and capture their thoughts without self-censoring or editing. Both tutors employed this approach, neither referred to this explicitly as freewriting, writing by association or spontaneous writing.

An early example involved Steve commenting that they might '*expect some kind of muddle as you're gathering raw ingredients for cooking'* and offering a list including: *early morning; the storm; falling; the seashore; first kiss; winning; losing; embarrassment; beginnings; gone forever'*. He then invited the teachers to:

> *Write for ten minutes about one of these words. Choose one or find one is choosing you, trust what comes, try not to think too much, take ten minutes to write and keep your pencil moving. There will be no sharing or feeding back.*

During this time he did not write but all others- teachers, researchers, Alicia and Mary- did. Afterwards Steve talked about the value of generating writing and not self-censoring and that such writing is an exercise in finding out what you think, that '*it's not about value judgements'*, but is '*writing for its own sake'* and ' *can influence the way you write more freely'*.

The teachers did not appear to have experienced such short burst writing before, they wrote rapidly and silently, responding to the encouragement from tutors to *'[write] just what comes', 'Let things happen when you start to write,' 'Allow yourself to do it behind your back and dream it'* , *'Get past the editorial voice'* and *'Trust what comes'*. These kinds of comments emphasised writing without fear of failure or evaluation, being open to what might emerge, not planning, just writing. They sought to help teachers overcome any fear of the blank page, and avoid attending to their critical self-editing voices.

Freewriting tended to be used for generating ideas, although sometimes it was noted that such writing is a resource to return to - not an end in itself- but a means to an end. Two teachers did comment on having combined ideas from freewriting, but the extent to which the teachers' appreciated this writing as a resource is unknown. Their attention was perhaps understandably on composing and on taking ideas back to the classroom.

Principles underpinning the prompts for writing

Despite the emphasis afforded trusting oneself as a writer and the espousal of freewriting values, the extent to which teachers became aware of the principles underpinning the range of writing approaches employed is not known. No discussion or commentary was noted about the purpose of using poetry as a stimulus and combining several texts thematically, and no passing comments underscored the shift from the oral to the written. Teachers were left to draw their own conclusions about the importance of valuing talk. It is likely they did so since talking prior to writing is common in school, although whether they saw talk as part of the extended process of writing is unclear. It may have been the activities they engaged in were construed as simply '*tools for the toolbox'* in Steve's words, a teacher's resource not part of a writer's repertoire.

One principle that was recognised and commented upon by the teachers was the personal nature of much writing and its underlying connection to the writer and their life. They valued 'writing from the heart' through a personal lens, and sometimes recrafted this in third person. They not only related this to the prompts for writing, but also to the response of the reader and the writer's audience. For example Jackie observed:

> *…when they [the teachers] write something and present it you can just feel that there's an emotional pull that resonates with people. …it reaches out and connects with you to help you identify with that other person on a very human level. …other writing is good and there's a variety of vocabulary and you know, it's technically competent, but it's not emotionally charged if you like. You can almost see people, when someone's read it, they're like ooh, they kind of sit up and they're like oh yes I've got it, I understand what you're trying to say to me.*

Teachers often became highly invested in their more personal pieces of writing, as an act of personal reflection and identity exploration, and several commented that the week had been '*emotionally demanding', 'personally exhausting'* as well as '*exhilarating*' and '*rejuvenating'* in this regard. This principle was strongly grasped.

Craft knowledge sharing

Across the workshops, tutors' voiced their craft knowledge more implicitly than explicitly. However analysis of the field notes identified some messages embedded in conversations and comments. These included:

- discovering potential characters and plot lines from freewriting ;
- the need to attend to the writing process;
- the need for specific details to evoke feelings and ideas;
- the power of employing the senses to create strong images;
- the significance of creating contrasts;

- the redundancy of adverbs;
- the value of leaning on your own experiences and memories;
- the impact of changing the detail and thus a character's perspective;
- the difference between showing and telling.

Craft knowledge was made explicit on a few occasions. Steve examined the grammar of storytelling and offered the example of The Hero's Journey, modelling this and making connections to Narnia and Billy Elliott. He shared different structures and story grammars and sought to reveal the nature of '*progressive complications*' about which he observed '*you'll have absorbed storytelling by osmosis'.* He also focused on the difference between showing and telling, noting '*As Chekhov said: 'Show me the glint of light in a broken glass. Don't tell me the moon was shining.' So we need to change the detail, change the perspective'*. He invited the group to '*Describe a barn from the point of view of a man who has lost his son in the war. You are not allowed to mention the man or the son'.* Several were read, including Karen's:

> *The bridle was hanging in its usual spot, but the stall beside it was empty and still. Old straw filled the corners compacted down in the mud, a few gold strands poked out of the top of the pile, a small rat nibbled at them contentedly, a shadow of dust had settled around a redundant crop, jars of half used wax lay open and a suffocated wasp, legs up, nestled tenderly in the indentation recently made.*

The discussion that ensued included attention to Karen's use of '*redundant crop',* and the sense her work conveyed of *'something recently gone', 'of emptiness and a kind of melancholy in the tone'* and the *'the contrast with the contented rat*'. This exercise, dedicated to exemplifying showing not telling was attended to more fully and overtly than other aspects of craft knowledge, nonetheless, in moving on whilst Steve noted '*it's a strong thing to do'* he did not re-emphasise the term. It is possible this oriented the teachers to view it as an 'activity' and directed their attention away from the underlying knowledge and skill being exemplified.

Feedback and commentary

In the open forum of the workshops, tutor and peer feedback was public. It was sometimes used to summarise the effect of a writing exercise or the writing quality of the whole group, for example Alicia observed '*I just thought those were really good. They're using an abstract noun and that's a very useful way sometimes if you're thinking about a character'.* Tutors offered focused comments which demonstrated their responses as a writer to: key features ('*lovely verbs'*), to a writer's particular skill ('*To be honest you're good at those last lines*'), to the overall text ('*Lovely dramatic monologue*'), and as a reader to the subject matter ('*I'll never look at limpets the same way again*!'). More detailed observations were noted later in the week and tended to involve the group in commenting also.

> Sally: Mine's called Loss. *There is nothing to do with it. Not the sound of the car, a scratchy rug, footfalls on the gravel, quietly placed Tupperware, wait to start the engine. Peel away the salty pillow wet and cold, repeat a script, repeat the day, repeat a memory, repeat. There is nothing to do with it.*

Alicia: That's very good. I particularly like that ending, the repeat. And interestingly in the adultery poem by Carol Ann Duffy she talks about the script, you know, and obviously the adulterous person has decided on. And that's also true of loss isn't it, that people kind of say what they think they ought to say as it were. And that's very cleverly put in at the end. And I like your imperatives, wait, peel, you know. Anybody else got anything to say about that?

Ann: I like the repeats too.

Vicky: I like there's nothing to do with it. You can't do anything about it, it's just there. There's literally nothing one can do, no one can make it any better by doing anything.

Not all feedback was positive, although the majority was. Tutors also asked questions, made sensitive suggestions and added qualifications to their praise. Constructive commentary emerged in a parallel manner to that given to the published work discussed. For example,

Perhaps lose the jigsaw. It might be too much. Maybe the stone you have is enough.

What is the melody? Do you have a sense of it? Is there a piece of music you could name?

What flower do you see? [Daisies] –'Well I would put that. It's more visual and easy to imagine.

You don't need 'passionate' and 'calm' because the sunrise does that for you.

…sometimes there can be slight confusion about what did and didn't happen, it works well until the ending

You're talking about beauty aren't you and sort of muted so you don't need to say with happiness and positivity as the image speaks for it.

I wonder about whether you need like a magnet, or whether like a magnet might be better at the beginning. I don't know.

Implicit feedback was also offered, for example when Steve selected one line from each of the teachers' poems and combined these into a group poem, although no explanation was offered of his choices. There was also silent feedback when tutor's responses were conveyed para-linguistically. Mostly this was open, with tutors leaning towards the teacher reading, very occasionally this was less welcoming.

Some teachers reacted with unease and discomfort when no comment was offered or to any critique, however well phrased. Whilst they had entered into an implicit contract by participating, most were very sensitive about their writing. Two reacted against a given critique, one by including more rhymes as a consequence of a comment that her rhymes sounded unintentionally humorous and naïve. Gradually as the week progressed the teachers became more assured in receiving and offering feedback. When commenting on each other's writing they almost entirely positive, selecting and voicing elements that they valued.

3.2.4 Writer identity

Teachers were positioned as writers and adopted the role of writer in this community of writers. The centre director, Mary positioned the teachers as members of a community of writers from the outset: 'I *know you'll develop your creativity as we hand over the centre to you. You are the community of writers here'*. She emphasised '*It's a special place for writers and has been for almost 50 years*'. This sense of being recognised as writers was also stressed by the tutors, one of whom acknowledged '*The pupils will be on your mind, but I encourage you to focus on writing',* whilst another noted '*This is not an INSET it's a chance to experiment and not worry. You're here to find out the kind of writer you are'*. Additionally, the way Mary joined the group on several occasions to write underscored this sense of community.

In the workshops teachers were positioned as writers which several noted helped their self-identification as writers, Sally noted:

> *I think the open tasks we did in the workshops kind of helped me to reverse that, I can identify myself as a writer because there I haven't been given a specific task and I am writing. … I think it's having that group setting where we're part of a community of writers, I then feel that I'm a writer myself and that then kind of gives me the impetus, the sort of kick up the backside that I can then identify myself as a writer in that setting and therefore I can take my identity as a writer with me when I'm writing in other places.*

Tutors inculcated teachers into membership of a wider community of writers through reading the work of published writers and making recommendations. The range of references to and anecdotes about writers included: Ted Hughes, Grayson Perry, Sam Willetts, Graham Mort, Michael Laskey, Stephen Dobyns, Stephen Knight, Nina Cassian, Tess Gallagher, Raymond Carver, Gordon Lish, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, Thomas Hardy, Angela Carter, Chekhov, Emily Dickinson, and E. B. White. This informal connection making to individual writers involved passing on contextualised knowledge about the wider world of writing. Cumulatively it implied that poems and stories are created by normal people 'just like us'. Tutors invited participants into this world via such comments.

Tutors positioned themselves as writers alongside teachers and early on reflected upon their journeys as writers. In offering this personal stance tutors demonstrated they had not always been writers and had encountered their own '*brick walls'* and found ways to circumnavigate these, as '*you don't have to get it right first* time'. Alicia explained that bringing a school group to Arvon had given her '*the confidence to write'*. Both tutors revealed a great deal about themselves, and shared personal anecdotes which they drew on as writers. This openness may have triggered a degree of openness on the part of the teachers, to their own lives, families and memories. As Alicia commented '*It's all about valuing our experience, what has happened to us and what we believe, even if it is a little pencil, the history of it can make a difference'*. Steve modelled a piece of writing spontaneously, thinking aloud as he did so and committing the bones of his narrative to the flip chart for discussion. Furthermore many of the tutors' passing comments indicated that they saw themselves as fellow writers working alongside the teachers, not as 'experts' teaching 'novices'. The non-hierarchical positioning of the tutors was recognised and noted by several teachers, as Sally said:

> *I didn't get the impression that this was 'Oh we're the writers and we're standing on a pedestal facilitating you.' It was very much more the on a human level as writers being in the room on a level playing field.*

Teachers were positioned or positioned themselves as teachers of writing. As an ex-head and ex-secondary school teacher, both tutors recognised and made reference to the world of schooling, although the extent to which classroom connections were made varied. Steve focused rather more on this and often connected workshops to the teachers' work in school, positioning them through his comments as teachers of writing. He made it clear that his ideas were all adaptable to the classroom: '*This is a very good exercise to do with children. Very good for anchoring those abstract emotions into a physical reality', 'We need to try to help children to be playful with language in small bursts',* as well as '*Say to children: 'What do you want to be the problem?' It's a good way of getting them in'.* Alicia made slightly less of the potential for classroom transfer although she referred to her teaching experiences: '*The tone of these [animal] poems is great fun to emulate. Last time I did this with a class there was a really annoying boy who chose to write in the voice of a fly –and he was really annoying!* (laughter) *Choose your soul-animal'*. In this way she demonstrated her recognition of the work roles the teachers held.

Sometimes teachers' positioned themselves overtly as pedagogues, with comments such as *'Sorry this is back to teaching but…'* and during breaks they very often discussed classroom application of activities and texts shared. Both writerly and teacherly identities were enacted at different times in workshops. For many, their teacher identity was dominant, a lens through which to engage:

> *…it's almost like you can't turn off the teacher in the head, like ooh we're trying this, ooh this would work really well with Year 10, … or ooh I'm realising that it's taking me more time to come up with ideas than I thought it would; I can understand how those poor Year 8s feel ….Yeah so I was doing a lot of thinking about teaching whilst I was in there.*

3.3 Arvon tutorials

3.3.1 Process of analysis

This analysis is drawn from the 30 one-to-one tutorials (20-25 minutes), which took place during the afternoons, one with each tutor. All but two were observed and audio recorded in the snug or the 'pod' in the grounds. Teachers chose what to share during these sessions. Most brought handwritten compositions, others work on laptops. The data set comprised transcripts of the tutorials, field notes and supplementary photographs. Both researchers worked inductively, identifying themes and patterns from this sample. During coding, sub-themes were developed and new codes created. The final set of codes is offered in Appendix 26.

3.3.2 Ethos and atmosphere

Initially the opportunity to share their writing in tutorials caused some teachers' **discomfort**; a few held back from so doing, either by not bringing any writing or sitting at a distance from the tutor and seeking to distract them by talking about classroom-focused issues. These avoidance strategies appeared to relate to a lack of confidence, anxiety about spelling and a fear of judgment, all of which may have been exacerbated by a researcher's presence. Gradually however a subtle shift was observed and the anxious writers relaxed enough to share their writing.

This shift was in part due to the **relaxed invitational and supportive tutorial context,** the warm welcome, marked sensitivity to their feelings, the language used and the clear and sustained emphasis that all authorial choices lay with the writer. Tutors emphasised '*What you do with my advice is entirely up to you'* and asking for example '*What have you got that you might wish to show me*?' This kind of opener was common and made it clear whilst agency and control remained with the writer, the focus of the tutorial was on the writing. Tutors also positioned themselves to increase informality and reduce any perceived sense of authority, they also employed early affirmation and praise.

Tutors engaged both professionally, as experienced writers and personally with each teacher as another human and writer. A strong sense of camaraderie was often evident and warm respectful relationships, some of which had an almost intimate quality, were observed. A sense of physical closeness was also documented. At the centre of the tutorial was the writing, passed from teacher to tutor, and then attentively and often intensely pored over together. Teachers often commented they had drawn on personal experience and written 'from the heart', as Paula noted about a piece of her writing:

> '*It's quite personal, it's me having a relief in my life and all the different things that have been constricted for so long, ... it's just - I think - it's me'*.

Personal memories that emerged in the workshops were revisited in tutorials. Some were painful, including broken relationships and marriages, the death of loved ones, moving house and bullying. Others were more positive, including pregnancy, weddings, family events and friendships. Retelling and reflecting upon such experiences in the tutorials was common, triggered by open questions from tutors who sought to understand more in order to help writers effectively capture the event: '*You know about it so well you can describe it*'. Tutors also responded with reciprocally, sharing their own examples, this served to build relationships and enabled them to express their solidarity with the teacher-writers.

The structure of the tutorials oscillated between focused attention on the writing itself (its construction, form and language), and a more wide ranging discussion about the subject matter (and where appropriate the life experience underpinning this). Genuine interest in the content of the writing was always evidenced which further framed the sessions as characterised by the tutor's interest in the writing *and* the writer. For example in discussing Molly's snail poem, a tutor observed '*I don't want him [the snail] squashed'* and appeared surprised by the retort '*You know that's going to happen'*, to which she replied with a sigh, '*I*

didn't actually. I didn't oh that's a shame'. Her investment in the voice and persona of the snail was clear, as was her valuing of the writer's skill: 'Y*ou should have more confidence in your ability to write and what you choose to write*'. In this and many other instances, the impact of tutors' language and personal response to the writer and their writing served to support the teacher- writers' affective engagement.

One of the **central principles about writing** voiced was that the tutors wanted the writers to see themselves as readers first. *If people don't read a lo*t, one warned '*it's very hard for them to get those kind of nuances of language and rhythm*'. Another noted:

> *If you read enough you know you'll absorb some of the kind of structures and understanding. Try and read them as a writer rather than just as a reader. Think to yourself how are they doing that, how have they structured those chapters, what point of view are they using, how are they getting that voice to be interesting?*

Recognition of the power of language was also implicit in the tutors' examination of the teachers' word choices, punctuation, and deployment of adjectives and adverbs. The recursive nature of the writing process was also implicitly referred to as an underpinning principle.

3.3.3 Writer identity

The teachers were invited to position themselves as writers and were positioned as writers by the tutors. The observational evidence indicates that during tutorials after some initial reticence on the part of some, the majority of the teachers constructed and figured writerly roles for themselves. Their writing was read with interest and respect; it was taken seriously and responded to with commitment. Their authorial agency was upheld, even when marks were made directly onto their writing. For instance following a brief interchange about whether the expression '*My knees were shaking'* was appropriate, a teacher noted '*I guess I could - yeah I'll change it.*' , to which the tutor immediately replied *'No you don't have to you completely don't have to it's just I was imagining if you're on them (her knees)'*. Both tutors demonstrated they valued their authorial agency and made links to their own experience, emphasising that as authors the teachers would need to select what suggestions to accept, adapt or reject. As one teacher observed '*his comments always feel very open and not really, well, you know, it's more sort of a 'could', or a 'would', rather than a 'need to'*.' Additionally the closing conversation in many sessions focused on what teacher-authors saw as the next steps for their writing: '*What are you going to do with all this then?', 'Which one are you thinking you might work on', 'What next, are you going to try something else*?'

In some exchanges teachers appeared to reject the position of writer being offered, for example one observed '*well I don't do myself as a writer'* seeking to explain this with '*I don't have the language other people have got'* and ''*I don't understand poems and I had a good day yesterday but today nothings worked for me'*. The supportive reply was immediate '*Ah well it can't be good every day, don't beat yourself up about it'*. Later the tutor also observed '*you need to give yourself permission to recognise what you're capable of'.* Throughout this interaction the tutor persisted in viewing the teacher as a writer, this, combined with other

experiences, had positive consequences on her gradual acknowledgment and performance of herself as a writer on the last night.

Both tutors made connections to the work of professional writers, in effect **positioning the teachers alongside them as members of a wider community of writers.** One did this very frequently, often connecting to a theme resonant in a teacher's writing and honouring the teacher by moving from their work to that of published poets. Some of the referencing to the wider community was not content or theme related but connected to other elements like punctuation. In addition, both tutors drew on the advice of the visiting author Narinder Dhami affirming her key messages that writing is '*a job like any other*', that '*you never stop learning*', and are '*never totally satisfied*'.

Tutors also positioned themselves as writers alongside the teachers. At points they highlighted their own challenges, with one noting 'my *first drafts are like me practising, it's me learning to find my voice'.* They were open about their own writing processes. This came across as passing on tips from one professional to another.

> *What I often find that by the time I've finished the novel or the book that I find that the chapters that I wrote at the beginning are no longer relevant. You have a different starting point, you can re-write. Often my first chapter is the last thing that I write.*

The tutors not only positioned the teachers as writers, members and apprentices to the writing community, they also positioned themselves as editors, advisers, and interested readers. Many **teachers also positioned the tutors as editors** in the tutorials and one tutor in particular adopted this role, focusing on meaning, language and punctuation which the teachers valued. **Teachers sometimes also positioned the tutors as personal writing advisers** and asked for specific assistance, particularly towards the end of the week when trying to select a piece for the anthology. At other times teachers invited advice when reviewing *'This was the one section of it all that I felt jarred with the rest of the poem and I'm not sure….'* In these contexts the tutors first sought to clarify and praise then offered multiple possibilities.

3.3.4 Support and feedback

Tutors often gave the teachers **support for the social and emotional challenges of writing**, especially at the beginning of the week, when morale for some was lower. Support was strong, individually responsive and reassuring; with tutors noting that 'the *whole point about this is to try lots of different things and to fail sometimes. and 'it's a process, it emerges and doesn't come out whole- as you know'.* When Molly spoke of her deep anxiety that she was about to get 'found out' both as a teacher and writer, the tutor used her writing to reassure her.

> *Sometimes when you are too close to it you worry about it and you can't appreciate the good things about it. One of the things that I noticed is that it's got a very strong sense of rhythm. You probably felt it when I was reading it: 'The elders knew a time when springtime blossomed and the world sprang into life' has got a lovely kind of rhythm to it. '.But the young knew only the icy chill of winter. Birds and life buried under layer upon layer of white.' What you're doing with the language there is you're kind of building up that snow, you can almost feel the layers. So I think you are being very hard with yourself.*

… It's very common to most writers that they think 'I'm going to get found out in a minute'.

Tutors also gave teachers **support with the cognitive demands of writing,** helping them to think about their writing from the point of view of an imagined audience. On other occasions tutors used a tactic of asking them what they would change about a piece, and encouraged them to make their own suggestions. A subtle balance between tutors' upholding the author's agency and view and offering their own view in order to support development was evident in most tutorials.

Tutors' subject knowledge was contextualised by and mediated through the presence of a work in progress, and thus a **focus on revision was evident**. This often referred to editorial incisions, making reductions and 'showing not telling'. The idea that good writing gives the reader a direct experience of the emotion or experience involved through visual and other sensory detail was stressed.

Tutors spoke of **cutting extraneous information, vocabulary or punctuation**, '*Adverbs you can get rid of forever… more or less'* and *'you could cut this whole section and move straight to the action'.* The following tutorial exchange offers an example of a tutorial in action. The whole exchange was a kind of performance, with back and forth repetition, reading out, questioning and explanation, resulting in a finished product that was read aloud. In this way both teacher and tutor co-constructed the final version, yet the ownership remained with the author.

Alicia: *Oh I love this '*I could have been a beam. I looked up in the barn I was looking at the firewood that I had and then all of a sudden I just looked up and I was like oh my gosh the dreams of a plank of wood'. *I really like this. '*You saw the potential in me, warmth and comfort, you drew me from the pile recognising the smoother more pliant side hidden by a armour of rough bumps and jagged edges'. *I don't think you want 'warmth and comfort' there.*

Ellie: *Ok.*

Alicia: *'You saw the potential in me, you drew me from the pile recognising', you know so we don't need to know what the potential is right now because what's important is that the person lighting the fire saw the other side of them. You know the 'pliant' is lovely actually and 'jagged' is a great word.*

Ellie: *Well I was just looking at it, when you said to describe the object, I had this chunk, and on one side it was really rough and then on the other side it was smooth, and then on one of the bottom edges it was almost furry.*

Alicia: *Oh right yeah.*

Ellie: *Whilst the other side it was splintery and prickly. There were different sides to it. That's almost like a person you know when you think about it. There's the jagged side of protection and then there's the smoother, fluffier side that we hide.*

Alicia: *I don't think you need 'and' they went first, too easily it seemed, I burned for you'. I love that – 'bending and curling'. I would put 'to' down here 'to your will'. It's quite*

(chuckles)… I don't think you need 'so faithfully' just 'as you tended me' which is really nice. I wonder about that. I wonder whether that's not you coming, the poet coming in and saying 'You need to know this' and I think actually that the line that the stanza break works anyway – 'where you tended me, too late I remembered myself'. I think we need the past tense there – 'I remembered myself, as I wither away to nothing, consumed entirely by you, I remember the dream.' I don't think you need the 'could have been' – 'I remember the dream.'

Ellie: 'Could have been a beam'

LAUGHTER

Alicia: I love it 'from part of a sturdy structure, built to last to endure, now I see the truth you split me in two when I wasn't looking, my […] reduced to half-moons, waning in the embers.' I would stop there I don't think you need that.

Ellie: I wondered about that as I…

Alicia: That's lovely it's lovely it's a really you know …

You saw the potential in me
You drew me from the pile recognising the smoother more pliant side
Hidden by an armour of rough bumps and jagged edges
They went first too easily it seems
I burned for you
bending and curling to your will
Your desire, succumbing to every stroke of the flames
Ignited by just one spark
You basked in my heat
My beauty my contentment I bestowed so freely
I glowed humming as you tended me
Too late I remembered myself
As I wither away to nothing
Consumed entirely by you
I remember the dream
I could have been a beam
Formed part

Alicia: I don't think you need 'formed'

Part of the sturdy structure built to last
To endure, now I see the truth
You split me in two when I wasn't looking
My golden rings reduced to half-moons
Waning in the embers.'

Alicia: Gorgeous.

Ellie: Does it make sense though?

Alicia: Yes it does. It's terribly sad (laughs).

Ellie: *I haven't ever had that happen to me. I just looked at this bit of firewood, and like I say I was looking at it, and the shapes and everything, and then I looked up at this beam and I was like you know that's built something and then that's going to be just completely demolished in fire and I thought well there's some relationships that are like that.*

Alicia: *Yes, absolutely, I mean that. I think you've done that really well.*

This was the piece Ellie selected to read on the final evening and placed in the anthology.

3.4 Time and space to write

Outside the workshops, tutorials, and cooking duties teachers were free to use the time and space as they wished (20 hours across the week). They could walk, sleep, read, daydream, talk or continue to write. The data set analysed here comprises end-of-Arvon interviews, field notes and written reflections from the pedagogy session and the 12 audio diaries.

Several teachers identified that having an extended time and space in which to write was highly significant for them. For one '*the lack of Wi-Fi*' made a real difference to her ability to concentrate. Others, whilst valuing this freedom from distraction, more explicitly used **time as a strategic resource** and noted their own patterns and rhythms as writers, for example with periods of writing, followed by much slower periods of free time, during which earlier drafts might be edited or rewritten. Teachers perceived their patterns were influenced by the balance of time at Arvon, and valued the chance to '*write how you like, wherever you like, whatever you like*'. Several commented the loose, but structured space and time, away from personal and professional pressures, helped them focus on their writing.

> *…having that mixture of 'Right, now you've got a really specific amount of time and you really need to write', and then producing loads in that short amount of time to give you something to look at in your freer time, I think that was really interesting.*

On another occasion the same teacher gave herself '*considerably more time than usual to redraft and edit*' a piece and found as she took her time, a new and clearer shape to her writing emerged, she noted '*Normally I would have given myself way longer to do the writing to start with and then have a little bit of time for editing*'. For her shifting the balance from planning to revision was valuable.

Teachers commonly noted that the lack of pressure to write a set piece in a set time contrasted markedly with school writing '*we pressure pupils in school but at Arvon there was no pressure except that you put on yourself*.' Links were made between their own agency as adult writers, their use of the available time to develop their writing and their students' lack of space and time to develop theirs.

Teachers also used the available **space for their own agentic purposes as writers**, in response to mood, need and each other. One noted the key spaces were the communal workshops, others the opportunity to be elsewhere in potentially more private spaces. '*So if I wasn't*

working, writing, sitting in my bedroom, then I could come down, go for a walk, or sit somewhere else and change the space'. Many teachers used their free time to walk and talk, this became a way of processing writing that was emerging:

> *… when we've been out for walks, we've talked through our poems and stories… And when I've come back, I've sat down and then just scribbled away all the things that we've talked about and all the things that went through my mind.*

This resonates with the professional writers' reported need for 'mulling time' (see Chapter 8; time away from the desk, but where the challenges of writing nevertheless come to the fore and are processed.

3.5 Teachers' intended pedagogical consequences

This data set comprises end- of-Arvon interviews, teachers' written reflections and observation of the pedagogy session. The inductively derived themes are noted in Appendix 26.

In their interviews all but two teachers mentioned they planned to create space for **'Just Writing';** informal burst /free writing which they experienced it at Arvon. Especially for the primary teachers this involved creating dedicated '*Just Write'*/'*Hear my Voice*' books. They saw these as an opportunity for young writers to '*develop the ideas they want to'*, '*explore their thinking'*, and '*play with language'*. Some expected they would not assess such writing, '*I won't write in [them] unless they want me to'*. Many noted this would be in contrast to current provision and would '*take the pressure off'* the children, enabling them to '*experiment with one's imagination and move beyond the constraints of the NC and pupil tracker'*. Professional eagerness to **borrow from the Arvon freewriting activities** was evident**,** *'because everything we've done you can do in classroom',* although teachers were conscious of the barriers, particularly the pressure to improve outcomes and maintaining high presentation.

Additionally teachers planned to offer **students' increased autonomy as writers**. This often related to freewriting, offering more choice, directing students' writing less and applying less evaluative pressure. Specifically, freewriting opportunities were planned '*to create a body of work and choose which pieces they would like to revise and edit',* and '*to work on the bigger picture (creativity, enjoyment, purpose)*'. One observed she wanted to give '*more time for thinking and spend less time chivvying',* and planned to hold back more as '*being stuck and working your way out of it yourself is a vital skill to learn'*. Several teachers linked increased autonomy to creativity and saw this in opposition to what was described as the '*technical side'* of writing. Whilst commonly viewed as a '*harder option'*, increasing writer agency and space '*for personal writing rather than teacher–led* writing' was seen to be worth pursuing.

Some teachers intended to **profile revision and supportive feedback** and reduce the time spent planning; a *'previous emphasis on the preplanning'* appeared to be being replaced by a focus on '*revise and revise again'*. Peer marking and editing in groups was mentioned by a few secondary practitioners, as was increasing attention to sensitive feedback.

Teachers commonly intended to **pay more attention to the young writers as authors** - with *'ideas that they need time to develop*', '*as writers, not just pupils'*, and '*as writers with a voice we're not really listening to at present'*. Some, mainly those from the primary phase, also planned to '*write alongside them and experience the same st*ruggles'. This was seen as a new practice which involved seeking to develop 'a *community of writers*, 'a writing *collaborative'* and '*spending more time developing writers rather than teaching writing.* As one noted

> *I'm taking back what it feels like to be a writer I think and how hard that can be and what you can do if you're stuck. …and it doesn't have to be perfect. It's the enjoyment of creating it… But it's not going to be an overnight job is it? …I think we're going to have to build that culture of actually 'we're writers' in here. We're not doing writing or having writing done to us.*

3.6 Discussion

The observational evidence, transcribed tutorials, and teachers' audio diaries and interviews collectively indicate a high degree of personal and professional engagement in the Arvon residential week on the part of teachers and tutors. The ethos and atmosphere was documented and experienced as informal and relaxed, conducive to focusing upon writing and was supported by the strategies and readings offered in the workshops, time and space to write and attention the texts produced both in tutorials and the opportunities for sharing.. A communal space for thinking, generating ideas, writing, hearing the work of professional writers, and sharing writing was constructed. A sense of community emerged which was commented upon by the teachers.

The workshop pedagogy was characterised by reading and response, by free writing and by a strongly personal stance on the part of the tutors, this often led to teachers connecting to their lives and writing from first-hand experience (although not always in first person). Teachers reported that few of them had experienced such unstructured time to write and that in their classrooms a space for 'just writing' and making choices about what students might write was not common practice. Many voiced the intention to offer this experience to students following the residential. Surprisingly perhaps the tutors did not name or label the writing as 'freewriting' or 'writing by association' and whilst in the workshops they sometimes connected to features of the craft of writing this was mainly implicitly.

Tutorials were highly focused on both the writer and their writing and were conversational in nature, contexts where the tutors' sought more detail about the author's intentions or previous experience which connected to the writing. In these contexts the tutors shared their craft knowledge of writing in order to support the process of revision. Feedback was not objective-focused and sought to explore the author's intentions for each piece. Comments were supportive, constructively critical and also related to the cognitive and emotional demands of writing. Despite this, the experience of receiving feedback in workshops or

tutorials was not neutral. Initial discomfort was evidenced and sharing writing was a challenge for many teachers, but gradually their assurance increased.

Teachers were positioned by tutors' in both workshops and tutorials as writers, and members of a wider community of writers, at times they adopted the role position as writers. At other times their roles as teachers were invoked and discussed and their teacher identities came to the fore. The teachers' identity positions were fluid at Arvon and shifted moment to moment in interaction with the tutors and their writing. Teachers identified pedagogical practices and approaches that they intended to develop post Arvon, although none named literally establishing workshops or tutorials, they commonly voiced the intention to offer burst writing activities and time to 'Just Write' which they perceived contrasted with their current practice that was described as both more teacher-led and teacher-directed. In addition, teachers intended to offer increased choice and attend to learners' creativity and 'rights' as writers /authors which they perceived were absent or limited within their current practice. Some also planned to profile revision on their return to school.

At Mum's

Concrete back yard,

Leading to a flimsy wooden door, the outside toilet,

High level wrought iron cistern and heavy clanking chain,

Above a cracked porcelain pan.

Carpet ends covering vinyl flooring,

Green thermos flask for the day's hot water,

Pretty blue, bone china mug filled with strong sweet coffee,

Magnolia wood chip,

Pale yellow primroses in a delicate Dartington vase,

Curling photos of grandchildren huddle on the mantelpiece,

Two flowery, beige, high-backed arm chairs,

Bulky, luke-warm storage heaters,

A brown leather pouf patched with sticky tape,

A shiny new iPad resting on the clean windowsill.

Rosa

Chapter 4: Teachers' identities as teachers and writers

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the evidence gathered in respect of teachers' identities. While teacher identity was a persistent feature, identity as a writer changed and developed over the project period. The chapter uses evidence from full sets (16) of interviews conducted before the teachers' involvement had begun, and at the end of the Arvon residential week, and from a partial set (8) conducted late in the term after the co-taught unit. The first two sets of interviews (32) provide the main data for this chapter, while the final interviews offer evidence of how changes had been sustained.

This analysis draws in particular on two of the project constructs explored in the initial and post-Arvon interviews: writer identity and teacher identity. The final interviews focused on how the experience of participation had impacted on teachers' continuing identity.

4.2 Process of analysis

The first two sets of interviews were coded according to the inductive principle, with open coding brought to manageable sets of agreed codes through a process which began by researchers separately coding selected transcripts and continued through a series of meetings in which the meaning, number and extent of codes was agreed. Whilst there are similarities between the two sets of codes, because of their inductive origins and the difference between interview schedules the sets are distinct. The final set of interviews was coded by a single researcher with codes again developed inductively. Again there were similarities and differences in comparison with the other two sets of codes. Details of the relevant coding are given in each section of this chapter.

Given the interrelatedness of codes, the degree of overlap and double coding, emerging differences in the significance of different categories of evidence and the sheer quantity of data, the findings here are presented in an integrated way. Additionally, some categories of data are not presented. For example, data gathered and coded about teachers' personal history as a writer is not explored.

4.3 Writer identity (pre-engagement)

Code		Sources	References
1.Writer identity		14	143
b.	Identity in the text	9	16
b1.	Ownership	8	17
b2.	Voice	5	9
c.	Conceptions of writers	15	78
c1	Conceptions of writing (e.g. art or science)	15	115
c2.	Personal practices -routines	15	93
c3.	Sense of self as a reader	15	47
d.	Interplay between teacher and writer identities	15	82

4.3.1 Acknowledging a writer identity

Of the 16 teachers interviewed at the start of the project, only seven said or implied that they considered themselves to be a writer. The same number stated clearly that they did not consider themselves to be one and of the remaining two, one avoided answering and the other was not asked the question directly.

Teachers gave a variety of reasons for not claiming a writer identity. A common reason given was that they never wrote (something which was never true), or would never choose to write. Validation by an audience, great or small was an important criterion for some:
'I think it's a big identity thing to say "I am a writer". It sort of seems like that has to be told by somebody else'. (Vicky). In contrast, Beth considered a text to be 'real' writing, only if it is principally intended just the writer herself. In a similar vein, Karen valued *'writing about things that are really significant to me.'*

Although (not surprisingly) all the teachers talked about writing regularly for professional and personal reasons, several felt they could not count themselves a writers because, like Sally, they felt their writing was not creative: *'I suppose I think about what I'm writing and try and communicate it clearly, but in my mind it's very separate to something creative that I would produce myself.'*

After listing several kinds of academic writing she had done, Molly concluded with *'So it wasn't kind of creative writing'*. Molly expressly excluded herself from writer status because, *'the writing I do now, the purpose of it, it's not writing for me, it's not writing for any sort of creative purpose'*.

Perhaps related to this high estimation of creative writing is the lower valuation of other genres, because the writing is done for some purpose other than its own sake. Non-creative purposes for writing cited include family and domestic activities, the personal (*e.g.* diaries) and the professional.

Some used 'writing for pleasure' as a sign of being a real writer –usually to disbar themselves. Others felt that writers are special*: 'only some people can do this and you're not one of them'* (Vicky). Although *'some people have an innate affinity with words and writing'* (Ann), for Tina, *'Words do not come easy to me. To speak them they do, but writing, no.'*

4.3.2 Teachers on the edge of writerhood

Being a declared non-writer does not mean a person does not write or get pleasure from writing. Many talked of enjoying writing at school or at other times in the past. For example, Emily rediscovered a love of writing poetry during her PGCE year. Several emphasised the personal importance of creative writing. For most of the teachers, however it appeared that while the claim to be a writer would be much too grandiose for them to contemplate, they nonetheless do a lot of writing for various, not always practical, purposes.

Bridget, who had declared very firmly that she did not consider herself to be a writer went on to reveal *'I do have snippets and bits and pieces, I've written a short novel'.* The teachers overwhelmingly revealed themselves to be comfortable with many aspects of doing writing. Rosa for example, who had said she was definitely not a writer, talked about leaving a text that *'isn't quite flowing'* until after a few days of *'churn[ing] it over in my mind'* returning to make substantial changes. This suggests quite a degree of sophistication. In fact, none of the teachers showed any hesitation or any difficulty in describing their personal writing process in detail.

The act of crafting a text may also confer pleasure. Emily spoke, for example, of the satisfaction of constructing an argument from a number of sources, while Vicky loved *'organising my thoughts on the page or the computer or whatever'*. She added that *'you really do go deep into something and find your way through'* and that this was both *'a challenge'* and *'fun'*. Karen saw writing as contributing to *'mental wellbeing'.*

Several teachers reported having kept journals, diaries or blogs and spoke about their texts as in some way personal, or 'self-expression'. According to Emily, *'if you write a diary, it's* my *way of writing a diary.'* She also saw such personal writing as a way to *'articulate your feelings'.* For Beth, the inclusion of *'personal thoughts'* had enabled her to enjoy her academic writing as a student. Molly believed writing enabled her to present an alternative identity:

'You know, if you talk to me, you might think I was a completely different person than if I'd written something down.'

Despite all the teachers' obvious facility with writing and an apparent sense of power and ownership, many appear to position themselves as only on the edge of 'writerhood'. In the words of Bridget: *'I've been in a nice sort of way kind of a pipe dream writer in the sense that I've sort of dabbled and done little bits and pieces and started stories and got ideas but never really followed them through'.*

Several spoke of their aspiration to be a writer, and of belief in their potential to be a writer. A few of the teachers talked about returning to writing, or rediscovering a love of writing, perhaps through joining a class or a self-help group.

4.4 Teacher identity (pre-engagement)

Code		Sources	References
d.	Interplay between teacher and writer identities	15	82
2.	**Teacher identity**	14	60
a.	Identity as a writer in school	13	55

4.4.1 Teacher first

The evidence of the pre-intervention interviews is that teachers saw themselves primarily as teachers, with writing generally appearing peripheral to personal identity. In contrast, the strength of most teacher identities was apparent in much of what participants said. Although it has been suggested above that a ready ability to explain one's own approach to writing is a sign of at least a latent writer identity, the routine experience of explaining the process to students must also be a factor.

All the teachers appeared very comfortable with their teacher persona, and some claimed or implied a vocation. All talked readily about the principles that underlie their teaching, for example the drive to develop children's love for learning, to impart valuable skills for life or to enable social mobility.

4.4.2 Writing as a teacher

All talked about the writing they did as part of their job, and for many this seemed to be the major reason for them to write. Several talked, for example of the care they took in drafting reports on students, crafting the text *'trying to sum up that child in a paragraph'* (Molly) and with an eye on the audience. Some wrote their own texts for use in the classroom.

Most professed an enjoyment of teaching writing and many referred to synergies between writing and teaching, *e.g. 'when I'm thinking about teaching it I'm thinking about how I would do it as a writer'* (Molly), and only Ann reflected that *'the funny thing about teaching is you actually have no time to read or write'.*

Despite not seeing themselves as writers, many expressed confidence in their ability to act as authorities for the purpose of teaching, with some willing to offer their own writing as a model and as a motivator *'it made me realise just how much they value seeing something that*

you've worked on'. (Karen). Charlotte is realistic about the authenticity of such representations of oneself as a writer:*'… there are certain behaviours that I suppose we try to encourage in the children that would be good ….. that are possibly not habits that I necessarily developed over the course of my writing.'*

Rosa suggested that her own discomfort with writing helps her to empathise with young writers:

> *writing didn't come as a very natural thing to me, and so I think that helps me ….to understand the kind of thoughts and processes and feelings that some of the children might be going through.*

4.5 Writer identity post-engagement

This section is based on the 16 interviews conducted at the end of the residential week and coded as follows.

Code	**Sources**	**References**
Writer identity	8	109
Community of writers	15	73
Conception of self as writer	16	106
Conceptions of writing	16	89
Identity in the text	13	55
Self-containment	9	28
Self-judgment	14	58

Additional evidence regarding longer term effects is taken from the eight final interviews, according to the following codes.

Code	Sources	References
Continuing writer identity	8	14
Writer identity Sustained/developed	8	10
Sustaining factors	4	5

In the text which follows, where evidence is taken from the final interviews, this is explicitly stated. Otherwise data is from the post-Arvon interviews.

4.5.1 Developing and acknowledging a writer identity

'After the Arvon week, many expressed a new enthusiasm for writing, a desire to write more and write more often. They professed greater confidence and a sense of empowerment to write. They were very comfortable to refer to themselves as writers, or simply assume that status. Their words revealed a pride in their texts and in their achievements. The way that they saw and talked about themselves as writers had changed. Lucy said that what she would take back with her was *'what it feels like to be a writer'.* Molly emphatically saw writing as a matter of identity: *'actually we're writers in here. We're not doing writing or having writing done to us*'. and Tina noted '*The biggest thing for me is the change that I've experienced as me as a writer.'*

The change was, for some, gradual and it was often implied that the capacity to be a writer had been lying dormant. Some, Tina for example, confessed to a lingering vulnerability, a lack of entitlement to the identity: *'if people sort of put me off ……it might be just, oh yeah don't be so silly, just get back to, you're a teacher'*. Tina concludes that the label doesn't really matter: 'I *like to write. So whether I am a writer, not a writer or whatever, I get quite a comfort in doing it, ….. I do want to continue when I go home'*.

Some teachers had experienced self-doubt. Bridget talked of her *'fear of looking stupid or it not being good enough'*, but Vicky saw the danger of taking this line of thought to extremes*: '… then you get in to self-censorship and, "Now it's all rubbish and I don't like that bit so I'm just like not going to use it." And then you don't do anything for about 12 years'.* Criticism of one's own text was also identified positively, however, as a motivator to revise.

Several linked their newly recognised writer status to a heightened sense of creativity, which, like the capacity to write was often characterised as latent. *'the biggest standout thing for me is my creative side coming through'* (Tina).

Some saw the change from (self-diagnosed) non-writer to writer in terms of how they understood what a writer is. Sally, for example, came to new personal definitions of both 'writer' - not necessarily professional or published - and 'identity' - she can hold a writer identity without it being exclusive or overwhelming, as part of a more complex conception of personal identity. Emily added her belief that identities are for ever changing as support for her changed view of her writer self.

Evidence from the final interviews showed changes in identity to have been sustained, with continuing engagement with writing (and teaching writing) often a consolidating factor.
'… and even by the end of the week… there was still a bit 'I'm not a writer'. But now I think because …, I've kept it up a little bit and now it's almost actually well maybe I am a bit of one.' (Molly)

4.5.2 Social validation and community

How the writer-teachers saw themselves as writers was affected by the views of others. Almost all explicitly attributed a new-found sense of being a writer to membership of a community of writers. For Tina, the important thing was *just 'being around other people when you're writing'*, which meant she was *'engaging as a writer alongside other people'*. Others, like Jackie, saw the relationship as *'showing each other our thoughts and feelings.'* The writing itself was important: Jackie felt that her '*intense'* relationship with fellow participants differed from the '*superficial'* relationship with members of other, more 'work-related' CPD programmes.

The 'community' was seen as an incentive both to start writing and to keep writing. Ruth saw this in terms of 'pressure', Ann felt motivated by a perceived competitive atmosphere and Tina thought there was a *'pecking order'.* Others, Beth, for example, insisted that the community was not competitive, with everybody *'empathetic'* and *'on the same side'*. Charlotte was encouraged by the knowledge that *'everybody has a blank page at some time'*. Opinions varied so widely it seems that while all found the environment conducive to writing, each found her own reason(s) why that was. Some talked of acceptance by the group as giving purpose to their work, others of the value of affirmation, particularly when sharing with a single partner.

Sharing writing was a major factor in the community. Jackie talked of *'a real holding back'* on the part of everybody to ensure that all got a fair hearing and the view that people had *'gone out of their way'* (Karen) to find things they liked in each other's work and give constructive feedback was widely expressed.

Less formal sharing had consequences too. Ann felt that the *'listening in the evenings, when we've had the kind of chats'* had the greatest impact on her writing and all the sharing sessions were seen as a pooling of ideas. Charlotte said she took inspiration from *'listening, …. to other people's texts ….., to the rhythm of their sentences and the vocabulary that they use and the way that they've crafted pieces in the workshops'* so that, in Ann's words 'automatically other people's words seemed to come into the work that you're doing, so it's that continuum'.

Several talked of their anxiety over sharing, particularly early in the week; Jackie called the sharing sessions *'vulnerabilising'.* Some brought their anxiety with them and others attributed it to their not knowing the other group members. Yet others worried about presenting alongside known individuals they expected to be better writers. Some primary teachers suggested that secondary colleagues' greater subject knowledge were intimidating, a perception that faded away over the week. Ruth probably spoke for the majority when she said that by Friday the vulnerability remained, but it could be coped with, and most agreed that sharing had been a positive experience, even when tears were involved.

Jackie saw her membership of the Arvon community as having lasting consequences for her writer identity: *'we're part of a community of writers ….. I can then identify myself as a writer in that setting and therefore I can take my identity as a writer with me when I'm writing in other places.'*

Although they were not explicitly identified as models, there was universal appreciation of the role of the tutors within the community.

4.5.3 Texts and identity

There is plentiful evidence of writers' development and expression of identity through their texts. At its simplest, this is a matter of ownership or pride in one's work. Writing about personal experience brought text and identity together and some talked of autobiography being at the heart of their work. For others autobiography was a starting point, while a focus on familiar aspects of their life was felt by some to reveal previously unrecognised truths. Several talked of the way texts expressed sometimes strong emotions using phrases like *'right from the heart'* (Ann). Molly, having chosen a piece to share admitted, *'I'll probably end up crying'*. Not surprisingly, emotions as strong as these could inhibit sharing.

Jackie said that she got to know other participants very quickly, because *'they're expressing their feelings and thoughts within the writing',* while Ann felt texts were particularly revealing of people she already knew: *'you just …. feel a completely different side of that person'*. Some saw texts' potential for identity positioning. Jackie contrasted other people's *'writing to be clever'* with her own her own *'nailing my colours to the mast and this is me.'*

4.6 Teacher identity post-engagement

Post-Arvon interviews were coded as follows:

Code	Sources	References
Teacher identity	13	50
Conceptions of school writing	12	26
Interplay between teacher and writer identities	15	78
Phase identity	14	26

Final interviews were coded as follows:

Code	**Sources**	**References**
Change in teacher identity	8	17
Interplay between writer and teacher identities	7	11
Change to practice		
Lessons from Arvon	8	15
Free writing	1	2
Empathy	3	4
Creativity	7	11
Curriculum tensions	6	8
Student identity		
Writer identity acknowledged	8	19
Students see themselves as writers	6	8

Students' ownership/agency/confidence/enjoyment	8	20

4.6.1 Being a teacher

While writer identities grew at Arvon, teacher identities remained strong and participants brought a teacher-like perspective to their experience at Arvon. Rosa could not see a future as a writer, but, like many, saw huge potential to apply her experiences in her classroom:
'this could actually change the lives of the children that I teach and how they view writing; that's very empowering.'

However, some had *'thought much more about writing than ….teaching'* (Vicky), while others felt a tension*: 'that pulls in two ways of wanting to be a writer yourself and wanting to be a writer to make you a better teacher'* (Lucy).

In so far as the scope of what they felt able to do as teachers had grown, teacher identities had been extended. Tina, for example, said she felt free to choose how she taught writing, while Rosa could *now 'be far more creative in the way that I teach the literacy lessons'*. The final interviews included references to many techniques experienced at Arvon, notably free writing.

4.6.2 Empathy

It is often argued, as justification of teachers' engaging in writing, that the experience allows them to understand better the experience of young writers. Karen called *'just experiencing what the children experience'* the *'biggest thing for me'*. Molly now recognised the difficulty for students of writing every day, and how worrying about *'capital letters and full stops'* can spoil the *'fun'* of *'playing with words'*, while Sally could see how difficult it is to write to a specified length in limited time.

In the final interviews, several teachers discussed their changed practice in empathetic terms. Speaking of the demands of the curriculum, Molly offered*, '… it's also just realising how hard it was. All the pressure we put children under to produce stuff'*, adding that her experience as a writer made her put herself in young writers' shoes: *'rather than thinking about … what the outcomes are, nuts and bolts and stuff. It's kind of looking at it the other way and thinking well actually how would I do this?'*

Tina reflected on the perspective of reluctant writers: *'I get a sense of how some of these children feel that don't want to put the pen to the paper.'*
This suggests that the teachers are not only seeing themselves as writers, but are also viewing their students as fellow writers.

4.6.3 Writers teaching writing

After Arvon, a number of teachers resolved to make significant changes to their teaching of writing (see also section 3.5) .

> *I feel like I need to go into school on Monday and apologise to my children. And tell them …., I ask you to write every day and it's really, really hard. …. No but we're going to do it for fun. We're going to enjoy it.'*(Molly)

Charlotte seemed to exercise a writer identity in lessons which had become *'more fluid and flexible … less planned out in immense detail at the start; more plan as I go along'.* Molly's

priority shifted from the language elements prescribed by the curriculum to *'the big picture'*. , with *'lots of stuff we need to teach … taught through the editing process'*.

Some talked of sharing their writer identity explicitly, for example by writing alongside their students or, as for example in Ann's case, giving *'lots of examples of what I would write if I was doing it'.* Others talked simply of being comfortable to refer to themselves as writers in the classroom.

Other 'writerly' strategies planned included giving more time to think and 'just write', adopting more positive feedback strategies, giving students the opportunity to talk about work in progress and reducing the emphasis on pre-planning. Several were inspired to create a mutually supportive writing community, bringing more constructive feedback into their classroom practice and aiming to encourage more talk around writing, for example by using paired sharing.

Creativity was often mentioned in connection with changed practice. Lucy believed children's creativity would be encouraged *in 'a safer, more playful environment'*. Karen felt that the kind of *'inner vision'* that had guided her writing at Arvon could be fostered in young writers too. Freewriting was seen as *'creative'* and choice (including in some accounts, free choice of content and form) important. Emily wanted children to experience 'liberation' but added that often, *'when children do that then it's actually frowned on'*.

4.6.4 Students' identity and agency as writers

An important theme which emerged from the final interviews was the significance of students' identity as a writer, the degree of agency they enjoy and their ownership of their work. This was often expressed in terms of choice, enjoyment and particularly freedom. In some cases, other forms of freedom are associated with the new pedagogy, from *'shoes off, on the floor'* (Ann) to *'I allow the children to go off and write wherever they want in the school.'* (Rosa). While freedom to choose may have been challenging to students at first –in Ann's words, *'… they're like, what do I have to do? How many pages do I have to write?'* – learners seem to have adjusted their idea of what it means to be a writer in school and free writing was universally reported to be highly popular.

Enjoyment was frequently linked to freewriting and also referred to more widely. Tina argued that children who enjoy writing will *'do more'* and *'get better at it'*. Emily contrasted her class's eventual enthusiasm with their attitude at the outset: *'telling the kids they were going to be doing a writing project, that was like telling them they were going to the dentist for a week.'* Several talked of the importance of ownership. For Tina, this meant, *'….the ideas are more coming from the children rather than me.'* Charlotte linked this change back to her Arvon experience: *'I think the different techniques and things that were used on the Arvon residency that we then tried to employ in our classrooms gave that ownership back to the children.'* For Molly, learners *'taking ownership of their writing, and then feeling like writers and being writers'* was a turning point and it is noticeable how several of the teachers positioned their students as fellow writers at this point. Emily believed that parents' reports of students writing from choice at home is *'about them seeing themselves as a writer'*.

Charlotte and Ann both talked of a growing writer identity in terms of confidence in one's own abilities. Beth said that her own confidence as a writer makes her comfortable to see her students as writers too. The inclusion of personal experience within the writing regime –both

in freewriting and in planned activities- promoted the inclusion of personal identity in the text: in Rosa's words, *'If children can bring little nuggets of their own experiences in life into their writing it brings the piece of writing alive.'* Molly saw the fostering of writer identity as her key responsibility as a teacher of writing: 'My role as a teacher I think is to inspire children to want to write and to be writers.'

4.7 Discussion

Before their engagement with the Teachers as Writers project it is clear that, in many ways all the teachers in the study felt themselves to be very capable at the task of writing and they were also easily able to explain their skills, knowledge, dispositions and experiences. Normally this would be enough to allow us to say that they all had a writer identity. However, at that time, fewer than half were prepared to declare that identity and many expressly denied it. It may be that there is a distinction to be made between an enacted identity and one which is personally acknowledged. Alternatively, the discrepancy may be due to the teachers' view of what a writer is. Perhaps at the pre-intervention stage the majority were best considered as latent or incipient writers.

At the same time, all were comfortable to see themselves as teachers confident in explaining their teacher role. Almost all, expressed enthusiasm for teaching writing, and most could link their personal experience as writers to the way they teach writing.

By the end of the Arvon experience, the elements of a writer identity discernible in the pre-Arvon interviews seem to have been consolidated by the residential week; almost all were willing to at least accept and in many cases embrace the title 'writer'. In part this was due to a shift in the way being a writer (and in some cases, identity itself) was understood, but there was also, overwhelmingly a greater commitment to this identity. The supportive writing community played a significant role in this transformation.

How the purpose of writing was seen had also changed. In the early interviews the majority of writing mentioned was for clarifying ideas, communicating and teaching. After Arvon, the power of writing to encapsulate and express emotions gained greater and greater importance.

Teacher identities were maintained through the residential. Furthermore, all talked of ways in which the Arvon experience can be said to have developed or extended their teacher identity. Many spoke of ways of bringing what they had learnt during the week into their classroom. This was not just in terms of what might be seen as 'skills' and 'activities', but also of how they would frame the task of writing, of creating an environment for writing and of building a supportive community of writers. Several talked about how they empathised more strongly with the young writers in their charge. These statements appear to have been more than good intentions, as those teachers who were interviewed more than a term after the project's formal conclusion spoke of many ways in which they had put them into action. In fact the evidence of these interviews was that not only had writer identities been maintained, they had been strengthened and enriched by further writing and teaching.

The doubts some expressed in the initial interviews about the value of grammar-based teaching resurfaced more strongly, partly in opposition to a renewed commitment to

approaches seen as more ’creative’, and some suggested ways in which the latter could be fostered without disruption from the demands of the former. Creative approaches to writing were far from new to the teachers, but as with many other aspects of ‘writerly’ teaching, for many of them they had been lying dormant, thanks to other demands. Evidence of this tension persisted into the final interviews, but again the intentions to accommodate ‘creative’ and ‘free’ writing activities alongside the required curriculum seem to have been realised.

Only a small number of participants talked explicitly immediately after Arvon of bringing their writer identity into the classroom, though there was much talk of using Arvon-style activities and also of empathy with younger writers. The final interviews, however showed that all in some way were bringing that identity to bear in their teaching.

Leaving

I walk through early morning streets,
I'm up before they can worry me,
make my way down Sheepmarket Hill
past the early morning taxi queue.

The sloping churchyard cemetery wall,
familiar to me now,
seems to have shrunk in size from
when my four year old feet trod it
bravely, unwarily.

Coffee shops not yet open,
Spar, centrally place by the Corn Exchange,
a meeting place, the market square
devoid of bustle this early.

Up Salisbury Street the bus trundles
almost passenger less at this hour
the steepness of the hill
exaggerated by the engine's pull.

I remember mum climbing this hill
at the end of one of her cycling jaunts
body upright, pushing on the pedals.

I pray not to belong to this town
To stay here, live here, die here
in this green, smothering valley.

Vicky

Chapter 5: Co-mentoring

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the interviews with teachers and writers after one of their co-teaching sessions, and a shared reflective discussion between the teacher and writer after the second co-teaching lesson. The data set comprise 15 teacher interviews (one interview was not conducted) and 16 post hoc reflections. These interviews and reflections probed teacher and writer thinking about the learning context, pedagogy and professional practice, and the co-teaching and mentoring.

5.2 Process of analysis

Drawing on the analysis of the comments on co-mentoring made in the professional writer interviews and the thematic codes in the co-teaching lesson observation analysis, a set of initial *a priori* codes were set up and after initial independent coding of two interviews, a further code was created (Teacher and Writer Discussion of Principles). A summary of this data analysis is provided (See Appendix 26 for the codes and their definitions).

Code Name	**No of respondents**	**No of occurrences of this code**
Integrating Arvon Learning into the Classroom	26	84
Pressures and Constraints	14	32
Shared Planning and Goals	22	62
Teacher and Writer Discussion of Principles	19	85
Teacher Learning	24	63
Teacher-Writer Roles	29	272
Writer Learning	22	54

5.3 Integrating Arvon into practice

The data show that every teacher made Arvon related connections, some revisited the key strands which one named as '*those Arvon values*', that is '*Time and space to write, you know, sharing your work, one-to-one reflection time and being in a nice environment*'. Others noted that what they had been trying to achieve was a form of imitation, a co-teaching lesson designed as '*a mini-Arvon*'. Whilst not all teachers positioned themselves differently in school and wrote alongside the students, they all **drew upon their new insights about being a writer in their teaching**. One felt this offered a particularly rich opportunity '*because I've only learned out of a book or university how to teach writing, rather than how writers write*'.

For the first time several teachers **wrote alongside children in class**, in order to offer '*a role model as a writer*', and keep focused on their own work so that students might concentrate also, '*I've been trying to do that, you know, "no, no I'm doing my writing I don't want to talk to you now, you need to do your writing. I'm going to do my writing"*' and one felt she now

sought to maintain quiet to '*keep the volume down'* in class as '*I found on the Arvon writing course I can't really write if there's a lot of noise going on'.*

It was evident that for many teachers the Arvon experience prompted **novel conversations about writing and in particular about being a writer** back in the classroom. There were multiple comments about this, such as:

> *…until I've been doing this writing project, I never really spoke to the children very much about how it feels to be a writer. And I didn't really bring it into my teaching at all until I went in April on the writing course.*

Some of the conversations involved considering **reasons for writing**, writing for oneself and others '*because that for me is a really big barrier. It's all very well to write, but it's not writing for anybody else, it's just writing for me. So that was something that I wanted to fit in there'* and establishing for instance where the author's ideas had come from. In addition the **emotional demands of being a writer and sharing writing** were discussed in classrooms, again in one case for the first time '*And then there's lots of feelings aren't there, it's really scary being a writer, especially when other people are going to listen to your work, so we talk about that now'.*

Through their engagement as writers at Arvon, some of the teachers appeared to have developed increased sensitivity to writing and its complexity. For some **the sense of openness and uncertainty** which they had experienced as part of the writing process at Arvon was a point of significance, as one noted '*You don't know where it's going to go until you begin…, I think I need to put that somewhere up on my wall'* and again this was discussed in class, '*well I know where the story's going but I don't know the bits in between…I don't know it's all going to tie in at some point'.*

It was clear that the teachers were aware they had drawn on the '*workshop style'* framing of Arvon and now regularly offered children time to **Just Write. This free writing**, which encompassed a '*more open brief'* than previously involved '*just getting them writing'* and was seen to offer more agency and choice to the writers themselves, '*I'm not telling them to write'*, noted one teacher, instead she perceived she was '*giving them lots of choices and letting them decide so it's not prescriptive'* as it *'opens up all the doors to them'*. There was a sense that for several this was '*more experimental because I am doing, kind of, quite structured teaching lessons either side. So part of it is freedom to just write and explore'.* This freedom, the teachers often noted, was well received, '*they love it' 'they ask for more'*.

In referring to what they drew upon from Arvon in the co-teaching sessions, a few teachers also highlighted **revisiting work, feedback and editing,** though not very many. There was recognition for one teacher that writing is '*about that revisiting process. That you're constantly coming back to pieces of writing, constantly coming back to ideas, looking at them again and getting something even more out of them'.* But as she noted before Arvon she would have been '*fearful about asking children to look again and again at ideas'* and would have been '*risking them becoming frustrated with the process'.* However having valued the opportunity to revisit her own work she had tried this and commented that she was *'finding*

that actually they can go back and make things better and better and better, and that they can get more out of their writing each time. So I think that comes entirely from the Arvon week.

The research team noted that **writing from personal experience, fictionalising life experience and writing for oneself** were common threads running through both the Arvon workshops and the teachers' own writing shared in the tutorials. Nonetheless in responding to the question regarding integrating Arvon into their classroom practice, few teachers mentioned drawing upon this aspect of their experience of Arvon. There were exceptions to this however; one teacher reflected that '*I think really Arvon was quite personal'* and went on to acknowledge that '*different people like different types of writing, but I have to feel an emotional connection with what I'm reading*'. As a consequence this teacher afforded opportunities for the children to explore their views and values and lives in and through their writing; she considered it important for '*the emotional connection to be built*, and said '*that's what I try and get the children to do, to connect with whoever their audience is'.*

5.4 Teacher learning

The most frequently noted comments related to **looking at writing and teaching writing differently** and '*with more confidence'* as a result of working in partnership with the writer post the Arvon experience. One noted her conception of writing had widened somewhat through working with a professional writer, '*because you write in a very accessible way, I think for me that's helped because I think in a way I always thought that writing had to be fancy, like that'.* Others valued the opportunity to step back and observe the writer, and one also noted she was able to develop increased self-awareness through this '*Because sometimes it's very easy sometimes to talk too much or sometimes to not talk enough because you can see actually they need to share it'.*

Awareness of taking a more writerly perspective appeared to prompt several teachers to '*think differently*' about writing, and even to observe *I'm thinking more like a writer and a teacher than just a teacher having to teach writing'.* For this teacher the shift appeared to be from foregrounding the more technical aspects of writing to thinking more about writing itself, the content and the ideas, as she noted:

> *…before if I was teaching I'd be thinking right OK, so we need to get connectives in here, and we need to make sure we've got our full stops in the right place, and the speech punctuation. Now I'm seeing that almost as something that you do outside of writing, which sounds stupid because obviously it is a part of writing. But that can be the editing, that can be in the reflective part of it rather than the actual writing and creating the sentences, even if you do forget the punctuation. If you've got the language and the ideas and the flow of the writing, and you're thinking about the reader, those are whole massive other different things aren't they? And the other stuff will come.*

To some extent, however, this comment suggests almost an abdication of the responsibility to teach the explicit skills of writing, or at the least a separation of the two. **Finding a balance**

between the skills and the freedom to write was a related theme evident in two of the teachers' comments, '*it's that dilemma between freedom and, you know, plotting their course for them'*.

Some teachers highlighted the **value of new ideas** when developed in collaboration with their co-mentor, *'for me it's new ideas and new ways of teaching, because for me when I'm teaching any sort of English lesson it's not something that I have crafted out myself*'. This sense of novelty was valued and in one case prompted a teacher to write alongside her class for the first time: I *think what I really liked today was, and what made me able to do the writing myself, was that it was completely fresh prompts, completely fresh task'.* Six teachers referred to **increased awareness of the children as writers** and made specific reference to their ownership of their writing, for example one said '*I'm allowing them to be the creator of it'* and another noted '*what has happened over the past few weeks is that they actually, they position themselves as writers'* and this was positively viewed.

For three teachers, providing real time for free writing enabled them to take a '*more relaxed approach'*, which involved the teachers *'trusting their [the students] creative instincts'.* It also afforded them opportunities to learn about the children and **challenged their expectations and understanding of young writers**.

Several teachers who worked with poets referred to the value for them of taking sustained and supported time to **teach poetry writing with an experienced poet**. This clearly supported them, as one noted: '*it's not something that I would naturally go to teach, whereas I think actually next year, I will…that's been the good thing, it's definitely the poetry side of it has really…I've been more focused in that. And I think I will be a better teacher of that'.*

5.5 Writer learning

The writers all voiced the view that the project had represented a learning opportunity; they valued the chance to work '*collaboratively and closely with the teacher'* and for some this enabled them to think 'I *can actually do this [teaching writing] without feeling like a complete fraud*', reducing a sense of what some described as an '*imposter syndrome'* since not all were trained teachers. The writers also valued '*just trying different things that I've not done before'* in classrooms which was viewed as '*quite kind of validating for me'*. Having the chance of 'working *with the teacher and having another adult in the room and having a lesson that was planned beforehand',* had for some *'well it's taken the kind of panic of it out*'.

The joint reflective conversations and interviews with the teachers and the writers revealed the latter were **finding out more about students as writers** and that they needed to recognise the students' starting points and skills as writers, because, as one came to realise, '*the more I think you can know that class and tailor it to their particular needs the better*'. Several commented on the challenge of '*parachuting into a class you don't know as well as you want to*', and one noted ' *We can't think because we're writers doing that, that it's a wonderful unique experience one bestows upon people. It doesn't work that. Actually a lot of those young people had already created good work*'. Some writers came to appreciate

difference and the need to **differentiate support for individuals**, as one noted '*differentiating through asking some key questions, so he can answer some questions'.* In some cases this prompted them to offer increased structure, when previously they had sought to eschew such tight frames for writing, for example *'I think I've learned the opposite of what you've [the teacher] learned, seeing some of those children who needed more structure at the beginning. And there was that risk that you could lose them because they didn't have, they weren't confident enough for the blank page, and needed more structure there'.*

In addition, five of the writers focused on new learning with regard to offering support for **the wider writing process**, highlighting the contrast between their *'normal'* practice of focusing on the generation of writing and developing ideas, and the project work in which some were also involved in offering support for sharing, revising and editing.

Recognition of the current context educationally, **the pressures teachers are under** and the nature of schemes of work and set targets were also key areas of learning for writers. Recognition of complexity '*It's a lot more complicated than I thought', a*nd an appreciation of the challenges teachers face clearly developed in some cases *'now I've actually worked with you and understood a bit more about how some of the processes go,…I can see that you have a lot to do, teachers have a lot to do, it's just craz*y'.

In particular writers were learning about the **nature of school schemes of work**. In their previous visits to schools, most had not had the opportunity, or perhaps the inclination, to plan from the national curriculum, from student need or indeed within a scheme of work. Their workshops had tended to be '*one—offs'*, often offered as enrichment or stimulus for writing, and not, to their working knowledge, placed within a unit of work. Thus those who had not been teachers had not experienced the iterative, responsive nature of teaching and learning over sustained periods of time. For some writers seeing students writing to a lesson objective increased their awareness and tolerance of these, several still viewed them as ultimately '*constraining*', yet others felt that it had '*been quite good to think about having a clear objective for each (lesson)'*. Working within the context of a scheme of work was for many a new experience and one which enabled some writers to view the National Curriculum and related schemes of work in a new light.

A persistent theme within the writers' comments during co-mentoring discussions and interviews was that working alongside a teacher was **markedly different from their usual practice of being a writer in school.** One acknowledged that 'I *tend to be the person controlling the session I suppose. And it's different here because it isn't like that. And actually to be honest quite often the teacher's not that involved* [in other writer in school visits]. *So this is really different because you're totally involved – which is great.'* This sense of the writer leading and performing, rather than being positioned as a co-mentor working alongside the teacher was evident. In their previous writers in schools experiences, being '*in charge for an hour'* in school, often without any accompanying teacher presence, did not sit well with some of the writers, three of whom referred to finding this unsettling.

5.6 Pressures and constraints

The co-mentoring pairs often mentioned the pressures teachers and schools operate under. **Time** was the most frequently noted, often related to '*school expectations*', '*the inflexible and packed timetable*', unexpected interruptions imposed by management, including a spelling bee which had been announced the morning of a poet's visit, and the absence of students during English lessons, 'half *of them are missing two lessons this week because it's sports day and things like that*'. Several teaching pairs noted they would have valued more time together, and with the term coming to a close, others reflected upon the need for additional weeks to extend and embed the work ' *what I'm just lacking is two more weeks of like bringing all of these things together in terms of their writing, in terms of the actual structuring. And, you know, like get a story together, edit it, draft it, you know, that sort of process*'.

Others also felt such space and time for extended writing and for being '*in the moment*' as one writer described it, had been curtailed over recent years, his co-mentor teacher also noted '*it's one of the aspects that has been lost with subsequent curriculums, is actually time for children to do extended writing, to play around with it and have that time to explore*'.

Additional pressures included the **expectations of the curriculum and assessment.** The former, in the view of several co-mentoring pairs, was not only in marked contrast to the kind of free writing that they were seeking to develop through the narrative unit, but restrained the potential of such writing. In noting the differences one teacher observed she was '*trying to focus on …just what's your response, just go with whatever comes to you*' but acknowledged this was '*so different to what we teach most of the time,* which *' almost doesn't allow for any sort of creative original response*'. This was reinforced by the view that '*it's all about the spelling and grammar, because we have to teach that*', albeit this teacher felt '*We do need the element of that creativity as well*'. Another teacher also believed the writing curriculum as currently framed in her school offered '*no room to breathe'*, no '*breathing space for the kids to be creative as we go along'*. Two teachers noted that free writing was particularly difficult in the sense that it was emergent and potentially messy; this was problematic as '*our English books have to be to a certain standard, because that's what Ofsted want and outstanding books and outstanding schools look pretty'* and '*our English books are all about presentation'*.

5.7 Teacher-writer roles

One cluster of responses about teacher-writer roles in the classroom rather naturally related to whether the teacher and writer were adopting the role of a teacher or a writer, regardless of their primary expertise. This was, of course, a teaching context where the teacher had ultimate responsibility for the class, or as one teacher recognised '*it's probably more natural for me to be a kind of teacher because I do it all the time*.' The teachers tended to be more aware of student learning, noticing learners' needs, and '*coming at it from a more teacherly point of view.*' The other aspect of the teacher's role which was evident was class

management and organisation, where some of the writers noticed that the teacher was leading on '*managing their behaviour'*.

There were some teachers who felt that it was being a teacher in a teacher role which prevented them from adopting a writer role in the classroom. One teacher reflected that she was so occupied with '*glad handing at the front and doing all the stuff … I know other teachers have taken the opportunity to write alongside their class… I haven't had a chance to do that, and also I don't think, you know, this is the whole teachers as writers thing, I'm teaching all the time, I'm not writing*.'

Because some of the writers had also been teachers, they found it relatively easily to adopt a **writer in teacher role** position; as one writer noted *'you know how a classroom works and all those sorts of little things, don't you?*' and another reflected that '*I used to teach like this when I used to teach*'. One writer very naturally '*took over the writing on the white board*' and another, having effectively handled a disengaged student who had '*drifted himself to the back of the group*' observed that '*the teacher thing came back to me actually while I was sat there'.*

The teachers frequently positioned the **writer in writer role** in the classroom, particularly linked to the gain of having a professional writer working with them. Recognising that writing was not simply a school experience but that there was a community of writers beyond school was evident: as one teacher noted, '*it helped them connect'*, or as this teacher's co-mentor writer added '*it's quite nice for kids to realise that writers exist*.' The strongest and most frequently occurring aspect of the writer in writer role was the writer sharing the craft of writing, through modelling the writing process and talking about their own experiences of being a writer. One writer said that he tried to:

> G*ive them insights into the way in which I do it … so I thought about the way in which I'd do that and came up with an exercise which allowed me to do it and allowed me to rearrange things etc. and verbalise those mental processes so that they had it*.

Two of the writers also discussed how they did not find it easy to write in the classroom with the children. One writer was very categorical that '*I can't write anything for my*self' because '*I just can't do it because I'll just get distracted and go off in to a dream*.' Another writer played the role of writing but recognised that it was not an authentic writing experience for him as the situation was not conducive to writing for him as he needed '*to be locked away in a room with no one else around, with nothing on the walls'.*

The practice of writing in the classroom with children is at the heart of responses in the **teacher in writer role** sub-code. Many of the teachers took from the Arvon residential the idea that as teachers who write they should be seen to be writers in the classroom – several teachers used the freewriting opportunities to write themselves: '*when they're doing their freewriting, I'm writing, and I've read them some of my stuff*'. In one classroom, the children became so used to this they expected the teacher to write, as one teacher recalled: '*the children then say to me, 'Well come on, you've asked us to do this, you write something. So I have written*.'

The four sub-codes described above are not discrete identity positions – the majority of the teachers and writers adopted different role positions at different points in the lessons. For several **flexibility** about their roles was very much central to either the way a writer saw their own role or the way a co-mentoring pair approached the co-teaching. Several talked of switching easily between teacher and writer roles. One writer described how '*I always move between the two*', elaborating by explaining that '*it's not an issue of feeling like one or the other, it's I am what I am, and it's both those things. I suppose primarily it's a teacher, but at the same time I'm thinking about ideas for writing, drawing on my own practice as a writer. Constantly*.'

In contrast, some respondents felt that there were **distinctive roles** for the teacher and the writer. At a very pragmatic level, this was about how the co-mentoring pair worked together, and whereas some had a very fluid way of working as noted above, others worked together by segregating responsibilities. One teacher commented that *'it felt fairly balanced. I mean we divvied things up quite nicely I think in the end*' and one writer observed that '*I think we were quite good, because you kept it going and you reinforced the instructions. And I was doing more, perhaps more of the resources, the inputs, and them feeling they could ask me questions as well*.' More substantively, the sense of distinctive roles was, in part, founded on a perception of differing expertise: as one writer explained, '*different people have got different skills … we worked well together because you know more about the teaching and I don't know so much.'* This was seen as a strength, amplifying what was possible in the classroom because '*having two different expertises coming together gives you more resources, more ideas*.'

To an extent, the sub code, **deferring to other's experience,** links with the idea of distinctive roles, discussed above, but it reflects those moments when the teacher or writer judges their own competence as less than, or lacking, in comparison to their co-mentor's. The teachers sometimes made the writer's visit a very special occasion, setting them on a pedestal perhaps, or treating them as something of a novelty. As one teacher said, *'here is a writer coming in and we don't get this opportunity all the time'*. For the writers, there was some deferring to the teacher's professional expertise because of a sense of them '*knowing what you're doing'*. However, the strongest element of deferral to the teacher was in relation to classroom or behaviour management. One writer had noticed '*the kinds of things xxx did to settle the class that I wouldn't have thought of really, and don't really have the experience of*'.

A very strong theme recurring through the data is that of a **comfortable working relationship** between the teacher and the writer. Given the focus of the project on teachers working with writers and on co-mentoring, there may be some natural bias in these responses. Nonetheless, both teachers and writers describe constructive and collaborative ways of working, based on mutual respect. Typical comments include '*I feel really comfortable with xxx, I feel like we just work well together*'. Counterpointing this comfortable working relationship was the **uneasy partnership** that characterised one writer's co-mentoring experience with two teachers. Both teachers positioned the writer as leader and were reluctant to genuinely co-teach. One teacher felt that the co-teaching lesson was not well synchronised, but put this down to *'the difficulty with doing two different activities with two*

different people' and argued that co-teaching was not '*the most beneficial thing for the pupils'* because '*I see them all the time'*. The writer felt '*there was quite a bit of tension'*, and despite trying to fulfil his allocated writer role by trying '*to enthuse them from the writer perspective*' he couldn't '*put on hold'* some of '*the teachery things'* that he would naturally do. In the writer's comments is a sense of disappointment and an opportunity for creative shared teaching which he felt had been missed.

5.8 Shared planning and goals

One aspect of the co-mentoring was that it encouraged the teacher and writer to discuss together the planning and goals of the teaching unit and particularly the co-teaching sessions. In general, teachers tended to lead on planning and writers varied in how much they engaged with this. This was particularly true of the practical aspects of planning, where some writers were happy to let the teachers lead. One writer argued that in terms of planning '*too many cooks spoil the broth'* and another said that invariably it '*ends up having to be the teacher who does the planning*'. At the same time, there was a sense that some teachers were a little reluctant to let go their control of planning, with one teacher maintaining that '*it's quite difficult to plan with somebody'*. However, some of this undoubtedly relates to the time it takes for a co-mentoring approach to develop and one teacher-writer pair seemed to have evolved a better way of working for the second co-teaching lesson: '*I think the difference here was that we really did plan this together and we changed our plans and we evolved our plans together'*. Both teachers and writers frequently recognised the need for flexibility and for plans to change as needed. As one teacher said, '*it was never a kind of get from A to B going through all the subsections; it's been much more flexible than that really'*.

In terms of articulating goals, although teachers were much more aware of learning objectives and curriculum goals, there was a recurrent pattern of the writers being more able to articulate a precise writing goal for a lesson. Sometimes that goal was about learning '*that you can write about yourself and provide some basic tools to do so'*, or '*how you can take a real memory and then turn it in to a narrative piece of fiction*'. In one instance, the writer politely focuses the more generalised learning goal of the teacher:

Teacher: *Well our learning objectives were about locking away that inner editor and free writing, but with extension. So trying to just write and just enjoy writing. But also you picked that one that was really interesting.*

Writer: *Well, I was quite interested with the whole idea of the creating and developing narrative hooks.*

There was a strong sense here of the power of writers' deep knowledge of writing as a focus for children's learning and development as writers.

5.9 Teacher and writer discussion of principles

In the co-teaching reflections especially, the teacher and writer frequently engaged in discussions of principles about writing and the teaching of writing. The discussions illuminate their shared and distinctive thinking about writing, and demonstrate how they are sometime grappling with new ideas and new ways of thinking.

One strong theme was the **principle of needing time and space for w**riting. Teachers in particular reflected that their usual teaching of writing might be too rushed, and that what is important is *'time for children to do extended writing, to play around with it and have that time to explore*'. The physical environment and space was significant too. Several teachers disrupted normal classroom practices to create opportunities for writing in different spaces, both inside the classroom and outside, and one teacher felt this '*ownership of space'* helped children write. She also noted that '*even if I'd done the whole Arvon residential but I'd just done it in a classroom I think I would've felt like I'd spent a whole week doing literacy*'.

Another principle discussed was that of **writing from personal experience, and drawing on emotional resources**. Helping children to realise that they all had personal experiences they could draw on and to '*trust their own ideas'* and '*make it about them'* was a focus of some of the teaching. There was an awareness that '*there is something universal in writing, there is something human in what we're doing here and I think that's why they're so motivated… something that's deeply human about that kind of just reflecting on memory'*.

Discussion also considered **freedom versus constraint**, not so much which is appropriate but how to get the balance between the two: '*It's really difficult to get the fine line between giving enough prompts for them to get going, and going their own direction'*. For the teachers this was sometimes about how much support they gave to children in terms of prompts and scaffolds, whereas the writers seemed to be more conscious that freedom and constraint are always in a kind of creative tension: '*it's both completely open and also completely…for me, it's like really controlled and yet with complete freedom. So you set it up tightly and then allow anything to happen with it now'*.

A further set of principles discussed related very much to the **process of writing**. There was considerable reflection on revising and editing, including how to shift attention from proof-reading to evaluating how you '*get your message across'*, the value of '*drafting as you go'*, and learning about '*editing which is just cutting down to the bare bones'*. One teacher-writer pair noted that '*once they're emotionally engaged with it they do want to make it as effective as possible. So hopefully they then see the point of the editing*', thus linking editing to broader purposes for writing. There was also consideration of the messiness of writing as a principle that needed to be incorporated into pedagogical thinking, giving greater place to understanding that '*authentic writing is really messy, and it's not a neat process where you can follow it step by step*' and that in contrast to typical school expectations, writing is '*not that linear process of gathering, drafting, editing, finalising'*.

5.10 Discussion

The teachers reported integrating key aspects of the experience of Arvon into their classroom practice based on their new understandings about writing and being a writer. Several reported writing alongside their classes rather than always overseeing or supporting and claimed that this prompted novel conversations about being a writer, the iterative nature of writing and the social and emotional demands involved, particularly with regard to sharing writing. Teachers also reported newly employing freewriting in the classroom, which they viewed as open and less structured than their previous practice; it afforded space for students to 'Just write' without specific learning objectives, success criteria and in most cases was not, as a resource for future writing, marked. A few also noted profiling revisiting and redrafting and editing and the importance of drawing on personal experience.

Teachers and professional writers reported the opportunities to plan, teach and learn together were characterised by comfortable collaborative co-mentoring relationships, based on mutual respect. A degree of spontaneity and team teaching was reported; this was recognised by the writers as a much more shared experience with fluid teacher-writer roles than they had previously experienced. Teacher learning through co-mentoring interlinked with the insights gained from Arvon: some claimed they viewed and taught writing differently as a result of these dual experiences and encompassed increased awareness of the need to profile the students' ownership of and responsibility for their own writing. For the professional writers this variously involved learning more about: the students as writers and differentiating accordingly; the national curriculum and schemes of work; and involved a shift for many from a previously predominant focus on generating writing to following through to supporting redrafting and editing. Both professional writers and teachers reflected that time pressures constrained the opportunities for extended writing and that previous practices, the curriculum and assessment also represented challenges.

Not surprisingly, given the teaching context and their responsibility for the class, teachers most commonly commented upon their 'teacher in teacher role' in the co-mentoring relationship and some felt the children primarily positioned them in this way. Whilst the need to fulfil this role position was strong, nonetheless many did adopt a teacher in writer role, occasionally in response to a professional writer's expectations of them. Writers primarily adopted writer in writer roles, although a few also stretched to encompass writer in teacher roles. These were not discrete identity positions, rather there was flexibility across and within lessons in response to the ways each saw their roles and the ways co-mentoring pairs approached the co-teaching.

Love

The double take

The hopeful smile

Hearts pounding

Out of time.

Slowly, ever – so slowly

They hear the faint sound

Of the string quartet's

Sweet harmony.

Dragging, pulling, enticing them

To take up the dance

Together!

Tina

Chapter 6: Teacher Pedagogy

6.1 Introduction

This chapter draws upon the 16 classroom observations conducted during the co-teaching phase of the narrative scheme developed by teachers and writers. Whilst broadly focused on narrative writing, each scheme of work was different both in content and duration. The observation data were intended to complement evidence derived from post-lesson teacher and writer reflections and interviews, and from teachers' written reflections. Observed lessons were digitally recorded. An observation schedule was completed by researchers which recorded teacher and writer input, teacher-writer interactions, student engagement and student response.

6.2 Process of analysis

The observation data were coded thematically by two researchers using NVivo (version 11). Key themes and their number of references are noted below, definitions are in Appendix 26.

Summary categories	Sub-codes	No. of references
Being a writer		18
Classroom layout		15
Student autonomy and choice		11
Tensions between creativity and curriculum		6
The writing process	Idea generation	26
	Just write	11
	Revising	23
	Sharing writing aloud	24
Writer-Teacher roles		53

6.3 Being a writer

The observations in eleven of the sixteen classes provided evidence of writing lessons where teachers, visiting writers or children were thinking about themselves as writers. Sometimes this involved the teacher drawing on her own experience as a writer and sharing that with the class. In one school, the teacher shared her own changed sense of being a writer with the children, she explained to her class *'when we started a lot of us, me included, did not feel I was a writer'*. The same teacher encouraged children to use free-writing, through modelling it, and recalled this in a subsequent lesson, drawing attention to the way freewriting can be a way to reduce the fear of getting it right. She told them '*You saw what I did yesterday scribble and write, and scribble and write, I need to learn to just write and not be so worried about it*'.

Sometimes, the idea of being a writer was foregrounded by giving children the chance to question the writers about writing. Frequently these questions related to preferences, or to questions about a particular text but sometimes the questions, or the answers given, more

directly related to being a writer. In one classroom, the writer responded to a child's question about whether they should plan before they write by outlining what he called the 'real process': *Most writers say they just write it. You're told to plan it out but when you're writing it goes somewhere else doesn't it? So the real process of writing is seeing where it goes and then making changes'.*

Having writers in the classroom created multiple opportunities for them to share their experiences of being a writer, or to reinforce the idea of how 'real writers' behave. In one lesson, the professional writer talked about the technique of putting barriers in the way for characters to overcome, and reminded them that '*that's what authors do.*' In another school the professional writer shared how '*the editing bit*' is what she really enjoys about writing, because '*you are polishing and honing your work to be absolutely the best piece, so a reader can pick it up read it and know what was in your head.*' The observations seem to suggest, perhaps not surprisingly, that it was the professional writers who were most likely to draw out the idea of being a writer, rather than the teachers.

6.4 Classroom layout

In five of the lessons observed, classroom layout was informal and students made flexible use of the space for writing, or used spaces outside the classroom. For example, one writing workshop took place in the drama studio, another class moved to the school hall to share writing and in a third lesson, small groups of students met with the writer in a separate room to discuss their work. In these lessons, students were more frequently seated in circles than rows when engaged in class discussion, sharing of writing or explicit teaching. In four classes students wrote on the floor, and sometimes teachers and writers joined them. One classroom had been converted into a 'camp' with tents and beanbags. This informality was in line with some teachers' stated intentions to *'change the atmosphere of writing'* and to cultivate a more relaxed workshop approach with *'a community of writers'*.

6.5 Student choice

In the context of a writing curriculum where conventional practice is for teachers to choose both the form and the topic for writing, and to determine the criteria for success, it was evident in some of the classrooms that children were being given greater freedom in writing. Children were reminded of the freedom of the brief for writing, including being told '*It's completely up to you. Just start writing and see. It's really quite free*' or that they could '*write anything else you would like to... you could go back to the swing one, the character one, the human wrapped up in cling film…*'. Sometimes teachers drew attention to the autonomy of choice they had, such as writing in past or present tense, or first or third person, or autonomy in how their writing developed from a stimulus point. One teacher, who was using Bottom's dream in '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' as a starting point advised her class they could use this *'as inspiration but don't let it limit you. Be as creative as you like, it doesn't have to be based on the play, set in a wood or in Athens, doesn't need to be the same Bottom…'*

Sometimes student autonomy reinforced the idea that there was no right or wrong in the writing task, and that they should not worry about this. One teacher told her class '*This is for*

you. You don't have to read it out. Don't worry about crossing out; don't worry about spelling or punctuation' and the same teacher commented to the class that '*The best thing about English is there's no right answer.* In another class, the teacher reminded the children that *'There's no right or wrong. I want you to use your minds, use your brain, use your imagination and enjoy yourself'*.

6.6 Tensions between creativity and the curriculum

A small cluster of codes in the observations indicated tensions between the goals of creative activity and the demands of the curriculums. Occasionally, the planned co-teaching lesson was disrupted by other school requirements, such as an assembly, or in one case, a mandatory Spelling Bee which had to be undertaken in the lesson. In one lesson, the observer noted a tension between the way the teacher was trying to use the creative freewriting task to fulfil a GCSE text as a stimulus for creative writing in a department with high expectations about accountability and outcomes. The same tension was evident in a primary school lesson when the teacher interrupted the professional writer's talk about editing with the children to remind them that they needed to look at '*the technical bits. All your ideas are great, but now we need to look at punctuation and spelling*.'

6.7 The writing process

The most prominent theme concerned attention to the process of writing. This included idea generation before writing, initial drafting, revising and sharing writing. The emphasis on writing process is in line with teachers' stated intentions following the Arvon pedagogy session when aspects such as generating ideas from an initial stimulus, freewriting, peer- and self-evaluation were identified by 12 of the 16 teachers for specific future focus: *'the teaching/learning focus will be on the writing process rather than the writing itself'* .

In 11 lessons observed, for example, a key focus was on helping students generate ideas for writing. This involved the use of a range of stimuli and pre-writing activities, often deployed in combination and supported by paired and whole-class discussion. Initial stimuli included artefacts made in class or brought from home; pictures; story dice; text extracts; personal anecdotes; suggested scenarios and prompt questions. Extended visualisation exercises were also used by several teachers and writers to focus attention and engage students' imaginations. In six lessons, real texts were used as prompts or explicit models for students' subsequent writing.

Freewriting was used as means of generating initial text in six of the lessons observed. In these lessons students were encouraged to forget about spelling and other cosmetic features and to write spontaneously without stopping, usually from a given starter. The stated learning objective for one lesson, for example, was to '*lock away your inner editor and free write'*. In some classes, students wrote in dedicated 'freewriting' or 'ideas' books which were not assessed. Freewriting episodes were led primarily by writers, often with high-energy prompting and encouragement, and in these sessions teachers tended to write alongside students rather than circulate. The emphasis was on creative freedom: *'Just get writing. Don't*

think about it. Don't worry. There's no such thing as right and wrong with this. Be wild. Don't be all controlled. Go for it!'

The process of revising writing formed the main or only teaching focus in eight of the lessons observed and 'editing' was frequently the stated learning objective. In one school, a full day's writing workshop was devoted to the development and improvement of stories about character. The experience of professional writers often provided the starting point for discussion about the purpose and process of revision. Writers shared their own revising strategies and examples of their edited texts or their publisher's notes. In some lessons students were invited to help edit writers' texts or suggest improvements to their teachers' first drafts. On occasions students were also engaged in evaluative discussion about the effect of particular choices and the reasoning behind suggested changes. The emphasis in these lessons was on revising for meaning and impact: *'not thinking about spelling and punctuation but words and content…the creative part'*.

In 12 of the lessons observed, students were encouraged to share their writing aloud and to offer feedback to others. Teachers sometimes shared their writing alongside, and writers frequently did so. The sharing process took a large part of some lessons and in one instance was the focus for the whole. Teachers and writers tended to invite volunteers to read aloud, but on occasions students were selected and in one case formal sharing by all students formed the culmination of an extended writing workshop. The feedback offered by peers, teachers and writers was usually brief and positive but sometimes more detailed critique was provided with suggested revisions. Teachers often drew on the expertise of writers for evaluative comments.

6.8 Writer-Teacher roles

The co-teaching observations provided a valuable setting in which to consider how the teacher and the writer managed their respective roles in the lesson. There were multiple examples where the teacher and the writer appeared very comfortable working together, co-leading the lesson and shifting roles as needed. One observation noted how one teacher-writer pair '*looked and behaved extremely comfortably in each other's presence, with neither one taking over or undermining the other*'. Other observations note a relaxed interplay between the teacher and the writer, where they co-lead and dialogue with the class together, and where they '*convey shared purpose and take equal role in prompting/supporting students as they write*'. It was also evident in several lessons where the teacher and writer positioned themselves as fellow writers. As one would expect, there were many examples of the writer adopting a writer role, sharing their own experiences of writing, sharing their own writing, and writing themselves. This was the dominant role position appropriated by the writers and often the teacher supported this.

There were also times when the teacher was very much appropriating a teacher role. In some instances, this related to class management where the teachers were often more confident handling problematic incidents; or when teachers re-focused the lesson back to curriculum. One teacher told the observer that she had had to struggle **not** to play her usual teacher role, saying that she had had to '*bolt herself to her chair in order not to look over students*'

shoulders and advise and correct - a new position for her.' There were also examples of the writers confidently adopting a teacher role, but largely in relation to class management, rather than learning or curriculum goals. In one lesson, the writer was observed watching the class during a writing task, '*monitoring like a teacher'*, and in another the writer was very direct in telling a student to *'Find a space by yourself. Do it now. You're wasting my time'.*

For some of the teacher-writer pairings, the co-teaching was conducted less by co-operation but through a friendly, but firm, segregation of roles(see chapter 5 for more details) . In one lesson, the observer described *'a lesson of two parts*', where the lesson was divided into two distinct sections led discretely by the teacher then the writer. In a different pairing, the writer was not keen to adopt a teacherly role, and signalled this by asking the children to call her by her given name. The teacher retained control in this lesson and did not position herself as a writer.

6.9 Discussion

The lesson observations allow us to consider how the Arvon approach to writing played out pedagogically in the lessons, and how the teachers and writers co-taught and co-mentored each other. The number of observations of pedagogical practices which linked to the process of writing is significant as there are direct links here to the Arvon approach to writing. In particular, the Arvon residential encouraged freewriting and the sharing of writing, both of which figured in the observed lessons. Although the curriculum itself does include attention to the writing process, the freewriting and sharing of writing are less common in conventional practice than attention to generating ideas, suggesting transfer of practice from Arvon to the classroom.

The co-planning of the teaching unit may not have been as successful, in that some writers left this responsibility to the teachers; some teachers did not give the writers room to be involved; and in some cases a division of responsibility was achieved by reverting to conventional teacher-writer roles. From the observations, there is tentative evidence that the teachers and writers are not fully aligned in shared goals for writing, particularly where curriculum requirements feel at odds with creative goals. There is room for further work explicitly trying to articulate and agree shared goals.

The co-teaching element of this project was unusual putting both teachers and writers into a classroom context which is not in line with their usual roles. The observations show considerable versatility and flexibility in co-teaching, with some very constructive role-swapping and reciprocal interplay between the teachers and the writers. There were also situations where the sharing of roles was less mutually supportive, or even not really apparent. The data provides a rich springboard for further more focused consideration of how teachers and writers can work together collaboratively when writers are in schools.

Jealousy

The lingering smell of chemicals,
Disinfectant, burning chlorine,
The aftertaste of apple perfume
Has invaded my house.
Like pernicious woodworm,
It is in the structure.
Irretrievable
It inhabits the splintered edges
Of the un-sanded doorframe,
The catch and snag
Of tights, the new cricket shirt.
It has infiltrated the fridge,
Even the final acidic tomato,
That oozing, sagging wrinkle among
plump Mediterranean scarlet.
It follows me, hisses,
It’s not fair. Whispers,
It’s not fair. It’s not fair.

Sally

Chapter 7: Student outcomes

7.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the analysis of the 32 focus group interviews conducted with students in project classes during the summer term. The interviews were intended to explore outcomes in relation to motivation, confidence and perceived writing skills and to complement statistical evidence derived from students' written outcomes. Each focus group comprised six students and was mixed in terms of gender and writing ability. The same students were interviewed on two occasions as the project progressed: once following their teachers' return from the Arvon course and again towards the end of the taught narrative scheme. Initial interviews therefore explored responses to the early phase during which teachers tried out activities prompted by their experience at Arvon; the second set of interviews explored students' responses to the scheme of work developed and co-taught by teacher and linked writer. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The questions asked were similar on both occasions (see Appendices 16 and 17) and focused on the following constructs: perceptions of writing and writers, perceptions of teaching and learning, understanding of writing process, enjoyment and motivation and confidence and perceived writing skills.

7.2 Process of analysis

Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and responses analysed inductively to identify themes within these summary categories. All students' comments were coded and sub-coded jointly by two researchers. Coding decisions were agreed through a process of independent and collaborative coding, and refined over several iterations. Main codes and references allocated to each are shown in Appendix 26. Key themes which were common across all age groups are described below.

7.3 Perceptions of writing and writers

Students' perceptions of good writing, and the skills good writers need, showed some development over the course of the project. In early interviews, for example, students tended to define narrative in terms of pre-defined structures: *'If you structure it properly…you put a beginning, a build up to the problem and then like a twist and then a resolution'* (Year 8). Similarly, insofar as poetry was defined at all, initial references were to particular forms such as *'limericks, haikus, riddles'* (Year 7). During later interviews there was less emphasis on standard structure - *'we don't do story mountains anymore'* (Year 5) - and greater emphasis on personal interpretation: '*(Before), a lot of our pieces of writing were quite similar…in storyline and stuff. Now it's more free and different' (*Year 8). Narrative fiction was observed to build on life experience: '*I have used life experiences and all those things, because you can't just make (stories) out of nowhere*' (Year 9).
Where poetry featured, it was recognised as a genre with wider possibilities than previously assumed: *'It can be any length…you can do it in a different style…it's not in the same format…it's not in full sentences'* (Year 4/5/6).

There was also some elaboration of perceived success criteria. During initial interviews students of all ages defined good writing in terms of specific linguistic components. Key concerns included word choice, descriptive detail, sentence variety and use of literary techniques, particularly *'ambitious vocabulary*' (Year 8) or *'wow words'* (Year 6*); 'loads of adjectives and loads of* verbs' (Year 3); *'a lot of similes and metaphors and alliteration'* (Year 4/5/6)*; 'noun phrases'* (Year 5); *'the power of three'* (Year 9), '*various sentences like from subordinate clauses to simple sentences to embedded complex sentences, things like that'* (Year 8). In later interviews, there was new mention of the importance of characterisation and perspective-taking:

> (The writer) told us how important the names of the characters were, and getting a back story for them, even if you don't use them (Year 6);
> When you are choosing a perspective to narrate it from you can choose something that you maybe identify with, because then you'll be able to express the character in a way that's accurate (Year 8)

Some students claimed that increased sharing of writing and feedback had strengthened their understanding of what works: '*Hearing from different people has helped me a lot because I understand what's good and what's not as good'* (Year 8)

There was also greater recognition of the writers' craft. Almost all students initially judged that anyone could be a good writer if they *'put their mind to it'* (33 references), and whilst several felt you needed *'some sort of talent'* (Year 9), they had difficulty defining what this might be. In later interviews, following writers' classroom involvement, there was new reference to authors' *'professional'* expertise, particularly process skills: *'like how she plans and how she writes it down'* (Year 7), *'how to change it'* (Year 8); and '*what qualities people look for in writing'* (Year 9). It was more widely acknowledged that good writers revise their writing '*a lot'* (see 7.4 below).

7.4 Perceptions of teaching and learning

Students in all focus groups observed changes in teaching over the course of the project which the majority had found helpful for writing. A shared theme was the perceived relaxation of pressure and prescription: '*(she's) taking the pressure off us*' (Year 3); *'she's been a lot more open…(less) precise about what we're going to do'* (Year 5); *'it's less kind of about rules and it's more about creativity' (*Year 8). Freewriting was cited as a new and liberating approach: *'You don't really have any limitations…basically you're free to determine your outcome'* (Year 9).

It was observed that teaching had become less didactic: teachers had '*backed off a bit'* and were less inclined to '*spoon-feed'* (Year 9), offering 'clues' or prompts instead, and encouraging independent thinking:

> (Before), she just gave us something to write down and we just wrote it. And now it's kind of thinking of our own ideas (Year 4/5/6);
> I think she's helping us more by not helping us as much (Year 9).

Students noticed 'more active' and 'interactive' approaches, identifying sharing of writing (33 references), talk partners and edit buddies as helpful, and particularly formative feedback from both teachers (37 references) and peers (26 references): '*The whole classroom has become more relaxed – you can share ideas and feedback* (Year 8)*'*. They appreciated more time and *'space to think'* and '*just write',* without having to '*worry about trying to get bits done right then and there'* (Year 8). Where teachers positioned themselves as co-writers and co-learners, students also valued the sense of shared endeavour:

> *You don't feel as distant, like they're a teacher, they know what they're doing 100% all the time. You kind of learn that they're not (and) they don't* (Year 8);
> *She can learn at the same time, but then she can teach us what she's learned* (Year 3)

Students in all groups also noted the fresh perspectives and ideas that professional writers brought to the classroom. At one level, they appreciated a new 'voice': it was '*nice to have someone different in the room'* (Year 9) '*so that you can learn in different ways'* (Year 3). At another, they valued writers' 'professional view'. As successful authors, *'you trust them'* (Year 9). They were assumed to have: *'more idea about stories (than teachers)'* (Year 3); expert knowledge of *'what works well'* (Year 9); and *'good ways to do it'* (Year 4/5/6). Writers' approaches to teaching were seen as especially helpful for idea generation. Their use of 'fun

scenarios', 'stories', modelled examples and suggested possibilities *'makes your imagination run wild'* (Year 8). They also introduced new drafting and editing strategies:

> (The writer) said just to keep on writing, don't stop. Just don't think about it and then it'll come together (Year 8);
> (The writer taught us) how to cut in, like cropping a picture but you like cut into what you're actually supposed to be writing about, other than like trailing off (Year 5);
> (The writer told us) how to zoom in on our stories and make them better…like put all the detail in (Year 3)

According to one Year 3 group, having a writer in the classroom: *'gives you ideas'; 'gives you a voice'; 'gives you an idea of what you want to do when you're older'; '(gives you) a sense of what you need to do (to be a writer)'; 'helps us improve stuff'; 'sharpens the mind'* and *'inspires us'.*

However, not all students welcomed all aspects of change in teaching. Some preferred more structure and time to plan: *'I like having a subject to write about more than making up something, because I find it hard* (Year 5)*'.* A few found professional writers *'just a bit over the top'* and *'intimidating'*: *'you feel like oh this has got to be perfect, and if I read it out and it's not good…he's going to criticise me'* (Year 8).

7.5 Understanding of writing process

There was a noticeable shift in students' definitions of writing process over the course of the project and some evidence that project activities had encouraged more flexible strategies.

Whilst preparation for writing was most frequently described in terms of written planning or 'note-taking' (62 references), there was greater emphasis in later interviews on warm-up activities and the use of 'ideas books' and 'magpie sheets' as starting points for writing. Visiting writers helped '*get ideas going'* with whole-class talk and personal examples: *'he is helping us warm up…so like set the scene and set the characters and stuff…so you're not like writing completely random'* (Year 9). There were many more references to freewriting as a useful strategy for generating ideas: *'you can discover your imagination, and then just discover new things like in your brain'* (Year 3)*; 'it lets my ideas flow'* (Year 8)*; 'it sets my mind free'* (Year 9). Some students suggested they now relied on written planning less: *'I used to like to plan, but now I think I can go straight into it'* (Year 5)*; 'I just left my plan and went straight onto my story'* (Year 3)*; 'sometimes it's easier to just write'* (Year 8).

As with prewriting process, responses in later interviews suggest that students encountered more flexible approaches to text production and had greater awareness of how texts are constructed gradually over time. Whilst the emphasis during initial interviews was on one-off production, there were more references in later interviews to multi-drafting, 'building' text from small ideas or 'adding layers' in stages (27 references). Initial drafting was more frequently perceived as exploratory, providing a basis for subsequent refinement (25 references):

> You should get your initial ideas down first…then build on it…then re-draft (Year 8)
> Just write something that's quite simple and then start to expand…build on it…then you can gradually just carry on adding more detail (Year 6*).*

It was widely acknowledged that good writing is not produced in one go: *'It's not just write a piece of work. You have to go through a lot of editing and publishing and everything'* (Year 8).

Editing was a specific focus in many of the co-taught schemes and students' explanations of text improvement were noticeably more elaborate towards the end of the project. Initially students of all ages tended to describe editing in terms of surface features. Predominant concerns were spelling, punctuation and grammar (37 references) and word choice (26 references). Many did not expect to revise extensively, if at all: *'We don't usually make major changes because that's why we plan it out'* (Year 4/5/6)*; 'if I'm honest I don't really read through'* (Year 9). Some expected their teacher to do it: *'she edits it'* (Year 3)*; '(she) does the EBI* [Even Better If] *and the WWW* [What Went Well] *and then she gives you 5 minutes to quickly write what you've done wrong'* (Year 8). In later interviews, however, there were almost twice as many references to improving writing, and revising goals were more clearly articulated. There was less emphasis on final proofreading and greater emphasis on repeated rewriting until it was *'pitch perfect'* in *'every little detail'* (Year 6). Some students described making multiple drafts, *'cutting big sections out'* (Year 5), or writing *'whole chunks again'* (Year 8). Others claimed to reflect more critically on content and audience:

> Rather than just focusing on like grammatical errors I tried to not look past it, still edit that out, but focus more on actual content of the writing because that's more important (Year 8);
> What I started to do in class was like actually think about what I was writing…like more about what I'm actually trying to get across to the reader (Year 9).

There was new mention of deleting material that didn't *'lead to anything'* or contribute to *'what you're trying to do'* (Year 8)*:*

> You have to miss out the bits that you don't really need…they might be exciting but you don't need them (Year 3);
> If something doesn't make sense I'll just take that out…like quality over quantity, so you don't really want too much, you just want to have it nice and snappy (Year 8).

Editing was also more likely to be described as an interactive process involving peer response and 'feedback from the class instead of just (the teacher)' (Year 5). Many students claimed to have learned both 'how to edit your work' (Year 3/4) and that 'you do a lot of it'! (Year 8).

7.6 Enjoyment and motivation

One clear message across all interviews was the enjoyment students derived from project activities. Almost all described recent changes in teaching as liberating and 'fun': 'It's a lot more free and it's not as strict, because we get to kind of relax and just have fun and just write' (Year 8); '(writing before) was pretty boring, but this is more exciting…I like it when I

can write without having to think about it' (Year 9). Students attached particular significance to creative freedom (53 references) and use of imagination (27 references):

> I just like being free when I write…I like being in my head when I'm writing. I like writing what I'm thinking, what I like…whatever I want (Year 5);
> The thing I most enjoy about writing is how much you can use your imagination…it really is just something of your mind that will go the reader and say 'wow'! (Year 6);
> I really, really do like creative writing because I can just kind of set my mind free…because it's my piece (and) it's my point of view (Year 9).

Greater creative license was associated with increased ownership (32 references): 'it doesn't matter what other people think, it's about what you think' (Year 6); '(I enjoy it when) I'm writing down how I actually feel and I'm not told to write it…because it's my own writing' (Year 7); 'I just like the fact that you can write whatever you want and you don't have a fear of it being bad…because it's yours' (Year 9). The introduction of personal notebooks which were not assessed was seen as supportive in this respect. Such writing was also described as emotionally engaging: it was possible to 'get lost in writing' (Year 8), 'start feeling the same emotions as your character' (Year 3/4) and 'want to carry on writing it. It's just that sort of emotion and connection with it that makes you want to build on it (Year 9).

New approaches to generating and improving text were widely welcomed. Whereas many students 'hated' routine planning before writing or 'correcting' afterwards, almost all enjoyed freewriting: 'I liked the part where we just kept writing and didn't stop, because it really let my ideas flow' (Year 8). Many also found drafting and redrafting more enjoyable than final editing: 'I've enjoyed doing drafts, because before we didn't do drafts and it's a lot harder to edit it and find every detail' (Year 5).

Professional writers were perceived as encouraging – 'by saying you can do it' (Year 3) – and reassuring: 'he said it doesn't mean that ours is wrong - it's just the way we think of it' (Year 3/4/5). They also provided inspiring and enthusiastic role models: 'he was well enthusiastic…it makes you want to do it more' (Year 9); 'you want to put your best into it…you want to make an impression to show that you're capable of the same level when you get older' (Year 8).

Some students observed changes in classroom behaviour as a consequence of project activities: 'People mucking about has gone down – they enjoy the tasks more so they're putting more into it' (Year 8). Others claimed their attitude to writing had changed or that they were more motivated to write at home
:

> In September I didn't really like writing, now I do (Year 3/4);
> I used to really hate writing challenges, because it said write about this and it was so annoying to have to stay in the boundaries…so I enjoyed it when it was completely what you want, no set task (Year 6).

However, enjoyment was not unqualified. A few students found freewriting stressful: 'These past few weeks have been rushed writing. I like to plan and just pause and think' (Year 9); 'the 'just write' thing is freeing in some ways but also it pins you down…often I don't have ideas

straight away' (Year 8). For some, the emphasis on editing was painful: '(it) takes loads of time' and 'makes you stress' (Year 3); 'having to make some edits, I was just like oh I have to do it all over again' (Year 5). Less confident writers did not enjoy sharing their writing aloud: 'I feel like I just can't compete' (Year 9). Others found unhelpful feedback from peers irritating: 'you ignore it because sometimes they just point out all your missing full stops and that's it' (Year 9).

7.7 Confidence and perceived writing skills

Whilst there was little difference in the percentage of students who described themselves as 'good' writers at the start and end of the project, many claimed their confidence had improved and almost all were pleased with the writing they had produced:

> Usually I'm not confident…because I don't think I'm very good…but because of this little project I feel a bit more confident with my work because occasionally it's actually quite good and it makes sense (Year 9)

Notably, there were three times as many references (126) to perceived progress in the later interviews: 'I think over, say, the last six, seven weeks I've improved drastically…it's had a massive impact' (Year 9); 'It's made my levels go higher' (year 7); 'the orange books and all the new ways we're being helped have definitely helped me a lot' (Year 4/5/6). In particular students identified improvements in ideas (22 references); descriptive detail (19 references); technical aspects (19 references) and vocabulary choice (16 references): 'I find it easier to think of things to write' (Year 8); 'before I didn't use as much description as I do now' (Year 4/5/6); 'I've definitely improved on ending and beginning sentences, paragraphs, punctuation, lots of things…all because of (the teacher) and the support she's given us in our story writing' (Year 5); I know how to…use a wider range of vocabulary' (Year 8).
Students often associated progress and increased confidence with shifts in classroom writing process. Greater emphasis on prewriting activities had helped with fluent idea generation:

> Warming up before you're about to do your piece helps my mind get going and I'm writing better stuff (Year 9)
> I just think because the writers came in I know how to maybe write better…instead of just putting like one idea and just sticking with it, you can put multiple ideas and then choose whatever one you want, and edit it (Year 8)

Collaborative approaches had made writing 'less competitive': 'if you have a problem you can just ask [your partner] and they can help you' (Year 3); mutual support and constructive feedback helped 'you feel nice about what you've done' (Year 8). When teachers shared their own writing problems, students identified with them and felt reassured:' People think ah she's an English teacher, she should be confident, proud in her work, but she's not, she has insecurities about her work and obviously we can relate to her' (Year 8)

There is some evidence that editing skills improved as a consequence of project activities. Students of all ages claimed they were more likely to re-read and check their work than previously. Some described more critical review, deleting unnecessary material and making

every sentence count: *'In the past I used to…just throw everything in there, you know, ramble. But now I think about every sentence I write and if I feel it doesn't fit…I do cross it out - that makes for very messy writing!* '(Year 9);

However, a few students did not feel they had gained in assurance or skill. Sharing writing aloud could undermine fragile self-confidence: *'It's kind of closed me off even more because I'm so scared that other people would judge it badly'* (Year 9). A minority who found freewriting difficult felt their writing had deteriorated.

7.8 The Randomised Controlled Trial

7.8.1 The sample

The sample for the Randomised Controlled trial comprised 32 classes in 26 schools who had agreed to participate in the project. As involvement in the project required teachers to be willing to give up a week of their school holidays to attend the Arvon residential, it is important to acknowledge there may be a bias in the sampling towards teachers who are already favourably predisposed towards creative writing or with pre-existing experience as writers. The randomisation process was undertaken using a random number generator (http://www.psychicscience.org/random.aspx), and the primary and secondary schools were randomised separately to ensure a balanced sample of both. The final sample was comprised of 32 teachers, all female, and 711 students, as outlined as below.

	Boys		Girls		Pupil Premium		Total
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	
Intervention	188	52	175	48	87	24%	363
Comparison	167	48	181	52	94	29%	348

Overview of the student sample

7.8.2 The measures

A pre-test/post-test design was used to measure the effect of the intervention. Two writing tests were adapted from a previous RCT (see Appendix 2) and were designed to be accessible to all students. To avoid variability in how the tests were undertaken, the tests were all administered by a trained team of testers, who had clear guidance on how to conduct the test and a standard PowerPoint. This created greater assurance of parity in testing across the sample. The tests were marked independently outside the project team by experienced teacher markers, trained for the project by a lead marker. The writing samples were fully anonymised and blind-marked. A systematic marking process was adopted, where an initial sample of ten scripts were used for training and initial moderation, selected to be representative of the range of attainment. Once marking was complete, a 10% sample was double-marked to establish marker consistency, and then a further random set of 20 scripts at pre and at post-test time points were double-marked by the lead marker as a cross-check of marker consistency. As the marking took place when a new writing assessment was being introduced at Key Stage 2, the writing was marked using the more familiar Key Stage 2 criteria, and following the guidance in the 2015 Key Stage 2 English Writing – Moderation booklet, provided by the Standards and Testing Agency (Standards and Testing Agency 2015). The writing was marked against three sub-criteria (Sentence Structure and Punctuation; Text

Structure and Organisation; and Composition and Effect) and given separate marks for each criterion, as well as a total score, so that it was possible to determine if any particular gains had been made in any particular strand.

7.8.3 The results

The descriptive statistics below provide an overview of the outcomes of the intervention, using gain score to describe the progress made between pre-test and post-test.

	PRE-TEST				POST-TEST			
	SSP	**TSO**	**C&E**	**Total**	**SSP**	**TSO**	**C&E**	**Total**
Intervention	510	573	779	1865	654	730	915	2294
	1.4	1.6	2.1	5.1	1.8	2	2.5	6.3
Gain Score					**0.4**	**0.4**	**0.4**	**1.2**
Comparison	653	729	931	2310	917	925	1247	3089
	1.9	2.1	2.7	6.6	2.6	2.7	3.8	8.9
Gain Score					**0.7**	**0.6**	**1.1**	**2.3**

The Gain Score Results

The data shows that the gain scores for the comparison group are higher than for the intervention, and that this holds across all three of the sub-criteria, although the differences are not large. Rather surprisingly, given the emphasis on creative writing in the intervention, it is *Composition and Effect* where the difference is most strong. The differences between the two groups are represented graphically in Figure 1 below.

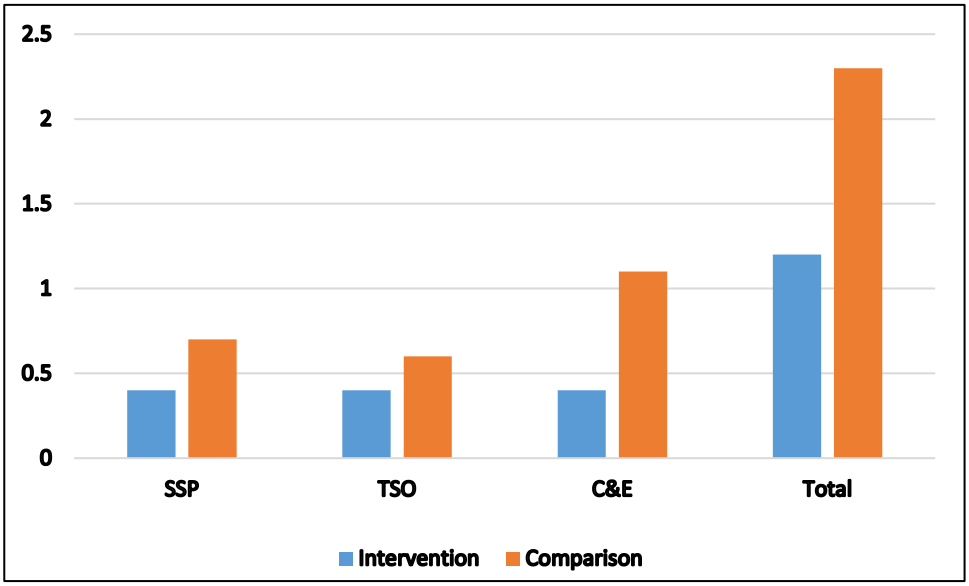


Figure 1: The Differences in Outcomes between the Intervention and Comparison groups

Further descriptive analysis shows substantial differences at class level, with gain scores varying quite widely in both comparison and intervention groups. This includes classes where there is a negative gain score, which highlights that writing performance may be less consistent over time than other aspects of learning where, once mastery is secured, repeated performance is more likely. What these data show more strongly, however, is the effect of

the teacher on student progress. The table below presents the gain score by class and ranked highest to lowest by intervention or comparison group. This makes visible that variability by class is evident in both groups, although the higher improvement is marginally more characteristic of the comparison group, and a negative gain score a little stronger in the intervention group.

Intervention Gain Score	7.3	7.2	4.8	4.4	3.6	2.3	1.9	1.7	1.3	0.9	0.7	0	-0.3	-0.9	-1.5	-4.1
Comparison Gain Score	8.0	6.7	5.0	4.3	3.1	2.2	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.6	0.4	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.7	-1.9

The Variability in Gain Score by Class

Although the descriptive data indicate that the comparison group made more progress between the pre and post-test time-points, in order to determine if the results are statistically significant, inferential tests were used. Because the data represents students 'nested' in classes who could not therefore be randomly assigned as individuals to comparison or intervention groups, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is most appropriate, because by using the pre-test scores as the co-variate it controls for pre-existing differences between the comparison and intervention groups (such as higher attainment at the starting point in one group than the other). It is important to note that this represents a robustly strict approach to the data. When ANCOVA controls for the covariate it also removes some of the treatment effect, reducing the likelihood of obtaining a significant result. Field (2013:479) explains that introducing the covariate to the analysis allows us to *'reduce the error variance, allowing us to more accurately assess the effect of the experimental manipulation'*. This analysis indicates that the difference between the intervention and the comparison group is statistically significant, with a very small effect size of 0.030.

A further level of analysis was undertaken using multi-level modelling, because it is another statistical technique which can handle clustered or nested data such as in this study (ie the children are in classes, where there may be a group or class effect, rather than an individual effect). Multi-level models recognise that effects can occur at different levels, or hierarchies, and that these can interact. A Contextual Value Added model was used with the post-test score as the outcome and the pre-test score as statistical predictor. What this shows is a negative effect size of the intervention of -0.34, but it also shows that 44% of the variance in the results is at teacher level. In other words, the impact of the intervention on students' written outcomes is not consistent across the whole sample: instead there are strong differences by class (as was evident in the descriptive statistics).

7.9 Discussion

The qualitative evidence from interviews suggest that project activities had a marked impact on students' enjoyment and motivation. Connections between motivation and achievement are well-established (Hayes, 1996; Pajares, 2003; Graham, Berninger & Fan, 2007). As learners themselves observed, *'if you don't enjoy it, you're not going to learn much'.* Increased choice and more time to *'just write'* may not help students meet specified criteria or equip them for time-controlled tasks. Findings highlight the potential conflict between the kind of freewriting

that students enjoy and teachers' obligation to deliver requirements and prepare students for assessed tasks, raising questions about the sustainability of these approaches. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that quite small shifts in teacher/student positioning can make a big difference to student response – for example, when teachers position themselves as co-learners, defer assessment and give students greater responsibility for evaluation and editing, they appear to foster more committed engagement.

In relation to students' writing confidence, the findings highlight the potential benefits of increased opportunities for collaborative review and feedback at formative stages of writing. However, the success of these opportunities is dependent on shared understanding of evaluation criteria. Students were not always confident about what makes good writing, relying on the judgement of others or their teachers: *'it's not for me to say'*. Some students found peer review less helpful because feedback was too general. The critical role of classroom talk about language and effects is highlighted – in particular, discussion about criteria over and above required components, vocabulary choice and accuracy.

The findings also underline the importance of flexible classroom writing procedures and dedicated time for idea generation and revision. The difficulties students associated with having to generate ideas from scratch or produce finished texts in one go testify to the disabling nature of tightly circumscribed or timed writing tasks. Equally, standardised classroom writing models which emphasise pre-planning and cut short the processes of evaluation and revision do not help students develop the skills necessary to craft writing. Research has also shown that school students typically revise little and at superficial levels (Berninger et al 1996; Sharples 1999). Evidence of gains in revising skill have significant implications for improved written outcomes, and this aspect of the project merits further development.

The evidence from student testimonies in the focus group interviews may seem paradoxical in light of the RCT evidence that there was a small, statistically significant negative effect of the intervention is students' written outcomes, with an effect size of 0.34 (as in the CVA multilevel model). However, as with all statistical results, it is important to interpret these with caution, particularly taking account of these broader findings in the qualitative data. Many of the gains that students identified, such as improved motivation, creativity, ownership and understanding of process, are not easily measured by standard assessment criteria, nor do they translate automatically into well-organised, accurate writing. Whilst good writing depends on such gains, follow-through inevitably takes time and may not be realised in written outcomes over the course of a short intervention.

Underpinning the project was a causal assumption that participation in the Arvon residential and working with professional writers will change student outcomes in writing. This is probably too simplistic a causal model, especially since effecting any change in education is always a challenge, and more consideration needs to be given to the causal mechanisms, and the time needed, to translate the energy and positivity of the Arvon experience into a transformed pedagogy for teaching writing.

Another reason for the lack of improvement in student written outcomes following the intervention may be that the kind of writing valued in the Arvon experience is not valued in school, or at least not what is valued in National Curriculum assessment. As the Arvon values indicate, and the qualitative analyses of the teachers' experiences of the residential and the professional writers' reveal, a powerful strand of the writing undertaken at Arvon was writing from personal experience, writing from the heart, for personal benefit and self-understanding, not for achieving curriculum goals. As one writer put it, '*writing can be a way of exploring their own life in relation to the world.'* The testimonies of the teachers at the project CPD days following Arvon frequently drew out examples of children's writing which was deeply personal, suggesting there may have been more of this kind of writing, and thus less time afforded to curriculum writing.

Linked to the point above, another reason for the absence of greater improvement in the intervention group may be because the teachers did less explicit teaching of writing than usual because they were focusing more on freewriting and on the more obviously pleasurable aspects of writing drawn from the Arvon experience. It is important to remember that in terms of learning, there is a substantial difference between a group of teachers who have already mastered many of the skills of writing, and who have had more experience of texts, and students who are still learning and need input. It is also worth noting that at the Arvon residential the writing tutors gave the teachers quite substantive input. It may be that the differential between the two groups is explained by this reduction in explicit taught input.

Lion

Tick follows tock, follows tick follows tock.
It's time.
I yawn widely flashing my extensive array
Of perfectly formed teeth at the gaping crowd,
Smiling inwardly at their hushed awe.

Shaking my luxurious locks,
I rise, stretching out,
Flexing my needle sharp claws,
Over the smooth concrete ground.

Head high, I place one great paw
Momentously in front of the other,
Heading out to my main stage.
The crown rushes round.
I never disappoint.

Cameras flash as I reveal myself into the beyond,
And reaching down deep (all for my fans of course),
I summon my most terrifying roar.
The very beings of my audience tremble
As I make eye contact with them one by one.

They shriek with delight.
I smirk.
Another job well done.
I saunter over to my other platform.
Flop down to sleep.
Next show is in 30 minutes.
See you again then.

Ruth

Chapter 8: Professional Writers

8.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on the interviews with the professional writers, those who led the Arvon week and writers who co-mentored with the teachers in schools. The sample is composed of 20 interviews in total: an interview before and after the intervention for each of the co-mentoring writers, plus two interviews each with Steve and Alicia at the beginning and end of the Arvon week. Apart from the interviews at Arvon, the interviews were all conducted by telephone.

The interview schedule (see Appendices 4, 5 and 6) were designed to probe the following constructs: pedagogical subject knowledge; content subject knowledge; perceptions of writing; pedagogical practices; knowledge/experience of the writing process; writer identity; teacher identity; and co-mentoring.

8.2 Process of analysis

The coding followed the principles of bottom-up inductive coding, with initial open coding of the data, followed by axial coding, clustering the data into related themes. The first coding step was an independent open coding of two interviews by the two coders, followed by a discussion of the codes attributed. A third interview was then coded independently by both coders, and a further meeting held where an in-depth discussion agreed on the codes and sub-codes to be used. The coding was then undertaken by the two coders, each coding half the interviews and generating new open codes where the data so justified. Data codes and their definitions are presented in Appendix 26.

The chapter is divided into two sections: *Writing Identity and Practices*, and *Working with Teachers*. *Writing Identity and Practices* includes statements by writers relating to issues of identity, be that writer identity, teacher identity, or any other identities; reflections on being a writer, the trajectory to being a writer, and growth as a writer, including comments on enjoyment or non-enjoyment of types of writing; and reflections on the process of writing, for example the cognitive processes of planning, translating, and revising, also including creative or social processes.

Working with Teachers includes statements by writers which refer to drawing on their own practices as writers as a model for students; comments which refer to creating classroom or out of classroom opportunities for playing and taking risks; reflections on creating communities of writers in the classroom; comments which refer to encouraging teachers and children to understand the process of writing; comments which refer to writers/teachers drawing attention to the craft of writing via text-based characteristics, for example vocabulary, story-structure, showing not telling, and using adjectives sparely.

8.3 Writing identity and practices

The data analysis resulted in the clustering of writers' comments about identity and practices into three thematic groups:

- Writer identity
- Perceptions of writing
- Knowledge and experience of writing

Each of these groups had their own set of sub-themes, and is reported separately.

8.3.1 Writer identity

Not surprisingly, **reflections on self as a writer** contained more references across the interview data than any other code that we used (114 references by 14 writers). We speculate that this was the case because writers enjoyed telling their personal stories of development, including the rewarding aspects of being a writer, such as publication, but at the same not

leaving out the '*struggle*' of writing, including personal and professional pitfalls that they encounter and overcome along the way. Some of the writers knew from a very early age that they wanted to be writers, even as young as six. For most, however, the need to write came later in life, even, in the case of one writer, after marriage and children, in their '*late 20's/early 30's*'.

Writers reporting on their belonging to **a community of writers** was also similarly varied. Nearly all the writers spoke of the critical importance of meeting another writer who gave them early encouragement. For one writer it was meeting Mal Peet. In the case of one poet, he invited Ian McMillan to take a school workshop. In the case of another poet, she met Graham Mort in her role as secretary of NAWE. In the case of another, she sent her poems to Selima Hill, because '*she was my friend's mum*'. At some point, the need for collaboration becomes more formalised. These communities take different forms and styles. Where writers meet face to face with their peers, they tend to commit to meeting in groups, like a guild of co-experts, just as we might expect to find natural networks of shared interest coalescing in other professions.

Writers' reflections on their **authorship**, including an occasional sense of loss of ownership of their work, revealed some highly personal statements about who they think their writing is *for*. Some writers report that they write for no one other than themselves. Writers' comments about themselves as **professional writers** were also evidence of their wide range of experiences, both personal and professional, that brought them to the moment when they began to think of themselves as 'professional'. For some this is based, in part, on a sense of length of service to their craft. For some writers, a sense of audience is vital influence to their work, not as something to '*work against*', but to negotiate with. Writers consider themselves 'professional' *because* of, not in spite of needing to '*compromise*' with others, be they clients or more close collaborators. Writers' professional identity is therefore something that is enacted through a process of negotiation with others, treating the writing as a '*job like any other*'.

When writers spoke of the **critical incidents** that had shaped them they did so in the form of highly personal anecdotes and stories. Some of these relate to specific incidents in individuals' lives, while others were about the context in which they grew up as they began to write. One poet made a direct connection between her early experiences as a child of racism and violence; while others found themselves reacting to their schooling. Just as in the data coded under the heading **professional** writers, there was a sense here of writers reacting to and using their life histories, both positive and negative, to frame their own sense of development.

In numerical terms, statements by writers about their **teacher identity** were second only in this part of the data set to **reflections on self as a writer**. That writers commented in such great detail about their **teacher identity** is not perhaps surprising, given how many of them had either worked as teachers, or continue to have regular contact with schools, teachers and

learners. For those writers who claimed a strong teacher identity, based on their previous work as teachers, there came a moment of transition between the two, when they would cross over, as it were, from one identity to the other, with their interest in teaching very much intact. This was not normally a completely linear process. For other writers, when the two worlds of writing and teaching began to rub up alongside each other there was a sense of tension, in that experience of one domain contained a new kind of knowledge which was not always easy to accommodate in the other.

8.3.2 Perceptions of writing

As with writers' statements about **authorship**, comments writers made about their **educational experiences** were also highly personal and revealing. Among these comments is awareness that schooling is a big influence on writers, especially English teachers. Without wishing to polarise the views of the writers in an unhelpful way, comments about their educational experiences did tend to fall into those describing unhappy experiences of schooling, and those expressing gratitude for more positive experiences, usually centring around the intervention of a key teacher.

Mapping more directly onto a divide between primary and secondary schooling, one writer had a similarly complex experience of learning to negotiate different kinds of culture, from the warmly encouraging environment of primary school to the openly hostile responses from his peers as secondary school. Others' more positive experiences of schooling tended to focus on the interventions of one or two key teachers at key moments, such as teaching in the sixth form or early secondary years. For some, mixed in with these reminiscences, there was a keen awareness of the ethos of the education they received, coupled to knowledge of how the educational climate has changed. For those writers for whom school was not such a positive experience, they continued to learn in and were inspired by other contexts, such as Arvon, as well as in the workplace and further and higher education. Fortunately, however, not having these positive experiences of schooling was not seen as an insurmountable barrier in the journey towards becoming a writer.

Writers' statements about having their **writing valued** tended to focus on the gratitude writers feel, in the words of one, '*that somebody is taking what they've done seriously and thought about it and placed a value on it*'. Value is not equated with publication by all writers. The act of being validated, for some, is '*a bit uncomfortable*', in part because it is as though there is no agreed language between publisher/editor and writer as to what the signals of affirmation are and what they mean. Perhaps this is what lies behind one writer's remark about *'needing validation: I don't know what that's to do with really, it's a bit odd, isn't it?*'

When writers spoke about **authentic writing experiences**, they again told personal stories of their writing development, but also included what they wanted younger writers to understand about writing as a result of their teaching. As writers mature they develop a sense of how their work changes with them, including the way that it relates to experiences of life. In this way it is as though they enter into a dialogue with what they have already achieved.

Writers with a strong sense of **teacher identity** (above) spoke with passion about wanting young writers in school to have the same authentic writing experiences as they have. One poet with a strong background in teaching summarised his teaching as *'[wanting] them to use their own voice and be authentic*'. Speaking towards the end of the TAW project, after their co-mentoring sessions with teachers, two writers had powerful stories to tell about the progress they saw in classrooms. Working with classes that had not expressed great interest in writing, there arose '*breakthrough*' moments in two classes. In one of these a pupil wrote and read out a poem about the death of his mother which reduced his class, including the teacher, to silent tears.

Not surprisingly, writers spoke at length about the impact that **publication** had had on their writing lives. As one said: '*I don't think I thought I was actually a writer until I got published*'. At the same time as receiving validation from a '*wider audience*', the act of publication does appear to take writers into a new territory, that of the 'published writer', with a new set of pressures and expectations. Indeed, one of the biggest transitions for writers seems to be managing the change from writing as a '*hobby*' to published author, or amateur to professional. What is clear in all the comments writers made about publication is the depth of their commitment to and respect for the *process* of becoming published. Further, all the writers who spoke directly about the process of being edited by an editor expressed gratitude that their work was being looked at closely in order to improve it. According to one writer, this process is both '*ruthless but […]also very encouraging*'.

A key concept for these writers is their stated belief in **writing as an act of freedom**. Writers employ what creativity theorists call an 'over-inclusive' mode of thinking (Csikszentmihalyi 1993; Chiu 2015), which allows them, at the outset of their writing, to be open to new ways of approaching their work. Referencing the US novelist E. L. Doctorow, one compares writing a novel to driving at night: '*you can see a little way ahead and you kind of know the direction you're going but you don't always know'.* For another, one aspect of his playfulness, which he admits may never actually appear in the writing itself, is his reading of other writers, some of whom he chooses deliberately because they are more '*experimental*' than he. It can be inferred from this that writers learn their craft not by copying other writers but gaining from them a sense of permission about what can be achieved by playing with the form or genre in question.

Writers attested to **the struggle** of committing to their craft, and made comments that related to difficulties with writing, complexities and writer's block. Writers' problems do not cease to exist at the point of publication, when they finally begin to think of themselves as writers. This is because they begin to enter into a kind of dialogue, not only with the writing they are working on at a given time, but also with the work they have previously accomplished. It may be difficult for them to regain 'beginner's mind' and approach their work playfully, as though it were a '*hobby*'. One novelist described getting her writing done in terms of '*practice*' and '*discipline*', especially when her writing is not going well. Part of keeping to this '*discipline*' is silencing the writer's inner voice of doubt which questions whether the work is being improved by constant re-writes, or not.

Finally, fundamental to writers' perceptions about writing was the belief that **anybody can write**. While the comments relating to this code in the interview data are relatively few in number compared with other codes, they do express a deep concern that teachers and pupils apprehend the idea that they have a voice and need to use it. In the words of one writer, '*[I say to them] "Look you are a writer, whatever you do"'.* It is possible to infer from writers' views of schooling that pupils who may at first appear talented are not always the ones whose writing is as vibrant and layered as their less obviously gifted peers. This has important lessons for educators, for how writing is taught and assessed..

8.3.3 Knowledge and experience of writing

All the writers referred to particular genres, or types of writing in their interviews and this captured the **range of writing** which concerns these writers. Not surprisingly, by far the majority of these references related to conventional creative genres, poetry, fiction, short stories and play-writing. There were some references to more transactional texts, such as '*invoices*', and '*precis and summaries*', demonstrating a recognition of the breadth of writing that occurs in various social contexts. Several writers also referred to writing genres which they had enjoyed, and which had led them towards a career as a writer: these included academic writing, journalism, and working on a university newspaper.

The notion of **confidence** as a writer was discussed by four of the writers, with one of the Arvon residential tutors making five references to it. A small cluster of these comments addressed the importance of developing teachers' confidence as writers, which was a core goal of the residential experience. The Arvon tutor reflected that '*I worked a lot with […] middle aged women and what they lacked was […] confidence*' and that working with professional writers, such as at an Arvon centre, helps teachers to see that writing is '*possible*' and that '*it's all about confidence'*. Two of the four writers talked about their own issues with confidence. One reflected that, when younger, he was not '*a particularly confident writer academically'*. However, persistence and experience have altered this.

Eight of the nine writers discussed **the influence of reading** on their own writing, and on their understanding of how texts work. The influence was uniformly positive and repeatedly expressed in the interviews, signalling the symbiotic relationship between reading and writing. The dominant motif in this code was the early discovery as a child of the love of reading and the pleasure it could evoke. Narrative fiction was the most frequently mentioned genre of reading. It was also evident that families had been important in generating a love of reading. Conversely, school reading or the influence of teachers on a love of reading was notably absent.

Given the strong emphasis on the influence of reading, it is perhaps surprising that writers made very few comments which considered their own readers. There were just eight comments by three of the writers which related to **reader awareness**. Some of these were concerned with how the writer make language choices appropriate to the intended age of

their readers, or a recognition that there was a need for *'some sort of structure to help the reader through the book to stop them getting too lost.'* Other comments were more concerned with specific authorial intentions towards the reader, such as *'I want my reader to be confused on time'* and the use of a particular '*technique to introduce my reader to my characters.'* It is possible that the sparsity of comments about readers and readership may be because it is not a prime concern for these writers.

Another sub-theme coded in this section was writers' comments on the **feedback** on their writing they have received from others, such as peers, publisher or critics. Eight of the nine writers made at least one reference to this. Chief among those respected was the peer community of other writers. Several of the writers mentioned particular peers who had, in effect, acted as mentors to them in a very significant way, either through the positivity of the feedback which generated confidence or through perceptive criticism. The writers also indicated that, occasionally, they dismissed the feedback they had been given in favour of their own judgment. One writer described how two critical readers of his novel both suggested changes, which he '*totally ignored'*. Another explained how the director of a play he'd written wanted to make particular changes which the author felt signalled a lack of understanding of the play: he told the director, '*I don't want to change it.'*

As people whose professional career is writing, these writers are very aware of how they manage the process of writing, particularly through the use of the own **writing routines**. Eight out of the nine writers referred to various strategies they adopt to help achieve their writing goals. Two of these used notebooks as a constant companion for noting down ideas and observations. In this way, the notebooks become the repository for material for later writing, reflecting the unpredictability of the writing process and how ideas form and crystallise. Sometimes, giving ideas space to emerge and develop was less about capturing them in writing, but about allowing mulling time for ideas to incubate. The other writing routine that was very commonly mentioned was being disciplined about writing regularly. One writer noted that he always recommended to new writers that they keep a diary '*because the very process of writing regularly'* was valuable. The most common routine was writing at a set time each day.

The most substantial sub-theme in this section, however, related to **craft knowledge,** that particular set of understandings and insights that professional writers bring to the task of writing. The interviews with the writers invited them to consider what knowledge or understanding they would hope to convey to children or teachers about writing, but their answers to these direct questions tended to focus on the value and experience of writing they wished to share, rather than anything specific about the craft of writing. Yet the writers' responses to other questions in the interview revealed, as you would expect, considerable explicit understanding about the craft of writing.

The most frequent comments made by these writers related to the importance of language choices to shape meaning. Writers talked about the various structural choices they could

make, from the within-sentence choices in poetry about '*line endings'*, to using '*recurrent images'* or colour as motifs which structure a text. Yet, embedded in this craft knowledge articulated by these writers were several responses which represented a rejection of school writing, largely because it embodied a view of what was important in writing which was at odds with their own craft knowledge. One writer said the Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar test for children '*fills me with utter horror'*, whilst another recalled how undergraduates he taught would be '*scattering semi-colons like the proverbial*' because that was what they had been taught about writing in school. He saw this as a '*disconnect between contemporary literature and what is required in writing in school.'*

The code **Just Write** was developed out of the numerous comments made by writers, both in these interviews and also in workshops and one-to-one tutorials during the Arvon residential week, in reference to their most fundamental need to *'just sit down and … write*' a draft of a new piece of writing. Many of these comments refer to this process as a kind of '*splurging*' during which there is no expectation of quality: '*I just sit down and I write my 500 words*.' In these comments there are also references to writing at speed. It is possible to speculate that writers force themselves to make drafts quickly as though persuading themselves into the work, and giving themselves glimpses of how the whole piece might turn out. Interestingly, the Just Write, '*splurging*' phase of writing is often accompanied by knowledge that initial lack of quality will be balanced out by the editing process that is to come during later drafts of writing.

A small but important group of comments were coded with reference to **writing as a recursive cycle**. As above, there is a good deal of emphasis in these remarks on writing as '*discovery*' and '*process*'. Some writers even found the '*bit in the middle that just feels crap*' had its own pleasures, because of their capacity to trust in their abilities to '*get rid*' of what is '*not working'*. Writers were holding in tension the fact that their first efforts will not be perfect. Even when the stage of '*peeling off the layers*' of the poem is reached, there is still a palpable sense of '*excitement*' in the '*rewriting*'. This is a more nuanced model of the drafting process (plan; draft; edit mistakes; publish) which has much to teach educationalists in the current context.

Writers also mentioned '*leaving it for a bit then coming back to it*' in comments referring to **revision**. While the majority of writers' remarks about revision referred to looking over their work '*dispassionately*', one writer did talk about revision occurring at the level of sentence, during first drafts of writing: '*I'm quite slow in that I re-write all the time … almost sentence by sentence*'. As a group they appear to proceed intuitively, allowing themselves to make decisions which, while deliberate, also occur as a result of being immersed in a process.

Writers' comments about **generating ideas** were equally illuminating. Largely they reflected on the process as something that '*can't be controlled'* or '*forced*'. Instead, they spoke of being '*open*' to ideas and prompts, both from their encounters with the world around them, as well as from their own imaginations. These writers seemed adept at holding their ideas lightly, at

the same time as taking them very seriously. As one novelist said '*Nine times out of ten the thoughts you have in the middle of the night are complete rubbish, but if you don't write them down you will never know*'. In the light of this it is possible to view staying '*open*' to ideas as a discipline in its own right. It is interesting to note that writers can engage in this process very deliberately while holding in tension that they may not *'include all the details'* of what they find. This indicates something important about the writing process, but also about the kind of authority that writers seek.

The above remarks are very interesting in the context of the different attitudes that writers showed towards **text planning**. Some claimed never to plan, and to rely on an '*unconscious process*' when they write. Others were very conscious of the need to plan, even if it was merely at the level of knowing '*whether you're going to build a shed or a cathedral before you start off*'. Some writers held onto the notion of planning quite lightly, recognising the need for it, but not wanting to over-plan. Other writers gave quite pragmatic answers referring to planning, remarking that their process changed depending on the nature of the project they were engaged with.

A small but nevertheless powerful cluster of comments related to the **emotion** involved in writing, these can be seen in comments relating to the therapeutic aspect of their craft, turning '*raw*' material into finished works that take away the original trauma or sadness which prompted the writing. Another aspect of writers commenting on the emotion in their work relates to the way that they react to and handle the events, both imagined and real, that they are writing about. One novelist spoke of her writing as '*emotionally draining*', even though the characters she wrote about were not drawn from her personal life. That writers do not look away from such material, but pursue it directly, is another reason to reflect on the different kinds of resilience they need to have in order to move their work from '*raw*' and '*painful*' '*into a public thing*'.

8.4 Working with teachers

The second principal strand arising from the data analysis was 'working with teachers'. This strand reflected writers' reflections and experiences of working with the teachers both at Arvon where the tutors were in a lead role, running workshops and one-to-one tutorials, and in schools, where the writers were in a co-mentoring role in the classroom. There were three thematic groups in this dataset:

- Writing: pedagogical practices
- Co-mentoring
- Writers in schools

These are each discussed more fully below.

8.4.1 Pedagogical practices

For some, though not all, of the writers, a strong driver for thinking about their own pedagogical approach was drawing on their **writer self as model**. For one writer, this meant that he could reveal to children that being a writer was not about '*some magical wand that somebody comes and waves over you and then you're a writer*', but about being someone who had shared the same experiences that children have. In this way, he hoped they might see him as '*a role model*' of someone who was on the same continuum as the children, '*but on a different part.'* For others, it was less about being a role model, and more about debunking stereotypes about what writers are like so children could see writers are '*real normal people.'*

A strong theme, articulated by six of the nine writers, was of the importance of **writing as self-expression** and how they tried to create activities which encouraged this**.** These comments underlined a keen sense of the value of self-expression as a reason for writing, regardless of the quality of the writing produced, or how it is valued by the curriculum. Self-expression was viewed as '*empowering because you can express things perhaps in words that you can't express any other way.'* Writing is seen as an '*important way for children to understand more about their relationship with the world and their sense of their place in the world'*. For some writers this was particularly about their own emotional connections, using writing to express *'difficult things they've experienced.'*

Closely linked to the notion of writing as self-expression was a cluster of comments relating to showing children the place of **writing from experience.** These comments affirmed the value of children's own experiences as the starting-point for writing, and writers noted that they sometimes talked about their own experiences to give children permission to talk about theirs. Some of these comments emphasised that children's own experiences have intrinsic merit: one writer argued that children's '*experiences are valuable and worthy of us hearing*', whilst another expressed the belief that '*everyone has their voice and their own experiences to talk about.'* Other comments were rather more focused on how our ordinary experiences can be used as an imaginative springboard.

Several writers noted that they tried to create learning environments which allowed for **freedom and taking risks**. There was a strong sense that children need to feel free from fear because '*worry is one of the biggest killers of creativity*' and if we want children to take risks they need to '*feel safe and able to do and to discover what they can do.*' Writing involves '*exploring and taking risks and not being scared*', and creating risk-taking classrooms supported young writers in understanding that '*failure*' is part of the process – '*sometimes it'll work and sometimes it won't.*' One writer also emphasised strongly his view of the importance of **collaboration** and sharing, something that might contribute to an exploratory risk-taking environment. He maintained that writing can be a '*collaborative process, it can be fun, it can be something you can be proud of and is shareable as well.'* This collaborative approach generates mutual respect, where '*the ethos of what you're doing is sharing and respecting the person who is sharing that work.*'

It is possible to consider the themes discussed above as principally concerned with the values of the writing classroom, and the kind of climate for writing that these professional writers aimed to generate. The final three codes – understanding writing as craft; understanding writing as process; and opportunities to just write – are more closely attuned to the writing as a text. One practice used during the Arvon residential by the workshop leaders was encouraging the teachers to freewrite, allowing their thoughts to run freely, and their words to flow onto the page, in other words to 'just write.' Once in the classrooms, the professional writers noted the **opportunities to just write**. Some of these were observations on how the teachers had used this as a strategy with their classes.

Writers also were keen to support young writers in shaping and crafting their text, and helping them **understand writing as craft**. Comments relating to this were very often specific accounts of working with young writers' unfolding texts to help them understand how and why they could make changes. One writer explained how he used the zoom facility on the interactive whiteboard to visually demonstrate how writers can choose to '*zoom in on a particular moment in the story and expand on that.'* The thinking about writing as craft was particularly promoted by the questions he asked, inviting students to engage with making crafted choices of their own. Another writer focused on character development and the possibility of starting a story by introducing a character '*because they never start with character'*; whilst another helped children to understand how choice of detail in a narrative is not arbitrary but part of how the story works.

The theme **understanding writing as process,** was the most frequently referred to theme in this analysis of pedagogical practices espoused by the professional writers. In part, this reflects writers' desire to help children see the big picture of writing, and that '*writing can be quite messy'* and that revising, drafting and sharing are as important as the initial generation of ideas. These comments also underline that the writing process includes getting things wrong or creating less successful attempts. More comments referred to the drafting and editing aspect of writing than any other element of the writing process. This possibly reflects the co-mentoring context, where the writers did not simply take a lesson, stimulate some writing and leave, but worked alongside children in a more sustained way. The writers were aware from their conversations with teachers that, for many children, '*it is the hardest thing for them to develop and stay with a piece of work.*'

8.4.2 Co-mentoring

Given the emphasis on co-mentoring, it is not surprising that the sub-theme, **writer-teacher roles,** was by far the most frequently discussed by the writers. The co-mentoring element of the project challenged both teachers and writers' conventional ways of working with each other, and the writers' comments reflect them negotiating this new role with their partner teachers. One writer aptly described this as '*a careful dance of being very, very polite to each other'*, noting that perhaps their concern '*to respect each other's ideas'* meant they did not challenge each other enough. Because of the focus on teachers as writers, the roles of 'teacher' and 'writer' were further blurred, and some pairs were clear they were '*trying to pitch [themselves] both as writers'.* Where the writer had been a teacher in the past, there

was greater ease in the co-mentoring role and one writer felt sufficiently confident in both roles to '*sweep from one to the other without [thinking]'.*

It was clear that the co-mentoring relationship involved negotiating new ways of working which challenged both teachers and writers, although for many this was ultimately very satisfying. One writer noted positively that '*so much teacher participation was unusual.'* Several writers realised that the co-mentoring made for a stronger classroom experience which was unlike their more usual single workshop events. This new kind of classroom experience could be characterised as semi-improvised joint working, which was based on a growing mutual trust and enjoyment of working together.

The experience of co-mentoring with the teachers prompted considerable **writer learning** and a re-thinking of the role of the writer in school. At a pragmatic level, this was sometimes learning from the teachers about particular strategies they could adopt. The way a teacher had developed one of the writer's starting point ideas made an impression on the writer. More significantly, perhaps, the co-mentoring prompted many of the writers to re-evaluate their normal ways of working in school. A repeated note here was the value of developing a more purposeful relationship with the teacher, to be '*open to a bit more collaboration'* and to establish '*more involvement from the teacher*'. There was a definite sense that the writers had become more aware of the learning purpose of the classroom, with an appreciation of '*planning'* and the value of being '*aware of the aims that the teacher has in that classroom.'*

One aspect of the co-mentoring that the project encouraged was **shared planning and goals**, where teachers and writers collaborated on planning and preparing for teaching the unit of work. Planning for teaching is perhaps an area of expertise which is less familiar to the professional writers, other than those who had previously been teachers. One writer reflected that '*the planning was to us was always a challenge'*, and another expressed the newness of this experience and how it felt unfamiliar. In some cases, the writers found the teachers' planning problematic, particularly over-planning. The writers also recognised that the planning was linked to '*goals*' that the teachers had to meet and that sometimes the teachers '*had to be quite rigid about how we met those goals.'*

Both through the shared planning and through the co-teaching, the writers became aware of the **pressures on teachers:** all of the writers made comments relating to this. On one level, this was an increased understanding of the workload teachers experience, or a recognition that individual teachers were '*all working really hard trying to do a very difficult job'* in a context where '*it's the state and the system that have the problems.*' More specifically, several writers grew more aware of '*the difficulties in trying to bring creative work into the schoo*l' and one writer, having been shown the kind of grammatical exercises some of the primary school children were doing, observed that '*it was awful, it was such a shock to see what they're spending their time doing because of the way the curriculum is'*. One writer commented on a perceived 'disjunct' between creative work and the '*need to get it right*',

while another, in his final interview after the co-teaching experience, concluded that '*there's an increasing divide between curriculum writing and what I would call real writing.*'

One clear expectation underpinning the research project was that the residential experience at Arvon would support teachers in altering how they teach writing because they were **integrating the Arvon learning in their classroom.** Perhaps, somewhat surprisingly, only two of the professional writers made any reference to this, one of whom was one of the residential workshop leaders. One writer expressed surprise that neither of his teachers seemed to be making direct use of their own Arvon experience. He noted that he '*had taken for granted that they would do it the same way'*. Reflecting on this, he wondered if this was because the starting points for the teachers and for him were different, that '*they hadn't perhaps thought of the processes in the same way that someone would have done had they been hooked on writing like I was'*. He concluded that '*it's one thing to have the experience at Arvon but another thing to integrate all those experiences into the classroom so that the kids have a similar kind of experience with the system that we have.'*

8.4.3 Writers in schools

Four of the writers articulated a clear personal sense of **purpose** for their role as writers in schools. One writer downplayed the teaching about writing and emphasised instead the experience for children of seeing the human face of being a writer. For another, it is about helping children to recognise *'that everyone can tell a story'* and *'that every child is capable of writing something that's unique and that could be really, really good – they've all got that within them.*' The distinction between being a writer who has '*no agenda'* and a teacher who has to worry about '*marks and all the rest of it*' can mean that the author visit is positively positioned as a '*fun day'* although this same writer did also note that he had to try to make the teachers '*feel like you're not a threat.'*

Closely linked to the idea of a purpose for writer visits to schools was the theme of **writing as empowerment** as an expressed specific aim for what the writer visits might achieve. Five of the writers made some kind of reference to a desire to enable children to see '*how interesting and rewarding writing is'.* One writer described how the teacher he worked with grew from being not very sure of herself as a writer to someone who was able to share her writing and see its personal impact: *'when she read her writing out she broke down in tears … it was very powerful.*' The sense that writing is strongly about social justice and '*a kind of tool towards equality'* was very important to one writer, who felt that writing was '*liberating*'. The potential of writing to empower was both at a very personal level, writing for '*their own pleasure and benefit'* about things that matter to them, but also about realising the power of the written word.

Linked to these comments about the purpose of the writer visits to school and the desire to enable to children to see writing as empowerment, was a clutch of reflections by writers on the **success and satisfaction** derived from school visits. These comments all related to witnessing change happening in a classroom: one writer found that one class's '*engagement*

was really exhilarating' and another recorded her pleasure when '*children who haven't really written much poetry before suddenly realise they can do it … and it's so exciting to see them being inspired.'* Or as one writer put it: '*I've managed to unlock something.'*

The final two codes in this section relate more to reflections on the nature of their visits to schools. Four of the writers talked about the idea of their '**visits as a show'**, characterised by a fairly routinised approach to each one that is often repeated, which they '*tend to deliver in a similar way'* each time. There was a recognition that '*it's very easy after a while to go into an act when you're being the writer.'* In these comments was an underlying sense that this is not the best way to work with schools. One writer reflected that if visits are not '*planned properly and they're not done in collaboration with the teacher, they can be more show.'* For another, this model was little more than '*a nice wallpapering job where people come out with a nice piece of work*'. These comments are both self-critical, in terms of treating a writer in school visit as a stand-alone performance, but also critical of schools in approaching a writer visit as a special but disconnected event, and not embedding it within any kind of curriculum continuity.

The most frequently occurring response in this writers in schools set of codes were comments which refer in some way to the **temporality** of the visit. To an extent, this set of comments links closely to the previous code reflecting on the one-off show visit. There was a sense of some frustration at this, on one level because '*you go into a class you haven't met […] before'* or because they usually work with '*many year groups'*, meaning that there is no time to build relationships or to understand the context of the students. Underpinning these comments appears to be a concern that the potential of writers' expertise is not being fully realised in the way these visits are arranged and handled. In the light of this, perhaps it is not surprising that the remaining comments on the temporality of their in-school experiences related to the time involvement with teachers on the project itself. Unusually, the project did create more sustained opportunities with writers attending the professional development days, co-planning with the teachers, and having two co-teaching lessons. All of these comments indicate that they would have liked '*more time and space'* alongside teachers and in classrooms.

8.5 Discussion

Most essentially, writers on the Teachers as Writers project gave voice to their very strong writer identities. The story of each writer is of course individual, but common to many was a belief in writing as a therapeutic act, even a '*life saver*'. Several also spoke of needing to in some way write from their hearts, explicitly positioning their writing as a way of understanding themselves as people. Not surprisingly, this influenced the model of writing that they proposed to teachers and students in the classroom, speaking of writing as an *'important way for children to understand more about their relationship with the world and their sense of their place in the world*'. Far from a romanticised view of writing, however,

writers on the project also emphasised the messiness of the writing process, including the importance of revision and rewriting '*I re-write all the time … almost sentence by sentence*'. They also stressed the importance of freewriting to liberate ideas, which one writer called '*a principle of experimentation*'.

In a similar vein, writers also underlined that for many writing was something of a struggle, which often felt more like a hard slog requiring '*sheer bloody mindedness'* to get things finished. They spoke explicitly of writing as '*practice*', '*discipline*' and challenge. Nevertheless, at the end of this not always smooth process, they spoke of their commitment to a new process of being judged by others. They spoke of editors as being '*ruthless but also very encouraging*', a nicely weighted and gently paradoxical phrase which summarises the realistic appraisal of the entirety of the writing process that they so relished. Central to writers' identities was their extensive craft knowledge of writing. This hinges on something of a paradox. There was limited articulation of craft knowledge when asked directly, but substantial evidence of in-depth craft knowledge in their answers to other questions, for example the '*learning curve of working on plot structure, rather than just randomly jumping down absolutely everything that was in my head'.* Each of these constructs of writing is complex and owned by individual writers after years of practice. It is encouraging to note that writers took this enthusiastic yet realistic model of writing into the project classrooms and that they were at pains to present it to the teachers and students they worked with.

One of the more challenging aspects of the project for the writers was the co-mentoring element. For many, it stimulated significant re-thinking of their roles, surprising some, and forcing a reconceptualization of the role of the writer in schools. As one put it, co-mentoring turned out to be '*a much more important experience than I expected it to be'.* The '*very careful dance*' of collaboration noted above was common to many writers' experience, prompting them to favour a shift away from previously tried and often successful working practices such as one-off events. One writer aware that she was able to create a great atmosphere and enjoyment over the course of a single day, also acknowledged post the project that she was perhaps not achieving much in terms of changing students' thinking about writing: '*the show might be all glitzy and they all might go oh/ah but actually what are they taking away?*'

Another impact was to encourage writers to think differently about how they worked alongside teachers and become '*open to a bit more collaboration',* establishing '*more involvement from them*.' Parallel to this change in writers' thinking was a greater awareness and understanding of teachers' roles and pressures in the current high stakes context. Finally, writers gained greater understanding of the benefits of being '*direct*' with students about how to improve their writing, including the '*grittier*' aspects of drafting such as cutting favourite passages of description which were not germane to the plot or character development. Taken together, a shift can be seen in writers' perceptions of teaching, of working alongside teachers and students, and of the role of professional writers in school. It is one of the more interesting paradoxes of the project that this shift took place whilst writers' own identities remained as strong, even fixed, as ever. This work has much to teach the education profession about the potential benefits of schools working with practising artists.

Panic

"I'm in no hurry"
Sidling closer, dragging his chair,
"I can wait".
A twisting knot of tension I try to quell,
Pulse of my heart's pounding in my ears,
I long for a steadying hand on my shoulder.

Exhale, inhale, exhale, inhale.

What's the worst that could happen?
That inner voice.
That mealy-mouthed misery.
"They're all dead you know – every single one….."
Panic sits stoically in the corner, biding his time.

No light seeps through the windows,
No respite from the morbid visions marooned in my mind's eye,
No sounds distract the rising urge to pace.
My clammy hands fidget.
Kettle boils again,
Cup
Tea
Milk
Clanking spoon on china
Fridge shut – my skin briefly cooled
Phone
His voice
Warmth surges back through vein to capillary,
Nerve endings alive again
I drink my tea and hum.

Karen

Chapter 9: The Research Questions

The research questions which framed the Teachers as Writers project focused on teacher engagement with writers, both through the Arvon residential at Totleigh Barton and the co-mentoring with a professional writer in school. The former primarily provided teachers with opportunities to write and reflect, the latter sought to enable them to make co-mentoring relationships which involved planning, teaching and evaluating a unit of work. The relationships were conceived for the mutual benefit of the teachers and the writers. These forms of teacher and writer engagement were integrated in the project plan in order to improve student outcomes. Shifts in the teachers' identities as writers and their pedagogic practice were also framed as research questions. Each is now addressed in turn.

9. 1: What kinds of engagement enable writers and teachers to work together?

The data indicate that flexible and varied kinds of engagement enabled the teachers and writers to work together in this project. At the residential the supportive ethos facilitated focused yet relaxed engagement and enabled the teachers to exercise their agency, participating in ways which suited them. The co-mentoring relationships were also predominantly characterised by ease, mutual respect, some spontaneity and informality in team teaching.

The teachers were expected to engage as writers at Arvon, whilst this caused some teachers initial difficulties, they gradually came to recognise and claim a writer identity. During co-mentoring some but not all teachers wrote alongside their students, some were prompted to do so by the professional writers and valued the perspective this afforded them. At Arvon, the tutors, engaged as educators, adopted roles as readers, advisers, editors and facilitators of the teachers' writing. The teachers often engaged as pedagogues in this context and during co-mentoring they also retained their educational role, which some felt prevented them from adopting a writer role. Occasionally professional writers who had been teachers themselves adopted pedagogic roles in the co-mentoring context. The data additionally reveal that there was a strong degree of personal engagement on the part of teachers and writers at Arvon. This was evident within some co-mentoring relationships but less prominent. Arvon tutors were open about the challenges of being a writer and the value of drawing on life experience and teachers frequently explored their memories and identities through their writing, they often wrote 'from the heart'. Nonetheless, reasons for writing were not foregrounded at Arvon. In co-mentoring sessions students were also encouraged to connect to their lives. Again reasons for writing were rarely explicitly examined.

9.2 What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on teachers' identities as writers?

Teacher identities were very strong and remained so throughout and beyond the project period and they comfortably accommodated newly developing writer identities. In contrast, writer identities grew as a result of the project. At the outset, despite for the most part having an extensive history as English specialists, wide experience of writing and the ability to articulate the detail of their personal writing practices, fewer than half of the teachers professed, even tentatively, a writer identity. By the end of the Arvon week, the overwhelming majority were enthusiastic about continuing to write and happy to claim a writer identity. Support from a community of writers and the Arvon tutors, and time and space to write were frequently cited contributory factors. Teachers saw this development as the emergence of latent qualities.

The strengthening of writer identities served to extend teacher identities. Teachers talked of changed priorities as they taught writing and greater empathy with their students as they wrote in class. Most of the teachers interviewed a term after the end of the project showed they more strongly felt themselves to be 'creative teachers', who enabled their students to write in more creative ways and thought more openly about their own practice. In the later interviews, many teachers acknowledged the writer identity of their students as an important concern. This often related to pedagogies which would allow learners greater ownership, agency, freedom and choice.

9.3 What impact does writers' engagement with teachers have on teachers' pedagogic practices in the teaching of writing?

The impact of writers' engagement with teachers on their pedagogic practices was particularly evident in the teachers' changed practices in relation to freewriting, creating time and space for writing, the sharing of written work, and in how they handle the writing process. What is also evident is that the ethos of Arvon was widely embraced and the pedagogic practices which reflect that most obviously were the most strongly translated into practice. Some of the students noticed the more collaborative and relaxed classrooms which gave them more autonomy and choice as writers.

There was less evidence of feedback, other than peer feedback, and revising was frequently led by the professional writers. This may indicate a residual lack of confidence in critiquing writing or providing feedback which is not aligned to predetermined curriculum criteria. Similarly, the analysis of the workshops and tutorials indicate that the professional writers provided quite a significant amount of direct, explicit input about writing at both text and syntactical levels. Yet there are no references in the observations to explicit teaching of writing, other than in the revision episodes. The analysis of the professional writer interviews indicates that although some were very aware of the craft of writing, they did not verbalise

their craft knowledge when asked directly, but nonetheless revealed a substantial and sophisticated set of understandings which represented their craft knowledge. Thus is it is perhaps not so surprising that this aspect of the Arvon pedagogy was less evident in subsequent classroom practice.

9.4 What is the impact of writers' engagement with teachers on teachers' efficacy in supporting students to develop motivation, confidence and writing skills?

Interview data suggest that the majority of students in all age and ability groups felt the project impacted positively on their motivation, confidence and writing skills. Some key outcomes were evident across many or all focus groups: enhanced enjoyment and engagement; a stronger sense of ownership; perceived progress in writing skill; and greater understanding of writing process. A minority of students identified aspects of the project which they had not enjoyed or found helpful, but nevertheless they described positive benefits overall.

Students in all classes found project approaches liberating and 'fun'. They attributed gains in motivation to increased choice over topic and format, more time to share ideas and writing, and freewriting activities. Some claimed their attitude to writing was more positive or that classroom behaviour had improved as a result. Many also identified gains in confidence and skill as the project developed, citing improvements in the fluency and quality of ideas, descriptive writing, and vocabulary range. The evidence suggests that as a consequence of teachers' engagement with writers, students were given greater creative license and encountered new ways of generating ideas and building text which enhanced motivation and made writing easier. Interactive approaches and feedback at formative stages appear to have strengthened students' confidence and their understanding of success criteria. In particular, the emphasis on constructing and crafting text over time seems to have enabled many students to revise more extensively and in more depth than they had done previously.

9.5 What is the impact of writers' engagement with teachers on student outcomes?

The statistical results indicate that the intervention did not lead to improved written outcomes, as assessed against National Curriculum standards, evidenced by the -0.34 effect size. Variation between teachers was evident, and as the effect was most marked for the intervention group, this suggests that how the teachers transferred their Arvon learning into practice was different. The causal model underpinning this intervention assumes a rather direct, linear and rapid change in professional practice, but in practice, changing teachers' classroom practice requires professional development to be sustained, subject-specific, classroom-based, collaborative, involving the external expertise (Whitehouse, 2011), and a

more sustained intervention may have led to different outcomes. Also the Arvon residential gave high value to writing which was 'from the heart', writing which is less amenable to grading and assessment.

The qualitative data, however, provide evidence which may inform the interpretation of the statistical results. The student interviews provide good evidence of changed attitudes and motivations to writing amongst students, and stronger engagement with writing. The data show that whilst teachers have started to develop their understanding of the writing process, they have not developed explicit new pedagogical understanding or explicit new craft knowledge about writing which might support student learning and outcomes. Whilst there was clear evidence of some of the personal and motivational aspects of the Arvon experience being re-appropriated in the classroom, there was less evidence of teachers re-shaping their pedagogical practices or developing explicit new craft knowledge of writing.

9.6 What do the writers reveal about writing and the impact of the project on their understanding of the potential role of writers in school?

The interviews and observations indicate that professional writers' identities are highly individualised and diverse, and have developed in different ways over different timescales. Some writers have multiple writer identities, particularly a public writer identity, aware of publishers, editors, and readers; and a private writer identity, where the writer exerts greater control over what and how they write. The data show that writers often reflected on the significance of their frequently negative school experience. They were also frequently negative about schools today, particularly how writing is taught.

Writers' accounts of their own writing experiences record very clearly the struggle of writing, both the difficulty of creating texts and some of the painfulness of being judged by others, yet they accept this as part of being a writer. Their voices illuminate the recursive nature of the writing process, where generating ideas, evaluating, and drafting are reciprocally inter-related. This is in contrast to children's experiences of the writing process in school which is frequently routinised as a linear, chronological process of plan, draft, revise and edit.

One of the more creative paradoxes of the project was the struggle experienced by writers when asked to define their craft knowledge about writing. This is in contrast to the abundant craft knowledge that they displayed when they spoke about other aspects of their writing life and process.

Using their strong identities as a platform, writers' engagement with students and teachers during the project widened their perceptions of teaching, of working alongside teachers and students and stimulated a re-conceptualisation of the potential role of writers in school.

Love

A squatter has taken up residence.
I don't want him nor did I invite him;
He is unwelcome.

Yet he stays.

I scrabble and scrape and scream.

I cannot.

He is lodged in my throat
Like balled-up bread
Gobbled down too greedily.

I'm choking.

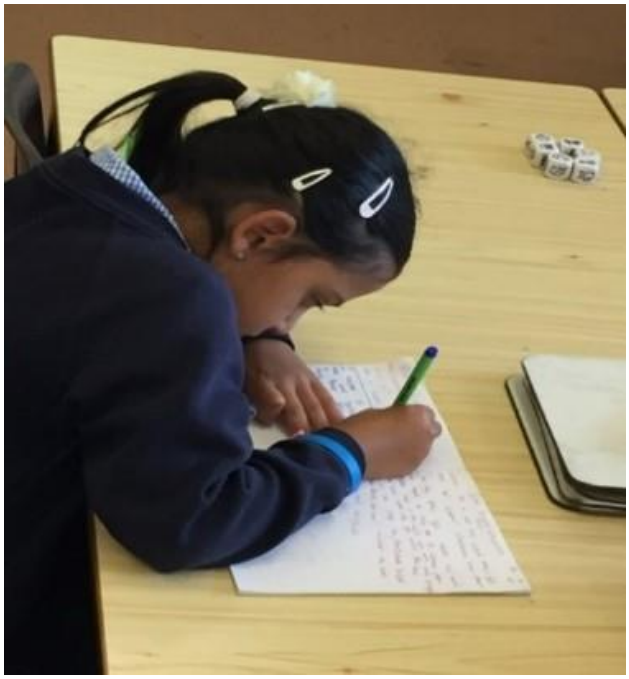
Now he's probing, prodding
And poking at my ugliness,
My dirty secrets.

I am exposed.

He is an intruder in my bedroom at night
Scaring me, slowly dismantling
My tightly-wound carefully constructed life.

Jackie

Chapter 10 Conclusions



This project is significant in that it represents the most systematic, sustained and robust investigation to date of the ways in which the Arvon Teachers as Writers residential experience impacts upon the teachers in terms of their identity as writers and their pedagogical practices, and thus ultimately on children's experiences of being taught to write. As such, this is a milestone study in understanding the complex and multi-level inter-relationships between being a writer, being a teacher of writing, and being a learner of writing.

There is no doubt that the residential experience at Arvon was a transformative experience for the teachers, changing how they saw themselves as writers, and deepening their understanding of how to write. Being given genuine time and space to write in an environment which actively supported the creation of a community of writers helped them find their own voices as writers. Moreover, the tutorials with the Arvon professional writers gave each teacher personalised and critical feedback about their writing. The experience of highly focused input and support from professional writers was sustained in the subsequent co-mentoring relationship which extended into the classroom.

There is also no doubt that for many of the students in these teachers' classes a change in how their teacher approached the teaching of writing gave them an increased motivation for writing and a sense of liberation as writers which improved their confidence and sense of ownership as writers. In particular, they benefited from being given more time and space for

writing, and more opportunities to write freely without fear of assessment. They also had richer, more creative experiences of ways to generate ideas for writing.

The fact that the statistical data did not show improvement in writing attainment is important, but is neither a negative finding, nor evidence that encouraging teachers to experience being a writer has no impact on the student. Rather it is an important signal of two key issues. Firstly, to expect direct impact on student attainment after one residential and two lessons co-teaching with a writer was probably too much to expect: the causal chain from the Arvon residential to increased attainment is long and complex. The evidence of increased motivation and engagement with writing is highly significant as this is a necessary precursor to increased attainment, but students improve their proficiency as writers over time, rather than rapidly. Secondly, it is also important to consider whether the result flags that the curriculum may be valuing or privileging a different kind of writing than do Arvon and professional writers. The qualitative data strongly suggests that the changes in teachers' pedagogical practices in the classroom tended to pick up on the 'freedom and fun' elements of the Arvon residential; for example, freewriting (Just Write), time and space to write, and writing without assessment. They were less likely to address the specific crafting aspects of writing which formed such a key part of the one-to-one tutorials, and may have reduced the amount of time afforded explicit teaching. It was very evident both from the writer interviews and the tutorials that the writers had a strong sense of craft knowledge, but they did not make this explicit to teachers. It may well be that foregrounding and making visible this craft knowledge would enable sensitive and personalised teaching of the craft of writing to students.

At the same time, the study is important in drawing attention to the role of professional writers in schools. The co-mentoring at the heart of this study positions teachers and writers as equals with different and complementary expertise to bring to the writing classroom. It reframes the standard 'writer visit' into one in which intentions and goals are shared, and knowledge is constructed. The study did not set out to change writers' views of their roles in school, but this was a key consequence of the co-mentoring experience, with the writers recognising that their typical school visits were often one-off performances focusing more on engagement than the hard graft of writing, and often making little connection with class teachers.

In terms of teaching, learning and research it is therefore recommended that:

- Follow-up research examines the causal pathway from teacher-writer engagement to impact on student attainment more closely, paying attention to practice implications;
- The implicit craft-knowledge of professional writers is made explicit as a framework to develop teachers' subject knowledge and support their teaching;
- Teachers re-examine the writing process and professional writers' descriptions of this, considering if their handling of this constrains students' writing experiences;

- Teachers offer time and space for (freewriting), integrating 'Just Write' sessions and sharing into the writing process;
- Teachers write alongside students, acting as role models, sharing struggles and reflecting upon the differences this role position affords;
- Teachers pay increased attention to students' writer identities and to fostering their autonomy and agency as writers;
- Teachers make richer use of feedback and peer-editing to support revision;
- Teachers explore the personal dimension of writing, alongside the social and emotional demands involved;
- Teacher-writer engagements foreground co-mentoring in order to maximise the educational potential of professional writers' work;
- Teacher-writer engagements encompass more of the writing process, attending to editing and revising as well as generating writing;
- Teacher-writer engagements include close attention to pedagogical follow-through and sustained professional.

As the first study of its kind, combining a randomised controlled trial with a rich qualitative data set, the Teachers as Writers project has established a strong empirical body of evidence about the transformative value for teachers of being given time and space to be writers and think about writing. It also provides salient insights into the role of writers in schools, flagging the need to re-imagine artistic involvement in the writing classroom. At the same time, it offers pointers to multiple lines of further research which would expand and enrich our understanding of this area. The time is ripe for a sustained and cumulative series of studies which takes this work forward.

[Untitled]

They came for it after Compline.

The notes of the final response lingered in the air mingling with the heady scent of incense. We knew they would come, but Father Abbot's prayers had told us we had more time – more time to decide what should be done with it. Though it should never have been our burden to bear.

The first tremor of danger came with the chapel door bursting open. The gatekeeper stumbled down the central aisle.

> "Men …" he gasped. "Horses … coming down the valley track." He collapsed into a pew.

The silent retinue of brothers – hands clasped in prayer and eyes cast piously down – fell out of step. Their eyes widened; there were urgent, whispered exclamations, a sharp intake of breath from the crabbed Infirmarian. Fear flashed through them. Only Father Abbot seemed to know what to do.

Casting his eyes around the chapel, he searched out the novices until his eyes fell on me. "You!" he hissed, his wizened claw clutching at my arm. "You are the smallest."

He propelled me backwards towards the chancel. His fingernails bit into the soft flesh of my arm and I wanted to cry out. I knew this would be little to suffer compared with the fate of those who tried to defy the Brotherhood, who even now would be crossing the drawbridge, bringing violence and death to our sanctuary.

Father Abbot pushed me to the ground then fell to his knees beside me. For a moment, I wondered if more prayers was all he had. I saw his fingers grope over the carved stonework – pressing.

A tiny void opened in front of me. I stared into a black hole that was barely up to my knees and narrower than me. A flash of realisation stabbed into my brain. We had listened to stories, whispered in the dormitory late at night by the older novices, of passages that ran from the priory land into the hills. Escape routes carved out by those who had lived here in more dangerous times than ours. I had not believed that the stories were true. Even now I did not believe that a person could fit into that space.

> "It has to be you", he hissed again. "You are the only one who might fit. You must take it and try to get through. It is the only way. It must not fall to them."

He pressed a small cloth bag into my hand, plush velvet so different to my cassock's coarse fibres. It was small but heavy and I wondered what it looked like.

Shoed hooves struck stone. Bits jangled angrily. The chapel door had been locked and barred but a few smashes with a heavy axe would soon see to that. Father Abbot pushed me more insistently.

“There is not time …” His fingers were cruel but his eyes were pleading. I was frightened of disappearing into the darkness but there was no other choice. Tremendous axe blows thudded against the chapel door. Voices thundered from beyond.

I crawled forward, stone bruising my knees, my hands out-stretched, feeling their way. The walls were clammy and cobwebs glued up my fingers. I heard a rasping sound behind me as stone ground against stone. Heart pounding, the bile gathered in my throat as the space closed in around me. The air around stilled and settled.

My voice croaked in the black.

“Pater noster qui es in caelis sanctificetur nomen tuum…”

Charlotte

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Student data spreadsheet (condensed)

Year group	STUDENT NAME	Gender	SEN	Pupil Premium	EAL	Teacher assessment of writing
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
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						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level
						Below expected level / Expected level / Above expected level

Appendix 2 Pre and post writing tasks for students

Pre writing task for younger students (Year 3)

Difficult Situations
These difficulties come in many shapes and sizes, from scary adventures like canoeing to more everyday events like starting a new school, overcoming a fear, getting into a team or learning a new skill. Often a difficulty is small to someone else but very big to you – for example, having to say sorry for something you have done or meeting someone you don't know for the first time.

Write about a difficult thing you have faced for a school poster on 'Difficult Situations'.

You could:
- ❑ Describe the difficulty.
- ❑ Tell the story of what you did and what happened in the end.
- ❑ Write about how you feel about this now
- ❑ Choose words that will make your account exciting and interesting for someone else to read.

You *might* want to start like this:
At the time, it seemed like the most difficult thing I had faced in my life….

Pre writing task older students (Years 4 to 9)

Challenges
Challenges come in many shapes and sizes, from adrenaline-pumping adventures like rock climbing or bungee jumping to more everyday events like starting a new school, overcoming a fear, getting into a team or learning a new skill. Often a challenge is small to someone else but very big to you – for example, having to say sorry for something you have done or meeting someone you don't know for the first time.

Write about a challenge or difficult thing you have faced for a school magazine feature on 'Challenging Situations'.

You could:
- ❑ Describe the challenge.
- ❑ Tell the story of how you tackled it and what happened in the end.
- ❑ Reflect on how you feel about this now
- ❑ Choose language that will make your account vivid and interesting for someone else to read

You *might* want to start like this:
At the time, it seemed like the biggest challenge of my life….

Post writing task younger students (Year 3s)

Childhood Fears

All of us get frightened about things from time to time – especially when we are young children.

Our fears may be based on something **real**, or on something we only **imagine**.....

For example, dragons under the bed .....,

are imaginary....

But snakes.....

are real.

Write about your childhood fears, real or imagined, for a school magazine report on

'Things that frighten us when we are small'.

You could:

- Choose a time when you were frightened or nervous about something.
- Describe it in detail.
- Explain why you were afraid and what happened in the end.
- Write about how you feel about this now.
- Choose words that will make your writing vivid and interesting for someone else to read.

You *might* want to start like this:

The scariest thing that ever happened to me …

Post writing tasks older age groups (Years 4 to 9)

Childhood Fears

All of us get frightened about things from time to time – especially when we are young children. Our fears may be based on something real that has happened or something we only imagine will happen. For example, it could have been a fear of something imaginary, such as serpents under the bed, or a very real fear, such as a fear of flies.

Write about your childhood fears, real or imagined, for a school magazine feature on 'Things that frighten us when we are small'.

You could:

- ❑ Choose a time when you were frightened or nervous about something
- ❑ Describe it in detail
- ❑ Explain why you were afraid and what happened in the end
- ❑ Reflect on how you feel about this now
- ❑ Choose language that will make your account vivid and interesting for someone else to read.

You *might* want to start like this:

I don't think I have ever been as scared as when…

Appendix 3 Timetable for the Arvon residential week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9.00						
9.30		**Morning Workshop** Break mid- morning	**Morning Workshop** Break mid-morning	**Morning Workshop** Break mid-morning	**Morning Workshop** Break mid-morning	Departure 10am
12.00		**Morning Workshop**	**Morning Workshop**	**Pedagogy session**	**Morning Workshop**	
13.00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
14.00		**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**Free time** Editing group anthology	
15.00		**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**Free time** Editing group anthology	
16.00	Teachers arrive for Cream tea at 4.30pm	**One to one tutorials** Free time Tea and Cake Cooking	**One to one tutorials** Free time Tea and Cake Cooking	**One to one tutorials** Free time Tea and Cake Cooking	**Free time** Editing group anthology Tea and Cake Cooking	
17.00		**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**One to one tutorials** Free time	**Free time** Editing group anthology	
18.00	Welcome +tour: Mary Morris, Centre Director, and Becky Swain				**Free time** Editing group anthology	
19.00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
20.30	Short evening session with tutors	Tutor reading 1: Steve Voake	Guest Reading: Narinder Dhami	Tutor reading 2: Alicia Stubbersfield	Group reading: sharing of work from the week	

Appendix 4 Professional writers' interview start of Arvon residential

1. <u>History</u>. Tell me about your history as a writer. Start wherever (in your life) you want to.	
• How would you describe your development as a writer? Identify any milestones/critical incidents; were there points at which you felt you were a writer or were seen as a writer? • Has the way you see yourself as a writer changed over time? • Of all the kinds of writing you do, which to you particularly enjoy? (or not enjoy?) • How important were teachers in your learning to write? What do you think you learnt from them? • Writers tend to mention their reading as a key influence on their work. How far is this true of you? • How far have others influenced you in your development as a writer? – friendships, or dialogue/collaboration with other writers? • If so, what do you think you learned? • How far has publication of your work shaped your writing? • How far has publication changed how you view your writing?	*Writer identity* *Perceptions of writing* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process* *Writing pedagogical practice* *Perceptions of writing*
2. <u>Writing practice</u>. From the beginning, tell me how you go about writing something: do you have a particular routine? (If they say 'it depends on what kind of writing/text, ask them to choose a type)	
• If you see writing as a process, what are the elements of that process? • How do you feel about writing? Does that vary at different points in the process? • How does the process vary depending on genre? Narrative? Poetry? Essay? Review? • Is there a social dimension to your life as a writer? For example, how far do you draw on networks of support, informally or formally (e.g. being part of a group, sharing new work etc.)?	*Knowledge/experience of the writing process and practices* *CSK* *Perceptions of writing* *Writer identity*

3. <u>Pedagogy/Teaching</u>. Do you have any experience of working with young people to develop their writing?	
• How would you describe your style of supporting young writers? • Would you say there are principles guiding the way you work? Can you say what they are? • Can you think of an example where you've helped a young writer, or group/class of writers, make particular progress in an aspect of writing? • Is there anything in your personal history of writing which affects how you help young writers? • Do you feel you face any particular challenges when you work with young writers? (E.g. learners' motivation, confidence and enjoyment in writing skills?) • Do you think writing is a skill that can be taught or are there some aspects of it that can't be taught?	*Pedagogical practices* *Perceptions of writing* *CSK* *PSK* *Writer identity* *Teacher identity*
4. <u>Teaching goals</u>. What do you want your contribution to teaching sessions to bring learners to know and understand about writing?	
• Prompt to include affective factors e.g. feelings and attitudes, if not mentioned (likewise skills and knowledge) • Do you have an idea of 'key knowledge' that you are trying to transmit in your teaching? • Is it the same 'key knowledge' that you draw on in your own writing?	*CSK* *PSK* *Perceptions of writing* *Pedagogical practices* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process* *Writer identity*

5. <u>Co-mentoring</u>. As you know, an important element of this project is co-mentoring. Can you tell me about moments in when you learnt from a 'more experienced other' or mentor figure?	
• In any aspect of life (e.g. study, hobbies) • How did you learn? • Is there anything the 'mentor' learnt from you? • Have you ever been mentored in the way you teach? How did that process compare with the learning you've just talked about? • Have you worked with a teacher before? What (and how) did you learn from that experience?	*Co mentoring* *Writer identity* *Pedagogical practices (of others)*
6. <u>Questions about Arvon.</u> Looking ahead to the Arvon residential, can you give an outline of what you want to achieve during the week? • In terms of key knowledge that you want writers to learn? • In terms of passing on your expertise (e.g. how to overcome challenges; inculcating confidence with and enjoyment of writing)? • In terms of how you want writers' perceptions of writing process to change? • In terms of how you want writers to feel differently about writing? • In terms of how you want to model to others what you see as best practice of teaching writing? • In terms of how you see yourself as a role model as a writer?	*CSK* *Writer identity* *Perceptions of writing* *PSK* *Pedagogical practice* *Writer identity*

Appendix 5 Professional writers' interview end of Arvon residential

Can we start by asking you to reflect on the week as a whole? Tell us about what you have found most satisfying, as well as describing the challenges.

1. How far do you think you achieved the goals you described in the interview at the start of the week? (Prompt if necessary about):
    - key knowledge you passed on *(CSK)*
    - passing on expertise (e.g. overcoming challenges; inculcating enjoyment)
    - how far you think writers' perceptions of writing changed during the week *(perceptions of writing)*
    - how far you think writers feel differently about writing at the end of the week *(PSK)*
    - modelling best practice as a teacher *(Pedagogical practice)*
    - acting as a role model as a writer *(Writer identity)*

2. Tell us about changes you saw in writers as the week progressed.
    - Describe changes you saw in the group as a whole (this could be in terms of confidence or enjoyment; in terms of interaction and engagement; or in terms of knowledge).
        - Describe what you saw as writers collected and edited their work for the group anthology. *(Perceptions of writing)*
        - Describe what you saw as the group prepared to read their work on the final night. *(Perceptions of writing)*
        - How far do you think publication/sharing work plays a part in writers' development on a week like this? *(Writer identity)*
    - Describe changes you saw in any individual writers that stood out for you.
        - What alerted you to them as writers? *(CSK)*
        - Describe the signs of progress you saw in their writing. *(PSK)*
        - How can you tell that they made progress? *(PSK)*
        - When describing 'progress' what do you look for? *(CSK)*

3. Tell us about 'the Arvon experience'. What do you think this offers to teachers, not all of whom see themselves as writers when they arrive?
    - How does the Arvon experience have an impact on teachers' attitude towards writing? *(Perceptions of writing)*
    - How does the Arvon experience have an impact on teachers' thinking about the process of writing? *(Perceptions of writing)*

- Tell us how you see the workshop format as a tool in supporting writers' progress.*(PSK)*
- Tell us how you see the one to ones as a tool in supporting writers' progress.*(PSK)*
- Tell us how far you think there are connections between Arvon and the way writing is taught in school. *(PCK)*

Appendix 6 Professional writer interviews (co mentoring writers)

Professional Writer pre-intervention interview

1.	History. Tell me about your history as a writer. Start wherever (in your life) you want to.	
	• How would you describe your development as a writer? Identify any milestones/critical incidents; were there points at which you felt you were a writer or were seen as a writer? • Has the way you see yourself as a writer changed over time?	*Writer identity*
	• Of all the kinds of writing you do, which to you particularly enjoy? (or not enjoy?) • How important were teachers in your learning to write? What do you think you learnt from them?	*Perceptions of writing*
	• Writers tend to mention their reading as a key influence on their work. How far is this true of you? • How far have others influenced you in your development as a writer? – friendships, or dialogue/collaboration with other writers? • If so, what do you think you learned?	*Knowledge/experience of the writing process*
	• How far has publication of your work shaped your writing? • How far has publication changed how you view your writing?	*Writing pedagogical practice* *Perceptions of writing*
2.	Writing practice. From the beginning, tell me how you go about writing something: do you have a particular routine? (If they say 'it depends on what kind of writing/text, ask them to choose a type)	
	• If you see writing as a process, what are the elements of that process? • How do you feel about writing? Does that vary at different points in the process?	*Knowledge/experience of the writing process and practices*
	• How does the process vary depending on genre? Narrative? Poetry? Essay? Review?	*CSK*
	• Is there a social dimension to your life as a writer? For example, how far do you draw on networks of support, informally or formally (e.g. being part of a group, sharing new work etc.)?	*Perceptions of writing* *Writer identity*

3.	Pedagogy/Teaching. Do you have any experience of working with young people to develop their writing?	
	• How would you describe your style of supporting young writers? • Would you say there are principles guiding the way you work? Can you say what they are? • Can you think of an example where you've helped a young writer, or group/class of writers, make particular progress in an aspect of writing? • Is there anything in your personal history of writing which affects how you help young writers? • Do you feel you face any particular challenges when you work with young writers? (E.g. learners' motivation, confidence and enjoyment in writing skills?) • Do you think writing is a skill that can be taught or are there some aspects of it that can't be taught?	*Pedagogical practices* *Perceptions of writing* *CSK* *PSK* *Writer identity* *Teacher identity*
4.	Teaching goals. What do you want your contribution to teaching sessions to bring learners to know and understand about writing?	
	• Prompt to include affective factors e.g. feelings and attitudes, if not mentioned (likewise skills and knowledge) • Do you have an idea of 'key knowledge' that you are trying to transmit in your teaching? • Is it the same 'key knowledge' that you draw on in your own writing?	*CSK* *PSK* *Perceptions of writing* *Pedagogical practices* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process* *Writer identity*
5.	Co-mentoring. As you know, an important element of this project is co-mentoring. Can you tell me about moments in when you learnt from a 'more experienced other' or mentor figure?	
	• In any aspect of life (e.g. study, hobbies) • How did you learn? • Is there anything the 'mentor' learnt from you? • Have you ever been mentored in the way you teach? How did that process compare with the learning you've just talked about? Have you worked with a teacher before? What (and how) did you learn from that experience?	*Co mentoring* *Writer identity* *Pedagogical practices (of others)*

Professional writer post-intervention interview

1. Pedagogy/Teaching. Can you reflect on the experience of working alongside teacher(s) or TAW?	
• How did you support supporting young writers with the teacher in the classroom? • How did you support your teacher(s) in the classroom? • How did you make your teaching of writing principles visible to students and teachers? And what were these? • Were there times when you helped a young writer, or group/class of writers, make particular progress in an aspect of writing during TAW? • What were the teaching challenges you faced during TAW? (E.g. developing learners' motivation, confidence and enjoyment in writing?)	*Pedagogical practices* *Perceptions of writing* *CSK* *Writer identity*
2. Teaching goals. How far do you think your contribution to teaching sessions helped students to develop their knowledge and understanding of writing?	
• This may include feelings and attitudes as well as skills and knowledge. • Can you sum up one idea of 'key knowledge/understanding' that you tried to transmit in your teaching? • Was this 'key knowledge/understanding' similar in any way to that which you draw on in your own writing? • What other signs of progress did you witness in students' writing that you feel your work helped shape? • How far do you think you departed from your joint original teaching goals as the project developed?	*CSK* *PSK* *Perceptions of writing* *Pedagogical practices* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process* *Writer identity*
3. Co-mentoring. Mentoring: Help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking' (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1995, p13). Co-mentoring: 'reciprocal and mutual' and non-: 'With	

co-mentoring, both [mentor and mentee] are positioned as co-learners or co-constructors of knowledge' (Le Cornu: 358). Can you tell me about moments during TAW when you felt there was an exchange of knowledge and understanding between you and your teacher(s)?	
• How were you co-mentored during the project? • How did you co-mentor your teacher(s) during the project? • What do you think your teacher(s) learnt from you? • About writing? • About teaching writing? • What did you learn from your teacher? about writing and the teaching of writing? • Do you think you saw any changes in your teacher(s)' practice of teaching writing during TAW? • How will your co-mentoring experience in TAW inform your future practice of teaching writing? • Are there any changes you expect to make or have already made to your teaching of writing or work in schools as a result of TAW? • In what ways was this different form your usual work in schools? • What were the challenges of working in a co-mentoring relationship on this project?	*Co mentoring* *Co mentoring* *CSK* *PSK* *Pedagogical practices (of others)* *Pedagogical practices* *Co-mentoring*

Appendix 7 Pre observation (initial) teacher interview

TaW core interview: Teacher

1.	**Tell me about your history as a writer. Start wherever (in your life) you want to.**	
	• Identify any milestones/critical incidents; were there points at which you felt you were a writer or were seen as a writer? Do you see yourself as a writer now? (In what way?) • What kinds of writing do you engage in? eg diaries, notes, reports, articles or social media such as blogs…. • Are there any of these you particularly enjoy or dislike? • How important were teachers in your learning to write? What do you think you learnt from them? • A lot of people mention reading as an influence on their writing – how about you? Probe listening (e.g. oral storytelling/someone reading aloud) too. • And some people mention the influence of writers in person –is that something of relevance to you? If so, what do you think you learned?	*Writer identity* *Perceptions of writing* *Writing pedagogical practice*
2.	**From the beginning, tell me how you go about writing something: do you have a particular routine? (If they say 'it depends on what kind of writing/text, ask them to choose a type)**	
	• If you see writing as a process, what are the elements of that process? • How do you feel about writing? Does that vary at different points in the process? • How does the process vary depending on genre? Narrative? • Do other people play a role in how or what you write? (e.g. audience, critical reader, support, writing groups) • Do you think your personal experience of the writing process influences how you teach writing in any way?	*Knowledge/experience of the writing process and practices* *SCK* *Perceptions of writing* *Writer identity*
3.	**Tell me about your own history of teaching writing.**	
	• How would you describe your style of teaching and/or supporting writing? • What are your guiding principles? • How do you see yourself as a teacher of writing? (e.g. is it a specialism, are you passionate, confident, wary….?) • Can you think of an example where you've helped a young writer make particular progress in an aspect of writing? • Is there anything in your personal history of writing which affects how you teach writing?	*Pedagogical practices* *Perceptions of writing* *SCK*

• Do you feel you face any particular challenges as a teacher of writing? (E.g. learners' motivation, confidence and enjoyment in writing skills?)	*PCK* *Writer identity* *Teacher identity*
4. What do you want your teaching to bring learners to know and understand about writing?	
• Prompt to include affective factors e.g. feelings and attitudes, if not mentioned (likewise skills and knowledge) • Is it essentially what you might call the same 'key knowledge' that you draw on in your own writing? • Do you think there are aspects of writing which can't be taught?	*SCK* *PCK* *Perceptions of writing* *Pedagogical practices* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process*
5. As you know, an important element of this project is co-mentoring. Can you tell me about moments in when you learnt how to do something (not necessarily writing) from a 'more experienced other' or mentor figure?	
• In any aspect of life (e.g. study, hobbies) • What was the nature of the dialogue between the two of you? • How would you describe the learning relationship? • How did you learn? • Is there anything the 'mentor' learnt from you? • Have you ever been mentored in the way you teach? How did that process compare with the learning you've just talked about? • Have you worked with a professional writer in your classroom before? What (and how) did you learn from that experience?	*Co mentoring* *Writer identity*

6. You are part of a project in which you will work together in the classroom with a professional writer. What do you anticipate will be the main benefits?	
• For you as a teacher (particularly of writing)? • For you in any other respect? • For your pupils? • For the professional writer?	*Pedagogical practice* *Writer identity* *Teacher identity* *PCK/SCK* *Co mentoring* *Knowledge/experience of the writing process*

Appendix 8 Lesson observation template

TAW Lesson Observation: March 2016

LESSON OBSERVATION.		
Teacher:		**School**:
Year Group:	**No of pupils:**	**Date:**
Lesson Focus (LO)		
	Teacher's Input and Interaction	**Student Engagement and Response**
	NB: Teacher identity; Writer identity; Teacher subject content knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; the writing process and practices.(Verbatim quotes)	NB: Student writer identity positions; engagement, motivation and confidence, students' responses to teacher. Notes re grouping/ pairs. (Verbatim quotes)
Episode 1		
Episode 2		
Episode 3		
Episode 4		
Episode 5 *(add more as necessary)*		
Evidence from in-lesson writing	Look at teachers' and students' writing produced in lesson. Note here how the latter make use of learning in lesson. Photograph examples if possible	

Commentary /themes	

Notes: An episode is deemed to be an obvious chunk of practice, some lessons will have several others may have few: e.g. introduction-/shared writing- group activity- plenary. These are just ways of denoting activities. If a lesson plan is offered keep this too.

The boxes expand enabling us to write this up afterwards and save to the teacher's file in Dropbox.

In the final *Commentary/themes* I suggest we add in bullets- these relate to any thoughts and key comments that the session as observed triggered for you, especially related to the constructs.

Please add a photo of the classroom at the end

Appendix 9 March observation: post lesson teacher interview

TAW: Post-observation reflection

Context:

1. Reflecting on the lesson, can you help me understand how it relates, if it does to other sessions in this unit?

2. How did you feel it went? How successful was it in your view- probe reasons. Any reservations/qualifications*? (Students' engagement, motivation and confidence)*

Linking back the teacher pre-observation interview, to pedagogy and identity:

3. You mentioned when we spoke on the phone that you aim to help learners to know and understand x…… about writing, were there ways in which this was being worked upon today- maybe unconsciously even? *(SCK/Perceptions of writing)*

4. What did you want the students to learn about writing in this lesson? –probe- can you explain your thinking about this ?

5. I noticed that during the lesson you ….. can you explain that choice, decision, way of working? *(PSK) probe for all key pedagogical shifts-*

6. I also noticed that you worked with/ focused on student X…. what were you specifically trying to do then? Probe- why- student needs? What strategies were employed? What decisions were made? *(PSK)Ask for a copy of that student's work*

7. In relation to the way you positioned yourself as a teacher/ a writer / how typical was this session? – did you feel this varied through the session? Were there moments when you felt you adopted other roles/identity positions? *(Identity)*

8. How would you describe the kinds of roles the student writers adopted- or were given? *(Identity)*

9. Were you pleased with the students' and /or your own writing? If so in what ways?

10. Are you looking forward to the Arvon residential next month? If so in what way? Any worries/concerns?

Thank-you!

Collect any planning docs and seek to get photocopies of the students'/teachers/ writing, or take photos of such and upload.

Appendix 10 End of Arvon residential teacher interview

Generic

1. This space to talk is focused on the key features of the week, the workshops, one to ones, time to write, and to publish your work, but I wonder if you might start just by **reflecting on the week overall**- how has the experience been for you? Prompt satisfactions and challenges…
2. What do you see as the **guiding principles about developing writers** which Arvon offer/you 've experienced this week?

Focus

3. **Re the Workshops- how did you find these? (general starter, then bullet prompts)**

- Did they support you as a writer and if so in what ways*? (writer identity)*
- Did other people play a role in how or what you wrote? (e.g. audience, critical reader, support, writing group)
- Were there any connections to the way you teach writing in school? (PCK)
- Are there potential pedagogical consequences that you might follow through? (PCK)

4. **Re the one to ones- how did you find these? (general starter, then bullet prompts)**

- Did they support you as a writer and if so in what ways?*(writer identity)*
- What role did the Arvon writer play in this context?
- What was your experience of their feedback?
- Were there any connections to the way you teach writing in school? (PCK)
- Are there potential pedagogical consequences that you might follow through? (PCK)

5. **Re the space and time to write- how did you find this? (general starter, then bullet prompts)**

- Did this support you as a writer and if so in what ways? *(writer identity)*
- Did other people play a role in this space /time, if so in what ways?
- Were there any connections to the way you teach writing in school? (PCK)
- Are there potential pedagogical consequences that you might follow through? (PCK)

6. **Re the process of writing towards publication tonight- how did you find this? (general starter, then bullet prompts)**

- Does it feel supportive of you as a writer and if so in what ways? *(writer identity)*
- Did other people play a role in this? if so in what ways?
- Were there any connections to the way you teach the writing process in school?
- Are there potential pedagogical consequences that you might follow through? (PCK)
-

Writing

7. **Looking at your chosen piece of writing, how do you think this has emerged- can you describe your journey as a writer composing this? *(Writer identity)***

Appendix 11 May post-observation reflection

Context:

1. Reflecting on the lesson, can you help me understand how it relates, if it does to other sessions in this unit?

2. How did you feel it went? How successful was it in your view- probe reasons. Any reservations/qualifications*? (Students' engagement, motivation and confidence)*

Post-Arvon interview:

Was there anything you experienced or learnt during the Arvon residential that you drew upon in this lesson? If so, what/how?

Is there anything that you learned or experienced from the Arvon residential that you have used in your teaching?

Linking back the teacher pre-observation interview, to pedagogy and identity:

3. You mentioned when we spoke on the phone that you aim to help learners to know and understand x…… about writing, were there ways in which this was being worked upon today- maybe unconsciously even? *(SCK/Perceptions of writing)*

4. What did you want the students to learn about writing in this lesson? –probe- can you explain your thinking about this ?

5. I noticed that during the lesson you ….. can you explain that choice, decision, way of working? *(PSK) probe for all key pedagogical shifts-*

6. I also noticed that you worked with/ focused on student X…. what were you specifically trying to do then? Probe- why- student needs? What strategies were employed? What decisions were made? *(PSK)Ask for a copy of that student's work*

7. In relation to the way you positioned yourself as a teacher/ a writer / how typical was this session? – did you feel this varied through the session? Were there moments when you felt you adopted other roles/identity positions? *(Identity)*

8. How would you describe the kinds of roles the student writers adopted- or were given? *(Identity)*

9. Were you pleased with the students' and /or your own writing? If so in what ways?

Thank-you!

Collect any planning docs and seek to get photocopies of the students'/teachers/ writing, or take photos of such and upload.

Appendix 12 Post intervention (final) teacher interview

1. **Teacher as writer**

Since taking part in this project, Arvon, plus co-mentoring, do you feel differently about yourself as a writer?

- Did the initial Arvon influence your sense of yourself as a writer or your skills as a writer and if so in what way?
- Did you participate as a writer in the classroom during the co-mentoring at all and do you now?
- What are the challenges you faced during the project as a writer within or beyond school? (e.g. time, confidence, conflict with school agenda/curric)

2. **Teaching/Pedagogy.**

To what extent did the opportunities of Arvon and co-mentoring with X, influence your pedagogy as a teacher of writing?

- What did you see as the writers' (Arvon plus co-mentor) principles of teaching writing/fostering writers?
- Did the experience shift your principles of teaching writing in any way?
- To what extent has TAW prompted you to teach writing differently and to what extent are you still maintaining these principles or practices??

Perceptions of writing

Pedagogical practices

SCK

3. **Students' learning**

Do you think the work you undertook both immediately post Arvon and with the writer made an impact on the students' knowledge and understanding, skills, feelings and attitudes in respect of writing?

4. **Co-mentoring**

Can you tell me about moments during TAW when you felt there was an exchange of knowledge and understanding between you and your writer(s)?

Mentoring: Help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking'

(Megginson and Clutterbuck, 1995, p13). Co-mentoring: 'reciprocal and mutual' and non-: 'With co-mentoring, both [mentor and mentee] are positioned as co-learners or co-constructors of knowledge' (Le Cornu: 358).

- How did co-mentoring work for you and X ?
- How would you describe your role in respect of your

Co mentoring

Co mentoring

writer in the co-mentoring process?'

- What do you think your writer (s) learnt from you about writing and teaching writing? *SCK*
- What did you learn from your writer about writing and the teaching of writing? *PSK*
- What were the challenges of working in a co-mentoring relationship on this project? *Pedagogical practices (of others)* *Co-mentoring*

5. **One last question, looking back at the experience of TAW what do you consider you learned about your own role and/or about the teaching of writing?**

Thank you.

Appendix 13 Co teaching observation template

TAW Lesson Observation: June 2016

LESSON OBSERVATION.		
Teacher:	**Writer**	**School**:
Year Group:	**No of pupils:**	**Date:**

Lesson Focus (LO)		
	Teacher's and Writer's Input and Interaction	**Student Engagement and Response**
	NB: Teacher identity; Writer identity; Teacher subject content knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; the writing process and practices.(Verbatim quotes)	NB: Student writer identity positions; engagement, motivation and confidence, students' responses to teacher. Notes re grouping/ pairs. (Verbatim quotes)
Episode 1		
Episode 2		
Episode 3		
Episode 4		
Episode 5 ***(add more as necessary)***		
Evidence from in-lesson writing	Look at teachers' and students' writing produced in lesson. Note here how the latter make use of learning in lesson. Photograph examples if possible	
Commentary /themes		

Notes: An episode is deemed to be an obvious chunk of practice, some lessons will have several others may have few: e.g. introduction-/shared writing- group activity- plenary. These are just ways of denoting activities. If a lesson plan is offered keep this too. The boxes expand enabling us to write this up afterwards and save to the teacher's file in Dropbox. In the final *Commentary/themes* I suggest we add in bullets- these relate to any thoughts and key comments that the session as observed triggered for you, especially related to the constructs. Please add a photo of the classroom at the end .

Appendix 14 Post lesson reflection, first co-teaching lesson teacher and writer only

Teacher as Writers:

Co-Teaching Teacher/ Writer Reflection Prompts

Please use these prompts to reflect on both what students' learned or experienced in relation to writing in the co-taught lesson, and to reflect on your roles in the lesson. When using the prompts, try to go beyond a straightforward answer to each prompt but reflect and tease out ideas which are stimulated by the prompt. Please try to expand your points as were not present so you will need to help us understand the full context.

Please bring copies of the students' writing to your reflection session so you can see how they have responded to your teaching.

Learning Context:

1. Reflect on how this lesson relates to the rest of the narrative unit?

2. What did you want students to learn about writing in this lesson?

3. How did you feel it went? How successful was it in your view both in relation to your intentions for writing or wider issues? Any reservations/qualifications*? (e.g. students' engagement, motivation, confidence; divergence from plan)*

4. Were you pleased with the writing they produced? What were you pleased with? Any disappointments/surprises?

5. Was there anything you experienced or learnt during the Arvon residential that you drew upon in this lesson? If so, what/how?

6. Is the narrative unit that you planned together progressing as intended or have you had to make changes?

Co-teaching/mentoring:

7. In relation to the way you each positioned yourselves as a teacher/ a writer in this lesson, how typical was this? – did you feel this varied through the session? Were there moments when you felt you adopted other roles/identity positions?

8. How do you feel you worked together as teacher and writer in this lesson?

9. What have you learned about your own role and/or about the teaching of writing through this co-teaching experience?

Thank-you!

Please keep copies of any planning docs and photocopies of the students'/teachers'/writers' writing from the lesson.

Appendix 15 Post second co-teaching lesson interview with teacher and writer

Teacher as Writers:

Co-Teaching Post-Observation Interview

Teachers should bring copies of the class's writing to the interview.

Throughout this interview, we will need to explicitly draw in the writer to answer or build on these questions.

Learning Context:

1. Reflecting on the lesson, can you help me understand how it relates, if it does to other sessions in this unit?

2. What did you two want students to learn about writing in this lesson?

3. How did you feel it went? How successful was it in your view in relation to planned intentions or other wider issues? (Probe reasons). Any reservations/qualifications*? (e.g. students' engagement, motivation, confidence; divergence from plan)*

4. Were you pleased with the writing they produced?

5. Was there anything you experienced or learnt during the Arvon residential that you drew upon in this lesson? If so, what/how?

Pedagogy and Professional practice

6. I noticed that during the lesson you ….. Can you explain that choice, decision, way of working? *(PSK) probe for all key pedagogical shifts-*

7. I also noticed that you worked with/focused on student X…. what were you specifically trying to do then? Probe- why- student needs? What strategies were employed? What decisions were made? *(PSK)*

Co-teaching/mentoring:

8. In relation to the way you each positioned yourselves as a teacher/ a writer / how typical was this session? – did you feel this varied through the session? Were there moments when you felt you adopted other roles/identity positions? *(Identity)*

9. How do you feel you worked together as teacher and writer in this lesson?

10. What have you learned/are you learning about your own role and/or about the teaching of writing through this co-teaching experience?

Thank-you!

Collect any planning docs and seek to get photocopies of the students'/teachers/ writing, or take photos of such and upload.

Appendix 16 Student pre-intervention (co-teaching) interview

Focus group: 6 students, mixed gender/ability, as many pupil premium as possible.

Theoretical constructs:

Perceptions of writing; Perceptions of teaching; Understanding of writing process; Enjoyment/motivation; Confidence and perceived skills;

Procedure:

- Explain purpose of the interview: I'd like to find out more about how you learn to write at school. There are no right or wrong answers – we're interested in what *you* think.
- Check consent - read consent form, ask students to sign and collect in.
- Once recording, ask students to introduce themselves so we can identify different voices.
- Use interview schedule flexibly: some Qs can be asked of group as a whole and others better in turn (e.g. confidence and perceived skills); adapt language as appropriate to the group.

Perceptions of writing
1. Tell me about the kinds of writing you have been doing in English/Literacy lessons recently. *(E.g. narrative; letters; poems; auto/biography; persuasive)* 2. What do you think makes writing 'good'? If you had to make a list what would you include? (Your answers might vary depending on the type of writing) *(E.g. interest for reader; description/detail; accuracy; word choice; pace; literary/grammatical techniques)* 3. Do you think anyone can be a good writer? Why/Why not?
Perceptions of teaching
4. What sort of things does your teacher do to help you with writing? *(E.g. provides prompts/starters; demonstrations; examples; individual help/feedback; sets targets/ EBI)* 5. Have you noticed anything new that your teacher has done recently to help you with your writing?

Understanding of writing process
6. What do you normally do to get ready for a piece of writing? *(E.g. draw; read/listen to examples; brainstorm; talk; make a plan)* 7. What do you do if you get stuck with writing? *(E.g. reread so far; look at examples; talk to a friend; ask the teacher)* 8. How do you go about improving a piece of writing? *(E.g. reread and make changes; use feedback from peers/teachers; check for errors; redraft)* 9. What kind of changes do you usually make? *(Corrections; vocabulary; additions/deletions; structure)*
Enjoyment/motivation
10. Do you enjoy writing? What do you enjoy most? (Your answers might vary depending on the type of writing) 11. Are you usually pleased with what you've written? Why/why not? 12. Do you write in your own spare time? What kinds of writing? *(E.g. diaries; stories; poems; lyrics; social media; letters)*
Confidence and perceived skills
13. Do you think you're a good writer or not? In what ways (strengths and weaknesses)? 14. Do you think you're getting better as a writer? In what ways?

Appendix 17 Student post intervention interview

Theoretical constructs:

Perceptions of writing; Perceptions of teaching; Understanding of writing process; Enjoyment/motivation; Confidence and perceived skills;

Procedure:

- Explain purpose of the interview: as before, we're interested in how you learn to write at school and in what you think. There are no right or wrong answers.
- Check that all are still happy to participate.
- Once recording, ask students to introduce themselves.
- Use schedule flexibly/adapt language as appropriate to the group.

Perceptions of writing
1. Tell me about the kinds of writing you've been doing in English/Literacy lessons since we last spoke. 2. What do you think you need to do to make this kind of writing 'good'? *(probe for anything new they may have learnt since previous responses)*
Perceptions of teaching
3. How has your teacher been helping you with this kind of writing? Have you noticed anything new that your teacher has done to help you? 4. Has having a writer in the classroom helped you? How? 5. Has anything or anyone else helped you become a better writer since we last spoke?
Understanding of writing process
6. What have you been doing to prepare for writing? Have you tried any new ways of getting ready for writing?

7. What sort of things have you been doing to improve what you've written? Any new things? 8. What kind of changes have you been making to improve your writing (if any)?
Enjoyment/motivation
10. Have you enjoyed the writing you've been doing? What have you enjoyed most/least? 11. Are you pleased with what you've written? Why/why not? 12. Have you been doing any writing in your own spare time? What kinds of writing?
Confidence and perceived skills
13. Do you think you're good at this kind of writing? What do you think you're good at/less good at? 14. Do you think you're getting better as a writer? In what ways?

Appendix 18 Email to schools and school briefing sheet

Teacher as Writers research 2016-17 FAO Name of Head teacher

Dear Head teacher,
Are you interested in joining this new research project on creative writing?
I am a researcher at Exeter University working with Prof. Debra Myhill on this new project as the University of Exeter's Centre for Research in Writing is working with Arvon, the national creative writing charity, and the Open University to explore how the opportunity for teachers to work with professional writers might change their understanding of being a writer, how they teach writing, and improve outcomes in writing for the children they teach. The project will work with 16 teachers of students, aged 8—14 years living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage in rural and coastal areas of south-west England. The rare opportunity includes a five-day residential exclusively for teachers at Totleigh Barton, Arvon's writing centre in Devon and professional development with writers. I would really like to let you know about this exciting opportunity and attach more details. If you are interested please let me know and I will call you at a convenient time to discuss. I really hope you are happy for your school to join the project.
Thanks for reading this email

Warm regards

(name of researcher)

School Briefing Sheet

Teachers as Writers

The Open University

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

What is this about?

Arvon, the Open University, and the University of Exeter are working together on a project funded by the Arts Council, exploring how the opportunity for teachers to work with professional writers might change their understanding of being a writer, how they teach writing, and improve outcomes in writing for the children they teach. The project is focussed on schools in the South-West, and is targeting schools in areas of social deprivation (with high pupil premium numbers). **This is a rare opportunity for deep and sustained professional development in the teaching of writing!**

What will the project look like?

We intend to work with 16 primary school teachers and 16 secondary school teachers, and their KS2-3 classes during 2016-17. Half of the schools will be 'intervention' schools, and the other half 'comparison' schools. Teachers in the intervention schools will attend an Arvon writing residential at Totleigh Barton in Devon from 4-9 April 2016 during the Easter school holidays, led by professional writers Steve Voake and Alicia Stubbersfield. The week provides space for writing workshops, one-to-one tutorials with writers, time and space to write as well as reflecting on ideas to take back to the classroom. You can find out more about the value of an Arvon week from www.arvon.org. Following this, when back in schools, teachers will work with professional writers to co-plan a unit of work, which the teachers will then teach and evaluate. The research team will collect data throughout both the residential, and the subsequent teaching.

What are 'intervention' and 'comparison' schools?

Research that is trying to test out whether a particular approach works needs to ensure there is no bias in the sample. One way to do this is to randomise: this means that all schools who commit to this study will be randomly allocated, using a random number generator, to either an intervention group or comparison group. The comparison group is much less involved in the project as they are there to act as a comparator. However, all comparison schools will be invited to a dissemination conference in March 2017 and offered the opportunity to participate in an optional Arvon *Teachers as Writers* residential in April 2017 at the same reduced rate that intervention schools will pay in 2016. They will also be invited to attend a CPD and networking day led by Arvon to share practice and to reflect on work they are developing in the classroom during the summer term 2017. **It is important that you understand you could be a comparison school.**

What commitment would this project require?

If you are an 'intervention' school, you would need to commit to allowing the project teacher to:

- provide student attainment data and pre and post-test writing samples to determine improvement;
- attend the Arvon residential 4-9 April 2016;
- attend two CPD days in Exeter in May and September 2016;
- allow the research team access to collect data (4 lesson obs; student interviews, 4 teacher interviews);
- co-plan a teaching unit with a professional writer;
- teach and evaluate the co-planned unit of work in June to July 2016;

- attend an after-school co-mentoring meeting bringing together two teachers and one writer;
- prepare to disseminate the research at a Dissemination Conference in Spring 2017, if required.
-

If you are a 'comparison' school, you would need to commit to allowing the project teacher to:

- provide student attainment data and pre and post-test writing samples to determine improvement.

Is there funding to support our involvement?

'Intervention' schools will receive £570 to cover CPD days in May and September 2016 and the dissemination conference in March 2017, and to provide time for planning, reflection, and supporting the data collection processes. Schools will need to agree to pay a (heavily subsidised) fee of £375 for their involvement, this covers the residential at Totleigh Barton and the costs of the professional writer in school (although schools are free to decide to take this from the £570).

If you would like to know more, please contact Lucy Oliver – l.j.oliver@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 19 Intervention schools' consent form

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

School Agreement to Participate

- [ ] I confirm that I have read and understood the Schools' Briefing Sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions;
- [ ] I understand that all children's /young people's data will be kept confidential and protected using encryption software and that no material which could identify individual children or the school will be used in any reports of this project;
- [ ] I agree to provide baseline student data for the project classes to the research team (excluding any students for whom opt out forms have been returned);
- [ ] I agree to random allocation and, if selected, to allocate a teacher to implement the intervention in 2016;
- [ ] I agree to providing an opt-out form to all parents of children/young people involved;
- [ ] I agree to the Project teacher fulfilling the commitments outlined in the Schools' Briefing Sheet;
- [ ] **I consent to the school taking part in the above study across the year 2015-2016.**

Name of headteacher ……

Name of School ……

School Tel Number ……

Headteacher Email address …….

Name of School Contact (if not headteacher)…….

School Contact email address ……

Signature of headteacher…….Date…….……

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Please return this consent form by post or scanned in an email to: Lucy Oliver – l.j.oliver@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 20 Comparison schools' consent form

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

School Agreement to Participate

- [ ] I confirm that I have read and understood the Schools' Briefing Sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions;
- [ ] I understand that all children's /young people's data will be kept confidential and protected using encryption software and that no material which could identify individual children or the school will be used in any reports of this project;
- [ ] I agree to provide baseline student data for the project classes to the research team (excluding any students for whom opt out forms have been returned);
- [ ] I agree to providing an opt-out form to all parents of children/young people involved
- [ ] I agree to the Project teacher fulfilling the commitments outlined in the Schools' Briefing Sheet;
- [ ] **I consent to the school taking part in the above study over the spring and summer terms 2016**

Name of headteacher ……

Name of School ……

School Tel Number ……

Headteacher Email address ……

Name of School Contact (if not headteacher) ……

School Contact email address ……

Signature of headteacher …… Date…….

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research. Please return this consent form by post or scanned in an email to: Lucy Oliver – l.j.oliver@exeter.ac.uk4

Appendix 21 Teachers' consent form

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

Thank you for being willing to help us with this exciting project - we hope that you will enjoy being involved and benefit from it. We are asking you to confirm here that you have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project, and that you are happy to be involved by reading the statement below and signing to confirm your agreement.

I understand that:

- ❑ there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may at any stage withdraw my participation;(see note below)
- ❑ I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me;
- ❑ any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications;
- ❑ if applicable, the information which I give may be shared between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project in an anonymised form;
- ❑ I will on one occasion be filmed whilst teaching. I will use this film to reflect on my teaching, it will not be used for the purposes of analysis by the researchers;
- ❑ all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- ❑ my anonymity will be fully preserved.

I agree that I am happy to participate in this project.

I have until July 8th to withdraw my support and in order to do so I will contact Lucy Oliver L.J.Oliver@exeter.ac.uk.

Signed: ……..

Print Name: …….

School Name: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 22 Parents' consent forms

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

Dear Parent / Carer

Your son/daughter's school is taking part in a project, funded by the Arts Council, which is researching the teaching of writing. Arvon, the Open University, and the University of Exeter are working together on this, exploring how the opportunity for teachers to work with professional writers might change their understanding of how they teach writing, and improve how they help children to become confident writers.

As part of this project, your son/daughter's school will be giving the research team data about your child's progress in writing. Your son/daughter's information will be treated with the strictest confidence. We will not use your son/daughter's name or the name of the school in any report arising from the research. Your son/daughter's information will be kept confidential at all times.

If you are happy for your son/daughter's **information to be used you do not need to do anything. Thank you for your help with this project.**

If you would rather your son/daughter's school did not share your son/daughter's information for this project, please complete the enclosed opt out form and return it to your son/daughter's school by **February 1st.**

If you would like further information about this project, please contact Lucy Oliver (l.j.oliver@exeter.ac.uk)

Teachers as Writers: Opt Out Form

If you **DO NOT** want your son/daughter's data to be shared for use in the *Teachers as Writers* project, please return this form to your son/daughter's school by **February 1st.**

☐ I **DO NOT** want my son/daughter's data to be shared for use in the *Teachers as Writers* project

Parent/Carer Signature…… Date……

Son/daughter's

Name…….

Son/daughter's

School……

Appendix 23 Writers' information sheet and consent form

Writer Co-mentor Opportunity: Teachers as Writers 2016-17

Arvon is inviting applications from professional writers to play a key role as co-mentors with primary and secondary teachers in a research project in South West England.

Arvon, the Open University, and the University of Exeter are working together on an 18-month research project funded by Arts Council England, The Rayne Foundation and The United Kingdom Literacy Association. Teachers as Writers (TaW) will explore how writers and teachers can work together to improve student outcomes, and what impact this engagement has on teachers' practice, skills and identities as writers, and young people's motivation, confidence and skills as writers. It will also explore the impact of the work on professional writers.

TaW is not a traditional "writers in schools" project led by writers. It is a research project which seeks to position writers and teachers as learning partners. It innovatively frames the work as co-mentoring where professional writers and teachers work together for their own mutual benefit (as writers and pedagogues) and in order to support the development of student writers.

Each writer will be matched with two teachers and supported to develop a reciprocal co-mentoring relationship with them. Writers will need to commit to:

- a half-day professional development day including training on co-mentoring and co-planning the teaching of narrative writing with their teachers (18 May 2016, Exeter);
- one visit to each school to co-teach and to evaluate a lesson together with their teachers (June 2016);
- being interviewed by the research team and documenting their own learning (across the project);
- a one-day sharing of their co-mentoring work with all participating writer-teacher partnerships (29 September 2016 in Exeter);
- preparing to share their work at a Dissemination Conference if required (March 2017, Exeter, London).

Fee: £1,375 (based on £250 a day for 5.5 days)
Deadline for applications: 5pm on Monday 22nd February 2016
Interviews will take place by arrangement.
Please see the full brief for writers and how to apply on Arvon's website here

You can find out more about the project at
http://www.arvon.org/schoolsandgroups/teachers-as-writers/

CONSENT FOR TEACHERS AS WRITERS

I agree to take part in the above Arvon Foundation research project undertaken in partnership with the Open University and the University of Exeter. I have read information about this in the Writers' Brief and on the website. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to be matched with two teachers and supported to develop a reciprocal co-mentoring relationship with them.
I know that as a writer and co-mentor on this project I will need to commit to:

- a full day professional development opportunity including training on co-mentoring and co-planning the teaching of narrative writing with the teachers (18 May 2016, Exeter);
- the continuation of planning for the unit and development of a documented relationship with the teachers through email/phone/skype, and making this record available to the research team;
- a first visit to each teacher in school to co-teach a lesson and to reflect upon the lesson together with the teacher (June 2016);
- a second visit to each teacher in school to co-teach a lesson and to consider the lesson with the teacher, recording the evaluative discussion through audio which will later be shared. One of the two school visits will also be observed by a researcher(June 2016) ;
- being interviewed twice by phone by the research team (March and July, this will be audio recorded);
- ongoing reflection and documentation of my own learning across the project and making this record available to the research team;
- a one-day sharing of my co-mentoring work with all participating writer-teacher partnerships (29 September 2016 in Exeter);
- preparing to share my work at a Dissemination Conference if required (March 2017, Exeter)

I give permission for the researchers to store securely, analyse and publish data as part of the study and also for this information to be used within future written reports, presentations and journal articles which make reference to this study on the understanding that

a) real names and contact information will be used.
b) real names and contact information will not be used.

(Please underline the version you want to choose)

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the study, and that I can withdraw my participation at any stage of the study.

(Consent can be withdrawn by contacting Lucy Oliver, Researcher on lucy.oliver@exeter.ac.uk and simply requesting withdrawal)

Name and signature .....

Date: .....

Appendix 24 Primary students' consent forms

Primary pupils' consent sheet, for the Focus Group students

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

Your Literacy teacher is involved in a project exploring the teaching of writing with the Open University, the University of Exeter and the Arvon Foundation which supports writers. The university researchers are interested in knowing more about how you view writing and would like to listen to you talk about your writing. Your teacher would also like to share your writing and your development as a writer with the researchers.

I understand that

- ❑ the project is trying to find out more about how teachers teach writing;
- ❑ my teacher's views on my development as a writer will be shared with the research team;
- ❑ my writing may be shared with other researchers and in publications;
- ❑ all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- ❑ I will not be named in any publications;
- ❑ the interview will be audio-taped so the researchers can listen to it later;
- ❑ I can choose not to have my views recorded on tape.

I agree that I am happy to participate in this project by being interviewed and by my teacher sharing my writing and development as a writer with the researchers.

Signed: ……

Print name: ……

School Name: ……. Date: ……

Appendix 25 Secondary students' consent form

Secondary pupils' consent sheet for the Focus Group students

TEACHERS AS WRITERS

Your English teacher is involved in a project exploring the teaching of writing with the two universities named above and the Arvon Foundation which supports writers. The university researchers are interested in knowing more about how you view writing and would like to interview you and ask about your own writing. Your teacher would also like to share your writing and your development as a writer with the researchers.

I understand that

- ❑ the project is seeking to find out more about how teachers teach writing;
- ❑ my teacher's views on my development as a writer will be shared with the research team;
- ❑ my writing may be shared with other researchers and in publications;
- ❑ all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- ❑ my anonymity will be fully preserved;
- ❑ the interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of analysis;
- ❑ I can choose not to have my views recorded on tape.

I agree that I am happy to participate in this project by being interviewed and by giving my permission for my teacher to share my writing and my development as a writer with the research team.

Signed: ……

Print name: ……

School Name: …… Date: ……

Appendix 26 Data codes and definitions

Chapter 3: Arvon Residential data codes and definitions

3.1 Arvon workshops

Theme	Sub theme	Definitions
Ethos and atmosphere		
	An invitational and supportive context	Comments and observations indicating that the tutor was open and supportive of the teacher writers
	Specific support for sharing	Observations and comments indexing tutors' awareness of the challenge of sharing writing and supporting teachers in this regard
Workshop pedagogy		
	Reading and personal recollection; interwoven prompts for writing	Observations, comments and activities, focused on reading and making connections to life experience
	Time to write and trust what comes	Observations, comments and activities referring to free writing and trusting what might emerge
	Principles underpinning the prompts for writing and 'writing from the heart'	Observations and comments referring to the principles, implicit or explicit underpinning the prompts for writing and those relating to writing which was affectively engaging
	Craft knowledge sharing	Comments made about the craft of writing, both implicit and explicit
	Feedback and commentary	Comments referring to the writing as shared by teachers, both those made by tutors and other teachers
Writer identity		
	Teachers positioned as writers and members of a community of writers	Comments referring to or indexing the teachers as writers and their membership of a wider community of writers, at Arvon and beyond
	Tutors positioning	Comments referring to or indexing the tutors as writers

	themselves as writers alongside teachers	alongside the teachers
	Teachers positioned by/ positioning themselves as teachers of writing	Comments referring to or indexing the teachers' roles as writing pedagogues in school

3.3 Arvon Tutorials

Theme	Sub theme	Definitions
Ethos and atmosphere		
	Discomfort	Comments and observations indicating that teachers found the experience uncomfortable
	An invitational and supportive context	Comments and observations indicating that the tutor was open and supportive of the teacher writers
	The personal dimension of writing and being a writer	Comments referring to and indexing the personal nature of writing, its connection to the writer and their life, linked to voice and ownership
	Principles about writing	Comments referring to underpinning principles about writing and being a writer or a teacher of writing, explicit or implicit
Writer identity		
	Teachers positioned by the tutors and positioning themselves as writers	Comments referring to or indexing the teachers as writers
	Teachers positioned by the tutors as part of a wider community of writers	Comments referring to or indexing the teachers as members of a wider community of writers
	Tutors positioning themselves as writers alongside teachers	Comments referring to or indexing the tutors as writers alongside the teachers
	Tutors being positioned and positioning	Comments or observations referring to or indexing the tutors as editors and advisers

	themselves as editors and advisers	
Feedback and Support		
	Support for the social and emotional demands of writing	Comments referring to or indexing support and feedback regarding the social and emotional demands of writing
	Support for the cognitive demands of writing : focus on subject knowledge about form and audience	Comments referring to or indexing support and feedback regarding the cognitive demands related to form and audience
	Support for the cognitive demands of writing: focus on revision	Comments referring to or indexing support and feedback regarding the cognitive demands related to revision

3.5 Post Arvon teachers' intended pedagogical consequences

INTENDED PEDAGOGICAL CONSEQUENCES	
Theme	**Definition**
Establish Just Writing	comments which refer to the teacher planning to introduce Just write/ free writing/ burst writing as they had experienced at Arvon
Employ Arvon writing activities	comments which refer to teachers intending to borrow from and use writing activities undertaken at Arvon
Increase pupil autonomy	comments which refer to teachers planning to increase pupils' agency, choice and autonomy as writers
Profile revision and feedback	comments which refer to teachers intending to giving a higher profile to students' revising their writing and to teachers supporting this through feedback
Focus on being a writer	comments which refer to teachers planning to profile being writers, themselves in class and/or the children

Chapter 5: Co-mentoring data codes and definitions

Code Name	**Definition**
Integrating Arvon Learning into the	Comments where teachers or writes referred

Classroom	explicitly or indirectly to integrating learning from Arvon into their classroom practice
Pressures and Constraints	Comments which refer to the various educational or contextual pressures which they encounter in the classroom
Shared Planning and Goals	Comments which refer to the teacher and writer discussing shared plans and goals for the unit of work
Teacher and Writer Discussion of Principles	Comments which refer to issues or principles discussed
Teacher Learning	Comments where teachers expressed what they had learned through the Arvon experience
Teacher-Writer Roles	Comments which shed light on the various roles the teachers and writers adapted in the classroom.
Writer Learning	Comments about what writers learned from the teachers; or writers altering their thinking about their role as writers in schools

Chapter 6: Teacher pedagogy data codes and definitions

Summary categories	Definitions	Sub-codes
Being a writer	Observations which reflect attention to being a writer (teachers, students or professional writers)	
Classroom layout	Observations which draw attention to classroom (or external site) layout	
Student autonomy and choice	Observations which reflect attention to students' autonomy and choice when writing	
Tensions between creativity and curriculum	Observations which highlight constraints, tensions or pressures caused by the curriculum and assessment	
The writing process	Observations which reflect attention to the process of writing,	Idea generation Just write Revising

	including prewriting activities and final presentation	Sharing writing aloud
Writer-Teacher roles	Observations which reflect particular roles played by teacher or writer	

Chapter 7: Student outcomes data codes and definitions

Summary categories	Level 1 codes	Definition
Perceptions of writing	Genres and their characteristics	Types of writing and their characteristic features
	Positive characteristics	Features or qualities that make writing 'good'
	Negative characteristics	Features or qualities that detract from 'good' writing
Perceptions of writers	Writers' attributes	Personal characteristics that writers need/possess
	Writers' skills	Skills that writers need or use
Perceptions of teaching/learning	Helpful for writing	Ways in which anything/anyone helps with writing
	Unhelpful for writing	Ways in which anything/anyone is unhelpful
	Perceived changes in teaching	New approaches/recent changes in teaching of writing
	Perceived impact of writer	Professional writers' impact on teaching and learning
Perceptions of writing process	Preparing for writing	Pre-writing activities; personal preferences/dislikes
	Drafting	Processes/strategies involved in drafting a text
	Improving writing	Processes/strategies involved in improving a draft
Enjoyment and motivation	Enhancers	Factors that enhance motivation/enjoyment of writing
	Detractors	Factors that reduce enjoyment/motivation
	Personal writing outside school	Forms of writing that students engage in for pleasure

Confidence and perceived skills	Self-description	Labels students use to describe themselves as writers
	Perceived strengths	Personal strengths or capabilities as writers
	Perceived weaknesses	Personal weaknesses as writers
	Perceived progress	Aspects of writing improved
	Helpful for confidence	Factors that enhance self-confidence
	Unhelpful for confidence	Factors that undermine self-confidence

Chapter 8: Professional Writers data codes and definitions

8. Professional writer identity

Sub theme	**Definition**
Reflections on self as a writer	comments which involve reflection on being a writer, the trajectory to being a writer, growth as a writer etc. Includes comments on enjoyment or non-enjoyment of types of writing; Excludes reflections on the writing itself.
A community of writers	comments which refer to writing within a community; being part of a community; creating a community; includes collaborative writing;
Authorship	comments which refer to ownership of writing; sense of authorship; including loss of ownership
Professional writer	comments which refer to being a professional writer
Critical incidents	comments which relate specific life incidents which appear to be significant moments in the development of a writer identity; or particular challenges.
Teacher identity	comments where writers refer to their own teacher identity, if relevant

8 Professional writers' perceptions of writing

Sub theme	**Definition**
Educational experiences	comments which reflect the influence of educational experiences on their writer or writing development
Writing valued	comments which signal the importance of having writing valued, or not valued; these are generalised positive or negative responses like a pat on the back;

Authentic writing experiences	comments which refer to authentic writing experiences; excludes any reference to professional writing
Publication	comments which refer to the influence or perception of publication, including working with publishers and editors
Freedom	comments which refer to the importance of freedom, risk-taking, experimentation in writing.
The struggle	comments which refer to the challenge of writing; messiness; complexity; writing blocks etc
Anybody can write	comments which express the belief that everyone has the capacity to write

8 Professional writers' knowledge and experience of writing

Sub theme	**Definition**
Range of writing	every mention, including repetitions, of particular genres or types of writing eg fiction; music reviews, academic writing etc
Craft knowledge	comments which refer to the 'how to' or 'know how' of writing; includes 'don't know' references and the absence of knowledge;
Influence of reading	comments which refer to what writers have learned (implicitly or explicitly) from reading
Reader awareness	comments which refer to the writer's cognisance of reader needs; shaping writing for a reader
Confidence	comments which refer to confidence or lack of confidence about writing, or a particular kind of writing
Feedback	comments which refer to feedback on writing from peers, publisher, critics, educators; include evaluation as feedback. This is specifically about comments on the detail of the text or writing
Writing routines	comments which refer to any strategies/practices the writer uses to manage the writing process eg daily writing time; going for a walk if stuck; using notebooks to capture ideas etc
Just Write	comments which refer to writers simply writing to get ideas on to the page or to develop ideas on the page; free writing
Recursive cycle	comments which indicate that the writing process is iterative, cycling between generating/developing ideas, drafting, and reviewing
Revision	comments which refer to revision, including contemporaneous revision as the writing unfolds, post hoc revision, distance required for revision
Generating ideas	any comments which refer to the way ideas are generated including research, mulling time, finding 'seeds' for writing, etc

Text planning	any comments which refer to the advance mapping or outlining of a piece of text once ideas have been generated; or which refer to no planning
Emotion	comments which refer to the way emotion plays through in text

8 Professional writers' writing: pedagogical practices

Sub theme	**Definition**
Writer self as model	comments which refer to the writer drawing on their own practices as writers as a model for student
Writing as self-expression	comments which refer to writing for expressing own ideas, writing from own experience; understanding the world, therapy…
Freedom and taking risks	comments which refer to creating classroom or out of classroom opportunities for playing, taking risks, creating time and space
Collaboration	comments which refer to learning together, sharing ideas/experiences; being a community of writers
Understanding writing as a process	comments which refer to writers wanting teachers/children to understand the process of writing: generating, drafting, revising, its messiness
Understanding of writing as a craft	comments which refer to writers/teachers drawing attention to text-based characteristics: words; story-structure; show not tell; editing adjectives etc
Opportunities to just write	comments which refer to freewriting; writing without evaluation
Writing from experience	comments which refer to writers encouraging students to draw on their experiences, however ordinary, as the source for writing

8 Professional writers' co-mentoring

Sub theme	**Definition**
Writer/teacher roles	comments which refer to their differing or similar roles in the co-mentoring relationship
Shared planning/goals	comments which refer to how they planned or didn't plan
Writer Learning	comments about what writers learned from the teachers; or writers altering their thinking about their role as writers in schools
Pressures on Teachers	comments which refer to contextual pressures such as testing, Ofsted, curriculum etc
Integrating Arvon Learning into Classroom	comments which refer to how teachers did or did not draw on Arvon experience in the classroom

8 Professional writers in schools

Sub theme	**Definition**
Visits as a 'show'	comments which refer to writer in school activity as performance; a routine; set activities that are used each time
Temporality	comments which refer to the time a visit takes – short; unsustained; 'helicoptered in'; no time to develop relationships
Success and satisfaction	comments which refer to times in school where they feel they have achieved something
Purpose	comments which refer to what the purpose of being a writer in school is.
Writing as Empowerment	comments which reflected writers' desire to show students that writing is important, empowering, liberating