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Journalism And Activism Anew: Participatory Movements With Adolescents Writing For Change

Abstract

This study followed 15 secondary students as they moved across multiple spaces of an unfolding writing program: a journalism summer writing camp; an educational online community for youth centered on social justice; and school year, drop-in writing workshop sessions. Aiming to understand how adolescent writers shifted participation and writing across these spaces, their perspectives are centered, in line with methodological and epistemological framing in YPAR and theoretical framings focused on movement in relation to power asymmetries: transliteracies and critical literacies. Program spaces were liminal and framed as "Third Spaces." Data collection was both individual and collaborative with youth and included field notes, surveys, discussions, multimodal artifacts, and interviews. Data analysis involved early collaboration with youth and open, in-vivo coding and narrative analysis. One findings set unpacks liminality as intentional aspects of writing space construction and co-construction characterized by multiplicities in genres, modes, and adult-youth relationships. A second findings set attends to tensions between youth and adult participants (including me) within our spaces, positioning tensions as generative sources of transformation when directly discussed with youth. A third findings set examines interplays between journalism as a shifting genre and our liminal spaces, describing convergences between "citizen journalism" and youth journalistic engagement as personal and social, specifically as creative, narrative, and activist. Collective implications point to the importance of surfacing metacommunicative awareness in writing teaching, learning, and research and suggest participatory ethnography and participatory narrative analysis as future directions for engaging in participatory work with youth that allows choices and practices to emerge.

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JOURNALISM AND ACTIVISM ANEW:
PARTICIPATORY MOVEMENTS WITH ADOLESCENTS WRITING FOR CHANGE

Emily Claire Plummer Catena

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in

Education

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2020

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Dedication

Dad (Steve Plummer)

June 21, 1955-January 3, 2020

I dedicate this dissertation to you, Dad—my most steadfast advisor, coach, friend, and mentor and a real-life hero. I am sorry that this did not happen in time for you to see and to know that I finished. I did this for you and because of you.

“A hero does for others. He would do anything for the people he loves, because he knows it would make their lives better”—Ernest Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*

Your life was cut short in a way that only the most beautiful souls and powerful influences can be.

“If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.”—Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*

Dad, I will look for you in cardinals. I will continue to live my life to make you proud, and I strive to emulate what you showed me throughout your life (and these are just some of the very many): to work hard but humbly, to persist even when it feels too hard, to say less (especially about yourself) and to listen more, to avoid judgement, to love others more than you love yourself, to tell the truth even if it might hurt, and to laugh. You always made me laugh (you still do), and I will forever miss the sound of yours.

Thank you. I will love you always.

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my mom, who did all that she could to make sure I had extended periods of time to write

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and my son, Jameson, both a wonderful motivator and distraction at the same time.

If, in the overwhelm of emotions that comes with completing and submitting a dissertation draft, I have forgotten to note anyone here, please know that it was accidental and does not diminish my gratitude.

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ABSTRACT**JOURNALISM AND ACTIVISM ANEW: PARTICIPATORY WITH ADOLESCENTS****WRITING FOR CHANGE**

Emily Plummer

Amy Stornaiuolo

This study followed 15 secondary students as they moved across multiple spaces of an unfolding writing program: a journalism summer writing camp; an educational online community for youth centered on social justice; and school year, drop-in writing workshop sessions. Aiming to understand how adolescent writers shifted participation and writing across these spaces, their perspectives are centered, in line with methodological and epistemological framing in YPAR and theoretical framings focused on movement in relation to power asymmetries: transliteracies and critical literacies. Program spaces were liminal and framed as “Third Spaces.” Data collection was both individual and collaborative with youth and included field notes, surveys, discussions, multimodal artifacts, and interviews. Data analysis involved early collaboration with youth and open, in-vivo coding and narrative analysis. One findings set unpacks liminality as intentional aspects of writing space construction and co-construction characterized by multiplicities in genres, modes, and adult-youth relationships. A second findings set attends to tensions between youth and adult participants (including me) within our spaces, positioning tensions as generative sources of transformation when directly discussed with youth. A third findings set examines interplays between journalism as a shifting genre and our liminal spaces, describing convergences between “citizen journalism” and youth journalistic engagement as personal and social, specifically as creative, narrative, and activist.

Collective implications point to the importance of surfacing metacommunicative awareness in writing teaching, learning, and research and suggest participatory ethnography and participatory narrative analysis as future directions for engaging in participatory work with youth that allows choices and practices to emerge.

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Chapter One: Stories of the Questions

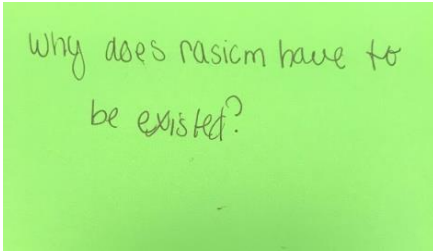


Figure 1.1

Middle school writing camper's topic brainstorm for a journalistic news article

A middle school student wrote this question as part of an initial topic brainstorming activity. She was a camper in a 2017 Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP) summer writing camp focused on the journalism genre. I was a co-facilitator and had put together the curriculum with two other co-facilitators: a fellow graduate student in the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education (PennGSE)'s Reading/Writing/Literacy (R/W/L) program and a School District of Philadelphia (SDOP) high school teacher.

What this student wrote stuck with me long after the camp had ended. I was—and remain—struck by her desire to tackle such a “big question,” such a systemic issue, through journalism and in a summer camp space. Even after spending a week-long camp with her devoted to the genre, I left the immediate experience wondering how she conceptualized journalism, if/how she saw herself as a journalist, and what she understood as the relationship between journalism and social justice.

Not so many months after this 2017 journalism summer writing camp ended, the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting and its aftermath unfolded, leaving a wake of death, grief, outrage, calls for action, and youth activism. Students in and around this Philadelphia region were deeply impacted by it and were taking their own local actions in response to it—and many were doing so via journalism. Parkland students who survived

the shooting took to social media, galvanizing a campaign that had political impact across the nation and was, overwhelmingly, looked upon positively in and by the general public. In addition to garnering much-needed (inter)national attention around gun violence, gun laws, and school safety, the Parkland's #NeverAgain movement also surfaced how racism and systems of power and exclusion kept similar student-activism efforts by youth of color out of the media spotlight and/or out of the public's good graces. At the root of headlines about these inequitable uptakes of student voices is the same question that the middle graders camper was asking about systemic racism. A local instance of journalistic coverage on this issue can be seen in Figure 1.2.

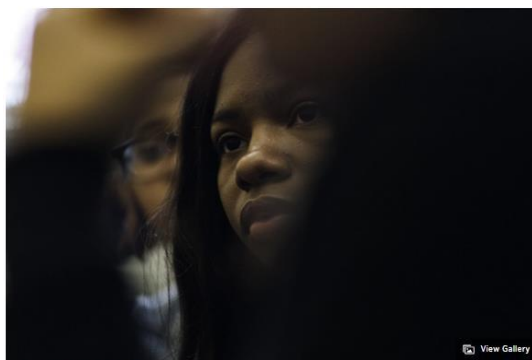
Figure 1.2

Local news headline about uptakes of student activism

News — Education

The world is listening to Parkland teens. Some Philly kids wonder: Why not us?

Updated: MARCH 11, 2018 — 8:52 AM EDT



© RAYMOND W. HOLMAN JR. / FOR THE INQUIRER
Milan Sullivan, a Mastery-Shoemaker junior, wonders where the outrage is when shootings happen in the black community.

I was seeing these sorts of *Philly.com* stories while working through my lingering questions from the 2017 journalism summer writing camp. I began to understand that the 2017 initial journalism camp did not unpack with students how journalism was already positioning them while we co-facilitators presented it as a genre through which they could write about

social justice. The journalism camp approached the genre only as one students can engage *in*, but it is also a genre they can and should—and many already do—engage *with*, as in deconstructing its genre conventions and publication norms while simultaneously writing within the genre for social change aims.

Spaces for Writing

Much like the middle school student I mentioned in opening, I instinctively understood the summer camp space as one in which deconstruction and reconstruction of a genre (e.g., Janks, 2010)—even one like journalism, often considered factual, “objective,” and/or rigid—could meaningfully take place. I have spent the last five years of my work at and through PennGSE as a student, researcher, and educator in “in-between” literacy learning spaces, spaces that are often in or directly connected to schools but that are not “traditional” classrooms. I worked with high school students in a School District of Philadelphia (SDOP) innovation high school on developing a peer writing center. I served as an assistant and co-facilitator in multiple PhilWP summer writing camps, like the 2017 one initially described. I was a moderator in an educational online writing community for secondary students called Write4Change (W4C). This digital community was centered on how writing can have social change impacts, and students in it were connected to it by their educators (in schools and in after-school/extra-school programs, like summer writing camps). I came to understand that there is something about these sorts of liminal spaces that surface possibilities, in approaches and outcomes and relationships, that are especially generative and are perhaps missing from school contexts (but they do not have to be). If how students conceptualize and engage in journalism is contingent and shifting, what can

be learned by critically examining the genre *with* those who are shifting it? And, if we draw on in-between, or liminal, spaces to do this work, what aspects of that work move across different contents and why?

When it came time to consider a second iteration of the journalism summer writing camp in 2018, I went into the curriculum planning conceptualizing the experience as one that would engage students *in* and *with* journalism. They would engage *in* journalism as they wrote articles, and they would engage *with* journalism as they considered how journalism positioned “them”: their communities of belonging and/or location, their concerns and struggles, and their youth peers writ large. Students would arrive at their own designs for news articles as per their understanding of the genre’s conventions and their choices around them and their knowledge of and response to how journalistic representations impact them.

Holding the journalism summer camp in 2018 then became about more than my research interests around students’ relationships to the genre. The camp expanded to become an initial space to unpack across local and global scales with students issues around uptake of students’ writing and activism within journalistic coverage. From that camp, I then aimed to understand how students took action as writers in connected and subsequent spaces—some digital, some in-person, and all “school-like” but outside of official and traditional school spaces.

Project Overview

Through this cross-contextual study that foregrounds student voices, I aimed to investigate students’ practices in, movements across, and understandings of contexts for

writing, genres of writing, and audiences for writing. For approximately six months, I researched *with* these students as they engaged *in* and *with* journalistic writing across writing spaces and considered individually and together the ways such writing could serve as an important form of activism.

I followed 15 students through multiple spaces of a writing program that was unfolding as the students, I, and other adults/mentors moved through it together. We started in an eight-day, two-week journalism camp experience that ran concurrently with W4C as a digital space to write in as well. The camp took place over a two-week span in August, four half-days each of the two weeks. Fifteen students from in and around the city of Philadelphia attended. The camp was part of a developing PhilWP collaboration called the Philly School Media Network that included a local community access media station; *The Philadelphia Public School Notebook*, an educational non-profit; and PhilWP teacher-consultants (TC) in schools with interest in developing school newspapers and/or journalism programs.

W4C was meant to be a digital space where students could grow their camp work around journalism and their relationships with their fellow campers such that they could ultimately engage in W4C in ways of their own choosing unconnected to camp curriculum. That neither materialized opened questions about youth digital writing, participation in youth digital writing communities, and youth participation more particularly in our cross-contextual writing program.

One month after the camp ended—and students remained members of the W4C community during those four weeks—students had the opportunity to reconnect and write

further together in Friday Night Writes (FNW), a bi-weekly school year program from September through December. Although I had preconceived a culminating, multimodal, participatory project as occurring with camp students who came to FNW sessions, it also did not materialize for a number of reasons—only six campers regularly attended FNW sessions, and they did not initiate or indicate interest in such a project. FNW became a place to both dive more deeply into our prior work around journalism and to begin other discussions around new pieces of writing in different genres and for different purposes and audiences. Journalism was only an emphasis in FNW for those students who came to the summer camp, and even then, other genres, contexts, and purposes for writing were explored by campers during FNW.

Across all three of these program spaces, I conceptualized my role as a participant-observer in line with Green’s “Double Dutch Methodology” (2014) and, in fact, came to understand a key tension underlying all of my work with youth during this study as centered in this “double Dutch.” It was at the intersections of my decisions as facilitator—curricular, organizational, relational—and students’ uptakes, refusals, and/or reconstructions of my framings and offerings that I most learned about writing, research, and participation from the students.

Individually and together with the students a wide variety of data was collected and analyzed, including field notes, open-ended surveys and reflection forms, audio-recorded group discussions and interviews, and student artifacts across modes: written, aural, and video. Some forms of data I analyzed with students during FNW sessions, in particular curricular documents like the journalism camp syllabus. Others, especially student writing

that was composed and published during the camp, I drew on narrative analysis methods to analyze. My goal across all forms of data collection and analysis was to understand from and with students how they conceptualized and engaged in journalism in expanded ways, how they drew on such writing as a means of affecting social change, and how they understood and enacted participation in the different spaces of our writing program in relation to their own aims.

Participation in and Across Writing Spaces

Underneath these aims, which I then had to think through curricularly, was a desire to learn from youth and their processes, practices, and pieces of writing. This youth-centering is also seen in the other, prior research mentioned that I engaged in with youth peer tutors, writing campers, and digital writing community members and connects strongly to considerations of the spaces where we would engage in this study and how we would shape those spaces. I decided to frame this study as youth participatory action research (YPAR) so that I could even more so think through what it would mean to do this work *with* students—this work of engaging *in* and *with* a genre across liminal spaces and, further, of (re)building those spaces together. YPAR emerged as the framing for this current study both epistemologically—in a research stance toward youth as researchers and knowledge producers—and methodologically, the latter in particular relation to developing the second 2018 camp curriculum. I organized the camp around three principles of YPAR in Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell’s (2016) foundational work: engagement in the research cycle, with social scientist mentors, and with publication outlets. And all principles are in relation to social issues of genuine interest to youth.

The 15 students who attended the camp constitute this study's participants although a significant number of other young writers as well as adult writers/educators/mentors influenced aspects of the study's unfolding. Those 15 students also had varied participation experiences in the writing program—camp, W4C, and FNW—as they developed different understandings around journalism, wrote about different topics and in different ways, and decided if and how to engage with the spaces that came after the camp. Students forged unique pathways throughout the spaces of the program, an emergent finding that surfaced for me in relation to my YPAR framing. What did it mean for the students to “participate”—in a writing space and/or program, in a genre, and as youth researchers—particularly within a participatory framing of my own conceptualization? Considering the “participation” in participatory research then became another key question and central issue within the study, one that connected strongly to my other questions around in-between spaces and shifting genres.

Bringing Together Spaces and Participation through Journalism

Through both this YPAR framing and a critical literacies framing (e.g., Janks, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2012), I centered the aim of transforming knowledge around writing for both students and educators and researchers, and I did this with students through the genre of journalism. This genre was at the core and in the particulars of the summer camp curriculum but was conceptualized not just as a means of publishing students' stories but of critically engaging with media and public positionings of youth as writers and activists.

Such considerations of the journalism genre, its representations, and the spaces in which it is composed and published were and continue to be echoed in current public

writing both by and about youth engaging in social change efforts. Figure 1.3 again shows how some students' stories circulate and get taken up while others are ignored, silenced, or even condemned. As a more recent example of youth activism efforts and journalistic representations of those, Greta Thunberg and her white counterparts were considered by the Associated Press (AP) to be appropriate representations of a youth-led climate change movement. The youth of color also involved and represented in the original photograph were not so considered.

Figure 1.3

International news article about uptakes of student activism

**Ugandan activist says AP
cropped her from a press
photo with Greta Thunberg**

**NOW
THIS**



This photograph links to the middle school student whose research question about racism I quoted initially. The original image shown just above was unmasked and shared via social media (I found it on Twitter), a form of deconstruction and reconstruction (Janks, 2010) akin to what I attempted to foster through the journalism camp curriculum. Posting on Twitter the image in Figure 1.3 was a form of writing for change.

These discussions of how youth utilize writing, particularly digital, for social justice aims across audiences and spaces highlights “the increasingly murky line between journalism and activism” (Neason & Dalton, 2018, para. 2). But, it also emphasizes that the potential of journalism in this age of social media to foster change is unequal for students of color, as their words, their causes, and even their identities are not met with the same enthusiasm and applause as those of their white suburban peers.

In this age of instant access and updates—where cell phones and social media make immediate, on the scene “reporting” by all citizens possible—journalism is no longer just about being the first to “break” a new story (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). When students push back against representations, what they are doing is utilizing this shifting journalism genre to enact activism—to write for change. Youth are taking to the digital realms that have become synonymous with adolescence to engage in new forms of journalism, ones that critically examine inequities and engage in activism against them. Students do this pushing back through international social media campaigns like Thunberg and the Parkland students. But, they also do so through local in-person protests or through participating in a journalism summer writing camp like ours.

These ideas about the shifts in means, purposes, and makers of journalism have been circulating for some time. However, the current political and popular culture moment of “fake news” and fears both about and churned up by the president bring the “blurred lines between journalism and activism” (Neason & Dalton, 2018, para. 21) to the forefront in forms that call into question how access, uptake, and outcomes of student writing are tied to identities. Journalism is, then, a liminal writing space itself, one that lends itself to

exploring intersections—between genre conventions and authors’ preferred writing styles and purposes—and representations in published writing. Such explorations are forms of participation in writing as activism and of shaping the spaces where the writing takes place, whether physical, digital, or hybrid.

Students’ choices as writers and change-makers are rooted in what they perceive as likely, possible, and/or necessary—when in school and out of school, when writing with or in certain genres and conventions, and when writing to or for particular audiences. How and why writing moves is inextricably linked to systems of power; fostering spaces and conceptualizing genres in ways that facilitate the former with critical attunement to the latter are much needed in these shifting times.

Preview of Chapters

In Chapter Two, I will link the theoretical aspects of my YPAR framing with transliteracies tools (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017) that similarly cut across multiple foundational pieces of this study, in particular the theoretical framing and data analysis. Transliteracies is attuned to movement as it intersects with power, and both aspects then connect to critical literacies cycles of deconstruction, reconstruction, and design (Janks, 2010), which is also further unpacked in Chapter Two as a key area of the framing. From these interconnected framings—YPAR, transliteracies, and critical literacies, I review research literature in two large areas. The first is related to liminal spaces like our own—a writing camp; an educational digital writing community; and a school-year, drop-in writing workshop series—and students’ writing within and across such spaces. The second is

connected to how youth are simultaneously engaging in and forming blended genres, like new forms of citizen journalism, largely through their digital writing practices.

In Chapter Three, I unpack YPAR again in relation to my methodological framing and approaches, with particular attention to my positionality in conceptualizing the spaces of the program and then in learning from students about their unfolding and reforming. I detail the particulars of the three program spaces as research sites, provide more background information about the 15 students involved, and specify and explicate data collection and analysis efforts in relation to the participatory framings.

Chapter Four is the first of three data analysis chapters. I begin with considering the spaces more closely—what made them liminal both intentionally and in emergence and what affordances of liminality can be sought after and strived for in different writing contexts and why. To explain why the spaces were conceptualized and co-constructed as liminal is not to indicate that liminality is inherently positive or that the spaces of this program were not without significant challenges. In fact, Chapter Five is dedicated to critically examining the tensions that arose from the liminalities that characterized our spaces. I argue that talking through with students these tensions as and after they arose made them productive—and that liminal spaces lend themselves to having such discussions. Chapter Six explores how the genre of journalism similarly lends itself to critical conversations, this time in relationship to how its conventions position writers more broadly and journalistic media representations position youth more specifically. From these deconstructions, I move to detailing how students—alongside adults/mentors within the program—reconstructed the genre for their own personal purposes. I end Chapter Six

with narrative analysis of one student's multiple writing pieces across the spaces of our program.

In Chapter Seven, the final and concluding chapter, I weave together these data analysis chapters on liminal literacy learning spaces and their productive tensions and on the relationships between our camp space and journalism as a shifting genre. I do so through implications centered on knowledge transformation in relation to sources drawn on as knowledge and outputs considered appropriate forms for distributing knowledge. In particular, I emphasize metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013) as a broader goal of writing together in liminal literacy learning spaces.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

At the core of my questions about how students “take up” journalism and our liminal spaces—and about how the activism of youth writ large is “taken up” in journalistic media coverage—are attunements to movement and power as they intertwine and impact writing choices and outcomes. Both transliteracies (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017) and critical literacies (Janks, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2012) share these emphases on how texts shift across contexts, genres, audiences, and purposes as they and their authors are positioned by and in systems of power. Importantly, both also offer “tools” for educators and students to consider how they might draw on texts, genres, and their own purposes to push back against the types of positionings outlined in Chapter One, like when the Parkland students are lauded for their efforts against gun violence while youth of color in similar campaigns are ignored or silenced.

Transliteracies tools focus on critically considering how adolescent writers’ practices are simultaneously more mobile given the ubiquity of the digital and yet subject to both the same and newer forms of power, gatekeeping, and exclusion. Through the transliteracies tools of inquiry, which include emergence, resonance, scale, and uptake (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017), the composition, publication, and reception of pieces of writing can be unpacked with attention to authors’ relationships and shifts across spaces and purposes while writing. Critical literacies also moves with a text across various points in the creation process, considering systems of power as influencing conceptualizations, constructions—both reconstructions and deconstructions, and ultimate choices around creation and circulation. This “design cycle” (Janks, 2010) is iterative and

emphasizes, like transliteracies, that a piece of writing is never static, even after creation and/or publication, as there is more to be gained from examining the writerly processes, choices, and tensions within and emanating from the cycle.

In this theoretical framing chapter, I will first continue to detail transliteracies and critical literacies as the grounding theories of this research study, with particular attention to how transliteracies coheres with YPAR (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016) as an epistemological framing and critical literacies coheres with ideas about liminal literacy learning spaces (i.e., “Third Space,” Gutiérrez, 2008). All emphasize knowledge transformation in ways that are particularly impactful for youth writers. This thread of transformation will then run through the literature review portion of the chapter. In the literature review section, I link these transformative framings (transliteracies, critical literacies, YPAR, and Third Space) to current research on how adolescent writing practices move across in- and out-of-school contexts, in turn changing writing and literacy learning in both; to current research on adolescents’ new purposes for writing, particularly as tied to the digital; and to current research on how such adolescent writing practices blur genre boundaries and conventions. In the latter subsection, both digital writing and journalism will be especially considered.

This theoretical framing chapter then intertwines the same various but interconnected areas undergirding this study in its entirety: student writing—especially journalistic, liminal writing spaces, and digital writing practices.

Transliterations

The uneven receptions of student activism discussed in Chapter One illustrate what Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) call the “paradox of mobility.” Digital writing makes youth activism across contexts more possible, but existing and current power structures still push back against those new possibilities. Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) argue that in our increasingly mobile worlds, there is a “need” for research studies like this one that foreground how a piece of writing moves in and through systems of power while being written and when being received:

there remains an imperative need for theoretical and methodological approaches to explain and study the contingency, instability, and emergence of mobile literacy practices that simultaneously open some opportunities and foreclose others. Such a focus on the paradox of mobility invites close analysis of how people’s literacy practices can be differentially valued and recognized, in turn reproducing, exacerbating, or challenging existing social inequities...a *transliterations* framework can serve as a flexible heuristic for addressing this mobility paradox in its efforts to examine who and what moves, how, why, and under what conditions. (p. 70)

During discussions of the digital writing community that spanned across our in-person writing spaces, one of the students in this study surfaced this paradox of mobility; she, Tina, said, “Nowadays it’s 2018, and you can change things by social media...that makes it easier than it was in the past, but then at the same time, it can still be difficult” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018). How and why it “can still be difficult” is precisely what a transliterations framing aims to unpack, as did I in my multiple conversations and collaborations with Tina (this particular discussion is described and analyzed with more depth in Chapter Four, which is about the liminalities of our program spaces like this W4C online community).

Particularly in the “connected world” that Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) also emphasize, there is a tendency to romanticize digital tools—and students’ uses of them—as democratizing for all writers. Yes, adolescents like Tina move across spaces as they write, whether they are shifting between in- and out-of-school contexts and practices or are literally moving as they type on their mobile phones while walking (e.g., Warner, 2016). Yes, adolescents blend genres and mix modes when they write blog posts or compose digital stories. But, these realities of writing must be recognized alongside the realities of power that exist in young people’s lives, particularly when those young people are from marginalized populations. Like Tina alluded to, Stornaiuolo and LeBlanc (2016) stress the importance of the paradox: “For literacy researchers studying the contingency and instability of literacy practices on the move, one of the central questions becomes, ‘How do we examine movement in a way that captures fluidity but equally the contradictions and gateways that restrict, sift, and marginalize?’” (p. 264).

A transliteracies approach is particularly attuned to these issues of equity in relationship to youth and their communities (Campano, Ghiso, & Sanchez, 2013; Campano, Ghiso, & Welch, 2016; Campano, Ghiso, Yee, & Pantoja, 2013). It aids researchers in examining the literal and metaphorical movements young writers make “across interactions among people, things, texts, contexts, modes, and media” (p. 72). This focus on mobilities further leaves open the specifics of the movements made as students navigate through existing and emerging systems of power—who and/or what moves or is moved, why, and how. Such fluidity was necessary in framing my study, as I followed a group of 15 adolescents across out-of-school, school-like, and digital contexts and through

the interactions they had with a variety of human and material resources in and across these contexts. Not only could students' participation not be predetermined, but my desire to ground this study in YPAR (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016) necessitated remaining open to students' mobilities and mobilizing—something that proved, as will be discussed in Chapters Four, Five, and Six, challenging but productively so.

Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) describe these aims of tracing movements in and across power dynamics as “tracing systems of relations in literate activity while emphasizing issues of power and ideology in those systems” (p. 76). They offer four “tools for inquiry” researchers can use when working toward such understandings: emergence, uptake, resonance, and scale (pp. 77-84). Brief definitions of these tools will first be offered below, followed by discussions of how they were drawn upon in my study, particularly as consistent with YPAR (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016).

Emergence emphasizes that both bodies and contexts are always emerging but that these emerging meanings are difficult to attend to in the “moment to moment” (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 77). To engage in “research as emergence,” researchers must observe and analyze “in the midst of activity in the present” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 35), which necessitates engagement without assumptions or predetermined explanations (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 78). Uptake highlights how people's responses, as audiences and/or creators—and sometimes as both simultaneously—are “never neutral” and are intimately tied to systems of power (p. 79). Those systems constrain some more than others, resulting in the “stratified nature of uptake” (p. 80). Along with this focus on power, uptake also emphasizes the collaborative nature of response, both in

terms of historical dimensions of literacy practices and in regard to the “distributed nature of understanding” (p. 80). Resonance has a collective dimension as well, as it “helps researchers address questions about how ideas, practices, symbols, objects, and the like become ‘shared’ and circulate across spaces and times” (pp. 80-81). Resonance takes uptake a step further, moving beyond just what does or does not get “taken up” to how something is “taken up” and then circulated and transformed (pp. 81-82). Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) assert the usefulness of their fourth tool, scale, in thinking through how power becomes tied to these different contextual relationships. This tool also emphasizes that researchers should not assume what constitutes the “local” and the “global” and should instead see these relationships of space and time as shifting and as socially constructed.

With its goal of conducting research *with*, YPAR is a framing that lends itself to emergence—“as a stance of experiencing emergence alongside participants” (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 78). In this study, I examined how young adults were affected by, felt about, pushed back against, and moved across contexts for journalistic writing. In my role as facilitator of the youth program, I attended to these forms of participation and the interactions that constituted them as they emerged, moving away from problematic assumptions that digital tools and journalistic writing are inherently democratic and instead considering “how those are intertwined with materials, people, and systems that may oppresses and discriminate as much as they liberate and amplify” (p. 79). Social media is one such digital tool through which many adolescents come together to disseminate and comment on news, in the process “taking up” news stories but also transforming them

through their responses, as seen in examples in Chapter One. My study keyed in on these concepts of “taking up” and “transforming” by foregrounding mainstream news and popular culture that was relevant to students but in ways that were critical and important to them, their identities, and their communities. Doing so within a YPAR framing further emphasized the collaborative dimension of uptake, as students engaged with one another as knowledge bearers and producers as well as with numerous adults/mentors across spaces and scales.

In Chapter One, I frequently refer to the “uptake” of students’ activism and the ways in which writing and activism by students from marginalized populations is received by mainstream news and society with less enthusiasm and support. That example—white suburban students fighting against gun violence met with widespread applause and black urban students also fighting against gun violence met with indifference, suspicion, and/or criminalization—also fits in with a resonance focus. Resonance requires examining “how particular voices, dispositions, practices, metaphors, and so forth find traction and resonate across systems, and in what ways others are stifled, cordoned off, and fade as they move” (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 81). In considering this issue of race as it relates to student activism through the journalism summer writing camp curriculum, students in this study took a national issue and localized it to their own communities and schools. By doing so, the students were also “translating their singular critical insights and observations into a broader dialogue that [has] more universal resonance” (Campano, Ghiso, & Sanchez, 2013, p. 98). This connects to the fourth transliteracies tool of scale, which afforded me opportunities to trace the choices a writer could and did make in relation to resources and

forms and then how those choices impacted interactions. I aimed to engage *with* the adolescent writers who attended the journalism camp to understand their conceptualizations of the “local” and the “global” and how they navigated the systems of power tied to each.

YPAR

I conceptualized my YPAR framing as one means of tracing these issues of uptake and power and of mobility across contexts, including the digital. As mentioned in Chapter One, I also conceptualized my YPAR framing as both epistemological and methodological. YPAR foregrounds youth perspectives, interests, and aims, positioning youth as contributors of knowledge based on their own lived experiences (Irizarry & Brown, 2014) and “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). In practice, this means that research takes up issues that matter to participants across lived experiences, following participants’ lines of inquiry. In putting forth their transliteracies framework, Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) also describe transliteracies as “inquiry” and specifically as in line with Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (2009) “inquiry as stance” (pp. 119-121). Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) assert, “Through inquiry, a transliteracies approach to analysis seeks to expand what counts as data and highlight the ways methods must be responsive to participants and communities, which have their own histories and commitments” (p. 76). The ultimate means of working toward such inquiry and of involving equity issues in research is through participation *with* rather than discussion about, which I sought in the YPAR framing of this study. My underlying focus throughout

the entire study was on youth critically engaging with and reflecting on their own writing and activism.

While student voices in academic research are excluded collectively, it is important to consider how that exclusion is further compounded for students of color and what YPAR's potential is for such communities (Campano, Ghiso, & Welch, 2016; Irizzary & Brown, 2014). Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) position this reminder as at the core of YPAR as a framing: "Considering the new perspectives of youth engendered by YPAR, we want to emphasize that the purpose of academic scholarship stemming from YPAR is to help advance the academy's acceptance of valued and historically marginalized voices" (p. 137). A transliteracies framework attends to these issues of power as well through its attention to the "paradox of mobility" (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017), as noted above: "close analysis of how people's literacy practices can be differentially valued and recognized, in turn reproducing, exacerbating, or challenging existing social inequities" (p. 70). Both YPAR and transliteracies framings push for transformations around knowledge production by expanding on "what counts"—as research, by whom, and through what data.

Critical Literacies

A critical literacies framing (Janks, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2012) also has at its core this aim for transformation, particularly when applied to spaces—both literal and metaphorical (e.g., digital writing contexts). While the transliteracies framing above does connect to this study's focus on space, it does so through an emphasis on movements across them. A critical literacies focus on space hones in on the space itself and how to engage in deconstruction, reconstruction, and personally driven designs (Janks, 2010) within the

space in ways that lead to transformations of knowledge and practices around literacy (e.g., Gutiérrez, 2008). Both transliteracies and critical literacies recognize the fluidity of youth writing practices across contexts, whether in-school, out-of-school, digital, or a hybrid of some or all of these.

Just as I pushed throughout the framing and findings of this study against dichotomizing types of and contexts for spaces, i.e., in- and out-of-school, I also argue here that critical literacies that aims for transformation involves more than deconstruction alone, as it is at times problematically conceived and implemented. Janks (2010, 2012) works to directly address critical literacies interpretations that are dichotomizing and/or disenfranchising and, in so doing, puts forth alternative critical literacy theories that call for the reconstruction and/or the creation of new educational practices and spaces, some physical, some figurative, and some both.

Janks (2010) similarly addresses as problems how various strands of critical literacy related to education each emphasize a singular aspect of critical literacy: “different realisations of critical literacy operate with different conceptualisations of the relationship between language and power by foregrounding one or the other of domination, access, diversity or design” (p. 23). Her counterargument to these factions is that these strands are actually “crucially interdependent” (p. 23). Janks (2010) specifically details as follows what is perpetuated and/or what is lost when one orientation is foregrounded at the expense of another. “Power without design” takes away human agency. “Access without design” maintains dominant forms without considering their transformation. “Diversity without design” does not allow for the realization of alternatives provided by diversity. “Design

without power” unconsciously reproduces dominant forms. “Design without access” risks whatever is created remaining marginalized. And, finally, “design without diversity” does not take advantage of diversity’s resources and reifies dominant forms (p. 178). These described shortcomings in how particular critical literacy orientations approach (or do not approach) issues of power as related to literacy speak to an overall need to avoid dichotomization or turning inward toward factions when attempting to understand broad and systemic issues like writing and representations.

The access orientation Janks (2010) describes points on its own to a need to reflect deeply on and ultimately resist binaries between access and domination. This “access paradox” (Janks, 2004) is a “question that confronts teachers of language and literacy” (Janks, 2010, p. 23):

How does one provide access to dominant forms while at the same time valuing and promoting the diverse languages and literacies of our students and in the broader society? If we provide students with access to dominant forms, this contributes to maintaining the dominance of these forms. If, on the other hand, we deny student access, we perpetuate their marginalisation in a society that continues to recognise and value the importance of these forms. (p. 23)

Such forms refer to dominant languages, literacies, and genres—particularly school-based genres, discourses (Gee, 1990), and cultural practices (Janks, 2010, p. 23). The overall contradiction of this access-dominance paradox is not meant to imply that educators and learners must simply choose one or the other: providing and gaining access or maintaining dominant forms. Rather, it is an implicit call for literacy educators and researchers to find means of instead allowing for transformation to occur in their learning contexts. I aimed to do this in the journalism camp by “providing access” to “traditional” structures and conceptualizations of journalism while simultaneously questioning their applicability for

students currently writing in digitally-infused realms and designing new forms of journalism that might better suit their identities as writers and their varied purposes for writing.

These camp activities were aligned with what Janks (2010) terms the “redesign cycle,” a process that takes into account all four strands of critical literacy described so far: design, diversity, access, and domination. Janks (2010) calls for teachers and students to work together in moving through this cycle, as the students and I did during the journalism camp. Collaborative engagement in this cycle is a means of working toward the types of transformation mentioned earlier—of knowledge production and sharing across writing processes, relationships, and spaces. This sense of movement within the cycle as ongoing also reinforces the interdependence of these orientations, as the “redesign cycle” involves continuous movement between “Design/Construct/Make a Text,” “Deconstruct/Unmake,” and “Reconstruct/Redesign/Remake” (p. 183). The iterative nature of this cycle undergirded our criticality and our compositions during the camp in this study. We engaged in deconstruction both initially and through to the last day of the camp, when we analyzed journalistic media headlines about student activists after having already broadcast our youth radio show and submitted news articles for later publication. Students continuously engaged in reconstructions of journalism as a whole as they grappled with the genre as readers and writers both positioned by journalistic coverage and repositioning journalism through their expanded understandings of what it can look like and do.

Through this critical literacies design cycle, students then had multiple entry points for transformation. They created their own texts (news articles, dramatic monologues,

W4C postings, and more) in response to texts that represented dominant forms. They deconstructed texts that already existed as representations of dominant forms (e.g., the headline analysis activity discussed in Chapter Six). And they redesigned texts that already existed as representations of dominant forms (e.g., they shifted news articles into dramatic monologues in a camp mentor's workshop discussed in Chapter Six). Regardless of entry, the results were the same in realization: Students came to see and discuss together how all texts have power dynamics and implications, that "[n]o design is neutral" (p. 183). Janks (2010) highlights the importance of the cycle in coming to this end: "It is important that this process is conceptualized as cyclical because every new design serves a different set of interests" (p. 183). In this way, transformation was not a singular achievement to be accomplished around or through a text, just as critical literacy is not one orientation at the expense of another and literacy learning spaces are not siloed in students' lives. Transformation is, instead, an ongoing opening of possibilities and shifting of approaches and understandings—an aim that has extended for the students and me beyond the six months of our writing program.

Third Spaces

Janks (2010), as above, is focused on reframing critical literacy orientations in relation to the transformation of texts, which in turn transforms orientations to knowledge within literacy learning spaces. Other critical literacy scholars push back against critical literacy orientations as they pertain to the transformation of spaces even more directly. Gutiérrez (2008) is one such scholar; through her work on the notion of Third Space, she calls into question traditional understandings of the zone of proximal development (ZPD)

and even of the concept of Third Space (Bhabha, 1994; Moje et al., 2004) itself. Gutiérrez (2008) draws directly on this idea of transformation in describing how her Third Space conception differs from common and more reductionist understandings of it:

the Third Space construct (contrary to the various interpretations it has attracted; e.g., Moje et al., 2004) has always been more than a celebration of the local literacies of students from nondominant groups; and certainly more than what students can do with assistance or scaffolding; and also more than ahistorical accounts of individual discrete events, literacy practices, and the social interaction within. Instead, it is a transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened. (p. 152)

These transformative potentials surrounding literacy learning and knowledge development in the Third Space pertain to rethinking not just discrete events, as Gutiérrez (2008) mentions above, but to interplays between individuals, their actions and interactions within their environmental “space,” and that space itself (p. 152). In this study, I sought to bring together these very same strands—relationships across youth/students and adults/mentors in a participatory framing, engagements with the shifting genre of journalism in our digital and politically charged realities, and movements across varied but connected liminal spaces that are school-like but outside of schools. My overarching aim was to center my looks into these relationships, engagements, and movements from students’ perspectives and as rooted in their experiences in our spaces.

Gutiérrez (2008) explains these interrelated aspects as similarly stemming from individual learner’s goals. She further positions the Third Space concept as transformative as follows:

the individual and her sociocultural environment actively seek to change the other to their own ends. Clearly, this process of transformation is anything but harmonious, and it is the inherent continuities and discontinuities among individual

and environment and the larger system that, in part, I have been attempting to account for in theorizing the Third Space. (p. 153)

This focus on the interaction between activity systems in people's learning and lives relates also to how Gutiérrez (2008) addresses misconceptions of the ZPD. Gutiérrez (2008) positions the Third Space as a type of ZPD itself, one that challenges traditional ZPD understandings that are overly adult-centered and therefore reductionist, or as Gutiérrez (2008) describes "the misunderstandings of the ZPD and...the limitations of a narrow view of the ZPD as a space of productive adult-centered scaffolding" (p. 152). In this study, the interplays between my own adult/facilitator framing and program organization and students' goals and their forms of engagement and learning emerged as significant sources of tension from which to learn. By conceiving of the various spaces of this writing program as in line with the concept of Third Space, the students and I were able to center this underlying tension in productive ways: discussing directly problematic interactions with adults/mentors, as in Chapter Five; working together to conceptualize still unfolding spaces of the program; and engaging in constructive feedback sessions around experiences in the spaces of the program and the activities within them.

Given that the Third Space is characterized by such interactions and movements both within and beyond the individual, including the "various temporal, spatial, and historical dimensions of activity" mentioned above, the Third Space also opens up the ZPD to include "the collaboration of different activity systems" (p. 152). So, learning is about far more than the adult/educator to youth/student exchange, taking into account how the histories of individuals both interact with one another and with the situation of the learning environment more broadly, what Gutiérrez (2008) describes as "interdependent zones of

proximal development” (p. 153). This study examined genres, spaces, and relationships between writers at various scales (peers, adults/mentors, literacy organizations, etc.) and positioned all as interdependent in individual and collective writing experiences and designs.

In these ways, the Third Space transforms what it means to learn by expanding who and, importantly, what contributes and how, as does the YPAR framing that guided my epistemological and methodological thinking.

Literature Review

In reviewing the research literature, I draw on the areas discussed above in relation to transformation: spaces, purposes, and genres of student writing. Across all three subsections is the notion that students, through their movements, digital practices, and social justice orientations, are shifting spaces, purposes, and genres for their own and others’ writing.

Spaces for Writing: In- and Out-of-School Contexts

This study builds on discussions of in- and out-of-school contexts that are more fluid (e.g., Alvermann & Moore, 2011) and, further, that broaden beyond a focus simply on how to harness students’ writing practices outside of the classroom, particularly their digital writing practices, to “make” students more “successful” in school as it exists traditionally (e.g., Hicks, 2009; Ranker, 2015; Turner, 2014).

The question I aimed to instead explore about students’ contexts of writing is how adolescents’ out-of-school literacy practices—especially those that are digital—can be drawn upon in ways that allow for the examination and disruption of school and societal

inequities (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017) as realized through conventions around the teaching and learning of writing. Given that the initial context for this study was a space that straddled the boundaries of the in- and out-of-school—a summer “camp” centered on writing and located in a non-classroom setting but with ties to sending teachers and to classmates—I sought to de-emphasize the dichotomies between the contexts, as do Hull and Schultz (2001):

By emphasizing physical space (i.e., contexts outside the schoolhouse door) or time (i.e., after-school programs), we may...then, fail to see the presence of school-like practice at home...or non-school-like activities in the formal classroom. Such contexts are not sealed tight or boarded off; rather, one should expect to find, and should attempt to account for, movement from one context to the other. (p. 577)

Hull and Schultz (2001) also raise the importance of movement. Students’ writing and activism circulates across physical and digital contexts in ways that require further examination—and not just for the potential to improve classroom practice but for the possibility of increasing equity of representations and writing practices within schools and the world (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017).

Haddix, Everson, and Hodge (2017) provide a powerful example of this movement and equity focus. They also help to illustrate this reconceptualization of the unidirectional metaphor of “bridging” adolescents’ out-of-school literacies to the classroom for academic improvement only. The authors discuss *Writing Our Lives*, a community program focused on activist writing among urban youth. Student co-author Everson describes a missing “bridge” between her school context, where she could not talk about protests against police killings of unarmed black men, and her personal passions for the cause—and her subsequent anger at being unable to bring it into her school-based writing. Everson drew

upon the resources of *Writing Our Lives* to organize a rally for young people also invested in the cause. Everson utilized the digital tools and practices she was already familiar with and proficient at to engage in activism missing from her academic context. This makes clear that students' own inquiries and social action have significant potential to transform learning in ways that are sorely needed—for equity and social justice ends, particularly for students of color whose voices are further stifled across multiple contexts (as touched on in Chapter One).

In this study, I similarly explored how the camp, W4C, and FNW school-year sessions could become spaces where students drew across the contexts of their writing and activism to transform learning and opportunities writ large. Through the YPAR curriculum, I looked upon “students’ experiences as rich sites of intellectual inquiry, not merely as a bridge to ‘real’ academic learning” (Ghiso, 2016, p. 10), and I further did so in ways that aimed to expand understandings of participation and relationships in our writing spaces.

Purposes for Writing: Youth Digital Activism and Civic Engagement

As alluded to in the above discussion of Haddix, Everson, and Hodge’s (2017) work around *Writing Our Lives*, student co-author Everson relied on digital activism to fight the injustices of racialized police killings. Efforts like Everson’s—and like those fostered in the conversations and creations from the cross-contextual writing program, particularly in the journalism camp—are examples of youth digital activism, a term for which Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) provide a definition that served as the basis of my understanding and approach as well. Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) define “youth digital activism” as “adolescent and young adult online practices that involve political, civic, social, or cultural

action oriented toward social change or transformation” (p. 338). They further argue, as additionally mentioned above, that youth digital activism “can serve as a central mechanism to disrupt inequality” (p. 338). By focusing on causes close to adolescents’ minds and hearts through YPAR, transliteracies, and critical literacies, the writing program in this study moved across contexts in ways that pushed back against inequities in systems and society related to learning, writing, and representations.

In their recent review of literature on youth digital activism, Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) emphasize forms of activism that fit in with this study’s YPAR framing: “self-expressive, issue-oriented, and interest-driven activist practices online” (p. 340). Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) find that adolescent activism online is centered around fan culture and social media. The “Harry Potter alliance” (Jenkins, 2012) is an instance of the former, with its members raising money and awareness about issues related to literacy and human rights more broadly. This link between *Harry Potter* and adolescent activism is also one that made its way into mainstream news media discussions about Parkland students’ activism. A *CNN* article titled “Harry Potter inspired the Parkland generation” relates the Parkland student efforts around gun control mentioned in opening—but also youth activism more broadly—to the fictional novel (Sklar, 2018). This understanding of student activism as inspired by fiction—and students’ love of it—demonstrates one way in which writing and activism move across genres in students’ consumption, inspiration, and creation. Such cross-genre compositions emerged from this study’s writing program as well.

As one form of activism interwoven with fiction, activism inspired by fan culture involves fans from marginalized communities “bending” and “restorying” (Thomas and Stornaiuolo, 2016) fictional characters from popular novels like *Harry Potter* to represent themselves in literature and films that become part of mainstream culture. For example, *Harry Potter* fans formed a social media movement to spread their collective belief that the novel actually describes main character Hermione as black despite the film version’s portrayal of the character as white (p. 327).

This instance of “racebending” (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016) has important parallels to and implications for the notions of racially unequal reception of adolescent activism touched upon in this study’s introduction (Chapter One)—issues that have existed for decades but have been brought to the forefront by the recent #NeverAgain campaign. How can students of color fight back against a lack of representation and/or respect in mainstream news outlets? Journalists are recognizing and writing about this mismatch, as in the editorial pictured in Figure 1.2 in Chapter One: Graham’s (2018) *Inquirer* piece titled “The world is listening to Parkland teens. Some Philly kids wonder: Why not us?”. A journalistic article with parallel messages, Chan’s (2018) *Time* piece titled “‘They are lifting us up.’ How Parkland students are using their moment to help minority anti-violence groups” was featured in this study as a deconstruction activity around positionings of youth activism in journalistic media. This journalism camp curricular activity is discussed in detail in Chapter Six. The headline deconstruction example shifts a notion like “racebending” (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2016) into non-fiction writing and also connects to the “re-design cycle” (Janks, 2010), transliteracies (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017),

and YPAR (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016) foci on making power structures more explicit.

These multiple forms of student activism—the racebending efforts of *Harry Potter* fans (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016, p. 327) and #NeverAgain and #BLM—occurred through what became social media movements. All are examples of the potential for social media outlets as forums for collective student activism. The #NeverAgain and #BLM campaigns are two particularly well-known examples of “hashtag activism” (Williams, 2015), which is an especially well-used form of youth digital activism that draws on Twitter’s indexing system. In these and other forms of online adolescent activism, including those on Instagram or YouTube channels, Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017) are careful to caution that the internet and social media are not spaces of inherent democracy as they are often incorrectly heralded; instead, “these sites open young people to bullying, abuse, explicit racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, ableism, and surveillance” (p. 344). This is again seen in mainstream news coverage of current adolescent activism efforts, with *Inquirer* journalist Ubiñas (2018) writing an editorial titled “Like Parkland students, Philly teens attacked for their views on gun violence.” While some in the far-right of the political spectrum have attempted to discredit the Parkland teens’ activism efforts around gun violence, efforts to be heard and validated about the issue have been much harder fought by urban students who are poor and/or minorities, a reality of racism playing out in the digital realm that we critically examined during the summer writing camp in this study.

Youth Digital Activism as Civic Engagement

As discussed above and throughout this proposal, it is clear that youth digital activism crosses over into the political realm, with adolescents directly addressing politicians through their own tweets and through adult-created opportunities like the “Letters to the Next President 2.0” initiative organized by multiple media partners including the National Writing Project (NWP), the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and WHYY (National Writing Project, 2018). This fits in with the also aforementioned reality that the genre of journalism is shifting in purposes and forms, as citizens increasingly take on roles of “breaking” news stories and commenting on news stories via highly visible forms of social media, including those outlined by Stornaiuolo and Thomas (2017). Students like those involved with #NeverAgain, #BLM, and the Harry Potter Alliance, among so many others, are acting as journalists by entering the realm of political news and commentary at both local and national scales.

All these shifting realities—of journalism’s means and purposes, of activism via the digital, and of reimagined contexts for learning—result in new understandings of why and how students participate civically and politically. Young people are motivated to engage with issues as a result of their personal identities and interests and their social networks, both digital and in-person (Kahne, Hodgins, & Eidman-Aadahl, 2016; Ito et al., 2015; Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017). This is seen broadly in the #NeverAgain movement’s outgrowth from the Parkland students’ own experiences with a school shooting tragedy and in the racebending efforts of *Harry Potter* fans (Thomas & Stornaiuolo, 2016). It also exists more specifically in Everson’s aforementioned fight to bring #BLM into her school

context (Haddix, Everson, & Hodge, 2017). Such “connected civics” (Ito et al., 2015) is more possible because of and through online communities and platforms, but as has also been made clear, not all students engaging in it are equally received by the public or mainstream media.

These “participatory dimensions of civic practice” (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017, pp. 347-348) also fit with this study’s YPAR framing. Kahne, Hodgins, and Eidman-Aadahl (2016) posit as central to “participatory politics” a shift in understanding about who can and does produce knowledge, one “not guided by deference to elites or formal institutions” (p. 3). This is closely akin to the ways in which YPAR pushes back against traditional notions of research and who has the knowledge and the power to conduct and contribute to it, as surfaced in this study through framings attentive to transformation: transliteracies (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2016), critical literacies (Janks, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2012), and Third Space (Gutiérrez, 2008).

Ito et al. (2015) make clear, however, that students are often engaging in these new forms of civic writing and participation “alongside adult allies” (p. 10), reinforcing the significant role of adult mentors in students’ engagement with their communities and local and national politics. These relationships between adults/mentors and youth/students emerged as a significant area of consideration in this study, as I continually reflected on the imposed elements of my YPAR framing and on the constitutions of student participation. Working *with* students so that their causes—and their writings about those causes—were heard and were as far-reaching as possible necessitated bringing in both digital tools and mentorship structures (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2017, pp. 349-351).

Regarding the former, Conner and Slattery (2014) discuss how the inclusion of blogs and podcasts in the youth activist organization the Philadelphia Student Union allowed for the students involved to reach a wider audience in more streamlined ways. I similarly sought multiple publication outlets that were attentive to students' digital writing practices, including the educational social media W4C community, a live-streamed radio broadcast, and the Philly School Media Network website—among others.

Garcia, Mirra, Morrell, Martinez, and Scorza (2015) bring together all these concepts within my literature review: contexts for writing, purposes for writing, and spaces in which to write. In their own YPAR effort centered on the Council of Youth Research, Garcia et al. (2015) aim to both honor and amplify the knowledge, experiences, interests, and goals of students of color and to provide them with resources to develop what they term “critical digital civic literacies,” which combine civic engagement, digital tools, critical literacies, and academic literacies. In all these ways, Garcia et al. (2015) demonstrate how I envisioned the different strands of this literature review coming together in my YPAR-framed program. Garcia et al. (2015) break down the binary between in- and out-of-school contexts by making academic literacies an integral part of their “critical digital civic literacies.” At the same time, digital literacies tools are also an essential part of the program as the students engage in youth digital activism and assert themselves as civically engaged citizens.

Genres In, Across, and Through Which Students Write

Although this literature review looks at genres, purposes, and spaces in these separate subsections, how students draw on them is deeply interwoven, as I also attempt to

uncover more directly in this study as a whole. This final subsection looks at research on how students are blending genres as writers around their own purposes and in relation to the spaces they are writing in, with particular emphasis on youth writing in and through digital media. Such a look at how adolescents are “writing for change” across contexts, affinities, and, here, genres is necessary to examine before then turning to a more particular look at how students are engaging in and with journalism as a shifting genre, e.g., through so-called “citizen journalism.”

Writing Digitally as Writing Across Genres and Spaces

In these research efforts to understand how students draw on, push back against, and/or shift conceptions and conventions around writing genres, it is important to center student perspectives and preferences, as was the goal of this YPAR-framed study’s writing program. Focusing on youth points of view and practices makes it possible to incorporate students’ digital writing practices from outside of literacy learning contexts into such learning contexts (whether in school or in school-like spaces, as in my study) in ways that are meaningful for students. What researchers largely posit as most meaningful is allowing students to choose when and how—and perhaps if—they draw on their digital writing practices and, further, having students come to be self-aware of the impacts of those choices on authors, audiences, and products. Shipka (2013) describes this aim as “helping students to ‘understand the intricate connections between contexts and forms, to perceive potential ideological effects of genres, and to discern both constraints and choices that genres make possible’” (p. 77). These choices around digital modes for writing emerged in this study’s journalism summer writing camp in particular and became important sources

of conversation and learning about writing for both me and the students, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

Although the work in my study was with a group of secondary students, Kervin and Mantei (2016) provide a useful, grounded example of Shipka's (2013) above discussion of metacommunicative awareness in their examination of one third grade student, Adam, and his digital writing practices. Kervin and Mantei (2016) frame their data analysis as follows:

allowing an examination of the ways a child's personal experiences, skills and expectations interacted with the resources on offer as they created new texts...[W]ork samples were examined in relation to the following: modal choices authors made in isolation and then as a whole; the "stuff"...the children drew on as they created their texts; and the affordances and limitations of the technology for text creation. These were then considered in connection with the writing process...and the child author's focus on purpose for the text and sense of an identified audience. (p. 134)

Such opportunities to consider, "experiment," and create within and across different modalities and genres was central to the way I organized my writing program both curricularly and conceptually, as news, digital, and creative writing intersected with written, aural, and video modes of composing and publishing with the broadest goal of transforming how we learned, wrote, and related to one another in our writing spaces.

In Kervin and Mantei's (2016) study, their above framework was applied to Adam's practices and products, which ultimately included an interactive book created through the app Book Creator and a digital text made in the app PuppetPal. While Kervin and Mantei (2016) focused on one student, this study looked at and across 15 students, which emphasizes Kervin and Mantei's (2016) assertion about the importance of recognizing that the "process of creating text with technology is different for different authors" (p. 139).

Again in line with my own YPAR-framed aim of centering student perspectives in relation to writing practices, I sought to make room for students to forge their own pathways of participation as writers—digital and otherwise—while also critically examining those pathways with them and learning from them.

Kervin and Mantei (2016) highlight how Adam’s educator (a classroom teacher) similarly fostered a literacy learning space that allowed the student’s preferences as a writer to emerge: “opportunities...provided in the classroom (i.e. allowing him to bring a personal device to school and acknowledging apps within the writing process)” in turn “provided the flexibility for him to have specific and substantive opportunities to engage as a powerful and productive producer of digital text” (pp. 138-139). Facilitating student choice as Adam’s teacher did is critical to making metacommunicative awareness possible, particularly when such choice affords students the ability to connect their out-of-school composing practices, which for Adam included app usage, with writing in literacy learning contexts. Through my own framings around YPAR, transliteracies, and critical literacies, I aimed for both the students and me to learn about digital writing and youth writing more broadly by working together in and with a variety of modes and contexts, including our digital writing space of W4C.

Honeyford (2013) builds upon this examination of how students use digital writing “tools” and practices as a means of bringing aspects of their out-of-school lives into literacy learning contexts. Thinking through how students draw on different modes and contexts of their writerly and broader identities in their writing helps to establish digital writing practices as meaningful to both writing teaching and learning. Part of a larger study of

student writing produced by middle school immigrant students learning English as a second or additional language, Honeyford (2013) examines how when the students composed with digital storytelling, they blurred actual aspects of their lives with imagined, “magical” pieces of their lives. Honeyford (2013) hones in on the narrative of one student, Gabriel, and highlights how Gabriel draws on a mixture of religious imagery, found images, and personal pictures in combination with written text. Honeyford (2013) urges educators and researchers to open opportunities for students of all ages to similarly experiment with mixtures of selves, forms, and contexts through digital writing. Honeyford (2013) asserts that

to include the narratives and identities of more of our students in the classroom, we need to understand, expand and take seriously the modes and genres through which they may choose to make sense of and communicate their experiences, dreams and social critiques. (p. 24)

I aimed to respond to this call through simultaneously centering the program’s curricular aspects on multiple writing modes and genres and centering students’ perspectives and choices around those modes and genres. This research study, then, aligns with Honeyford’s (2013) urging to “understand, expand and take seriously the modes and genres through which [students] choose to make sense...and communicate” (p. 24). However, I further extended that understanding and expansion to the students with which I was working such that they could investigate and reflect on their own choices and practices as well.

Lamberti and Richards (2012) also recognize this duality around incorporating students’ digital writing practices into literacy learning environments, both in-school and out—a duality that involves broadening conceptions of writing for both educators and youth. The authors, in fact, suggest that students’ digital writing practices—in their

particular research “playing” video games—can work toward radically altering the in-school context. On these points, Lamberti and Richards (2012) state the following:

We suggest that teachers of writing seize the increasing presence, rhetorical range, and influence of the digital as a kairotic opening, not to harness and norm the diverse rhetorics of digital communication into hierarchically based formulae for the digital age, but to nudge our praxis in the direction of classroom decenteredness and student authority. (p. 488)

Lamberti and Richards (2012) clearly envision students’ digital writing practices being brought into literacy learning spaces in ways that facilitate connections between and movements across contexts and genres, with the ultimate goal being to “potentially reconfigure the nature of schooling” (Ghiso, 2016, p. 10).

In this student-movement based shift toward what they term “democratic classrooms” (p. 490), Lamberti and Richards (2012) assert the “primary charge as teachers to be that of helping create a culture characterized by fluid movement and thoughtful and open communication across social boundaries, both inside and outside the classroom” (p. 489). In order for such classrooms to function, Lamberti and Richards (2012) further assert that they must be “minimally hierarchical learning environments in which students are encouraged to articulate and to act according to their own goals and have the opportunity to refine their social habits and skills as they encounter an expanding network of others” (p. 490). These points around the educator role and the relationship between educators and youth as both writers and learners are important to this study, as through the YPAR framing I tried to write and learn alongside youth. Our collective goals were to examine a genre more in depth—journalism—and to then reconsider and reconstruct how we wrote in that and other genres and why. These aims also speak to metacommunicative awareness—that

students came to understand their own purposes, choices, and goals as they moved fluidly across the program's contexts and forms. These movements were made available by the combination of students' own digital writing practices and my YPAR-framed attempts to create a "democratic" literacy learning environment (p. 490).

Similar to Lamberti and Richards (2012), Schwartz (2014), in her partnership with a high school English teacher, aims to "support students' movement of semiotic resources across the boundaries of genres normative to in-school and out-of-school spaces" (p. 124). Schwartz (2014) discusses student school writing samples that incorporate YouTube videos, Japanese manga, and students' own collaboratively created songs and stories. Schwartz (2014) describes also bringing students into curriculum development through a classroom social networking site, of which students have significant voice in determining its use; students are also co-creators of assessment rubrics (p. 125). Such efforts align broadly with the "democratic classrooms" that Lamberti and Richards (2012) envision (p. 490) as well as the YPAR-infused curriculum that I created for the journalism summer writing camp that in turn impacted the subsequent spaces that unfolded with students' participation and that of other adults/mentors in our writing program. In all these research efforts, we worked to de-center the educator as the sole authority for what counts as meaningful and effective writing.

Similar to the "access paradox" put forth by Janks (2004) and described in earlier theoretical framing sections, Schwartz (2014) remains attuned to conventions such as learning standards and academic genres while pushing for expansions of writing engagement, learning, and teaching. As such, Schwartz (2014) articulates a more "hybrid"

approach that “join[s] the conventions, modalities, objectives and audiences characteristic of both new media and academic domains” (p. 124). Schwartz (2014) asserts overall, “This approach has much to offer educators who aim for their students to articulate strong perspectives and arguments in texts, who must address academic standards for argumentative writing in their teaching and who are interested in appropriating the affordances of new media tools” (p. 134). While I was not beholden to “academic standards” in relation to writing done across the spaces of this study’s program, I was acutely aware of the need to present the “traditional” structures and conceptualizations of journalism as a genre during our summer camp—but to also then unpack those presentations and understandings. It is also worth noting that the writing students brought into our out-of-school spaces in this study were at times constrained by such “academic standards,” as in when students brought in-school essay assignments to FNW sessions, for example. In these ways, the students and I engaged in movement together across genres and contexts, in line with Schwartz’s (2014) overall framing of both students and educators as “semiotic boundary workers” (p. 124) pushing back against power dynamics related to writing practices.

Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) bring these considerations around expanding roles and conceptions of writing teaching and learning directly into the digital. In their study of high school students engaging in asynchronous digital writing within an English classroom environment, Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) notice a similar sort of “hybridity” in students’ practices. While students engage in movements that cross contexts and forms and present themselves in a variety of purposeful ways, they do so while remaining entirely

aware of and adherent to traditional notions of writing within a school environment. Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) are, however, critical of this “in-between” nature of what they term “contrapuntal writing” (p. 59). They explain as follows:

‘Contrapuntal writing’ adeptly denotes the multi-layered and polyphonic nature of these students’ online writing. It also appropriately captures the paradoxical nature of the students’ online writing, at once meta-cognitive in its critical manner – allowing for fluid and emergent constructions of self and understanding of culture in relation to the counterpoint of other’s perspectives – yet adhering to strict non-transformational rules of schooled engagement. (p. 59)

Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) recognize the potential of digital writing practices within the classroom to enhance students’ metacommunicative awareness, but they push for the sorts of critical literacies engagements that I argue for in framing this study: deconstructing and reconstructing with students genres and forms such that designs allow both expanded understandings of “what counts” as writing and meta-cognition about one’s own writing practices. In pointing toward transformation, Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) also allude to the ways that criticality about genres, modes, and spaces can lead to transformations of literacy learning contexts and the writing practices within them.

As mentioned in the above quote, Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) describe how students engage in “multi-layered” writing, responding to multiple peers but also multiple topics and themes (pp. 54-56), akin to multiplicity as a core element also running through all spaces of our writing program in this study. Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) similarly and additionally describe their students’ writing as “polyphonic,” or “multi-voiced,” as the many voices across peers interact and intersect with the multiple voices that one individual can write with across and even within online posts (pp. 56-57). In our writing program, these multi-directional relationships also included additional adults/mentors, and

examining those interactions and intersections emerged as key to understanding my participatory framing.

Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) go on to highlight the posting of one student, Shar, within the WebCT digital environment, showcasing her contained but cross-contextual writing movements. Their honing in on Shar's post is similar to the type of narrative analysis of one student's writing (Katy's) that I engage in at the end of Chapter Six, and Katy's and Shar's writing share parallels in their blending and movement of genres across and into digital writing spaces. Below are Shar's words as quoted by Nahachewsky and Ward (2007):

Car, you're cracked. 80's music is the best!!! Same with 80's movies!! The Breakfast Club was on this weekend, anybody catch it? sooooo good! Here's something to think about, back in that day, Molly Ringwald, Emilio Estevez, Judd Nelson, Ally Sheedy, and Anthony Michael Hall were super popular actors. Now they're pretty much unheard of. Ever think that Brad Pitt, Ben Affleck, Jennifer Love Hewitt etc. are going to be lost in obscurity in the next 10 years? Think about it. i'm a dork, i know. (pp. 56-57)

Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) highlight how Shar is able to draw on and move between her out-of-school interests in popular culture within an academic context (an online English classroom) by writing "with a critical voice to represent her understanding and connection to course content" (p. 57). This in-school connection is, however, capped off with an informal closing remark: "i'm a dork, i know" (p. 57)—a cross-contextual movement that represents how she chooses to present herself as a writer in various ways within a single post. Nahachewsky and Ward (2007) sum this up as, "The multi-purposed, fluid nature of this student's polyphonic writing – the slippery nature of identity and content – challenges more modernist notions of single-voice, authoritative writing that is often privileged in

expository forms of writing in ELA [English Language Arts] classrooms” (p. 57). The same can be said for Katy and for numerous other students who wrote within and across our writing program and particularly so in relationship to the genre of journalism, which is traditionally considered solely a form of “expository writing.”

Centering on Journalism as a Shifting/Shifted Genre

Although “traditional” conceptualizations of journalism—as explored and deconstructed in our summer writing camp—are linked to such “expository writing,” journalism has become and remains a shifting genre. This is particularly the case as youth take to social media for “hashtag activism” (Williams, 2015) campaigns like those outlined above and in Chapter One that push back against both political structures and these traditional notions of journalism. As also noted in Chapter One, a key element of these shifts is this link between youth digital activism and civic engagement and the journalism genre, or “the increasingly murky line between journalism and activism” (Neason & Dalton, 2018, para. 2). The result of these shifts, particularly those that are initiated by and for youth, is that journalism as a genre has emerged as a liminal space in and of itself (Papacharissi, 2015).

When referring to traditional notions of and structures within journalism, I am including widely known aspects like the “inverted pyramid,” the “5 Ws,” and the “cut test” as examples (Purdue University, 2020). The former is how news articles have traditionally been organized in the genre, with the most important information for the story in the opening, or lead, paragraph; additional information then follows in paragraph order of decreasing informational importance. In that lead paragraph, the “most important”

information is the “5 Ws,” or who, what, when, where, and why—the essential facts of an article. Such organizational structures have their roots in print, hard-copy newspapers, where an editor would be able to “cut” a later paragraph of an article without sacrificing crucial content or audience understanding—as in the “cut test.” I drew on these elements during a journalism summer writing camp mini-lesson, featured in Chapter Six and seen in Figure 6.1; with attention to the access paradox (Janks, 2004), the students and I first reviewed this “traditional” information and then critiqued and deconstructed it.

In that camp conversation, what emerged was a strong sense that digital writing practices and spaces have in particular changed what journalism looks like and does. Students surfaced how reading newspapers online has altered both where and how people engage with journalism; people skim headlines and articles more at the same time that digital newspapers have unlimited space and so do not need to strictly follow the “cut test” mentioned above. These audience-based shifts in journalism that the students brought up are echoed in the research literature as well, as when Peters (2012) discusses the “changing spaces of news consumption” as people increasingly read on mobile devices and, as such, read more quickly and while on the go.

As noted in Chapter One, these digital devices and social media channels that literally move with people have also shifted the “breaking news” aspect of journalism (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014), as citizens out in the world—including youth—can be the first and/or the most-heard voices around a story. The rise of so-called “citizen journalism” has been well documented and discussed in both popular culture and research literature (e.g., Bruns & Highfield, 2016; Chorley & Mottershead, 2016; Hess, 2013; Jewitt, 2009).

Citizen journalism is broadly understood as gathering, creating, and/or publishing news information by members of the general public who are not professional journalists; it can be organized and regular, as in an ongoing blog, or more spontaneous, as in capturing footage “on the fly” with a cell phone and posting it on social media. Such citizen journalism has gained particular momentum in the past approximately ten years (Hamdy, 2010) largely in relation to social crises and traumas, as noted throughout this study with youth activism around gun violence and school shootings. *Guardian* journalist Bulkley (2012) brings together these different aspects of citizen journalism (the digital, activist purposes, varying frequencies and forms, etc.) in describing citizen journalism as follows:

From the Occupy New York City bloggers, such as Tim Pool who has broadcast hours and hours of live reports from Zuccotti Park in the city, to YouTube videos of citizens under fire from government forces in Syria – these incidents and more are changing the landscape...This has been made possible by the technology they use, the distribution platforms that are now available and the passion of ordinary men and women to tell the kinds of extraordinary stories that were once the domain of professional[s]. (para. 2)

Such citizen journalism also became critical and widespread, for example, during conflicts in Gaza (Hamdy, 2010) and Egypt (Hamdy & Gomaa, 2012; Issawi & Cammaerts, 2016; Lim, 2012; Lotan, et al., 2011) when “traditional” journalists could not access sites and could not (or perhaps just did not) present stories from activist agendas. The same can be said for youth activists involved in #NeverAgain and #BLM as well as other more localized efforts around gun violence in schools, as students are the ones truly “on the ground” of school shootings. The writing program in this study centered on youth in relationship to citizen journalism, but rather than explore it through this particular terminology, I opted to approach deconstruction of the genre more broadly so that students could generate their

own understandings and approaches—to allow the individual and collective aspects of journalism as a social practice to surface.

In response to the rise of citizen journalism, researchers and professionals within the genre have begun to develop new structures for writing and engagement. This is seen in Hermida's (2010) "ambient journalism," which refers to citizen journalism as "para-journalism" and positions this para-journalism as a useful source for professional journalists in framing their news articles to be more in line with public communication. Hermida (2010) understands the impact of citizen journalism as strong enough to require that professionals and their norms and practices engage with it in ways that would be useful to the general public: "help the public negotiate and regulate the flow of awareness information, facilitating the collection and transmission of news" (p. 297). Rather than investigating these and other potential responses of the profession to the genre's shifting with students in this study, I again sought to deconstruct *and* reconstruct journalism with the students such that they could come to their own designs, both of and in the genre.

Of this evolving relationship between citizen (or para-) journalists and professional journalists, Burns (2010) explains, reminiscent of Bulkley (2012) above, that

[i]n the academic debate, para-journalists or 'citizen journalists' may be said to have a communitarian ethic and desire more autonomous solutions to journalists who are framed as uncritical and reliant on official sources, and to media institutions who are portrayed as surveillance-like 'monitors' of society. (para. 5)

It was the students' ethics and desires that I sought to surface during the journalism summer writing camp and to then watch play out across other, connected spaces of our writing program. It is important to note that in the camp curriculum (and subsequent program curricula), I did incorporate elements of citizen journalism as a form of engagement but

did not draw directly on the term—or on these resulting new research understandings—as I wished to avoid positioning youth further in relationship to the genre. Together we engaged *with* journalism by examining how journalistic media covered youth engaged in new forms of journalism, and then students participated in and with multiple spaces, modes, and mentors to engage *in* journalism in their own ways and for their own purposes.

The approach we took to journalism was, then, one rooted in students' own stories and subjectivities in relation to the genre as one already shifting and one we could shift further. As such, my approach both built toward metacommunicative awareness while it surfaced engaging with journalistic writing—as audiences and/or writers—as a social practice. The realities of journalism in the digital age, in particular citizen journalism, as outlined above made the genre a particularly timely and useful one to critically engage *in* and *with* alongside youth; it was its own liminal space for us, an approach backed by Papacharissi (2010):

the shape news takes on is affective, the form of production is hybrid, and...spaces produced discursively through news storytelling frequently function as electronic elsewheres, or as social spaces that support marginalized and liminal viewpoints...news collaboratively constructed out of subjective experience, opinion, and emotion all sustained by and sustaining ambient news environments...provide liminal layers to storytelling, but also a way for storytelling audiences to feel their own place in a developing news story. (p. 27)

Our work together in this study around journalism was approached as a way for students to see themselves both in and through journalism—as writers and as “storytelling audiences.” The particulars of how we did this will be described in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Study Methodology

This six-month long study drew on elements of YPAR in both framing and methodology as I followed a group of 15 secondary students and their writing across multiple spaces that were liminal and literacy focused. These spaces included a two-week journalism summer writing camp that met for a total of eight half-days in a local community access media station; a global, educational online writing community dedicated to social justice and for adolescents; and a drop-in, school-year writing program that met at PennGSE every other Friday for three months.

Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) similarly approach YPAR epistemologically and methodologically and, as such, served as the guiding source for my framing of this cross-contextual study. Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) define YPAR as

the practice of mentoring young people to become social scientists by engaging them in all aspects of the research cycle, from developing research questions and examining relevant literature to collecting and analyzing data and offering findings about social issues that they find meaningful and relevant. (p. 2)

I applied YPAR as the methodological framework of this study both logistically and more broadly in facilitating and understanding the movements students made across the study's contexts. I organized the summer camp curriculum around three aspects of the above definition: engagement in the research cycle, mentorship through social-scientist role models, and publication of findings about social issues of personal relevance. I did so, however, with attention to the caveat Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) also provide about this definition: "YPAR is about so much more than simply training young people to mimic the behaviors of adult researchers" (p. 2). Rather, I was implementing this YPAR framing with "a different purpose for teaching and learning—one rooted in social change and the

realization of students' capacities in all areas of life" (p. 4). Approaching this study with a YPAR framing meant that I aimed to foreground youth perspectives and goals for writing and for participation in the multiple spaces of the writing program. Researching with students about topics for which they had passion and saw needs for activism opened possibilities for "transformative learning" and "personal, academic, and civic opportunity" (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016, p. 2)—for the students and for me.

The students wrote in and across these spaces with me and other adults/mentors. Together, we collaboratively de- and re-constructed how and why we wrote as journalists as we simultaneously co-constructed the spaces in which we did so. During the camp, we deconstructed journalism as a genre, including components of it considered "traditional" and/or foundational (i.e., the inverted pyramid, the "5Ws," etc.) and worked to compose news articles, a newspaper, and a radio broadcast. While still in the camp, the online writing space—W4C—was a context where students responded to writing prompts I provided them about their journalistic research and writing. I also meant for W4C to be a space where the students could share writing and engage with their camp and global peers more broadly and in ways of their choosing. If and how these forms of engagement in W4C materialized is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five.

Regardless of whether or not students were active in the W4C community, they remained connected to W4C through FNW, the school-year, drop-in writing program. FNW was open to all journalism campers but also to students beyond our program who lived in and around Philadelphia. FNW also extended beyond our program in terms of writing emphasis, as students could work with graduate-student writing coaches on any

genres of writing, at any stage of the writing process, and for any purpose (e.g., academic, personal, college admissions, etc.). I drew on FNW as a research space to continue to engage with camp students, interviewing them about their camp and W4C experiences and co-analyzing data from those prior spaces, including inviting students to annotate the camp syllabus.

While the camp, W4C, and FNW were the primary spaces of our program, other collaborative contexts emerged in which the students and I worked together around writing, including academic presentations, school-based senior projects, and future versions of the journalism summer camp. These emergent forms of participation and relationships are both representative of the participatory framing at the same time that they push back against it. Students reconstructed “what counted” as participation within and extending from our program, as is also explored in depth in Chapter Five.

Research Questions

Across the six-month span of this study and its multiple spaces and participation forms, I aimed to critically examine with students different contexts, conventions, and critical potentials for and of writing. I shared my underlying research questions for the study with the students during day one of the summer writing camp so that they could understand my aims and consider the relationships between my aims and theirs. My research questions were as follows:

- In what ways does a YPAR-infused curriculum focused on journalism impact youth perspectives on writing for change?
 - How do students understand and experience “participation” in liminal literacy learning environments?

- How do different adult roles (facilitator, community members, professional journalists, etc.) shape students' practices and understandings about writing?
- How do students in a journalism program utilize digital tools in relation to their efforts as activist writers?
- What are the choices these students make and the practices they engage in as their writing moves across contexts?

In working toward understanding these questions alongside the students, we generated data across a variety of modes and forms. I wrote field notes; collected reflective, open-ended pre- and post-surveys; audio-recorded collaborative camp discussions; and conducted interviews at the end of the camp and after each FNW session. The students generated data in forms that included audio- and video-recorded reflections, digital postings in W4C, and collaboratively created radio broadcast and newspaper publications. Although I describe these data sources as student-generated, my roles in presenting, facilitating, and/or “collecting” them cannot be overlooked.

There was this underlying tension throughout the study's unfolding between my roles in conceptualizing and facilitating the program and students' uptakes and own pathways of participation within the program. How—or even whether—this study emerged as YPAR is unpacked in forthcoming chapters.

Researcher Positionality

Across all the spaces of this study—and through the data collected in each—I attempted to interrogate issues and understandings of power surrounding writing, participation, and research through a focus on adolescent voices and through an examination of my own assumptions, motivations, and roles. I conceptualized my role—that of a facilitator who engaged in research about sessions I was part of with students—as

in line with Green's (2014) "Double Dutch Methodology" and its emphasis on researcher positionality and reflexivity (pp. 147-160). What this conceptualization meant in practice, however, was less clear, and I continued to grapple throughout the study with how to conduct a research study with my own questions while simultaneously framing that study as YPAR focused on youth interests and aims.

My ongoing attempts to navigate the interplay between my emphases and aims and students' goals and issues of importance to them can be seen in iterations of my research questions. My first research question, "In what ways does a YPAR-infused curriculum focused on journalism impact youth perspectives on writing for change?", had only one sub-question prior to and during data collection. That sub-question was inward-facing and asked the following: "How do different adult roles (facilitator, community members, professional journalists, etc.) shape students' practices and understandings about writing?". I did recognize and aimed to examine the impacts I had on what, how, and why students engaged in writing. I understood curriculum creation, resource curation, and my own research agenda all as ways I would affect students' experiences in the writing program. However, as the study unfolded, I came to further understand that I was not the only one impacting the participatory framing. My earlier research questions did not also recognize what was to be learned from students about participation: "what counts," what motivates, and who shapes it and how. As the study unfolded, I added the second sub-question listed above: "How do students understand and experience 'participation' in liminal literacy learning environments?". Although I was positioning the study as YPAR, I had initially precluded a source of learning from and with students.

This realization about my focus on adults at the expense of students highlighted the need to remain attuned to my own assumptions through ongoing reflection and to more actively consider what it means to focus on students' perspectives. My identity as a white middle-class doctoral-student researcher from an influential university was also important—especially so—to consider as it was experienced by the program's students, most of whom were students of color. Openly discussing issues of race, power, and equity was essential to the “writing for change” focus of the camp but also for fostering understanding and interpersonal relationships across differences and imbalances. Sharing my research questions, as mentioned earlier, and writing field note reflections about issues relating to positionality, to be discussed below, were two ways that I created space for dialogue—internal and external—around systems of power. Such reflection on my role as an adult/mentor in this YPAR work does not mean that I was helping students to “find their voices” or was “giving them agency” or otherwise “empowering” them, a caution that Shiller (2013) also makes. In this study, I aimed to recognize and work together *with* students to amplify voices they already had in relation to issues about which they already cared.

In providing the tools of their transliteracies framework, as discussed in Chapter Two, Stornaiuolo, Smith, and Phillips (2017) provide a related caution:

We intend these to be tools that can foster an inquiry orientation as researchers negotiate and orchestrate the delicate dance of following traces and connections while maintaining reflexive stances about their roles in the research process and the epistemologies they bring to bear in their observations. (p. 77)

In both data collection and subsequent data analysis across the study's contexts, I aimed to follow this intention and remain attentive to the “delicate dance” of focusing on and

following student voices while also remaining aware of the power of and biases behind and within my own.

The Study's Contexts: Multiple Spaces for Participation and Movement Across Them

The students and I—along with other adults/mentors—progressed across the program's spaces both physically and temporally, but the impacts and relationships between them were multi-directional. All the spaces and our movements across them also surfaced the aforementioned underlying tension between my conceptualizations of a participatory framing and students' uptakes/pushbacks in relation to that framing.

Our initial space was the journalism summer writing camp, which took place Monday, August 6th through Thursday, August 9th, 2018 and Monday, August 13th through Thursday, August 16th, 2018 from 10:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. each day. On the first day of the camp, the 15 students in attendance connected to the online writing community, W4C, where they remained as digital participants through FNW and beyond. That school-year writing program, FNW, took place on seven Fridays: September 14th, 2018; September 28th, 2018; October 12th, 2018; October 26th, 2018; November 9th, 2018; November 30th, 2018; and December 14th, 2018.

Each of these spaces will now be described in more detail as research sites for this study.

Journalism Summer Writing Camp

As mentioned earlier, I conceptualized and created the camp curriculum based on Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell's (2016) three guiding principles for YPAR: engagement in the research cycle, mentorship with relevant social scientists, and publication of findings about

social issues of personal relevance. However, it is important to note that the camp was sponsored by PhilWP, a literacy education organization well known for providing such camp opportunities for students during the summer months. PhilWP plays a key role in supporting student writing in and around the Philadelphia area—through its camps, writing coach programs, and art and writing awards for students and its professional development (PD) for literacy teachers. PhilWP is an integral part of PennGSE, and as such, this journalism camp and its affiliations embodied another aspect of YPAR important to my conceptualization and creation of the program experience: “university/community partnerships” (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016, pp. 140-142).

As the sponsor of this camp, PhilWP had already established a key community connection with a local education-focused online newspaper. PhilWP and this local education newspaper entered into a partnership project called the Philly School Media Network in the summer of 2017, beginning with the inaugural journalism camp for which I was a co-facilitator, as touched on in Chapter One. In reprising my role as sole educator-facilitator of the camp in the summer of 2018, I aimed to not only continue the Philly School Media Network project but to grow it—by adding new university/community partnerships, by developing a website for the project through which students affiliated with the program could publish their journalistic writing, and by redesigning the camp curriculum around the timely issue of student digital activism.

Expanding the network in these ways also involved building upon the already existing partnerships within it, including that with the local education newspaper and with a local community media center that was housed in the same office building as the

education newspaper publication. As a publication focused on “working for quality and equity in Philadelphia’s public schools” (Philadelphia, n.d., para. 1), the local education newspaper’s mission aligned with that of my proposed journalism program and its emphasis on equity in youth writing and activism. As it did during the 2017 camp, professional journalist staff from the local education newspaper delivered lessons and provided first-hand insights to campers as mentors and further provided digital publishing space for students on its organization’s website, helping to additionally amplify students’ voices.

The local community media center provides programming and makes available equipment for individuals of all ages throughout Philadelphia to have opportunities to become media creators. The organization’s stated goal to “promot[e] creative expression, democratic values and civic participation” (*Mission*, n.d., para 1.) was also in line with my vision and aims for the summer camp. The 2017 summer camp was held in a “community room” within the local community media studios; after further communication and negotiation with the studio’s executives, I was able to again hold the 2018 camp in that same meeting room—provided that my camp more closely worked with staff members during and following the program. As it did in 2017, the local community media center provided students who attended the 2018 camp access to the community activists who worked in the studios; in my 2018 version of the camp, those activists/journalists additionally collaborated with students to create and broadcast a radio show utilizing the studio’s professional media equipment. Both the media studio and the education newspaper offered students mentors and opportunities to share their perspectives with new, wider

audiences, especially as staff members from the community media center and I worked together to ensure students were continually informed of the center's opportunities for composing and presenting after the camp as well.

Write4Change (W4C) Online Community

Students also had opportunities to publish in the global context of W4C. Both during and after the camp, attending students were connected to W4C, an online writing community that was a “social network for adolescent writers (ages 13-19) to share their writing with others, to collaborate with global peers similarly engaged in using writing to effect change, and to learn from and with one another” (Write4Change, n.d., para. 1). W4C included adolescents from another Philadelphia site as well as sites in Canada, the United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, and South Korea, providing opportunities for local and global sharing of ideas and drafts and for publishing. The potential for peer collaboration W4C afforded fit in with the YPAR framing of this study, and that framing, my goals, and the W4C website considered the amplification of student voices a central aim (Write4Change, n.d.). Further, the overall notion of “writing for change”—what it means to students, how they think it can be done, and ways they wish to go about it—undergirded the entire writing program.

The W4C community was in the now-defunct Google Plus, or G+, platform and served as the social media context of the camp and a point through which to trace students' movements between digital and non-digital contexts. Within the W4C community, I was an educator-moderator who could view and comment on students' postings. Both during

and after the eight-day journalism camp, I “followed” the students’ continued activities (or lack thereof) in the W4C community.

See Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below for images of students’ postings in W4C both during and after the camp, the latter during the school-year program of FNW.

Figure 3.1
Students’ postings in W4C during the camp

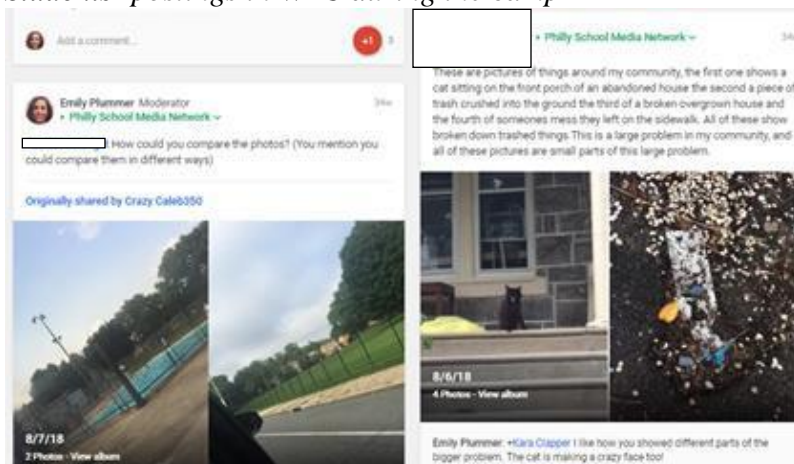
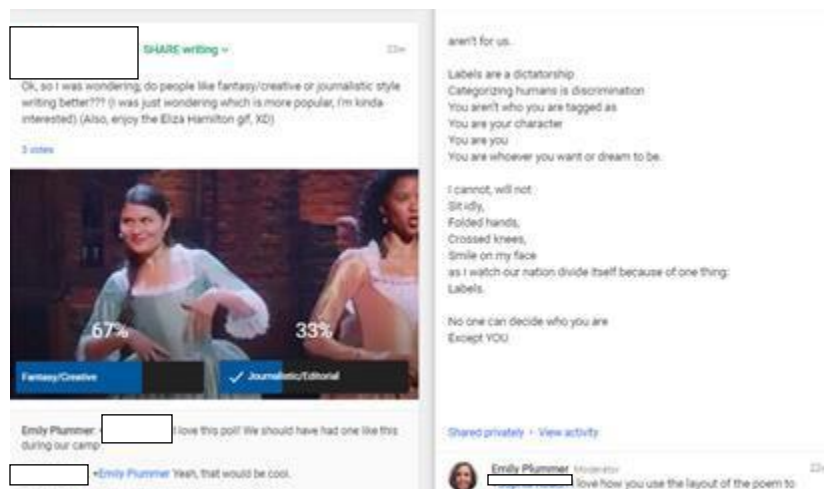


Figure 3.2
A student’s posting in W4C after the camp



Friday Night Writes (FNW) Affinity Space

In addition to this online component that extended after the camp, I also facilitated bi-monthly meetings in which campers gathered from across their schools to continue studying about writing and to engage in writing individually and together. These in-person sessions took place at PennGSE through the PhilWP program Friday Night Writes, which I designed for the 2018 program to include seven sessions from September to December. These sessions took place from 4:30-6:30 p.m. on two Fridays per month from shortly after the start of the 2018-2019 school year until just prior to the students' winter breaks.

While participation in the camp and the W4C community had almost exclusively centered on journalism in the forms of social issue topics, news articles, and engagement in and with student activism, maintaining the participatory framing of this study meant that I needed to remain open to how the students wished to learn and participate in FNW as this overall writing program unfolded and evolved. Furthermore, because FNW was also open to students from all around the Philadelphia area, participants extended beyond the journalism summer writing camp. While campers who regularly attended FNW and I did continue to edit existing and write new journalistic articles and discuss student activism, FNW even further extended genre foci and blurred the boundaries of in- and out-of-school. Students brought to FNW sessions school assignments, high school and college admissions essays, and submissions across categories for the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, a both local and national writing contest of which PhilWP is a regional partner and sponsor. Students worked with me as well as with other graduate and undergraduate University of

Pennsylvania (Penn) students who co-facilitated as writing coaches. See Figure 3.3 for images of students and coaches workshopping around writing.

Figure 3.3

Images from final FNW session of students and coaches workshopping writing



Curricula Across Contexts: Camp Syllabus, W4C Writing Prompts, and FNW Slideshow

While the above section focused on the particulars of each space—when we engaged within it, in what relationships, and within what broader structures—I turn here to delve into the curricular design and implementation choices I made both prior to engaging with students and during and as a result of learning alongside them while the program was unfolding.

Camp Syllabus

As mentioned earlier, I organized the camp around three YPAR principles prevalent in the research literature: engagement in the research cycle, mentorship through social-scientist mentors, and publication of findings about social issues of personal relevance (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). This framing was combined with the PhilWP summer

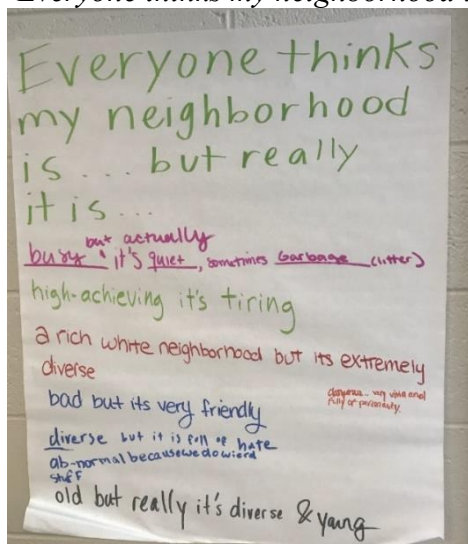
writing camp expectation of a clear syllabus for youth and their guardians. See [Appendix A](#) for a copy of the full syllabus.

Each day of the camp featured a professional journalist and/or community activist as a “guest speaker” and “mentor,” and the camp culminated in the broadcast of a “youth takeover” episode on a recurring radio show at the community media station and in the creation of a newspaper publication. What students presented on this radio show and in our newspaper reflected seven days of research about topics they chose as relevant in their own lives and/or communities, topics that included diversity in the city of Philadelphia, the myth of the model minority and its impacts on student learning, and depression amongst adolescents. In what genres and forms students chose to present both on the radio and in the newspaper was impacted by their interactions with these various adults/mentors, to be discussed further below.

Engagement in the Research Cycle. The camp’s curriculum carried out YPAR methodology through a focus on the research involved in writing impactful news articles that detail and/or inspire social change. Students were encouraged to explore topics of personal interest but did so after collective brainstorming on wider topics such as “What does it mean to write for change?” and “What is the role of a journalist?” and in response to open-ended prompts like “People think my neighborhood is...but really it is...”; in the latter, students filled in the blank sections with information about their own communities. See Figure 3.4 below for an example of this collaborative brainstorming.

Figure 3.4

'Everyone thinks my neighborhood is...but really it is...' collaborative brainstorming



Students were then encouraged to explore these initial topics in subsequent topic-development sessions that were both individual and collaborative with other students as well as with journalistic mentors. Once topics were selected and research questions were written—for example, as discussed in Chapter Six, Katy’s research question and ultimate newspaper article title was “Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?”—the students engaged in research as “social scientists” through the work of journalists: reading and annotating articles, interviewing key sources, gathering statistics, creating and/or borrowing relevant images, etc.

I asked that students track all their efforts and forms of research in “research logs” for “one week,” or four days, of the camp. In YPAR fashion, students could do so in means of their choosing, which ranged from hand-written notes to spreadsheets of “data.” I created and shared with each camp student a Google Folder in which they could keep their research, drafts, and other writing-related documents. While these research logs were intended to help understand my third research question about writers’ choices and practices, they were

more than merely “collected” by me as the researcher. They also served as important reflection points for students too. Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) write about the significance of taking a similar approach to students’ reflections:

Rather than simply being tucked away as completed assignments, the reflections helped formalize pathways toward research. They became artifacts...important in informing the questions that students were gearing up to ask about their communities...adults, by treating student writing as legitimate spaces for exploration and learning, mentored students to become active researchers and media producers. (p. 59)

Through this curricular choice of research logs, I aimed to make clear to students that we all had much to learn from how they engaged in research and what choices they made about inclusions and presentations of research as writers. This and other forms of student-created artifacts align with the YPAR framing of this study by engaging students as researchers into their own writing practices—an approach that also aligns with metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013) as an overarching goal.

Mentorship through Social-Scientist Role Models. Students engaged with journalists and activists who provided personal experiences and professional insights into these research practices, with the aforementioned university/community partnerships also integrated into the camp curriculum through “guest speakers.” The journalism summer camp drew on adult journalists and activists as examples—both in careers and personal passions—of ways that writers conduct research, interact with their and others’ communities, and work to uncover and put forth stances that have social impacts. On each scheduled camp day, a different “guest speaker” from a news and/or community organization in the Philadelphia area attended and addressed the students.

The specific speakers included the following local professional writers, community organizers, and/or journalists: the local community media center Youth Media Coordinator; the local community media center Radio Station Manager; International journalist, The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting; Editor and Education Reporter, WHYY; Contributing Editor, the local education newspaper; Connectivity Manager and Producer, Philadelphia Young Playwrights; Staff Reporter and Photographer, the local education newspaper; and Editor in Chief, a local city university.

I paired all eight mentors with a particular day of the camp that I felt aligned with each mentors' experience and areas of interest and expertise, as per the "guiding questions" I had created for each day of the syllabus. For instance, day six of the camp was on the topic of "Genres of Journalism" and had as its guiding question "What are the various genres and forms of journalism?" with the sub-question "How do digital tools impact who writes news and how?". When working to develop a collaboration with the Connectivity Manager and Producer of the Philadelphia Young Playwrights, I scheduled him within that particular day of the camp given his knowledge and work in the realm of podcasting—the organization had recently created its own podcast—and on writing for an audience that is primarily listening only, or what he termed "writing for the ear." His workshop with students is also described and examined in depth in Chapter Six.

This and other such details about the guest speakers and their situations within the syllabus can be found in [Appendix A](#). Highlighting these pairings I made as educator-facilitator of this camp simultaneously highlights the interplays between my practitioner role, those of the selected mentors, and the ultimate interactions with and reactions from

the students—with the latter as most impactful within the program experience. Students had direct opportunities to both offer feedback in relation to the adults/mentors and to reflect on their engagement with them through a Guest Speaker Reflection Form that I had set up and shared with the students at the start of camp as seen in [Appendix E](#) and discussed in more detail in later sections about data collection.

Publication of Findings about Social Issues of Personal Relevance. These university/community partnerships and mentors also added to students' work as journalists and activists by providing multiple opportunities for publication. These aspects of my original YPAR framing are crucial to emphasize because they both foregrounded the lived experiences and interests of students through their issue explorations and topic selections and linked students with individual mentors and organization connections. These both unmasked publication processes and extended contexts and networks through which students could then and can now circulate their writing.

While it is important to recognize that students were already capable of self-publication through social media and through their own initiatives with outlets of their choosing, the journalistic avenues explored in this camp brought together the research, writing, and publication processes of professional journalists with students engaging in and with the genre. This was a particularly critical component of the YPAR framing, as publication helped students to solidify their identities as social scientists engaging in research and writing about topics of personal and community relevance—as journalists and activists. Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell (2016) similarly

detail the importance of public research presentations as crucial components of YPAR practice, both as opportunities to share the knowledge created by students

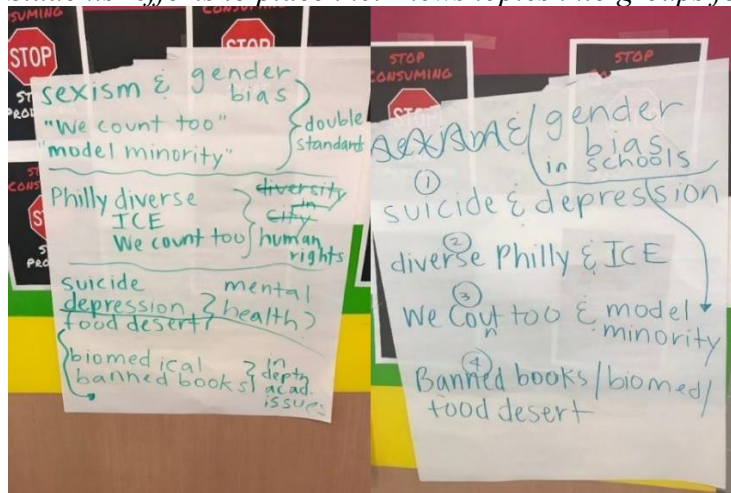
with family, teachers, policymakers, and community members and as celebrations of students' developing identities as scholars and researchers. (p. 115)

In this journalism program, publications of students' articles were envisioned as "public research presentations," and these opportunities began during the camp and extended throughout subsequent school-year meetings.

Publication avenues exclusive to the camp included the "Youth Takeover" episode of the local community media station weekly radio show and the collaboratively designed *Young Writers Time* newspaper that was both postal mailed and digitally shared. Not all students chose to participate in the radio show broadcast, either because they did not wish to share their pieces in that format and/or because they did not join the camp until the second week and so did not feel ready to participate in a radio broadcast of their research. See Figure 3.5 below to view how students organized their individual or pair article topics into four groups for radio show segments. The students' organization of the show segments was around the following broad topics: "double standards" around sexism and gender bias, human rights, mental health, and "in-depth academic issues."

Figure 3.5

Students' efforts to place their news topics into groups for radio broadcast



All but one student participated in putting together the newspaper publication around these same topics. See [Appendix B](#) for a full copy of the *Young Writers Time* newspaper that emerged as a culminating camp publication; more details on tensions that arose around that publication and student participation in it are in Chapter Five.

Other publication contexts included student postings of writing in the W4C community; Scholastic Art and Writing Award submissions; and academic presentations at local conferences: the Celebration of Writing and Literacy and the Ethnography in Education Research Forum.

While these publication avenues were arranged and often maintained by adults/educators, it was students' interactions with and across them that show what can be learned in and from writing contexts that are multiplicitous, liminal, and collaborative.

W4C Writing Prompts: "On Assignment"

W4C curriculum was also a part of the summer camp syllabus in the form of "On Assignment" writing prompts. These prompts were meant as means for students to become initially involved in and acquainted with the W4C community as well as with one another as the community of the in-person camp. All seven of the given "On Assignment" prompts can be seen in the camp syllabus in [Appendix A](#). A particularly impactful "On Assignment" was the first day's prompt, which was also the only one to focus on images. It asked the students to "[d]o a 'think like a journalist' photography walk in your own neighborhood. Take and post three pictures of your neighborhood, and explain how each picture represents a larger concern in your neighborhood." Eight out of the total 15 campers responded to this prompt—the most of any given "On Assignment" prompt. These "On Assignment"

questions served as the impetus for the bulk of student postings during the summer camp. However, if and how the campers engaged within W4C after the camp ended was more open-ended and student-initiated, as will be discussed in the Data Collection subsection below.

How W4C was taken up—or, in actuality, was not taken up—across the other program spaces was telling in highlighting the tensions for both students and practitioners between in-school and out-of-school contexts and between roles as adults/youth and educators/students in digital spaces. These “On Assignment” prompts are analyzed with more depth in Chapter Five.

FNW Slideshow: Icebreakers and Organization

As the final space of our writing program, FNW was the most influenced by prior spaces and their activities, interactions, and relationships. It was also as a result the most open form in terms of both building on students’ feedback on prior spaces and centering students’ purposes and goals. As such, FNW did not follow the types of school-like organizational structures that the camp did (or that W4C did during the camp), although I did begin each FNW session with an icebreaker activity. I also created a digital slideshow meant to frame the overall experience of FNW as well as the particulars of each session; see [Appendix C](#) for a copy of this slideshow. Below in Figure 3.6 is a single slide that I put together for the first FNW session and showed to students then; it explains the general format of FNW as well as the multiple contexts and goals that the space could accommodate.

Figure 3.6

Introductory slide about FNW that was shown to students

Recap: What is Friday Night Writes?

During these meetings, doctoral and master students from the University of Pennsylvania's (UPenn's) Graduate School of Education (GSE) and undergraduate students from UPenn are available to discuss and collaboratively revise and edit your writing pieces.

You can prepare for the [Scholastic Art and Writing Awards](#) and/or work on college scholarship and admission essays and school assignments. You can also share and get feedback on more personal writing.

You are encouraged to invite any interested friends to join too!

This introductory slide for FNW again demonstrates foundational tensions of participatory work, as I delivered a summary of what the space was to be for and about to the students with whom I was trying to build it.

Participants: Learning About the Students—and From and With Them

Given the participatory framing of this study, I will focus here on the students as participants.

However, participants also included me as the educator-facilitator of the camp and other adults/mentors in all the program spaces. In the camp, these adults/mentors included the individuals listed above in the “Mentorship through Social-Scientist Role Models” curriculum subsection (and seen in the syllabus in [Appendix A](#)). In W4C, these adults/mentors included other adult facilitators, only one of whom directly interacted with

postings from the camp through comments. In FNW, adults/mentors were two undergraduate and four other graduate student writing coaches from Penn. All graduate-student writing coaches at FNW were in PennGSE's Reading/Writing/Literacy (R/W/L) program, one a doctoral student and three master's students. The master's students were members of a R/W/L course I was acting as teaching assistant and field placement coordinator for; the masters students approached FNW as a fieldwork site for the course. The undergraduate students were sophomore comparative literature majors with teaching aspirations; one of these undergraduates and her relationship with a FNW student is discussed in Chapter Four. During FNW, the secondary students worked with a variety of these adults/mentors during different sessions and at various points during single sessions. This contrasts with the camp space, where adults/mentors and students interacted for more fixed and finite periods of time, usually just for one camp day—with the exception of the community media center's radio station manager.

Not all student participants attended and/or participated across these multiple camp spaces, as seen in Table 3.1 below. However, I consider the total number of student participants to be 15, and this is based on the number of students who attended the journalism summer writing camp. The camp was the first of the three main program spaces and had the most student participants, and it was from this initial space that students then determined if and how they would move their writing and overall participation across the subsequent spaces. The students' decisions—both to participate and to not participate in particular spaces and/or in particular ways—was what most shaped the program's trajectory and impacts as a whole.

The 15 students who attended the camp and then all, none, or some of the spaces that followed from it ranged from sixth to twelfth grades—the grades they were to enter in September 2018, a month after the summer camp’s conclusion. These 15 students were from in and around the Philadelphia area, with the majority of them—11 out of the 15—living directly in the city. Most students also attended public schools (eight), but the particular types of public schools among them were highly varied: selective, non-selective, charter, magnet, etc. Most varied were students’ responses on the Google Doc sign-up form for the camp to a question about what they might want to learn during the camp. Their answers to this question ranged from particular beats within journalism—i.e., “political journalism”—to ethical and representational issues within journalism to audience and writing style considerations—“How to write gripping stories better.” Such a variety of interests in the genre is indicative of the multiple ways that students ultimately chose to engage in journalism during the camp and writing more broadly throughout the program.

With their particular interests, the 15 students from the camp were made aware of it and decided to attend as a result of teacher recommendations and PhilWP connections with teachers and/or parents; I advertised for the camp through PhilWP’s website and its email listserv. As the camp was free to all students who attended, I chose the first 15 students who “applied” temporally—or the first 15 students who filled out the Google Form I created and linked to on PhilWP’s website/in PhilWP’s email outreach. I obtained informed consent for all students who participated in the camp. Prior to the start of the camp, I emailed the parents/guardians of all campers and included a digital copy of the consent form. I also sent camp students home with hard copies of the forms in folders I put

together for each of them and distributed on the camp's first day. I additionally posted a link to the electronic version of the consent form in W4C; all students and their parents/guardians consented to participation in the study, four of them doing so electronically.

FNW was open to students beyond this journalism summer writing camp; they similarly became aware of FNW through PhilWP communication channels and word-of-mouth among local teachers and parents connected to educator networks. However, I did not obtain consent in the same ways for additional students who came to FNW sessions, as I remained focused on the campers who carried and shifted their participation through to FNW.

More detailed information about the 15 camp students—their grade levels, home locations, school types, and interests in journalism prior to the camp—can be seen in Table 3.1. This table also includes context about the students' identities, e.g., how they identified their genders and races; however, I did not formally ask students to identify themselves (i.e., through survey questions). Although I recognized earlier in this chapter within the “Positionality” subsection that I attempted to address issues of power head on with students, I did not directly collect this identity information from students. Much like how I recognize my discomfort with relinquishing educator control within participatory research in Chapter Five, I must name my discomfort here in relation to framing as well. As a white, cisgender woman associated with an elite research institution, I was uncertain of how to ask for information about students' identities—or perhaps I was just uncomfortable trying to do so. While students revealed pieces of their identities in

conversations and compositions, as seen with Katy's exploration of her mixed-race identity in Chapter Six, I never solicited the information myself. The result is that my understandings of students' identities are based only on how students chose to self-describe in particular moments of discussion and/or through their writing processes, also seen when Massi shared his personal connection to his news article topic on the stigma of depression amongst black individuals. In his news article, Massi wrote the following:

In 2014, 16% of the black community had been diagnosed with some type of mental illness in the past year; this is 6.8 million people. And I am part of that number...For most black people like me, it is super difficult to open up about their problems with mental illness.

It is important to note that while I intended to co-construct liminal writing spaces that made it possible for students like Massi to surface their identities at times and in ways of their choosing, I may not be providing here the fullest picture of students.

Table 3.1*Background information on student participants who attended journalism summer writing camp*

Name*		Grade	Race	Gender	Home-town	School	Contexts of Participation	Interest in/ Reason for Attending Camp
1	Katy	11 th	Hispanic, Black, & Jamaican	Female	Philly	Private, independent Catholic high school for low-income students	—Camp —W4C —FNW —Celebration of Writing and Literacy	“techniques for writing”
2	Aaron	12 th	Asian-American	Male	Philly	Public high school, selective	—Camp —W4C —Celebration of Writing and Literacy	“political journalism”
3	Penelope	7 th	Asian-American	Female	Suburb	Public middle school, non-selective	—Camp —FNW	None given
4	Maisha	12 th	Black	Female	Philly	Private, independent Catholic high school for low-income students	—Camp —W4C	“The basis on how to write or just simply finding your own flow of writing as a journalist.”
5	Ramona	7 th	White	Female	Philly	Independent Quaker K-8, selective	—Camp —W4C —FNW	“How to write gripping stories better”

6	Massi	9 th	Black	Male	Philly	Independent, Christian, arts-based high school for students with language-based learning differences	—Camp —W4C	None given
7	Brielle	12 th	Asian-American	Female	Philly	Public high school, selective	—Camp —W4C	“Who are our journalists and how does that shape the way certain race groups are portrayed in the media? How does the choice of words in portraying a certain event change the way people view an event? Are there any rules as to how situations may be portrayed by a journalist? Where do the journalists themselves

								<p>get their information from, Is it a primary source, a secondary source, or just possibly a quick insight on a big situation? How does the medias reaction to a journalists article, blog, or etc. change the way a journalist may choose to present the information? What is a journalists true goal and how does working in the business for so long change that? *sorry for all the big questions/ topics**</p>
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8	Jasmine	10 th	Asian-American	Female	Suburb	Private PK-12 girls school, selective	—Camp —W4C —FNW —Ethnography in Education Research Forum	“I am interested in learning how to establish the tone in an article you're writing, how to know if the article is meant to be factual or opinionated and how to get a good balance of facts and opinions in one article that makes it both interesting and yet not obviously biased. Thanks!”
9	Tina	9 th	Black	Female	Philly	Public magnet high school for creative and performing arts, selective	—Camp	“Become better at journalism”

10	Harry	12 th	Asian-American	Male	Suburb	Public high school, non-selective	-Camp	“I’ve always had trouble writing in a clear-cut way without any superfluous language. I’m hoping that I will be able to fix that up during the summer camp!”
11	Serena	8 th	Black & Hispanic	Female	Philly	Public charter PK-8 school, non-selective	—Camp —W4C —FNW	“How to start a school newspaper”
12	Leila	6 th	Black & Hispanic	Female	Philly	Public charter PK-8 school, non-selective	—Camp	None given
13	Carlo	7 th	Black	Male	Philly	Independent, cooperative K-8 school, selective	—Camp —W4C	None given
14	Shayna	9 th	Black	Female	Philly	Public high school, selective	—Camp	“Improve my writing and expand my views on it as well.”
15	Katerina	12 th	Asian-American	Female	Suburb	Public high school, non-selective	—Camp —W4C —FNW —Ethnography in Education Research Forum	“Publication process”

*All names are pseudonyms, and students are listed in the order in which they signed up for the journalism summer writing camp.

Data Collection in and Across Contexts

Throughout the contexts of this study, I aimed to draw upon and collect data forms focused on tracing movement and extending the YPAR framing into data collection and analysis with the students involved. However, the methods used remain best described as “general qualitative research” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 19) and include participant observation and field notes, surveys, interviews, and student-centered artifacts. Artifacts that were student-generated, like the radio broadcast, newspaper, W4C postings, and more, demonstrate the tension described throughout this chapter between my role in forming the YPAR framing and students’ decisions within and in relation to that framing as participants.

Some data forms were drawn on across contexts while others were particular to a certain space. Each of the above-listed data forms will be further described in the subsections below.

Field Notes

As a participant-observer, I generated 25 field notes across the eight summer camp sessions and the seven FNW sessions. In line with the above subsection about my positionality, I followed Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) in not writing any notes while engaged in my field work to avoid “diluting the experiential insights and intuitions that immersion in another social world can provide” (p. 22). I also included a reflective portion at the end of each field note as a way to “ongoingly [monitor] [my] observations and [include] evidence of personal bias or prejudice” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 164).

All field notes were audio-recorded immediately following the session (camp or FNW) during my commute home in my car. I then utilized Otter, a voice meeting notes transcription service, to generate initial field note transcripts, which I then “cleaned up” by listening to my field note audio recordings alongside the service’s transcription drafts.

Surveys

At the start of their summer camp participation in August 2018, students were each given a survey that asked how they understood themselves as writers and activists; see [Appendix D](#) for copies of the surveys. These were reflective, open-ended pre- and post-surveys. The content of the survey remained constant across both deliveries, with post-survey administration occurring during the last FNW session on December 14th, 2018. The post-survey was given to any student who had participated in the journalism summer writing camp and was present during this final FNW session. All 15 campers completed the pre-survey during the last camp day; however, only five students filled out a post-survey during the last session of FNW. This discrepancy is reflective of the various pathways for participation—including *not* participating in a particular space(s)—that students took throughout the writing program.

I drew on the (pre-)survey topics in end-of-camp interviews as well: reasons for participating in the program and/or a particular space of it; students’ understandings of themselves as journalists and activists; and students’ understandings of writing as a means to affect change.

Interviews

The pre- and post- surveys were used as ways to individualize questions during interviews of students, or to create “specific, tailored follow-up questions within and across interviews” and allow for “a unique and customized conversational path with each participant” (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p. 154). I conducted a total of 12 of these semi-structured interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016), five at the end of the summer camp in August 2018 and seven through the seven weeks of FNW (one per week) between September 2018 and December 2018. All summer camp interviews were in small groups while the FNW interviews were a mixture of small groups and one-on-one.

Given that both sets of interviews were semi-structured and included individual and group structures, I did not create or follow structured protocols. I instead offered broad prompts about five key areas: student journalism, student activism, W4C, the camp newspaper, and shifts in writing and participation across forms and spaces.

All 15 students in the summer camp participated in one of five small group interviews during the last camp day on August 16th, 2018 with the exception of Katerina, who had to leave early that day due to senior pictures at her high school. I followed up with Katerina in a one-on-one interview during FNW; she was one of the seven interviews from FNW. The FNW interviews were a mixture of individual interviews, like Katerina’s, and small group interviews. The end-of-camp interviews were structured around key areas I wanted to focus on as culminating for the camp experience: students’ understanding of themselves as journalists and activists, their engagement with W4C, and their experiences moving writing across mediums/modes. The FNW interviews—with the exception of

Katerina's, which was more in line with the summer camp set—were emergent and based on conversations had during a particular FNW session. As a result, FNW interviews spanned topics and were distinct in foci, reflective of work done during the camp, in W4C, and/or within FNW in a given Friday session. Some FNW interviews, like Katy's, also included discussions of additional collaborative spaces that emerged during the study's unfolding, like the presentation she, Aaron, and I created and delivered together at the Celebration of Writing and Literacy on October 6th, 2018.

Both end-of-camp and FNW interviews took place in the shared physical location of the spaces—the community media station studios and PennGSE, respectively. Both August 2018 and December 2018 sets of interviews were also conducted at moments of convenience during camp and FNW sessions (e.g., when students arrived early, were working independently on writing, etc.). Given that I was the sole facilitator of the camp, conducting interviews with all camp attendees while still managing the activities of the camp proved challenging, and end-of-camp interviews were shorter and less in-depth than those conducted during FNW. The FNW interviews were longer and more extended conversations with greater room for emergent follow-up questions given more freedom in when and how long we could speak for (there were always additional writing coaches present during FNW sessions) and given relationship histories to draw upon in our conversations at this later point in the program. However, only six students participated in both sets of interviews (camp and FNW), as only six students were ultimately interviewed during FNW—some more than once during multiple FNW sessions on different interview topics/foci. These six students were Katerina, Katy, Penelope, Ramona, and Serena. This

discrepancy in interview numbers is again reflective of how students' participation was not consistent across spaces—and further of how this was drawn on as a way to learn more about participation, writing, and liminal learning spaces.

All interviews were audio recorded, initially transcribed through Otter (as explained above), and then finalized as transcriptions by me for later coding and analysis.

Artifacts

Multimodal artifacts that emerged across our program spaces include reflection forms, collaborative camp discussions and activities, student writing, and student-generated audio and video reflections.

Guest Speaker Reflection Forms. A key part of my YPAR framing was bringing youth and adults/mentors into interactions and relationships; as discussed above, this manifested in daily journalistic guest speakers collaborating with the students and me each day of the summer camp. Also in line with these aspects of the framing was the Guest Speaker Reflection Form, as seen in [Appendix E](#), that I created as a place for students to consider each speaker as a potential mentor and to provide me with feedback on the speaker. I regularly posted the link to the form in our daily camp slides and encouraged students to fill out the Google Form after interacting with each day's "guest speaker"; however, doing so was voluntary and at the students' own initiations. Across the eight speakers, 22 reflection forms were filled out by 10 different students. Seven of the speakers were represented in the responses; the one speaker left out was the community media center's Youth Media Coordinator, who met with students briefly on the first day to provide a tour of the studios.

Discussions. I audio recorded group discussions and activities, including those with these invited adults/mentors, during each day of the summer camp, which resulted in 21 such recordings for over 11 hours of our collaborative engagements. These discussion recordings also aligned with the guiding question of each camp day; recorded discussions centered on the following: what it means to write for change and what the role of a journalist is (day one); deconstruction of the inverted pyramid and other “traditional” journalism structures (day three); reflection on week one guest speakers (day four); journalistic ethics (day five); connections between dramatic monologues and journalism (day six); reflections on journalistic publication, including our own radio broadcast (day seven); and student journalism (day eight).

Student Writing. The student writing collected included prompts and activities facilitated during the two-week camp, such as the brainstorming session shown in Figure 3.4; postings in the W4C community during and after the camp; and news articles and other related writing pieces—both drafts and published—connected to the camp radio broadcast and newspaper. I will discuss writings in the camp context and writings in W4C separately here because W4C extended beyond the camp as a space to share writing. They are, however, deeply intertwined spaces within our program that influenced one another in ongoing and reciprocal fashions.

Camp Writings. By the end of the summer camp, each student wrote and submitted a news piece for publication in the newspaper. The form and genre of that piece varied based on student choice, with some students publishing “traditional” news articles and others publishing dramatic monologues they created in a workshop with an invited

adult/mentor. The dramatic monologue workshop is discussed in depth in Chapter Six. These choices also played out on the radio broadcast on the penultimate day of the camp, with some students focusing on their dramatic monologues on air—a choice Katy tried to make, as discussed in Chapter Five.

The radio broadcast was part of a pre-existing, weekly radio show at the community media center, and the radio station manager there worked with us to broadcast and film a “youth takeover” episode of that show, which focuses on local people’s takes on social issues impacting Philly. The manager hosted the show, and station team members filmed a video of the broadcast, which they then put on YouTube and shared with me for distribution to campers and their parents/guardians. As will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five, the newspaper was a publication outlet that I framed as culminating for the camp and that I pushed for all students to participate in regardless of their individual or collective interest.

Both the newspaper and radio show, although centered on student creation, highlight a core tension that underlies this study in its entirety: how adults’ preconceptions in framing impact students’ participation in a liminal learning context. These adult/mentor preconceptions refer to those that are both literal in terms of creating curriculum and intangible like assumptions about youth and their writing.

W4C Postings. As discussed within the W4C curriculum subsection, I directly connected the camp students to W4C and acted as a facilitator and digital moderator, offering writing prompts for students to respond to in the community as the former and commenting on students’ postings in the latter. I provided a total of seven writing prompts

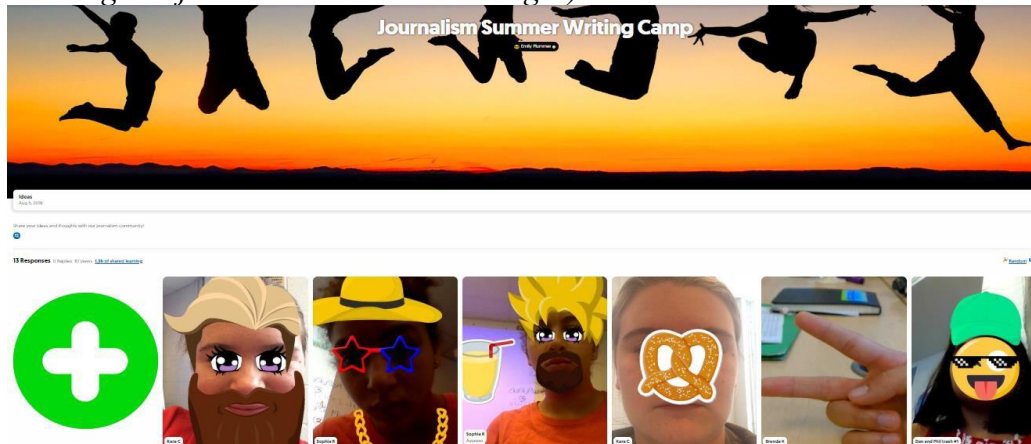
related to our camp activities and unpacking of genre terms—journalistic research, newsworthiness, journalistic ethics, etc. Between the first date of the summer camp on Monday, August 6th, 2018 and the end of my formal data collection in February 2019—following a conference presentation with students about our writing program—the students created and published 50 posts. Of those 50 posts, 21 occurred during the camp as a direct result of the “On Assignment” writing prompts from my curriculum. The remaining 29 were posted by campers outside of the camp curriculum and after the camp had ended as they further forged their own pathways for participation.

Audio/Video. Other forms of data were also student-generated, although my roles in presenting, facilitating, and/or “collecting” them again cannot be overlooked. Students recorded with me “news notes” in which they responded on-the-spot to prompts that I posed about the guiding question of and/or activities during a camp day. Nine of these “news notes” (a term I came up with for the recordings) were created on the second day of the camp in response to questions about the day’s focus on “newsworthiness” in relation to students’ own developing article topics.

Students also created video reflections in Flipgrid, an educational platform to facilitate video sharing and digital discussion. I set up our camp channel, which I named “Journalist’s Journal,” and encouraged students to compose and publish within it at multiple points throughout each camp day. Students ultimately created a total of 12 videos, eight of which were individually created and four that were collaboratively created (with two or more students in the videos). I also appear alongside a small group of students in one of the Flipgrid videos. See Figure 3.7 below for a screenshot of our Flipgrid channel.

Figure 3.7

Screenshot of students' published video reflections in our closed Flipgrid channel (face-covering emojis were students' own designs)



This student-created video data was meant to be voluntary and based on students' initiation, interests, and needs. I had questions and topics to consider in the daily slides for each camp day meeting, but I encouraged students to speak about whatever they wished in Flipgrid. Students were not required to visit the “Journalists’ Journal” channel, as I termed it, as I conceptualized students' decisions around whether or not to take up this particular literacy practice as important research considerations. Dussel and Dahya (2017) also point out the importance of considering what happens when students purposefully choose not to use their voices in writing and creating digital media and/or are reluctant to do so. However, in the emergent unfolding of the study, I experienced significant discomfort around Flipgrid not being taken up by students, as examined in Chapter Five.

Also not taken up by students was a culminating participatory project that I had conceptualized for FNW prior to it existing as a physical and unfolding space within our writing program. I had proposed—as part of this study and to the students—that we use the

audio recorded “News Notes” and group discussions and the Flipgrid videos to create together a short film about our camp experiences. This did not materialize—students were not interested and did not initiate it or similar projects, and I did not want to “push” my ideas and aims, as discussed in Chapter Five as well. As a result, FNW became both a more collectively reflective and a more individualized space. During FNW, students who attended from the camp engaged in extended discussions with me and camp peers about their prior and ongoing experiences in the program. And, they also brought various pieces of writing to the space for their own shifting purposes and writing contexts beyond the program, but I did not collect or document these writing pieces as I did during the camp and W4C.

Data Analysis

Both the transliteracies and the YPAR elements of this proposal extend through to how I approached the data collected across contexts. The four tools of a transliteracies approach, outlined in my theoretical framework in Chapter Two—emergence, resonance, uptake, and scale—function as “thinking devices” (Gee, 2014) or as devices to “guide inquiry in regard to specific sorts of data and specific sorts of issues and questions” (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 76). I relied on these transliteracies tools as I attempted to address issues of power and representations as students moved across writing contexts while engaging *in* and *with* journalism as a way to make social change. Both transliteracies and YPAR—and in particular the two in combination—have “the potential to orient researchers to everyday, and often systematic, practices of exclusion and marginalization that move with/alongside/against youth and communities” (Stornaiuolo,

Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 85). To work toward an understanding of these issues through the forms of data outlined above, I remained committed to the students' own words and experiences.

I also attempted to engage in some forms of data analysis *with* the students. In the case of my proposed study, both the students and I were researchers. My initial notions of a participatory framing included only work in which youth/students and adults/mentors engage in a shared research project on the same topic and in the same context. However, after writing with and learning from these 15 students for six months—and in actuality far longer as I continue to communicate regularly with multiple students from the study—I have come to see that the students and I could still be co-researchers even if our purposes and outcomes were not the same and our research questions different.

Furthering this focus on “additional voices and perspectives” (Stornaiuolo, Smith, & Phillips, 2017, p. 85) and what can be learned from and with them, the transliteracies framing also reminds that “categories are not pre-formed but locally contingent, interactionally produced, and actively negotiated” (p. 82). This was an important idea I held on to in forming my coding and analysis approach.

Multiple data sources involved, including student writing, interview and discussion transcripts, and survey responses, were coded inductively through a combination of several kinds of coding to allow for different readings and different patterns, themes, and relationships to emerge: open coding (Maxwell, 2013), in-vivo coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), process coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), and emotion coding (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). “Between-methods triangulation” (Ravitch

& Carl, 2016, p. 195) was sought by collecting and coding these multiple forms of data— participant observations and field notes, survey responses, transcripts of individual interviews and group sessions, and student-created and/or student-centered artifacts.

Upon completing each transcript or approaching each artifact for the first time, I read through it while simultaneously listening to the corresponding recording; by engaging in this way, I also followed Maxwell's (2013) directive about this stage of qualitative data analysis: "During this listening and reading, you should write notes and memos on what you see and hear in your data, and develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships" (p. 105). This was, further, a first step in a broader "open coding" approach, which Maxwell (2013) defines as "an inductive attempt to capture *new* insights" (p. 107). I highlighted transcribed sections that stood out as speaking to my earlier-articulated research questions but purposefully did not create any categories or labels during my first readings.

After this initial reading and note-taking I then reread the transcripts more collectively, first in chronological order of date to note common themes emerging across recordings and then again in that same order but with particular attention to the themes I had seen as surfacing in earlier readings. In developing and naming these codes, I aimed to utilize "in vivo coding" as described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) in order to "prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (p. 74).

As I continued to re-read the data, I collapsed codes, reorganizing them and looking at patterns across students' different experiences with and perspectives on writing in and across our spaces (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Three overarching categories

emerged: genre, personal, and impact, as did seven sub-categories: creative, narrative, activism, multiple, school, audience, and inform. An example of the interrelations of sub-codes across the broader categories can be seen in the following student statement in a Guest Speaker Reflection Form response, as can the centrality of the students' own words in forming the codes: "The speaker taught us, when it relates to activism, not to listen to the editors and personal opinions if the topic is really something we want to pursue" (Harry, Personal communication, August 9, 2018). Harry articulated an expanded understanding of the journalism "genre" as linked to the "personal" as through "activism" and "impact," or having a broader social purpose. See [Appendix F](#) for more detailed examples in the included codebook.

Although I engaged in these forms of analysis on my own, I also engaged with students in more participatory forms of analysis during FNW sessions, although not systematically. I did, however, understand my conversations with students about their camp, W4C, and FNW experiences during and as the spaces unfolded as participatory—as the students shaping the spaces and determining how to participate in each as writers. With two students I put this understanding into practice during a FNW session by asking them to annotate a printed copy of the camp syllabus with their feedback and future suggestions and then talking through their "annotations" together. I also audio recorded and transcribed these joint analysis efforts.

Participatory analysis of data from the summer camp like the syllabus (a curriculum document) is also important to consider in relation to member checks or participant validation, defined by Ravitch and Carl (2016) as "some form of connecting with or

‘checking in’ with the participants in a study to assess (and challenge) the researcher’s interpretations” (p. 197). It is also important to note, though, that not all students participated in FNW, with many not attending any FNW sessions. Of the 15 students who originally attended the journalism summer writing camp, six attended FNW sessions. A discrepancy in participation across contexts also exists for the camp and W4C, even though connecting to W4C was built into the syllabus and daily camp activities. Ten of out the 15 campers were active in W4C to at least some degree—one posting at minimum. Two students only posted once. What these numbers point to is the narrowing of possibilities for a data set that moved across all three contexts of the program with one or more pieces of writing in each and with opportunities to engage in member checking with the students. As a result, five students emerged as focal students through my data analysis efforts: Jasmine, Katy, Katerina, Ramona, and Serena.

Focal Narrative Analysis

In Chapter Six, I engage in narrative analysis (DeFina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Ochs and Capps, 2001; Wortham, 2001) methods in examining one focal students’ writing—Katy’s—across the spaces of our program and her participation with me beyond it in a conference presentation. I came to Katy as a particularly telling case for the discussion of reconstructing journalism across contexts given that I had a robust data set from her: she attended all camp sessions, participated in the radio broadcast, published a news article, posted in W4C both during and after the camp, presented at an academic conference with me and another camper (Aaron), and attended multiple FNW sessions.

I narrowed my narrative analysis onto a consideration of interactional positioning (Wortham, 2001). I conceptualized interviews and discussions as well as students' news stories, creative stories, and other pieces of writing as narratives, often personal ones. As such, interactional positioning emerged as a means of better understanding how students saw journalism as positioning them at the same time as they repositioned journalism for their own purposes.

By centering on students' experiences and their writing and bringing their perspectives into both data collection and analysis, I aimed for us to learn about ourselves and one another through our considerations of writing, representations, and change.

Chapter Four: Learning Together in Liminality

Chapter Three's framings around in- and out-of-school spaces (Hull & Schultz, 2001) and Third Spaces (Gutiérrez, 2008) were critical to forming my own conceptualizations of what constitutes liminality in literacy learning spaces—conceptualizations that shifted as I engaged with youth in and across the spaces of and connected to our writing program. The former piece of framing emphasizes fluidity across literacy learning contexts, as in when Hull and Schultz (2001) are critical of the tendency amongst educators and researchers to dichotomize learning contexts by fixating on their literal locations as distinct. Narrowing and dividing where we engage in literacy learning—and further how we should engage in those different wheres—closes off opportunities for movements across contexts and precludes educators and students from coming to understand more about their own and others' literacy practices, positionings, and identities, as akin to metacommunicative awareness that is attuned to social and cultural elements in and impacting spaces.

Liminal spaces are, then, transitional rather than “sealed tight” (Hull & Schultz, 2001) and, as such, are inherently open: to youth as co-inquirers who bring rich stories and sources of knowledge both individually and collectively and to iterating goals, purposes, and uptakes as relationships and spaces built and shift. These transitional aspects of liminality then come to center the transformational (Gutiérrez, 2008) in literacy learning and teaching and researching about that learning. Liminal literacy learning spaces are not meant to be “new” because of their physical designs or locations (although these can be powerful pieces of liminal spaces), as reflective of more narrow ways Gutiérrez's (2008)

construct of “Third Space” is often taken up (e.g., Moje et al., 2004). Instead, a Third Space is transformational in and through critical attention to literacy practices and positionings across individuals and groups, both in a space and beyond it: “more than ahistorical accounts of individual discrete events, literacy practices, and the social interaction within... Instead, it is a transformative space where the potential for an expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge are heightened” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 152). These transformative potentials surrounding learning and knowledge development in liminal spaces involve interplays between individuals, their actions and interactions within their physical “spaces,” and the spaces themselves.

In line with these framing theories, I conceptualized our writing spaces as sites of both transition and transformation. I attempted to draw on these broad understandings of what constitutes liminal spaces when initially conceptualizing this overall writing program. One way that I did that was by emphasizing opportunities for movement across not only multiple spaces—the summer camp, FNW, and W4C—but also mediums, modes, and genres for composition. However, I also aimed to frame the entire experience around learning from and with students about their participation, perspectives, and practices as writers in relation to these movements across contexts and forms. In these ways, the goal of this participatory work with youth was not to transform physically where they learned but to draw on different learning spaces to gain new understandings and insights—all while utilizing those various spaces as platforms for students to compose and publish writing on social issues important to them.

I did, however, intentionally emphasize physical and temporal aspects of spaces that Hull and Schultz (2001) caution against, as in when I brought in school-like structures (e.g., syllabus, “do-now,” and homework) to the camp or when I scheduled FNW dates to begin as soon after the camp and as close to the school-year’s beginning as possible. However, our spaces were never clearly one “recognizable” context entirely; they were, for instance, always “extra-school” spaces or “school-like spaces”—and therefore emergent and contingent, even when I drew on school (camp), social media (W4C), and/or affinity space characteristics (FNW). My intentionality, then, sat in often uneasy relationships with emergence, as students’ individual and collective experiences, aims, and understandings unfolded alongside my conceptualizations and choices and as students permeated and shifted the boundaries across spaces both in our program and outside of it (e.g., students’ writing practices at home, in schools, on social media, etc.). Thus, while liminality requires intentionality, this intentionality extends beyond constructing the space as an educator/facilitator. It further includes reflection on the hows and whys of that construction *with* youth as they experience it and ultimately engage in co- and reconstruction. In these ways, emergence and intentionality were, then, interconnected aspects of our liminal writing spaces.

Multiplicity also characterized our writing spaces. Across the camp, W4C, and FNW, multiple modes, mentors, means of publication, and more were offered to, initiated by, and explored with youth. But again, these multiplicities were always in relationship to simultaneous multiplicities of purposes and experiences in and across participants and spaces. As Gutiérrez (2008) surfaces in her unpacking of the Third Space construct,

multiplicities are necessary for transformation, as individual and collective literacy practices in a space always intersect with systemic understandings of literacy, in-school and out-of-school contexts, and students' identities, which are themselves multiplicitous and complex. Collaborating *with* students was, then, integral to making and remaking our liminal writing spaces—engaging with students in discussions about their writing practices and goals and their reasons for participation in specific spaces and in certain ways. Such attention to multiplicities made possible the “expanded form of learning and the development of new knowledge” to which Gutiérrez (2008) refers.

Our writing spaces were not, however, simply separate contexts that existed next to one another in an ongoing time span. The liminality within each space influenced the other spaces at the same time that it both shaped and was shaped by the participants, including the students and the adults/mentors. For example, as the final collective context of the writing program, FNW was the space that most incorporated students' feedback in how I presented it and how it unfolded: as an affinity space where students could bring in writing of all origins, forms, and purposes to share with and get feedback from a writing community that spanned ages, positions, roles, and purposes. The multiplicitous relationships across people, practices, relationships, and spaces seen in FNW were constituted by histories and systems of power both broadly and narrowly within this writing program. As such, FNW as well as the W4C and camp spaces and engagements with and in them were not neutral in their joinings or collaborations and developed asymmetrically and, at times, with contestations. However, in and across our writing spaces, surfacing these uneasy aspects was a goal of mine and something I practiced with students: asking

them directly why they did not “participate” in a space or take up a publication medium or how they felt about a difficult exchange with an adult/mentor. These direct, purposeful unpackings with the students return to intentionality within our liminal spaces, particularly as it relates to participation across spaces and collaboration across roles.

In the sections that follow, I will further unpack how each and all our writing spaces were both intentional and emergent as well as multiplicitous in how the students, other adults/mentors, and I formed and reformed writing in and across them both individually and together.

Liminalities in and Across Our Spaces

These elements of intentionality, particularly in relation to collaboration, and multiplicity were both built into and emerged within this writing program, most notably around three key program facets: co-construction, movement, and writing affinities.

Extending from the types of open conversations mentioned earlier between the students and me is the creation and re-creation of the spaces as a result of our discussions. People’s literacy practices—most notably the students’ but also the adults’/mentors’—were central to this collaborative, iterative construction processes. In ways both individual and collective and in tensions and with shared purposes, participants’ ways of writing and of relating to one another impacted others (and themselves) in the spaces and the current and future cultures of the spaces.

Getting to know and work with one another across multiple liminal spaces also meant that the students brought different elements to each of the spaces, of themselves and of their writing. What this indicates, more broadly, is that the students experienced a

freedom in this program to move across spaces and to shift in relation to those spaces through those movements. Students temporally moved across the summer to school-year portions of the program (both also with the asynchronous, ongoing W4C community context), but how they engaged in each program space—the camp, W4C, FNW, and still others they developed—shifted. These shifts were both individual and collective; students had their own reasons for and goals in being part of each space, but in and through their interactions within the spaces those reasons and goals shifted too. And, those transitions impacted the unfolding and recreating of the spaces as well. Movements were multiplicitous and contingent but also constituting.

One thing that was constant, however, was a shared affinity for writing as the persistent thread that united us as the participants in the program and in its different spaces. How and why we wanted to write (or not), where, and when was unique among each of us and unique within us collectively as the spaces and the people and the climates of our spaces ongoingly shifted. Writing is a liminal mode in and of itself that spans time, physical distance, and the individual and collective—all writing is both autobiographical (Murray, 1991) and influenced by everything we read, write, and engage in and within our broader lives. Writing as our shared purpose then extends the notion of temporal movement beyond the August through December timeline of the program, as what students created and shared across contexts and forms was circulated and recreated in different modes and mediums by original authors and new collaborators both in and out of the program. Such new trajectories mean the students' compositions and the relationships they built and insights they shared within our liminal spaces lived on—and still live on—in multiple times and

places. These various pathways of participation emphasize movement as well as co- and reconstruction of the spaces together. These constituting elements of co-construction and movement—as grounded in and through our writing—were both intentionally built into the writing program experience but also allowed to emerge in unexpected ways as we navigated our writing in and across our liminal spaces together.

Liminalities Within Each Space

Liminality in and across our spaces was constituted by these aspects of intentionality and multiplicity in co-construction and movement in relation to writing, itself a liminal mode. In this section, I will narrow to the liminality “in” each space despite the foundational importance of their interrelations. I do this so that the multiplicities between and across people, spaces, and forms of composition are all the more clear. I will be delving into each program space in the order in which they occurred, which will also allow for greater understanding of the ways each space and the interactions within it came to influence those that co-existed and/or followed.

When zooming in on each context, I will begin with the more “physical” and temporal aspects of the liminality there. This is meant as a move away from the sort of sole emphasis that Hull and Schultz (2001) warn against, as referenced in my opening. I aim to show how the locations, timings, etc. of each context interacted with the other, broader aspects of liminality laid out earlier: intentionality and multiplicity through emergent co-construction and movement.

Journalism Summer Writing Camp

In my planning of the camp curriculum, I made numerous intentional choices around its timing and curricular structures that connected it to in-school contexts. This was a purposeful decision for several reasons, including the broadest one of making the space legible and more inviting. One result of connecting the camp to the in-school was that movements across in- and out-of-school contexts clearly emerged in strong relationship to how students understood this space as liminal.

While “camp” is not often seen as so strongly connected to the in-school, this particular camp focused on writing, which is—among many other things—a key academic skill for students as they are preparing for high school and college application essays, writing assignments in their humanities classes, and future careers. It took place in August, just a few weeks before the start of the next school year, marking for many of the students who participated in it the start of a transition out of summer and into school—or at least into “school-like” work. This was coupled with the camp’s PhilWP affiliation, which is one that extends into a wide network of educators who included former and upcoming teachers for multiple campers as well. Teachers “recommended” that students attend the camp; one such teacher was a former facilitator of another PhilWP camp that I had worked with in a supporting role for two years. These sorts of connections exemplify how the context of the camp and the work in it were based on and built further upon multiple other, adjacent writing-related affinities and relationships.

Holding the camp just prior to the start of the school year was also a future-focused choice for the still unfolding forming of the FNW space. By having the camp end in August,

I believed it would lead well into FNW as a space to remain connected in the months to come—September through December—without having to wait a particularly extended time period, during which interests and relationships in the program might wane. The camp ended on Thursday, August 16th, and the first FNW session took place on Friday, September 14th, making for just a day over four weeks between them. Although the type of temporal element that Hull and Schultz (2001) caution about solely emphasizing, it becomes clear in this example how this smaller-scale piece was important to the broader incorporation of movement—facilitating it logistically so that it might unfold relationally.

Bringing contexts within and outside of this program (i.e., FNW and school) into close relationship also brought together in-school and out-of-school spaces and practices, pushing back against the frequent dichotomy and aiming instead toward liminality. In addition to movements across in- and out-of-school contexts, the camp was also intentionally built as a space to fluidly shift across modes, mediums, and genres. During—and then following—the camp, students engaged in multiple forms of composing for reasons beyond school assignments and in genres and contexts of their choosing, including in and through social media.

Another significant curricular aspect of the journalism summer writing camp was researching, writing, and presenting to various audiences news articles about topics students felt passionate about or at least interested in, something that many students expressed having little to no space to do in their school contexts. Students did this researching, writing, and other forms of composing alongside many writing mentors, including professional journalists of various forms (e.g., ethnographic, podcast, etc.). Some

of these journalistic mentors themselves occupied transitional spaces—like Gloria, a rising college senior and editor-in-chief of her university’s newspaper whom I invited to be a mentor during the camp.

Each time that a mentor like Gloria visited us during a particular camp day, there were multiple opportunities for students to engage in dialogue across scales about their experiences with the specific mentor. There was a Google Form created and shared with the students at the start of the camp to complete “Guest Speaker Reflections,” which were voluntary but were also an outlet I frequently encouraged. This digital reflection form included open-ended questions about what students did or did not learn from the selected mentor about journalism, writing to affect change, and writing more broadly (i.e., strategies) and about whether students might consider the person a mentor then or in the future. The full version of this “Guest Speaker Reflection” form can be seen in [Appendix A](#). The form was meant as a means of making additional room for students to reflect on their experiences in the camp and to have opportunities to give feedback on the program in multiple forms in case one or another was not comfortable or familiar to them: an intentional step toward fostering reconstruction of the current space to the extent possible and co-construction of future spaces connected to this camp one.

This camp was the first of the three core contexts to be introduced—and the space in which the other two spaces were also first introduced, W4C concurrently and FNW subsequently. As a result of its temporal position, much of its co-construction was forward aimed, as mentioned earlier in my decision to hold the camp in mid-August just a few weeks before the school year. Our co- and re-construction efforts during the camp were

built around open discussions where students had chances to offer their opinions on and takeaways from a mentor's presentation and/or activity, as one instance. These discussions took different forms: whole group, small group, and one-on-one with me. But all were aimed at and resulted in unpacking student experiences and engaging those experiences as forms of collaborative feedback to consider in forthcoming spaces.

With some mentors, like the aforementioned Gloria, similar discussions were had directly with those mentors—students having conversations with mentors about topics that mattered to both. I will now turn to looking more in depth at the ways the above liminalities I attempted to facilitate in our camp space intertwined with emerging relationships and practices; I will do this through closely considering mentors' roles in the camp, including both Gloria's and my own.

The Liminal Roles of Journalist Mentors. The mentors of the summer camp return to the idea of movements across in- and out-of-school contexts as foundational to the camp's liminality, but they further center emergence as we considered mentors' impacts individually and collectively in terms of relationships and experiences in the camp. These mentors strongly influenced how the camp emerged as liminal for students, an emergence that was both personal for each student and collective for the group's experiences and shared goals.

The mentors that I invited to join us each day of the camp were also an important factor in gaining students' interest in attending and participating overall. Katerina explained that the mentors—which I had drawn on in advertising the camp through PhilWP—were her main reason for choosing to attend: so that she could distinguish herself

from other school journalists and could find out more about becoming a “professional” journalist as a potential future job (Personal communicate, December 14, 2018). Katerina looked to the journalistic mentors of the summer writing camp as distinct from anyone associated with journalism in her school setting, drawing clear distinctions between school and student journalism and “professional” journalism. It was through our out-of-school mentors that she felt she could learn about journalism as a career path, despite already having been involved as a writer and editor with her school newspaper before coming to the summer camp. However, adult/mentor Gloria’s “in-between” position—both a college student and a “professional” journalist—challenged these dichotomizations at the same time that it centered fluidity and news forms of engagement in and knowledge about writing.

Katerina, then, called on her in-school context at the same time as she reflected on the affordances of a more liminal space for learning about writing—a space more liminal in both its physical location and in who can more easily circulate into and through that physical location. She also further emphasized how the contributions of mentors—also including myself in fostering connections with other mentors—were important in bringing students into the experience of the liminal space, but it was only through students’ personal interactions with the mentors that the space became collaborative and personally relevant for students’ goals. It was also in these interplays that the space emerged as liminal.

As aforementioned, Gloria was an adult/mentor in the camp who occupied an in-between role, one that countered some of Katerina’s earlier notions about distinctions between school journalists and professional journalists. In many ways, Gloria was both a

student journalist—during the camp she worked for a university newspaper—and a professional journalist, the latter given her vast experience with challenging social issues across scales and with adult mentors and authority figures, which she talked about with the camp students directly. She shared her own experiences but also invited students to share theirs. For instance, Gloria spoke at length about her time as a high school journalist, which was consumed by her efforts to write about and publicize her high school’s mascot as racist. This inspired campers, in particular Katy, to seek guidance from Gloria about how to navigate the power asymmetries around sports uniforms in Katy’s own high school—and about how those power dynamics might emerge were Katy to write about the issue (Observation, August 16, 2018). While Gloria was no longer a high school student, she drew on that aspect of her identity—that she was a high school student recently and was still a student now, just in a college context—to invite reconstructions attentive to power from her shared experiences.

In fact, students frequently mentioned feeling better able to relate to and enjoy Gloria as a mentor because of her “age.” In an end-of-camp group interview with Jasmine, Shayna, and Tina, all three described Gloria as their “favorite” mentor because of her young age—“everyone else is above like 30,” as Shayna noted (Jasmine, Shayna, & Tina, personal communication, August 16, 2018). This is a description of Gloria’s liminal role that is more in line with what Hull and Schultz (2001) refer to as a “physical” and/or temporal aspect. However, as with the other “physical” and temporal aspects of the camp described above, this one also has important connections to broader liminalities of and within the camp space. In line with perceiving her age as more relatable, Jasmine, Shayna, and Tina also

emphasized Gillian's resulting use of "natural" language, including curse words and humor. Gloria's perceived "in-betweenness"—not an "old" adult but still older and more experienced than the middle and high school students in the camp—opened opportunities for emergent conversations that were simultaneously more personal and more comfortable for students.

The students were struck by how Gloria fostered this while still discussing with them "hard issues," like racism and Gloria's relationship with her high school principal during and after writing about her high school's problematic mascot. But, what they seemed to appreciate most was how Gloria was willing to be "honest" even about questions she was asked that did not have to do with journalism as directly, like when Brielle asked Gloria about how Gloria was paying for her college degree. Tina remembered this interchange between Brielle and Gloria and brought it up in the group interview with me, Jasmine, and Shayna when discussing Gloria's relatability. Tina said, "Gloria, she was, like, so honest, and then, like, she told us about her experience with college. Like most people don't share their financial aid stuff, like you know?" (Personal communication, Jasmine, Shayna, & Tina, August 16, 2018). Tina placed particular value on Gloria's honesty, rather than on any particular journalistic, academic, or otherwise writerly "strategies" Gloria might have given the students. This emphasizes how our space was rooted in the personal at the same time that it was grounded in a particular genre and in "school-like" structures and, for some if not many students, in school-related purposes. Tina's comments—as well as the interaction she is talking about between Brielle and

Gloria—are reflective of fluidity both in the space, relationships, and approaches to writing genres and practices.

Pulling back to Brielle’s initial question-posing to Gloria about tuition costs and payments, that Brielle understood our camp as a space where this could be asked and that Gloria was a person whom she could ask without fear of negative reactions from her or other adults speaks to the ongoing co- and re-construction of the space. Brielle moved across her many goals and purposes in participating in the camp to both create and take hold of an opportunity to connect with a mentor who was at once a student and adult/professional journalist and who had information beyond those narrowly-construed identities of use to Brielle as a rising high school senior with plans to attend college. Gloria likewise understood our camp as a space where questions like these could surface and be met with “honest” answers—curse words and humor included.

Gloria’s in-between role as an adult mentor who was student-like and who centered much of her discussions with students around her high school journalism experiences has much to do with her physical age and temporal location in a university setting. Gloria’s liminal role was not entirely constituted by her age; rather, her perception as a young person connected her to contexts and concerns familiar to secondary school students, who then felt a pathway forward for critically and directly exploring their own concerns and aims, whether finding out about student loans or figuring out how to start a potentially controversial news article about school inequities. In that same end-of-camp interview, Jasmine located Gloria’s age in relation to her experience level, explaining that Gloria struck a helpful balance:

Gloria...she felt like a breath of fresh air compared to all the others, like...yes, they're experienced and it would be great to learn from that, but I think I also want someone who's experienced but yet I can still find a way to relate because her age is also close to ours. In a way, like, you can understand each other better. (Jasmine, Shayna, & Tina, personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Jasmine took note of Gloria's own liminal role (without naming it as such). Jasmine recognized that older and perhaps "more experienced" mentors, like multiple others who came to the camp, had a great deal to share as well. But, Gloria's youth made what she had to share not only more relatable but more appreciated—it should, after all, come as no surprise that students want to learn from one another, understand that there should be opportunities to do so, and are glad when such chances are made possible in learning spaces.

In designing the camp curriculum, I intentionally chose to focus closely on ideas around "student journalism" on our final day together and sought a student journalist as the day's mentor. In Gloria's talking with students—and her knowledge, warmth, and genuine interest in the students must not be overlooked—there were intentional movements between school contexts (high school to university) and out-of-school contexts and emergent reconstructions of the topics and purposes of the student-to-student exchange. Not only do all of these demonstrate the ways our camp space was liminal in complex, emergent interplays between the space and the people within it and their goals, they also highlight the power of youth voices in learning, research, and teaching—particularly when multiple youth voices are brought together.

W4C

This idea of youth "writing for change" was both a foundational framing and goal of the overall camp experience and of the broader program across contexts. The online

community of W4C clearly connected to these framings and aimings, as its name would strongly suggest. W4C was a pre-existing digital writing space constituted by adolescent writers and their educators, all of whom share a commitment to writing about social issues and for social change. That the space was an “educational” platform again emphasizes the ways the program experience overall was strongly tied to movements across in- and out-of-school spaces. W4C was introduced during the camp, and the audience it opened for the camp students was also entirely made up of secondary students and their educators, whether their connections to W4C were from in-school classrooms; school clubs; or out-of-school but “school-like” writing programs, like our own camp. The other students in W4C, were, however global in their various locations and otherwise diverse in their goals for and uses of W4C, whether self- or teacher-directed or a combination of the two, with the latter how it emerged in our own camp context and following it. In many ways, W4C as an online writing community mirrored our in-person writing contexts—the camp and later FNW. All spaces were tied to school contexts through educator relationships and/or school-based purposes (e.g., academic writing, resume-building, network-building for references to schools and jobs) but open to multiplicitous forms of writing and participation with the goal of centering youth voices.

At the same time—also similar to our program context—W4C was a form of social networking, a digital writing space and writing style that is most often dichotomized from the in-school. This is particularly true given that the W4C community lived in Google Plus (G+), a now defunct social network, for the six-month span of this study. While I ensured that each camper connected to the W4C community during the early days of the camp—

even making it a dedicated portion of the camp's day one syllabus agenda—how students wished to engage once connected was meant to be emergent and up to them.

These intended “choices” were, however, further complicated by the fact that I included brief “assignments” of daily writing prompts for students to consider and to respond to in W4C. I intentionally crafted the writing prompt questions to serve a number of distinct but interrelated purposes. The writing prompts were all connected to journalism and our research efforts in the camp and so served as reflections on students' goals and progress for both them and me. More broadly, though, I had hoped to frame them as beginning inroads into wider and more independently initiated forms of participation in the online community. If the students responded to my prompt about capturing photographs in their neighborhood and reflecting on what the images highlighted about change, I imagined—or perhaps assumed—that they would be “motivated” to explore other avenues of engaging with camp and global peers connected to W4C. Whether or not this surfaced will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Five. What this discussion around my approach to W4C calls forth is the often uneasy relationships underlying our emerging liminal spaces, the movements across in- and out-of-school practices and structures that constituted and contributed to the spaces, and our interactions within them. This is true for us as students and educators/mentors separately and as students and educators/mentors in relationships to one another.

That these movements and relationships were fraught is particularly important to highlight in relation to an online community, as there remains a tendency among educators and the public writ large to automatically and always position the digital as democratic

and/or even emancipatory for youth voices. Student writers from this program already recognized that digitally mediated writing contexts hold both significant affordances and challenges at the same time and that the former does not erase the latter. There are “physical” and temporal aspects—to harken back again to Hull and Schultz (2001)—of online writing communities that facilitate youth sharing their stories and amplifying their voices. However, there are real issues of equity, not just in access—i.e., the “digital divide” (Eamon, 2004)—but in uptake, particularly when the audience is adults. Tina brought these conflicting ideas into conversation when she reflected on the notion of “writing for change”:

Nowadays it's 2018, and you can change things by social media, just by putting it out there and that is much easier than it was in the past, but then at the same time, it can still be difficult. So it's like standing for what you believe and working towards it. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Rather than accepting the omnipresence of digital tools as an automatically social or useful presence—let alone a democratic one—for writing, I aimed to discuss directly *with* students like Tina why it is that “it can still be difficult” to make an impact through digital writing. While Tina did not elaborate on what she specifically feels makes social media composing “still...difficult”—and it should be noted that I did not seize the chance I had to ask her to explain further—she did bring forth points important to W4C as a liminal writing space. Like online writing writ large, as Tina referred to, W4C as a digital writing space was not inherently beneficial, especially in ways I had imagined it as an educator-facilitator, simply because it was accessible to all campers and to a more global audience. Digital writing, particularly in “school-like” contexts like a summer writing camp and W4C, remains contextually bound and impacted: by how it is introduced, by how it is

facilitated, by how writing peers do and do not engage with it, and by personal perspectives on and motivations for writing.

Within the confines of our journalism summer writing program, I unintentionally presented W4C as a writing avenue that I wanted and even expected students to respond to my “assigned” writing prompts within; this was seen by students as “school-like,” further emphasizing the ways in which W4C was shaped by its temporal connection to the camp. However, when I did engage in the sorts of open dialogues with students alluded to above, it became clear that other forms of participation were not only possible but were productive for students within W4C as a more emergent liminal space, one that could allow for movements across geographic locations between global peers, genres and modes of writing, and school and personal purposes for sharing. Jasmine, for instance, shared with me that the power of W4C for her emerged through outwardly unseen forms of participation—reading and reflecting on what other people wrote about and posted in the community. Jasmine explained that for her, W4C was a space

...to just enjoy other people’s writing, read and get some ideas about what to improve on for my life. If I have a writer’s block, maybe see what other people are doing. Like I don’t want to copy per se, but it’s always useful, having, like, writing. (Personal communication, October 26, 2018)

While I was framing participation in W4C through only more visible forms of writing—i.e., posting pieces of writing—Jasmine acted intentionally but invisibly within the community. She reconstructed my limited understandings of digital writing in our writing program context by first reconstructing the preconceived approach to participation I had given her and the students. W4C afforded multiple emergent pathways for engagement with others’ work in the community and with the community as a whole, and Jasmine

surfaced this as an important aspect of the space's liminality and one in and from which we all learned more about writing and writing communities.

My Liminal Role as Facilitator. Jasmine's points about multiple forms of participation in W4C also extend to my role as a facilitator in the digital community, a role that was multiplicitous in ways that were often uneasy too—both internally and with the students. Much like my overall role in the journalism camp in which I was both a participant and a facilitator, in W4C I was an audience member at the same time as I was the educator who connected the students to the digital community. I wondered how to encourage and facilitate discussions within W4C in ways that were not directive and/or stifling of students' own choices and purposes for posting (or not posting). This was a role tension that I experienced when working with W4C in the past (particularly in another PhilWP summer writing camp), which also shows how our writing program spaces contained connections to and movements across spaces even beyond the program.

I reflected on these ongoing questions around how to be an educator-facilitator in an online, educational writing community for students in my first camp field note. This initial camp day was when I introduced W4C to the students both in concept and through connecting them literally to the online space. What makes this excerpt from that first day field note especially telling is that students raised their own concerns about how I and other adults did and would function in W4C. By bringing to the fore how often I had made comments on students' postings in the past, a student from the camp surfaced how my own struggles with navigating my role impacted students' perceptions of and writing within

W4C. In my field note, I described this conversation I had with a student about my role in

W4C as follows:

When one of the students was looking through the W4C community during some downtime and I happened to walk behind her, she said, ‘Oh, you’re all over this thing,’ meaning, you know, I’d made lots of comments. And it reminded me of before, of other students, I think it was Project Write [another PhilWP camp I was involved in]. So they don’t really like when, you know, the adults give lots and lots of comments because they know, you know, that adults give lots and lots of comments because they...kind of have to comment or else there’s no conversation in the community. (Observation, August 8, 2018)

This student—whose name I was not familiar enough with on day one of the camp to use in the field note—also surfaces how she (and other students) perceived my role in W4C differently than I did. To her and others, I was not really an audience member but was, instead, always an educator and, therefore, always distinct from the students. I understood my goals as educator-facilitator in being “all over” W4C as to ensure that students felt their writing was seen, heard, and responded to and to encourage others to do the same and to hopefully form relationships in the process. However, students—like this one in the journalism summer writing camp and like students in past camp environments—indicate that my comments were read by students as being perfunctory, inauthentic, and/or task-based rather than truly personally motivated by the writing, or as forced and not fluid or indicative of the sorts of in-between and transformational relationships and learning we were aiming for in our in-person spaces.

While my W4C role was understood as singular rather than multiple by the journalism camp student here, that she read over my past comments—and the peer writing those comments was attached to—puts the camp and her experience in it in relationship to students, schools, and other literacy programs from the past through to the present. In

connecting her shared reaction to my past writing camp experiences with W4C, I began to also connect student uptake of W4C with my liminal role and to question how to make my participation more emergent and less planned. But, I did so with the recognition that my participation was also in relationship to the students' participation forms too. I wondered how I could amplify youth voices if I did not respond to them, particularly when their peers were not responding to them either.

The broader question I seemed to be working toward in reflecting on that day one field note and on similar past issues with W4C is around how to make room for youth agency and re-construction in pre-established educational spaces. The student in the journalism camp who called out my perhaps over-participation indicates that tacit and overt refusals to participate and silent forms of participation are critical in understanding youth agency and co- and re-construction of writing spaces. Opening adult/educator and youth/student conversations around these issues is one way to make this needed room for intentional collaboration in surfacing power asymmetries that accompany in-between adult roles like mine in W4C. In so doing, spaces like W4C, roles like my educator-facilitator one, and relationships between educator-facilitators and student writers in digital writing spaces can become more emergent and multiplicitous—and push toward liminality.

FNW

While W4C was a digital space first introduced during the journalism summer writing camp, we all remained connected to W4C and read, posted, commented, liked, etc. within it after the camp ended, through FNW, and even beyond the program's temporal confines. This emphasizes the fluidity of these three spaces, despite their distinct discussions here, as well as the ways they individually and together opened new and

extended forms of connection and participation. FNW as the third and final pre-planned and implemented space of this writing program was particularly integral to this opening up, as it was able to most directly incorporate students' feedback from prior program space experiences and to further expand networks of student writers and adult mentors. However, all these emergent possibilities and relationships made FNW the most contingent of the spaces, as it served no singular purpose for me or for any of the students. The result was, as one camper described FNW, a "community of writers" with a multiplicity of purposes, goals, and connections. FNW was an ongoingly emergent context that invited more movements across in- and out-of-school contexts and continued co-construction through open discussions with students about their experiences in the program and around my research—and in so doing, FNW surfaced possibilities for shifting how we learned, related to, and wrote individually and in community.

During FNW, our writing community expanded to include students beyond the journalism summer writing camp, as FNW was another PhilWP-sponsored program that advertised to a broad swath of students through PhilWP's educator network and its public-facing website. This was in addition to and beyond the smaller-scale forms of communication I had continued to do with my journalism campers, including sending reminders about upcoming FNW sessions via email and through a student-initiated group chat in the GroupMe app as well. These communication forms allowed us to stay connected across our physical locations and across the one-month span between the end of the camp and the start of FNW, which as mentioned earlier was intentionally planned to be as

minimal as possible while remaining in line with schools' academic calendars in order to facilitate movement from the camp to FNW and between FNW and the in-school.

Another intentional aspect of how I planned FNW relates to how I framed it, starting at the end of the summer camp and continuing through to the start of FNW and then throughout it. I positioned FNW as an open space for students to bring in writing of their own choosing and in relation to any number of purposes, as I described in my final camp day field note. The ending day of the camp experience was also the day when I introduced FNW as a continuation of our writing work both individually and together but also hinted at it as a broadening of that work. In that field note, I described an exchange I had with a student, Aaron, who had noticed the FNW dates in the overall camp Google Slides presentation that I had shared with the students on day one and used as a daily organizer.

I went over the FNW dates, and Aaron had actually asked me earlier—he was looking through the slides—he was like ‘what are these,’ and so I explained how it [FNW] could be a time for us to do whatever students wanted: to work on some more of the journalism research, to work on college stuff, to work on SAT stuff, or to work on essays for school. I mentioned the Scholastic Art and Writing awards, and I mentioned the Celebration of Writing and Literacy, how we could do a presentation together. I said, ‘We've been collecting all this data, you know, our audio files, our Flipgrids.’ And I said, ‘Academic presentations look great on a resume.’ And Aaron nodded. He was like, ‘Yeah.’ (Observation, August 16, 2018)

In this earlier framing of FNW, I did expand the writing focus from strictly journalism to other forms of composing and literacy learning; however, upon reflection it is clear that even these broadened forms were almost entirely school-based: college applications, college admissions exams, and school assignments. Even when I shifted toward contexts in which composing could have more personal connections, like the Scholastic Art &

Writing Awards local and national competition and the Celebration of Literacy local PhilWP conference, I did so with specifically school-connected purposes still in mind: building a resume for college applications. In these ways, my initial conceptions of FNW were connected to the in-school much more strongly and with much less fluidity than later iterations of my framing. And that later shift to emphasizing fluidity is due largely to reflecting on student input from discussions and interviews during the camp (including on this last camp day); this brings forth the importance of co- and re-construction as based upon youth input and agency. The significance of co- and re-construction in this space was particularly related to movement as we shifted across related spaces and learned from those shifts.

During the first FNW session, I took time to reiterate what I saw as the open and multiple purposes of FNW, this time extending types of writing mentioned to include more personal forms and broadening what could be considered as participating in the FNW writing space. In the first field note I composed following our inaugural FNW session, I described this (re)-introduction—an introduction that was new for all but contained some repetition for those attending FNW who were campers. In this later framing, I said the following about

how Friday Night Writes was kind of just what the students wanted to make of it, that it was you know, casual. People could come late; they could leave early. But it was up to them if they had something for school they wanted to work on or college or high school admission stuff they wanted to work on or if they had just personal things they were writing—whatever they wanted to share and get some feedback on, or if they kind of just wanted to come hang out and talk about ideas. (Observation, September 14, 2018)

Truly taking into account multiple writing purposes beyond those connected solely to school, purposes like “personal things they were writing,” required me to relatedly expand the forms of participation that FNW was open to, as I did after speaking with Jasmine about her “invisible” ways of engaging in and with W4C. My later conceptualization of FNW, then, emerged from reflecting with campers about their experiences in that writing community and in W4C and using what they shared with me as a form of forward reconstruction and transformation in FNW.

As shown in the above descriptions of FNW I offered to students, FNW sat in shifting relationships with school contexts—also similar to the camp before it and W4C before and concurrently with it. Given its PhilWP sponsorship, FNW was housed in the same building as the PhilWP office, which means that it was located on Penn’s campus in a GSE building. Students often literally moved directly from their middle and high schools to the university setting. FNW took place at 4:30 p.m. every other Friday beginning in mid-September, and some students had significant geographical distances to travel and/or distances that took long amounts of time to navigate via public transportation. These points bring together the physical and temporal with broader forms of movement across the in- and out-of-school as, upon arrival, students worked on various writing assignments and projects. Some were tied to their secondary schools, like class essays and college applications, while others emerged from more student-centered goals around writing, like sharing a play written out of school or creating a piece of art for an out-of-school art course. Still other student writing and reasons for attendance were connected to a different PhilWP-based purpose and goal, that of entering their work in the aforementioned

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. In the Philadelphia region of the writing contest, PhilWP and Penn GSE are integral partners and sponsors, with the former taking on the work of securing and training adjudicators for the student writing entries, and many of those judges are students from Penn GSE. I had been an adjudicator in multiple years past, as had other adult mentors in the space.

In these ways, students' purposes and goals for attending any single session of FNW shifted and crossed multiple school contexts as well as out-of-school contexts. And intertwined in these movements were multiplicitous, interrelated relationships with organizations as well as peers and mentors and each's varied purposes, goals, and prior experiences.

As not only one of the adults/mentors in the FNW space but the primary facilitator connected to the supporting organization—I had chosen the session dates, liaised with PhilWP administrators, etc.—my purposes and goals for the space were particularly impactful. I simultaneously drew upon these twice-monthly, cross-school meetings as a space to share and discuss with the students from the journalism summer writing program my data and tentative, evolving findings as they emerged. Through this sharing of my research, I drew on my original participatory framing of the study to extend co-researcher roles to students, again centering their experiences and drawing on their voices in interpreting the data we collaboratively gathered. However, the impetus of doing this was my individual goals for the research study, as guided by student feedback—just as the students' goals for attending and participating in FNW were individual as based on varied overarching and bi-weekly aims and needs and as guided by relationships with me and

adult mentors in the space. My purposes remained relatively static, so it was the students' movements across in- and out-of-school contexts and purposes, genres, mediums, modes, and more that contributed most strongly to FNW as a liminal writing space in its emergent unfolding session to session.

The shifting nature of FNW, as constituted by multiplicitous individual purposes and relationships, also meant that I was continually reconstructing how FNW should unfold with my journalism students in particular and how FNW did or did not relate to that initial participatory framing that I envisioned and shared with those students. FNW was in a constant state of co- and re-construction, which was challenging in terms of my facilitator role, the participatory framing I was still trying to hold on to, and the student voices I wished to center and amplify through collaborative work. I reflected on these issues around the contingent nature of FNW in a field note I composed after the third FNW session, which was right in the middle of the program's seven total dates.

I'm having a hard time knowing how to use these meetings. In terms of my data for my dissertation, it's becoming pretty clear that some collaborative kind of action project is probably not going to happen...But...I have a lot of data, and the students have said really cool and interesting things. And so, maybe part of my dissertation is like, how do you do a participatory project as, like, as the practitioner, you know, what are the challenges? And actually doing a participatory project...what happens when you frame something as participatory but it doesn't, you know, get taken up that way? Why doesn't it and what makes some things participatory and not others? (Observation, October 12, 2018)

In this field note excerpt, my multiple purposes as in tension become clear: engaging in my research project, facilitating a collaborative action project characteristic of YPAR framing, and centering students' voices. While FNW as a liminal space made room for all these elements to be possible, that does not mean that all emerged for or with the students as

equally important or interesting or even at all. By beginning to ask in this field note questions about what the relationship between FNW and participatory research even was, I started to surface here how liminal spaces bring forth role tensions within adult/mentor and youth/student collaboration, an important aspect across all of our liminal spaces that will be discussed in depth in Chapter Five.

Even amidst all these uncertainties—shifting purposes across participants and contingencies in implementation and unfolding—FNW consistently retained and projected a strong sense of coherence around shared appreciations for and goals in writing, a core aspect of the liminalities in and across our program spaces. As discussed earlier, writing and working on writing came to be even more broadly construed in the FNW space thanks to student input on prior program space experiences. The result was an emergent, fluid space that functioned in many ways like a writing affinity space (Gee, 2004) where students and adults alike simultaneously pursued their own goals but did so together and did so in multiple ways and in multiple relationships across the weeks of the FNW program and beyond.

The Liminal Roles of Writing Coaches. Multiple relationships were a particular feature of FNW. As mentioned in the above section, a broader swath of students from the city and surrounding local area attended—in addition to just the journalism camp students. Similarly, more adult mentors came in and out of FNW and its bi-weekly sessions. While I was the organizer and primary facilitator, there was another doctoral student, Isaac, who consistently attended and worked with the students, in particular one student who had attended his separate PhilWP camp on humor writing. A key feature of FNW was also its

connection to Penn GSE master's students, as I was acting as a teaching assistant (TA) and field site coordinator for a Reading/Writing/Literacy (R/W/L) master's course and offered FNW as a field site for the master's students in that course. A range of about three to five master's students attended as "writing coaches" on any given FNW session. This writing coach role was prearranged prior to the start of FNW, and it again shows an extension of the networks of relationships and individual and collective goals people engaged in through FNW.

In addition to these master's students, two undergraduate students, Natalie and Jen, came into the space during our first FNW session. They did so without having been expressly "invited" to attend and contribute in the same ways that the master's students had been; this highlights their own purposes and goals for coming into the FNW space and the increasingly expansive network of relationships that came to undergird and (re-)build FNW session by session. Natalie and Jen shared with me that they had heard about FNW through PhilWP advertisements of the program and had become interested as a result of their own creative writing endeavors and their teaching aspirations. Both were Penn undergraduate sophomores studying comparative literature and affiliated with a student program similar to FNW in a creative writing-focused space on campus. They saw FNW as a way to gain experience working with youth prior to student teaching and to do so in a space with a mix of student ages and grades so as to better understand what student subset they might best fit with in their educator futures. All of these more logistical details of Natalie and Jen joining FNW are important to highlight because they show FNW as a permeable, liminal writing space including relationships across student ages and

affiliations and open, emerging roles around who and what constituted an adult/mentor in the space.

In their roles as adults/mentors, Natalie and Jen were reminiscent of Gloria, the college student who was editor-in-chief of her university newspaper and who the students connected with as a result of her age proximity. Natalie and Jen, though, were the ones to first draw on this temporal connection in speaking to the FNW students whereas Gloria never made specific mention of it. During each session of FNW, both adults and students in attendance (re-)introduced themselves briefly, an intentional program design choice I had made based on the openness of the space in terms of who attended when and from where—attendance could and did vary each week. During one of the FNW sessions that Natalie and Jen were present for, Natalie positioned herself as almost the same age as some of the upperclassmen high school students and as particularly suited to work on college admissions essays as a result. Natalie stated, “So I’ve just submitted admissions essays recently, so I could help with that” (Observation, October 26, 2018).

And “help with that” is precisely what she did, spending significant amounts of time each session she attended working with Katerina, a high school junior who consistently drew on FNW as a space to draft and revise college admissions essays. Katerina came to all seven FNW sessions, sometimes working independently on putting together an essay and sometimes sharing her progress with adults/mentors in the space, most notably Natalie. In a field note from the very first FNW session, I commented on this developing adult/mentor and youth/student relationship as brought together by Natalie’s age and underclassmen, undergraduate student status:

And then towards the end [of the FNW session], about 15 minutes left, I went and checked in with Katerina. One of the undergraduate students [Natalie] had really been working closely with her. I feel like this is a good match because, she's, you know, much more close to the college application stage. She just did it. Katerina told me she was working on her common application essay. (Observation, September 14, 2018)

As with Gloria, it was a more physical or temporal connection that led to a strong bond between Katerina and Natalie around what is often considered an age-specific writing task, particularly in secondary school settings: college application essays. But, I had expressly invited Gloria to the journalism summer writing camp based on what I understood of her experiences as a student journalist and because she still fit within that role of student journalist despite not being a secondary student. Natalie, however, came to FNW on her own because she saw FNW for the affinity space that it was and was continually re-becoming: a place where writers across ages—with students from elementary school through doctoral studies in attendance—could come together to write, talk about writing, and/or give feedback on writing as based on their own needs and wants. Proximities and positions like Natalie's in relation to Katerina's were able to emerge in the liminal space of FNW at the same time as they constituted it and shifted across it week to week in relationship to other contexts both within this writing program and beyond.

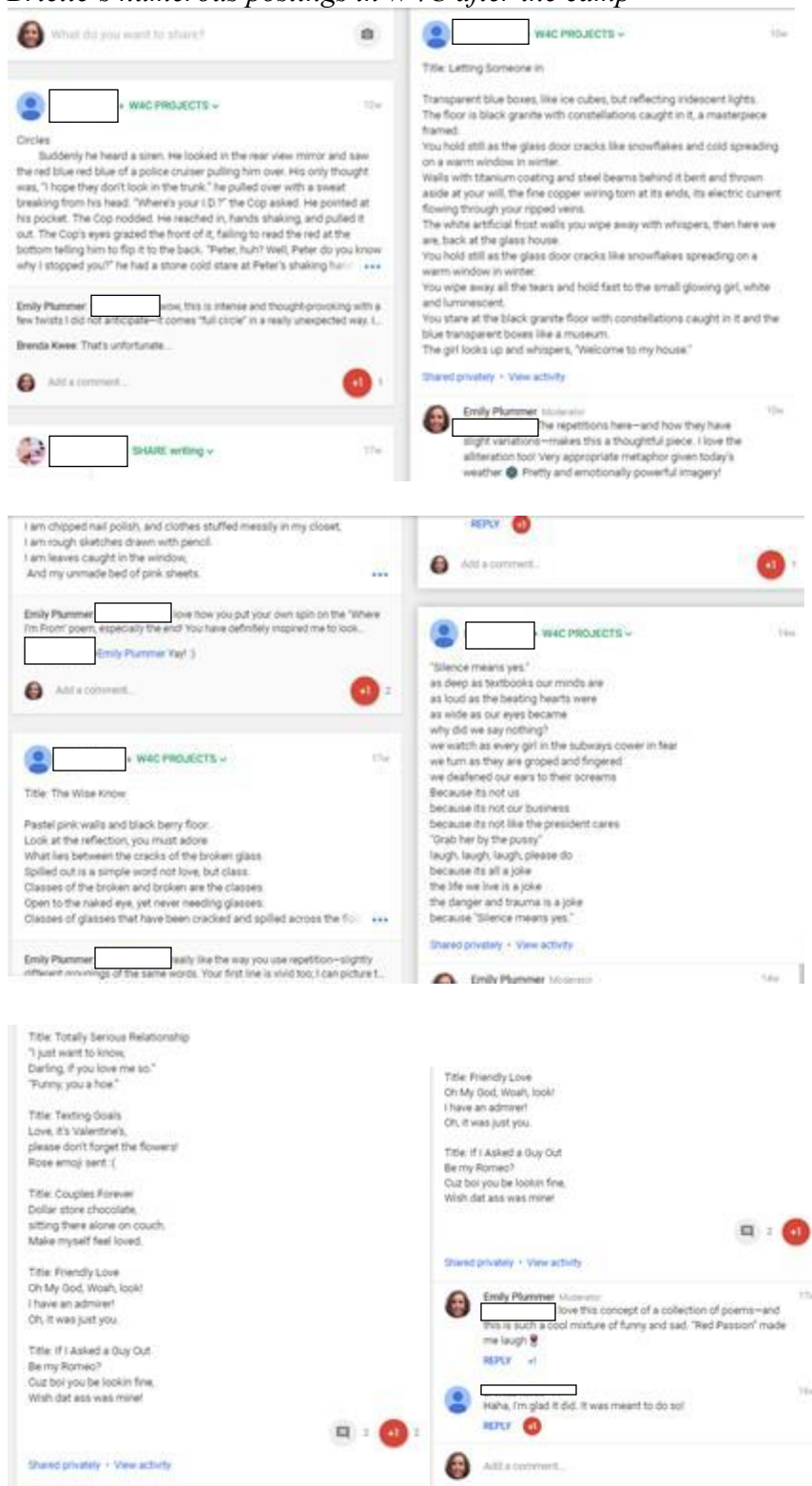
Liminalities in Relationships Across All Spaces

The purpose of looking at each space separately was to gain a fuller picture of the intricacies of the individual spaces themselves, all of which contributed to the overall program further exhibiting liminalities through movements across its multiple, interwoven writing spaces. In speaking with students about their experiences co-constructing within

and navigating amongst these varied contexts as they unfolded, these movements—across mediums and genres, purposes, relationships, and the spaces themselves—emerged as critical for understanding how to create together writing spaces that are both individually productive and communal. We drew on familiar, in-school structures in doing this as well as pushed back against them, and we also drew on physical and temporal aspects of the spaces individually and together to better position ourselves as writers and communities of writers.

As alluded to throughout the discussions of each space, the individual contexts built upon one another in time and in sequence but even more so through the multiplicities of mentors and relationships within and across each. For instance, while W4C remained strongly tied to the journalism summer writing camp in which it was introduced, its purpose shifted from that of students completing “assigned” writing prompts I offered students during the camp to students sharing pieces of writing they created unconnected to the camp or FNW. Brielle, for example, emerged as a prolific writer within W4C only after the camp. Within the more journalism-centered portion of the program, she was direct in sharing with me during interviews that she “did not like the task” (Brielle, personal communication, August 16, 2018) set out for her in W4C during the camp. In fact, Brielle did not post once during the camp. But after the camp—and notably after numerous discussions about W4C with me and her peers during the camp—she found W4C on her own as a digital community within which to share her creative writing. See Figure 4.1 below for screenshots of Brielle’s numerous postings; what is shown is not exhaustive but is indicative of her post-camp participation in W4C.

Figure 4.1
Brielle's numerous postings in W4C after the camp



The volume of her post-camp postings, as represented by the samples above, is perhaps all the more notable given that Brielle did not attend a single FNW session; W4C remained her connection and her ongoing relationship to our overall program and its participants, one that she reconstructed out of a W4C premise she originally disliked. Brielle's participation shifted based on her own preferences and goals for writing and sharing writing but remained tied to collaborative structures from the camp and further connected to later parts of the program she was not physically present for too. These movements were multiplicitous and multi-directional but cohere around an appreciation for and need to engage in and share out writing—as did all three spaces in our program.

It is in these liminal spaces and in collaboratively shifting within and across them together that we were able to directly discuss affordances, differences, and tensions between multiple writing contexts and learn from often student-led raisings as we reconstructed current spaces and looked forward to the co- and re-construction of future spaces. Underlying all such discussions of co- and re-construction were interplays between adults/youth and educators/students. Our individual and collective intentions and writings moved across “school-like” contexts largely initiated by adults/educators (mostly me) but ultimately shifted and changed by the students' varied forms of participation and what they shared about them. It is through centering the latter—youth agency and input—that the spaces continually emerged and re-emerged as liminal.

Learning *from* the Liminality

While I acted intentionally in crafting each of these spaces—and the overall writing program—as liminal, the students and other adults were also intentional in their

movements, practices, and relationships individually and with one another. I aimed for liminality in order to first open these writing spaces for youth agency and input—and then to learn from and with youth as we progressed through the program and across its contexts. Co- and re-construction emerged from intertwining my goals with students' own multiple purposes and aims for participating in the program—our multiple ways of participating and

our multiple relationships with one another as we did so. At the core of those relationships—and at the center of framing this work as participatory and grappling with what that looked like for us as adults and youth in our liminal spaces in actuality—was a shared affinity for writing, one that emerged most prominently in our final space of FNW.

It continues to be important to highlight this centering around writing because writing is, in many ways, liminal itself, as it crosses physical boundaries of time and space and varies across authors and audiences in its emergence, forms, and uptake. Unpacking all of these—how we wish to write, what a genre means to us, why we write, where we write, how writing can affect change—became possible in liminal spaces like ours where

metacommunicative awareness of our choices around writing conventions could be meaningfully paired with attention to writing as a living social practice with impact. This critical work was contingent and, at times, discomforting work that necessitated letting the power asymmetries and uncertainties across roles not only surface but be a productive force for transforming the types of writing spaces we fostered as educators and students. This

reminds of the underlying tensions around my conceptualizations as the adult/mentor forming and facilitating these spaces as they intersected with other adults/mentors and with the students whose voices we all wished to amplify—and to learn from in the processes.

Such understandings of liminality and its importance for co- and re-constructing writing spaces also bring us back to Gutiérrez (2008) in her push toward transformation as the goal for liminal spaces: “Clearly, this process of transformation is anything but harmonious, and it is the inherent continuities and discontinuities among individual and environment and the larger system that, in part, I have been attempting to account for” (p. 153). I now turn in Chapter Five toward even closer examinations of the tensions that emerged in and from learning and transforming together in our liminal writing spaces.

Chapter Five: Navigating Productive Tension

As discussed in Chapter Four, shifting within and across the multiple spaces of this writing program—the journalism summer camp, W4C, FNW, and other student-created contexts that emerged—involved navigating the convergences between my conception and implementation of the cross-context program and the students’ embodiment of the spaces and their perceptions of and goals around participation. In these individual and collective navigations, three tensions (outlined below) consistently emerged around these interplays between my assumptions, the power asymmetries across adults and youth as co-participants, and the choices and contingencies in the liminal spaces and as part of understanding and engaging in participatory research. These tensions proved productive in that the students and I discussed and explored them, gaining valuable insights into various facets of writing, both individually and in communities. This generative dimension is worth highlighting because a shared affinity for writing and its potential to impact change in our own and others’ lives is what drove most of our work and our relationship-building.

In many ways, all three tensions involved the ways in- and out-of-school literacy learning spaces are so often dichotomized by both practitioners and learners. The first of these tensions coheres around how the students and I moved our writing practices across in-school and out-of-school contexts and how we understood those contexts in relationship to one another and to our spaces. The second tension focuses on how those involved with this journalism program navigated their roles—as adults/educators and as youth/students—in these liminal spaces where participation and boundaries were more fluid. The third tension highlights how all involved—adults/educators and youth/students—worked

together to understand what engaging in participatory research ultimately meant or could mean.

Each of these tensions will now be explored in turn, with the ultimate goal of learning to draw on discomforts as sources of open discussion and from which to better understand how, when, and why we participate (or not) as writers and researchers individually and together—an expanded metacommunicative awareness. Across all three of this chapter’s focused-on tensions, then, emerges the need to occupy together *with* youth the uncertainties of co-constructing a liminal writing space: allowing tensions and challenges to surface as a result of students’ own motivations and choices and then directly unpacking such tensions together through shared and ongoing discussions. These are transformations of research and relationships that, in turn, transform literacy learning and writing.

Productive Tension One: Moving Across “In-School” and “Out-of-School” Practices

The spaces of this writing program—the camp held in a community media center, the online writing community within a social network, and the in-person writing community held at the university I am affiliated with—were “school-like” but not tied directly to students’ own school spaces. In these in-between or “extra-school” spaces, writing practices, terms, and mentors were sometimes school-like, sometimes not-school like, and sometimes both at once. In navigating these interplays, the students often discussed the spaces of the program as in opposition to school. Students did this dichotomizing especially in relation to writing and the “personal”—what students most wished to use their voices to compose about and why—as noted when Serena explained

that “most schools don’t really...let you talk. You know...they don’t actually let you express” (Serena, personal communication, October 12, 2018). In the sorts of open dialogues mentioned earlier, the students and I (and other adults/mentors) explored this broad-level dichotomization in ways that broke it down such that the students and I could conceptualize in- and out-of-school contexts as more permeable and writing practices as not bound to each but rather as useable and shiftable across each space and other spaces in line with students’ purposes and purposeful choices.

School Structures in Extra-School Spaces

What can be seen in Serena’s brief statement above is that she does not view school as a space in which she should or even can “talk,” let alone write, in ways or about topics she is most comfortable or feels are most necessary. This sense of school as sealed off is even more so true for writing because writing in school spaces carries additional burdens like educators’ and/or policymakers’ expectations and assessments. It is for these reasons that Serena went on to state that a summer writing camp should be like school in organization only, namely presenting and reviewing a detailed syllabus.

Even this, however, Serena felt should unfold differently than she often sees it occurring in schools, where a teacher’s syllabus or assignment sheet are generally explained and reviewed at the immediate outset of a class. During our first day of the journalism camp, I, as the educator-facilitator, did do something very similar. Although the syllabus overview was not the very first thing we did with our time together, it was a shortly second task after an opening icebreaker. When annotating with me the summer camp syllabus during our third FNW session, Serena detailed how a syllabus should instead be

offered to and looked at with students only after the end of their first day together. By moving the overview to the end of the first day of camp, “it’s not like the first thing you’re going over the whole week, but you’re doing it after so that you’ve already experienced it. But you’ve also sort of experienced what you’re going to be doing” (Serena, personal communication, October 12, 2018). Here Serena highlights how structures she associates with school—a syllabus or longer-term overview—are important and useful in out-of-school spaces as well. But, she re-envisioned their delivery across both contexts in ways that highlight how students are already participants in their writing spaces, rather than in ways that immediately dictate how the writing spaces will unfold before students have had any opportunities to participate. Such an emphasis on youth agency by Serena—with students shaping the agenda collaboratively alongside the educator—emphasize ways that structures of our camp did, and could further, trouble how youth are often positioned as recipients of writing activities and not as participants and co-constructors of such activities. These insights surfaced only through direct discussions with Serena—discussions in which she also made more fluid boundaries between in- and out-of-school writing spaces, as she indicated her advice around educators’ agendas applied to our camp, to classrooms, and to other learning contexts as well.

Katy similarly highlighted the importance of a “school schedule” in our out-of-school writing space. But, Katy went further to emphasize the usefulness of drawing on other school structures, like “do-nows,” and school writing terminology, like “evidence,” “argument,” and “claim.” Katy said all of these were helpful as brainstorming tools both during the camp and in her school English classes (Personal communication, November 9,

2018). Where Katy made an important distinction between her experiences with these school structures in our out-of-school writing program was around choice: “but then I chose my topic...I put my own thoughts into it without...having a guideline of how to do it. So at school, even if you get to choose your topic, there’s usually more like rules or something” (Personal communication, November 9, 2018). Much like Serena, Katy shows how our writing program and its spaces allowed students and adults/mentors, myself included, to explore tensions between structures and choices, as Katy helped to articulate that structures are not inherently negative features of writing spaces just as choices are not inherently positive features. Katy found the “in-betweenness” of our camp useful in that it drew on school structures that she and other students found effective in generating ideas for a topic and presenting it clearly and/or persuasively (i.e., argument, evidence, claim) but with room for far greater freedom in what kinds of topics they wanted to write about and how. Katy points to the importance of working with students to determine the balance in a given writing space between norms and expectations and choices so that students’ motivations can dictate the writing more fully—metacommunicative awareness that critically attends to the writing contexts as well.

Feedback Forms Across Contexts

How and why students engaged in giving and receiving feedback on their writing also emerged in relation to ideas about choices and motivations across contexts. We collectively found that grounding feedback in multiplicities—of forms, sources, and times—allowed students to feel senses of freedom as individual writers and as writers in a community of participants. Across all three contexts of the writing program, students were

offered multiple sources of feedback that included but extended beyond me as the one organizing and delivering the writing activities. During the camp, mentors offered students feedback on their articles and on their radio show broadcast. During FNW, students had undergraduate and graduate student “writing coaches” to share and engage in discussion with about their writing. In fact, for many of the students, just being part of these writing communities—even apart from the direct feedback of others—was a powerful form of feedback on their writing. Serena brought this to the fore when she reflected on how “we got to see other people’s writing and see how we could, like, write like that but still have our own style” (Personal communication, October 12, 2018). Viewing our writing program as made of spaces to share writing of various forms and styles not only contributed to a sense of community but also to productive feedback, as students could choose to try out what they saw or heard without the immediate constraints of assessment.

Serena and Katy both again referenced boundaries between in-school and out-of-school contexts as sources of tension when discussing writing feedback, centering on cumulative assessment. Serena described the journalism summer writing camp as a participatory space because feedback was ongoing, student-centered, and non-directive or evaluative, which she contrasted with her classroom experiences.

Because like you actually like, gave us tips...my teacher now she just tells us to write stuff. And then she edits it and then that would be our grade later on, but...you were helping us edit while we were still working, which was, like, a lot easier. (Personal communication, October 12, 2018)

In framing feedback on writing as “tips”—as something one writer might give to another or one writer might take away from what another has said or done in their piece—students

like Serena are able to understand themselves as participants in a communal, collaborative writing process at the same time as they engage as individual writers.

Similarly, Katy emphasized the process of writing and revising in school as based upon the need to write a piece in ways educators expect. Katy went so far as to say, “In school, I want to do it their way because I think their way is the right way” (Personal communication, November 9, 2018). This sense of a singular “right” way to engage in writing is in sharp contrast to our writing spaces, in particular the camp where multiple mentors presented multiple means of engaging with the same genre: journalism. In this way, multiplicitous understandings of genre, self, and space made room for forms of feedback that were generative because they were multiple. In exploring *with* students like Serena and Katy how they understood different contexts for writing relevant in their lives (namely in-school and out-of-school), we were able to arrive at more fluid understandings of writing spaces through approaches applicable and generative across them, like collaborative agenda and norm creation; multiple, ongoing, and conversational forms of feedback; and more expansive, practice-based understandings of genres.

Homework in Out-of-School Spaces

It is important to reiterate here the point that Katy surfaced earlier about neither choice nor structure as inherently beneficial to writing or a writing space; rather, determining what “works” for a writer and a community of writers requires open dialogue about assumptions behind and reasons for structures, choices, and participation with and in a writing space. This need to engage in collaborative discussions and reconstructions

with students as a space is unfolding became clear around my initial approach to W4C as educator-facilitator and students' lack of uptake and response to that approach.

To initiate interest in the W4C community and begin to build comfort around posting there, each day of the camp syllabus included an "On Assignment" writing prompt for students to consider and respond to by posting. As the educator-facilitator of the camp experience, I chose "On Assignment" to flag the prompts because of its relation to journalistic terminology for working on a new story assigned by an editor and because of its potential to "soften" the prompts' relation to "homework" as a school-based term. In introducing the "On Assignment" prompts, I made frequent mention that students could respond to them at any point, including during the camp and not just at home.

However, it became increasingly clear that students were not taking up the W4C community as a place to reflect on these "On Assignment" prompts or as a space to connect with one another and/or with other adolescent writers in the community more broadly. As such, uptake of the W4C community became a frequent point of discussion between students and me, and students consistently referred to W4C as feeling too much like in-school "homework," which, as Brielle emphasized, meant the "On Assignment" prompts were simply "tasks" rather than opportunities for personal reflection and connection. Brielle explained her lack of participation in W4C:

Personally, I didn't like the task, right? Because I felt like W4C would be something like the title itself, which sounds like, you know, something personal. So I feel like the questions were too narrow, okay. So maybe it's gotta be like broader...I think, like, if you were to center it around actually writing...then the W4C section, it could be more of like, a creative writing spot. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

In her response to my question about the collective lack of participation in W4C, Brielle made both targeted points about the types of writing prompts I had provided as well as broader points about overly narrow conceptions of journalistic writing. In doing so, Brielle emphasized how this aspect of our syllabus that I had created as a means of guiding our collaborative creation of an unfolding liminal space was out of touch with how I had framed that effort verbally. What was meant as an additional means of moving their pieces of news article writing across contexts and forms was instead interpreted as a directive with little to no opportunities for the personal, whether through digital dialogue with peers or self-choice about what other forms of “creative writing” they might have preferred to engage in within W4C in relation to journalism (or perhaps not in relation to it).

Maisha echoed these sentiments around expanding the forms through which students were initially asked to respond in W4C. She stated that in regard to posting in W4C,

I think that people felt like it was more like homework; that’s probably why they didn’t do it. So I think if it was more like, not necessarily writing—just talking about issues in journalism. Or like sending a voice recording...I think they would probably enjoy it. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Maisha extends Brielle’s suggestions about “creative writing” to include particular ways that students could participate beyond even “writing,” calling forth notions of a social media composing form—“just talking” to one another. I had intended for my “On Assignment” writing prompts to invoke the notion of “homework” but with the nuances afforded by our liminal space and its unfolding co-construction. However, as Maisha, Brielle, and others indicated, the only true choice students had in terms of participating in W4C was whether or not to do it, as I had dictated the initial “how.”

As educator-facilitator, I also grappled with this W4C challenge on an ongoing basis, as in my final camp field note, when I referenced Brielle's comments about the online community:

There seemed to be pretty strong agreement that W4C, it felt like homework, not somewhere that the students could connect. But I was talking to Katy and Brielle about it; I said I was afraid that if I didn't make it a homework assignment that no one would do anything. So I don't know. I don't know what the balance is. (Observation, personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Students chose not to participate in W4C because I had called upon "homework" as the framing for encouraging participation. In terms of "what the balance is" between drawing upon school structures that students may find useful in out-of-school spaces, this continually presented as a challenge for me as educator-facilitator and a challenge for the students. But, it was one better understood after we had direct discussions about it together—ones that centered student input.

Serena demonstrated this difficult-to-find balance when she noted the duality of her experience in our liminal writing spaces. She explained how choice across the program's structures—topics, feedback forms, participation—was actually a challenge in comparison to school structures she is more familiar with that do not emphasize choice.

That's also what I really like about this because like we actually got to choose stuff that we wanted to do. And it was fun. But sometimes I didn't really know what I wanted to do because in school they always tell us what to do and then, like, you know what you're doing. (Personal communication, October 12, 2018)

As Serena calls forth with her words around "know[ing] what you're doing" when writing, structure can be generative—although this was not the case with the "On Assignment" structure I had attempted to put in place with W4C. If, when, and how choices and/or structures are generative for writers is space-bound and particular to participants, which is

why the sorts of unpacking conversations the students and I had were so critical. Through our open discussions, we arrived at new understandings of our own and others' writing practices and of what can constitute a productive and welcoming writing space.

Liminal spaces are by their very nature contingent and, at times, uncomfortable. But, there is productivity for both adults/educators and youth/students in exploring these tensions and discomforts as a way of more fully understanding writing as both an individual and part of a collaborative, however, as seen in the above explorations of organizing a writing environment, giving and getting feedback in a writing environment, and prompting but not stifling or preventing fuller participation in an online writing community.

Productive Tension Two: Negotiating Roles and Perspectives as Adults/Mentors and Youth/Students

As alluded to earlier, surfacing productive and more permeable understandings of in- and out-of-school writing practices undergirds this second productive tension as well: negotiating what it means to be an adult/educator and a youth/student—both individually and in collaboration with others—in a liminal writing space. Students drew on their more familiar learning experiences as students in schools, and I also drew on my experiences as a teacher and facilitator in approaching the creation and unfolding of our camp, digital, and affinity spaces. That I organized this program around the YPAR principle of mentorship through social scientists (Mirra, Garcia & Morrell, 2016) also contributed to this second tension, particularly in the type and number of additional adult mentors a camp and an affinity space made accessible. In this section, I will further examine how these people—in particular the “mentors” of the summer camp and FNW in collaboration *with* the students—surfaced power asymmetries that we then attempted to unpack and learn from

together. Critically engaging with adult/youth tensions was both an affordance and a constituting element of our liminal spaces, as we attempted to understand together how educators and students can write and learn about writing in ways that explore rather than ignore discomforts and use them to build stronger writing communities and more inclusive writing practices.

Working with Adults/Mentors around Writing in Schools

Although the students and the camp mentors were engaging in an “extra-school” space, they surfaced together issues around writing that moved across both in- and out-of-school contexts in important ways. One such mentor from the journalism summer writing camp who discussed with students how writing, power, and relationships can become intertwined across contexts was Gloria, whose “in-between” role as editor-in-chief of a local university’s newspaper was discussed in Chapter Four as well. Gloria spoke at length with the campers about tensions she experienced with her former high school principal when she used her high school newspaper as a space to agitate for changing the school’s racist sports mascot. This situation drew widespread local and national attention, for which Gloria appeared on ESPN—among other major media outlets—and for which her principal was lambasted. Gloria explained how she navigated this in-school tension as a student journalist:

With the principal though it wasn’t too bad...I was always very clear that I was being respectful, but I was right. That was just like my approach to it...We were on good terms, and still like we’re friends on Facebook...I was very coming from the journalism standpoint...like...this is just right. And I have the right to do it as well. I stuck with that...and it worked out really well for me. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

As she shared this, Gloria navigated dual roles as both a student journalist—she worked for a university newspaper—and an adult professional journalist, the latter given her vast experience with challenging social issues across scales and in tensions with adult mentors. She emphasized journalism as means to work toward change and also a sort of liminal space of its own, one where she could push back against adults in schools in “respectful” ways on issues that mattered to her and to other students and beyond, given the national attention Gloria’s work drew.

Gloria’s candid discussion of challenging her in-school context inspired students in the camp to pose questions about their own school contexts in relation to their journalistic writing. Katy asked for advice about navigating a similar situation in her own school around unfair funding allocations for sports teams based on gender, an issue Katy felt personally passionate about given her leadership role on her high school’s soccer team. Katy initiated her own question for Gloria, first by explaining in more depth how the male basketball team at her high school received new uniforms and equipment directly from their coach while the female soccer team received nothing and continued to wear and use old items. Katy then asked, “So how would I go about that? Because I don’t want to seem, not like ignorant, but...biased?” (Katy, personal communication, August 16, 2018). Following Gloria’s discussion of challenges in working with (and against) her principal, Katy raised questions about anticipated power struggles in her own context. With her question, Katy drew a connection about navigating adult/student relationships in her high school to this out-of-school mentor, to the genre of journalism, and to her personal experiences and feelings. Through these interrelations between Katy as a student with her

own experiences and goals in her school (and out as well) and Gloria as a mentor in the journalism summer writing camp space, we all engaged in a collective conversation about power, push back, and the personal. This was a discussion from which we all learned individually and collectively through open dialogue across roles and contexts that centered students' wonderings and aims as writers and activists.

Working with Out-of-School Mentors in Liminal Spaces and Roles

As seen with Gloria, our liminal camp writing space afforded explorations of tensions with school-based authority figures and with the personal and the social in journalism. However, it is important to state and to explore that tensions were also experienced directly *with* the very adults serving as mentors during the camp experience. I will focus here on two such tensions between students in the summer writing camp and the adults I had invited to participate with us as “mentors” for the students, in line with the YPAR framing of the broader writing program (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). These tensions center around how the mentors did or did not foster participation with the students, which further pushed me to reflect on my role as educator-facilitator and as the one who initially conceptualized this study’s participatory framing and brought in these mentors.

Delilah. The first of these tensions with the out-of-school mentors in the journalism summer writing camp also returns to the interplay between the in- and out-of-school, as both Serena and Ramona took issue with how a journalistic mentor, Delilah, positioned them and topics important to them. Serena described her communication with this mentor, Delilah, as “intense” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018), referring to how Delilah had ultimately centered her presentation on an instance in Serena’s school involving a

handgun found in a teacher's belongings within a classroom. Serena offered this instance only after direct prompting from Delilah, who had turned to Serena for participation given Serena's front-row seat. I had asked Delilah to visit the camp on the day centered on ethics, which had as its guiding question "What does it mean to be ethical when writing news?". Upon reflection, I believe Delilah's intention was to zero in on a story familiar to students—the one Serena "volunteered" about a gun being found in her school—and to show how through repeated questioning around it, the ethics of how a story is told can and must be interrogated: which details are included, how to determine if something is accurate or "true," from whose perspective is information gathered and why, etc.

In a group interview during the first FNW session that included Serena as well as Ramona, Katy, and Penelope, I tried to offer this potential explanation of Delilah's approach: "Okay, I think she was trying to show how journalists came at things in like, different ways, but I don't know if that came across in how, yeah, kind of how she was questioning everything" (Personal communication, September 14, 2018). That I felt the need to offer such an explanation demonstrates my own grappling with tensions around adult/mentor roles. I felt responsible for students' negative experiences surrounding Delilah's visit, as I was the one who directly invited Delilah to engage with us during the camp. However, I also had felt compelled to make that invitation based upon the prior relationship with the local education newspaper that PhilWP's Philly School Media Network—of which I was a founding member—had fostered and for which Delilah was a long-time staff member. When Serena had first expressed feeling uncomfortable about the "intense" exchange with Delilah, my immediate reaction was an apology: "Yes. She was a

little intense. I feel your pain” (Serena, personal communication, August 16, 2018). Although I had not directly “participated” in the conversation between Delilah and Serena, I had participated in multiple ways from conceptualization of the camp day to selection of Delilah as speaker to my presence and potential lack of action during the exchange, highlighting many tensions I felt around my own role as adult/mentor and Delilah’s role as adult/mentor as well.

Following my apology during this end-of-camp interview, Serena described how she felt silenced by Delilah’s exclusive honing in on Serena’s school gun incident: “I was trying to talk to her about what happened with the guy [the teacher] and my school, and she just kept saying, ‘Is this the gun? No? Okay.’”; Serena was referring to Delilah’s repeated referencing of a gun image from an *Inquirer* article on this school incident. In addition to feeling silenced herself, Serena further explained during that first FNW session follow-up conversation that she also felt her school had been positioned unfairly by Delilah’s exclusive focus:

I mean, like, originally, I didn’t really want to say anything. I didn’t want it to like, seem like my school is, like, bad. It [the gun incident] really wasn’t...something super serious. Yeah. But then she made it seem like everyone was lying in the end and only what she [Delilah] said was the real truth. (Personal communication, September 14, 2018)

Just as I was trying to navigate multiple aspects of my role as educator-facilitator around this situation, Serena also expressed conflicting desires: wanting to remain silent during the in-camp discussion but feeling forced to offer the incident, wanting to remain respectful to the invited mentor and/or to me and to the camp space, and wanting to portray her school context as a positive space rather than a potentially violent one. Serena did explain during

the camp that the gun incident in question involved a teacher whose own personal handgun was found in a gym bag within a classroom. However, Serena felt that explanation—which would have shown her school in a less negative light—was lost in Delilah’s “intense” questioning. That Serena felt comfortable unpacking these tensions in follow-up interviews both during and after the camp speaks to the possibility that we did foster a collaborative, communal, and participatory environment—an important takeaway from an uncomfortable moment. But, we also learned that our community stopped short of including invited mentors like Delilah to the fullest extent possible.

Ramona also participated in the FNW session one follow-up interview in which Delilah and her presentation surfaced, and Ramona concurred with Serena during that group interview that Delilah “...felt a bit harsh” (Ramona, personal communication, September 14, 2018). Ramona went on to explain that “maybe that [perceived harshness in Delilah’s questioning] was a result of, like, not having been super prepared. She [Delilah] was kind of flying on...” (Personal communication, September 14, 2018). Here Ramona validated Serena’s experiences, again speaking to the community built within the program through open discussions of tense moments as individual and collective opportunities to build understanding.

Ramona then expanded on this shared perception in reflecting on her own back-and-forth with Delilah, during which Delilah commented on Ramona’s topic of the “We Count Too” movement in Southwest Philadelphia. Ramona was questioning that day of the camp—and during the camp as a whole, as we all were—why it was that the Parkland students received widespread positive attention and catalyzed national action around gun

violence when youth of color, like local students involved in the “We Count Too” movement, were at best ignored or even demonized. Ramona drew on earlier camp discussions of newsworthiness, to which Delilah responded that acts of violence involving urban youth of color are no longer reported on because their frequency has removed the novelty necessary for newsworthiness. When reflecting on this interchange around newsworthiness and youth of color, Ramona expressed very strong personal feelings toward Delilah and toward the topic.

At that point, I was kind of like, ‘I don’t like you. I so disagree’ ...I mean, I think that someone’s life can’t be something that you just, like, pass off as something that’s like boring or like there’s just another one...if a white person gets shot, like, it’s gonna be on the news. That is news, right?...it’s not fair that that would happen. And then like some people get the media attention, and they’re saying, ‘Oh, but people would be bored if this happened.’ Like, what? Like that makes no sense because I’d be interested. (Personal communication, September 14, 2018).

Ramona intermixed her personal feelings on broad social issues—racism and gun violence amongst youth—and on her narrow topic for the camp newspaper—the “We Count Too” movement—with the words of a mentor Ramona herself conceded was “knowledgeable.” In the moment of the exchange with Delilah, Ramona did not share these negative feelings, similar to Serena out of a desire to maintain cooperation and respect within the shared camp environment for the veteran journalist invited by the educator-facilitator. Recognizing this in conjunction with the candid words Ramona as well as Serena (and others) shared in closing and follow-up interviews and discussions illustrates the multiplicity of experiences and perspectives in a shared writing space and how they often clash in ways that are both challenging and productive. Dialogues such as these highlighted here sharpened students’ personal stances towards issues but also point to the need for more open writing spaces

where conversations between adults and youth across roles can occur in emergent moments and after with the shared goal of understanding how and why we write in relation to power asymmetries.

Vivian. A separate tension that occurred between Brielle and Katy and a different camp mentor also connects to this navigation of participatory elements across roles and relationships in our writing spaces. This tension occurred around a culminating camp experience—the students sharing their research and news articles (in formats of their choosing) on a live radio broadcast that could be seen by parents/guardians, friends and family members, teachers, and regular viewers of the show in both audio and film formats. Vivian, the radio station manager and a host at the local community media center, produced our radio broadcast and become involved in this tension during that broadcast. As a staff member at the community media center, Vivian was another partner of the PhilWP Philly School Media Network. The importance of the broadcast to the camp experience in combination with this reality around prior adult relationships led to strong feelings of disappointment among Brielle and Katy and discomfort by me.

Brielle and Katy were the first to present their work on the “Youth Takeover” episode of the radio show the students co-created with Vivian’s guidance. As described in Chapter Three, the show was organized around topical segments; the students brainstormed how to best place their individual and pair topics into larger groups of approximately three to five students. Brielle and Katy were in the “human rights” group, which ultimately presented first on the air. I highlight their early appearance on the show because it was one

explanation I attempted to use later to help them understand the stilted exchange they had with Vivian, who they felt cut off their efforts to share their news pieces more in depth.

Katy in particular felt she had been silenced and was put off by what she believed was a missed opportunity to share her work, especially as she had chosen to read her dramatic monologue on air. Katy had moved her news article “Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?” into a dramatic monologue. The latter took the perspective of a tree in a Philadelphia park contemplating its own ability to live among trees who look and function differently while people of the city cannot do the same with one another. The creative elements of the monologue and Katy’s choice to share the monologue over the traditional news article in a journalism radio segment made the monologue—and her ultimate inability to share it fully—more emotionally charged. When introducing the monologue on the radio show, Katy began with a broad description of the piece, with some of her reasons for creating it and her proposed solution for the issue of lacking diversity that the piece tackles:

Okay, so today I will do a monologue on how trees are really diverse. Trees live among different trees, as it displays an example of how Philadelphia should be. In this monologue a tree will explain how Philly may appear diverse but it’s actually segregated. In fact the only solution to fix it is to by coming together as a community to attend many fun events or organizations in Philly. (PhillyCAM, 2018)

Katy offered this in response to Vivian’s prompt to “tell everyone what you are going to be talking about today,” thinking she would next be able to read the actual monologue. Instead, Vivian stepped in just after Katy’s introduction, stating, “That was really great. Did you write that yourself?”; Katy felt the only appropriate answer in the moment was a simple “yeah.” In the liminal space of our camp, multiple factors were undergirding that experience in its emergent moment as well as more broadly, contributing to Katy’s

response as the youth/student in the situation. The format of composing and sharing was live and new to Katy, and Vivian was the show's experienced host and an invited mentor.

Almost immediately following the on-air exchange between Katy and Vivian, I was able to have a direct and private—with Brielle also involved—conversation with Katy: a conversation that Katy and Brielle initiated with me about feeling “cut-off.” I reflected on that exchange in the day's field note: “They were really disappointed and wanted me to ask if there will be another opportunity for them to get back on the air to read their monologues. And I never did ask. Vivian was doing the show, and I couldn't” (Observation, August 15, 2018). While I did mention in that same field note that I openly apologized to Katy and Brielle for having had that experience, I did not take action beyond making that statement. I accepted a role of responsibility in having made the mentor-to-youth connection that did not reach the space's goal of amplifying youth voices, but I did not advocate for those youth voices directly. This is an example of role tensions I felt many times throughout the program—uncertainty in how to navigate my role as educator-facilitator, especially in relation to the other adults/mentors.

In a whole group debrief that took place after the conclusion of the full radio show, Katy also openly shared the difficult aspects of her presentation time with her peers. Prior to Katy sharing—which she did when Vivian was no longer in the room—Vivian had entered into our physical space and into our communal conversation about participating in the broadcast. Vivian at one point “apologized” to the students, explaining that many did not talk for as long as she thought they were going to, which was why she asked so many questions: to fill that time. She added that this need to “improvise” can often occur in the

live radio medium. Later when Katy voluntarily reflected on her experience without Vivian present, Katy responded to Vivian's words. I wrote about these exchanges in a field note at this end of this seventh camp day: "And Katy said that she felt like Vivian was really talking about them [she and Brielle] when she mentioned like having to ask a lot of questions but that she didn't feel comfortable saying anything" (Observation, August 15, 2018). For many reasons related to the liminal—in particular here the uncertainty of how to navigate relationships between adults/mentors and youth/students in the space—Katy was unsure what to do about the exchange and about sharing her monologue, which she still wanted the opportunity to do. The connection forged between Vivian as a mentor and the students in the summer camp did bring forth positive opportunities for both parties: the interesting segment for Vivian's radio show. However, that opportunity's existence, which was an aspect of building the Philly School Media Network partnership, did not make it an inherently or in actuality positive experience for all who participated. Unpacking these power asymmetries and emergent relational contingencies directly with students was key, however, in making these tensions productive junctures for both the students and I to learn from and shift future writing spaces we were collaborating in together.

In fact, when I interviewed Katy and Brielle the day after the broadcast—the last day of the camp—they advocated for just that as the solution to the Vivian situation: more communication and collaboration. Brielle explained as follows:

I think the way we could have done that better is if we, like, talked to Vivian beforehand to be more prepared, not entirely for everything we're going to say but...just like a quick runthrough of what might happen...read the first line of like, her [Katy's] monologue, last line of her monologue, and then like how we're going to transition to my article. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Brielle highlights a mismatch in expectations between she and Katy as youth/students less familiar with sharing writing via live radio and Vivian, for whom preparation around this show was a low priority—due to her extensive experience and the casual, conversational tone she has fostered within her show as a whole. However, it is also important to consider that Vivian felt it was a greater part of my role as educator-facilitator of the entire camp experience to ensure that students felt ready to speak for a certain amount of time and with the fluency needed for a radio interview segment; this is despite the fact that I am not a broadcast journalist and was in many ways relying on Vivian’s role as mentor to the students to fill these needs.

The students and I did feel prepared for the students to share their written work and the research behind it from the first six days of the camp, but the students indicated here that they did not feel adequately prepared to work *with Vivian*. Katy backed this up when she added to Brielle’s above words; Katy said,

Vivian didn’t expect us to go through it [Katy’s whole monologue and Brielle’s full article] because she said there was a lot of pauses, but like she interrupted. And I was going to say something next, but it was like, ugh, okay...because we had like a whole skit. Brielle was going to, like, ask questions and talk back. Yeah, we got ready. We were prepared. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Just as I could not see these mismatches in expectations and actions until stepping back to reflect on the incident, Katy did not feel comfortable in the emergent moment of the on-air exchange directly asking for the opportunity to share her monologue—an opportunity she felt she had already prepped for and that had already been secured. Both she and Brielle make clear that the ongoing collaborative environment we had aimed to establish in the liminal space had not been extended enough to include Vivian in effective and meaningful

ways for all involved, similar to what was discussed with the other mentor, Delilah. Both highlight a need to more intentionally engage in relationship-building with mentors at multiple stages of the composing process, not just close to the point of “publication.”

Collective Experiences of Individual Tensions

In addition to arguing for more open dialogue across adult/mentors and youth/students in liminal writing spaces, it is also important to consider that role tensions such as the one between Katy and Vivian are both individual and collective. Although feelings of disappointment, anger, and mistrust as a result of the dramatic monologue exchange (or lack thereof) were most immediate and personal to Katy, many other campers experienced similar emotions and felt compelled to voice them. During a FNW group discussion between Katy, Penelope, Ramona, and Serena during the first session, Ramona also used the word “interrupted” to describe Vivian in her exchange with Katy. But, Ramona went a step further, extending the curtailing of student voice to a more collective “we” of all campers involved in the show:

Yeah, because she [Vivian] kept interrupting, like, you [Katy], right? Because, like, you know, on the radio you’re like, ‘Oh yeah, I really think that’s cool.’ And then, like, you kind of build on that...Yeah, I think she kind of thought, like, that we weren’t capable. (Personal communication, September 14, 2018)

Ramona draws on the specific instance between Katy and Vivian to make a broader statement about how this adult/mentor positioned the youth/students through her words during the on-air broadcast. In this way, this particular disappointing moment between three people became emblematic of larger power asymmetries in literacy learning contexts that manifest in underestimations of young people’s capabilities—and FNW emerged as space to explore these asymmetries and their impact on literacy learning and participation.

Despite having chosen not to “participate” in the on-air radio broadcast opportunity with Vivian and her show, Serena felt she had become a part of the tension through watching it unfold via live viewing and taking part in its prior planning. Like Ramona, Serena saw Vivian’s questioning as stifling to multiple other show participants as well. During the third FNW session in mid-October, nearly two full months after the camp had ended, Serena even implored me to “talk to Vivian” about the issue. This speaks to the lasting collective experience and impact of tensions with adults/mentors, as did Serena’s words connecting Vivian’s backgrounding of youth voices with what Serena believes she similarly sees in her school contexts, where the perspectives of young people are not valued and spaces for their voices are not fostered. Serena stated the following:

I think maybe she thought that since it was, like, most of our first time on the radio, she’d probably need to help us more. But, like, we’re all...teenagers...you know, mature...you can see that they were trying to say stuff. But like I think she thought that they didn’t really understand or something...People, like, act like they don’t have any idea about what they’re talking about just because they’re teenagers....I think she just didn’t know or thought that we wouldn’t be, like, right, or they wouldn’t be ready to, like, talk by themselves because, like a lot of people at school...most schools don’t really, like, let you talk. You know, like they don’t actually, like, let you express. (Personal communication, October 12, 2018)

Serena not only shifted between in- and out-of-school contexts in exploring this tension, she also called into question how liminal spaces can appear to afford more room for youth voices but in reality operate very similarly to traditional notions of “school” around what is appropriate to discuss, by whom, and when. The ways Serena intermittently used “we” to describe feeling silenced on the radio show is telling given that she chose not to appear on air at all. That tensions with adults/mentors like Vivian are experienced both individually and collectively in the ways Katy, Ramona, and Serena indicated speaks all

the more to the importance of unpacking together power asymmetries in liminal learning spaces across roles and scales.

Productive Tension Three: Figuring Out What Participatory Research Involves, Looks Like, and Could Be

Working with community partners—as also focused on in the second tension through Vivian and her connections to the community media center—is integral to participatory research. However, this third tension arose from reflecting on how my initial conceptions and framing of this cross-context writing program relied heavily on YPAR elements, but students overwhelmingly did not take up these elements. Underlying my ideas in putting together the syllabus and the day-to-day activities of the camp were many problematic assumptions about youth and their relationships with one another and with adults/mentors. These assumptions did not become fully clear until emergent moments of tension arose in the camp—many discussed in this chapter—and were then unpacked *with* students in ways I believe proved productive for both them and me.

In coming to understand that the camp was not YPAR as defined in the research literature (i.e., Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016), I began to form questions about participation more broadly—what counts as participation, for whom, by whom, and why. These questions came only in conjunction with what students were doing during the camp as well as sharing with me in interviews and suggesting about structuring writing spaces more broadly. These thoughts and questions surfaced in the journalism summer writing camp but carried through to FNW in terms of how I spoke about and structured the latter. Starting in the camp and extending into W4C after the camp and through FNW and beyond (in academic presentations and other forms of student-initiated communication and

collaboration), I saw students forge their own pathways for participation as journalists, writers, and overall learners.

My grappling around participatory research began as largely solitary—posing questions in reflective portions of field notes about if my work was “actually participatory,” if it could or should be, and why I wanted it to be. However, as alluded to above, it was only in direct conversations with students that I was able to come to new and expanded understandings of what can make a researcher/youth relationship “participatory” from the perspective of the students. As also mentioned throughout this chapter, a key consideration that cuts across all these tensions is the interplay between an experience initially constructed by me in connection to other adults and adult-run organizations and an overarching goal to be “participatory.” To what extent could students shift the initial conceptualizations and structures to move toward co- and re-construction? If—as was the case in my work in this writing program—students shift the framings largely by *not* taking up participatory elements, does that mean that the study was not participatory? Or, can it mean that students have other ideas about what counts as participating with a researcher and other goals for doing so beyond those given? In this section, I explore the latter possibility and how it emerged—as did the other tensions in this chapter: only through directly unpacking with students the power dynamics and contingencies within our liminal writing spaces and beyond.

When I was conceptualizing the rationale and goals of this writing program—drawing on the journalism genre as both a way for students to engage in social change and to examine how students are positioned in the media as change agents—relying heavily on

Mirra, Garcia, and Morrell's (2016) YPAR elements made sense because their work is targeted and geared toward amplification of youth voices as well. As the study unfolded, I found myself having a hard time letting go of that particular framing, often ruminating on its failure to materialize in field notes and even interviews and discussions with students. One of the main reasons for this framing fixation was that prior to even meeting the students and learning their reasons for coming to the camp and their goals for the overall experience, I had conceptualized key "participatory" data collection and analysis events. These included using a group Flipgrid channel as a place for students to share video research reflections during the summer camp and collaboratively creating a camp newspaper with students taking on different roles in the making of it. I will discuss these "failures" of Flipgrid and the newspaper to materialize in turn but with a broader lens of viewing these mismatches in expectations, uptakes, and outputs not as indications of a lack of participatory research but instead as a shifting of what participation in research and with a researcher might look like and why.

Prior to delving into these two instances, I first wish to recognize my own discomfort as another key contributor in how I initially attempted to implement a participatory framing—one I had pre-conceptualized prior to meeting the students and imagined would unfold fairly quickly (within the span of an eight day camp). It was not until the fifth FNW session (out of a total of seven) that I directly spoke this truth aloud, and it was to myself as I audio-recorded a field note on the drive home. I reflected as follows:

You want to do super participatory things. But there's realities, like, you have these kids coming to this camp, and you want to fill the time, and you want it to be

rewarding for them...Maybe it was a fear, if I'm being totally honest. Like I could have made it super participatory. But that would have been scary. I would have had no control over how things went, over what happened, over what, you know, final products were, and so, the only participatory part was them choosing their topics. I mean they could organize the radio show however they wanted, although it sort of had to be in segments. Yeah, so maybe I didn't want to relinquish that control, subconsciously. (Observation, November 11, 2018)

This excerpt highlights a broader challenge inherent to foregrounding youth voices and working *with* youth, particularly in liminal spaces where boundaries and roles are further blurred as discussed in tensions one and two. How can we afford students choices in ways that are meaningful to the entirety of the collective experience rather than choices that are prepackaged and have little to do with shaping the space or its goals or outcomes? In the above reflective piece of a later field note, I position myself squarely as doing the latter. I also bring forth how the “choices” I will present in the examples of the Flipgrid video and the camp newspaper were actually not “choices” in a participatory sense. This also helps to explain why students felt little motivation toward working on them.

Flipgrid is Not Taken Up: ‘...it’s the face’

I had envisioned students “choosing” to use Flipgrid as a communal way to individually and collaboratively create pieces of data around our work together. However, the digital tool became instead a source for me of understanding both choices and participation more fluidly. In a field note following the third summer camp day, I lamented in a reflective portion that I felt compelled to directly and repeatedly ask students to make Flipgrid videos and that I later gave students who did pieces of candy. In these tensions with myself, it becomes clear again that I was not willing to relinquish “control” over how students did or did not wish to contribute to our work. I was forcing this “choice” upon

them rather than trying to understand in the emergent moments what their lack of uptakes might mean. My own goals around fostering participatory research overshadowed the students' aims and needs, as I continued to wonder in my field notes if my actions around the Flipgrid negated its participatory potential, as seen here:

So yesterday I directly asked the students to make a Flipgrid because they just weren't using it. And then I asked them during the break to use the Flipgrid to do the 'L' of the K-W-L chart—what they learned—and students still didn't really take it up. So, I asked directly, like, 'Oh, Ramona, will you do it?' and kind of paired her with someone. And then at the end of the day, I was like, 'Oh, who are my Flipgrid people? Who made a Flipgrid?', and then I gave them some candy. And now I'm feeling, like, really conflicted that I did that. Was that, like, a bad thing to do? Because I wanted them to just do Flipgrid of their own choosing, but it's not happening. So I'm trying to make it something, like, kind of fun, but is it participatory if I'm, like, bribing them to do it? Because then later Serena made one, and she said, 'I don't know what this is. I'm just in it for the candy.' And that's definitely not what I want. But is it better that the students start using it? Yeah, I don't know. (Observation, August 8, 2018)

Upon further reflection—both individually on this field note and collaboratively with students in interviews and discussions on this topic—I realize that wanting someone to choose something I had already put in place is not the same as offering someone choice. I had predetermined the purpose, outcome, and even the reception of Flipgrid as a collaborative research tool. It was to be a form of video data in which students would reflect on their identities as writers and researchers, and it would be an inherently positive outlet that students would appreciate and understand as a form of participation in joint research with me. What I heard from the students was fundamentally different. Their choice—the only one they truly had—to not participate was what felt like a participatory element of our work together, as they described having the ability to do that in our liminal spaces in ways that they generally do not in their schools.

Their reasons for not participating via Flipgrid were rooted in both the personal and the collective, powerfully demonstrating assumptions I was making about the space. Jasmine brought both these aspects of the Flipgrid uptake (or lack thereof) to the fore in an interview during the fourth FNW session in late October. Jasmine began her response to my questions about Flipgrid with a very specific reason for why students did not use the digital tool: “The main issue with that is because it’s the face...So having their face on the screen is usually something people don’t like” (Personal communication, October 26, 2018). I next referenced how the Flipgrids were only visible to us in a journalism camp-specific group that I created within the platform; I asked if that fact eased people’s concerns about being on film. In her response, Jasmine broadened the particular reason of “the face” to incorporate the relationships among the camp students and sense of community within the camp as a whole. Jasmine replied, “A person doesn’t want to see their own face, and also at the camp, it’s not like we’re extremely familiar with each other either. It’s not like close friends where you can kind of, like, let your inhibitions go” (Personal communication, October 26, 2018). I then asked if by the second week of the camp people felt more comfortable with one another, to which Jasmine offered, “I mean, I still don’t feel as close to anyone that much really. I mean, I got along with people, but wasn’t like...I’m not ready to tell anyone my deep dark secrets” (Personal communication, October 26, 2018). Jessica emphasized still not feeling truly close to fellow program participants over a three-month span. Reflecting on this made clear my problematic assumptions about being able to engage in participatory research only a few days into the initial camp

experience without having had time to develop the stronger relationships first necessary to do so.

In the field note I composed on my way home following that fourth FNW session, I began to make this connection around assumptions and relationships thanks to Jessica's words:

And I'm starting to wonder if that was, like, a really big assumption that I made about the kind of relationship we would have so quickly. And like those [Flipgrids] may have been a lot to ask of students—I didn't respect or understand that. (Observation, October 26, 2018)

My introduction of this mode into our writing space ultimately brought forth a number of tensions inherent to participatory research. These include the influence of initial and ongoing adult/organizational conceptions and structuring and the potential for mismatches between adults'/mentors' and youth's/students' experiences and understandings (as also seen in tension two). But, this Flipgrid aspect of the camp also emphasized that uncovering and talking through these tensions *with* the students—making clear their feedback was valued and would be incorporated into future versions of the program—was a productive practice for both me and the students. Participatory research necessitates structuring around such relationship-building rather than the use of tools, even if the intent of a tool's introduction is to help foster those relationships.

The Newspaper is Not Taken Up: 'And they didn't end up helping me with it at all'

The same holds true for mediums of composition and roles within those mediums, as their interest and value to students should not be presupposed by the researcher. I built into the syllabus and overall structure of the journalism summer writing camp the collaborative creation of a camp newspaper. This was partly because a publication

(particularly a print one) is often a component of PhilWP summer writing programs. But, it was also very much because I wanted to have a cumulative publication (print and/or digital) for my own research aims and needs. Also similar to my inclusion of Flipgrid in designing the camp curriculum, this camp newspaper too relied on assumptions about the unity of the student group—that all would feel compelled to work as a team on a final product, that all would value a newspaper as a medium of publication, and/or that all would have prior understandings of newspaper publication processes.

When the time came during the camp that [I felt] attention needed to be turned to designing the newspaper, it was already apparent that students were not interested in it and/or were not taking initiative around it. Uncertain of how to proceed—and not having built the newspaper's composition into the daily routines of the camp and into our interactions with professional journalist mentors—I waited out of discomfort until the second-to-last meeting day of the camp to directly ask students for help in putting the newspaper together. By its nature, my request of asking students to help me make the newspaper highlighted that the origin of the newspaper medium as an important publication outlet was only mine. While a medium certainly can and should be offered in a liminal writing space and/or a participatory research project, it should be offered alongside multiple other mediums and only with the assumption that working on it is voluntary and student driven. The journalism camp did offer multiple publication outlets, including W4C and the radio broadcast. However, I pushed much harder for newspaper participation than I did with the other outlets because of a combination of the parent audience and PhilWP expectations, my own syllabus and wanting to stick to it, and my investment in this study

as a researcher. Students pushed back both directly and indirectly, though, showing me participatory research and liminal writing spaces should allow for a bubbling up of composing mediums and for remaining open across all of them in terms of whether they materialize for any or all students—and for exploring the “why” of each.

On that penultimate day of the camp when I did finally ask Brielle and Katy for help with the newspaper, they did not refuse but did not take action. This highlights tensions around our adult/mentor and youth/student roles as well as around what participating in this work together looked like in practice: who “had to” or wanted to do what tasks, when, and why. In my field note on that camp day, I described the exchange around creating the newspaper with Brielle and Katy.

I asked them if they would mind helping me with the layout of the newspaper, so I pulled it up on the Mac that I was using...but I went back to check on the radio show. And then when I came back, they hadn't done it. They said, like, the computer had gotten logged out of my Gmail, and I told them I wasn't sure they needed that. And they didn't end up helping me with it at all. (Observation, August 15, 2018)

I centered my request around these two individual students “helping me” rather than having asked, for instance, if they might talk with me about their potential interest in the newspaper and/or in getting others interested in it. This framing did not invite participation and made it both easier and more difficult for Brielle and Katy to say no, which they did not say directly.

The power asymmetries inherent in our roles as adult/mentor and youth/students—heightened further by the blurring of in- and out-of-school contexts and practices in our liminal camp space—worked against Brielle and Katy frankly opting out. They wished to maintain positive relationships with me and contribute to an overall positive environment

within the camp. However, because my request was not indicative of the types of participatory research we had talked about when I introduced myself to all students at the camp's start, it was also less personally difficult for Brielle and Katy to choose to not take on this "opportunity." As they saw it, they had nothing to gain from it, and no room was made for their own motivations in how I had framed the request and even the overall publication. Katy and Brielle did not "have to" engage in the task I laid out of designing the newspaper as they might "have to" in response to a school activity or assignment. Rather than treating this lack of participation around the newspaper as a potentially participatory element—as a medium of publication made available within our liminal writing space that did not have uptake for reasons important to explore with the students—I continued to push the newspaper as a necessary avenue for my own reasons.

This example with Katy and Brielle continued to unfold and to further highlight how I struggled to navigate my roles as educator-facilitator to students, with other adults/mentors, and as a researcher and how that impacted relationships with and responses from students. After Katy and Brielle—and their collective camp community—had tacitly rejected putting together a newspaper, I attempted to create the publication myself. Given that this was now the late afternoon and evening prior to the final day of the camp, time constraints both professionally (local and university copy centers had deadlines I had missed) and personally (an infant, an impending home move, etc.) meant that what I was able to create before the next morning's final camp session was, in my opinion (as none others had been involved), sub-par. I chose to present these happenings directly to the students and use it an opportunity—finally—to have a more frank discussion about whether

or not students wanted a newspaper publication and why. I reflected on the conversation that unfolded around this on that last camp day in my final field note for the summer data collection period; I described how

I talked to the students about the paper and I said—I told them, and it’s true—I spent hours last night trying to get it ready, and it just doesn’t look good. And I said I thought about it. And I thought about how we talked about doing YPAR and how I felt it didn’t make sense for me to make the newspaper, particularly if it wasn’t something that I thought looked awesome...I heard Brielle kind of make some comments to Kayla about how it was just because I didn’t want to do it because I had asked them to help me yesterday, and they didn’t help me. (Observation, August 16, 2018)

My main concern here emerges as how the publication will look for the students as one of its audiences, instead of what the publication meant (or not) for the students as potential composers.

As with the Flipgrid example, the issue is not with the introduction and/or inclusion of the newspaper as one of multiple avenues for creation and publication. But instead the tension surfaced around how students were not given authentic opportunities to explore and engage with the medium(s) over extended periods of time supported by emergent (rather than only cumulative) open conversations and by relationships. That Brielle made remarks to Katy about my wants and needs around the newspaper demonstrates the newspaper did not feel like a collective task. It felt like my task and, as such, one that I should just do myself, especially given that this was not an in-school context that could make the same sorts of requirements around participation that schools can. In the outgrowth of this conversation, students did eventually voice wanting a newspaper publication, even with preferences for a hard copy newspaper; but, these requests were centered on the notion of a newspaper as a “souvenir” from the camp, as Ramona initially phrased it (Observation,

August 16, 2018). And, moreover, I am still left wondering what influence my apparent “pushing” of the newspaper had on students coming to that conclusion, especially considering aforementioned power dynamics.

Offering multiple means to compose and publish and multiple connections to professional adult journalists on article topics of students’ choosing did not constitute participatory research simply because it fulfilled a three-part conceptualization of YPAR in the educational research literature (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016). YPAR is first about establishing relationships that make possible participatory aspects: common goals, open dialogues, and shared commitments. When these are established—and, as with the (co-)creation of liminal spaces discussed in Chapter Four, this must be done with both intention and emergence—then the how can be more collectively established: through what mediums to create and publish and in what roles will students collaborate to create those publications and why.

I chose to unpack this tension as the third and last in this chapter because it in many ways brings together and emerges from the first two tensions around students opening movements across contexts and students and adults/mentors learning from and with one another through those movements. Across all tensions the collaborative, critical examinations that emerged pushed toward new understandings of what it means to write together and to participate in co- and re-constructing writing spaces individually and collectively. To do so required that I rethink many of my own preconceptions about participatory research, and I share some of this reflexive work—as arrived at through continued engagement with the students—in the final subsection that follows.

Students' Own Pathways for Participation

The notion of affording or offering opportunities for students to amplify their voices is different than arriving at and/or co-constructing opportunities for students to amplify their voices. Working toward the latter in ways that make sense for the particular affordances and tensions of liminal spaces in relationship, as in this study, should be the goal of participatory work with youth. Working toward that goal necessitates intentional discussions with students about how they believe is best for them and for the community of writers to participate and why. This “why” points toward the notion of motivations for overall participation and for individual choices. While I “offered” students many potential writerly roles, activities, and outlets to engage with and reflect on—both internally and through others—I found that students who became most involved with the program forged their own pathways for participation. These pathways often involved students pursuing other angles to the adult/mentor relationship they were developing with me, of their own accord and often in forms unrelated to the journalism genre that initially brought us together.

In one-on-one interview conversations with Katy and Ramona, I made one of these “offerings,” suggesting separately to each that they consider joining me in next year’s (2019) summer camp in a “co-teaching” role. Neither of them ultimately expressed extended interest in actually taking on that role nor had any connection to the 2019 summer camp. Jasmine, however, contacted me independently in the time between the end of FNW (December 2018) and prior to the start of the July 2019 camp to ask if I might be interested in working with her on that next camp: she offered to give input on syllabus drafts and to

lead particular activities during camp days. She and I did end up collaborating that second summer together; she fulfilled the forms of participation she had suggested herself and more, as she also handled all design aspects of the 2019 camp newspaper. Although the underlying role/opportunity was the same when I offered it to Katy and Serena, it was for Jessica tied to her own agency and motivations and emerged from a relationship she and I had continued to build over time. We presented together in February 2019 at the Ethnography in Education Research Forum and exchanged frequent emails about Jasmine's writing both in- and out-of-school and about letters of recommendation. For Jasmine, the co-teacher role was her own path. Participatory research necessitates time for students to develop these individual pathways within the broader shared contexts, purposes, and forms.

Other students similarly built their own forms of participation within the program, but they did so in ways that pushed even further beyond the journalism genre focus of the camp. At the start of her senior year of high school in 2019-2020, Katerina asked if I would be her senior project mentor. Katerina was similarly drawing on the relationship we had formed up to that point, including our presentation with Jasmine at the 2019 Ethnography Forum and correspondence about letters of recommendation, to forge her own pathway of participating in our writing community across spaces. In her email request, Katerina described her project topic as "learning more on how English classes broaden students' perspectives and teach essential communication and empathy skills" (Personal communication, February 25, 2019). While she did not mention journalism specifically or the program experience more broadly, she evoked aspects of its framing: engaging *in* and

with literacy as a way to affect personal and social change. She was still participating in the program when reaching out to me about this; there are individual pathways within a broader collective experience that must be examined and seen as contributing to both engaging in and understanding participatory work.

These are forms of participation with a researcher—not the type of collective group work and “action” that most often characterizes YPAR but individual acts of participating in a broader community, program, and network. And, Katerina, Jasmine, their peers, me, and the other adult mentors brought into the spaces did (and do) share a collective affinity for and motivation around writing and connecting with other writers. But, foregrounded in these examples were Katerina’s and Jasmine’s own aims as they intersected with the liminal and partnership-based spaces and work. This is in contrast to prior discussions around my field notes where I was emphasizing a participatory framework that was removed from students’ broader interests and goals. Trying to bring together the individual and collective across youth and adults is an ongoing tension of participatory work, one particularly highlighted within liminal spaces.

I view the initiative and actions of Katerina and Jasmine (and others) as in line with participatory research, and I believe—through still ongoing conversations with them about their writing and their future plans and mine—they understand us as researching with one another, even if what we are researching, writing, and doing is not tied together by a singular shared purpose but rather a collective sense of writing as important for making change across scales.

Tensions as Affordances and Challenges of Learning in Liminality: Working Together to Understand in and Across Extra-School Writing Spaces

This chapter has focused on three broad-level, intertwined tensions that emerged in our efforts to learn within and across liminal writing spaces: shifts across in- and out-of-school contexts and practices; navigations of roles as adults/mentors and youth/students; and considerations of participatory research and “what counts” as participation. Within these broader tensions emerged complex, overlapping, and interlocked challenges in our particular spaces and the individuals, relationships, and practices that constituted them. Rather than pushing such potentially uncomfortable emergences—be they power asymmetries between adults and youth and/or misunderstandings about how people do and do not wish to participate—out of a learning context, the tensions surfaced in our work demonstrate how powerful and illuminating doing just the opposite can be for both individuals and the collective. Discussions about tensions are often avoided out of discomfort, which is something I describe experiencing numerous times throughout this program—like when I reflect on not wanting to relinquish control as the adult/educator in planning and implementing “participatory” elements. However, the new knowledge around writing spaces, writing relationships, and writing participation discussed here surfaced only from adults/mentors and youth/students coming together to have discomfiting but open dialogues about these very issues and others, as dictated by the needs of the students, the spaces, and the collective community of learners (including the educator-facilitators).

Chapter Six: Students' Experiences in and with Intertwining Space and Genre

Moving into this chapter on the ways that students both positioned and were positioned by the writing program—with particular emphasis on the genre of journalism as our initial point of entry—it is important to remember the often tense relationships around power structures in emergent liminal spaces, which although fraught are productive. Stornaiuolo and LeBlanc (2016) offer a useful prompt for exploring genre in relation to liminality and its tensions: “For literacy researchers studying the contingency and instability of literacy practices on the move, one of the central questions becomes, ‘How do we examine movement in a way that captures fluidity but equally the contradictions and gateways that restrict, sift, and marginalize?’” (p. 264). Our liminal spaces were ones in which we together attended to issues of power, positioning, and representation.

In our journalism summer writing camp space in particular, the genre of journalism was a grounding means of looking at and working in a writing genre as fluid—but doing so with particular attention to positioning. How does the genre of journalism already position youth, especially when youth are attempting to use journalistic writing to affect change? What factors influence that positioning? In the camp, we talked about this as working *in* journalism. But, importantly, we simultaneously also looked at working *with* journalism. What are our understandings of journalism? What are different ways that the genre can be approached in mediums, modes, and more? What does it mean to be a student journalist? While these questions were at the root of our summer camp experience, they also speak to journalism as a shifting genre more broadly. Given the rise of “citizen” and “social media” journalism, the genre has become its own sort of liminal space characterized

by constructions that are interpersonal, collaborative, and ever-shifting (Papacharissi, 2015). In these ways, the genre of journalism was a means for us to examine our individual choices and movements as writers with critical eyes towards how journalism—particularly in the media—positions youth writers and activists.

This chapter will explore how this hybridity and contingency of journalism as a genre came together with the liminality of our camp space, as constituted by co-construction and multiplicity of both the space and the relationships within it. During the journalism summer writing camp, students interacted with eight different journalistic mentors—one for each day of the camp—that each presented the genre in line with their own practices and understandings. These journalistic mentors discussed and/or engaged with the students in a variety of journalism forms, including journalism as activism and journalism through ethnography, narrative, podcast, and even dramatic monologue. The latter will be explored in depth in later sections of this chapter. An emphasis on “the personal” cohered across and emerged from all these various journalistic forms, as we centered engaging *in* and *with* the genre as a necessarily social practice.

The summer camp students, then, concurrently examined how journalism positions youth of diverse backgrounds and experiences when they attempt to draw on the genre to affect change at the same time as they developed relationships with multiple mentors and were (re-)introduced to multiple means of engaging in journalism. As a result of engaging *in* and *with* activism, the students expanded their understandings of what journalistic writing is or could be as they simultaneously shifted the genre themselves through their

varied forms of engagement in activism, writing, and collaborative discussions both in-person and digital.

That journalism positioned the students and the students re-positioned journalism was most apparent in this summer writing camp, which was most directly focused on the genre, had the most participants, and was the most structured in terms of group learning experiences about singular topics and/or with shared mentors. This first space of the writing program was also the one that “set the stage” for further movements—in addition to across genres, modes, and mediums as in the camp to across spaces themselves into W4C and FNW, both of which built from direct student feedback during the camp. While journalism came to be understood more broadly and approached in more various forms as a result of the camp, so too did writing writ large. Journalism camp students took what they had learned and with whom they had learned it as they shifted into the other writing spaces of our program and into literacy learning contexts beyond it. Journalism was our initial genre for exploring the portrayals and positionings of youth writing. And it was our genre for working to expand on those positionings.

Papacharissi (2015) describes how journalism as a changing genre can bring together our aims of engaging *in* journalism—as writers—and engaging *with* it—as audiences.

For journalism studies, this permits us to understand how audiences employ news storytelling to develop their own takes on what makes a news story, and what counts as journalism. But audiences do not engage in practices of co-creation from the conventional spaces of news production and consumption. They tell stories from the spaces and places of their everyday lives, and tell them in ways that further infuse these spaces with meaning. (p. 28)

Our camp space, and the people within it both student and adult, intertwined with the genre of journalism in ways that shifted writing practices, perceptions, and even the genre of journalism. It was in the context of our liminal camp space that students were able to connect stories of their own lives and interests with the ways journalistic stories are told about “them”—their peers, their communities, their schools, etc.—and, further, to begin to shift the latter with the former.

In this chapter, I first explore the notion of engaging *with* journalism by focusing on elements of our summer camp curriculum in and through which we attempted to do critical work around youth representations in journalistic media. I then turn to how we engaged *in* journalism—emphasizing the role of our camp journalistic mentors—to expand understandings of and practices and publications within the genre. I end the chapter with a closer examination of the multiplicities of writing forms that students came to consider journalistic by looking in depth at the various pieces that one camper, Katy, wrote and shared out to various audiences. In line with narrative journalism as a new way of understanding and practicing the genre that we collectively surfaced, I draw on narrative analysis to learn from Katy’s writings. Bringing together how we participated in the camp space, across relationships with one another, and in and with a genre, we moved toward developing metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013) attuned to power and both individual and collective experiences, as I was given a fuller picture of youth writing practices and purposes and the students similarly examined their own approaches and aims and those of others.

Our space, the genre of journalism, and our individual and collective forms of participation in both converged to create both new practices and new forms of knowledge around writing—the sorts of “transformations” made possible by liminal spaces that Gutiérrez emphasizes (2008): “expanded form[s] of learning and the development of new knowledge” (p. 152).

How Journalism Positioned the Students: Engaging *with* Journalism

In order to move toward these “expanded forms of learning and the development of new knowledge” (Gutiérrez, 2008), we had to first grapple with more traditional understandings of journalism as well as examine the ways student journalists are portrayed and taken up in and by journalistic media and the public. The goals of doing so were to “access” (i.e., Janks, 2004, 2010) some of the forms of knowledge considered critical to journalistic writing—e.g., the “inverted” pyramid—but to push back on them by reconsidering them in light of students’ current, more diverse writing approaches and practices. These aims are further in line with how Papacharissi (2015) positions journalism studies—for students “to develop their own takes on what makes a news story and what counts as journalism” and to “tell stories from the spaces and places of their everyday lives” (p. 28). Students were, then, seeing how student journalism was broadly construed without their input but doing so in our camp space where their input was critical and was working to reshape student journalism.

While engaging *with* journalism in these ways was an underlying goal of how I had structured the camp as a whole, I will focus on two particular camp activities I built into the curriculum. They illustrate how the students and I—along with the journalistic

mentors—worked together to consider how journalism as a genre positions youth drawing on and practicing it and to begin reconsideration and reconstruction of those positionings. The first curricular activity was a mini-lesson about “key journalism terms and structures,” as I worded it on the camp syllabus, during which I briefly presented to the students on elements of journalism such as the “5Ws,” the “inverted pyramid,” and the “cut test.” A key part of the “lesson” was working with students to question these structures—how they might no longer apply or not be in line with their understandings of engaging writing practices. Examining positioning was an initial step towards the types of more concrete reconstructions to be discussed later.

The second activity is what I termed the “activism headline omission activity.” This was an interactive group activity in which the students worked to fill-in-the-blanks of ten headlines I had pulled from various news sources both local and national about the Parkland students’ activism efforts around gun violence. Given the 2018 time period of the summer camp (and overall writing program), the Parkland teens were of significant interest across scales—from our local youth to national news audiences to prominent politicians. The disparity of audience uptake between the white, suburban Parkland youth and the urban youth of color engaged in similar activist efforts around issues of gun violence—including very near youth like those in the “We Count Too” movement in Southwest Philadelphia that Ramona researched and wrote about—was a recurring discussion point throughout the camp. But, it surfaced in particular relation to this headline omission activity, which also occurred on the final day of the camp along with university student journalist/editor-in-chief Gloria. This headline omission activity highlights the ways our developing sense of

community connected with journalistic mentors and portrayals of youth in journalistic media to surface important discussions about how students saw themselves portrayed in and by the genre. And, it pushed toward reconsiderations of what those portrayals could and should look like and toward reconstructions of the genre as a result.

Pushing Back on the Pyramid

In order to move toward the types of “transformation” mentioned above—transformation of knowledge about the journalism genre and then of writing practices and impacts—it was first necessary to discuss “traditional” understandings of journalism. It is only then that students could de- and re- construct journalism in ways more personally and socially relevant. This duality of needing to both learn “traditional” and/or “dominant” approaches to journalism and to push back and remake them returns to the “access paradox” (Janks, 2004, 2010) discussed in prior chapters.

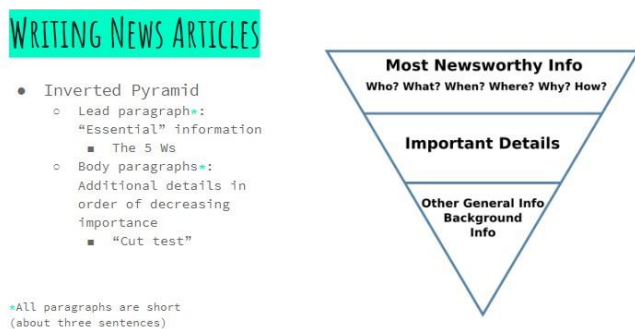
Janks (2010) poses this duality as a question, and it was relevant to our work in engaging *in* and *with* journalism: “How does one provide access to dominant forms while at the same time valuing and promoting the diverse...literacies of our students and in the broader society?” (p. 23). Janks (2010) refers to these too-often dichotomized aspects as “access” and “domination,” and in raising them together, she is similarly calling for educators/facilitators/mentors to not just resist dichotomization but to further work toward transformation. Janks (2010) argues that the latter can be worked toward through her “redesign cycle,” which involves attention to elements of “design” and “diversity” in addition to access and domination. Students engage in an open-order cyclical process of

designing, deconstructing, and reconstructing, coming to see how all “texts” are laden with power dynamics and serve varying people and interests.

We began this de- and re-construction of dominant forms on the third day of the journalism camp, another intentional curricular choice as I imagined when conceptualizing the camp that this would be the point at which students might begin their own text “designs”—or actually begin engaging in direct research and writing for their news articles. As such, I included in this third camp session (out of eight total) a mini lesson to introduce the way “traditional” news articles have been approached and produced, as in line with the “inverted pyramid.” See Figure 6.1 below to view how this information was presented to camp students in a Google Slide.

Figure 6.1

Journalism summer writing camp shared slide on traditional approaches to writing news articles



The purpose of providing students “access” to this “dominant” form of journalism was not to offer this as a template for how they should be writing their own articles—a point I was clear to make multiple times when reviewing the information with the students. Rather, the purpose was to first consider why this approach might have been an appropriate or even strong fit for certain contexts—be they time periods and/or mediums, like the prior

preeminence of print newspapers as compared to the current dominance of digital newspapers. Then, students could reconsider what might be the best fit in terms of article format for them as authors today with their own preferences and aims. This is in line with what Janks (2010) talks about as deconstructing. As seen in Figure 6.2 below, the next slide in my mini-lesson presentation put that deconstructing front and center. The points listed on the slide about creative, narrative, and the digital were not posted on the screen until we had engaged in an open discussion about what students understood as potential “problems” with the inverted pyramid.

Figure 6.2

Journalism summer writing camp shared slide on rethinking traditional approaches to writing news articles

WRITING NEWS ARTICLES

Problems with the Inverted Pyramid

- Limits journalists' creativity
- Gives all “essential” information first
 - Why keep reading?
 - Goes against good storytelling principles
- Clashes with rise of online journalism
 - Physical newspaper space no longer a concern
 - Blogs, social media, and other non-traditional news formats

RETHINK IT

One student, Harry, made multiple points that spanned these three areas of creativity, narrative, and the digital, all with particular attention to what he saw as the ultimate purpose of writing a news article, a social purpose: having others read it so that it could make an impact. Harry first spoke in our group discussion about the inverted pyramid in ways that resisted dichotomization between different approaches to writing. He drew a parallel between the inverted pyramid structure for journalistic news articles and the five-paragraph essay structure for school-based analytical essays, ultimately arguing that having

those structures was not sufficient for creating pieces of writing that other people would want to read and would feel affected by:

It's sort of the same context. We try to, I guess, sort of approach it as more fluid, more dynamic in writing style. Then what that achieves is that we're able to sort of attract the audience. And really even if we have something for creating our messages, like, you know, even if it's actually important, if there's no one to read it... (Harry, personal communication, August 8, 2018)

Harry makes clear that there can be utility in “traditional structures” but not if they are approached as stagnant templates. Harry's words echo Janks (2010) around designing, deconstructing, and redesigning—the “original” or “traditional” structure has importance in the “more dynamic” reconstruction.

I intentionally included this mini-lesson as educator-facilitator in order to facilitate movements within the “redesign cycle” (Janks, 2010). In fact, I explained this purpose to students directly in closing our deconstruction of the inverted pyramid as the traditional approach to writing news articles; I said the following to the students:

So I think the point of me telling you this is when you guys write your news articles, there's maybe pieces of traditional news structure that we want to keep in mind, like the shorter paragraphs. And we do want to have important information at the top, but maybe not all of it. And maybe we don't sacrifice our personal voice for it. But kind of keeping this in the back of your mind and balancing that with your own style. Yeah. (Personal communication, August 8, 2018)

Like Harry, I explained that our deconstruction of traditional approaches did not mean that we must abandon all elements of news writing but rather that we must be critically aware of the reasons for those elements and our choices around drawing on them or not, when, and why. My framing, although intentional and conceived prior to engagement with the students, centered students' choices as writers and pointed toward individual and collective

metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013) as a broad goal of this deconstruction effort and of our movements across and work within the writing program as a whole.

How Do Headlines Position Us?

This mini lesson around the inverted pyramid took place early in the camp curriculum and was meant as a means of first deconstructing in order to then reconstruct and design. However, we continued to engage in acts of deconstruction throughout the camp, as the “design cycle” (Janks, 2010) is iterative and open in order. When we all participated together in another deconstruction activity on the eighth and final day of the camp, students had already written their news articles and shared pieces of their writing on the radio broadcast, whether news articles or other reconstructed forms.

The activity involved critically examining headlines about student activism efforts as covered by a wide range of journalistic media outlets, from local ones like *6ABC Action News* and the *Inquirer* to national ones like *CNN*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*, for both the impact of journalists’ diction and the positioning of youth as change agents—metacommunicative awareness of writing practices that opens up discussions of social impacts. The activity also emphasized the importance of considering authorial choices and contexts as both writers and readers. The students and I collaboratively unpacked representations, positionings, and uptakes of youth across aspects of identities and lived experiences, like geographic location (i.e., urban versus suburban), race, socioeconomics, and more.

Students were given ten headlines I had chosen and then presented with strategically missing words, which they worked in pairs or small groups to “correctly” fill

in; students were also given the subhead text that appeared just under the headline, which was usually one to two sentences. After being given time to complete all ten headlines, I revealed the original headlines. We drew on discrepancies between the words students imagined would fill in the blanks and the words the journalists who wrote the headlines actually used—e.g., why did a journalist choose that word instead of another? What impact might a different verb have had on the reader?

I designed the headline omission activity to fit our focus on critically examining the journalism genre and how it positions youth as student journalists and change agents. Given the both temporal and topical relevance of the Parkland students' activist efforts around gun control, I focused on articles that touched on Parkland in relation to other student groups. To see a list of all ten selected headlines, see [Appendix G](#). In Figure 6.3 below, however, is a particularly powerful headline example, described as such because of the reaction it garnered from both the students and me during our discussion.

Figure 6.3

Example headline from activism headline omission activity in camp

‘They Are Lifting Us Up.’ How Parkland Students Are _____ Their _____ to _____ Minority Anti-Violence _____

The [Peace Warriors](#), a group of predominantly black high school students from Chicago, have been fighting gun violence for 10 years without garnering much attention from the outside world. The students from Parkland, Fla. brought the issue to national prominence in a matter of days.

This example is particularly illustrative of the focus on Parkland students in relation to other student groups. It places the white, suburban youth in the Parkland gun control activism campaign in problematic positionings with youth of color in anti-violence

activism campaigns. This headline originally appeared on *Time.com* and read “‘They Are Lifting Us Up.’ How Parkland Students Are Using Their Moment to Help Minority Anti-Violence Groups.” The article explores a student group called The Peace Warriors that is based in Chicago and made up of predominantly black youth who have similarly been engaging in activism for nearly a decade about gun violence without capturing the nation’s attention and overwhelming positive uptake in the ways the Parkland Students so quickly did.

A number of students, especially Brielle and Aaron, had strong reactions to this headline. Brielle first focused in on how the headline positions both the Parkland students and youth of color in negative ways—but with particular emphasis on the latter. And Aaron then broadened the discussion from this particular headline to his own personal experiences with how journalism has positioned him as a youth of color: ignoring and even silencing the knowledge and lived experiences of youth of color like he and his peers.

Brielle, an Asian-American rising high school senior, perceived this headline as dichotomizing the suburban youth of Parkland from youth of color, exalting the efforts of the former and downplaying those of the latter. However, she resisted this pulling apart of youth activists in her response to the headline, offering both that it “was very passive aggressive to say that they [Parkland students] get more attention” but also at the same time was passive aggressive to imply that the Parkland students’ activism amounted to nothing more than “their 15 seconds of fame” (Brielle, personal communication, August 16, 2018). While Brielle did go on to use the collective “we” when expanding on how the headline positions youth of color—“We’re not as important. We’re more resilient but not as

important” (personal communication, August 16, 2018)—her words aim to push back on this unequal positioning by highlighting how the headline places both groups in problematic relationship to one another and, in so doing, is detrimental to both.

However, that detriment is more strongly experienced by youth of color, with whom she indicates she shares an identity specifically and broadly as a student writer wishing to have an impact on social injustices. In deconstructing the headline, Brielle reconstructed how we discussed it—she surfaced the racial disparities evident without erasing the ways it simultaneously did harm to all student activists. Brielle more strongly identified with how the headline positioned youth of color, reconstructing it around the resilience of minority students rather than the author’s implied unequal placement of them as in need of white students’ help. But, she resisted the journalist’s positioning of both white, suburban students as well as urban youth of color. Her words and the stance behind them remind of the importance of resisting dichotomization and instead working toward reconstructed and transformed relationships and spaces that surface discomfort for productive design ends.

While Aaron engaged in less direct resistance of the dichotomization, the story he shared still points to an important reconstruction of this particular national news story. Aaron showed how the “personal is the political.”

I personally felt this when, um, the protests after Parkland, when, um, a lot of the local schools went out and protested but, like, *6 ABC* and all of the local news, they went to the suburbs. Yeah, no one covered the protests that were happening at City Hall at all. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Just as Brielle made a personal connection with the youth of color deficitized in the headline—“We’re more resilient but not as important”—Aaron brought together the local

youth in Philadelphia, who are majority students of color, with the Chicago youth of color specified in the headline. A local news outlet in his home context of Philly, *6 ABC*, ignored the perspectives of youth of color on gun violence while the national news outlet in our headline activity, *Time.com*, called it forth but in a positioning unequal to that of white, suburban students on the same issue. Aaron brought all of these into relationship as problematic positionings: the local news ignoring groups of local youth and the national news dichotomizing student groups across locations and races. In order to move toward reconstruction, Aaron offered a personal example to show how he has experienced both forms of journalistic positioning. And by putting them into juxtaposition, he invited us to consider how we might put the local and national and the personal and the political into new, more productive—if not more equal—relationship with one another.

How the Students Re-Positioned Journalism: Engaging *in* Journalism

Students engaged *in* journalism within our camp by drawing on the above activities and on our relationships, critically examining and becoming more individually and collectively aware of the genre's conventions and positionings of youth. They reconstructed the genre as they considered what journalism meant and could do for them. Within the camp space, students did this alongside multiple journalistic mentors, each with their own approach to writing within the genre and their own personal and professional background and experience. As mentioned in prior chapters, the liminalities of our camp space afforded a multiplicity of mentors. These mentors ultimately presented journalism as liminal as well. Students then had multiple opportunities to connect with others' ways of

writing and to take from those approaches (or not) when writing as student journalists and when engaging with others' writing.

Engaging *in* journalism as a writer was simultaneously personal and influenced by the approaches and experiences of others, particularly the adults/mentors of our camp space. One of the campers, Tina, made note of this duality when she stated that “writing is, like, personal to everybody. Everybody writes differently. So it’s like people can inspire other people’s writing” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018). Tina points to how the camp presented journalism as liminal through steeping it in the personal and the social. And, just as “the personal is the political,” the personal is both individual and collective. Students engaged with various mentors and their individual approaches to the genre of journalism while they also de- and re-constructed the genre themselves.

As a result of these simultaneous engagements *in* journalism, students expressed that the camp expanded their understandings of what journalism is and could be. Aaron brought together his own prior experiences as a student journalist in his high school with the camp experience in explaining how his views on the genre had shifted.

Before this camp I thought journalism was just, like, investigating and finding out what happened. Like, I was just, like, writing political opinion articles, like giving what I thought about it, yeah. Journalism is a lot of things. Yeah, so this camp made you think about it as more than just, like, the mainstream journalism idea. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

It is important to emphasize that students, as Aaron articulated, were already engaging in journalism prior to attending the camp. However, the liminal space of the camp centered journalism on the personal and social experiences of students and mentors. The result was that students then came to see journalism as a way to tell their own stories—“like giving

what I thought about it”—and to do so through a variety of modes and mediums. These various forms incorporated elements of the “mainstream journalism idea,” like the inverted pyramid, but also left room for students’ creativity, lived experiences, aims, and commitments.

Students and Mentors Unpacking the Power of the Personal and the Social in Journalism

While the adults/mentors in the space were significant in this opening up of journalism, it was only through collaborative discussions and work with students that reconstructions of the genre became possible. These reconstructions were, further, only realized through students’ choices and practices in designing. While Aaron noted, as above, “Journalism is a lot of things” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018), camp students’ reconstructions of the genre cohered around the power of incorporating the personal and the social. In particular, “the personal” and “the social” included three expanded understandings of what journalism can involve and/or look like in practice: journalism as creative, journalism as narrative, and journalism as activism. Both creativity and storytelling emerged in the early camp deconstruction activity around the inverted pyramid, as students raised concerns about a lack of room for both in more “traditional” approaches to journalism. The students, then, built on that initial discussion in reconstructing the genre with adults/mentors in the space and with one another, ultimately centering journalism on stories they wanted to tell about social change issues, which is in line with journalism as activism.

Each of these three expanded understandings of journalism—as creative, as narrative, and as activism—will be discussed in turn, with particular attention to the

personal and the social as both individual and relational. Although each will be talked about separately, all are intertwined and overlapping, which coheres with multiplicities as a core aspect of liminality overall. As a way of representing these interconnections, I will focus on how journalism emerged as creative, narrative, and activist during and as a result of interactions and composing with one adult/mentor: Maurice.

Mentor Maurice and the Dramatic Monologue

Maurice worked with the students on the sixth day of the camp (out of a total of eight days); he was the only adult/mentor who structured his time with us as a “workshop,” making it both the most targeted and the most widely impactful mentor interaction. Maurice’s workshop centered on dramatic monologues and how they connect to journalistic writing. Nearly every student commented on Maurice in reflective discussions and interviews as having broadened how they understood and subsequently engaged in journalism, making it more personally relevant and more socially interesting and useful to others. Aspects of writing they had previously separated from journalism—i.e., creativity and voice—were brought to the fore, as was perspective-taking in considering who tells a story, how, and why.

Maurice was a podcast producer and connectivity manager for Philadelphia Young Playwrights, a local educational nonprofit that works with schools to engage students in playwriting where theater programs do not exist. I had intentionally reached out to Maurice because of the potential I saw in his work, particularly the podcast, to break down this often-perceived binary between journalism and creativity. The podcast was a newer project of Philadelphia Young Playwrights centering on students’ writing related to social issue

topics rooted in real, local experiences. An episode of Maurice's podcast had been filmed at a Philadelphia public school where I was separately doing field work, and so I had previously had the opportunity to watch first-hand how a student's piece of writing about gun violence was transformed into a dramatic monologue that was then read live on the podcast by a professional actor. Following the reading was a discussion between students and experts on gun violence, all facilitated and broadcast through the podcast. This was the general format of all the podcast episodes. I imagined Maurice could work with camp students on shifting their news articles into dramatic monologues, thereby expanding understandings of journalism.

Here again we see the weaving of intentional adult construction prior to students' involvement in the summer writing camp/overall writing program with students' uptakes and own reconstructions and designs. Maurice was uncomfortable at first with my pairing of dramatic monologue and journalism when I contacted him in my early planning stages before the camp. He requested we meet in person to unpack what I saw as the connection. Maurice's uncertainty was something he shared directly with the students and attempted to unpack with them as well, in line with our camp as a liminal space where uncertainties could be approached as sources of productivity and learning. He saw the camp as a space where adults and students could engage in such work openly and together.

While Maurice remained certain throughout our camp collaboration that a dramatic monologue was *not* a form of journalism, he articulated that he saw the two as sharing important elements. Those connections emerged during his conversations and activities with the students, and they included writing about issues significant to individuals and their

communities, offering multiple perspectives on a situation or story, and fostering empathy. Activities included examining the medium of podcast, or “writing for the ear” as Maurice termed it; considering journalism’s relation to activism; and thinking through relationships and perspectives when writing about something that impacts real people. Maurice had students read and talk about a *Los Angeles Times* article on podcasting and journalism as a shifting genre, “How podcasts are being used by journalists and how they are changing journalism.” After engaging with the article, Maurice invited students to consider one of two options with their news articles: rework the article into a monologue (to the extent possible in the short time frame) or record themselves reading their articles to think through how to rework them for the next day’s radio broadcast.

Students were later given opportunities to share this work, a time which also surfaced how Maurice saw dramatic monologues as distinct from journalism. Maurice commented on how a dramatic monologue is a more dynamic form focused on a single lived perspective up close: “there’s a lot of motion in the monologue as well, which is maybe where journalism starts to fade away” (Personal communication, August 14, 2018). In highlighting differences as well as connections across journalism and dramatic monologue, Maurice made clear that the point of his workshop was to examine both types of writing and to then consider them together—how they might inform and strengthen one another in service of a writer’s voice and purposes, again in line with understandings of metacommunicative awareness referenced elsewhere.

Maurice emphasized how students could take up elements of dramatic monologues in the aim of writing journalistic news articles about social justice issues, positioning

journalism as deeply personal and social. At the core of Maurice's work with the students, then, was a sense of students' agency—an agency that involved drawing on multiple genres and forms both selectively and simultaneously in the pursuit of their own goals. Maurice was also direct in discussing with students how their personal voices and writing practices were powerful social forces, particularly in relation to journalism as a liminal genre, as in when he said the following:

Journalism is always changing. You all, if you continue to go on this path, are going to make decisions about what journalism looks like and how people receive it that are going to affect me and the way I consume it 20 years from now. (Personal communication, August 14, 2018)

As “traditional” and “mainstream,” as Aaron put it, notions of journalism continue to mix with social media and citizen journalism as well as youth activism, what the genre is or can be becomes increasingly open. Again centering youth agency and pointing toward metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013), Maurice called on students to recognize their power to shape a genre and to raise awareness of their own writing practices and purposes at the same time as they raise awareness about social issues.

“The Personal” and “The Social” in Journalism: Journalism as Creative. In order to understand why journalism emerged for students during and as a result of the camp as “creative,” it is first necessary to understand that many of them identified as creative writers. These identifications inherently bring in the personal, as students evoked the precise phrase or drew on genres most commonly thought of as creative writing, e.g., poetry and playwriting, when describing their writerly identities both before and during the camp. Amongst the students—and in society writ large—there remained an initial tendency to associate journalism with fact-telling and, further, to dichotomize facts from creativity,

personal voice, and a variety of writing forms. Similar to how Aaron described his camp experience as “more than just, like, the mainstream journalism idea” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018), students often spoke about their reconstructed understandings of and approaches to journalism as coming to incorporate both creativity and journalism. I use “reconstructed” intentionally here because these new conceptualizations—of the genres and/or of themselves as writers—were actively arrived at through deconstruction activities, mentor and peer relationships, and students’ own reflections and engagements.

In an end-of-camp interview, Carlo articulated his own understanding that journalism incorporates both creativity and fact-telling.

I think you can do creative writing and journalism at the same time because I think you can, like, you can have facts in your article...and make it, like, maybe kind of your own way at the same time. Like how you write it, it’s, like, different from other articles. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Carlo conceptualized writing as involving multiple genres at once—a piece is never squarely one genre because writers are continually shifting across genres as their approach is always unique. This was mirrored in our in-between writing spaces and our movements across them collectively and individually. Writing is inherently personal (i.e., Murray, 1991) and, as a result, always creative, as Carlo drew a direct connection between creativity and the personal—“your own way” and “how you write it.” It follows, then, that journalism is always personal and, therefore, creative.

Carlo repositioned journalism not as a prescribed genre that indicated to him how to utilize it but rather a fluid genre he drew on and shifted in his own ways and for his own purposes. This was a repositioning of both the self and journalism and the relationship

between them. There are many ways to engage in and with a genre—journalism in our camp space but others elsewhere—and Carlo places those choices and navigations in line with “the personal” by emphasizing that there is room for creativity in journalism.

Brielle drew an even more direct connection between journalism, creativity, and the personal when reflecting on why she most enjoyed writing the monologue with Maurice as compared to other forms of writing and publication explored during the camp. Brielle researched and wrote on her selected topic of immigration issues in Philly, specifically if Philly was going to become a sanctuary city. She shifted this work across multiple different genres and mediums: news article, dramatic monologue, and radio broadcast. Brielle explained her preference for the monologue during an end-of-camp interview with fellow camper Katy and me:

I think writing the monologue...made me think about it more. It was something different. And now I'm like, okay, I want to do this more...like I mean, like, creative writing-wise...in my case, when I wrote the monologue, I feel like I connected with my topic because it was more of a personal account of what might have happened in the personal aspect. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Brielle originally chose her topic because of its personal proximity to her family, many of whom she described as undocumented immigrants. However, she felt that the “traditional” news article format distanced her from that personal connection while the monologue gave her “creative license” to explore it. In the latter form, Brielle wrote from the perspective of an undocumented immigrant who was ultimately pursued by Immigrant and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and arrested in front of his mother. How immigration laws are unfolding in a major city is inarguably a topic of social and journalistic relevance. What the dramatic monologue workshop called into question was what makes for an especially

impactful news piece about that issue. Exploring the topic through the creative monologue form surfaced how important personal perspectives and experiences can be to news stories. Similar to Carlo, Brielle equated creativity with the personal, and both campers described journalism as more meaningful to them and others when allowed to approach it in their “own ways.” Just as Maurice was very clear in articulating that a dramatic monologue is not necessarily a form of journalism, Brielle and Carlo did not say all structures of journalism should be erased or all news articles should be written from a first-person perspective. They instead highlighted how they can choose to draw on elements of multiple genres and forms at once when writing journalistically. And, further, they articulated that doing so makes for more complicated and, therefore, more powerful pieces of “news.” I consider these acts of reconstruction. The students came to describe themselves as writers, their understandings of genre, and their engagements in journalism with heightened individual awareness and social purpose. By delving with Maurice into dramatic monologues alongside and intertwined with news articles, students began to speak into being the shifts in journalism that Maurice emboldened them to move forward with during his workshop. A key way students made these shifts was connecting journalism to their personal preferences and experiences by exploring and later bringing in elements of creative writing into the genre.

“The Personal” and “The Social” in Journalism: Journalism as Narrative.

Another way students reconstructed journalism and worked toward greater understandings of themselves as writers and of writing more broadly was through perspective-taking in their reading and writing. Students discussed and then acted on journalism as a means to

tell personal and social stories—first-person accounts of real-life experiences with issues and concerns in their own communities, schools, and lives. The students often surfaced journalism as linked to personal narrative while still discussing creative writing. For instance, Shayna shared what she saw as the power of Maurice’s workshop: bringing together creativity and journalism and showing how doing so through narrative opens approaches and impacts.

I was able to connect journalism and creative writing at the same time...you got to see how, like, a simple, like storytelling writing thingamajig...can come up with so many different things and, like, in so many different ways. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Shayna may have forgotten the particular form Maurice focused on, swapping “thingamajig” for dramatic monologue, but she held onto the storytelling she saw become possible in journalism. Broadening understanding of the genre likewise broadened its impact for both writer and audience—Shayna felt she could write as a journalist “in so many different ways” once the role was framed as storytelling, whether in relation her own narratives, others’ narratives, or broader societal narratives.

In her end-of-camp interview, Ramona similarly centered on the storytelling aspect of Maurice’s collaborative workshop, even describing Maurice as a “storyteller.” Ramona further described her own preference for fictional genres because of the potential for building new worlds, whether to be part of another’s “world” and/or to escape one’s own: “you can make a world that’s not like yours” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018). I followed up this discussion of fiction by asking Ramona if she felt journalists could tell stories, to which she responded affirmatively. A news article can incorporate aspects of storytelling inherent to fiction and dramatic monologue—first-person perspectives, in-

depth description, and opportunities to see self and others differently. In this discussion of intertwining news stories with fictional stories, Ramona distinguished between “storytelling” and “fact-telling,” arguing that the latter is strengthened by the former.

Maurice similarly positioned both news articles and dramatic monologues as grappling with complex personal and social issues through stories. Maurice described the first-person narrative inherent to dramatic monologue as a “way into” multifaceted social issue topics that journalists want to tackle with news articles. He offered an extended example about a journalistic piece on the George Foreman Grill, which in its heyday became the “go-to-stove for people experiencing homelessness” (Maurice, personal communication, August 14, 2018). When the journalist writing this story approached Foreman about his grill’s significance in homeless populations, Foreman was unaware but then shared his own experiences with hunger and food instability as a child. Maurice framed this example for the students as follows:

So, it’s journalism. So whatever your topics are that you’re working on this week, who is someone that can speak to that in the first person? First-person narratives—personal, side ways into difficult issues. I want to talk to George Foreman about hunger because he experienced it, and then you get in that door. And then you can talk about the facts and the figures and all this sort of other work that goes into journalism. Again, sort of like a restatement of that, putting complicated topics into intimate personal stories. (Personal communication, August 14, 2018)

Through his George Foreman Grill example, Maurice showed how a news article can be narrative and be factual and, as a result, more impactful for readers because the combination opens challenging issues in new, person-centered ways. Presenting journalism as including and made more powerful by personal stories is a reconstruction—literally of the inverted pyramid’s call to begin with only the most important “facts” and broadly of

how students understood their preferences for fiction and creative writing in relation to journalism.

“The Personal” and “The Social” in Journalism: Journalism as Activism. Just as Maurice worked with the students to break down these perceived boundaries between factuality and storytelling, he and the students also “blurred lines between journalism and activism” (Neason & Dalton, 2018, para. 21). Maurice acknowledged that positioning journalism in an activist stance around issues of personal and social importance “is a shift in thinking,” using the podcast medium as an example through the aforementioned article on journalists’ podcasts as shifting the genre. He shared a quote from the podcast article, situating it between activism and fact-telling:

‘Although traditional reporting emphasizes the facts,’ and I’ve bolded that because I think that’s very important about journalism, ‘and lets readers draw their own conclusions, podcasters are not shy about trying to change people's minds. We have,’ and this is a quote from someone, I think they worked at NPR [National Public Radio], ‘some pretty old school journalists, and they may bristle at the idea of journalism being activist, but I don’t. We are out there to make the world a better place, to make it more just.’ (Maurice, personal communication, August 14, 2018)

Amid the article quotes, Maurice highlighted that a fact-telling orientation to journalism—although “old-school”—is particularly constitutive of and important to the genre. But, he did so with equal attention to how those facts can be framed by the personal, in this instance a journalist’s activist agenda. Journalism as activism became the culmination of telling revealing stories and drawing on elements of creative writing like dynamism, perspective, and emotion. Maurice summed up these interrelations as “journalism can be activist. There can be a voice and call for change inside of the presentation of an issue in a journalistic way” (Maurice, personal communication, August 14, 2018).

Further Expansions: Who and What Counts as Journalism and Activism.

Students broadened reconstructions and expanded understandings even further, opening who and what counts as a journalist and as a form of activism. Tina, in an end-of-camp interview, stated the following:

Anyone can be a journalist. Like it may seem difficult, but well...as any other skills, you have to learn, but it's like writing on issues that's going on in the world and standing for a change. And that's, like, a way of becoming a journalist, standing up. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Tina did not directly reference the workshop with Maurice. However, she similarly recognized the duality of needing to understand and draw on key structures within journalism while simultaneously taking a clear stance on an issue of personal and social importance. Connecting journalism to activism made journalism more inclusive for Tina, as she offered the most challenging part as needing to “learn.” In addition to learning more about the core tenets of “traditional” journalism, a writer also necessarily learns about others, self, and the complexity of social issues in question while engaging in journalism as activism. Such multi-directional and interrelated learning then brings writers and readers together. Here again, “the personal is the political,” as journalism comes to include genre conventions as well as a writer’s aims and beliefs in the service of a broader social message and purpose.

Tina focused on how journalism as activism expands who can participate. Jasmine further opened what counts as participation in journalism and in activism. When I asked Jasmine at the camp’s end if she considered herself an activist, she first described physical activities she participated in that demonstrated her activism, i.e., rallies and marches. However, as she went on, she clarified that, “activism can go way farther than, like, just

participating in these sorts of events...I also write about things online, whether it's, like, an actual...serious paragraph or just like a random Tumblr post made to tell people" (Jasmine, personal communication, August 16, 2018). Writing, whether "serious," factual, fictional, and/or creative, is a way of engaging in activism. Journalism, as reconstructed by Jasmine, Tina, Maurice, the other campers, and me, is a shifting and more inclusive form of writing than first conceptualized by many in our space.

Maurice, the students, and I drew on our own experiences and our collective work to together more deeply understand what journalism is and could be. The liminality of the camp space, which afforded room to unpack these complex relationships and experiment with various mediums and forms, also contributed to how students moved from deconstruction to reconstruction and then to design. I will now turn to an in-depth examination of one student journalist's design work as she grappled with a complex social issue of her choosing, diversity, and with how and when to publish her work, in what spaces, and why.

Katy's Stories Across Positions and Spaces

By focusing on the multiple writing pieces that Katy composed during this writing program experience, I aim to further surface how students repositioned the journalism genre and their relationships to it as writers. In looking at Katy's work, I will push the focus of this chapter beyond the journalism summer writing camp that it has been thus far, but the writing Katy created for the program began in the camp with her news article, which then shifted across genres, mediums, modes, and other forms as we transitioned through FNW and beyond. In and across these movements, Katy drew on her personal preferences

and aims in writing and her relationships with adults/mentors and peers in the camp and in other writing contexts. These interrelations then came to include the journalism genre, as she engaged with it and presented it in different ways, in different spaces, and for different purposes. In line with these interrelations and with the expanded understanding of journalism as narrative, I will draw on a piece of my narrative analysis methodological framing to understand Katy's reconstructions and design choices.

Wortham (2001) discusses "interactional positioning" in relation to autobiographical narratives and describes the act of telling such narratives as "a performance that can position the narrator and audience in various ways" (p. 9). I extend the term in my usage of it. Katy's positionings and re-positionings included how she understood herself as a writer, how she conceptualized genre, and how she engaged with other writers. While her pieces of writing were not "autobiographical narratives" in the most direct sense, all three of the compositions I will discuss here contain aspects of her lived experience she described as significant to her: her experiences as mixed-raced person living in Philly and her experiences with losing loved ones to gun violence. I see these as autobiographical narratives (e.g., Murray, 1991). I will consider how Katy reconstructed journalism in shifting her writing and research across different pieces about these core personal and social topics. While doing so and as a result of doing so, she repositioned herself as a writer in relationship to journalism. This is in line with Wortham's (2001) explanation that such "narratives not only represent states of affairs but also accomplish social actions...autobiographical narratives foreground certain versions of self...[and] might construct or transform the self" (p. 9). Katy reconstructed journalism, repositioning

herself and the genre separately and in relation to one another—both a “social action” and shift of the self. The result is a new form of knowledge, or a transformation (Gutiérrez, 2008).

Katy’s Three Published Pieces Within and From Our Writing Program

The three pieces that Katy wrote in our camp included a news article, dramatic monologue, and poem. The news article was the piece she started first, although both the article and the dramatic monologue were being written simultaneously at later points in the camp. See Figure 6.4 below for an image of how the article appeared in the final camp newspaper publication. For a full-text version of the article, see [Appendix H](#).

Figure 6.4

Katy’s news article, “Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?” in camp newspaper



Katy titled her news article “Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?”; this was the question that guided her research and writing. In the article, she combined statistics researched during the camp with her own personal knowledge of the city to discuss how its neighborhoods remain segregated despite numeric and/or visual appearances that the city is “diverse.”

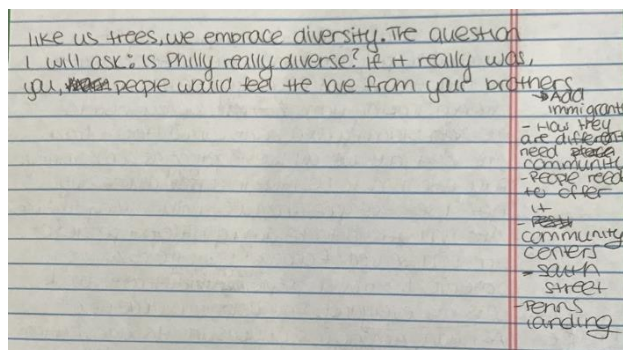
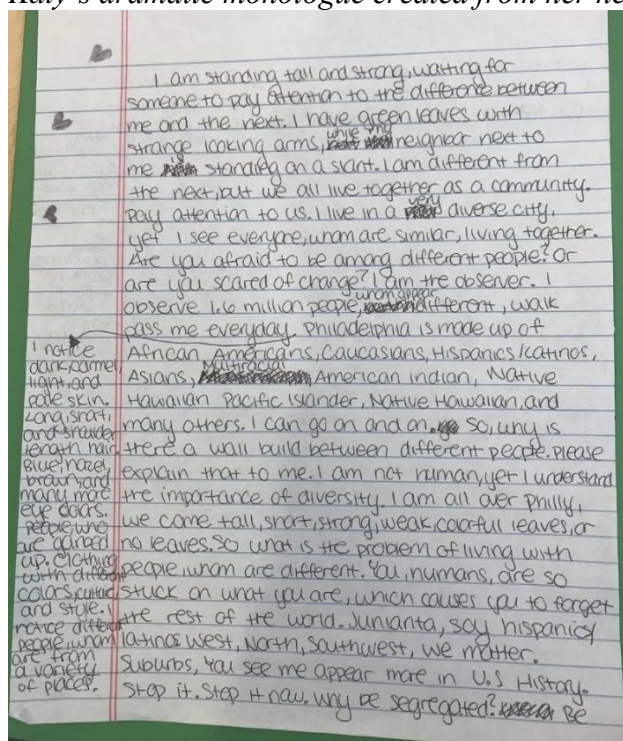
Katy concluded the piece with a potential way to encourage diversity within and across Philly's neighborhoods: by attending cultural festivals. This news article was created in response to my camp curriculum, which laid out the newspaper as a culminating publication outlet.

While composing this news article was at the core of all camp sessions, the dramatic monologue was a more finite—but nonetheless widely impactful—outcome of Maurice's workshop. Katy confirmed its impact when she chose to share the dramatic monologue she wrote during the workshop first with her peers at the workshop's conclusion and the next day on the radio broadcast. Katy had shifted her news article draft at that point into a first-“person” story meant to present the same personal and social issue of lacking diversity in Philly's neighborhoods. Katy wrote her monologue from the perspective of a tree in a Philly park. The tree comments on its ability to live amongst other trees who look and function very differently, juxtaposing that with how the people in Philly seem unable to do the same.

Her monologue incorporated some of the statistics from her news article, and it ends with a reference to both her news article title and to Philly's nickname as the “City of Brotherly Love”: “The question I will ask: is Philly really diverse? If it really was, you people would feel the love from your brothers.” See Figure 6.5 below for the full text of Katy's dramatic monologue, which only existed in handwritten form. While this monologue was also penned as a result of an in-camp adult/mentor-given task, the monologue was distinct from the news article in that there was no direct tie to publication for the monologue.

Figure 6.5

Katy's dramatic monologue created from her news article

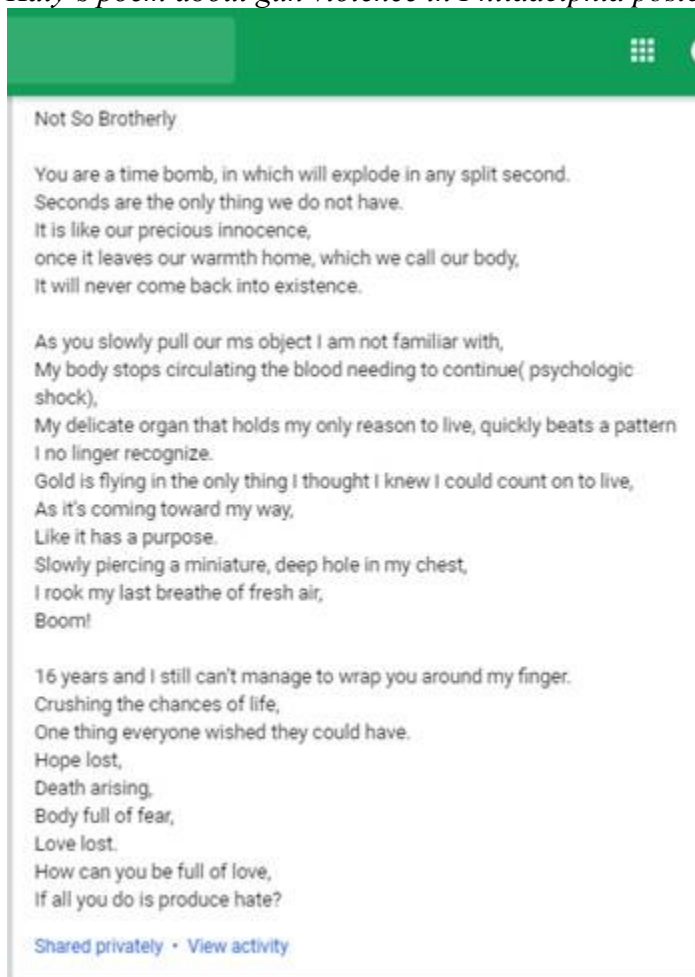


Both the monologue and the news article were created within the two-week period of the camp, but the third piece, a poem Katy wrote, was posted in W4C 11 days after the camp ended. However, the poem, “Not So Brotherly,” took up where the monologue left off: with the reference to Philly as the “City of Brotherly Love.” Katy’s poem is a slowed-down, in-depth look at an instance of gun violence in Philadelphia. It returns at the end to that contradiction of a city supposedly known for “brotherly love” that struggles with

violence, segregation, and intolerance: “How can you be full of love,/If all you do is produce hate?”. While connections to both her prior news article and monologue pieces are clear in this poem, Katy posted the poem in the W4C community outside of any camp activities or expectations and with no framing text before sharing the piece, which can be read in its entirety in Figure 6.6 below.

Figure 6.6

Katy’s poem about gun violence in Philadelphia posted in W4C on August 27th, 2018



The poem, monologue, and news article were Katy’s three published written pieces within/from the program. She also shared some of these pieces in other more aural modes

like the radio broadcast and an academic presentation we delivered together following the writing program.

I turn now to explain my use of interactional positioning in understanding how Katy was positioning herself when writing in and across spaces and forms.

Approaching Interactional Positioning in Relation to Katy's Published Pieces

I began my narrative analysis of Katy's pieces by reconstructing Wortham's (2001) definitions of interactional positioning to better fit my aims of examining Katy's intertwined, multiplicitous (re)positionings and purposes when drawing on the journalism genre and our writing spaces. As in-roads to considering interactional positioning in relation to Katy's three published pieces, I drafted the following prompts (Plummer, 2018).

- Why do you think Katy chose to share this particular piece (article, monologue, or poem) in this particular space or situation?
- How does Katy see herself in relation to the genre/medium/mode/form being drawn on in writing?
- What "social actions" does Katy accomplish by sharing this particular piece?
- What version of herself does Katy present?
- What kinds of change does Katy want to accomplish—for herself and for others?

These questions break down interactional positioning into useful questions for analysis. But, they also connect back to our expanded understandings of journalism. They are rooted in Katy's personal purposes and preferences, and they work to surface how she shifted across journalism and creative forms, told personal stories, and pushed toward social justice ends for self and others.

News Article. Although the personal is not foregrounded in Katy's article, there were still strong personal connections underlying her news piece. Diversity—and whether

or not Philly is a diverse city—held interest and implications for Katy, as she lived in the city and as she shared with Brielle and me about grappling with her own mixed-race identity; about the latter, Katy told us the following:

And then I was talking about, like, a personal thing—how, when for, like, a job application I did...it said Hispanic, African American, then some other race, and then it was like, two or more races but not Hispanic. So I wasn't sure what to pick. So I just said Hispanic because that's what I mostly am, but I'm also...African American. And then I'm Jamaican as well. Because, like, I don't know, yeah, you can't...identify. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

Katy had already submitted her news article when she had this conversation with Brielle and me about her mixed-race identity and her sense of being misrepresented/not represented. However, the connections between the topic and content of her news article and her experiences and stances is apparent.

Katy relied on statistical research rather than her personal identities and experiences in her article, where she offered, “According to Suburban Stats, Philadelphia is made up of the following racial groups: African Americans are 46%, caucasians are 41%, Hispanics/Latinos are 12%, Asians are 6%, ‘other race’ is 5%, and two or more races is 2%.” She did not place herself in any of these categories when writing her news article, nor in fact did she place herself directly anywhere in the article: no “I” statements, personal anecdotes, or quotes. But, when she included the following specific descriptions of Philly neighborhoods, her knowledge of and experiences in the city shine through:

For example, if you take a trip to Juniata and Fairhill, you will see predominantly Hispanics. If you go to Ardmore or any other suburb, you will see more caucasians. Also, Germantown and parts of Southwest, North, and West Philly are made up of predominantly African Americans.

Although not flagged as such, this is a personal as well as social example. This article was an autobiographical narrative (i.e., Murray, 1991) given Katy's own experiences with her mixed-race identity.

These personal aspects were backgrounded and only apparent after developing a relationship and engaging in discussions with Katy. Why the personal was positioned in the background of her news article emerged from a combination of traditional journalism genre conventions and the "school-like" structure of the culminating camp newspaper. Although we often discussed journalism and creative writing as connected, we largely drew on aspects of creative writing as "ways into" the hard facts of journalism, and doing so still emphasized "facts" over first-person social perspectives. This emphasis is seen in Katy including the former and not the latter. As mentioned in Chapter Five, I also pushed for all students to write and publish a news article in a culminating newspaper publication despite indications that students were less than interested in the outlet. The result was that nearly all students, including Katy, published work in the newspaper regardless of the lack of uptake around it.

While Katy did take part in these structures—of the genre and of the camp curriculum—she also repositioned them. If Katy had fully conceptualized or accepted journalism as only the "traditional" or "mainstream" approach (i.e., the inverted pyramid, the 5Ws, and the cut-test), then there would have been no room for her personalized and social action-oriented end to the article. Katy offers a potential "solution" to the lack of diversity in Philly by mentioning attendance at cultural festivals. To end with a call to social action is not "traditional" journalism and is a creative, activist move that centers her

“own ways” of approaching the task, its genre, and the issue. Katy’s news article contains reconstructions as she shifts the overarching expectations of what it meant to write her news article.

These expectations extended to her audience of newspaper readers as well, which I made clear to students included parents, teachers, and PhilWP administrators. Embedded in this framing of readers was the need for pieces to be “polished”—proofread and “final.” While Katy did publish a piece that adhered to these adult and organizational expectations, she chose not to share her article otherwise in our camp space. It was only in a post-camp, snail-mail publication that Katy was associated directly with her news article. When this is considered alongside her later voluntary monologue shares, both during the workshop and our radio broadcast, her intentionality in not sharing the news article during the camp becomes clear. The news article format and newspaper publication outlet were not in line with how Katy identified as a writer, and her purposeful distancing from them was resistance to the positioning of the genre and the camp’s assignments around it.

But, these re-positionings and resistance did not preclude meaningful engagement with the process of writing her news article. In a closing camp interview, Katy described how her research for her “Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?” article taught her a great deal about her own home city. Katy explained

...for the diversity thing...I wanted to talk about race. So and then I say, yeah, this a good topic. I didn’t even know about, like, I didn’t even realize Philly was segregated until I actually looked at the research. (Personal communication, August 16, 2018)

The autobiographical aspects of Katy’s news article—her own narrative—intertwined with the fact-telling aspects of journalism in ways that led her to “transform the self” (Wortham,

2001, p. 8) at the same time that she transformed the genre. She was interested in and stirred by what she found, and this inspiration propelled her forward with shifting this same broad personal and social topic across genres, mediums, modes, and forms, and spaces. This is a step toward metacommunicative awareness as a writer as well.

Dramatic Monologue. Katy's dramatic monologue was temporally positioned between the news article research and draft that preceded it and the W4C poem post that followed it. But, it is also positioned between the two in terms of its expansions of journalism. While the dramatic monologue by its very nature foregrounds narrative, Katy's monologue still did not feature a first-person perspective through an actual person. It was not until nearly two weeks after these in-camp writing activities that Katy directly spoke from the first-person perspective in her "Not So Brotherly" poem. However, similar to the more implicit personal aspects in her news article, Katy did weave into the dramatic monologue her personal experiences as a mixed-race Philly citizen. Her monologue centers on trees in one of the city's parks—the park remains unnamed, but Katy has more than likely walked many tree-filled parks in her home city. Katy positions pieces of herself into the trees, just as she did with her solutions of festivals in her news article.

Katy did not identify with and so chose not to share out her news article, except for in its final, "polished," and published formats (as per the camp's expectations). However, she still shifted portions of its more "traditional" journalistic approach—the fact-telling and the research—into her dramatic monologue. Once moved across genres and put into a form that she connected with more as an overall writer, Katy was eager to share those same bits of research, which were voiced in her monologue through one of those park trees:

I am the observer. I observed 1.6 million people, whom appear different, walk pass me everyday...Philadelphia is made up of African Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, multiracial, American Indian, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and many others. I can go on and on.

Katy's movements across genres and forms—journalism to the dramatic monologue—was bi-directional. She brought journalistic research into a piece of creative writing in a way that it might not often be. And, she incorporated elements of her personal experiences and her social change efforts into a news article. I conceptualize all these shifts as creative as Carlo did: Katy wrote both pieces in her “own ways,” and these ways were distinct but intertwined across forms.

Katy's initial audience for her monologue was only Maurice, me, and her fellow campers. However, she subsequently decided to try to read her monologue (rather than her news article) during our live, public radio broadcast. Katy believed in the importance of her social message and personally identified with and enjoyed the creative form of the dramatic monologue. In her choice to share the monologue, Katy brought together two of her core aims and identities as a writer: being creative and working toward social change as a journalist. The same topic of understanding and promoting diversity, with much of the same content, was made more powerful for Katy by the dramatic monologue form. She saw it as more powerful for her as the writer and more impactful for her audiences.

Katy positioned herself multiply: as a creative writer, activist, and journalist. This positioning is in line with Katy's description of herself as a poet and artist and with her journalistic career aspirations. In a one-on-one interview during our fifth FNW session, nearly three months after the above three pieces were written, Katy explained how she saw

these aspects of her writing practices and goals as intertwined. And she explained how she aims to bring them together in her future career.

...but I just want to be able to be myself and saying, like, my opinions. Like news anchors, they don't...they all talk the same way. And they don't have no like, no like feelings. Yeah, and like kind of like no personality and like I want to be able to like yeah, this is what I believe in over here. (Personal communication, November 9, 2018)

Katy simultaneously articulated an awareness of genre conventions and of her power to shift them as a writer. Katy positioned herself as a creative writer at the same time that she repositioned journalism as a genre that can and should account for that—for her personal experiences and opinions, for her creative writing preferences, and for her social justice stances.

Poem. Katy reconstructed journalism around what is personally important for her purposes: saying things in her “own ways”—in creative genres and forms—and for social change. These shifts reveal the deeply personal nature of journalism for her, particularly seen in “Not So Brotherly.” Her poem narrows to an even more personally relevant topic: gun violence. Katy shared in other pieces of writing during FNW, including college admissions essays, that she suffered losses of close friends and family members to gun violence. This comes through in her direct positioning of herself into the poem’s narrative, as in the opening line of the third and final stanza: “16 years and I still can’t manage to wrap you around my finger.” Katy’s poem bears similarities to how Maurice conceptualized the connection between dramatic monologue and journalism: the former as a way into complex social issues written in the latter. Katy’s poem offers a first-person perspective of a complicated social issue. Through the creative form of the dramatic

monologue, Katy engaged in journalism as creative and activist; she composed a first-person perspective that advocated social action be taken against gun violence.

Readers can imagine that the first-person perspective might be Katy's own given the poem narrator's age and Katy's (a rising high school junior at the time of this August 2018 posting). But Katy offered no framing commentary to her post and nowhere else described or discussed the poem's perspective. Katy's choice to not directly position herself in the poem illuminates Wortham's (2001) description of interactional positioning: "autobiographical narratives foreground certain versions of self...[and] might construct or transform the self" (p. 8). Although more tied to her person than the tree perspective in the dramatic monologue, Katy's first-person perspective in "Not So Brotherly" is still not directly embodied. By not making the poem a clear first-person narrative in the style of a dramatic monologue, she positioned the poem as creative but not fictional—"fact-telling" through storytelling. She reconstructed the journalism genre in line with how she hopes to engage in and with the field as a "professional" journalist.

Katy's choice to post this poem in W4C was entirely her own, as the camp had ended and along with it W4C expectations (i.e., "On Assignment" writing prompts). But that original connection to her camp research—exploring Philly and people's relationships in it to one another—remains apparent. Her poem remained connected to and built off her in-camp writing. All three pieces cohere around her personal goals as rooted in creative writing and social justice.

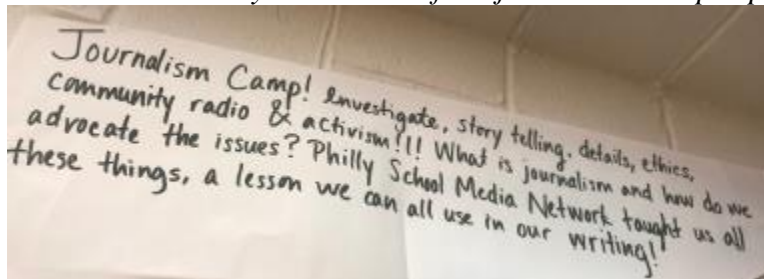
Learning from and With Katy, Maurice, and All: Through our Writing and in our Spaces

Katy moved across genres, forms, and spaces in ways that demonstrated a continued commitment to reconstructing journalism both for her own purposes and for inclusive, social-justice ends. Katy also showed how the spaces of our program were in relationship and had impacts on how she and others drew on them. These spaces include the original three that constructed our writing program—the camp, W4C, and FNW—as well as ones that emerged from them, like the Celebration of Writing and Literacy conference that Katy and I presented at together with Aaron. During the latter, both Aaron and Katy shared pieces of writing from their program experiences. Katy chose to share all three of the above-discussed pieces during that presentation, reading her news article, dramatic monologue, and poem in succession. Katy took another opportunity to present her reconstruction of journalism, this time to an academic audience, a purposeful writerly decision that points toward her metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013). Her decision to do so was also an outgrowth of her work with adults/mentors in our program spaces, individuals like Maurice who collaborated with students on engaging in *and* with journalism.

Chapter Seven: “What is journalism and how do we advocate the issues?”

Figure 7.1

Headline created by student to reflect journalism camp experience



I begin this final, culminating chapter with the words of one student from this study as captured during an activity on our final day of the journalism summer writing camp. I asked the students to create headlines to encapsulate their camp experiences, placing pieces of large sticky notes and piles of markers around the media center’s community room where we wrote and discussed and learned together over a two-week span. Although the student’s words are centered solely on the camp space, which included W4C and preceded FNW, I find the headline illustrates a number of core aspects of the program in its entirety.

In describing how we approached journalism during the camp, this student highlighted storytelling and activism, two of the expanded understandings of the genre that emerged from our deconstruction and reconstruction efforts, as discussed in Chapter Six. The student also emphasized the radio broadcast rather than the newspaper and, in fact, did not even mention the latter, surfacing one of the tensions around forms and pathways of participation as put forth by adults/mentors and youth/students that I examined in Chapter Five. And, in highlighting the radio broadcast as “community radio” and mentioning the Philly School Media Network, this student further surfaced the partnership element of this YPAR-framed study—partnerships that brought their own tensions, as also discussed in

Chapter Five. Overall, the multiple ways in which this student framed journalism and the camp experience points to the liminalities of our space, our roles and relationships, and the journalism genre; the student spoke in the collective and offered a culminating question as a “lesson,” indicative of complexity of experience and still-unfolding understandings.

In even just this brief description of the headline and of the eight-day writing camp experience it attempts to encapsulate, there are clear connections to the framings of this study, in particular an emphasis on criticality—as in critical literacies (Janks, 2000, 2004, 2010, 2012). Our time together—both this student who wrote the above headline and her program peers—extended beyond just the summer camp, however, which allowed for our deconstructions and reconstructions of youth representations and the journalism genre to be carried into other concurrent and subsequent writing spaces. And it was through the transliteracies framing also detailed along with critical literacies in Chapter Two that the students and I attempted to further understand ourselves as writers and as part of writing communities across physical and digital contexts.

In addition to the camp, these physical and digital communities included the online, adolescent, social-justice orientated W4C writing community and the school-year FNW drop-in writing workshop sessions. I conceptualized all three spaces of the writing program as in line with Gutiérrez’s (2008) notion of Third Space, emphasizing more than just physical changes to literacy learning contexts (Hull & Schultz, 2001). Also across all elements of this study’s framing, I honed in on and aimed for “transformation”—of how and where writing practices are considered appropriate and meaningful; of how and by

whom knowledge is produced and valued, and of what constitutes research and participation with and in it.

I will carry this thread of transformation through this ending chapter—although much like my discussion of the iterative nature of the design cycle (Janks, 2010) in Chapter Two, this work has not come to an end. In the sections that follow, I will expand further on Chapters Four, Five, and Six as the data analysis chapters of this study, unpacking what was arrived at within them and then thinking through what they point me, the students, and other literacy researchers, educators, and learners toward as possible next steps in continuing to push on spaces for writing, genres and practices of writing, and perspectives in literacy education and research.

Further Discussion of Findings: Unfolding Implications

The broad areas looked at in each data chapter were mentioned above: Chapter Four on the liminalities of our program spaces and relationships, Chapter Five on the productive tensions that emerged from those liminalities, and Chapter Six on the intersections of our liminal spaces and relationships with the genre of journalism. These foci and the findings that surfaced within each were, however, also emergent from my initial research questions. As such, I will frame this discussion of my findings and their still unfolding implications through my research questions, which are detailed below.

To work toward addressing my research questions, I collected a variety of data, both on my own as an educator-facilitator and with students; data sources are discussed in depth in Chapter Three and include field notes; open-ended reflective surveys; audio-recorded group discussions; semi-structured interviews; and various multimodal student-

created artifacts across written, aural, and video modes and in digital and physical forms. YPAR (Mirra, Garcia, & Morrell, 2016) informed my data collection as well as data analysis efforts, with some forms of data, including curriculum materials, analyzed directly with students. Those curriculum materials were also conceptualized through a YPAR framing, making this participatory aspect both epistemological and methodological. Given the centrality of YPAR to this study, questions about the participatory framing and about students' forms of participation emerged as particularly significant across all findings. A central tension that continues to surface is how my educator-facilitator framings and preconceptions impacted and intersected with students' own aims and pathways of participation in the program. How this underlying tension played out across spaces, genres, and student writing will be made clearer in the implications below.

I will begin the subsections that follow by reiterating each of my research questions in relation to its particular areas of examination and the new understandings that surfaced from the question(s). Then, I will look across the questions for implications that came from thinking through all the findings together.

Unpacking Participation and Relationships in Liminal Spaces and Participatory Work

My first research question, with its sub-question, is listed below; I conceptualized this line of inquiry—and the insights it fostered—as centered on what “participation” means when co-creating and writing in liminal spaces and within a participatory framing. This look into participation considers not just how individual students navigated movements and made choices, as how they did so is necessarily impacted by the relationships they did or did not develop with peers and adults/mentors—me included—in

and across the writing spaces of the program. These interplays between the individual/personal and the collective aspects of participation are reflected in this first set of research questions:

- In what ways does a YPAR-infused curriculum focused on journalism impact youth perspectives on writing for change?
 - How do students understand and experience “participation” in literacy learning environments?
 - How do different adult roles (facilitator, community members, professional journalists, etc.) shape students’ practices and understandings about writing?

These questions recognize the influence that I had upon the study in creating the journalism-centered curriculum and inviting other adults/mentors into the various spaces, as I aimed to ask how spaces—and participation in them—can unfold with attention to power asymmetries. The above questions also hone in on the collective—how students collectively navigated the adult/mentor-youth/student interactions, the curricular elements, the peer relationships, and the overall affordances and constraints of each space as both “school-like” but not in schools.

In Chapter Five, I draw on an interview with Serena to bring forth these collective, collaborative dimensions of participation. Serena described her experience with the journalism summer writing camp’s radio broadcast—a broadcast she did not “participate” in through speaking on the air or even picking music for the show. Serena watched the show unfold through glass windows in the room adjacent to the radio studio. But in a months-later FNW session, she used “we” when discussing her reactions to and suggestions for ameliorating the disappointment Katy felt in working with Vivian, the radio show host/camp mentor. By participating in the camp experience more broadly, Serena still

participated in the broadcast in ways that she could offer feedback from and feel connected to peers around too. For the six days leading up to the camp broadcast, all the campers, me, and the other adult mentors—including Vivian—interacted within our camp space with a shared goal of preparing for the radio broadcast. Although Vivian, other partners from the community media center, and I were the ones who conceptualized the broadcast as a publication outlet, our collaborative work with the campers to create it meant that we all collectively engaged in and with the show and were part of the broadcast by having been part of the camp, as Serena was. Serena then demonstrates the need to expand “what counts” as participation, both individual and collective, and particularly how passive or silent forms of participation are still experienced by students as meaningful and powerful and worth sharing out, as Serena did with me around the radio broadcast.

That this finding around collective forms of participation stemmed from a negative experience between a youth/student, Katy, and an adult/mentor, Vivian, is important to highlight as well. I argue in Chapter Five that such tensions can become productive sources of learning for self and others when critically unpacked with those also participating in the space. This is seen in Serena’s collaborative reflections on Katy’s individual experience. In bringing this framing of tensions to the fore, I want to clarify that negative moments are still negative even after unpacking them directly. Similar to how Janks (2010) cautions about viewing critical literacy as deconstruction alone, I too want to take note that being critical about an emergent experience does not neutralize it. It can, however, transform it into a helpful site of reflection, new knowledge, and stronger collective relationships despite the negativity.

In this broad goal to see and understand how we experienced and unfolded these writing spaces together—how we participated collectively—it remains necessary to recognize too that how we all participated in the spaces was also experienced individually. Participation in participatory work and in liminal spaces like ours is simultaneously individual and collective in ways that are at times overlooked in YPAR, where focus tends toward the collective “action” of youth participating as a group. Rather than attempt to paint individual pictures of participation or personal trajectories from within the whole, researchers aiming to engage in participatory work—like me—often describe the whole, focusing on tasks we all “do” as that whole. My fixation on the summer camp’s newspaper publication despite students’ lack of collective interest, as discussed within Chapter Five, is a prime example of this emphasis on the collective at the expense of the individual. I then worked to address the discomfort that surfaced around creating a newspaper publication directly with students, as also described in Chapter Five. Through looking more closely with students at moments of misunderstanding and tensions that emerged throughout our work together in the participatory framing, I came to understand that there are individual experiences and trajectories within broader, collaborative, participatory work. Both individual and collective social practices contribute to understanding participation and the participatory in literacy learning and research. In fact, it is these social practices that come to constitute and re-create writing spaces and the writing and relationships within them. Participatory research can and even should follow these individual and interconnected pathways around participation, writing, relationship-building, and research, and the latter is not policed—“what counts”—in liminal spaces.

This necessary intertwining of the individual and the collective is indicative of the liminality that both undergirded and surfaced within our writing spaces, in particular the multiplicities discussed in Chapter Four. Our liminal spaces were characterized by the simultaneous unfolding of students as both sole and co-inquirers, following their own pathways for participation and engagement with writing practices and forms and, in so doing, contributing to collective, collaborative creations of writing and of our writing spaces. Such interplays—between self and others, students and adults, ways and goals for writing, and more—are organic: they cannot be planned for, they continually shift, and they often sit in tensions. And, these tensions necessitate a sort of improvisational space, one that is continuously contingent as it is made and remade by the writing, participation, and relationships that constitute it.

Engaging in and with Digital Writing and Youth Activism

The above ideas center on expanding “what counts” as a writing space, as research, and/or as “participation” in each. Similar tensions and new understandings around participation surfaced in relation to digital writing practices, particularly as they pertain to the journalism genre, during our writing program. Jasmine, as discussed in Chapter Four, spoke to me during a FNW session about how she continually participated in the W4C online writing community but did so without posting or “liking” others’ posts, which would have been the only openly notable ways for me (and others in W4C) to “see” her participation. Jasmine instead explained the power of W4C for her as through reading, scrolling, and taking in what other people posted to “enjoy other people’s writing” and to get inspiration for her own writing (Personal communication, October 26, 2018). This piece

of data also connects digital writing and youth activism to discussions of participation in adult-framed spaces and studies because W4C was a closed educational network moderated by students' educators. The educators connected students to the network, and adult facilitators involved in educational research facilitated the community; I was in a role that did both. But, Jasmine's description of her participation also connects to my second research question below, where I again see preconceptions in how I was framing digital writing in our program: as "tools" I was providing—in particular W4C and Flipgrid—that would be taken up by students for activist purposes.

- How do students in a journalism program utilize digital tools in relation to their efforts as activist writers?

I imagined that both W4C and Flipgrid would function as social networks of sorts both during the journalism camp in which they were introduced and after. That this did not happen in either writing platform has implications for participation more broadly in participatory research but also for my educator preconceptions of students' digital writing practices and engagement in and with journalism. I believe these preconceptions and these impacts on participation are issues educators more widely also grapple with in their literacy learning contexts.

As touched on in Chapter Two's literature review subsection on digital writing, there remains a tendency for educators to approach students' digital writing practices as only opportunities to seize upon for academic success: "as a bridge to 'real' academic learning" rather than "as rich sites of intellectual inquiry" (Ghiso, 2016, p. 10). The latter is in line with the elements of YPAR that framed this study and with seeing students as engaging in transformations of literacy learning and knowledge production and in writing

approaches (individually and collectively). I wanted to learn more about students' digital writing practices—how did they write digitally, where, when, why—and about how those practices related to what I was hearing and reading and seeing about student activism in journalistic media locally and globally.

In relation to these aims, I imagined that W4C would be a space where students could write and talk about social justice of interest to them with local and global peers. But, as seen in Chapter Five, I drew on school-like structures in attempting to facilitate and foster participation, giving daily writing prompts as an “On Assignment” piece of the camp syllabus/curriculum. Students expressed in interviews that they felt my approach positioned W4C as a school-like, performative space for only the specific journalistic writing being done in the camp. This led students to also feel that W4C was not a space in which they could be creative—it was a place to answer my prompts and to perhaps engage “off the radar” in ways Jasmine described. In a journalism camp where I was working with students to expand understandings of and representations in journalistic writing and youth activism more broadly, I was simultaneously pushing students into the same binaries I thought I was pushing back against: in-school versus out-of-school, creative versus “academic,” etc. But, this realization is not one without its complexity, as I continue to wonder how to foster spaces where such engagement among students around issues of personal importance would be able to emerge in literacy learning. My grapplings with this question were also connected to the liminalities of our writing spaces, as it was often very unclear and contingent if or when to draw on certain structures for learning and writing or not.

I did frame many of the elements of the journalism summer writing camp as “choices”—whether or not to post in W4C, what topic to choose for a news article, etc.—and students then made choices in relation to them, like when Brielle described “not liking the task” of posting in W4C and, therefore, choosing to not post—as also discussed in Chapters Four and Five. I approached all choices and forms of engagement as participatory in that both the students and I could learn about writing and ourselves as writers from them. But, I find myself rethinking how I conceived of the camp curriculum as based on a participatory framing around choices. Creating writing forms and outlets and culminating experiences *for* students as opportunities to amplify their voices, which is what I did along with a number of other adults/mentors, literacy organizations, and schools, is not the same as truly co-constructing opportunities *with* youth in and through which they amplify their voices. I understand the latter to be participatory research.

Participatory work takes an extended period of time to unfold, during which grounding, mutual relationships can form and shared interests and courses of action can be truly collaboratively developed and then taken up. This is not to say that educator-facilitators cannot create curriculum and/or are not important to the unfolding of participatory work. The choices that come from curriculum are still impacted by that curriculum, but those choices can be arrived at through students’ own aims and efforts. But, arriving at truly student-centered, participatory work requires the co-creation of not just liminal writing spaces but writing communities—communities in which power asymmetries are critically examined and adult/youth relationships are shifted and continually shift. Such collaborative community-building in liminal writing spaces is made

more possible by participatory ethnography, a research methodology that unfolds with youth over lengthy time periods and multiple iterations of a space (i.e., Plummer et al., 2019) in ways that emphasize relationship- and goal-building first such that authentic writing practices and individual and shared goals can surface. In the spaces of our writing program—particularly the journalism camp—digital writing practices and conceptualizations of and engagement with the journalism genre emerged as key choices for space co-creation and for individual and collective participation in the spaces. In order for students to engage with an educational digital writing platform like W4C in ways truly of their own choosing, there needed to be time spent and relationships forged within and across our writing spaces—time to bring in the personal rather than simply complete the academic task, as Brielle indicated during a camp interview.

After the camp concluded, there was a significant uptick in students from the camp posting in W4C; out of 50 total posts from students in the writing program, 29 of them occurred after the journalism camp (students were connected to the program during the camp). This is a form of movement away from the “bridge to ‘real’ academic learning” (Ghiso, 2016, p. 10) mentioned above, as students shifted their understandings about writing and their participation in W4C in clearly intertwined ways of their own choosing. The postings after the camp did not come from any prompting; they include, for example, Katy’s “Not So Brotherly” poem about gun violence in Philly, a narrowing of her original camp topic for her newspaper article. That original camp topic was also an outgrowth of her own mixed-raced identity, as described more in Chapter Six. Her digital writing

practice of posting that poem in W4C was, I believe, an activist act and an engagement with the community in the ways similar to those I had originally envisioned.

Educators and researchers need to engage in these critical examinations of choices *with* youth such that both youth and educators/researchers can learn more about their own and others' writing practices and the constraints and affordances of particular writing spaces, particularly digital ones. This points to metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013), as touched on in Chapter Two's framings and in Chapter Six's discussions, as a key source of knowledge transformation that can be surfaced in liminal writing spaces in relation to individual and collective social practices around writing and participation in writing spaces and communities. Metacommunicative awareness is also an implication of this study that cuts across all the research question areas, as will be discussed below.

Centering Students' Inquiries and Mobilities

Participatory research—or any kind of collaborative work—with youth requires attention to power asymmetries around this notion of choices in literacy learning environments. In my third research question, as seen below, I position “choice” in relation to my overarching aim to center students' inquiries—especially with attention to students' writing as it shifted across spaces, modes, and genres of writing.

- What are the choices these students make and the practices they engage in as their writing moves across contexts?

I wanted to know what students did and did not do as writers in different contexts and why. And I understood that their approaches and their pieces of writing would be impacted by my choices as they made their own or did not or could not. Their choices as I saw and/or discussed them were made in direct interaction with choices I had also made in framing

the experience. And while this is a recognition—albeit a tactic one—of the sorts of power asymmetries just mentioned as in need of critical examination *with* youth, this research question still lacks recognition of student agency in relation to “choice.”

Just as I attempt to push back against dichotomizing contexts and practices for writing and literacy learning through liminality, I also want to resist the tendency here to frame findings and think through implications in terms of how students’ choices played out against my own envisionings (e.g., when I was creating curriculum). Doing so detracts from students as the center of knowledge transformation in our spaces. Rather than wondering how students reacted to my organizational and resource selections as educator-facilitator of the program spaces and overall experience, I should have instead asked about what the students could teach me—and other educators, researchers, students, and community members—about writing and writing spaces and, in our contexts, about the journalism genre in particular.

In Chapter Six, I surface how students expressed in interviews at the end of the journalism summer writing camp that their understandings of journalism as a genre had shifted. Students articulated new conceptualizations of their journalistic writing endeavors as rooted in the personal—as creative, centered on stories, and activist in nature. Students like Katy and Jasmine and many others often described in camp and FNW interviews that they wrote about social issues so that their opinions, perspectives, and voices could be heard. And, they connected their writing directly to activism, as in Chapter Six when Jasmine said “activism can go way farther than, like, just participating in...events...I also write about things online, whether it’s, like, an actual...serious paragraph or just like a

random Tumblr post made to tell people” (Personal communication, August 16, 2018). Students not only made their own connections between their writing and social change, but they were already engaging in the types of writing we surfaced as journalistic in our camp space: citizen, digital journalism across forms, genres, and contexts aimed at making impacts on the sorts of systemic issues mentioned in the introduction as well as the literature review and returned to in closing here. By emphasizing how students were already engaging as writers alongside how they were expanding their practices and understandings around writing through individual and collective engagement in our writing spaces, I aim to highlight that students’ inquiries during our writing program were built with resources they already brought to journalism and to writing writ large. Students were re-positioning the genre as we examined how it was positioning them, as through the design cycle activity (Janks, 2010) around youth activism headlines in Chapter Six.

Students’ personal experiences and funds of knowledge (Moll, et al., 1992) deeply influenced such forms of engagement with the journalism genre during our camp and beyond, highlighting students’ cultural, intellectual, and writerly resources and showcasing journalistic writing as, therefore, a social practice. Just as I earlier described our liminal writing spaces as organic in their unfolding, so too were our critical examinations and varied practices *in* and *with* journalism. Even when we recognized journalism as a blended or shifting genre, particularly as it pertains to the digital realm and to youth activism, we still also recognized it as fixed somehow: we were simply pushing away from the particulars of the processes, structures, and expectations of journalism. By emphasizing the dynamic, “living” nature of practicing journalism as social action—instead of discussing

how we engage with “the” singular genre of journalism in “new” ways, even when those shifts are significant—we can center students’ inquiries *and* students’ capital as change-makers and writers writ large. The question to explore then becomes what can we all learn from students about how we write and read journalistically and more broadly, how we engage with our audiences and communities, and how we can envision new ways of learning and collaborating in varied literacy learning contexts and in educational research across those contexts.

This emphasis on journalism as a social literacy practice rather than as a form of disciplinary literacy returns to earlier mentions of metacommunicative awareness (Shipka, 2013). Rather than approach such awareness as purely cognitive and process-focused in terms of particular genre conventions, metacommunicative awareness can and should also focus on the social: on the individual and collective practices in a writing space that contribute to how we approach and engage in and with a genre, a community of writers, and the broader social world. Students, educators, and researchers can then gain deeper understandings of how and why they and others write, participate, and form relationships across contexts and spaces, peers and mentors, genres and forms, and purposes and goals.

Implications Across Questions. I believe that such approaches to metacommunicative awareness as rhetorical dexterity can—and even should be—at the core of all research into writing teaching and learning. And, relatedly, emphasizing such rhetorical dexterity can and should be a foundational goal of literacy education and research. If we center awareness of and direct discussion about the choices we have to make and that we can and cannot and do and do not make and about motivations we have

and practices we engage in as writers *with* youth, writing further becomes a way for youth to amplify their voices about issues important to them and about conventions, practices, and representations in and around writing. Working toward metacommunicative awareness that is attuned to the social practices that both constitute and shift writing genres and practices and participation in writing spaces and communities necessitates not only intertwining all sources and forms of knowledge, i.e., personal, social, and academic, but centering the former in the latter. Metacommunicative awareness then becomes about more than particular convention choices to encompass awareness of one's own and others' social practices and of the resources that each can bring separately but especially together.

Across the spaces of our writing program—the journalism summer writing camp, the W4C online writing community, and the FNW school-year sessions—students had direct opportunities to consider where they wanted to publish a piece and why and what the impact of doing that would be—for example, whether they wanted to publish a dramatic monologue in the newspaper, why, and how that might have been received. Students in our writing program did have these sorts of choices around how they wanted to make their voices heard in particular moments or outlets that I largely conceptualized. But, how would students have chosen to write, publish, and otherwise participate if there had been less pre-conceived/-determined for them? This was a notion that I began to explore in field notes (i.e., in Chapter Five) as a source of struggle around my own discomfort with offering topic choices instead of truly letting choices meaningful for students emerge, as indicative of the sorts of participatory work I had problematically envisioned and that I now understand as necessitating a more ethnographic stance toward community building. In order to view

metacommunicative awareness as equally attuned to the social aspects of writing, we must approach students as co-inquirers into writing genres, practices, and representations and as co-creators of the writing spaces in which we do that shared inquiry work alongside individual inquiries of our own choosing. And, importantly, we must also approach students as inquirers and creators who already bring myriad resources and understandings that can help us grow as individual writers and as communities of writers focused on social change.

Future Directions

This argument for opening forms of knowledge and spaces for different forms and for centering rhetorical dexterity as the goal of writing teaching, learning, and research requires building writing spaces alongside and with students. Doing so, in turn, requires extended engagement with one another and with and in our literacy learning spaces. Long-term, more immersive engagement that is central to ethnographic research was not an aspect of this six-month study. But, I do see strong connections between YPAR research and ethnographic research in how both attempt to center the perspectives of “participants”; this is work that I engaged in as part of a research team while at PennGSE—work that I also mentioned in Chapter One’s opening. Participatory ethnography (e.g., Plummer, et al., 2019) has the potential to foreground the individual and the collective and to surface new understandings about participation and creating.

Engaging in participatory forms of analysis with young people—about the stories they both consume and produce, as seen below in Figure 7.2 and in the same image in the

opening chapter—is a line of research I hope to continue. We must ask *with* students why it is that some young people’s stories circulate and some do not.

Figure 7.2

International news article about uptakes of student activism



In addition to participatory ethnography, I also see participatory narrative analysis (Plummer, 2018) as a future methodological direction for both centering and critically engaging with such youth voices. Participatory narrative analysis is a form of narrative analysis similar to that in which I engaged in myself in Chapter Six around Katy’s multiple writing pieces. Drawing on Wortham’s (2001) definition of interactional positioning in approaching a text and breaking it down into discussion and/or writing prompts like those I offered in Chapter Six could be a form of engagement in literacy learning contexts and/or literacy research *with* students from which metacommunicative awareness could surface, particularly if the texts examined are by the youth themselves. I stopped short of engaging in this collaborative analysis with Katy for reasons I still need to reflexively interrogate,

but it is my aim to draw on participatory narrative analysis with adolescent writers like Katy (and perhaps even with Katy) in the future.

Writing situates youth in particular ways, which in turn impacts what youth see as possible for themselves—as writers, researchers, learners, and civically-involved people. Research into and teaching and learning around writing are spaces to explore these realities collaboratively.

Appendices

Appendix A

Journalism summer writing camp syllabus

Week One: August 6-August 9, 2018

Monday, August 6	Tuesday, August 7	Wednesday, August 8	Thursday, August 9
Journalism as Activism	"Newsworthiness"	The "Local" and the "Global"	Journalistic "Sources"
<i>Guiding Question:</i> What does it mean to write for change?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> What makes an issue or story "newsworthy"?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> How can we engage audiences when writing news?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> How do journalists select and draw on sources?
<i>Sub-questions:</i> What is the purpose/role of journalism?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> What are the issues impacting our communities? Which are most interesting to other students, community members, etc.? Which are most researchable?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> What is the relationship between the "local" and the "global" when writing news articles?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> What are some of the issues surrounding journalistic ethics and sources? (e.g. "off the record")
Connect to W4C community	Brainstorm/choose topics	Choose topics/begin research	Select sources/research topics
Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Icebreaker (Journalists' Jumble/"Write" Bingo) -Overview of Week (10:30-10:45) -Write4Change (W4C) discussion & sign-up (10:45-11:15) -Break: 11:15-11:30 -" Think like a journalist " photography walk activity from Pulitzer Center (11:30-12:30) -Tour of community media center with local community media center Youth Media Coordinator (12:30-1:00) -Wrap-up/review "assignment" (1:00-1:30)	Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Criminal mystery/write "report" - What's newsworthy in your schools/communities? Brainstorm/discussion (10:30-11:00) -Tour of community media center radio studio and preparation for live radio show Wednesday, 08/15 with local community media center Radio Station Manager (11:00-12:00) -Break: 12:00-12:15 -Work to determine topics/develop articles (12:15-1:15) -Wrap-up/review "assignment" (1:15-1:30)	Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Question Generator (then look up questions to ask speaker) -Mini-lesson on key journalism terms & structures (10:30-11:00) -Guest speaker International journalist, The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting Q&A on local/global angles of research topics (11:00-11:30) -Break: 11:30-11:45 -Introduce "log" assignment/Discuss potential ways to log research (11:45-12:00) -Work to narrow topics/begin research (12:00-1:15) • Speaker stays to give feedback -Wrap-up/review "assignment" (1:15-1:30)	Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Interview activity, part one -Work to brainstorm people to interview and continue research (10:30-11:00) -Guest speaker Editor and Education Reporter, WHY? to discuss sources (11:00-11:30) and to give tour of WHY (11:30-12:45) -12:45-1:00 walk back -Break: 1:00-1:15 -Wrap-up/review assignment (1:15-1:30)
"On Assignment": >Do a "think like a journalist" photography walk in your own neighborhood. Take and post three pictures of your neighborhood, and explain how each picture represents a larger concern in your community. >News article due by Wednesday, 08/15	"On Assignment": >Post in W4C a news article you find online that is "interesting" to you. Explain why it is "interesting"/"newsworthy" to you and/or to others. >News article due by Wednesday, 08/15	"On Assignment": >Choose 1 research method from our class brainstorm (or your own idea). Try it with your topic. Post about your process in W4C. >Log your research. >News article due by Wednesday, 08/15	"On Assignment": >Find someone in W4C not from our camp that has written about a topic similar to yours. Reach out to them to ask for ideas about sources. >Log your research. >News article due by Wednesday, 08/15

Week Two: August 13-August 16, 2018

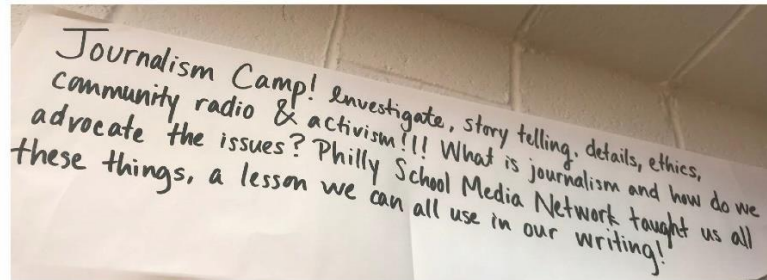
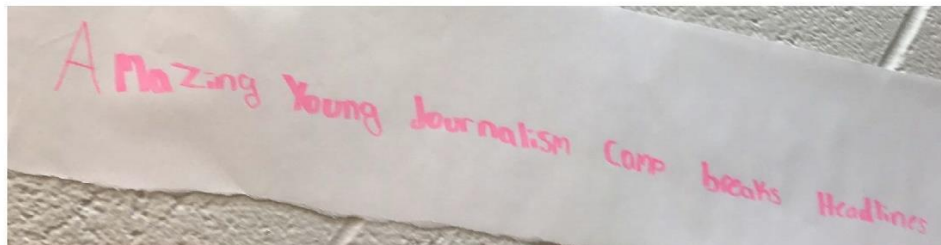
Monday, August 13	Tuesday, August 14	Wednesday, August 15	Thursday, August 16
Journalistic Ethics	Genres of Journalism	Publication of News Writing	Student Journalists
<i>Guiding Question:</i> What does it mean to be ethical when writing news?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> What are the various genres and forms of journalism?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> How do we prepare a piece of newswriting for publication?	<i>Guiding Question:</i> How can school/student newspapers create change?
<i>Sub-questions:</i> In what ways does the internet/technology complicate journalistic ethics? How do ethical issues impact student journalism specifically?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> How do digital tools impact who writes news and how?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> How do you balance disciplinary/genre conventions with personal voice when writing?	<i>Sub-questions:</i> What kinds of change do you <i>think</i> your writing <i>can</i> or <i>will</i> have? What kinds of change do you <i>hope</i> it will create?
Research topics/write articles	Write articles	Edit articles/Broadcast	Celebrate/reflect/plan for school year
Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Interview activity, part two -Question-Connection-Surprise on ethics/representations using news articles (10:30-11:10) — What are some of the issues surrounding journalistic ethics and sources? — In what ways does the internet/technology complicate journalistic ethics? — How do ethical issues impact student journalism specifically? - Ethics Scenarios “Get Off the Fence” (11:10-11:30) -Break: 11:30-11:45 -Guest speaker Contributing Editor, local education newspaper to discuss ethics (11:45-12:15) -Work on articles (12:15-1:15) -Wrap-up/review assignment (1:15-1:30)	Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Choose an episode of <i>Mouthful</i> podcast—listen and write reflection -Guest speaker Connectivity Manager, Producer Philadelphia Young Playwrights to discuss and engage with journalism across genres and “writing for the ear” (10:30-1:15*) *Break: 11:45-12:00 -Wrap-up/review assignment (1:15-1:30)	Activities: -Writing Opener (10:00-10:30): Write a tweet and/or a headline about your journalism camp experience so far. -Guest speaker Staff Reporter/Photographer, local education newspaper to discuss editing/publication process (10:30-11:00) -Rehearsal for live radio show with local community media center Radio Station Manager (11:00-12:00) -“Youth Takeover” live radio show/sharing of news articles with local community media center Radio Station Manager (12:00-1:00) -Break: 1:00-1:15 -Wrap-up/review assignment (1:15-1:30)	Activities: -Celebration (10:00-10:30): Donuts/picture slideshow/etc. -Writing Opener (10:30-11:15): Activism “ Headline Omissions ” activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of diction and impact • Discussion of ethics of representation of student activism in the news <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. using Blades article and Ubiñas article -Guest speaker Editor in Chief, local university newspaper to discuss student publications (11:15-11:45) -Break: 11:45-12:00 -Collaboratively create newspaper publication (12:00-1:00) -Wrap-up/debrief/plan future meeting dates planning (12:30-1:30)
“On Assignment”: >Post in W4C an article you find about journalistic ethics. Explain how it relates to your topic/research. >Log your research >News article due Wednesday, 08/15	“On Assignment”: >Write your news article as a Tweet. Post in W4C. >Log your research >News article due Wednesday, 08/15	“On Assignment”: >Post in W4C the headline for your news article—but not your article. Ask people in the community to tell you what they think your article is about/includes and why.	

Journalism summer writing camp newspaper publication, *Young Writers Time*



Issue I

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Cover designed with the help of student journalist Shayna



Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?

Katy

Imagine walking down the streets of downtown Philadelphia, which is a very crowded area. As you are walking, people are accidentally bumping into you because there is not enough room for them to walk on the concrete sidewalk. Once you take a look at your surroundings, you notice different kinds of people, from their skin color to their clothes and hair. No one looks or talks exactly the same.

Philadelphia is the largest city in Pennsylvania, with a population of approximately 1.6 million between the years of 2017 and 2018. Since Philadelphia is the largest city, it includes one of the most diverse communities. According to Suburban Stats, Philadelphia is made up of the following racial groups: African Americans are 46%, caucasians are 41%, Hispanics/Latinos are 12%, Asians are 6%, "other race" is 5%, and two or more races is 2%. In addition, American Indian, three or more races, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian are below

1%. Although Philadelphia includes many racial groups, is it really diverse?

There are a great amount of different places in Philadelphia that many people are unaware of because it's such a large city. However, one thing you may notice is the segregation of certain races in specific neighborhoods. For example, if you take a trip to Juniata and Fairhill, you will see predominantly Hispanics. If you go to Ardmore or any other suburb, you will see more caucasians. Also, Germantown and parts of Southwest, North, and West Philly are made up of predominantly African Americans.

The segregation in these areas and others are the reasons why stereotypes are often created about the different racial groups. Since some neighborhoods are predominantly one race, the people of outside races start to create information about that ethnicity because they are ignorant to that culture. In order to understand one culture, you have to be around it. So, is Philadelphia really diverse?

The answer is no because Philadelphia may have a lot of people with different ethnicities, but people often end up living with their own ethnicity and nothing more.

The solution to this social issue is quite simple. There are many local organizations that people may join in their communities. Also, events occur in South Philly where people can come and gather with other people. For example, the Odunde Festival in South Philly brings awareness to the African culture, yet people from different cultures come to that event. People buy clothes, food, jewelry, etc. from the African culture. Towards the end of the festival, music is played to bring the whole community as one.

Also, Penn's Landing has so many diverse festivals, in which everyone is welcome to come. It has festivals for Hispanics, African Americans, the LGBT community, etc. At the festivals, people come together to eat, dance, and communicate with different cultures. For example, at the Hispanic Festival there were people who were and were not Hispanic dancing the salsa and bachata. You don't have to belong to a certain race to go to one of these festivals; instead you can go to support and become more knowledgeable. With the help of these festivals and people coming together as one, Philadelphia will actually become diverse.



Philly: Is it Becoming a Sanctuary City?

Brielle

Listen, can you hear the sounds around you? Can you hear the loudness of the city? But the real question is, can you hear the tick of time, the heavy breaths, the shaking eyes, and the whispers of the heart? Many

undocumented immigrants view Philly as a city for a beginning, something new, somewhere safe to start a home: a city where dreams are nurtured. But is it really?

Philly has always been battling between being a sanctuary city or not, but

what does “sanctuary” mean? Sanctuary means that the city limits its cooperation with the national government's effort to enforce immigration law. This creates a place of safety for immigrants that are undocumented or without legal status.

Although Philly is a city made of many immigrants, we still have this ongoing battle to protect the people and treat each other like humans. The city has had incidents in which Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has arrested people without warrant, and people have not spoken out or reached out to police to ask for help out of fear. Although the time seems grim for undocumented immigrants, there are community organizations like Juntos that are helping immigrants. Olivia Vásquez, a former community organizer for Juntos, says to all immigrants, “We have always been deported. Yes, the chances increase under the Trump administration, but that does not mean we stop. I want them to remember two things, and one is that you are not alone and to not be afraid. We have to stay together and continue to fight.”

On July 28, 2018, Mayor Kenney did not renew the contract that allows federal ICE agents to access a key law-enforcement database known as PARS and use that information against undocumented but otherwise law-abiding immigrants in Philadelphia.

“I cannot in good conscience allow the agreement to continue,” he said.

A Dangerous Divide

Katerina

Just as red and gold are staple colors of Chinese culture, so is black. Black is associated with negative subjects such as death and bad luck, a mentality that carries over to how skin tones are viewed.

Philly will also be offering municipal IDs to anyone who does not have one. A municipal ID, or a city ID, allows a person to have access to everyday citizen needs. In Philly it pertains to getting groceries from food pantries, treatment for drug addiction, entry to City Hall, entry to municipal buildings, and possibly more. The cards will be issued to anyone 13 and above to provide some form of identification when asked. They will cost probably around \$10-\$15 judging from Chicago's price.

However, there is a big controversy. With the municipal IDs being provided in the most ideal situations, the people who would most likely apply for them are the undocumented. If they were stopped by ICE and asked to take out their IDs that might create a problem; considering that most Philadelphians would have a PA state ID, having a city ID would hint that the person is possibly undocumented, possibly making it easier for ICE to identify them. On the other hand, many people argue that Philadelphia is on its way to becoming a sanctuary city and that this is a first step to help people.

Meeting interesting people with interesting background

In Asia, people with darker skin tones are largely looked down upon with the connotations of being poor, ugly, and as among the commoners. In the past, poor farmers tanned as they worked long hours under the sun while the rich and powerful largely stayed pale from being inside and not needing to do manual labor. As with most other cultures, these outdated

associations with skin color haven't left modern culture. There are many rampant stereotypes about dark-skinned people fueled by the Asian media's constant portrayal of dark-skinned villains and dumb comic relief characters. Characters who are smart and "good," on the other hand, like princesses and love interests, are mostly pale. Pale skin is such a standard of beauty in Asia that harmful skin bleach is a popular cosmetic product, always marketed with the claim that beauty comes from light skin only.

As Asians began immigrating to America, the Asian cultural divide between light and dark skin combined dangerously with the "model minority" mindset. The "model minority" label separates Asian immigrants from other American minorities, namely African Americans, by claiming that with their hard work and quiet nature, Asians are the ideal minority that others should live up to. Not only does this stereotype box Asian Americans into a certain standard that makes it easier to ignore and dismiss them, it also began as another way for white Americans to oppress and belittle other minorities such as blacks and Latinos.

The "model minority" standard takes toxic cultural mindsets about skin color and feeds off of them to divide minorities further to the benefit of the white majority. If minorities are separated, they are not able to band together, and they are kept as separate, smaller voices that are easier to silence as compared to one unified crowd.

In 2009, animosity between the black and Asian student populations of South Philadelphia High School grew to the point that a group of mainly black students organized an attack on over 30 Asian students, resulting in some having to be hospitalized for the physical assault. The story made headlines around the country

after Asian South Philly students retaliated with a week-long boycott of the school, stating that the school had known about the growing tension between the black and Asian student communities and did nothing to help. With new administrative staff in the years following, the school began an intensive effort to integrate the students better, including having workshops on self defense and no longer separating immigrant students on a separate floor from the rest of the student body. Now, almost ten years later, the school is still well known for its strong English as a Second Language programs and also as much less divided than it was in 2009.

The "model minority" myth harmfully and unnecessarily divides minorities and keeps them from accepting and appreciating each other. The consequences of this are clear.

The Myth of the "Model Minority"

Jasmine

When walking in the hallways of school as an Asian student, it's not surprising to hear someone crack a joke about your "perfect" grades or something that has to do with you being the model student. It's something most people just don't care to notice because it's nothing out of the ordinary. After all, jokes are more than common, and jokes about an Asian's intelligence are just one of many racial and stereotype-based jokes. Despite this, there are many serious issues with this "model minority" mindset that plague Asian/Asian American students today.

Aside from countless other racial issues that the "model minority" affects, the idea of such a "model minority" also places

a huge amount of pressure on many Asian students at school, proving harmful to many students' mental health during their academic years. Throughout the course of high school and college, when tension about academics runs rampant among most students, it is not uncommon for Asian students to experience mental breakdowns or suffer from high anxiety due to the extreme pressure placed on them. This can happen to students of all races and ethnicities, but for Asian students there's a general expectation of top-notch grades that makes these events a higher possibility. Academic isolation is also a possibility thanks to the "model minority" stereotype. Having an image of a perfect student forced upon them often results in many Asian/Asian American students being unwilling to reach outwards for academic help, in fear of compromising the image they were assigned. While the stereotypes that come with the title of "model minority" seem like compliments, in reality they dismiss all the hard work people do and force an image upon students based solely on a factor of life they can't control.

The "model minority" mindset also affects plenty of Asian/Asian American students at home. After all, stereotypes don't come out of nowhere, and the conformation of Asian parents of such negative "model minority" stereotypes can have huge impacts on the children's relationships with their parents and other aspects of family life. Grades are often seen as the link between a parent and their children in Asian/Asian American households, and oftentimes an Asian/Asian American child's grades become the child's entire identity in an effort to meet expectations, regardless of whose those are. This can easily veer into more dangerous territories like questioning self worth when failing to meet certain

expectations or even worse situations like depression and other mental health issues.

Of course "Asian/Asian American" encompasses a huge group of people who are all quite different, with many unique traits that they each possess. There are countless other issues surrounding the "model minority" concept and Asian/Asian American discrimination in general, but the damages that the "model minority" mindset cause many Asian/Asian American students should not be overlooked. People need to see what lies behind the facade of pretty compliments and stand up to this before the belief becomes fully cemented in the stones of the Asian American identity.

"If I don't... If I can't... I won't"

A dramatic monologue by Tina

I need a 4.0
 I need a 4.0
 I need a 4.0
 I NEED A 4.0!!!
 If I don't... If I can't... I won't have a
 successful career
 I need a 4.0
 To become the person I want to become I
 need to have this score
 Because... Because who am I without it,
 who am I if I fail
 I need to get into Yale.....
 I need a full scholarship so my parents can
 be proud of me for once in my life
 So I can no longer be the least favorite child
 Yes I've made mistakes, but I am human,
 why can't they see that I try my best day in
 and day out
 But it's fine...
 They favor my older brother who doesn't try
 at all but gets the most love
 He doesn't do anything at all HE'S A C-
 STUDENT!!!!

To be honest I'm surprised he's still in college
 I join as many clubs as I can, as many school activities as there are but for what
 My parents don't see me the way they see him
 My parents don't see me the way they see him.....
 I try constantly but nothing seems to give, which is why I need to graduate with a 4.0 unweighted GPA and a 4.9 weighted
 If Yale accepts me they will finally love me
 And my dreams will come true

We Count Too

Ramona

It's February 28, 2018. The students of John Bartram High School stand on the front steps of their school holding signs that say things like "#wecounttoo" and "peace and love." Why were they doing this? They were protesting unnecessary gun violence in Philadelphia and how it never gets media attention.

When the Parkland shooting happened, it gained national media attention, as it should have. But what about the shootings that happen all the time and never get media attention? Students at John Bartram High School in Southwest Philadelphia say that gun violence in their neighborhood is ongoing and underreported.

Just because a shooting happens in a so-called "bad neighborhood" does not mean it has less importance than other events. What does a "bad neighborhood" even mean? A person who lives in the suburbs once said things to me like, "West Philly is so bad," and "I hope we'll see a police chase." These stereotypes are unfair and hurtful to people who live in these neighborhoods; just because some bad

things may have happened, the neighborhood is now a "bad place."

A reporter from *The Notebook* said that because these shootings happen so often, they may not be reported on because news stories need to be fresh and unique. This does make sense--if a news story keeps repeating on and on people would stop wanting to read it, but what about the people whose lives have been lost? Do they not matter to people?

In a speech at the We Count Too protest in February, Senator Anthony Hardy Williams said a very true quote: "A child on the other side of the city line is the same as a child who happens to live in an urban setting such as Philadelphia."



Raising Awareness for Mental Illness

Serena and Leila

This report is meant to raise awareness and help those who suffer from mental illness. Though people may look fine on the outside, deep down, they might be hurting. It is always important to listen and let them know that they are heard. If a person ever discusses suicidal thoughts, tell someone; whether it be a trusted adult or a close friend, always tell somebody. You never know if they might be serious, and they might hurt themselves. If you or anyone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or actions, do not hesitate to call 1-800-273-8255.

Depression is a mental illness that affects more than half of the American population. That means about 1 out of 25 people is affected by this chronic illness. Depression may lead to suicide if not treated or helped. Many people assume that if someone is depressed, you just have to cheer them up. However, that is not the truth. Having a mental illness such as chronic depression is not cured so easily. It requires legitimate medications and therapy.

People with mental illnesses are often scared to talk to someone, and many times, they are not correctly treated or people simply don't believe them. This has been reported in many accounts and usually worsens the person's situation. This is a result of stigma.

What is stigma? Stigma is a feeling that produces other feelings such as fear, shame, disgrace, and negativity. People who are dealing with mental illness often experience stigma, so it is hard for them to express their feelings.

Mental illness is something that affects much of the population. Issues such as this can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, or gender. One in five will experience mental illness by the early age of 14. People are not getting treated, and many people don't know or understand what they (or others) are struggling with. Raising awareness for mental illnesses such as depression could truly help people, whether strangers, family members, or close friends.

If you are interested in learning more, visit some helpful websites that target awareness for specific illnesses, such as <https://www.curestigma.org> and <https://www.nami.org/>

“We are skin and scars but we are also skinned and scared”

Massi

In 2014, 16% of the black community had been diagnosed with some type of mental illness in the past year; that is 6.8 million people. And I am part of that number. People think that if you are depressed, then you should just tell somebody about it. But let me tell you personally, it's not that simple. For most black people like me, it is super difficult to open up about their problems with mental illness. Because of the fear of being perceived as weak or seeking attention, I have kept it bottled up for six years, not speaking to anyone about it and using jokes and comedy as my mask: smiling on the outside but frowning on the inside. But comedy is not the only mask that I and others have tried. Sadly in the black community, drugs like marijuana seem to be the preferred choice of mask: a mask that can land you in jail. Like rapper J. Cole said, “meditate, don't medicate.” When it comes

to dealing with depression, the best thing to do is to try to seek help and talk to someone about it, but if you are scared of being seen as weak, then find something positive to do.

Suicide Prevention

Carlo

I think suicide is a global issue among teens. While doing my research at sites like the Suicide Prevention App and Suicide Lifeline, I've learned several suicide prevention methods for parents to use with their teens.

1. **Constantly check up on children's and friends' mental states if they're depressed.** Don't wait for children or youth to come to you with their problems. Knock on the door, and talk to them: "Would you like to talk about it?" or "Can I help?"
2. **Let the person know he or she is not alone.** Everyone feels sad or depressed or anxious now and then, including parents. Reassure that these bad times won't last forever.
3. **Never shrug off threats of suicide as typical.** Any written or verbal statement of "I want to die" should be treated seriously. Children who attempt suicide sometimes tell their parents multiple times that they intend to kill themselves. My research supports that people who threaten to commit suicide don't always really intend to take their lives.
4. **Encourage your teen not to isolate himself or herself from family and friends.** It's usually better to be around other people than to be alone. But don't push if he or she says no.
5. **If you keep guns at home, store them safely or move all firearms elsewhere until the crisis has passed.** Suicide by firearm happens among youth who want to shoot themselves, so parents and guardians must keep their firearms put away and in safe places.

"The Knife"

A dramatic monologue by Penelope

I looked from my perch above the sink. My eyes were fixed on David, waiting for my next task.

"Today's Thanksgiving, I'm probably going to finally meet David's mom tonight," I thought intently.

"Mom, I can't come to Dad's house today, I...have work," he trembled. "No, I can't get off. I'm sorry, Mom, I'll call tonight."

"At least the working part was true.

He never has time for me," I thought.

David got ready for work, uttered goodbye, and left me until late afternoon. I stared outside through the kitchen window for a long time awaiting David's arrival. He eventually came home stumbling and tripping over his feet.

"He's drugged up pretty bad," I thought. He then collapsed on the couch in a deep sleep. I watched him until morning so he didn't do anything sketchy...well, anything more sketchy.

"You didn't call back!!!" I hear David's mom scream. "I looked like an idiot when I told them you'd call that night."

"I'm sorry, Mom, I had to work until morning," he said calmly back.

"Liar," I heard his mom whisper. "I talked to your friend. He saw you with a man by Hammed Street...smoking."

David almost immediately hung up. He then suddenly grabbed me and brought me into his room. He grabbed me by the handle and then stopped for three minutes in plain silence. And my point fluidly tore through his left wrist.

Blood

He then abruptly dropped me and collapsed to the ground. I lay there by the bed, staring at one of the legs with fresh blood running down my face.

And I never returned back into the kitchen again.

Gender Bias in Schools: Dress Code

Serena

Gender bias is a big issue in America. Many accounts tell about experiences with unequal payment and roles in offices and workplaces. We hear about these experiences a lot in the media today, but one thing that is almost always forgotten about is gender bias in **schools**.

Gender bias or discrimination often starts with teachers and school-aged children; whether it be related to dress code violations, sports teams, or the general treatment of either gender, there is no denying that gender discrimination does in fact exist in schools. Some argue that gender bias in schools is worse than in workplaces because behavior like that in schools is what is nurturing children to actually think along the lines of those discriminatory views.

One of the biggest issues in school gender bias is dress codes. I can say truthfully that after reading the code of conduct for my school, it is very clear that more than half of the dress code is directed at **girls** rather than at boys. We have rules on the lengths skirts and shorts can be and also

what kind of earrings and shirts we can wear on dress-down days. I can attest to the fact that shopping for shorts and skirts that touch or go below your knee is really hard.

Everyone has a different body type, and it can be extremely difficult to find clothing that meets ALL of the restrictions of what's allowed and what's not. In many ways, dress codes are just like body shaming. They can make you feel extremely insecure about your body and ashamed about the clothing that you have. Some teachers' justifications for making girls change their clothes is that "boys will be boys." By this, they are basically straight out saying that a girl's education is less important than a boy's if the girl's shorts are too short. Instead of teaching male students not to look at girls in ways that objectify them, they teach the girls to deal with and ignore being objectified. If this is how young people are being taught, we desperately need to change that.

Food Problems

Aaron

When was the last time you visited a supermarket? How long is the drive from your home to your local supermarket? Questions like these are often overlooked throughout the country and around the world. For many of us that have never thought about this, that is because of our privilege of having easy access to food. Unfortunately, across the country and around the world, access to affordable, healthy produce is a dream, not a reality.

Places that have difficulty accessing healthy food are often low income and rural communities, which are often overlooked because of their economic status and geography. The term for communities like these is food deserts, areas in which finding affordable quality food is difficult.

Food deserts are an epidemic that affect the entire world. Not having access to nutritious and affordable food is a crime against humanity. In some areas food deserts relate to places where unhealthy food is made more affordable than healthy food. Communities that are often targeted are the communities that are less educated and less informed, rural, and mostly low income.

An example is a small municipality in Guatemala: Santiago Atitlán. Lake Atitlán, the sacred body of water that borders this community, is polluted to the point that the water is no longer safe to drink. Water must be imported from neighboring areas, and that means high taxes on the water. Due to the NAFTA agreement with the United States, imported soft drinks are sold at a much lower price than water: about .20 cents is equal to 1.5 Guatemalan quetzal. The only option to escape this is to drink sodas like Coke and Fanta, cheaper alternatives to quench thirst. The policy is that American products like Coke will not be taxed when imported to Mexico, and other Mexican products coming to the U.S. will not be taxed as well.

It may seem like a fair contract on paper, but there are negative outcomes on both countries. It undermines communities like Santiago Atitlán and its addiction to cheap Coke. In the long run, communities like these will face diabetes, obesity, and other health complications at no fault of their own but at the fault of blind leadership that negotiated these trade agreements with no consideration of the small towns to be affected.

In the U.S., Americans have the option to choose what they buy and what they eat but do not have the option of avoiding society's judgement of what they choose.

America does not share the same issue with Mexico, but there are some

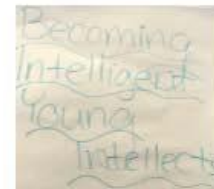
similarities. Food deserts are a problem, but they are not as widespread as compared to other countries.

The food crisis in America is more of an obesity problem. Fresh produce like fruits and vegetables is more costly than junk food. If a person does not frequently go to the supermarket or is not able to go, then the person's shopping cart will probably be made up of items that can last them until the next trip. The person will most likely purchase instant noodles, instant macaroni and cheese, and other items that cannot go bad or rot.

At the same time, there is a stigma towards choosing natural and organic food. Produce that is organic, like what is sold at Whole Foods, is seen as for the affluent part of society, people that can afford a bag of apples for ten dollars or have the money to "go vegan." For most Americans, this is not a luxury they can afford, but instead they must think of where their next meal is coming from.

Problems like these often go unheard. Philadelphia is an example of this. Philadelphia is full of corner stores and supermarkets, but most of the time supermarket chains like Walmart, Shoprite, Acme, and Giant are clenched together because geography affects customers. There are only two food deserts in Philadelphia, but that is still a significant population. Philadelphia can easily solve this problem by providing initiatives to supermarket chains for placing a supermarket in a food desert. Initiatives like tax cuts will help supermarkets to build new ones.

Food deserts is an issue that goes unheard, but it is not a problem that can go unsolved.



FNW curriculum slideshow

Friday Night Writes

Fall 2018



what's one
place you went
this summer or
recently?



Your favorite
_____?
(fill in the blank
and answer it!)



what's a book
you read
recently?



one thing you
like about
school this year
or would
change

Session Two: September 28th



Recap: What is Friday Night Writes?

During these meetings, doctoral and master students from the University of Pennsylvania's (UPenn's) Graduate School of Education (GSE) and undergraduate students from UPenn are available to discuss and collaboratively revise and edit your writing pieces.

You can prepare for the [Scholastic Art and Writing Awards](#) and/or work on college scholarship and admission essays and school assignments. You can also share and get feedback on more personal writing.

You are encouraged to invite any interested friends to join too!

“Break the Ice” with M&Ms



-  Your Name
-  Your School
-  Your Grade
-  What you hope to work on at Friday Night Writes



[M&Ms Icebreaker](#)



Friday Night Writes

Upcoming Sessions

- **October 12th**

- October 26th
- November 9th
- November 30th
- December 14th

eplummer@gse.upenn.edu



Session Three: October 12th



“Break the Ice” with Skittles



-  Your Name
-  Your School
-  Your Grade
-  What you hope to work on at Friday Night Writes



Skittles Icebreaker



Friday Night Writes

Upcoming Sessions

- October 26th

- November 9th

- November 30th

- December 14th

— eplummer@gse.upenn.edu

Session Four: October 26th

Friday Night Writes



“Break the Ice” with Halloween Candy



Your Name



Your School



Your Grade



What you hope to work on at Friday Night Writes



Favorite color



Favorite food(s)



Favorite book or movie



Favorite trip or place you want to travel

Upcoming Sessions

Upcoming Sessions

- November 9th
- November 30th
- December 14th

— eplummer@gse.upenn.edu

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a 'Login' button, a 'How to Enter' button, and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Below this is the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards logo and the tagline 'SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF CREATIVITY SINCE 1923'. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. The main navigation menu includes links for HOME, WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO, SCHOLARSHIPS, EXPLORE, DONATE, and FAQ. The central content area features a large graphic with the text 'ARTISTS & WRITERS' and '2019 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards'. To the right of this graphic is a photograph of a group of diverse young people. Below the graphic, there are two text blocks: 'Calling all creative teens! The 2019 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are open for submissions' and 'Announcing the Class of 2018 National Student Poets Meet the teen poets selected to serve as literary ambassadors'.

Session Five: November 9th

Friday Night Writes



Scholastic Art & Writing Awards



“Break the Ice” with Candy



Your Name



Your School



Your Grade



What you hope to work on at Friday Night Writes



Favorite season



Favorite holiday



Favorite animal or pet



Favorite drink

Friday Night Writes

Upcoming Sessions

- November 30th

- December 14th

— eplummer@gse.upenn.edu

Session Six: November 30th

Friday Night Writes



Scholastic Art & Writing Awards



“Break the Ice” with Candy



Your Name

Your School

Your Grade

What you hope to work on at Friday Night Writes



Special talent
you have or
wish you have



Someone/something
that always makes
you laugh



Favorite
dessert



One good thing
that happened
to you this week

Friday Night Writes

Upcoming Sessions

• December 14th

— eplummer@gse.upenn.edu



Session Seven: December 14th

Our *Final* Friday Night Writes

“Break the Ice” with Candy



Your Name



Your School



Your Grade



What you have enjoyed most about Friday Night Writes



Last book you read or a book you want to read



Somewhere you plan to go during winter break



Favorite sport, game, or activity (watch or play)



eplummer@gse.upenn.edu

Pre- and post, open-ended reflective surveys given to students at start of camp and end of FNW

Your name _____

Please circle your grade: 7 8 9 10 11
12

Your school _____

Please write your answers below each question. Feel free to use the back of this sheet as necessary.

- What made you want to participate in this summer program?

- Do you consider yourself a student journalist? Why or why not?

- In what ways do you see yourself and other students making an impact through writing?

- What social issues are most important to you? Why?

- Do you consider yourself an activist? Why or why not?

- What do you think would be the best ways to continue the collaboration across schools that we will start in this summer camp?

Your name _____

Please circle your grade: 7 8 9 10 11
12

Your school _____

Please write your answers below each question. Feel free to use the back of this sheet as necessary.

- What made you want to participate in Friday Night Writes?

- Do you consider yourself a student journalist? Why or why not?

- In what ways do you see yourself and other students making an impact through writing?

- What social issues are most important to you? Why?

- Do you consider yourself an activist? Why or why not?

- What do you think would be the best ways to continue the collaboration across schools that we have built through the summer camp and Friday Night Writes?

“Guest speaker” reflection form from journalism summer writing camp

Guest Speaker Reflection

Please fill this out at the end of each camp day about the guest speaker who visited that day. Speakers will NOT see your responses. You may choose to remain anonymous.

* Required

1. Please choose today's guest speaker. *

Mark only one oval.

- Ariel Taylor, PhillyCAM Youth Media Coordinator
- Vanessa Graber, PhillyCAM Radio Station Manager
- Jeffrey Stern, International journalist, The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting
- Kevin McCorry, Editor and Education Reporter, WHY
- Dale Mezzacappa, Contributing Editor, The Notebook
- Mitchell Bloom, Connectivity Manager, Producer, Mouthful podcast
- Darryl Murphy, Staff Reporter/Photographer, The Notebook
- Gillian McGoldrick, Editor in Chief, The Temple News

2. Your Name

3. What, if anything, did today's speaker teach you about journalism? *

4. What, if anything, did today's speaker teach you about activism? *

5. What strategy (or strategies) did today's speaker offer that you think you can use? If none, please indicate that. *

6. What is one thing you wish today's speaker would have discussed and/or done that he or she did not? Why? *

7. Do you think you could consider this person a mentor? Why or why not? *

Appendix F

Data Analysis Codebook

	Codes	Examples
	<p>Genre [G] -discussions of what does or does not constitute a writing genre and/or of preferences for and identification with genres; curriculum and writings as indicative of particular and multiple genres</p>	<p>“I think you can do creative writing and journalism at the same time because I think you can, like, you can have facts in your article...and make it, like, maybe kind of your own way at the same time. Like how you write it, it’s, like, different from other articles” (Carlo, personal communication, August 16, 2018).</p>
	<p>Personal [P] -journalistic writing as linked to, motivated by, and/or demonstrative of an individual connection to one’s identity, beliefs, goals, etc.</p>	<p>“...but I just want to be able to be myself and saying, like, my opinions. Like news anchors, they don’t...they all talk the same way. And they don’t have no like, no like feelings. Yeah, and like kind of like no personality and like I want to be able to like yeah, this is what I believe in over here” (Katy, personal communication, November 9, 2018).</p>
	<p>Impact [I] -discussions of and/or goals for broader social purposes of making change(s) through journalistic writing</p>	<p>“Nowadays it’s 2018, and you can change things by social media, just by putting it out there and that is much easier than it was in the past, but then at the same time, it can still be difficult. So it’s like standing for what you believe and working towards it” (Tina, personal communication, August 16, 2018)</p>

<p>Descriptive Sub-categories: further detailing how students articulated or practiced conceptualizations/understandings of journalism</p>	<p>Creative [C] -discussion and/or use of writing structures or practices in journalistic writing that are considered fictional, imaginative, and/or literary</p>	<p>“I think writing the monologue...made me think about it more. It was something different. And now I’m like, okay, I want to do this more...like I mean, like, creative writing-wise...in my case, when I wrote the monologue, I feel like I connected with my topic because it was more of a personal account of what might have happened in the personal aspect” (Brielle, personal communication, August 16, 2018). [G-P-C-N]</p>
	<p>Narrative [N] -discussion and/or use of storytelling techniques (e.g., first-person perspective) and/or incorporation of personal stories (one’s own or others’) in journalistic writing</p>	<p>“So, it’s journalism. So whatever your topics are that you’re working on this week, who is someone that can speak to that in the first person? First-person narratives—personal, side ways into difficult issues. I want to talk to George Foreman about hunger because he experienced it, and then you get in that door. And then you can talk about the facts and the figures and all this sort of other work that goes into journalism. Again, sort of like a restatement of that, putting complicated topics into intimate personal stories” (Maurice, personal communication, August 14, 2018). [G-P-C-N-Inf]</p>

	<p>Activism [Act] -discussion and/or positioning of writing (one’s own or others) as change-making and linked to broader social issues</p>	<p>“Anyone can be a journalist...it’s like writing on issues that’s going on in the world and standing for a change. And that’s, like, a way of becoming a journalist, standing up” (Tina, personal communication, August 16, 2018). [G-P-I-A]</p>
	<p>Multiple [M] -understandings of journalism (as a genre and/or a journalistic piece of writing), writing, and/or writing spaces as incorporating or indicative of more than one genre, purpose, modes, mediums, etc.</p>	<p>“Before this camp I thought journalism was just, like, investigating and finding out what happened...Journalism is a lot of things. Yeah, so this camp made you think about it as more than just, like, the mainstream journalism idea” (Aaron, personal communication, August 16, 2018). [G-I-M-Inf]</p>
	<p>School [S] -discussion and/or position of writing practices, writing spaces, and adult-youth relationships as connected to and/or contrasted with in-school structures and experiences</p>	<p>“...Friday Night Writes was kind of just what the students wanted to make of it, that it was you know, casual. People could come late; they could leave early. But it was up to them if they had something for school they wanted to work on or college or high school admission stuff they wanted to work on or if they had just personal things they were writing— whatever they wanted to share and get some feedback on, or if they kind of just wanted to come hang out and talk about ideas” (Observation, September 14, 2018). [P-M-S]</p>

	<p>Audience [Aud] -references to one's audience when conceptualizing, writing, revising, and/or publishing a piece of writing and discussion of how audiences do or do not affect writing processes, goals, spaces, etc.</p>	<p>We try to, I guess, sort of approach it as more fluid, more dynamic in writing style. Then what that achieves is that we're able to sort of attract the audience. And really even if we have something for creating our messages, like, you know, even if it's actually important, if there's no one to read it..." (Harry, personal communication, August 8, 2018). [G-I-M-Aud]</p>
	<p>Inform [Inf] -discussion or positioning of journalism as intended to provide information, particularly information that is "factual" and/or "objective"</p>	<p>"Although traditional reporting emphasizes the facts," and I've bolded that because I think that's very important about journalism, 'and lets readers draw their own conclusions, podcasters are not shy about trying to change people's minds. We have,' and this is a quote from someone, I think they worked at NPR [National Public Radio], 'some pretty old school journalists, and they may bristle at the idea of journalism being activist, but I don't. We are out there to make the world a better place, to make it more just.'" (Maurice, personal communication, August 14, 2018) [G-I-Act-M-Inf-Aud]</p>

Headline omission activity during journalism summer writing camp

1.

Like Parkland students, Philly teens _____ for their _____ on gun violence

Maureen Boland worried when she started seeing the nasty comments piling up under the [column that I wrote about her Philadelphia students](#) as the National School Walkout approached.

2.

Parkland's David Hogg _____ students to _____ activists, even if they don't go to _____

One of the most prominent students leading the fight for stricter gun laws got meetings on Capitol Hill with top lawmakers, airtime on prime-time cable news and a key speaking spot at one of the largest marches in recent years.

3.

Parkland Students Bring _____ to Town

To keep the momentum going on their #NeverAgain protest movement, student activists from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., have been pushing members of Congress to hold town hall meetings.

4.

Harry Potter _____ the Parkland

After the 2016 election, I was bewildered by many things. One of them was how 41% of millennials voted for Trump when they had been raised on Harry Potter.

5.

‘They Are Lifting Us Up.’ How Parkland Students Are _____ Their _____ to _____ Minority Anti-Violence _____

The [Peace Warriors](#), a group of predominantly black high school students from Chicago, have been fighting gun violence for 10 years without garnering much attention from the outside world. The students from Parkland, Fla. brought the issue to national prominence in a matter of days.

6.

How the Parkland Students _____ So Good at _____

The secretary of education, Betsy DeVos, had only just announced that she would visit Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School when the students began to react.

7.

For Parkland Students, a _____ Journey From ‘ _____ ’ to a _____ March

WASHINGTON — Little has returned to normal for the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School since Feb. 14, when a gunman killed 14 of their classmates and three staff members.

8.

The world is _____ to Parkland teens. Some Philly kids _____: _____ us?

Milan Sullivan is horrified that 17 people died in a mass shooting at a Parkland, Fla., high school. And she does not disagree with the teenage survivors who have stood up since the massacre, demanding action on gun violence.

9.

Parkland students _____ clear backpacks: 'We _____,'

PARKLAND, Fla. — Students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School are not happy about the clear backpacks they've been issued as a safety measure, decrying them as a temporary fix to a larger issue and bemoaning their sudden loss of privacy.

10.

Trying to _____ post-Parkland _____, students again _____ gun violence in Philly

For the second time in as many months, high school students around the country walked out of school to protest gun violence and call for more gun control.

Katy's full text news article from journalism summer writing camp newspaper publication, Young Writers Time

Is Philadelphia Really Diverse?

Imagine walking down the streets of downtown Philadelphia, which is a very crowded area. As you are walking, people are accidentally bumping into you because there is not enough room for them to walk on the concrete sidewalk. Once you take a look at your surroundings, you notice different kinds of people, from their skin color to their clothes and hair. No one looks or talks exactly the same.

Philadelphia is the largest city in Pennsylvania, with a population of approximately 1.6 million between the years of 2017 and 2018. Since Philadelphia is the largest city, it includes one of the most diverse communities. According to Suburban Stats, Philadelphia is made up of the following racial groups: African Americans are 46%, caucasians are 41%, Hispanics/Latinos are 12%, Asians are 6%, "other race" is 5%, two or more races are 2%. In addition, American Indian, three or more races, Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian are below 1%. Although Philadelphia includes many racial groups, is it really diverse?

However, there are a great amount of different places in Philadelphia that many people are unaware of because it's such a large city. However, one thing you may notice is the segregation of certain races in specific neighborhoods. For example, if you take a trip to Juniata and Fairhill, you will see predominantly Hispanics. If you go to Ardmore or any other suburb, you will see more caucasians. Also, Germantown and parts of Southwest, North, and West Philly are made up of predominantly African Americans.

The segregation in these areas and others are the reasons why stereotypes are often created about the different racial groups. Since some neighborhoods are predominantly one race, the people of outside races start to create information about that ethnicity because they are ignorant to that culture. In order to understand one culture, you have to be around it. So, is Philadelphia really diverse? The answer is no because Philadelphia may have a lot of people with different ethnicities, but they often end up living with their own ethnicity and nothing more.

The solutions to this social issue is quite simple. There are many local organizations, which people may join in their community. Also, events occur in South Philly, where people can also come and gather with other people. For example, the Odunde Festival in South Philly brings awareness to the African culture, yet people from different cultures come to that event. People buy clothes, food, jewelry, and etc. from their culture. Towards to the end of the festival, music is played to bring the whole community as one.

Also, Penn's Landing has so many diverse festivals, in which everyone is welcomed to come. It has festivals for Hispanics, African Americans, the LGBT community, etc. At the festivals, people come together to eat, dance, and communicate from different cultures. For example, at the Hispanic Festival there were people who were and were not Hispanic dancing the salsa and bachata. You don't have to belong to a certain race to go to one of these festivals; instead you can go to support and become more knowledgeable. With the help of these festivals and people coming together as one, Philadelphia will actually become diverse.

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