ABSTRACT

Title of Document:	POSITIONING AND IDENTITY IN THE ACADEMIC LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
	Pamela J. Hickey, Ph.D., 2011
Directed By:	Melinda Martin-Beltrán, Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum & Instruction

This study investigates the academic literacy experiences of elementary English Language Learners (ELLs) in first grade, fourth grade, and sixth grade. Participants included students as well as their reading/language arts mainstream teachers and their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers. Informed by both cross-sectional cross-case study and narrative inquiry methodology, this study used positioning theory and identity theory as complementary analytic lenses. Students' positionings, both reflexive self-positioning and interactive positioning by others, were identified and named through analyses of their interactions in academic literacy events during reading/language arts. In order to consider the ways that students' positionings may afford or constrain their access to and engagement with academic literacy events, the researcher created an analytic framework naming student positions. Additionally, positions were considered in light of the ways that they mediated students' levels of engagement as literacy events unfolded. To investigate

the construction of students' literate identities, the researcher examined students' patterns of positioning during literacy events and considered interview data from students and teachers as well as field notes that documented conversations with participants. The researcher also gathered two self-portraits from student participants, including one self-portrait showing the student engaged in an academic literacy task at school and one showing the student engaged in a fun activity outside of the school context. The study demonstrated that students' positionings, both positive and constraining, may work to construct and re-construct students' literate identities even as students' literate identities may inform the ways that students take on and negotiate positions in a recursive process. The study also found that students with strong literate identities bridging home and school contexts took on more positive positions thus engaging more deeply with academic literacy tasks than students with striving literate identities. Students with striving literate identities often took on positions of constraint in strategic moves that allowed them to get through literacy tasks without engaging deeply. Finally, this study demonstrated the powerful ways that teachers may support students' deep engagement with literacy tasks through positive positioning and following through on their lesson implementation by offering opportunities for re-positioning and the use of scaffolds.

POSITIONING AND IDENTITY IN THE ACADEMIC LITERACY
EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By

Pamela J. Hickey

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2011

Advisory Committee:
Assistant Professor Melinda Martin-Beltrán, Chair
Professor Francine H. Hultgren
Assistant Professor Megan M. Peercy
Assistant Professor Rebecca Silverman
Associate Professor Jennifer Turner

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of my parents and first teachers,

Joann and Charlie Hickey

And with much gratitude for their support –

to my brothers and sister, Joe, Jim, Ron, and Michele

And to my constant shoulder-companion through the years of study and writing,

Flirty Bird

Acknowledgements

Many people, friends and mentors, family members and teachers, have contributed to my ongoing journey as a scholar. This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and assistance of my friend and interpreter, Diana Gough, who also sustained me with tea, casseroles, and cookies along the way. I want to thank other members of my family: Daune for proofreading and for always answering the telephone in the event of everything from a logistical question to a NATO bombing strike; Gregg for problem-solving and coaching both on and off the bike; and Sharon for perspective and laughter. I also want to thank my nieces and nephews: Kevin, Katie, Colleen, Travis, Kendall, Kristin, Josh, and Brianna for keeping me on my toes, as well as Ryan, who is always in my heart.

I want to thank Melinda Martin-Beltrán for her advising, insights, and balance of practical and theoretical considerations throughout this dissertation journey. It has been a pleasure to have shared the development of this work with you. I always left our conversations with my candle of energy and curiosity glowing brighter. I am grateful to have also had the support of a wonderful committee, including Francine Hultgren, who has been the Virgil to my Dante on a wonderful journey of discovery; Megan Madigan Peercy, who was my guide and mentor through important waypoints on my scholarly path; Rebecca Silverman, who has shared her sharp insights and helpful suggestions; and, Jennifer Turner, whose skill as a teacher and passion for reading pedagogy inspired me to follow-through on my own desire to explore and come to know better the field of literacy.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1 : Introduction

Introduction

During the years when I was a teacher of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in elementary schools, I had the pleasure and privilege of working with English Language Learners (ELLs) from a variety of nations and linguistic backgrounds. I had newcomers from China who taught me to make red envelopes for New Year; I had students with interrupted education from West Africa who reminded me of the joyful feeling of writing one's name for the first time; I had students from Austria who showed me how again my job was not simply one of teacher, but of welcoming committee; and, I had students born in the United States who instructed me on the secret intricacies of PowerPoint.

Manuel[1], a stocky fifth-grader, always seemed to come to my class reluctantly, but he came so often, before and after school hours, during recess, slouching hesitantly against the doorframe, that I came to interpret his reluctance as a form of über-chic sophistication. He was adored by the primary students, especially the boys, for his combination of the utterly cool and brotherly friendliness. At the end of the day, I could see him shepherding the kindergarteners and first graders from his neighborhood onto his bus, his arm around a boy who had had a particularly trying day. In class he was shy during literacy tasks and read with great hesitancy. He found

---

[1] Pseudonyms are used for all participants as well as all students and teachers mentioned in this study.

reading difficult and laborious, with an instructional level several grades below fifth grade.

When I introduced a project to his class that integrated the students' creation of PowerPoint presentations, Manuel blossomed. He was sitting at a computer next to another student who was stuck at the challenge of inserting clip-art. I told Manuel's neighbor that I'd be over to help in just a moment and in the meantime Manuel leaned over to help. When I got over to the student, he had not only inserted clip-art, but it was animated, dancing across the screen. He had just received his first lesson in PowerPoint from Manuel, The Master.

Manuel, like Felix, Miguel, Ana – other students whose faces stay with me years later -- was a student with a vast range of strengths but with ongoing difficulties in reading and writing. Many of them had been referred to their school's instructional team but had not been found to have any exceptionalities that could be contributing to their challenges with academic literacy. They had either been born in the United States or had come here at a very young age and had had all of their schooling in English. They were the students whose faces kept me awake at nights when I was their teacher and who drove my questions years later when I re-entered graduate school. I instructed them the best that I could, within the constraints of my own knowledge and experience and the boundaries of the school day. It was not enough. Because of their challenges with reading and writing, it was unlikely that these students would move into middle school from elementary school being able to read or write at a level close to their current grade level. I know this because even when I changed jobs, or they transferred schools, I would check on them, through the ESOL

teacher grapevine or by showing up at their new school to chat with their current teachers.

These students were known within their schools and by their teachers as students who had extreme difficulties with academic literacy tasks but who did not have specific learning disabilities and did not belong in special education. Although they were described at the elementary school as "struggling readers" I knew that if these students continued on their literacy trajectories they were likely to enter a category of English Language Learners (ELLs) known disparagingly in schools and among teachers and administrators as "lifers" (Jacobs, 2008; Zehr, 2008) or in academic literature as "long-term English learners" (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2009; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999) or entrenched ELLs (Scarcella, 2009). While students described as Long-Term English Learners generally have a high level of fluency in social English, they may have difficulty in academic discussions and they always have reading and writing skills that are well below grade level standards. Their reading and writing levels keep them from being able to exit from English language support programs. Research shows us that these students drop out of high school at an alarmingly high rate (Jacobs, 2008). Sometimes these students spend all of their school years classified as Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students. Sometimes they are automatically exited from the language support system despite their low reading and writing levels after seven or eight years. Either way, their needs are not being addressed and their reading and writing skills remain stagnant. I know that we are letting them down and it is as much a question of ethics and educational equity as it is a question of academics.

I know these students and their stories from my perspective as their ESL teacher in their early years of schooling, from the fractured hours and half-hours I spent with them during their time in elementary school. Their classroom teachers, with whom they spent the majority of their instructional day, did not know what to do with them. One told me it was a language problem – if the parents only spoke English at home this would be a non-issue. One teacher, of fifth grade Manuel, wrote on his report card that his problem was not paying attention in class and talking to his friends too much. In the year that I taught at Manuel's school his mother came to me, asking me why her son couldn't read and if I could teach him to read. The only answer I had for her was "I don't know." I am a participant in this travesty.

I enrolled in a doctoral program with the faces of these students and my knowledge of their challenges driving my first questions. As I come to the end of my graduate studies it is the difficulties experienced by these students and the possibilities for constructing effective and rich academic literacy experiences for them that is the impetus and focus of my dissertation. It is my hope that this study will shed light on how ELLs experience literacy events as they unfold moment-by-moment and provide insights on ways that teachers can support the Manuels, Miguels, and Anas in ways that can facilitate their literacy trajectories on a fruitful and successful course.

English Language Learners

English Language Learners as a group are the fastest growing school-age population in the United States. These students speak a language other than English at home and have a level of proficiency in English that prevents them from accessing

4

school curricula without targeted support (Harper & de Jong, 2004). The official U.S. government term designated for these students is Limited English Proficient (LEP) (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2009). The population of students identified as ELLs in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade increased to 5.3 million during the 2007-2008 school year (NCELA, 2010). This is a 53.25% growth since the 1997-1998 school year, when 3.4 million students were identified as ELLs (NCELA, 2010). Most of these students spend the majority of the instructional day in the classrooms of mainstream content teachers who are either untrained in working with ELLs or who have not received sufficient training in this area (Batt, 2008; Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006; Harper & de Jong, 2004). Federal guidelines for highly qualified teachers focus only on core-subject area teachers and do not require teachers who have ELLs in their classroom to be trained to effectively instruct these students (Echevarria et al., 2006).

Long-Term English Learners

Within the category of ELLs are several types of learners. Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) identified four types of ELL students. The first three types are accelerated college bound students with strong educational backgrounds in their home language (L1); newly arrived students who have been in the United States for three years or less; and, underschooled students who have been in the U.S. for several years or less but who have had interrupted, disjointed, inadequate or no schooling. Olsen and Jaramillo were the first to identify the fourth category of students: Long-Term Limited English Proficient students, describing them as having been in the U.S. 7+ years when entering high school.

Described in the academic literature as Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) (Freeman & Freeman, 2002), these students are more commonly known as "ESL lifers" (Zehr, 2008) because they never attain the academic reading and writing proficiency as designated on language proficiency assessments that would allow them to successfully exit from English language support programs. Calderon (2008) states that 80 to 91% of ELLs in middle and high schools are Long-Term English Learners who were born in the United States and are second- or third- generation students. While students who speak Spanish as a first language comprise the vast majority of ELLs --74% of ELLs at grade four, 72% at grade eight, and 54% at grade twelve (Mazzeo, Carlson, Voelkl, & Lutkus, 2000), Hispanic students have a higher drop-out rate, 21.4%, than students from any other ethnic background, including White with 5.3%, Asian/Pacific Islander with 6.1%, or African-American with 12.4 % (Cataldi, Laird, & KewalRamani, 2009). Furthermore, many Hispanic students who do drop out of school leave earlier than either White or African-American students who drop out (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1995). In 1995, "Over half of the Hispanic dropouts reported less than a tenth grade education, compared with 31.1% of the white dropouts and 26.6% of the" African-American students who dropped out of school (NCES, 1995).

Students' difficulties with English language acquisition play a role in this appalling school dropout rate. While 14% of Hispanic youth who speak English at home drop out from school, 32% of Hispanic youth who speak Spanish at home drop out from school. As noted by the National Center for Education Statistics, "Clearly,

language limitations are associated with failure to complete a high school program"
(1995, Race-Ethnicity section, para. 4)

Upon registration in U.S. schools, students who are identified as using a
language other than English at home typically through a Home Language Survey are
assessed for their English language proficiency level (Abedi, 2008). Students who are
deemed not to have an English proficiency that allows them to independently access
grade level curricula are designated as LEP and are entitled to receive English
language support. Some Long-Term English Learners "begin school in kindergarten
classified by their school district as limited English proficient (LEP) and…leave it as
LEP students 13 years later" (Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000, p. 22). Artiles, Rueda,
Salazar, and Higareda (2005) found that in California in the 1998-1999 school year,
only half of students beginning their school experience as ELLs had been reclassified
as Fluent English Proficient (FEP) based on language proficiency assessment scores
at the end of elementary school, leaving half of ELLs to leave elementary school and
enter middle school *still* as language learners.

Olsen and Jaramillo (1999) credit the initial identification of Long-Term
English Learners as a discrete group within the larger ELL population to a group of
teachers who "realized that many students were still classified LEP after seven or
more years in the district" (p. 324). Olsen and Jaramillo do not state why the
classification came down 7+ years, but the 7+ usage has been carried on as a means
of identifying Long-Term English Learners in the work of Freeman and Freeman
(2002) and Menken et al. (2009). This research all points to the work of Cummins
(2000), Collier (1989, 1992), and Thomas and Collier (1997) which identifies 5 to 7

years as the amount of time most ELLs will need to achieve grade level norms in terms of academic language proficiency.

Multiple research data point to the effectiveness of first language support alongside second language education as a means of supporting efficient English language acquisition. Collier (1989) notes that students taught in two languages reach national norms in 4 to 7 years, while students who arrive as immigrants with at least 2 years of L1 education take 5 to 7 years to reach the performance level of an average native speaker, and young elementary students with no L1 education may take 7 to 10 years.

Depending on L1 support as the answer to the problems of Long-Term English Learners is not a solution in a policy climate with very little support for bilingual education. While research has demonstrated that first language support alongside second language support and instruction benefits students, especially in their L2 literacy achievement, current policy does not offer bilingual education as an option. With Title III, the pedagogical emphasis "is on English acquisition and academic achievement in English – not the cultivation of bilingualism" (Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006, p. 68). Given that bilingual education is not always feasible, this study seeks to find pathways to potential solutions beyond L1 instruction to address the practical and immediate needs of ELLs and their teachers.

Yang, Urrabazo, and Murray (2001) found that the "vast majority of ninth grade LEP dropouts are continuing LEP students who have spent their entire school life" in an English language support program (p. 10), unable to exit because of low literacy skills. By the time these students have been identified as Long-Term English

Learners they have left the context of elementary school and have entered secondary school, where little to no access for developing literacy support is available as the emphasis shifts from learning to read in early elementary school to "reading to learn" (Moss, 2005, p. 48) in the intermediate elementary grades and secondary school. Therefore, in order to understand more about the issue of Long-Term English Learners and to support this group of students in achieving the academic proficiency and educational access to which they are entitled, it is necessary to begin to consider students who are on a variety of literacy trajectories in elementary school in order to gather more about ELLs' experiences of academic literacy well before they enter secondary school.

Academic Literacy

In this study, I operationalize academic literacy as the ability to read and write for academic purposes in school as well as the ability to engage in high-level academic discussions (drawing from definitions explained in the following literature). Gersten et al. (2007) include supporting the ability to comprehend and use academic English as just one component of effective literacy and language instruction for ELLs, with others including intensive small group reading interventions, extensive vocabulary instruction, and regular peer-assisted learning opportunities. Academic English is a term that has frequently been used to describe the standard form of English that is the language of U.S. schools (Bailey, Huang, Shin, Farnsworth, & Butler, 2007; Gebhard & Willett, 2008; Scarcella 2003a, 2003b). Academic English is "the language of the classroom, of academic disciplines (science, history, literary analysis) of texts and literature, and of extended, reasoned discourse. It is more

abstract and decontextualized than conversational English" (Gersten et al., 2007, p. 16). Because the instruction of academic English has been identified as just one component of an effective literacy program for ELLs and because effective emergent and developmental literacy support is necessary for students to acquire academic English, I use the concept of "academic literacy" in this study to describe the reading and writing, as well as the oral academic discourse, that is essential to students' achievement in school.

As noted by Scarcella (2009), some Long-Term Language Learners are able to read and write informal texts with confidence and fluency, but do not notice or use academic English, and so cannot achieve the academic standards necessary to exit out of English language support programs. Other Long-Term Language Learners (Scarcella, 2009) may experience difficulty with all, or nearly all, reading and writing tasks, as well as the comprehension and use of academic English. In this study, I investigated the experiences of a variety of ELLs across elementary grades in order to discover how they experienced academic literacy events and tasks and how their interactions with and around those events and tasks mediated the possibilities for engagement and learning. This study included students who have been identified by their teachers as having a high degree of social fluency in oral English but who may have not yet achieved the level of academic English literacy that is required for success at their respective grade level.

Because the dimensions of academic literacy vary in and increase across grade levels, I undertook this study as a cross-sectional snapshot that included students in grades 1, 4, and 6 on a variety of literacy trajectories. In the primary grades, literacy

instruction is focused on the development of reading and writing skills. If students do not attain proficiency in academic literacy early in their school careers, it becomes very difficult for them to "catch up" with other students. This holds true for L1 English users as well as ELLs. Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998) assert that the "Failure [of students] to develop basic reading abilities during the first few years of school portends a host of later academic, economic, and even social-emotional difficulties" (p. 101). In a longitudinal study, Juel (1988) found that students who struggled with reading in grade 1 were still struggling in grade 4. Chall and Jacobs (2003) identified the fourth grade slump in which low-income children began to have greater difficulty with reading around the time when fourth grade texts became more abstract and technical. In a follow-up study, they found that struggling readers' scores continued to drop below norms in each succeeding grade up to and through high school. This finding is a disturbing parallel to the reading challenges faced by Long-Term English Learners throughout their school careers. In primary grades, instructional emphasis is on teaching students to read, but as students move to the intermediate grades they are expected to "read to learn" (Moss, 2005).

For all students to become academically literate, "learning opportunities must not only be available, they must be accessible" (Ostrosky, Gaffney, & Thomas, 2006, p. 177). Research shows that this access comes through the recognition by others, teachers and peers, that students are eligible to participate (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Christian & Bloome, 2004; Norton Peirce, 1995) as well as students' own recognition of themselves as eligible to participate (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Cummins, 2011; Hawkins, 2005). In this study I sought to examine the ways that students' positioning

of themselves and by others, defined as the stances and roles they take on and which are imposed upon them during interactions (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), mediated their access to academic literacy events. Additionally, I considered the ways that students' positioning was mediated by their literate identities and in turn constituted and re-constructed those identities.

Problem

While work has been done on the needs of Long-Term English Learners, most notably by Freeman and Freeman (2002) and Harklau, Losey, and Siegal (1999), this work takes a late interventionist approach, addressing students' needs *after* they have spent seven or more years in an ESOL or bilingual program. Additional work has been done on investigating the academic literacy learning of elementary ELLs but it has not considered explicitly the experiences of students who are on different literacy trajectories. This study sought to investigate how the academic literacy experiences of ELLs who have had all of their schooling, including kindergarten, in English immersion U.S. schools may be considered across grade levels in order to gather insights about how students' literacy trajectories may develop and how teachers may support fruitful literacy trajectories.

This study investigated the experiences of elementary ELLs who had been identified by their teachers as being on different literacy trajectories. Using positioning as a lens of analysis to look at moment-to-moment interactions during academic literacy events and complementing that with a consideration of students' literate identities as they are constituted by themselves and their teachers, I sought to uncover opportunities for teachers to facilitate the academic literacy development of

these students in practical but powerful ways. Positioning theory, as articulated by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) is a way of examining moment-to-moment interactions as people take on and negotiate stances and roles within those interactions. One's positioning may afford or impinge on the possibilities for further "interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action" (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999, p. 1). For example, "if someone is positioned as incompetent in a certain field of endeavor they will not be accorded the right to contribute to discussions in that field" (p. 1). I considered students' positionings during academic literacy events, discussions and interactions that were centered around texts, in order to consider the ways that such positions may afford or constrain students' access to and engagement with the literacy event.

Although interventions for Long-Term English Learners, when actually implemented, do not begin until these students have been identified by their middle schools or high schools, Jacobs (2008) implied that this problem might be noticed earlier. She quoted a WestEd researcher, "'How many students leave your elementary schools still as ELLs?...Of those, how many have been there since kindergarten or 1st grade? How many go on to be reclassified? How well do they do?'" In a study that included both monolingual English speakers and Hispanic students, Juel (1988) found that students who experienced literacy difficulties in first grade tended to still be "poor readers" (p. 1) in fourth grade. Scarcella (2009) pointed out that ELLs who experience difficulties with academic literacy tasks often become entrenched and reach a plateau in their development of academic English literacy.

I began to use the term "literacy trajectory" during the data analyses phase of this study to describe the different paths of academic literacy development that students seemed to be on in light of their current and predicted academic literacy achievement, their patterns of positioning across the reading/language arts block, and their literate identities. In selecting my participants, I asked teachers to identify pairs of students who, although in the same grade level, were at different points in their academic literacy development. The concept of a "literacy trajectory" was helpful in articulating not only the different points that students were currently at, but also the pathways that they seemed to be on regarding their academic literacy development.

Having found "literacy trajectory" a useful term during my analyses, I returned to the literature and discovered several studies that explicitly considered the "trajectories" of students. Pianta, Belsky, Vandergrift, Hours, and Morrison (2008) found that students' reading trajectories were mediated by a combination of socioeconomic background, early reading achievement, and the quality of the students' relationships with their teachers over a period of 54 months. In a study of Finnish students, Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen, Aunola, and Nurmi (2004) found that students' reading development trajectories could be fluid given high quality instruction and attention to students' individual academic and motivational needs.

These studies point to the importance of doing research that considers the ways that students' interactions within literacy event experiences and the ongoing construction of their literate identities may positively impact their literacy trajectories. While I will not be able to adjust the literacy trajectories of ELLs challenged by academic literacy with this single study, I hope that I may be able to contribute to the

construction of a counter-narrative to stories of ELLs who move through their schooling years continually challenged by academic literacy. Harter, Scott, Novak, Leeman, and Morris (2006) argued that "Social change usually emerges as a contest between an entrenched vocabulary and orientation that is no longer useful, and a half-formed new vocabulary that holds the promise of great things" and an alternative to the narratives that lead to the marginalization of some peoples (p. 6). What I hope to contribute through this study is a reconstructed understanding of ELLs who face academic literacy events as an ongoing challenge.

<div align="center">Purpose</div>

For students who have ongoing difficulties with academic literacy, school becomes a place where "their inability to keep pace with their peers forces them to stand out and fall even farther behind" (McDermott, 1993, p. 282). This study sought to understand some of the forces that construct students' literacy trajectories by including participants in different stages of their schooling experiences as well as pairs of students at the same stage of their school experiences but identified by their teachers as being at different stages in their academic literacy development. I hoped to discover ways for students and teachers to develop positive pathways that can lead to success with academic literacy. In order to gather such insights, this study had two purposes.

The first purpose of this study was to investigate students' experiences of academic literacy events through the theoretical lens of positioning by considering the ways in which students' positioning mediated their engagement in literacy events. I considered students' positioning of themselves during literacy experiences as well as

how they were positioned by their peers and their teacher. In order to fulfill this purpose I compared and contrasted students' positioning of themselves and by others within and across grade levels. Given previous studies (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Hawkins, 2005) that looked at how positioning may provide or constrain access to literacy experiences that have been made available by the teacher, looking at the positioning of ELLs within and across grade levels may offer insights about how different students experiences academic literacy events in different ways. The data for learning about students' positioning were gathered through observations of participants during the reading/language arts block and recorded on a laptop, and occasionally in a notebook, through field notes and memos.

The second purpose of this study was to consider how students' experiences of academic literacy at school worked to construct and be constructed by students' literate identities, acknowledging the connection that this has to students' positioning, a theoretical relationship that I will unpack in detail in Chapter 2 of this study. The importance of students' literate identities in participating in academic success is described by Christian and Bloome (2004), who note "in classrooms and in schools, learning to read is often who you are" (p. 367). The way that students and their teachers have constructed their literate identities can guide their positioning and thus their engagement in academic literacy events. The data for gathering insights about students' literate identities was collected through semi-structured interviews with students and their teachers, as well as through conversations with students and their teachers throughout the data collection period.

Participants for this study were two students each in grades 1, 4, and 6 as well as their reading/language arts and ESOL teachers. All of the students were ELLs who had had all of their schooling in English immersion U.S. schools and who spoke Spanish at home. Within each grade level, I asked teachers to identify two students who were at different points in their academic literacy development, one student who was on a path to meet grade level expectations of reading and writing and one student who gave the teachers concern, so that I could investigate the ways that students may experience academic literacy events in different ways. Because I did not want to have pre-conceptions about these students as I began to observe them during academic literacy events, I sought not to know in advance which student had been identified by his teacher as being on a particular point in his academic literacy development. Although the sixth grade ESOL teacher shared with me which student was which and I found that my pre-conceptions influenced my early observations, the sixth grade participant who found academic literacy difficult became *my* teacher in this study, as I will share in Chapter 6.

Indeed, during my observations, I sought as much as possible to develop a student's point of view, sitting very close to my participants and trying to see the classroom from where they were located. Additionally, I was able, with one exception, to conduct all of my interviews with students at their homes, learning more about their viewpoints and lives beyond school. As Nieto (2002) notes, "Discussions about developing strategies to solve educational problems lack the perspectives of one of the very groups they most affect: students, especially those students who are categorized as 'problems' and are most oppressed by traditional educational

structures and procedures" (p. 119). Thus I used this study as an opportunity to listen to the students we frequently hear *about* but rarely hear *from*: the ELLs themselves because "students need to be included in the dialogue if educators are to reflect critically on school reform" (Nieto, 2002, p. 119).

Framing the Research Questions

There are a total of three research questions, but each includes at least one sub-question to clarify aspects that will support the main question. Also, because this study is cross-sectional across three grade levels and compares the cases of ELLs within grade levels, comparisons and contrasts across cases and grade levels will be considered in light of each question.

1. How do ELLs' positionings mediate their experiences of academic literacy events?

    1.1 How may their positions afford or constrain their engagement in literacy events?

2. How are participants engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning during literacy events?

    2.1 How are students engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning?

    2.2 How do teachers interactively position ELLs?

3. How do students' experiences of academic literacy work to construct and be constructed by their literate identities?

    3.1 How do students' positionings in academic literacy events work to re-construct/constitute students' literate identities?

Definitions of Key Terms

1. ELL: English Language Learner: A learner of English who speaks another language or languages (Ovando et al., 2006).

2. Limited English Proficient (LEP): The designation for a student at a U.S. school deemed not to have a level of English proficiency high enough to be able to access the curricula independently (NCELA, 2009). This is the official term of the U.S. government for ELLs. I do not use it because of its deficit connotations, as described by Freeman and Freeman (2002). It is not the *students* themselves who are limited, it is the availability and access to literacy support and grade-level curricula which is limited.

2. Long-Term English Learner (LTEL): An ELL who has been in U.S. schools for seven or more years (Freeman & Freeman, 2002; Menken et al., 2009; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999). An LTEL is typically below grade level in reading and writing, but has conversational fluency in English (Freeman and Freeman, 2002; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999).

5. L1 English user: A student who has English as his or her first language. I employ the word "user" rather than "speaker" because English at school includes the modalities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. I have created this term to employ rather than "native speaker" of English because of the negative and colonialist implications of "native speaker" which have been problematized (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

6. Positioning: The ways people take on multiple roles, stances, and identities, and assign them to others through discourse (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Harré & van

Langenhove, 1999; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999; Weedon, 1997). Yoon (2008) notes that "Learning may change as a function of the interrelationships due to social power dynamics" (p. 498). Davies and Harré (1999) describe two types of positioning: "interactive positioning" in which one person positions another and "reflexive positioning" in which one positions oneself (p. 37).

7. Discourse: Ways in which we create knowledge socially, through verbal and non-verbal interaction including body language and gestures; institutional design, such as school and classroom layout; and through private speech. My definition of discourse is informed by concepts of discourse from Weedon (1997), Gee (1996), Harré and van Langenhove (1999), Lessa (2005), and Foucault (1972, 1980).

8. Literate Identity: A facet of a learner's "complex social identity" (Norton Peirce, 1995) that constitutes a learner's fluid and dynamic sense of self, specifically as a learner. According to Hawkins (2005), "Children acquire different identities in different sites and environments as the resources they have available to recruit interact dynamically in different ways with the specific constellation of components unique to each environment" (p. 63).

9. Academic Literacy: Literacy necessary to succeed on grade-level in a K-12 environment, including reading and writing, and the ability to converse about disciplinary subject matter at grade level (Hawkins, 2005; Scarcella & Rumberger, 2000; Wong Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Academic English, the standard form of English that is the language of school, is a component of academic literacy (Gersten et al., 2007).

10. Literacy Event: According to Heath (1982), "The literacy event is a conceptual tool useful in examining within particular communities of modern society the actual forms and functions of oral and literate traditions and co-existing relationships between spoken and written language. A literacy event is any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (p. 93). In this study, as I observed participants during the reading/language arts block, I looked for episodes of participants' positioning during literacy events. The pieces or writing, or texts, of these events included textbooks, guided reading books, read-aloud books, age-appropriate magazines, texts on worksheets provided by teachers, and student-generated texts.

11. Engagement: The meaning of engagement with reading extends from a consideration of a student's general interaction with reading, including strategy use, motivation, and interest (Cummins, 2011; Guthrie, 1996; Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn, 1992) to a consideration of a student's involvement with text within a literacy event (Afflerbach, 1996; Moody, Justice, & Cabell, 2010). In this study, my use of engagement reflects that latter approach, looking at students' engagement within distinct episodes. As Moody et al. did, I found that students' particular levels of engagement varied within literacy events.

12. Affordance/Constraint: Affordance was defined by van Lier (2000) as "A particular property of the environment that is relevant – for good or ill – to an active, perceiving organism in that environment" which "affords further action (but does not cause or trigger it)" (p. 253). The use of "affordance" has since come to take on a purely positive connotation, with the term "constraint" serving to counter it as a

property of the environment that precludes further action (Dickey, 2011; Martin-Beltrán, 2010b; Murphy & Coffin, 2003).

13. Literacy Trajectory: Lerkkanen et al. (2004) write of "developmental trajectories" of reading performance and Pianta et al. (2008) write of "achievement trajectories." The data on Long-Term English Learners also suggests that students' academic literacy development may follow a variety of trajectories. In this study, I use literacy trajectory to discuss the paths of academic literacy development that my participants seem to be on given their academic literacy achievement, patterns of positioning, and literate identities.

Significance of the Study

This study investigated the positioning of ELLs within and across grades during academic literacy events and considered the ways that such positioning may work to re-constitute as well as be mediated by students' literate identities. This study offers insights into the academic literacy experiences of ELLs who have experienced all of their schooling in English immersion U.S. schools from the perspectives of students and from direct observation of their engagement in literacy. By learning about the experiences of these children from the students themselves, I have sought to develop a better understanding of how my participants experienced academic literacy events first hand so that we can better support and prepare teachers for instructing ELLs and for facilitating the development of fruitful literacy trajectories for ELLs.

This study adds to the body of research on the academic literacy development of ELLs by bringing a cross-sectional cross-case perspective that considers how students' experiences may differ across and within grade levels with a snapshot that

stretches across the breadth of elementary school. Previous studies on elementary ELLs' academic literacy learning have focused on one particular grade level (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Hawkins, 2005) or looked at students longitudinally, but in a specific period of their learning, such as Toohey's (2000) study of students from the beginning of kindergarten through grade 2. This study also links the discussion on elementary ELLs' academic literacy development to the conversation on the academic needs of ELLs in secondary school, including Long-Term English Learners.

This study is focused on academic literacy not to diminish the importance of multiliteracies (Hawkins, 2004; Villalva, 2006) in which students may excel, but because I recognize that schools and educational systems value a very particular type of literacy and that academic success in this type of literacy serves as a gatekeeper to social, academic, and economic opportunity. While tapping into the multiliteracies of students and recognizing the valuable contributions that such multiliteracies will be essential in creating full equity for diverse students, unfortunately, a more narrowly constructed version of academic literacy currently stands as the litmus test for student success and as the gatekeeper for the academic success that leads to increased opportunities and life chances for student success in U.S. public education. Until we have a revolution in U.S. education that recognizes the multiple contributions and strengths of *all* students and have developed schools and teachers that will team with students to co-construct success, academic literacy is the gatekeeper to academic and economic success, and the greatest range of life choices.

Brief Statement of Methodology

This study was informed in its design by the methodology of cross-sectional cross-case study with the use of narrative inquiry as a methodological tool in my data analyses and sharing of findings and interpretations. The research site included three classrooms in a large urban-suburban elementary school with a significant portion (37%) of its students currently classified as English Language Learners (ELLs). My participants included two students each from grades 1, 4, and 6. I spent six weeks at the school and within those six weeks I regularly observed my focal students during their reading/language arts blocks. Additionally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with all of my student participants as well as with their mainstream reading/language arts teachers and their ESOL teachers. Finally, I asked each student to draw two self-portraits, one of the student engaging in either reading or writing at school and one of the student doing something fun outside of the context of school in order to include an alternative form of sharing their story that did not have academic literacy demands.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study employs positioning theory as articulated by Harré and van Langenhove (1999) and identity theory (Gee, 2000-2001; Norton Peirce, 1995) as complementary points of view that may inform each other. The moment-to-moment interactions that may be captured and considered through positioning theory are gathered through participants' discourse. The locus of analysis is the literacy event, with additional insights gathered through interviews

with participants. I will provide a more detailed consideration of my theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

<div align="center">Limitations and Delimitations</div>

The first limitation of this study is that it is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. While a longitudinal study would be able to observe how students' positioning and literate identities may evolve or change through their years of academic literacy experiences and to document students' literacy trajectories, this study instead examined how students' positioning and literate identities may *differ* across grade levels.

In order to allow for close examination of students' experiences of academic literacy events and the affordances and constraints those events may offer for students' literacy development, I conducted my observations for this study during the reading/language arts block portions of the school day, when most of the specific and explicit instruction on literacy occur. Although this observational choice supported my emphasis on students' academic literacy experiences, this limited my perspective and potential understanding of how students' positionings change across context within and beyond school. Additionally, although I interviewed the teachers of the participants in this study in order to gain insights about each teacher's instruction and their perspectives on my student participants, this study emphasized the experiences of my student participants, rather than attempting to discover connections or disconnections between the two groups.

Overview of the Document

Although I have presented my personal experiences that have led me to this study as well as a discussion of ELLs and the importance of academic literacy development, I have not gone deeply into a discussion of the theories of positioning and identity that frame and guide this study. I open up these theories in Chapter 2 in order to describe them and consider the ways in which they may complement each other as lenses of analyses to shed light of the academic literacy experiences of elementary ELLs. In Chapter 3 I provide a thorough discussion of my research site, participants, data collection, conceptualizations, and analyses. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 I introduce my participants by grade level, sharing the experiences of ELLs in grades 1, 4, and 6, respectively. In Chapter 7, I bring together my analyses of students' experiences across grade levels in order to compare and contrast their experiences. Finally, in Chapter 8 I revisit my research questions in light of my findings and discuss the contributions that this study has made to the field of English language education and its pedagogical implications.

Chapter 2 : Literature Review

Introduction

The purposes of this chapter are to open up a theoretical framework for this study, to elaborate concepts essential to this study, and to synthesize research that has addressed issues relevant to this study. Drawing from theories of positioning and identity, this literature review first considers each theory and then offers the possibilities for how these theories may complement and inform each other. Also, I make a case for why the concepts of positioning and identity may be fruitful for uncovering the ways in which English Language Learners (ELLs) experience academic literacy events and the moments in those events that support their engagement in those events, bringing in piloting data to illustrate my use of the theoretical lenses. Finally, I will discuss and analyze empirical studies that explicitly or implicitly also draw on one or more of these theories and assumptions to better understand ELL experiences before revisiting the main findings of this literature review and their implications for my study.

Scope and Limitations of the Literature Review

Because my study is focused on the literacy experiences, positioning, and academic identities of students at the elementary level, most of the empirical studies included have investigated students at the elementary level. Exceptions to this include studies on ELLs at the secondary level which utilize theories that are part of my theoretical framework in order to investigate the analyses and insights that may arise from the application of these theories. Additionally, one empirical study from L1

literacy research has been included because it uses positioning to explore the literacy development of primary students, albeit L1 English users. Finally, although I make occasional references to the ways in which the studies in this review informed my methodology in this study, I will provide a thorough consideration of my methodology in Chapter 3.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

To explicate my theoretical framework, I first discuss positioning and then identity. Next, I argue for how the two theories may complement each other in shedding light on the academic literacy experiences of ELLs. I share data from my pilot study that illustrates the use of positioning and identity in analysis.

Positioning

Positioning theory is a way of looking at interaction and discourse with an emphasis on the fluidity of "positions" as people take different stances in relationship to each other as well as working to place others in particular positions during interactions. According to Harré and van Langenhove (1999), a position is a "Complex cluster of generic personal attributes, structured in various ways, which impinges on the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and even intrapersonal action through some assignment of such rights, duties and obligations to an individual" (p. 1). As they interact with each other, people claim and negotiate stances that may change fluidly across the course of an interaction. According to Bomer and Laman (2004), "The notion of positioning points to the ways people continually put on different selves and assign roles to other people" (p. 425).

Positioning theory is a means of interpreting social phenomena and interactions (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

The positions that people take and which they may attempt to impose on others are visible in "episodes," units of discourse which are more than "visible behaviour" – they "also include the thoughts, feelings, intentions, plans and so on of all those who participate. As such, episodes are defined by their participants but at the same time they also shape what participants do and say" (p. 5). In this way, the process of positioning may be seen as a recursive process, people bring into interactions positions built from prior experiences, but those positions are fluid and always changing based upon new episodes, and it is only through such episodes that positions are situated. Davies and Harré (1999) have articulated two types of positioning: "interactive positioning" in which one person positions another and "reflexive positioning" in which one positions oneself (p. 37).

Positioning has been used in investigating learners' feelings toward the target language community (Ros i Solé, 2007); the ways in which classroom practices construct L2 learners (Toohey, 1998); language learners' negotiation of their identity with peers (Hawkins, 2005); and the positions assumed and imposed by primary student writers (Bomer & Laman, 2004). While not all of these studies used positioning as defined by Harré and van Langenhove (1999), they all explicitly used the construct of positioning to analyze students' schooling experiences. Koyama (2004) noted that the use of positioning as a theoretical lens allows us to move from placing the locus of failure on an individual by asking, "Why can't some students

learn English?" (p. 404) to a questioning of the broader perspective of *interactions* in which productive solutions may be sought.

Martin-Beltrán (2010a) found that language learners' proficiencies as perceived by target language speakers informed their positioning in ways that "excluded them from language learning affordances all together" (p. 273). Yoon (2008) found that the positioning of ELLs by teachers was modeled by L1 English user classmates. Also, Yoon argued that "Teachers might position ELLs without realizing that they may be limiting the students' opportunities to develop a positive sense of themselves as learners" (p. 499). By looking at the context in which the student is provided literacy experiences and support, one may begin to see how positioning may constrain or provide access to literacy experiences made available by the teacher.

Identity

As defined by Gee, identity is "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person,' in a given context" (Gee, 2000-2001, p. 99). Identities are fluid, "multiple and contradictory" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 15). Identity is continually reconstructed through social interactions and the positioning of students. As Gee noted, "People can accept, contest, and negotiate identities" (p. 109). From her work with language learners, Norton Peirce proposed a theory of social identity that "assumes that power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (p. 12). Norton Peirce critiqued the "artificial distinctions" that have been created between "the individual language learners and larger, frequently inequitable social structures" (p. 125). She argued that "Second language theorists,

teachers, and students cannot take for granted that those who speak regard those who listen as worthy to listen, and that those who listen regard those who speak as worthy to speak" (p. 28). As students' literate identities are constructed and re-constructed, their patterns of positioning, both reflexive and interaction, and access to meaningful language use may change and evolve.

Positioning and Identity

I use both positioning and identity as theoretical lenses in this study with the assertion that despite coming from different traditions, social psychology and cultural studies, respectively, they may inform and complement each other. Positioning is most useful for analyzing moment-to-moment interactions within an episode, as participants' fluid positions, or stances, are revealed through their discourse. As Rampton (2007) wrote, it is a "micro-analytic" lens that may offer a "complexity" to analyses when paired with identity theory by bringing a "heightened sensitivity" to analyses and implications (pp. 11, 9). Positioning theory allows for micro-grained analyses of interactions that may then be connected to the fine-grained considerations and connections to multiple situations and contexts offered by identity theory when coupled with data gathered through interviews and conversations with participants

In comparing positioning theory to identity theory, Norton described positioning as more "singular," that is, in "a particular time and in a particular interaction in a particular time and space" (personal communication, December 2, 2010). Positioning theory is most useful in looking at moment-to-moment episodes in a micro-analysis, or as Rampton put it "nose-down" in interactional data (2007, p. 2). On the other hand, Norton asserted that identity theory "allows conceptually for the

31

multiplicity of identity across time and space" supporting analyses across episodes and moments (personal communication, December 2, 2010). Identity theory allows for a stepping-back in analyses to consider the larger picture and ramifications. In arguing for the importance of micro-grained data analyses such as positioning as a complement to identity, Rampton (2007) asserted that it is when a researcher steps back

> back from the intensive process of trying to work out what's going on in a particular episode that notions like identity become potentially relevant, pointing to a more general set of issues of debates that the episode maybe speaks to. Identity, in other words, tends to feature as a second- or third-order abstraction, a bridge back from data analysis to social science literatures and public debate, just one among a number of potential resources for explaining why the research is important, for answering the ever-pressing questions 'So what? Why bother?'" (p. 2)

Positioning opens windows into the moment-to-moment interactions of participants. Complementing the use of positioning with identity allows for a more complete picture of participants' experiences and a richer discussion of access and power relationships that would be lost if one theoretical point of view were sacrificed to the primacy of the other.

Indeed, one can view positioning as one of the processes that contributes to identity construction. Positioning supports an investigation of participants' stances as they unfold in academic literacy event interactions and identity theory allows us to consider the ways that certain patterns of positioning may constitute or be constituted by students' literate identities. The possibilities that positioning holds as a window

into the micro-interactions that contribute to identity construction are recognized by Vetter (2010) who used positioning theory "to highlight" how a teacher "used language to position students as readers/writers to facilitate the construction of literacy identities and literacy learning in general" (p. 36). Vetter found that "The ways teachers position students as readers and writers over time contribute to how students fashion their literacy identities and become members of the classroom community" in her investigation of an 11th grade mainstream English classroom. In this study, I will discuss how patterns of positioning connected to students' ongoing construction of their literate identities and the powerful role that teachers could play in positively positioning students during academic literacy events.

Bernhard et al. (2006) asserted, "The way students are positioned in relation to the teacher, to other students, and to the learning community in general can affect their identity investment and cognitive engagement" (p. 2387). Positioning is one of the processes that informs and contributes to the negotiation and constitution of students' identities. As Harré and van Langenhove (1999) noted, positioning theory is "*a starting point* for reflecting upon the many different aspects of social life" (p. 9) [emphasis mine]. This study considered students' positionings during academic literacy events not only to explore how their positioning mediated their engagement in those events but also to consider positioning as a window into the construction of students' literate identities. Yoon (2008) wrote, "Although a single positioning of ELLs might not seriously affect the students…a continuous positioning of ELLs in certain ways might influence them to *view themselves accordingly*" (p. 518) [*again, emphasis mine*]. Nasir and Saxe (2003) also considered positioning to be a process

33

that informs identity construction and works to investigate the ways that face-to face interactions and positioning in those interactions "matter to later identity development" (p. 16).

Considering Positioning and Identity Through Pilot Study Data

To illustrate the concept of positioning, both reflexive and interactive, I integrate a vignette from the piloting of this study. As the focus of this study is on the academic literacy experiences of ELLs, the positioning with which I am most concerned is the positioning of ELLs in and around academic literacy events. In the piloting phase of this study, I observed Alexi, a sixth grader, who was born in Mexico and came to the United States at the end of second grade. Although Alexi did not fit the criteria for participation in this study, not having had all of his schooling in U.S. English immersion schools, my analyses of his experiences in literacy events and the transcript of my semi-structured interviews with him as well as with his ESOL and reading/language arts teachers was useful in supporting the development and design of this study.

During the whole group lesson of Alexi's reading/language arts block, the mainstream classroom teacher, Mr. Imler, sat in a chair in the front of the classroom and called all of the students to come and sit on the carpet around him. Alexi chose to sit immediately in front of his teacher, nearly within touching distance of Mr. Imler's knees. Alexi raised his hands several times to answer questions posed by the teacher, speaking his answers very softly. Mr. Imler, a man of imposing presence with a booming voice, once gently asked Alexi to "speak up" after a whispered response. Mr. Imler also called on Alexi once when Alexi had not raised his hand. In choosing

34

to sit at the front of the group, near to his teacher, Alexi positioned himself as an engaged and motivated student, one eager to hear what the teacher had to teach. He affirmed his position of a contributing member of the class and a dependable student by raising his hand and joining actively in the discussion of the text. Mr. Imler's interactive positioning paralleled Alexi's reflexive self-positioning by calling on Alexi when he raised his hand and even once when he had not raised his hand, acknowledging and affirming Alexi's role as a dependable and contributing member of the class.

Alexi's positioning during this literacy event provided a window into the ongoing construction of his literate identity. He positioned himself in positive ways that opened up his access and level of engagement in the literacy event and this positive positioning was validated and affirmed by Mr. Imler. In his conversation with me, Alexi later described himself as a "in the middle" reader who likes to "practice and get good grades." He revealed a literate identity of a confident and motivated student with regular experiences of success, noting, "Every single time we do a test I get good. Sometimes I get my test put up in the hall because I got all of them right." Alexi's strong literate identity was affirmed by his teachers. Alexi's ESOL teacher described Alexi as "very motivated" and a "fantastic kid" as Mr. Imler nodded in agreement. On my way out of the school building after my observation of Alexi, I ran into Alexi's science teacher in the front office, who described him as a "dream."

In contrast to Alexi was Guillermo, the other participant in my pilot study. Guillermo was recommended by his ESOL teacher as a participant because he was a

"cool student" with a "great family." Guillermo was a third-grader who was born in the United States and had a high level of oral English, but was challenged by reading and writing in English. He was considered by his teachers to be on a worrisome literacy trajectory, one that did not predict future success with academic literacy tasks. I observed Guillermo in a small-group pull-out with Mrs. Murphy, a reading/language arts support teacher whose focus was on improving the reading comprehension skills of students reading below grade level. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with Guillermo and with Mrs. Murphy.

Guillermo's small group lesson took place in Mrs. Murphy's room, a space the size of a large office containing three round tables and a chalkboard. Mrs. Murphy, Guillermo, and three other students sat at one of the round tables, Guillermo sitting next to Mrs. Murphy on her right. As Mrs. Murphy led her students into the classroom, she pointed at Guillermo and muttered to me, "I already had to talk to him once this morning." As a group, the teacher and the students were reading a book about street games such as marbles and hopscotch. The teacher told the students to examine the table of contents of the book. After glancing at the table of contents, Guillermo began to look through the rest of the book and was reprimanded by Mrs. Murphy, "Did I ask you questions? Did I ask you to flip through the book? The table of contents." Throughout the lesson, this pattern was repeated. Although students took turns reading sentences from the book, with the teacher offering commentary on the pictures, the sentences, and new words that were encountered by the students, much of the discussion in the class was focused on student behavior, usually Guillermo's, who rarely raised his hand before offering a comment. However, twice

Guillermo raised his hand, and Mrs. Murphy offered positive comments, including, "You raised your hand, good." Over the course of the lesson, each student read about two sentences aloud, with the teacher spending most of the time talking to the students about the book, guiding their page-turning, addressing their behavior, and explaining her plans for follow-up activities to the book.

In contrast to Alexi's positioning of a well-behaved and engaged student who was universally enjoyed and appreciated by his teachers, Guillermo was positioned by his teacher in the lesson as a distracted student who had difficulty following classroom rules and procedures. Guillermo reflexively positioned himself as someone interested in the content of the text, looking through the book, pointing at illustrations in his copy of the book and in the copies being read by his peers, and making comments relating to the content of the book. However, for Mrs. Murphy, the salient attributes that guided her positioning of Guillermo were his disregard for the classroom rule of raising his hand before speaking, his talking at moments when she did not want students to talk, and his looking at pages in the book other than the page at which she had directed students to look.

Mrs. Murphy's perceptions of Guillermo were further revealed in the semi-structured interview, where she described Guillermo as a "frustrating" student who was "so sure he knows the answer and won't listen." Mrs. Murphy was concerned about Guillermo, noting that "If I correct him or try to show him the strategy, he's not there." She perceived Guillermo as a student who doesn't think he has anything to learn or who, while physically present in the lesson, absents himself from the possibility of instruction.

I was surprised to find that this absence was later echoed by Guillermo, where he explained that he wants "to be last" in any reading group, going so far as to describe how he is careful to keep his hands down and out of the way when the teacher is looking for students to call on. When asked if there was anything Guillermo would like his teacher to know if she could, he said "to not, to not call on me to read." Guillermo's desire to be invisible in moments of his reading lessons when students would be expected to read aloud was perceived by his teacher, who, as noted above, described him as "absent."

In contrast, Guillermo's teacher also described moments when Guillermo was an engaged and active participant in other lessons, especially those that involved dramatizing new endings to texts and physical involvement. Mrs. Murphy described Guillermo as "fabulous," bringing ideas to life in a way that was "clear and funny." Her positioning of Guillermo as a highly capable student when written forms of literacy were not central to the literacy activity highlights the dynamic nature of positioning. Guillermo's positioning quotidian success in the literacy events of Mrs. Murphy's class were likely linked to the context and type of literacy event, although I am drawing this conclusion from a limited piloting study. Guillermo's literate identity was one of a striving reader. He endeavored to do well and was working to do better using the strategies and skills he had available to him.

The multiplicity of Guillermo's identities was revealed to me when I spent an evening with Guillermo and his family at their apartment to conduct my semi-structured interview and found my encounter with him utterly different from my interactions with him at his school. He welcomed me to his apartment as his guest,

introducing me to his family, his birds, and his favorite toys. My visit to Guillermo's home gave him an opportunity to reveal identities that were not salient in the context of school. Rather than being the quiet boy trying with all of his might to avoid reading tasks, he was a confident host, pleased to act as an informative research participant and to tell me about other facets of him, pet owner, soccer player, big brother, that are hidden under the academic tasks of school. My engagement with Guillermo at his apartment not only gave me an opportunity to apply my initial interview protocol and to collect pilot data for analysis and interpretation, but to realize the importance that seeing the multiple identities of the participant, and not just the participant as student, has for considering the positioning(s) of ELLs.

Although these vignettes and analyses came from a pilot study comprised of only two classroom observations and four interviews, they provide an illustration of positioning, as well as an example of how positioning may be revealed in literacy events and conversations with participants. Additionally, these vignettes offer implications for how the positioning of and by students may impact their experiences of academic literacy and work in the construction of their literate identities. Alexi, a reader who was still working to achieve grade level success, was nevertheless positioned by his teachers as a student who was successful through his potential to learn and his current success in the participation in everyday classroom literacy events. Alexi identified himself as a good student who is focused on learning. Alexi's positioning of himself as a good student created the space he made for himself in front of the teacher during the whole group activity. His teacher invited him to actively participate in the discussion of the text, called on him when he raised his

hand, bending close to listen to his softly-voiced answers, and calling on him even when he had not raised his hand. Alexi's positioning brought him into active engagement with discussions of the text and positive feedback from his teacher, confirming his identity as a good student and potentially pushing him to participate even more actively in future literacy experiences.

In contrast, Guillermo's attempts to talk about the text led to his interactive positioning by Mrs. Murphy as a distracted student. Although Guillermo tried occasionally throughout the lesson to position himself as a student engaging with the text in moments that did not require reading aloud or writing, he was positioned by his teacher as a student with a behavior issue who was beginning to overcome his behavior issue rather than as a student trying to be an active participant in the literacy experience. Guillermo's positioning as a student engaged with text was overridden during the positioning negotiation and in the literacy event of my observation his pattern of constraining positions was multiplied by his avoidance of being called upon to read and write, which were usually negative and uncomfortable experiences for him. Given the patterns of positioning and the very different literate identities that were being constructed in this example, the results of this pilot study have implications for the importance of positioning in literate identity construction and in the development of students' literacy trajectories.

Although my interpretation of the experiences of Alexi and Guillermo are based on limited data, they offer fruitful implications for the role that positioning may play in students' access to teacher support and rich academic literacy experiences, as well as their own perceptions of their school experiences. Alexi's experiences were

generally positive and were reinforced by his teachers. With such positive feedback, Alexi was able to envision himself as an engaged and diligent student and brings himself forward in literacy experiences in his classroom when they are offered. In contrast, Guillermo's negative experiences, while punctuated occasionally by tasks in which he can excel, have contributed to his lack of confidence in his ability as a literate student. Rather than taking risks as a learner, Guillermo would have chosen to not be part of any literacy activity that involves reading or writing unless he felt that he had a high likelihood of experiencing success with them; his preference was to exclude himself from literacy tasks that were inevitably painful for him.

Noting that "Learning to read is often who you are: how well a child learns to read in comparison to other students provides a social position in a social hierarchy of 'becoming readers'" (Christian & Bloome, 2004, p. 367), Christian and Bloome (2004) explicitly linked learners' social identities to "access to learning tools" (p. 381). Positioning and identity are crucial in determining how students are able to participate in classroom activities, including literacy, and therefore their opportunities to learn. Christian and Bloome's description of ELLs who "entered the classroom low on the hierarchy, and classroom interactions [that] often confirmed their position" (p. 382) has been shared by other researchers (Garza & Crawford, 2005; Li, 2004).

Identity work in the field of second language education has been tied to a variety of characterizations, including identity, social identity, and biliterate identity. Identity, including all of these iterations, is fluid – an individual's identities may overlap and may even be "contradictory" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 15). "Social identity" connects the individual to the world(s) in which he or she is located.

Cultural identity "emphasizes the shared cultural meanings that make up the history of a group of people" (Ros i Solé, 2007, p. 204). Biliterate identity connects to an individual's "status as [a] bicultural, bilingual, biliterate person" (Jiménez, 2000, p. 985). Hawkins (2005) contrasted the school experiences of an ELL who relies heavily on his "social identity" at school with another who "claim[ed] an identity as a learner" (p. 78). Finally, Toohey (2000) proposed "school identities," which are constructed of academic competence, physical presentation/competence, behavioral competence, social competence, and language proficiency.

For this study, Toohey's conceptualizations of identity were useful for informing my consideration of students' literate identities. I sought to gather insights on students' literate identities at school through classroom observations and interviews, as well as from conversations with students and their teachers as well as discover how students constructed their literate identities at home by locating my interviews with students in the context of their homes. As I have noted, the importance of seeing and being with my participants in multiple contexts to discover the possibilities of their multiple identities was made clear from my piloting study data.

Review of Research

A critical examination and synthesis of selected research concerning ELLs and literacy further illuminates the possibilities for positioning and identity, and their links to beliefs and attitudes as well as remind us of key findings. In this section, I first explore research most closely tied to my topic, which focuses on the academic literacy experiences of ELLs, particularly ELLs in the mainstream classroom

(Christian & Bloome, 2004; Hawkins, 2005; Toohey; 1998). Next, I address research that looks at the identity and positioning of ELLs at the secondary level (Koyama, 2004; Yoon, 2007) which further illuminates my theoretical framework and provides implications to support my proposed study. This discussion is followed by a consideration of a study on L1 readers in a primary classroom (Bomer & Laman, 2004), because this study uses positioning as its lens of analysis.

Positioning and Identity in the Elementary Classroom

Hawkins (2005) described a year-long ethnographic study she co-conducted with a kindergarten teacher in order to "explore positioning and identity work…as it connected to the language and academic development" of ELLs in a kindergarten classroom (p. 67). The four students (of 14 in the class) identified as language learners were the focal subjects of the study. Hawkins collected data from a variety of sources, including observations; field notes; classroom videotapes; samples of student work; home visits; student interviews; observation protocols that looked at social interactions, behaviors, and language use; and sociograms that gave insights into the "social terrain" (p. 68) of the classroom and how students categorized their peers. Sociograms are charts that describe the social network and structure of a group of people, and may be created through surveys or interviews in order to determine individuals' preferences for partners and group members in social and work tasks. While four students were the participants of the study, in the analysis shared by Hawkins, she focused on two students because of the unexpected discoveries she made about them. The two students were Anton and William. Anton was a Peruvian immigrant living with his single mother and fourth grade sister in a small, nearly

43

unfurnished apartment. William was born in the U.S. to Korean parents, who owned a successful store. William received much academic support outside of school, including L1 literacy instruction in Korean. He also engaged in a variety of extracurricular activities, while Anton seldom left his apartment except to attend school. However, Anton's older sister took on a mother/teacher role with him, speaking to him in English and having him work on her schoolwork with her.

Hawkins found that Anton worked the system at school. Although he lacked experience in social interactions, he "observe[d] and analyze[d] what others [in the classroom] valued" and then claimed an "insider identity" (Hawkins, 2005, p. 70). Using "relatively limited English" in his interactions, he successfully appropriates words he hears his peers using, such as "chrysalis" to claim a position as a knower (p. 72). In interviews with Anton, Hawkins found that he avoided topics on social interaction, bringing the conversation back to school-based language and topics. By April, Anton identifies himself as "a good learner" (p. 73). On the other hand, William is focused "on friends and play" (p. 74). Rather than risk his dominance as Anton did by interacting with students who had a strong command of English and positions as knowers, William played with students who were quiet or not considered "socially desirable" according to the sociograms. Hawkins and her co-researcher postulated "that William was not comfortable in an activity in which he was positioned subordinately" (p. 75). Unwilling to take risks in interactions in which he might not be dominant or successful, William finished the year with an oral language ability in the 47th percentile while Anton's was in the 88th percentile, even though both boys had begun with comparable abilities.

This study is particularly compelling because Hawkins (2005) found that "social status and language and literacy were distinct" (p. 78). While William had a strong social identity, he avoided discussions on his identity as a learner. Anton claimed identity as a learner, but avoided discussions of his social identity. Hawkins asserted that unique identities related to schooling are constructed in classroom interactions and that these "identities may not align with the identities that these children may acquire in other contexts and environments" (p. 64). Also, Hawkins placed her discussions of identity around "academic literacies." She argued that understandings of "the languages of schooling and [the ability] to communicate in the ways that the institute of schooling values…must be extended to even the youngest learners" (p. 64). From students' earliest experiences in school, they must be able to master subject matter content as well as the ways of using language that are specific to school.

Also examining ELLs within the social dynamics of mainstream classroom literacy experiences were Christian and Bloome (2004), who examined a peer-group activity in a first-grade classroom following a read-aloud by the teacher. The data analyzed in this report came from a six-month ethnography in the classroom, which included the collection of observations, field notes, and interviews. The researchers sought to consider "how students socially construct the distribution of symbolic capital and how the distribution of symbolic capital influences literacy learning opportunities" (p. 371). Using data analysis to analyze transcriptions of the literacy event, Christian and Bloome considered the interactions of a group of students consisting of David and Oscar, Latino ELLs, and Katie and Michelle, L1 English

users. During the activity, the students were given a large piece of paper in order to draw a picture from the book shared in the read-aloud. The researchers found that the ELLs were "marginalized in this event, both literally and in terms of participation" (p. 376). Katie and Michelle dominated the physical space on the paper, leaving David to draw upside down on a top margin and Oscar with no place to draw at all. In the focus group of the analysis, Michelle was selected by the teacher to bring the crayons, and they were kept between her and Katie. Sometimes, Michelle took full control of the crayon box, limiting others' access to it. According to the researchers, students were selected by the teacher to be the "keeper of the crayons" based on "the hierarchy of academic achievement" (p. 378). They noted that "being the 'keeper of the crayons' places one in the position of determining who gets to act out a classroom task in a way associated with play and creative expression and who does not" (p. 379). Michelle and Katie claimed dominant positions. While at one point Oscar shifted his position from "non-participant to participant" by making a comment about Katie's drawing and having her accept his comment, his position changed only to one of "art critic," described by Christian and Bloome as one "whose ideas are valued but not to the extent that they provide the authority to issue directives" (p. 377).

This study has powerful implications in light of my theoretical framework and focus on the academic literacy experiences of elementary ELLs. While the literacy experience described in this analysis was available to all students, *access* to the literacy experience was not. The two L1 English users of the group held the positions of power and refused to grant equal positioning to the ELLs in the group, thus denying them access. Additionally, while Christian and Bloome (2004) wrote of

Oscar and David as ELLs, their description of them offered the implication that they were striving readers. Both Oscar and David were "low achievers in terms of reading and language arts" but they understood "most everything and [were] able to carry on casual conversations with ease" while having difficulty with "academic English, reading, and writing" (p. 372). This study points to the importance of considering how a variety of patterns of positioning may constitute students' variety of literate identities.

In another ethnographic study of primary ELLs in a first grade mainstream classroom, Toohey (1998) used the community-of-practice perspective to examine three classroom practices that "contribute to the construction of L2 learners as individuals" (p. 61). Toohey used field notes of her observations, tape-recordings of students' conversations, and once-a-month videotaping as her data. Also, she interviewed both the participants' mainstream classroom teacher and English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. Toohey's participants included Teaochew, Cantonese, Polish, and Punjabi speakers, comprised of three boys and three girls. Toohey found that the location of the participants in relation to the teacher, borrowing practices, and the rule against copying other students' work contributed to the breaking up of the children that forced them to individually negotiate classroom life without the support of combined resources. Because the participants were perceived as needing more help, they were placed closer to the teacher's desk and were not able to engage in the free conversations enjoyed by students located further away from the teacher's desk. While borrowing was frowned upon and sometimes disallowed by the teacher, not all students had access to the resources they needed to complete tasks.

Finally, students became more "vigilant" of protecting their work throughout the year. The ESL students had copied other students' work more frequently than L1 English users at the beginning of the year; however, Toohey noticed the "disappearance" of this phenomenon from her data by the end of the year (p. 80).

Toohey (1998) argued that "This individualizing of the children starts a process of community stratification that increasingly leads to the exclusion of some students from certain activities, practices, identities, and affiliations" (p. 80). While Toohey did not make the connection to positioning outside of her community-of-practice perspective, this stratification connects to van Langenhove and Harré's (1999) assertion that one can position oneself or be positioned as "powerful or powerless, confident or apologetic, dominant or submissive, definitive or tentative, authorized or unauthorized" (p. 17). Inferring from Toohey's work, students may be positioned as knowing (protecting work)/unknowing (desiring to copy work), academically independent (free to talk)/academically dependent (not permitted to talk), or having resources/needing to borrow. Although Toohey noted that "Any long-term effects of [students'] positioning in their Grade 1 classroom are impossible," I designed a cross-sectional study that could look at how students' positioning might differ across and within grade levels and offer implications for how such patterns of positioning might inform the ongoing construction of ELLs' literate identities.

While Hawkins (2005), Christian and Bloome (2004), and Toohey (1998) provided analyses of data on primary ELLs in mainstream classrooms and illuminated the issues around literacy and schooling experiences that may constrain ELLs' positive positioning, Hawkins is especially relevant to my study because of the three,

she is the only one who integrated children's "voices and opinions" into her data collection. Methodologically, Hawkins offered insights into the possibilities of interviewing young participants. Theoretically, she also demonstrated that academic literacy and learner identity are viable concepts that must be investigated in future research on school-aged ELLs.

Positioning and Identity in Secondary Contexts

Though Yoon's (2007) study on the shaping of ELL identity and opportunities for positioning as "resourceful and intellectual instead of powerless and inferior" (p. 221) is not at the elementary level, but in a middle school classroom, it considers the opportunities for repositioning of ELLs when supported by a mainstream teacher with positive beliefs and attitudes about them. Yoon used the method of case study to examine a sixth grade class in suburban New York State, visiting the classroom of Mrs. Young nearly every school day for a semester. While Yoon's 2007 paper focused on one classroom, the researcher also noted that two other classes were part of a larger study. In those classes the mainstream teachers "believed that teaching ELLS [was] not their main responsibility" and so "played a passive role in supporting the needs of their ELLs" (p. 222). Mrs. Young was exceptional in her belief that all students were her responsibility and the way in which she worked to create learning opportunities and positive positioning opportunities for the ELLs in her classroom.

Yoon interviewed the teacher and the two focal students, took field notes of classroom observations, and audiotaped classroom observations to cross-check them with field notes. Because the purpose of Yoon's study was to "examine the teacher's beliefs about her role in teaching ELLs, and the relationship between her teaching

49

approaches and the students' identities" she used a theoretical framework informed by culturally relevant pedagogy as articulated by Ladson-Billings (1995) and identity theory, including indicators of identity such as "students' participation and emotional pattern" (p. 223) as disclosed through their speech and actions per Harré and van Langenhove (1991). Yoon was not focused on cultural or ethnic identity but on students' "psychological and emotional identity – such as a sense of being powerful or powerless" (p. 224).

Mrs. Young was a European American with seven years of teaching experience, teaching English Language Arts/Reading/Social studies in a two hour block. Twenty-six students comprised the focal class, 18 European American, six African American, one Russian and one Korean. The last two students, Ana, a girl, and Dae, a boy, were the focal students, who each had one year of U.S. schooling in elementary school before coming to Mrs. Young's class. Yoon found that by valuing the cultural and academic knowledge of the two ELLs, Mrs. Young offered opportunities for them to be positioned as literate, intelligent, and a resource for her and for L1 English users in the class. Yoon concluded that this positive modeling by Mrs. Young may have encouraged positive positioning of the ELLs by their peers, who positioned the language learners as "capable" members of the classroom community (p. 236).

The ELLs who were the focus of Yoon's (2007) study did not share the characteristics of my participants, having only been in the United States for one year prior to the study, but her findings informed my study in light of the powerful role that positioning played in the classroom. Yoon demonstrated the importation of

50

positioning in ELL and teacher interactions, as well as the potential for the effects of teacher attitudes and example on the behavior of peers toward ELLs. According to Yoon, "The ELLs were engaged and participated more when their American peers showed interest and offered encouragement to them" (p. 236). The teacher explicitly used the ELLs as a resource, asking for their insights on cultural differences between U.S. schools and schools in their countries, which the U.S. born students found to be "cool" and "interesting" (p. 236). Also, in contrast to the Toohey (1998) and Christian and Bloome (2004), Yoon found that the ELLs in Mrs. Young's class received scaffolding, access to discussions and materials, and positive reinforcement from their peers that positioned them as classroom equals in learning. As Yoon noted, "Mrs. Young's approaches seemed to affect both groups of the students and assisted their learning as they worked together" (p. 237). Although Yoon interviewed both focal students in addition to Mrs. Young, her analysis focused on Mrs. Young's perspective, using classroom observation to guide her understanding of students' positioning, with minimal information on the identity and beliefs of the ELLs themselves. While my study will focus on positioning from the perspective of focal students who are struggling with literacy, Yoon's conclusions stress to me the importance of learning about teacher perspectives, as they likely have a direct effect on students' positioning and literate identity construction.

More negative implications for the affects of positioning by teachers and peers on ELLs is described by Koyama (2004) in her ethnographic study of the ways "in which students of Mexican descent who are designated as limited English proficient are 'acquired' by particular social positions in a northern California high school" (p.

51

401). While Koyama described the positions as "social," they link directly to the academic challenges, success, and potential of the ELLs as constructed by policy, teachers, L1 English using peers, and the focal students themselves. Koyama's data and subsequent analysis are from a larger 4-year research project at the school. The focal school was populated primarily by upper-middle-class "non-Hispanic White" students and working class Mexican and Mexican-American students. Although students of other ethnicities attended the school, they were a much smaller portion of the student population and were not the focus of the Koyama's study. Clashes and fights between the White students and the Latino students were frequent.

The students were clearly on different academic tracks, with 15% of Mexican-descent seniors having completed "all high school courses required for admission to either of the California public university systems" compared to 52% of the White students (p. 406). Mexican-descent students were underrepresented in most schoolwide and extracurricular activities, and the two groups of students spent their free time in completely different areas of the school campus. One of the ways in which students were positioned was through the English language proficiency testing conducted at the beginning of the school year, since there was no coherent process in place for articulation from middle school to high school. In the 30 minute oral section of the test, teachers were required to keep asking increasingly difficult questions even after students had given up answering after the first ten minutes. The students in Koyama's study became stuck in patterns of constraining positions that constituted identities which Koyama wrote of as "failure."

Through interviews with students, Koyama found that Mexican-descent students sometimes intentionally scored low on tests so that they could remain in lower-track academic classes with their friends and peers. When students were in classes dominated by White students, they sometimes did not participate. One student "explained that he did not feel comfortable talking in that class, where he was the only student of Mexican descent" (p. 415). Even students of Mexican-descent who elected to speak English with each other outside of class chose not to participate in class because "speaking English with [friends] was 'less dangerous' than in class, where [they] would be judged by the teacher and better English speakers" (p. 415).

In contrast to Yoon (2007), the ELLs in Koyama's (2004) study were positioned in patterns that constrained their movement into positive literacy trajectories by the school and school policy. While my study investigates the experiences of ELLs at the elementary level, Koyama offered a grim picture of what may be the fate of students who do not achieve grade-level academic literacy in English as well as the potential harmful effects on ELLs of policy, tracking, and a school culture imbued with latent linguistic and ethnic discrimination.

Positioning and Identity for L1 Readers Challenged by Academic Literacy

Bomer and Laman (2004) also used positioning as a way of gaining greater understanding of students and learning in a school context. However, this study, rather than coming from the field of English as a Second Language comes from L1 literacy development, specifically writing. While one of the two participants in the study, Jessamyn, a second-grader, was of "Filipino ancestry," no mention is made of home language, and so I assume that she was a L1 English user. Romy, the other

participant, was a first-grader from a working-class European American family. The girls were selected because they both regularly encountered difficulties with academic literacy, their voices "were less often present in the official settings in the classroom, and both were more "academically vulnerable" than other students (p. 433). The data analyzed in the article were taken from a larger year-long study in a combined first- and second-grade classroom in order to consider the ways in which "the subject positions these student writers assumed, those they assigned each other, and the related functions they assigned the texts they composed" may "interlace with intellectual growth as children struggle to become students, writers, and people" (p. 420). Bomer and Laman looked closely at three positioning episodes that occurred between the two students as they were working next to each other during a writing workshop time, in which writer groups or partnerships were neither "assigned nor publicly remarked upon by the teacher" and which did not "exactly correspond with friendship pairing on the playground or with the children's chosen partners in other parts of the school day" (p. 435).

The research project's data collection phase in this study was comprised of field notes taken during "20-24 hours of weekly non-participant observation of writing partners" in order to examine the "relational and cognitive dimensions of student talk while writing"; ten interviews with the teacher in order to provide "analysis of the affordances" in this classroom's discourse; and, two interviews with the principal in order to get "background on focal students" (p. 435). Bomer and Laman found that in the pedagogical structure of the writing workshop, the ability of the students to work "in interaction with other students but somewhat independent of

the teachers' direction and most of the class's scrutiny" allowed the "possibility of multiple positionings" even for students who were academically "weak" (pp. 452-453). The positions appropriated by the students and assigned to each other were frequently taken from the general school positions: competent/incompetent, fast writer/slow writer, needy/pestering, distracting/diligent.

Bomer and Laman asserted that "The students compete even when they do not have to – and are therefore perhaps hobbled in their participation in non-competitive environments" and that this "is a product of their participation in the wider culture" (p. 453). The researchers strengthened this assertion by comparing the positioning of Romy and Jessamyn with that of adult writers, who also consider their work in constant comparison with others. Bomer and Laman challenged the "static and linear model of [writing] development" that still dominates policy, arguing that the growth of writers is a much more complex series of "intricate dances that occur as children grow into literate individuals" (p. 457).

While this study was not about ELLs, it did investigate the positioning of and by primary schoolchildren who were working to develop their academic literacy skills. Bomer and Laman's (2004) conclusion that "Schools must be understood as places that host "intricate interactions that shape the growth of learners" and "not as assembly lines that produce 'achievement' in isolation from these dynamics" (p. 457) validates the complexities that I believe intertwine with the successes and challenges of ELLs in their schooling experiences.

Summary

As discussed above, the availability of quality literacy experiences does not guarantee either access to those literacy experiences or the possibility of student engagement within them. This access may be constrained by the positioning of the student, either self-positioning by the student or positioning of the student by others. When students are positioned as resources and contributing members of the classroom by the teacher, as shown in Yoon (2007), access to academic experiences has the potential to open up. Unfortunately, ELLs may sometimes be positioned in ways and in patterns that constrain their access to success in school and to supportive literacy activities (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Koyama, 2004). Table 2.2 provides an overview of the findings of this literature review as well as the implications that the analyzed studies offered for this study.

Table 2.1: Findings and Future Research Implications of the Literature Review

Empirical Research	Findings	Implications for Study
Hawkins (2005)	The ways in which students' position *themselves* may constrain or provide access to academic literacy.	ELLs' insights and perspectives will provide richer interpretation of their reflexive positioning in literacy experiences.
Christian & Bloome (2004)	Just because a teacher makes literacy support available doesn't mean that students will have access to it. Access is prevented and constrained by the positioning of striving ELLs by academically successful L1 English users.	Positions are negotiated between teachers and students, as well as students and students
Toohey (1998)	The positioning of students may constrain them in a way that they may not be able to avail themselves of the advantages granted to others, also, classroom practices and routines may	Classroom practices and positioning by the teacher may play a large role in how ELLs are positioned and their resulting access to literacy support.

	further marginalize striving ELLs.	
Yoon (2007)	When the teacher positions ELLs as legitimate and resourceful members of the classroom, peers may position them in the same way. This broadens the access of ELLs to literacy events more so than in other studies.	Positive beliefs by teachers may feed directly into their positioning of ELLs, as well as model positive positioning by peers.
Koyama (2004)	State, district, and school policy may work with classroom practices and teachers to position ELLs in patterns that constrain their access to success	Long-term patterns of constraining positions may work to construct literate identities of striving students whose potential is not recognized by the institution
Bomer & Laman (2004)	L1 primary writers create multiple positive and constraining positions for themselves and others	Students play a significant role in their positioning during literacy tasks

As illustrated in Table 2.2, positioning by students (Bomer & Laman, 2004; Hawkins, 2005) and positioning by teachers, peers, and even policy (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Koyama, 2004; Toohey, 1998; Yoon, 2007) play a large role in the access that ELLs have to literacy experiences. Although not all of the studies which I included and analyzed fully addressed both positioning and identity, when taken as a group, these studies allowed me to demonstrate the recursive nature of these concepts when articulated through social interaction in the classroom and discourse. Interactions in the classroom must include access to quality literacy events to support the development of academic literacy. Clearly, teachers play a role in developing students as readers and writers not only by creating activities and tasks that support their students, but by co-constructing positions for students that open up their access to those activities and tasks. Also, as teachers model instruction, they may model the

positive positioning of students, who may then, as shown in Yoon (2007), position their peers in positive ways.

These studies have demonstrated the theoretical value of both positioning and identity in considering students' experiences at school. My study extended this research by considering students' patterns of positioning during academic literacy events in ways that allowed for the examination of differences both within and across grade levels. In addition to investigating students' experiences across grade levels 1, 4, and 6, I included pairs of participants in the same grade level who were identified by their teachers as being at different points in their academic literacy development in order to compare and contrast their experiences of academic literacy and positioning within academic literacy events. My study also addressed current gaps in the research by investigating students' school *and* home literate identities as well as considering how students' experiences across grade levels may inform their literate identity development.

In the next chapter, I discuss and justify my research design, demonstrating how my methodology in data collection and analyses supported the effective use of positioning and identity. While the focus in this chapter was on literature that informed my theoretical framework, Chapter 3 draws on methodological literature to justify my choices for research design and data analyses.

Chapter 3 : Methodology

Introduction

In order to investigate the academic literacy experiences of elementary English Language Learners (ELLs) through the lenses of positioning and identity, I used cross-sectional cross-case study methodology to inform my research design and supported my data analyses and write-up with approaches from narrative inquiry. In order to provide rich and triangulated data sources, I considered students' experiences, positioning, and literate identities through classroom observations and time spent with them in the school, through semi-structured interviews with my focal students and self-portraits created by them, and through semi-structured interviews with their reading/language arts and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers. By implementing a design that supported me in investigating grades 1, 4, and 6, I was able to consider how students' experiences of academic literacy events and their positionings during those events differed across grade levels. By contrasting the experiences of my two focal students within each grade level I considered the differences in each grade. I discuss the rationale for my research design in this chapter, first sharing the research context and participants, then the instruments and procedures used in data collection, and finally, my data analyses and analytic framework.

Research Questions Restated

While I am restating the research questions here, the ways in which I addressed them through data collection and analyses are considered in depth later in this chapter. As noted in Chapter 1, there are a total of three research questions, with

each research question supported by a sub-question. Also, because this study is cross-sectional across three grade levels and compares the experiences of students within each grade level, comparisons and contrasts across participants and grade levels will be considered in light of each question.

1. How do ELLs' positionings mediate their experiences of academic literacy events?

    1.1 How may their positions afford or constrain their engagement in literacy events?

2. How are participants engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning during literacy events?

    2.1 How are students engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning?

    2.2 How do teachers interactively position ELLs?

3. How do students' experiences of academic literacy work to construct and be constructed by their literate identities?

    3.1 How do students' positionings in academic literacy events work to re-construct/constitute students' literate identities?

Research Design and Rationale

As noted above, the design of this study was informed by a qualitative cross-case cross-sectional methodology; however, as I worked deeply into my data analyses, I found that both the experiences of my students and of myself in undertaking this scholarly journey were best addressed by narrative inquiry which I used to deeply investigate the experiences of six participants. This study is cross-sectional in that it examined the differences in students' experiences across three grades. The design of this study was informed by research on comparative cross-cases

in order to compare and contrast (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) the positioning of students identified by their teachers as being in different stages of their academic English literacy development. Additionally, this study also integrated approaches from cross-sectional design (Wiersma, 2000) in order to investigate the differences that may exist between ELLs in different grade levels. This allowed for the consideration of the possible differences that may exist across grade levels. As noted by Wiersma (2000), "Differences between defined groups in a cross-sectional study may represent changes that take place" over time (p. 163). As noted earlier, one limitation of this study is that it did not include a longitudinal design that could follow my focal participants throughout their school careers.

As I have mentioned, the initial design of this study was informed by case study methodology, which "helps you to make direct observations and collect data in natural settings" (Yin, 2006, p. 112). This aligned with my intention of considering students' academic literacy experiences in situ as well as provided the methodological support for gathering multiple sources of evidence in order to " 'triangulate' or establish converging lines of evidence" (Yin, 2006, p. 115). Additionally, the case study design offered the opportunity for triangulation and interpretations "continuously throughout the period of study" (Stake, 2005, pp. 443-444). However, as I moved through the beginning stages of analyses and started to make cross-case comparisons in light of my intended cross-case design, I found that my original intentions of "contrasting cases (e.g., a success and a failure)" (Yin, 2006, p. 115) would not sufficiently capture the complexities of the academic literacy experiences of my students. Furthermore, my own development as a researcher and my newfound

conclusion that the dichotomizing of my participants into contrasting cases made me a participant in constructing positions of constraint for my participants revealed to me the importance of bringing my personal journey as a researcher into the text of my final study write-up. For this reason, I and this study experienced a methodological shift about halfway through my data analyses period.

In concluding my data analyses and in writing up this study in preparation for sharing with an audience, I turned to narrative inquiry to inform the final stages of this study. According to Chase (2005), "narrative is a way of understanding one's own and others' actions, or organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time" (p. 656). Opening up my study to be informed by narrative approaches allowed the voices and personal stories of my six student participants to take the forefront in all of their complexities, broadening the field of study to extend into the experiences that had shaped them into the children as I knew them. Furthermore, a vital aspect of narrative research is the way(s) that the researcher invites participants to tell their stories. In addition to conversations, I had invited my participants to tell stories through self-portraits, giving them the opportunity to use an alternative medium "to tell stories about biographical particulars that are meaningful to them" (Chase, 2006, p. 661).

Additionally, turning to narrative created a space for my own voice and personal journey as a researcher to be shared as I invited my audience to join me on the journey of discovery that I was privileged to experience. Chase notes that "narrative researchers, like many other contemporary qualitative researchers, view

themselves as narrators as they develop interpretations and find ways in which to present or publish their ideas about the narratives they studied" (p. 657). Bringing my own narration into this study was crucial, as demonstrated through a later section in this chapter that illustrates the difficulty of developing names for positions that were constraining to my participants in their experiences of academic literacy events.

As I considered more deeply my own role as a researcher, my own learning and self-discovery along the course of this study, and the relationships with participants that I developed despite myself that are documented in the later chapters of this work, I found that narrative inquiry called to me as the best way of addressing the new complexities and conundrums that I faced. According to Connelly and Clandinin (2006)

> Narrative inquirers, particularly those who start with the living, often say that even though they intended to remain disengaged they found themselves intimately intertwined with the living under study and, as a result, with the field texts that form the basis of the written research text. It is not necessary to undertake an autobiographic study to find oneself heavily involved autobiographically in narrative inquiry. Narrative inquirers need to be self-conscious of their potentially intimate connection with the living, with the field texts collected, and with their research texts. (2006, p. 482).

In turning to the literature on narrative inquiry, I found a methodology that could support the new direction my study had taken, seen most in Chapter 6 and my relationship with Rosa Maria, in which I realized that I had entered and impacted my own field of study. I had intended to remain disengaged from my participants, but

found myself engaged with them. I had intended to implement and follow-through with a cross-case cross-sectional study, but found myself inevitably drawn the narrative research and the necessity of claiming that in order to be authentic to myself and to this study.

<center>The Research Context</center>

The primary research site of this study was a school which I will call Walnut Springs Elementary School. Walnut Springs was a large and airy building, constructed within the last ten years, and located just outside the jurisdiction of a large Mid-Atlantic city. At the time of my data collection at Walnut Springs, 784 students were registered at the school, with 54% identifying as Latino, 44 African-American, with the remaining 2% a combination of Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, and White. Thirty-seven percent of the students at Walnut Springs were classified as ELLs, though according to Mrs. Bennett, the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) chairperson, a much larger percent of the school population, including most of the Latino students had at one time been enrolled in ESOL. Additionally, 85% of the students received Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS).

Because of the large ELL population, the ESOL department included seven ESOL teachers. The school acknowledged its large Spanish-English bilingual population by posting many dual language signs and notices, as well as by employing a Spanish-English bilingual parent liaison to serve as an interpreter and point of contact for Latino parents. Students were admitted into the ESOL program based on their parents' responses to a Home Language Survey (HLS) administered during the

<center>64</center>

registration process. The purpose of the HLS was to identify all students who spoke a language other than English at home, had been born outside of the United States, or who had transcripts from schools outside of the United States. Those students were referred to the district's central ESOL office for transcript counseling and credit transfer, if at the secondary level, as well as an initial English language proficiency assessment and level placement.

The language proficiency assessment used by the district and mandated by the state at the time of this study was the LAS Links, which assessed students' English language proficiency with listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on the academic language skills needed for school success. A short form was used during the initial placement process to identify students as being in either one of five proficiency levels or to have the English language proficiency necessary to succeed in the mainstream classroom without additional ESOL support. A more comprehensive LAS Links assessment was administered by ESOL teachers in the district each spring to determine students' latest proficiency levels and to discover whether or not they had achieved the English language proficiency necessary to succeed in the mainstream classroom without additional ESOL support.

Students who achieved at the "exiting" level would consequently be exited from the ESOL program and re-designated as English proficient Released English Language Learners (R-ELLs) for two years. In the years leading up to this study, there was constant debate and contention at the school, district, and state levels about when and how students should be exited from ESOL. At the district level there were discussions about avoiding the construction of a Long-Term English Learner

population by automatically exiting students after a certain number of years in the program. However, this policy proved to be problematic. This policy climate points to the need for more research to understand the journeys of these ESOL students and why and how they may or may not be de-classified as ESOL.

Students currently classified as ELLs were included in the state's annual reading and math assessments, although recently-arrived students (those in the country for less than one year) were exempt during their first year in the United States. Students who successfully exited the ESOL program and were reclassified as R-ELLs were monitored for two years with their scores contributing to the ELL sub-group scores on annual reading and math assessments and their school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind.

The importance of this annual assessment was visible in the main atrium of the school, which was dominated by two displays during my time at Walnut Springs Elementary School. The first display was in celebration of the "Book of the Month" club, a monthly activity overseen by the principal that mandated a particular book to be read in every classroom at Walnut Springs supported by related activities. During my time at the school, the book of the month was actually four books, all of which were on display in the showcase in the front of the atrium: a traditional version of *The Three Little Pigs*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury, and the Spanish/English bilingual *Los Tres Pequeños Jabalíes /The Three Little Javelinas* by Susan Lowell. I witnessed many literacy event activities around the *Pigs* books, as I discuss later in Chapters 4 and 6.

The second display in the school's large atrium was a massive racetrack made from colored chart paper and construction paper that took up the right side wall at the back of the room. On the racetrack were cars with students' names on them as well as with different colored wheels. An explanation noted that different colors on the wheels showed which students had tested at proficient (passing) grade for the quarterly benchmark test on either math or reading, and sometimes both, as well as which students had tested very near to proficient on either math or reading, or both. The quarterly benchmark test was aligned with the annual state assessment for math and reading that determined whether the school had reached its target for Adequate Yearly Progress under the No Child Left Behind mandate. The dominance of the atrium by the testing display foreshadowed the prevalence of focus on and concern about the test that was present in my observations of and conversations with my student and teacher participants in fourth and sixth grades. First-graders were exempt from the annual reading and math assessments that connected to AYP.

Participants

This investigation implemented a cross-sectional design that looked at the experiences of ELLs in grades 1, 4, and 6 in order to investigate how students' positioning during literacy experiences and literate academic identities may differ within and across grade levels. Within each grade level, my two participants were identified by their teachers as being at different points on their academic literacy development. As I spent time in the field and begin initial analyses, I realized that my participants were not simply at different points in their academic literacy development, but that they were apparently on different literacy trajectories, one that

seemed to be on track to meet grade level standards for academic reading and writing and one that gave the teachers concerns in light of the student's current challenges with academic reading and writing. I avoided discovering which student was on each trajectory in order to avoid bringing in pre-conceived notions about each student into my observations, although in sixth grade I was aware of which student the teacher saw as being on the "successful" trajectory and which student the teacher identified as being on the "challenged" trajectory. I also asked teachers to identify students who either had not demonstrated exceptionalities in earlier referral processes or students who were not under consideration for a referral to the school's instructional team in order to minimize the possibilities that my participating students had exceptionalities that were impacting their academic literacy development.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, all of the students in this study had all of their schooling, including kindergarten, in U.S. schools up to the grade level in which they were currently enrolled. I made this selection because my study is centered around academic literacy and literacy experiences and I want them all to have had comparable access to developmental literacy support and experiences. All of my students spoke Spanish at home, although upon my visit to the home of Rosa Maria (one of my sixth grade participants), I discovered that her mother had a high level of proficiency in English and that they engaged in frequent Spanish-English code-switching at home. I chose to include students who were Spanish-English bilinguals in this study because that represents that largest population of ELLs in the United States.

Additionally, I sought to match my participants according to gender and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to keep my comparisons strong, and asked my participating teachers to keep this in mind as they sent home my consent forms and explained my study to their students' parents. Table 3.1 provides an overview of my participants and these variables.

Table 3.1: Student Participants and Comparison Variables

Student Participants and Variables to Support Comparisons					
Grade	First		Fourth		Sixth	
Pseudonym	Hector	Alejandro	Sebastian	Antonio	Ingrid	Rosa Maria
L1	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female
Father's Occupation	International Courier	Block-layer	Block-layer	Construction Worker	Block-layer	(Lived with mother)
Mother's Occupation	House Cleaner	Sold tamales from home	Home-maker	House Cleaner	Worked at a canning factory	Worked at McDonald's
Type of Housing	Apartment	Apartment	House	House	Apartment	Apartment

Across the course of my data collection, I gathered additional information on my participants' language background. Through my administration of a reading interest survey and through my interviews and conversations with them, I found that Alejandro, Sebastian, and Ingrid all demonstrated literacy skills in Spanish and had been read to in Spanish by a parent when they were very young, before attending school. Also, all of the students were comfortable using academic English in oral discussions with the teacher and were eager to use academic vocabulary which had been modeled and taught by their teachers in previous lessons. My permission with the district to conduct classroom-based research and student interviews did not extend to gathering formal assessment data on my participants' English language proficiencies. It is not within the scope of this study to make interpretations about

their language proficiency or "perceived proficiencies" as this is often problematic (see Martin-Beltran, 2010a).

In addition to my focal students, my participants in this study also included the reading/language arts and mainstream teachers of my focal students. I obtained the consent of all of my adult participants, as well as consent from the school and school district. For my student participants, who were all under the age of 18, I obtained their assent as well as their parent's consent on their behalf. I have provided Table 3.2 to illustrate all of my participants. I invited all of my participants to choose a pseudonym. Some of them provided me with a pseudonym and others asked me to choose the pseudonym for them.

Table 3.2: School Participants

Student Participants in Data Collection	Teacher Participants
Grade 1 Hector Alejandro	**Grade 1** Ms. Breen, Reading/Language Arts Ms. Francis, ESOL
Grade 4 Sebastian Antonio	**Grade 4** Mrs. Greene, Reading/Language Arts Mrs. Hood, ESOL
Grade 6 Ingrid Rosa Maria	**Grade 6** Mr. Snyder, Reading/Language Arts Mrs. Bennett, ESOL

In the school district and state where Walnut Springs Elementary School was located, ESOL teachers had access to state English Language Proficiency standards that linked to the academic language demands of school across the content areas. As I show in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, my focal students in first grade and fourth grade received ESOL support through a pull-out program and my focal students in sixth

70

grade received ESOL support through a co-teaching model with their reading/language arts teacher. Because my intention in designing this study was to investigate students' experiences of academic literacy and because reading/language arts is the content area where literacy develop is most explicitly addressed, I observed students during their reading/language arts time. The ESOL pull-out time did not take place during the reading/language arts block for both first and fourth grade, therefore I did not observe the ESOL instruction of my first and fourth grade focal students.

However, both Ms. Francis, the first grade ESOL teacher, and Ms. Hood, the fourth grade ESOL teacher, gave me a snapshot of their instruction during my interviews with them. Both teachers focused on linking their lesson to students' content area curricula in the mainstream classroom. Because Ms. Francis saw her ESOL students from Ms. Breen's mainstream first grade classroom during their science time, she often linked her instruction directly to science content coming up in Ms. Breen's room, with an emphasis on developing students' knowledge of science vocabulary. Mrs. Hood also sought to develop students' language to support upcoming content curricula and included spelling as well as content language development, including science vocabulary, as part of the skills she addressed in her instruction. Because I was able to observe the co-teaching ESOL/mainstream teacher model during the sixth grade reading/language arts class, I include a discussion about that co-teaching model in Chapter 6.

Given the emphasis on students' perspective that I sought to bring to this study, I did not gather comprehensive information on teachers' backgrounds as part of my data collection. Additionally, my emphasis on students rather than teachers was

an important element in my ability to gain access to classroom observations, as my teacher participants were understandably nervous about inviting a stranger to watch moment-to-moment interactions in their classroom space.

However, some teachers shared information about their previous experiences and professional development, although Mr. Snyder, the sixth grade reading/language arts teacher, was the only mainstream teacher to share that he had experienced professional development specifically targeting ELL support. Mr. Snyder's ongoing professional development in the area of ELLs is discussed further in Chapter 6. From my conversations with Ms. Breen, I learned that she was a veteran teacher of nearly three decades. Mr. Snyder shared that he was in his fourth year of teaching. I did not learn Mrs. Greene's level of experience as the fourth grade reading/language arts teacher. Regarding the ESOL teachers, Ms. Foster, in sixth grade, had been teaching for over a decade and had National Board Certification in the area of elementary ELLs; Ms. Francis in first grade had recently earned her ESOL certification through a Master's program but had several years of experience as a primary teacher; Ms. Hood in fourth grade did not reveal her previous experience to me.

I selected the focal grade levels of 1, 4, and 6 for very specific reasons. In first grade, students are supported by explicit early literacy instruction as they are "learning to read" (Chall & Jacobs, 2003). In the early primary grades, students are being explicitly instructed in decoding skills and developmental reading strategies that support them in "breaking the code" of reading (Moss, 2005). I included first grade in order to investigate the positioning and literate identities of students within the supportive emergent literacy environment of a primary grade classroom.

However, "School tasks change significantly from third to fourth grade" as the emphasis shifts from "decoding to the reading of expository text" (Moss, p. 47). So many students encounter reading difficulties for the first time in fourth grade that the concept of a "fourth grade slump" has developed (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Moss, 2005). Therefore, I also included fourth grade because it is recognized by researchers and teachers that academic literacy demands increase sharply around this year.

Also, I selected sixth grade as my final focal grade level in order to investigate the literacy experiences of sixth grade students who are on the other side of the "fourth grade slump" and are deeply enmeshed in the new challenges of upper elementary academic literacy demands. Additionally, my sixth grade students were in their seventh year of study in U.S. schools. As noted in the literature, Long-Term English Learners are identified as students who have not been exited after ESOL despite having 7+ years in U.S. schools. My sixth grade participants were on the cusp of entering secondary school, the location where Long-Term English Learners are typically identified.

<center>Instruments and Procedures for Data Collection</center>

In order to have "multiple sources of evidence" to support triangulation and "establish converging lines of evidence," I included classroom observation, participant interviews, and student drawings in my data sources (Yin, 2006, p. 115). In this section, I first outline my instruments and procedures for observation data collection, then discuss my instruments and procedures for the semi-structured interviews, which also included a time for students to create two self-portraits.

<center>73</center>

Observation Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Before my data collection period officially began, I became an informal fixture at Walnut Springs Elementary School, checking in with potential teacher participants and spending time in the back of classrooms without my laptop. I did this in order to give my participants an opportunity to familiarize themselves with my presence as well as to develop relationships with my participants as I sought "to know and understand" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) them in order to become a useful presence in their classroom and develop a more insightful and meaningful narrative of them.

When I had received approval from the school district to officially enter the field and begin to collect data, I recorded my observation data through "jottings" (Emerson et al., 1995) and field notes, usually typed into my laptop computer during the observation but occasionally handwritten. Although on some days I went immediately from one classroom observation to another, on other days I had a break between observations and I would often use that time to go back into my field notes and begin to enter initial interpretations or questions. On occasions when I was actively involved in the classroom as a participant or tutor, I would go to my laptop immediately afterwards to enter in observations or anecdotes. Regular visitors to the classrooms in this school included administrators, instructional coaches, and student teacher supervisors who regularly recorded observations via laptop computers, so the sight of an adult taking notes on a computer during class was familiar to the students. Some of my participating teachers initially expressed concerns that my presence

would be distracting, but these teachers informed me after my first observation in their classrooms that they were surprised by my ability to fade into the background.

My role within the school during my six-week data collection was one of participant-observer (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Spradley, 1980). Over the course of my time in the school, sometimes my role was one of participant-OBSERVER and sometimes my role was weighted as a PARTICIPANT-observer. Most of the time, my role as an observer was primary as I sat with my laptop or notebook in a location within the room that was near to my focal student for the observation but out of the way of members of the classroom community. Occasionally, I would step out of this role in order to address a question that a student, sometimes my participant, sometimes another student, had about the content or the task that he or she was working to complete. All of the teachers in my study were comfortable with and supportive of this occasional role as a teacher's assistant.

I took on the role of the participant more frequently during the second half of my observation in the school because the teachers and students had become very used to my presence and sometimes invited me to play an active part in the activities of the classroom in this study, as when Ms. Breen in first grade invited me to serve as the scorekeeper for a class game or when Mr. Snyder in sixth grade invited me to work with a small group of students, including one of my sixth grade focal students, to support their self-editing of stories they had written.

Over the course of my six week data collection period, I spent every day at the school and frequently lingered in the neighborhood after school hours to visit students at their homes for interviews or to meet with teachers for their interviews, either on

75

the school site or at a nearby restaurant of their choice. As much as possible I integrated myself into the context of the school, eating lunch with teachers and waving goodbye to my participants and other students during dismissal.

I observed each participant for four or five complete reading/language arts blocks, as well as several additional "reading/language arts" fragments. My first grade participants, Hector and Alejandro, were in the same class, so although I chose one student to focus on at the beginning of each observation, I included field notes on the interactions of the other focal student when feasible. In fourth and sixth grades, my focal students were each in different homerooms. These grade levels were departmentalized, meaning that all students had the same teacher for reading/language arts, just at different times of the day. This scheduled supported my ability to gather several reading/language arts observations of my focal students in a day.

My strategy for observation was to focus on my participant by "shadowing" or "tailing" (Hawkins, 2005; Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999) him or her throughout the reading block. This often meant moving my chair around the room as my participant transitioned to different activities within the classroom. Although teachers were initially concerned that my presence would be obtrusive, they all expressed delighted surprise at how quiet and non-disruptive my presence was. Some teachers also voiced their concern at the content of the notes that I was taking so I began to share my field notes with teachers who expressed an interest or concern in my rapid note-taking. This alleviated teachers' concerns when they realized that I was taking a moment-to-

moment transcription of classroom events related specifically to my focal students and was not framing my notes and initial interpretations through judgments.

In my shadowing, I collected data through field notes, handwritten or typed onto a laptop, rather than through electronic equipment such as an audiorecorder or video recorder for two reasons. First, I wanted to gather information about participants' positioning during literacy events. While this positioning is revealed through discourse, this discourse may include, in addition to verbal and non-verbal speech acts, body language, location in the classroom, and participant actions as he or she moves around the classroom (and possibly the school). The limited range and scope of audio- and video recorders did not support my purpose of discovering the positioning of participants. While I missed some data of verbal interactions by excluding audio- and video recorders from my data collection, I was able to be very flexible and unobtrusive in my movements as I shadowed students throughout their movements during lessons as they moved from their table groups to the carpet for reading group and then into different areas of the room to work with partners. Also, given the initial hesitation of both the school district and my participating teachers to support my data collection, I felt that requesting video- or audio-taping permission would jeopardize any chance I had of receiving permission to conduct this study with their participation.

Bomer and Laman (2004) also faced the dilemma of using electronic equipment vs. field notes for their observations of student interactions. They assert that the precision of electronic recording was "less significant for our level of analysis than being as careful as possible about our procedures' influences on social

positioning" (p. 436). Bomer and Laman also found that interactions during the writing experiences that they observed were "not as rapid as [they] might be, for example, on the playground" since children were engaged in classroom tasks during their interactions (p. 436). Additionally, the school which served as my research site was frequented by visitors and student teacher supervisors who regularly observed classrooms and took notes either via handwritten notes or notes typed onto a laptop. By collecting my notes in the same way, I hoped to better integrate myself into the tapestry of the school.

My observational data collection focused on the literacy instruction and experiences of students, with an emphasis on their positioning during academic literacy events. Research on literacy instruction informed the observation protocol that I developed in light of my research questions and my pilot study. The observation protocol is included in Appendix A and centers around the literacy event as articulated by Heath (1982). I selected the reading/language arts block as my observational focus because it is the time of the day that is most generally dedicated to explicit literacy support. I piloted the observation protocol in conjunction with piloting both my student semi-structured interview protocol as well as my teacher semi-structure interview as discussed in Chapter 2. I then made adjustments to my observation protocol (and interview protocols) as a result of that piloting. I created an outline and table of reading/language arts components and literacy events, using that as a guide for describing the literacy events. The outline and table are included in Appendix B.

I collected all of my data during May and June of the 2009-2010 school year. My data collection ended in conjunction with the end of the school year, as most of my participants noted that they would be unavailable during the summer for interviews and my observational schedule was guided by the school classroom schedule. As much as possible I rotated my observations, cycling through my participants in order to use the constant comparative method (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) in analyzing my data sources which I discuss further in the section on data analysis.

Interview Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

I conducted semi-structured interviews with all of my participants. I specifically sought to conduct my interviews with students at their homes in order to get a glimpse of them outside of the school context and in doing so to get a richer picture of them "on their turf" in their home environments. I was able to visit the homes of all of my students except Hector, in first grade. Hector's mother was willing to let him participate in the study as long as we did not come to her home. Therefore, I interviewed Hector in his ESOL classroom one day after school. Because all of my student participants were Spanish-English bilinguals, I had a trained Spanish-English interpreter accompany me on all interviews to translate my conversation with the student into Spanish for the parents' as well as to provide any interpretation assistance that the student might need. The protocol for my semi-structured interview with students is located in Appendix C.

As noted, I piloted the semi-structured interview protocol with two students, but I also piloted individual questions from the protocol with 15 elementary ELLs and

exited ELLs to check the comprehensibility of my questions. I found that even kindergarteners, who are one year below the lowest targeted grade level of this study, were able to articulate their perspectives and feelings about school and academic literacy. While research proposes that children, especially young children, are more apt than adults to suggestibility and giving the responses they think an interviewer wants to hear; research also suggests that the number of accurate responses given by children are linked to the interviewing style of the interviewer (Almerigogna, Ost, Akehurst, & Fluck, 2008). Interviewers demonstrating supportive nonverbal behaviors, including smiling, make children who are being interviewed much more likely to respond to questions with accuracy (Almerigogna et al., 2008).

I conducted the interviews with students in the second half of my data collection period so that there was time to develop rapport and trust with them. I also began each interview with a reading interest survey modified from *"But There's Nothing Good to Read" (In the Library Media Center)*, by Denice Hildebrandt (2001) and located in Appendix D. The reading interest survey served as an icebreaker at the beginning of each interview with students. It also opened up pathways into conversation about reading and books with the students. The students' responses to the reading interest survey are integrated into my discussions of them in Chapters 4-6. I also included a table of students' responses to the reading interest survey in Appendix E.

Hawkins (2005) included interviews with kindergartners in her study in order to become informed about "how positions were made available, how the children interpreted their environment and what positions meant to them in this context, [and]

what resources they had available to make identity bids" (p. 67). Relying only on observation data "enabled adults to view the behaviors of children and inscribe meaning on them" and did not allow for resources that "provided us with representations of the children's own interpretation" (p. 67). Therefore, interviews with my student participants provided an opportunity for me to consider their experiences of academic literacy event from their perspectives and points of view and to ask them about specific episodes that I had observed with them in order to gather insight on their choices in positioning themselves. Also, Hawkins (2005) notes, that one of the reasons that children's voices are not widely heard in the research about their language and literacy development is the fact that we are always "interpreting children's voices from an adult perspective" (p. 79). However, by bringing forth children's voices through these interviews, my interpretations of my observational data were informed by the perspectives of my student participants.

I concluded each interview with my students by asking him or her to draw two self-portraits, one that showed the student either reading or writing at school and one that showed the student having fun in a context outside of school. I offered each student a choice of either a box of crayons or a box of washable markers to draw the pictures, and then gave the student the drawing supplies he or she had chosen as a "thank you" for their participation in my study. I included the self-portraits in my data collection in order to offer my participants an alternative means of telling their stories in a way that did not require them to grapple with a reading or a writing task (Finley, 2005). Finley points to portraits as "one way for the children to tell 'the story of us'" in a medium in which they are comfortable (2005, p. 691).

Yoon (2007) asked students to explain their positioning of their peers, with productive results that suggests peers position their classmates in ways that parallel the teacher's positioning of those classmates. Given the importance of interactive positioning of students by teachers as well as teachers' roles in the construction of students' literate identities, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the reading/language arts teachers and ESOL teachers of all of my student participants. Again, Yoon (2007) informed my methodology through her in-depth interviews with the mainstream teacher in her study. By investigating "Mrs. Young's" beliefs about her students, including ELLs, Yoon was able to construct a more nuanced interpretation of the positioning of ELLs in Mrs. Young's classroom.

The semi-structured interview protocol for teachers can be found in Appendix F. As noted earlier, I had the opportunity to pilot my semi-structured interview protocol with two literacy teachers in conjunction with the observation of an ELL in each of their classes and a semi-structured interview with each student. I made adjustments to the semi-structured interview protocol for teachers as a result of my piloting.

I interviewed each teacher at a time and place of his or her convenience. Two of the teachers, Mrs. Greene the fourth grade reading/language arts teacher and Mrs. Hood the fourth grade ESOL teacher, declined to be audiorecorded. However, they consented to my taking notes on my laptop as we spoke. I shared the interview transcripts with the teachers who consented to be audiorecorded.

Data Analysis

Before I discuss my data analysis, I present Table 3.3, which shows how my data sources and analyses connect to my research questions.

Table 3.3: Research Questions, Data Sources, and Analyses

Research Question	Data Source	Analysis
RQ 1: How do ELLs' positionings mediate their experiences of academic literacy events? **RQ 1.1 How may their positions afford or constrain their engagement in literacy events**?	Field notes from observations during the reading/language arts block Memos regarding field notes and observations during the reading/language Arts block. Interviews with students and their teachers Memos regarding interviews	Open coding to seek themes of reflexive and interactive positioning, with a shift to focused coding as categories emerge Constant comparison of the reflexive and interactive positioning of participants through the comparison and contrast of interactions during literacy events and of responses from interviews Sort events and interactions that demonstrate similarities or differences between cases Identify vignettes, events, and task engagements or disengagements that illustrate the reflexive and interactive positioning of participants and provide contrasts and comparisons Create models, such as concept maps, graphic organizers, and matrices to compare and contrast the cases and reveal patterns Compare and contrast cases within and across grade levels
2. How are participants engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning during literacy events? **2.1 How are students engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning?** **2.2 How do teachers interactively position ELLs?**	Field notes from observations during the reading/language arts block Interviews with students Interviews with teachers Memos regarding field notes and observations during the reading/language arts block	Open and focused coding to seek demonstrations of positioning Constant comparison of the positioning of ELLs as demonstrated through interactions during literacy events and of responses from interviews Compare and contrast cases

	Memos regarding interviews	within as well as across grade levels
		Open and focused coding of interview data and memos to seek ELL references to episodes of positioning
3. How do students' experiences of academic literacy work to construct and be constructed by their literate identities? **3.1 How do students' positionings in academic literacy events work to re-construct/ constitute students' literate identities?**	Interviews with students Memos regarding interviews Classroom observations Interviews with teachers	Open coding to seek themes of literate identity, with a shift to focused coding as categories emerge Constant comparison of literate identity as articulated by participants through the comparison and contrast of themes Comparison of patterns of positioning and triangulation of positioning patterns to interview data Compare and contrast cases within and across grade levels Create models, such as concept maps, graphic organizers, and matrices to compare and contrast the cases and reveal patterns

In order to continually compare and contrast cases, my analysis of data was ongoing from my first day of data collection. Initially, I coded and thematized data, including transcripts from interviews, as well as field notes and memos from classroom observations, with open coding "grounded in the data" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 241) to identify themes related to positioning and literate identity. As Mackey and Gass note, "The schemes for qualitative coding generally emerge from the data rather than being decided on and preimposed prior to the data being collected and coded" (p. 241). However, "Key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data" became "categories of focus" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 75).

According to Bogdan and Biklen, the constant comparison method involves the use of formal analysis from very early in the study and is useful for multi-data source case studies. To support my ongoing analysis, I wrote memos (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Emerson et al., 1995) to connect my data to my research questions, highlighting events, interactions, participant responses, and observations that connected to participant positioning and literate identity construction. According to Glaser (1978), memos are the "theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationship as they strike the analyst while coding" (p. 83). Additionally, I created and revised models and cross-case displays (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to find and interpret patterns in my data, frequently using the flexibility of post-it notes to organize ideas and concepts. Such models allowed for comparisons and contrasts among cases to become visible, as well as providing ways of considering relationships and revealing links. Analysis was also a large part of my initial and intermediate writing as I worked to better articulate my interpretations and findings, as well as selecting and narrating literacy vignettes that shed light on students' experiences of academic literacy (Becker, 1998).

<center>Analytic Framework and the Challenge of "Naming"</center>

As I coded and returned to academic literacy event transcription data over the course of several months, repeating my coding with more focused codes, patterns of positioning began to emerge within events and literacy event contexts. I sought to conceptualize certain positions in order to deepen my analysis, creating an analytic framework that conceptualized the most frequent and salient positions of my participants during literacy events. I include the analytic framework here as Table

<center>85</center>

3.4. The use of (R) and (I) designate *reflexive* self positioning and *interactive*

positioning by others, respectively.

Table 3.4 : Analytic Framework

Position	Position Described	Example	Effect on Engagement in the Literacy Event
Knower	Student possesses or has the answer or knowledge about something, usually demonstrated through oral language	Student raises hand to answer question (R); student called upon by teacher to answer question (I); student proclaims a fact (R)	Affords Access
Reader	Student reads text or completes a writing text that relies on reading comprehension	Student claims a turn to read (R); student reads aloud (R); student completes worksheet based on text (R); teacher gives students purpose for reading activity (I)	Affords Access
Writer	Student constructs or revises a "new" text	Student writes a story (R); student edits previously written text (R); teacher gives students instructions for independent or peer editing assignment (I)	Affords Access
Strategic Appealer	Student "appeals" for help as part of a repertoire of other immediately-tried strategies	Student asks teacher to "provide" a word in a text after student has tried several times to sound it out (R); teacher provides word to student after student has made independent attempts to figure it out (I)	Affords Access
Learner	Student demonstrates development of understanding or "stretches" thinking to	Student "re-answers" a question that he addressed incorrectly the first time now that a teacher has provided additional scaffolding (R); Teacher	Affords Access (Deep engagement)

	consider new concepts or try out new skills; seen in "light bulb" moments; generally facilitated through scaffolding by the teacher	does not simply accept an answer and move on. She pushes students to reconsider and offers additional scaffolding (I)	
Thinker	Student synthesizes, clarifies, extends, or applies information and knowledge	Student asks questions about a text that go beyond display (R); Student actively connects new knowledge to previous understandings (R); Student actively applies information (R); Teacher guides students in synthesizing or applying information (I)	Affords Access (Deep engagement)
Task Borrower	Student gets materials necessary for completing the task	Student borrows an eraser to make necessary corrections (R)	Affords Access
Not-Knower	Student does not "have" the answer	Student chooses not to raise hand when invited (R); Student's right to supply the answer is overridden by another (I)	Constrains Access
Passive Appealer	Students seeks assistance without trying out any other strategies	Student waits for others to provide words every time she encounters an unknown word when reading text aloud (I); peer "gives" word to student when the student pauses during a read-aloud (I)	Constrains Access
Reluctant Reader	Student is hesitant to read	Student verbalizes anxiety about the reading task (R); Peer notices that focal student has not yet begun the activity and reminds him to start working (I)	Constrains Access

Reluctant Writer	Student is hesitant to write	Student verbalizes anxiety about the writing task (R); Peer notices that focal student has not yet begun the activity and reminds him to start working (I)	Constrains Access
Doer	Student completes the task with the primary goal of demonstrating task completion	Student pretends to read by rapidly flipping through book (R); student copies answers for a worksheet from another student (R); student gives work to another student to copy directly (I)	Constrains Access
Stymied	Student wants to share the answer but is unable to "come up" with it	Student raises hand, but then does not have an answer to give (R)	Constrains Access
Distracted	Student is off-task	Student playing with pencil during whole group work (I); student talks to "neighbors" about non-task topics during independent work time (I)	Constrains Access
Strategic Borrower	Student borrows materials to avoid a task or be social with a neighbor	Student borrows materials but doesn't then use them to complete a task (R)	Constrains Access
Social	Student is interacting with other students in a way not related to the literacy event	Student talks to "neighbors" about non-task topics (R); Student engages in physical play with "neighbors" (R)	
Personal	Student is attending to something other than the task	Student daydreams (R)	Constrains Access

I developed the analytic framework shown in Table 3.4 in order to give a

name to those positions that were most salient and frequent across my classroom

observations and to consider the roles that those positions played in creating affordances for engagement in the literacy event. The naming of positions was a recursive process that went on for several months. As I sought to develop appropriate names for positions, I referred to the literature, to fellow teachers, to professors, and to friends outside the field to talk through the possibilities for naming.

I found the task of developing names for the positive positions, those that afforded access to the literacy event, much easier than developing names for those positions that constrained students' access to literacy events. For the positive positions, the names for the positions of "reader" and "writer" came quickly, as did that of "knower." I developed "thinker" after a consideration of Bloom's taxonomy as I worked to find a name that would describe the application, synthesis, and extension of knowledge. I developed "learner" after spending time with my first grade field notes and memos, as well as my notes and transcripts from my interview with Ms. Breen, the first grade teacher. From that data, I discovered that Ms. Breen often intentionally positioned her students as learners and actively sought "light bulb" moments for them and then I began to see parallels in that positioning across grade levels.

Given the power that names carry, I had a much more difficult time developing the names of positions of constraint. Although I was aware of the power of naming before I began this study, it has become even clearer to me through this process of study design, data collection, and data analyses. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, in most government reports, English Language Learners are described as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Given the fact that the students are not limited, we do not

use the term LEP. Indeed, other, better names to describe students who speak a language or languages other than English at home are continually under negotiation.

The importance of finding or developing appropriate descriptors and names for my interpretations of the data was not limited to my work in naming positions. As I journeyed through the literature on academic literacy development, I encountered a variety of adjectives to describe the types of readers that needed additional support, encountering names such as "poor reader" and "struggling reader." These names are clearly inadequate to capture the experiences of the participants of my study who were working to develop their academic literacy and who demonstrated that they had many talents, academic and non-academic, as well as challenges. I have been lucky to have been directed to a name in the literature that better captures the academic literacy experiences and the literate identities of some of my participants. It is for this reason and through this journey that another name that will be used in this study is that of "striving" reader (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009; McDonald, Thornley, Staley, & Moore, 2009). I will discuss the use of "striving" in more detail in Chapter 5.

In developing my positions' names, I wanted to avoid terms with deficit implications but I also wanted terms that described the ways that the positions could be positive but also the ways that certain positions could constrain access and diminish engagement in the literacy event. I developed two types of appealer, "strategic" and "passive," after considering the different positions of appeal found in my data and after many conversations with colleagues, to capture the different ways of seeking assistance. The position of "doer" was also one with many iterations. I

settled upon doer after much consideration and a revisiting of the work of Pope (2001) and I discuss this position in depth in Chapter 5.

As shown in Table 3.4, I have the positive position "task borrower" to show when a student uses the materials, such as an eraser, of another student in order to immediately engage with a literacy task at hand. I developed the name of "strategic borrower" for the position taken on by a student who seems to be borrowing as a way of strategically avoiding a task or engaging in physical movement. I created the names of "social" and "personal" as the reflexive version of the interactive "distracted." I use "personal" to describe this reflexive positioning in which a student is apparently daydreaming or "elsewhere" in his or her thinking and "social" to describe the reflexive positioning of students who are talking to their peers or playing with their peers in a way that is unrelated to the task. I had begun by using both "unprepared" (for borrowing) as well as "distracted" for reflexive as well as an interactive position name. However, in one of my discussions with others around naming the positions, we realized that the student is not positioning himself or herself as "unprepared" and "distracted." Those names are taken directly from teachers' perspectives [and lifted from my transcript data of interviews with teachers]. Therefore, I have used "borrowing" to show the students' reflexive positioning in gathering materials and "personal" and "social" to describe students' positioning when they are apparently daydreaming or when they are participating in social non-task related interactions. In gathering materials, whether to avoid a task or to better engage in it; in talking to a neighbor about a topic of personal interest; in dis-engaging from an activity to think about an issue at home, students are not

positioning themselves as either "unprepared" or "distracted," they are attending to personal priorities and needs.

<center>Levels of Engagement</center>

In Table 3.4 I also noted that some positions, including those I named as "learner" and "thinker," support students' access to an academic literacy event in a way that often leads to deep engagement in the event. I explain that here in my discussion of levels of engagement. As I continued in my analysis and in developing the analytic framework shown in Table 3.4, I found that students' level of engagement within academic literacy events was the locus of affordance or constraint offered by students' positions. This is reflected in column 4 of Table 3.4 and considered throughout the remainder of this document, including an in-depth discussion in Chapter 7. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the definition of engagement with reading extends from a consideration of a student's general interaction with reading, including strategy use, motivation, and interest (Cummins, 2011; Guthrie, 1996; Newman, Wehlage, and Lamborn, 1992) to a consideration of a student's involvement with text within a literacy event (Afflerbach, 1996; Moody, Justice, & Cabell, 2010). In this study, I generally use a concept of engagement that reflects the approach taken by Moody et al. which considers students' engagement within distinct episodes of interaction. As Moody et al. did, I found that students' particular levels of engagement varied within literacy events and illustrate examples of engagement in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Levels of Engagement

Level of Engagement	Example	Possible Positions
Disengagement	Student not attending to the literacy event; talking to another student; daydreaming	Strategic Borrower, Personal
Shallow Engagement	Student copying answers from another student; student pretending to read	Doer
Engagement	Student completing task, generally as intended by the teacher; student answering questions on a worksheet; student answering display questions in a discussion	Reader; Knower
Deep Engagement	Student actively applying information to the text to personal experience; Student synthesizing background knowledge with new learning	Thinker; Learner

As shown in Table 3.5, I have named levels of engagement that often correspond to certain positions. As in Table 3.5, shallow engagement can be seen when a student is involved in an academic literacy event at a minimal or nominal level. The student is attending to a task, but only in such a way as to get *through* it, not to delve *into* it. I identify an average level of engagement as simply "engagement" when students are involved at a level that would be the lower bands of Bloom's taxonomy, such as attending to a literacy event that calls for display question/answers or completing comprehension questions about text. Finally, I identify a level of deep engagement to signify when students are involved in an academic literacy event in a way that extends their understanding or operates on the upper bands of Bloom's taxonomy,

such as synthesizing their prior knowledge with new information. I will refer to these levels throughout the remaining chapters of this study.

Member-Checking

Once my drafts had begun to stabilize and my revisions became more focused, I began the process of member-checking. According to Brenner (2006), member-checking is a process of confirming "the researcher's interpretation of meaning with informants' perceptions" (p. 368). Brenner notes that there are two levels of member-checking: sharing interview transcripts and sharing outcomes of analysis. With my student participants, I engaged in member-checking by writing brief narratives of my analyses and reading it aloud with them. Four of the students agreed with my interpretation. One student, Rosa Maria in sixth grade, agreed with my interpretation of her academic literacy experiences in sixth grade but wanted to let me know that her experiences in seventh grade were very different from what I had observed. I discuss this in depth in Chapter 6. I was unable to reach my sixth student participant for member-checking despite several attempts.

I completed member-checking with teachers by providing them with a copy of their interview transcripts as well as with copies of my field notes upon request. I also shared early chapter drafts with interested teachers. Additionally, I provided near-final copies of the relevant grade level chapter to four of my teacher participants who expressed interest in the full chapter text. I selected exemplar sections from the relevant grade level chapter for two other teachers who expressed limited time concerns. Four teachers responded that they agreed with my analyses and interpretations. One teacher, Mr. Snyder of sixth grade, responded to my letter of

gratitude and near-final copy of the sixth grade chapter draft with the comment, "Actually, I want to thank you for providing a snapshot of my classroom, as this will allow me to grow as an educator." Although two teachers did not respond to my final member-checking, they had responded positively to earlier drafts which I had shared with them.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a detailed description of the data collection methods, context, participants, and data analyses for this study. The cross-sectional cross-case study that I outlined in the chapter provided an opportunity to consider the academic literacy experiences of students within grade levels as well as compare and contrast them across grade levels. I sought to design a study that would highlight student voices and perspectives and offer insights into the ways that students experience academic literacy events. In Chapter 4, I introduce my first grade participants and share their experiences of academic literacy through vignettes and analyses as well as a discussion that includes their voices and the perspectives of their teachers.

Chapter 4 : Learning Is Fun in First Grade

"It's fun to do work." (Alejandro, first grader)

"It's all fun." (Hector, first grader)

"I try to do that, you know, go towards their strengths. Not necessarily the strength of the kid over here. But their *own* strength." (Ms. Breen, first grade Reading/Language Arts teacher)

Introduction to First Grade

In this chapter, we meet the youngest of my focal students, Hector and Alejandro in first grade. They both spent most of their school day in Ms. Breen's first grade classroom, a large airy room located off a long hallway at the back of the school. One could find her classroom by looking for the reading log sticker chart outside of her door, where individual photos of her students' glowing faces indicated which sticker chart belonged to them. I felt that there was a sunny feeling to Ms. Breen's classroom, regardless of the weather outside. Because of the clear and well-developed routines and procedures that I will describe and which were a significant part of Ms. Breen's classroom culture, being in the room gave me the sensation of being on a very well-run, very pleasant Navy ship, with Ms. Breen as the experienced admiral and her students the eager and enthusiastic sailors, with all on-board delighted to keep the ship sailing smoothly forward, so they could see the next good things that awaited them.

Unlike the fourth and sixth grade students who are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, my first grade focal students were in the same class homeroom and had reading/language arts together. Therefore, the literacy event vignettes I share and discuss in this chapter frequently include both focal students. Because I found across

grade levels that student positioning was often linked to the context and type of literacy event, I share a vignette for each type of literacy event that was typical in a regular reading/language arts block. In episodes where I found students' positioning to be particularly insightful or intriguing, I occasionally share a vignette that encompasses more than one type of literacy event or I share more than one vignette that represents that type of literacy event. This is true for each of my grade-level chapters. I have organized the order in which I share types of literacy events in the chronology that they would typically take place on a regular school day to provide a full range of each students' reading/language arts experience.

Although my study focuses on reading/language arts and the academic literacy experiences of students, I am also including in this first grade chapter some discussion of academic literacy events which focused on math because they took place within the reading/language arts time. This reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the first grade curriculum, which often sought to synthesize students' learning across content areas. Two math literacy events regularly took place during Mrs. Breen's reading/language arts class, calculations relating to how many days of school had taken place so far in the academic year and engagement with numbers on the class calendar. One of the unique qualities of first grade in comparison with my observations in fourth and sixth grades was this interdisciplinary approach to instruction. In first grade, students were learning to write sentences (from words) and number sentences (sentences using numbers, words, and symbols).

I begin this chapter with a discussion of Ms. Breen's first grade classroom and reading/language arts block, followed by introductions of my two focal students in

first grade. Next, I share vignettes of academic literacy events accompanied by discussions of the student positioning throughout those events. These vignettes and their accompanying analyses are the heart of this chapter, as they are in the other grade level chapters, including Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. In each literacy event vignette, I share the names that I have given to each position. I also mark each position with either an "R" or an "I" to demonstrate that the position is reflexive self-positioning or interactive positioning of the student by another. In first grade, occasionally both of my focal students appear in the same vignette, so I differentiate between their positioning by beginning each position name with a letter, "A" for Alejandro and "H" for Hector, when they appear in the same vignette. The names that I have assigned to the positions were introduced through the analytic framework I shared in Chapter 3. I use this structure for each literacy event vignette across the chapters. Following the literacy event vignette section in this chapter, I engage in a deeper discussion of Alejandro and Hector that brings in additional details and insights gathered from interviews with them and their teachers. Finally, I synthesize my first grade findings on the academic literacy experiences, positionings, and literate identities of Alejandro and Hector.

Ms. Breen's First Grade Reading/Language Arts Block

During the days and weeks that I spent in Ms. Breen's reading/language arts block, her schedule followed an impeccably regular routine that was interrupted once by a field trip to a play in a nearby city and for several days because of mandatory district-wide standardized testing. The children in Ms. Breen's first grade began their day by completing an assignment that was placed on their desks before they arrived,

often a color-by-number activity that required the students to use their knowledge of phonics to figure out which crayon color to select. As the children worked on their arrival activity, Ms. Breen completed the logistical operations of attendance taking, paper and homework collection, and communicating with other first-grade teachers about department tasks and shared student responsibilities. She completed these operations seamlessly, dispatching student volunteers to deliver notes to other teachers efficiently and quietly. When everything and everyone was in place, Ms. Breen complimented the students on their focused working and told them about some of the events that they could expect in their day.

Once a week, on Fridays, this routine was altered slightly. Students who had completed a weekly reading log were called by Ms. Breen to line up as they were completing their arrival activity, and they paraded out to the hallway to place a sticker on their reading log records, papers that held all of the weekly stickers that each student had earned so far, as well as a color photograph of him or herself. This procedure, as well as all the other procedures of lining up, took place silently and wordlessly, with Ms. Breen usually remaining as silent the children. So many of the procedures in the classroom took place with such subtle signals that I often had to ask Ms. Breen or a student to tell me what was happening, since it was clearly so obvious to each student as to be second nature.

This well-run routine is exemplified by an incident that took place during the second week of my observations in Mrs. Breen's class. One morning a fire drill bell began ringing as Ms. Breen was in the middle of a read-aloud to students as they sat cross-legged on the carpet. Without saying a word, she quietly closed the book,

walked to her desk, picked up the class roster, and went to the door. Just as silently, the students rose, lined up without fuss, and followed as she walked down the hallway and out of the building. Outside, standing in a straight line well away from the school, Ms. Breen quietly checked off names on her list, and when the "all-clear" bell sounded, led her flock back into the classroom. The children returned to their places on the carpet and Ms. Breen continued the read-aloud she'd been engaged in when the alarm had gone off. Neither Ms. Breen nor any of her students said a word aloud during the entire procedure. As I demonstrate in this chapter, both Hector and Alejandro experienced positive positioning and regular success during academic literacy tasks in Ms. Breen's class, often due to the rich variety of scaffolds she provided. The regular routines and clear procedures I have described in this section were just one type of scaffold (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008) of the many that I observed during my time in her class.

However, on "regular" days, after students had completed most of their arrival work and after Ms. Breen had addressed all administrative concerns, she went to her rocking chair on the carpet and called the students to come to the carpet. She kept the procedures orderly by asking students to come according to each "table group," clusters of desks arranged to create a "table." All of the focal classrooms in this study used table groups as their primary seating design.

On Mondays, carpet time began with sharing, as Ms. Breen asked students to share how they had spent their weekend. This time was also used regularly for discussing items of interest to Ms. Breen and the children, such as an upcoming field trip to see a play in a nearby city. Next, students were invited to update the calendar

displayed at the front of the room. A volunteer added a date card in the shape of an apple and announced the day. Other volunteers read sentences such as "Yesterday was Thursday, May 14." After the students had read sentences about yesterday, today, and tomorrow, they waited in expectant silence as Ms. Breen wrote a number on the board. This number corresponded to how many days the students had come to first grade. Students were then invited to create equations equivalent to the number in creative ways.

After the calculations, Ms. Breen began a whole-group literacy activity. During the time I spent in her room, Ms. Breen was implementing the "Book of the Month" curriculum with students. As I discussed in Chapter 3, this school-wide project included all grade levels in reading, comparing, and contrasting four versions of *The Three Little Pigs,* including a traditional version of *The Three Little Pigs*, *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury, and the Spanish/English bilingual *Los Tres Pequeños Jabalíes / The Three Little Javelinas* by Susan Lowell. Whole group activities included read-alouds, the development and implementation of oversized-graphic organizers to compare and contrast the *Pigs* books, and games.

After whole group activities, Ms. Breen often followed up with a small group or pair activity that aligned with the content of the whole group activity. Finally, students often went back to their seats for the final part of the reading/language arts block to work on a writing activity, or to take an assessment such as a spelling test. Ms. Breen also used this independent seatwork time to administer running records. I

did not observe guided reading groups during my time in her classroom because my observations coincided with the "Book of the Month" project, although Ms. Breen and I discussed her student groupings for guided reading. As I show in this chapter, Ms. Breen's activities were interesting and pleasurable for her students, including both focal students. Her literacy events were thick with scaffolding, differentiation, and opportunities for academic literacy practice, both planned and spontaneous. Both Hector and Alejandro responded eagerly to most of the tasks set by Ms. Breen. Her organized, well-run classroom was a space in which both Hector and Alejandro were comfortable being themselves and discovering the pleasures and challenges of school and academic literacy. Hector and Alejandro, like all of the identified English Language Learners (ELLs) in Ms. Breen's classroom, received English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support through a pull-out model with Ms. Francis. Because their ESOL time was outside of the reading/language arts block, the observational focus of this study, I did not observe them during their ESOL time.

<div align="center">Discovering the Experiences of Alejandro and Hector</div>

In this section, I introduce my first grade participants, Alejandro and Hector. This is be followed by a series of vignettes organized according to type of literacy event and its chronology in Ms. Breen's daily reading/language arts routine. Following this section, I engage in deeper discussion on the experiences of Alejandro, then of Hector.

When one first encountered Alejandro, one immediately noticed his waves of bronze hair that fell below his shoulders and streamed out behind him as he rushed through his days, intent on his next activity. He was talkative and unafraid of making

his opinion known and of standing up for answers he believed were correct. During my observations of him, he showed a strong proprietary sense about tasks and work in which he held a responsibility and he asserted himself frequently in small group work to make certain that his opinion was known. He was always confident in his abilities and sometimes became frustrated when his work did not live up to his own expectations, although his social tendencies and lively curiosity in his surroundings occasionally sent him veering off-task so that he turned in only partly finished work to Ms. Breen.

Hector, a quiet, dark-eyed boy with a slow-blooming beautiful smile, was much more subtle in his engagement in literacy events, but also took his assignments very seriously. He was usually the first student in Ms. Breen's class to respond to instructions, including raising the "respect" sign, a hand signal using the letter "R" from American Sign Language that Ms. Breen would make and wait for all students to follow when she needed their attention. Hector enjoyed all of school, but he was particularly fond of math.

I share the literacy event vignettes according to the order they would appear during the reading/language arts block, although they have been selected from different observational days. I provide them in this order to provide a snapshot of the types of literacy events that my focal students experienced in first grade. As I mentioned, because Hector and Alejandro were in the same classroom, they appear in several vignettes together. This is not the case in my fourth and sixth grade discussions in Chapters 5 and 6.

Sharing

After students gathered in front of Ms. Breen on the carpet, as she sat facing

them from her rocking chair, she sometimes invited them to share something. The

following vignette is from sharing-time. Alejandro had already "shared" earlier in the

morning, before this event took place.

Table 4.1: First: Sharing Time: Hector

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector and Sharing Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Hector raises his hand and the teacher calls on him. "On Saturday I had a sleepover," he says. *"Saturday night?" asks Ms. Breen. "How many people came to your sleepover?"* *"Just me."* *Ms. Breen looks confused. "What do you mean by sleepover?" She pauses, and adds, "Did you go somewhere for your sleepover?"* *"To my friend's," Hector responds.* *Ms. Breen smiles at him. "Did you have fun?"* *Hector nods his head, yes, silently.*	Knower (R)[2] Knower (I) Knower (R) Knower (I) Knower (R)	

Ms. Breen used sharing time as a way to check in with students and give all

students an opportunity to participate as experts. Because the sharing activity

positioned students as knower, all students, including Hector who was often quite

quiet, were able to take part in it without concerns about being correct. Although Ms.

Breen was initially confused by the idea of a sleepover of one in this vignette, she

positioned Hector as a knower, providing guiding questions that would lead him to

clarify his explanation and explain that he was the sole invited guest. The sharing

activity in Ms. Breen's class provided her with knowledge about her students'

background and experiences and gave the students the opportunity to hold the

---

[2] As discussed previously, in all of my literacy event vignettes I use (R) to note reflexive self-positioning and (I) to note interactive positioning of the focal student by others.

expertise, "teaching" the details of their lives to her. This interaction was typical of Ms. Breen's sharing time. When a child "shared" Ms. Breen didn't collect the information and move on, but engaged each contributing student in a brief conversation, posing follow-up questions. In this episode, Ms. Breen's follow-up questions guided Hector's response to clarify her understanding of his experience. On other occasions, Ms. Breen used follow-up questions to elicit details and connect to content the students had encountered in the classroom. She also shared parallel personal experiences with the children, building rapport and links between them.

Calendar

After sharing, the class had a regular routine of updating the calendar, which was located at the front of the room and constructed from a calendar format with a Velcro square on each day. During the calendar activity, students volunteered to select the appropriate date card for "today" from a Velcro board on the side and add it to the calendar. This activity also included discussion about day of the week links to yesterday, today, and tomorrow and events that the children had or were going to participate in on different days. In the following vignette, Ms. Breen facilitated her students' encounter with a calendar situation where they needed to figure out that two of the date cards would have to include two dates [as is often sometimes done with calendars at the end of the month to allow the format to fit onto a single page].

Table 4.2: First: Calendar: Alejandro

Literacy Event Vignette: Alejandro and Calendar Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
The day is June 1, the Tuesday after a three-day Memorial Day weekend, but rather than dismantle the May calendar, Ms. Breen has left the incomplete May calendar up on the wall. She has a plan. "How many days are in May?" she asks, then	Knower (I)	

105

calls on Alejandro, who has raised his hand.	Knower (I)	
After a long pause, Alejandro responds, "30?"	Knower (R)	
"No," replies Ms. Breen, "How many days are in May, not 30?" There are no more spaces left on the calendar, but two of the date cards remain on the edge, waiting to be chosen. They are 23/30 and 24/31. "We don't have any more days?" she asks, gesturing to the filled date spaces. "Hmmm, what are we going to do?"	Learner (I) Thinker (I)	
Another student, Nelson, gets up and boldly replaces 23 on the calendar with 23/30.		
"What does that mean?" asks Ms. Breen.		
Jorge responds, "Both of those days are Sunday."		
"Who would like to do the other one?" Alejandro has raised his hand, and she calls on him again.	Knower (R/I)	
Alejandro mutters, tapping his finger on his mouth contemplatively, "Monday, ummmm."	Knower (R)	
"Monday was…" Ms. Breen prompts.	Learner (I)	
"Monday was May 24."	Knower (R)	
"No," replies Ms. Breen, "What was Monday?"	Learner (I)	
Alejandro whispers, a little unsure, "May 31, 2010."	Knower (R)	
"Speak up, Alejandro, I can't hear you."	Learner (I)	
Alejandro repeats, more loudly this time, "May 31, 2010." Ms. Breen nods "yes" and Alejandro comes up to the calendar, removes the 24, and puts up 24/31.	Knower (R) Knower (I) Knower (R)	
"Why did you do that?" Ms. Breen asks. "What does that mean?" Alejandro is already walking back to his place on the carpet. At Ms. Breen's question, he pauses, silent, for about ten seconds. "Do you know why you did that?" asks, Ms. Breen, probing. "Alejandro, do you know why?" Alejandro shakes his head "no" as he sits back down on the carpet. "Can anyone help him out?" asks Ms. Breen.	Thinker (I) Thinker (I) Learner (I)	Stymied (R)
Nelson responds, "Cause we ran out for Monday."		
Ms. Breen addresses the class, "Just like we ran out for Sunday, we ran out for Monday. Pretty cool! We hadn't learned to do that yet."	Learner (I)	

In this literacy event, Alejandro boldly took up the position of knower to address the dilemma of the double date card and lack of space. He has watched Nelson have success with the first double date card, 23/30, and took the leap of mimicking him. Nelson was respected by all of his peers in the class for making leaps of insight and coming up with wild answers that often turned out to be right, so Alejandro decided that his odds of being correct were strong, even though he didn't understand the reason that 23/30, and then 24/31 were the correct date cards.

Taking on the position of knower even when he wasn't absolutely confident in his answer was typical of Alejandro. He was uncertain of his response of Monday, declaring a long "ummmmm" as he worked to figure out what it is he needed to say. Ms. Breen positioned Alejandro as a learner, offering him prompts and questions to scaffold him in coming to the answer. In response to each prompt by Ms. Breen, Alejandro responded with an answer, claiming the right of knower with his guessing. After Alejandro demonstrated that he knew where the 24/31 card should go, Ms. Breen positioned him as a thinker, pushing him to explain the reasoning behind his identification of the 24/31 card. Alejandro had figured out what was the correct answer, but not the "why" behind it. Ms. Breen followed up with four questions that positioned him as a thinker, and included substantial wait time. When Alejandro ultimately positioned himself as stymied (after several opportunities provided by Ms. Breen's questions) so Ms. Breen sought help from another student and then positioned Alejandro (and the rest of the class) as learners as she talked about how they "hadn't learned to do that yet."

In the next literacy event, we see Ms. Breen working with Hector during calendar time. This interaction took place on the same day as the double date card dilemma just described. Having worked through the double date dilemma, the students are now dismantling the May calendar in order to update to June, which has just begun. Ms. Breen used the dismantling of each month's calendar as an opportunity to practice calculations. She wrote a calculation on the board and the answer to the calculation corresponded to a date that needed to be removed from the calendar. The student who provided the answer to the calculation won the right to remove that date card from the calendar. Ms. Breen wrote calculations of a variety of difficulty levels. In addition to using numbers, she also constructed calculations using symbols that the students were familiar with, a single block for "ones" and chains of ten blocks for "tens."

Table 4.3 : First: Calendar: Hector

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector and Calendar	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Ms. Breen leads the class in dismantling the May calendar in preparation for replacing it with June. For some students, she also writes symbols corresponding to tens and ones, a block of ten cubes, and a single cube. Hector hasn't yet raised his hand at all this morning, so Ms. Breen draws two blocks of tens and seven ones, then calls on him. *Hector responds, "ten."* 　　*"Two tens and seven ones," responds Ms. Breen, gesturing to the symbols on the white board.* 　　*"Nine."* 　　*"No, honey, each of these is a ten. If we had them together, what do we get?"* 　　*"Twenty."* 　　*"And these?" asks Ms. Breen, pointing to the ones.* 　　*There is a pause of about five seconds, then Hector responds, "Twenty-seven."* 　　*"There you go!" declares Ms. Breen, and*	Knower (I) Knower (R) Learner (I) Learner (R) Learner (I) Learner (R) Learner (I) Learner (R) Learner (I)	

Hector comes up to the calendar to remove the 27 date card.	Knower (R)	
Several minutes later, when the calendar is nearly empty and ready to be titled "June," Ms. Breen asks aloud, "Who has not been up? Hector?"	Knower (I)	
Hector responds very softly with a smile, "I've been up."	Knower (R)	

During a calendar activity full of new ideas and conundrums, Hector had chosen to sit back. He had been watching Ms. Breen and participating students intently, his gaze following the action. Although he raised his hand less often than Alejandro, Hector was still a regular participant and this was the only day when I noticed that he had not yet volunteered with any responses well into the reading/language arts block. He seemed a little intimidated by the materials but very attentive to Ms. Breen and the responding students. In this vignette, Ms. Breen has noted which students have already participated, and has begun to call on students who do not have their hands raised. She constructed a calculation that she believed Hector could be successful at and positioned him as a knower by selecting him to complete it. Hector took up the position of knower with the answer "ten" and Ms. Breen responded by positioning him as a learner and gesturing to the figures she had drawn on the board. Hector used this scaffold to respond with "nine" which corresponded to the number of figures but failed to account for the fact that two of them were "tens" figures. Ms. Breen positioned Hector as a learner again by reminding him that some of the figures each count as "ten." Hector added the two "tens" together and responded as a correct knower with "twenty," and then was positioned as a learner again with a reminder to include the "ones" and sufficient wait time to figure out the answer. Hector used each scaffold offered by Ms. Green, ultimately coming to the

position of knower. Hector glowed with his success as knower and claimed this position again with a smile when Ms. Breen surveyed the class to see if anyone had not yet successfully completed a calculation and removed a date.

When a student responded with an incorrect answer during an activity with Ms. Breen, she had the option of positioning that student as stymied and moving on to another student. However, she regularly used interactions with students as opportunities to position them as learners and guide them to correct answers through a variety of scaffolds. She did move on when repeated attempts failed to support the student in reaching an answer but only after providing second and third or more chances. When she did "move on," she always moved on to another student, and only on the rarest of occasions when all students were "stymied" did she give away or provide the answer herself. She was a sort of tour guide into knowledge, pointing her students in the direction of the tourist sites, but giving them the full pleasure of experiencing the attractions for themselves. As I have mentioned, Ms. Breen's lessons were rich with scaffolds. In this vignette she used the drawings of the cubes and blocks of ten as a scaffold for Hector, as well as using her gestures to those drawings to support Hector as he worked through the calculation.

Read Aloud

The next example of a literacy event I share is the read-aloud. The read-aloud took place as a whole group activity on the carpet. During my time in Ms. Breen's room, I observed several read-alouds. Her students were entranced by them, eager to join in the drama of the story through pantomime, and wildly entertained by the distinct voices that Ms. Breen gave to each of the characters. In pointing out that

110

read-alouds were just one highlight in a fun-filled day in Ms. Breen's classroom,

Hector noted Ms. Breen's talent for voices, declaring that she "reads the same [as] the

person in the book would read." In read-aloud, Ms. Breen frequently positioned the

members of class as one unit with large questions to the whole group. My positioning

analyses of this vignette reflects the positioning of Alejandro and Hector as members

of the group, as well as their positioning through individual responses. As I

mentioned earlier in the chapter, I differentiate my focal students' positioning by

putting their initial in front of the position name. For positions that are taken up or

interactively imposed on the class as I whole, I use the designation "WC" for Whole

Class.

Table 4.4 : First: Read-Aloud: Hector and Alejandro

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector, Alejandro, and Read-Aloud	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access

Ms. Breen is reading aloud from <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u>, which turns the original version of the story around to make the pig the villain and the wolves flower-loving, tea-drinking chums. She gives a distinct voice to each character and invites the students to point out interesting details in the illustrations. She is sitting in her rocking chair at the edge of the carpet and the students are sitting, legs crossed, before her. When the teacher gets to a section that describes how the wolves have locked their door against the Big Bad Pig with 37 padlocks, Alejandro turns to a friend and comments, "Whoa! Thirty-seven!"
    Ms. Breen responds to his comment, "That's a lot of locks, isn't it?"
    Hector nods his head vigorously in agreement.
    All the students, including Alejandro and Hector, chime in on repeated sections of text, including the classic "by the hair on our chinny-chin chins, we will not let you in."
	WC[3]-Reader (I)
	
	A-Reader (R)
	A-Reader (I)
	H-Reader (R)
	WC-Reader (R)	

---

[3] As I have mentioned, in literacy event vignettes that contain two focal students, I use "H" to refer to Hector's positioning, "A" to refer to Alejandro's positioning, and WC to refer to the positioning of the class as a group (Whole Class).

111

Ms. Breen encourages the students to join in with dramatizing the text. "Someone show me how you sniff – all of you, show me how you sniff. Show me how you would huff and puff."	WC – Reader (I)	
Alejandro, Hector, and their peers vigorously huff and puff, preparing to blow houses down.	WC – Reader (R)	
Ms. Breen pauses to consider, "It's a little bit different, isn't it? Between huffing and puffing and sniffing." She models the different actions and the students engage in this with vigor, leaning back to get momentum, then huffing, puffing, and sniffing until the room sounds like every occupant has a terrible head cold.	WC-Thinker (I) WC-Thinker (R)	
When Ms. Breen closes the book after the final page, the students break into spontaneous applause.	WC-Reader (R)	
One of the students asks why the animals are wearing clothes.		
Ms. Breen, looking thoughtful, comments, "Do we need to talk about what kind of book this is?" She leads the students in a vote for fiction and non-fiction, eliciting responses to define each term and apply it (or not to the text).	WC-Learner (I) WC-Learner (R)	
Another student asks, "What is that on the back?" He is pointing to the text blurb on the back that offers a preview of the book.		
Ms. Breen responds, "This tells a little bit about the story so that you want to read it. If you are in a bookstore you can read this and decide if you want to buy this book." She then reads the blurb aloud. It includes an assertion that in the story the wolf blows three houses down. She asks the students, "What about this blurb is not true?" launching them into a critique of the blurb that leads to an explicit examination of other book blurbs from recent read-aloud selections.	WC – Learner (I) WC-Thinker (I)	

During this read-aloud literacy event, as well as other read-alouds in Ms.

Breen's classroom, all students were positioned as readers, as was Ms. Breen. She

positioned them all as readers by actively inviting them to join her in responding to

the text, investigating the pictures and their connections to the words, and acting out

interesting tidbits. She used the position of reader as a gateway to one of thinker when

she encouraged students to consider the differences between huffing, puffing, and sniffing and to apply the differences through a dramatization of the different actions of huffing, puffing, and sniffing. Ms. Breen was open to students' comments and used their questions to open pathways into new learning. When a question was asked about clothes-wearing animals, and then about the chunk of text on the back of the book, Ms. Breen used both questions as opportunities to position students as learners, using that as a gateway to the position of thinker, as she supported students in applying their comprehension of the story to concepts of genre and the dubious assertions of the blurb.

Pair Work/ Whole Group Activity

In the next vignette, we see an episode that took place another day during whole group time in Ms. Breen's reading/language arts class. In the previous week, the students have enjoyed several read-alouds from different versions of *The Three Little Pigs* and today have focused on comparing and contrasting events and characters from two of the books. As I show, Ms. Breen builds a pair-work activity into the whole group activity. We follow Alejandro and Hector and their respective partners throughout the activity.

Table 4.5 : First: Whole Group/Pair-Work: Hector and Alejandro

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector, Alejandro, and Whole Group/Pair-work	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
On a sunny Wednesday in May, 24 first-graders are seated on a bright carpet. They have just spent 25 minutes comparing and contrasting events and characters from <u>The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf</u> *and* <u>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</u>. *They've been working with partners to figure out where cards bearing details about the stories would fit into a Venn Diagram pocket chart. Their small bodies wiggle with expectation as Ms. Breen gives them instructions*	WC-Learner (I)	

113

for their next task. "This is what I want you to do. I want you to go back with your partner. I want to give each group of partners an index card. You can come up with your own idea. You can come up with something that happened in one or the other story or something that happened in…" The teacher pauses expectantly.	WC-Learner (I)	
All the children chime in "both!" with enthusiasm.	WC-Knower (R)	
Ms. Breen reminds them, "Don't write the title of the book or write 'both' and don't use the ones we did together." She gestures to the Venn Diagram, which is half-filled with index cards covered in story details.	WC-Learner (I)	
Alejandro leans into his partner, Carlos. "I'll be back!"he whispers frantically, then dashes to his desk, hair flying. He returns with a pencil and he and Carlos claim the space of the classroom library, a five-foot by five-foot area bounded on three sides by book shelves, containing stuffed animals and rocking chairs. They mentally sort through episodes from <u>The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf</u>, listing events aloud to each other. Carlos says, "Hopscotch!"	A-Knower (R)	
Alejandro begins to write, muttering aloud, "Where the character played hopscotch." Carlos interrupts him, "Character is only one!" Alejandro looks up at him, and says, testing, "Where the characters played hopscotch." Alejandro's partner takes the pencil and begins to write.	A-Writer (R) A-Learner (I/R)	
Back on the carpet, Hector and his partner, Oliver, are huddled over their index card. Oliver rushes over to Ms. Breen to ask how to spell "-ing." Hector leans over the card with the pencil, refers to a card already placed in the Venn Diagram, and copies "A character was," then adds "d-a-c-n-e." His partner returns, takes the proffered pencil, and adds, "i-n-g." When the word is complete, the two boys jump up in elation and give each other a high five.	H-Strategic-Appealer (R) H-Writer (R) H-Learner (I/R) H-Writer (I/R)	
Alejandro and Carlos are still working. Alejandro says to his partner in frustration, "I don't know how to spell it." The sentence reads "3 characters were playing h-------." A word that used to be a phonetic spelling of "hopscotch" is being frantically eradicated from the paper by Carlos. Carlos adds "pig pog" after "playing". Alejandro hisses, "Hurry up! She's coming!" Ms. Breen is going around the room, urging students back to the carpet.		A-Not-Knower (R)

I ask Alejandro, "What happened to hopscotch?"		A-Not-Knower (R)
"We didn't know how to spell it."		
Hector and Oliver are sitting on the carpet, quietly waiting, fairly glowing with pride. Hector flips the card upside in front of Oliver so that no student can peek at it, and raises his hand, hoping his group will be called.	H-Knower (R)	
The teacher notes that they are one of the first groups to be ready, "Oliver and Hector remembered the rules."		
Another group is called to the Venn Diagram and puts up a card, "1 character used a drill to brake down the pigs house."		
"Thumbs up if it's right," calls the teacher. All the students except Alejandro hold their thumbs up. "Thumbs down if it's wrong," declares Ms. Breen. Alejandro holds out a downturned thumb. "Alejandro," the teacher asks, "What's wrong with it?""	A-Knower (R) A-Knower (I)	
"It wasn't the pigs' house. It was the wolves' house," he asserts, referring back to <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u>.	A-Knower (R)	
Ms. Breen smiles at him, "I didn't even notice that. Good for you! Alejandro, you are on the ball today." To the group she says, "I love how he was listening." After several more turns, Ms. Breen calls up Hector and Oliver. Oliver reads, very softly, "A character was dancing."	A-Knower (I)	
"Okay," Ms. Breen asks the pair, "where does it go?" Hector puts it into place.	H-Knower (I/R)	
Ms. Breen next calls on Alejandro, who has his hand raised, and Carlos. As Alejandro moves to get up, his partner whispers into his ear, clearly concerned about the something. Alejandro responds solidly, "I was going to tell Ms. Breen what's wrong." He turns to Ms. Breen and says stoically, "We put it wrong." He shows her the card, which states, "3 charhters were playing pig-pog." "We put three characters, but there were really four characters."	A-Learner (R) A-Learner (R)	
Ms. Breen examines the card thoughtfully, "I'm not sure that that was totally wrong. Go back to a quiet space and find it for us." She hands him the book <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u>.	A-Learner (I)	
Alejandro and Carlos rush back to the classroom library and Alejandro finds the place in the book where pig-pog is mentioned. The illustration		

shows three wolves and one pig playing together and the text notes that the three little wolves played games with the pigs.		
Carlos erases "3" and writes "4." "We're done!" he declares.		
Alejandro takes the index card and examines it closely, "You messed up the h and the t. Oh my God!" He snatches the pencil, erases "c-h-a-r-h-t-e-r-s" and rewrites it fresh as "c-h-a-r-t-h-e-r-s." They return to the carpet.	A-Writer (R)	
Ms. Breen notes their return, "Read to me the part."	A-Learner (I)	
Carlos reads, "They played pig pog."		
Ms. Breen asks, "Who is they?"		
Carlos responds, "The three little wolves and the pig."		
"Okay, good, super!" responds Ms. Breen.		
Alejandro, still annoyed by the mistake, mumbles, "We had three."	A-Learner (R)	
Ms. Breen responds, "Very nice boys. Good job using the book to test your answer."	A-Learner (I)	

I began this vignette as Ms. Breen was guiding the students into the pair-work activity they would do next before returning to a whole group discussion. She positioned all students as learners as she gave them explicit instructions for what they were going to do, inviting them to chime a key word in as knowers. Alejandro claimed a space with his partner, Carlos, and they both took on the role of knowers as they used their expertise of the book to identify an important event. Alejandro, who had a pencil, took on the role of writer as he began to construct the text, but was positioned by Carlos as learner when he was corrected on his use of the singular "character." Alejandro accepted the position of learner as he considered Carlos' assertion and realized that Carlos was correct. Carlos' correction earned him the right to a turn with the pencil.

Alejandro was frustrated by his inability to correctly write "hopscotch" and avoided dealing with the word, opting instead for a more reasonably spelled "pig-pog." By taking on the position of not-knower with "hopscotch" Alejandro chose not to grapple further with a difficult spelling and instead strategically selected a word he was confident he and Carlos could manage.

Meanwhile, Hector and Oliver decided which event they would write about but they knew that they needed assistance from Ms. Breen for the "-ing" ending. They decided to strategically appeal for that portion of the word spelling and Oliver took the job of spokesperson to make the appeal to Ms. Breen for the pair. Hector took on the role of writer and strategically used a card that displayed on the Venn Diagram pocket chart as a resource to write the beginning of the sentence and his own knowledge of letters and sounds to write the first half of "dancing." Having consulted with Ms. Breen, Oliver returned and shared the insight of "i-n-g" with Hector by writing it on the card as Hector watched. Having acquired "i-n-g" from Ms. Breen as learners, Oliver and Hector successfully authored their sentence and claimed the position of writer in a sparkling celebration.

When the students returned with their partners to their places on the carpet in front of Ms. Breen, Alejandro bravely took on the position of knower with a response that was in disagreement with every other student in the room. Ms. Breen positioned him as a knower as she supported him in sharing his assertion. Hector also took on the position of knower and was simultaneously positioned as such by Ms. Breen and his peers as a knower when he placed his co-authored card into the correct area of the Venn Diagram.

In the time between authoring their card and preparing to present it to the class, Alejandro and Carlos identified an error in the content of their sentence. Alejandro positioned himself as a learner to Ms. Breen when he explained that the sentence was incorrect but that he thought he knew how he could fix it. Ms. Breen affirmed his position as learner by giving him and Carlos space and time to double-check their answer against the text. Also, as shown, Alejandro took on the position of writer at this point when he noticed and was appalled by a spelling error that Carlos made.

Ms. Breen's instruction constructed frequent opportunities for students to take on the position of learner and successfully use that position as a gateway into positions of knower, reader, writer, and as noted in the previous read-aloud vignette, thinker. These opportunities invited students to regularly take on positions that afforded access to learning and encouraged deep engagement in literacy events. Ms. Breen's students, including Hector and Alejandro, had come to expect challenging literacy tasks from Ms. Breen but they expected and received supports and encouragement that helped them to successfully meet those challenges. Both Hector and Alejandro had developed a history of success with individual literacy tasks and so were willing to take on new challenges. Even the constraining position of not-knower, which Alejandro took when he became frustrated by the orthography of "hopscotch," constrained him only briefly. He and Carlos strategically chose the alternative of "pig-pog" because they felt that they could be successful with it.

In first grade, students were encouraged to take leaps of learning but they knew that there was always a safety net beneath them. In this activity, both pairs of

students negotiated their way to successfully authored sentences and supported each other in addressing and correcting errors and difficulties. The pairs themselves were another scaffold in Ms. Breen's repertoire. Although Ms. Breen always had a very tight lesson plan and strict pacing within that plan, she was also open to clearing pathways when students themselves identified opportunities for learning, as when she offered time and the text to Alejandro and Carlos. She listened to what students had to say and used individual students' assertions as opportunities for further learning, as demonstrated through Alejandro's singular "thumbs-down" and he and his partner's desire to produce an absolutely accurate sentence, as well as through the questions linked to genre and blurbs described in the previous vignette.

Small Group/Game

Next, I share a vignette of small group/game work in which Ms. Breen organized her students into three teams. She begins by providing explicit instructions on how the game, called "Which One," will work. She then reads questions about each of the different *Pigs* stories from index cards, asking a question to each team in turn. The members of the team must talk to each other to identify which story is referred to in the question and then one member of the team is to provide the answer. If a team gets the answer correct, they are awarded a point. If a team gets the answer incorrect, the same question is asked of the next team. In this vignette, some reflexive/interactive positioning is in opposition as we see Alejandro push back against an imposed position.

Table 4.6: First: Hector and Alejandro: Small Group Game

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector, Alejandro, and the Small Group Game	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
When a question is addressed to his team,		

Hector raises his hand and simultaneously puts his arm around Oliver, leaning close to discuss it. Ms. Breen calls on Hector, who gets it right.	H-Knower (R/I)	
The game continues, Hector raises his hand again and is chosen, responding with a correct answer. He and Oliver have their arms around each other, and whisper frantically to each other at each question, sometimes shooting their hands up when it is their team's turn. Sometimes Hector raises his hand partway, wavering between putting his hand down and raising it fully.	H-Knower (R/I) H-Knower (R/I)	
Meanwhile, Alejandro begins the game on the edge of his group cluster. He tries to lean between two students into the huddle, but doesn't fit. Frustrated, he leans over the top, nearly toppling into the middle of the huddle as students begin to collapse under him. This proves ineffective, so he sits on the edge of the group during the next question. Toby, who has been dominating the huddle, is selected and gets the answer wrong.	A-Knower (R)	A-Not-Knower (I)
On the next question for his team, Alejandro pushes his head into the huddle and his hand flashes into the air just ahead of Toby. Toby snatches Alejandro's arm and tries to pull it down, but it's too late, Ms. Breen saw that Alejandro had his hand up first and chooses him. Pausing for several seconds before he responds, Alejandro gets the answer right.	A-Knower (R) A-Knower (R/I)	A-Not-Knower (I)
On the next question for his team, Alejandro leans into the huddle but Toby says, "I already know the answer."		
Alejandro responds, "It won't help us if you get it wrong again." Alejandro and Toby both raise their hands, but a different team member is selected.	A-Knower (R)	

Working closely with his team member Oliver, Hector frequently positioned himself as a knower. He checked his answers with Oliver, which generally gave him confidence in his answer, although we see that one time he was a *hesitant* knower, raising his hand halfway and wavering. For Hector, the opportunity to work with Oliver supported his access to engagement in the literacy event by giving him a peer to consult with and discuss answers together. The rest of their team, all girls,

120

consulted together on answers. Ms. Breen chose her responders for that team from the two friendly factions within it.

On the other hand, we see that Alejandro had to negotiate hard for positive positioning within his group. With the tacit support of his team members, Toby attempted to exclude Alejandro from the group discussion as a not-knower. Although this frustrated Alejandro, it did not ultimately constrain his access to the literacy event. Alejandro had a very strong school literate identity, which I will discuss further below. This identity provided him with the confidence to assert himself as a knower even in risky situations, such as when he wasn't exactly sure of the answer, as described in the Calendar vignette, and in this case, when his peers were deliberately positioning him as a not-knower in order to exclude him from the group. Even as the group worked to exclude him from the huddle, Alejandro persistently worked to negotiate his position as knower and his physical positioning by attempting to get access to the group by entering the huddle from the top. When this failed, he managed to succeed in pushing his way into the huddle from the side. Toby attempted to override Alejandro's positioning as knower by trying to pull Alejandro's "knowing hand" out of the air but Alejandro succeeded in getting recognized as the knower for this answer by Ms. Breen and confirmed his position of knower when he provided the right answer. Alejandro's victory was all the more powerful because Toby had responded incorrectly to the previous answer. When Toby informed Alejandro that his input was not necessary because he, Toby, already knew the answer, Alejandro simultaneously questioned Toby's position as a knower and asserted his own position

as a knower by deliberately pointing out Toby's failure to provide a correct answer two turns before and then by raising his hand.

Although in previous small group episodes, such as the pair work vignette shared earlier, participation in small groups for Hector and Alejandro usually served to open up access to deeper engagement in literacy events, we see that this may not always be the case. Whereas in this vignette, Alejandro's strong school literate identity gave him the confidence to negotiate for positive positioning even as others were working to position him in constraining ways, a student in the same situation but with a striving school literate identity might have been overridden and excluded from deeper access to the literacy event. I did not discuss Ms. Breen's perceptions of this literacy event with her. However, she later shared with me her frequent observations of Alejandro's ability to hold his own and fight for positive positioning when working with peers who might have otherwise marginalized or excluded him, so she may have had this in mind when she placed him into a group with Toby and company. It is likely that Ms. Breen also placed Hector in a group with Oliver deliberately, since I often saw her pairing them up together and they were always very supportive of each other.

Independent Work

Finally, I share a vignette that provides a snapshot of Hector and Alejandro during independent work time. This portion of instruction came at the end of the reading/language arts block and included time for assessments such as spelling tests, individual reading assessments such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and "Fast Facts" math computation quizzes.

Table 4.7 : First: Hector and Alejandro: Independent Time

Literacy Event Vignette: Hector and Alejandro in Independent Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Hector picks his paper up from his desk and examines it closely.		
Ms. Breen instructs the class to put "your name and date" and then tells them to "circle the two books you want to compare."	WC-Writer (I)	
Alejandro picks <u>The Three Little Pigs</u> *and* <u>Los Tres Pequeños Jabalíes / The Three Little Javelinas</u>	A-Writer (R)	
while Hector chooses <u>The True Story of The Three Little Pigs</u> *and* <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u>. *Alejandro begins to write.*	H-Writer (R) A-Writer (R)	
Hector has paused. He bounces his eraser thoughtfully on his desk for a minute and then gets out his green "Help Folder," which contains word lists, a miniature "word wall," and documents set up as mini picture dictionaries. He looks through the folder, puts it away and begins to write.	H-Strategic Appealer (R)	
Alejandro works for several minutes, beginning "These two book are alike because in the three little jabalies*" but then is called by Ms. Breen to go over to*	A-Writer (R)	
the guided reading table. She administers a DRA to him. After Ms. Breen finishes, she gives him a copy of the DRA text and sends him to the class library to read the book aloud to himself before returning to his work	A-Reader (I/R)	
on the <u>Pigs</u> *compare/contrast task. He sits criss-cross on the floor in the library, reading softly to himself.*	A-Reader (R)	
Meanwhile, Hector erases his work and with occasional references to the Help Folder, begins again, "Their wore 3 little pigs day..."	H-Writer (R)	

In this literacy event, we see that Ms. Breen positioned all students as writers as she provided the instructions for a task that asked them to write a text that comparing and contrasting their favorite *Pigs* book. Alejandro positioned himself as a writer immediately, settling into his task. Hector gave the task some consideration, and then strategically went to his Help Folder to look up some of the words that he wanted to use. The Help Folder was a green folder that each of the children kept in

their desks. It was full of scaffolds such as miniature word walls, picture/word glossaries, and word lists that the students could consult when they were doing writing tasks. Ms. Breen provided it as a scaffold that students could use independently and strategically. Rather than having students appeal to her whenever they wanted a spelling, she gave them the procedure of referring to the Help Folder so that they could be independent writers taking strategic advantage of resources. Hector frequently took advantage of his Help Folder. He was able to write independently, without teacher intervention, by using it as a resource.

Another resource that we can see a student using in the vignette is Alejandro's choice of the bilingual text *The Three Javelinas* as one of the books he wrote about. He code-switched to the Spanish "Jabalíes" in his writing, using the resource of his home language of Spanish. Later, I will share additional ways that both Alejandro and Hector used Spanish as a resource.

The episodes described in this section represent the types of literacy events that Hector and Alejandro experienced each day during Ms. Breen's reading/language block. I selected these episodes for inclusion in this chapter because they offer a representation of the typical positionings that Hector and Alejandro reflectively and interactively took on and negotiated throughout my time in their classroom. In the next section, I look further into the stories of Hector and Alejandro to discover more about their literate identities.

Alejandro: The Scholar/Athlete

As I described previously, Alejandro was a slender, graceful boy with wavy golden locks that streamed out behind his energetic person. When I visited him at

home, he led me gleefully into his family's apartment, sitting down next to me at the table. We were joined by his mother, a warm and cheerful woman who supplemented the family income by making and selling bulk tamale orders out of the apartment, and his father, a block-layer who played regularly in a local amateur soccer league. Also joining us were Alejandro's inquisitive sister, a kindergarten student at Walnut Springs Elementary School, and his older brother, a third-grader who popped in and out of the conversation.

Alejandro described his experiences in Ms. Breen's class as "fun." When I asked him to elaborate, he explained, "It's fun to do work." When discussing reading specifically, he noted that one of the fun parts of reading was "that no one has to help me read because I like to read by myself" and that reading was his favorite thing to do in Ms. Breen's room. He described reading as an easy task for him "because all the words, all the words that I read, I can pronounce all the words."

In first grade when students are initially constructing their literate identities, Alejandro's academic literacy experiences were fun and positive. His teacher and peers usually positioned him in positive ways. As we have seen in the literacy event vignettes, Alejandro also engaged in regular positive reflexive positioning and was not afraid to take calculated risks that regularly led to success. His academic literacy experiences were supporting the development of a strong literate identity which in turn manifested itself in positive positioning in a cyclical construction. The fact that he found reading to be an easy and pleasant activity also most certainly supported his strong literate identity and positive positioning.

Although Alejandro was pleased with the entertainment aspect of reading --
the silliness of characters and the adventures of superheroes -- he took a particular
delight in the ease that he had with reading and in his abilities as a scholar, pointing
out various certificates and awards he had brought home as a consequence of reading.
Although Alejandro had never been to the public library, there were a variety of
books at his apartment gathered from miscellaneous sources. He explained that he
read four books each day after completing his homework so that one of his parents
would sign the reading log for Ms. Breen. The reading log assignment was a program
across-grade levels and school wide that asked students to read for a regular period of
time every day at home and collect a parent or guardian's signature confirming that
they had spent time reading. As we see, the reading log was mentioned by most of my
participating students.

Even though the only use of Spanish by Alejandro that I observed at school
was linked to the bilingual text *Los Tres Pequeños Jabalíes / The Three Little
Javelinas*, he informed me during our conversation at his home that in addition to
reading in English, "I learned how to read and write in Spanish because last time my
Dad told me to read in Spanish and he helped me." He and his family shared with me
that as Alejandro was learning to read in English at school, his family supported his
reading development in Spanish, with his father ticking off a list of the Spanish books
they read with Alejandro and his siblings. Alejandro's father described the way that
Alejandro liked to come up and peek over his shoulder when he was writing in
Spanish and the way that Alejandro's little sister had begun to ask questions about
Spanish-word spellings when she began to learn about words in English. Not only did

Alejandro's home literacy practices include independently reading books in English, but they included co-reading and writing activities in Spanish with his father, and other family members, as well as discussions about the linguistic differences between Spanish and English.

In describing his extended family to me, Alejandro shared that he had family in Boston, North Carolina, and Connecticut. Only at prompting by his mother did he add, "Oh, and Salvador." He went on to declare that "In my family everyone talks Spanish except me and my brother." When I pointed out that I'd been hearing him speak a lot of Spanish during my visit whenever he addressed his parents or my interpreter, he added, "Only when we talk to my dad, but when me and my brother talk to each other, we talk English."

His father chimed in at that point, declaring in Spanish, "He told me, 'Why don't you speak in English? This is America!"

As my conversation with Alejandro continued, he later interjected the assertion, "I do know two languages."

As these exchanges demonstrate, Alejandro's linguistic and cultural identities were fluid. In my conversation with him, his identity as an American, with relatives spread across the United States, was dominant. Although he at first described himself as a monolingual English-speaker despite frequent code-switching with the others at the table, he clearly pondered this idea throughout our conversation and made it a point to later clarify to me that he was bilingual, despite his earlier statements. In the English immersion context of Ms. Breen's classroom, Alejandro's oral English

expertise was salient, with his Spanish an underlying resource that was occasionally

tapped. On the other hand, Spanish played a large role in his home literacy practices.

When I asked Alejandro to draw me a picture of him reading or writing at

school, he created this:

Figure 4.1: Self-Portrait: Alejandro at School

I asked my focal students to draw the self-portraits in order to give them an

alternative way of expressing themselves that did not included reading and writing

and in order to discover more about their multiple identities. Although as I describe,

Alejandro wrote in the "real name" for his school, I removed his text from his

drawing and replaced it with an approximation of his handwriting and substituted the

pseudonym Walnut Springs to preserve his strong intention to incorporate his

school's name into his drawing, shown in Figure 4.1.

As he drew the self-portrait, Alejandro told me that he wanted to draw his school in a way that would not look like a house and that he wanted to include the name of the school on the building. When he got stuck on the word "Springs," he asked his brother for advice, then strategically took his father's cell phone and copied the word from where it was listed in the contact list. Even after he had moved onto his second picture, he kept returning to his "Alejandro at School" picture to tweak it and add details. In the picture, we see Alejandro delighted at having filled an entire page with his own writing, still proudly holding his pencil. His confidence in his writing ability shines through both in the delight shown in his illustrated self and in the work he put into making sure he included his school's name on the drawing.

For his second picture, which illustrated him doing something fun outside of school, Alejandro created this:

Figure 4.2: Self-Portrait: Alejandro at Play

Describing it, he explained that it was he and his brother playing baseball. In Figure 4.2, he shows us his most frequent playmate, his older sibling. I found it interesting that he chose to show himself playing baseball rather than soccer because in addition to playing baseball with his brother, Alejandro, like his father, played in a soccer league. Indeed, when I visited him at home, he explained that he was skipping practice to meet with me, but that it wouldn't be a problem because he would make up for it by training in the apartment. As I reviewed the transcripts from when he was drawing his "Alejandro at Play" picture, I concluded that he played baseball for pure pleasure whereas he viewed soccer as a vocation and himself as a developing soccer professional.

Alejandro's skill as a soccer player was something of which he was very proud. He enthusiastically shared with me the way that he and his team had just won an important game. His father added that Alejandro's soccer coach stressed the importance of school, insisting upon seeing each player's report cards and banning a player from playing against other teams if his report card showed a dip in grades.

Alejandro's confidence in his abilities was evident to Ms. Breen, who described him as "very sure of himself, very confident." She was also aware of his ability to stand up for himself, noting, "at the beginning of the school year he was at this particular table and Toby was there, a lot of my top, top kids were at that table. And I remember, Alejandro was not at all intimidated by these kids." She also was aware of the dynamics within Alejandro's small groups describing, "He gets upset sometimes, you know, somebody does something that he doesn't think should be done in a group or at his table or, you know, he'll let them know that he's not happy

with them…He's stubborn, and that's good." Ms. Breen identified Alejandro as a successful student, with much of his success stemming from his confidence in himself and his ability to take risks and not be intimidated by the impositions or work of others.

Alejandro's confidence was also evident to Alejandro's ESOL teacher, Ms. Francis. Although Ms. Francis was never present in my observations of the first grade reading/language arts block, she worked regularly with both of my focal students in an ESOL pull-out group and met frequently with Ms. Breen to align her teaching to students' needs and the mainstream classroom curriculum. According to Ms. Francis, "[Alejandro is not afraid] to answer questions and share what he thinks he knows and what he knows about things." When he got the answer wrong,

> It doesn't bother him at all. Not at all. Doesn't faze him. I watched his facial expressions to see if, how he feels when maybe he wasn't quite right about something, or misunderstood something. It doesn't faze him in the least. He accepts it, learns from it, and moves on. He's a very confident little boy.

Ms. Francis also saw Alejandro's desire and willingness to answer questions even if when he was not certain of the answer and noted that his strengths included "his intelligence, his confidence, his willingness to take risks."

Among the other strengths and resources that supported Alejandro in literacy events were his salient reading skills in English and his underlying reading skills in Spanish. He brought a strong literate identity into literacy events with him, which provided confidence and assertiveness to aid him in positioning himself in ways that led to deeper engagement in literacy events and taking risks. When working with a

partner with whom he had mutual respect, small group work could create a context that also opened up affordances to Alejandro. When he worked in a small group where his peers sought to position him in constraining ways, Alejandro seemed to draw upon his strong literate identity to negotiate and re-negotiate constraining positions, as demonstrated in the Game literacy event.

In the next section, I share information and insights gathered from my conversation with Hector, as well as perspectives shared by Ms. Breen and Ms. Francis. This is followed by a discussion of my findings regarding the academic literacy experiences, positionings, and literate identities of Alejandro and Hector.

Hector: Music and Math

Hector was a quiet and thoughtful boy with a sweet slow-growing smile that gave him a glow when it was in full bloom. Initially, his mother was reluctant to have him participate in this study because she was uncomfortable about having strangers into her home, but agreed to Hector's participation when I offered the possibility of having my conversation with him on school grounds, where she could meet us. She explained that she, Hector, and Hector's little brother were currently without Hector's father, who made a living by driving cars to Guatemala and selling them there, adding that she worked cleaning houses.

I had my conversation with Hector in his ESOL classroom, a familiar and friendly space that was removed from Ms. Breen's classroom, one day after school. In describing his experiences reading and writing in Ms. Breen's classroom, Hector overwhelmingly labeled his experiences as fun. When I asked if there was anything "not fun" about Ms. Breen's class, he declared, "It's all fun!" In response to

questions about his literacy experiences at home, he explained, "I haven't been to the library [a lot], but I just been one time. I went to play in the computer with Mom." He also talked about the reading log, and how he read "lots of books" at home so that his mother would sign the reading log and he could accumulate stickers on the chart outside of his classroom.

In discussing the difficulties of reading, Hector pointed out that "Some words are hard but some are not" and that science class "is a little hard because the words are a little more big." He pointed out some of the scaffolds available to him in Ms. Breen's class, describing the Help Folder as having "lots of words for you can find and write it in the paper. [There are] pictures of animals and people with words if you don't know the word." He also explained the benefits of working with a partner, describing, "Like if you are doing something like a story and when they have a paper they can start writing. I help get an answer for we can put it in." This description hearkens back to his interaction with Oliver described in the vignette on whole group/pair-work.

In discussing Ms. Breen, Hector said that she told him that he was a good writer and that, as I mentioned previously, she had an exceptional skill at providing the voices to characters in read-alouds. He told me that when he became stuck on a word during reading, "She doesn't give it – she say I have to sound it out." This assertion aligned with my observations of Ms. Breen's interactions with students and her regular choice to position students as learners, scaffolding their way to success. Later, I shared this comment with Ms. Breen, who laughed and agreed, "Pretty much. If I know that he can do it, I don't give him the word."

During my conversation with Hector, he drew this picture of himself happily writing in Ms. Breen's classroom:
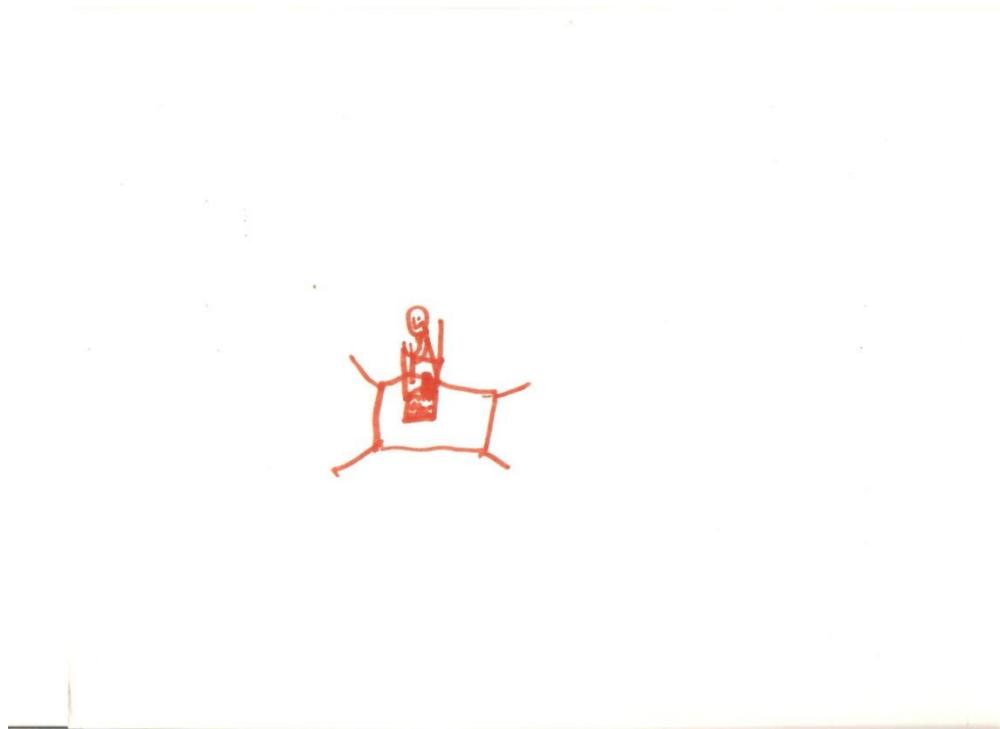
Figure 4.3: Self-Portrait: Hector at School

In Hector's picture, shown in Figure 4.3, we see him smiling as he creates a text. Like Alejandro, he is holding a pencil and has already written several lines of text. In Ms. Breen's classroom, Hector constructed texts independently with the support of scaffolds like the Help Folder and experienced success with his writing. Also like Alejandro, Hector had a wide range of interests and pleasures outside of school. He described playing baseball and hide-and-seek, as well as playing a balloon game with his brother at home, and helping his mother with cooking such meals as scrambled eggs, tortillas, and pizza. His second picture shows him cheerfully playing one of his favorite games, baseball:
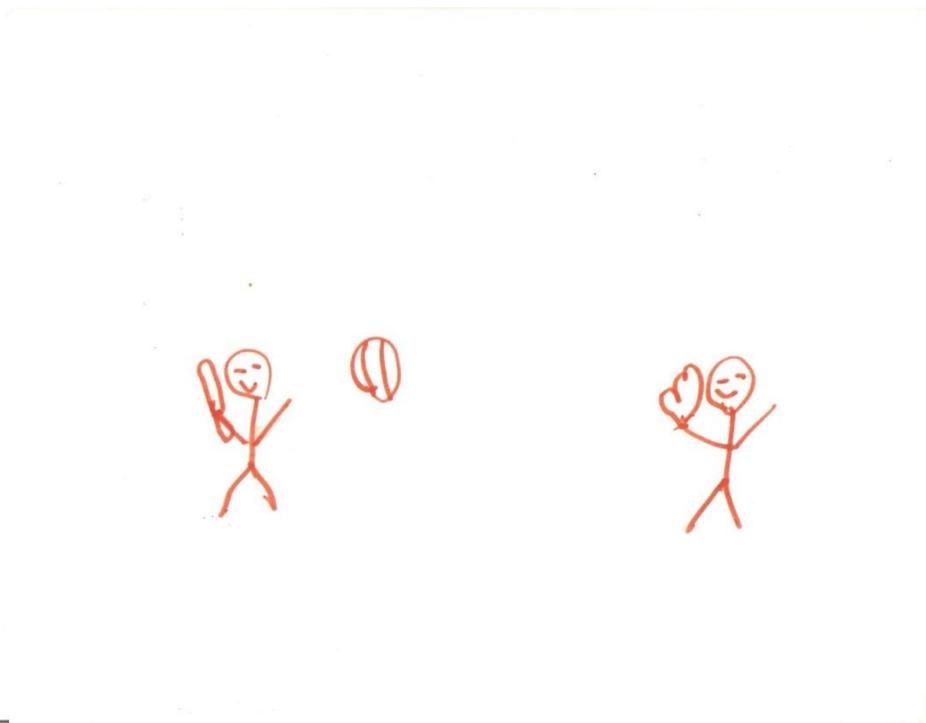
Figure 4.4: Self-Portrait: Hector at Play

I was surprised to see that like Alejandro, Hector also drew a picture of himself playing baseball. He explained that this baseball game was taking place at school during P.E. and that he was preparing to hit the ball that had just been thrown by a classmate. According to Hector as well as Ms. Francis, his ESOL teacher, Hector was good at sports, including baseball.

Hector also brought a variety of strengths to the classroom. He told me, "I'm good at doing math" and "I'm good at musical chairs." Ms. Breen also recognized Hector's strengths in math and music. In looking over Hector's progress in Fast Facts, a regular computational drill that increased in difficulty as students demonstrated success, she found that he was ahead of Alejandro on the day of my interview with her. To highlight their success with Fast Facts, each student kept a picture of a rocket ship in their folder, and they colored another level of their rocket ship each time they moved up another level in Fast Facts. Students also received a certificate each time

they moved up a Fast Fact level. One day before a unit math test, Hector turned in his chair to shyly show me a newly acquired certificate that proclaimed "Hector is an Addition Star." Throughout the test, Hector kept the certificate out on the right side of his desk while he worked on the test on the left side of his desk. During the examination, he often reached over and delicately touched the paper of the certificate, like a talisman. Hector was proud of his math abilities and delighted in his Fast Facts success.

Ms. Breen recognized Hector's skill with math, but noted that even in first grade, math is mediated by a student's ability to read. "Hector's much better in math than reading," she said, "He's more comfortable in math. With the math though, when there is reading, like a word problem, he still has problems." She later added, "He's always done well in math." As I will later show, although math success is important, reading and writing are the gatekeepers for all academic areas, including math, as Ms. Breen has pointed out. Hector was a whiz at pure computation and time-telling activities, but when words mediated the computations, math tasks were extremely difficult for him.

As Hector explained earlier, he was also good at music. Ms. Breen described Hector's reaction the day a mariachi performer visited the class and played his guitar and sang to the students. "I was watching Hector during the music," she explained, "And of course my Hispanic kids were in seventh heaven because he was singing in Spanish, of course. And I looked at Hector – the biggest smile on his face, and he was moving…just loving it, loving it." She later added her perceptions of the additional value of the experience, "Of course, you know, somebody speaking his language and

he understands what Mr. Aguilar was singing. It was great. I was glad to see Hector kind of loosen up a bit…when he [smiles] his whole face lights up." Although she said that her Spanish-speaking students don't use Spanish with each other, in her description of this incident, Ms. Breen demonstrated that she recognized the importance of students' home language.

Ms. Breen's recognition of the importance of Spanish for her students contributed to a resource that was heavily used by Hector and his mother. Ms. Breen and the other first grade teachers sent both English and Spanish versions of homework home with students who spoke Spanish at home. According to Ms. Breen, at first this caused a confusing problem with Hector's homework completion because his mother "wrote all of his homework in the book for him in Spanish." As she described, she addressed this issue with Hector, explaining, "Please, Hector, I want you to do it." By the time I became a presence in Ms. Breen's classroom, Hector was completing his homework in English, but with the Spanish-support of his mother. His mother wrote it out with him in Spanish on the page and then he completed it in English alongside her writing.

According to Ms. Francis, Hector's strengths included his behavior, math, and science. She described him as "a joy." As I noted earlier in this chapter, Hector distinguished himself above all the other students by usually being the first to respond to Ms. Breen's hand signals. Ms. Breen's routine gave Hector a context in which to position himself as an expert, whenever she gave a hand signal, he would perk up and signal back, usually before most of his classmates had noticed. Because of this as well as Hector's sweet nature in general, Ms. Breen said of him, "He's a very caring

person. He follows the rules. He's very much aware of right and wrong. He's always the first one to show me the respect sign."

As I've shown in this section and as demonstrated in the vignettes in this chapter, Hector brought a variety of strengths to his classroom experiences. He was well-behaved, focused, and hard-working. He enjoyed school and relished experiencing frequent success with reading, writing, and math through a variety of scaffolds. He excelled at math computation and delighted in music. However, he was challenged by reading and writing tasks, although he was able to experience regular success with them because of the many scaffolds provided to him through Ms. Breen's procedures and instruction. In the next sections I will address my findings on the academic literacy experiences, positioning, and literate identities of my first grade focal participants.

Scaffolding for Success and the Fun of First Grade

Ms. Breen had created a classroom rich with scaffolds and regularly positioned all of her students in positive ways that opened up many opportunities for success with academic literacy in first grade. Both Hector and Alejandro viewed themselves as good readers and writers and had strong literate identities that bridged home and school. Although Alejandro took more risks and might have had more confidence in his abilities than Hector, both students enjoyed participating in whole group and small group activities and positioned themselves often as knowers, readers, and writers throughout those literacy events. Both Hector and Alejandro were able to have daily experiences of success with academic literacy tasks because of the numerous scaffolds and resources that were available to them in Ms. Breen's class.

The numerous scaffolds present in Ms. Breen's classroom and instruction meant that students could take on the risk of positioning themselves in positive ways independently and in front of their peers while being confident that they would be provided the support they needed to successfully take on those positions. Even raising one's hand and then not being able to provide an appropriate or correct answer, going into the constraining position of stymied was quickly turned by Ms. Breen into an opportunity to re-position the student, and frequently the entire class, as learners. Indeed, she often positioned herself as a learner through the questions she asked of the class as a whole, inviting all students to join her in this positive reflexive positioning. Ms. Breen's class was an open invitation for positive positioning and a rich setting for the development of strong literate identities.

Peregoy and Boyle (2008) describe a number of effective scaffolds for ELLs that align with the support I witnessed in Ms. Breen's room. According to Peregoy and Boyle, routines not only serve to create "a smoothly functioning classroom" as we saw in Ms. Breen's first grade classroom but they also serve as scaffolds to language and literacy acquisition with language patterns and academic vocabulary choices that remain the same, as we saw in the morning Calendar activity. Additionally, Ms. Breen provided a wide variety of "literacy scaffolds," described by Peregoy and Boyle as "reading and writing activities that provide built-in teacher or peer assistance, permitting students to participate fully at a level that would not be possible without the assistance" (2008, p. 102). We see literacy scaffolds present in the Help Folder, read-alouds that integrate choral responses of repeated text, and the variety of peer and small group activities centered on text creation. During the time I

spent in her classroom, a large portion of the front wall was taken up by a massive chart that compared and contrasted elements from each of the four *Pigs* books. This provided support to activities such as the independent work task described in the independent work vignette. Hector, Alejandro, and their peers could refer to the chart to clarify information and differences among the texts and find models of words related to the text.

As I have demonstrated, Ms. Breen's interaction style with students in whole group activities was another type of scaffolding. She explained her way of responding to incorrect answers by describing, "I go back. I don't want to go to another kid because [the first student] isn't learning. If I go to another child, there's no learning involved. If over here, this kid answers it like that, and [the first student] is sitting here like, 'I don't know what was wrong with mine,' that's not fair." Ms. Breen positioned all students as learners and therefore worked to use all answers, including incorrect or incomplete answers, as opportunities to develop students' knowledge and understanding. Her determination that answers should come from students with the support of strategies and scaffolds was recognized by her students, as shown from Hector's assertion that Ms. Breen didn't "give" away answers.

Differentiation, when teachers accommodate learners' various needs, play to learners' strengths, and capitalize on students' differences, also played a role in Ms. Breen's classroom (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Tomlinson, 1999). She constructed weekly spelling tests so that so that students in different reading groups were responsible for different numbers of words. As she gave a spelling test of a total of eight words, some students were only responsible for the first three and stopped the

exam after three words, some students were responsible for the first six, and some students were responsible for all eight. During my time in Ms. Breen's classroom, Hector took spellings tests for three words and Alejandro took spelling test for six words. She also tailored individual questions and tasks within whole group according to students' strengths and needs, explaining, "I try to do that, you know, go towards their strengths. Not necessarily the strength of the kid over here. But their *own* strength."

Both Hector and Alejandro had daily experiences of success with literacy tasks and through Ms. Breen's carefully structured activities, had a reading/language arts experience where work was indistinguishable from fun, or as Alejandro described it, work that was fun. Ms. Breen's regular invitations for students to actively apply their knowledge or to further their understanding through deep engagement in the literacy task were generally in the form of fun activities in which play and learning overlapped. Dramatic interactive read-alouds were intertwined with discussions about genre and critical discussions about "blurb" descriptions on the back of books and the purposes they serve. Students could examine their histories of success by referring to the reading log sticker chart posted just outside the classroom in the hallway or by looking at the Fast Facts progress they had made on their personal Fast Facts rocket ship. In Ms. Breen's first grade, success in day-to-day literacy tasks was achievable and expected by my focal students because they knew that they would be supported in ways that would facilitate their success.

Another resource recognized as valuable to the literacy development of ELLs (Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), 2002; García

& Beltrán, 2003) and which sustained Hector and Alejandro in first grade was their home language. Although the use of Spanish in their classroom was scarce, both students used it as an essential resource at home. Alejandro's experience of learning to read in English was paralleled by a pleasurable experience of being taught to read in Spanish by his father at home. Although he admitted a preference in speaking English, from the comments of his parents, it was clear that he shared rich details about his school days with them in Spanish. They all had plenty of details about me and all of them were well-versed in all of the *Pigs* stories and the ongoing activities around those texts. Hector turned in bilingual homework that included his mother's handwriting in Spanish and his own writing in English, demonstrating that his mother used their shared language to help him to complete his English literacy tasks at home.

A Culture of Learning

Ms. Breen's positioning of students generally sought to invite them to share their knowledge, to think through problems and interesting conundrums, and to take leaps of understanding. She used incorrect responses from students as opportunities to re-position them as learners and to bring in scaffolds to help them make leaps from confusion and not-knowing to knowing and understanding. Wrong answers, as well as right answers, served in Ms. Breen's classroom as gateways to new learning. She positively positioned students as knowers and learners and when they stumbled or needed support she provide scaffolds through questions, gestures, graphics, partners, and texts. As I have discussed, much of her instruction aligned with best practices described in the research on ELL support. Ms. Breen, although a veteran teacher, had not had explicit training on the effective support of ELLs. Ms. Breen's classroom,

142

rich with affordances for Hector and Alejandro, is likely reflective of Hite and Evans'

(2006) assertion that "First-grade teachers may be more versed in making language

comprehensible to all learners. Use of manipulatives and visuals, making language

'comprehensible,' and varying activities are typical of first-grade classrooms" (p.

105). With the support of Ms. Breen, Hector and Alejandro took on positions and

were positioned in ways that led them into deeper engagement in literacy tasks. Ms.

Breen modeled reading, writing, and learning as exciting processes of discovery and

shared her excitement with students.

<center>Positioning and Peers</center>

Peer interaction is held to be a highly beneficial instructional strategy for

ELLs during academic literacy development (Gersten & Baker, 2000; Hernández,

2005). In Ms. Breen's class, peer interaction also usually led to positive positioning of

my focal students by their peers and deeper engagement in literacy tasks, as seen in

the pair-work examples with both Alejandro and Hector. In the whole-group/pair-

work vignette, the partners of both my focal students served as co-thinkers and co-

writers as they worked together to identify key events in the *Pigs* stories and

articulate those events in written text. Both Alejandro and Hector created work in that

task that was stronger than text they might have authored alone. Carlos provided

grammatical and critical support to Alejandro while Oliver served as a spelling team-

member of Hector, going over to Ms. Breen as the spokesperson for their joint

strategic appeal on the "-ing" spelling.

On the other hand, we witnessed the difficult negotiation Alejandro worked

through when he was positioned as a not-knower by Toby and his cohorts during the

small group/game literacy event. However, Alejandro was successful in negotiating positive positioning and claiming his right as a knower because he persisted against Toby's efforts to position him in a way that would constrain his engagement in the literacy event. He used his confidence in his own knowledge in the task (and his physical strength) to re-position himself as a knower and show Ms. Breen and his group members that he knew the answer by raising his hand. His strong literate identity provided him with the confidence and motivation to prove that he was as much, if not more, of a knower than Toby and the other group members. Rather than turning out to be an incident of positioning which constrained Alejandro's deeper access in the literacy event, the positioning/re-positioning battle with Toby turned out to be supporting evidence that Alejandro's positioning as a knower was justified, perhaps providing a bolster to Alejandro's literate identity.

<div align="center">Defining Success in First Grade</div>

In first grade, at first glance, Alejandro may seem to be a more successful student than Hector. He was quick and confident with his answers, polite, and curious. Hector was also polite, eager to learn, and delighted to be in Ms. Breen's class. Both students regularly experienced success with academic literacy tasks at school, although Hector benefitted more from scaffolding. Ms. Breen's positive positioning of her students and the scaffolded structure of her classroom encouraged her students to in turn position themselves in positive ways and take risks during academic literacy events, usually experiencing success. Over the course of my observations, both boys had some days when they raised their hand frequently and some days where they sat back and watched the action of whole group activity, not

speaking often, but clearly engaged in the lesson as demonstrated by their body language and non-verbal reactions to classroom happenings. When given an independent task to do, Hector immediately got down to work, sometimes consulting his Help Folder before he began to write whereas Alejandro was occasionally apt to be social at his desk or to agonize over the content of what he would do for the assignment for a few minutes before he began his work.

Both students frequently positioned themselves and were positioned as readers, writers, knowers, and learners, and both students had strong literate identities and beliefs in their own abilities as readers and writers. The instructional culture of Ms. Breen's classroom supported Alejandro and Hector in their daily success with classroom activities through her many forms of scaffolding including careful questioning, help folders, and differentiated support. Her scaffolding complemented and was balanced by the plethora of challenging activities she provided that constantly positioned her students in ways that led to deeper engagement. Alejandro and Hector were both successful in their day to day activities in Mrs. Breen's reading/language arts class because Ms. Breen's instruction created the conditions for such success.

However, in considering what it means to be successful in first grade at Walnut Springs Elementary School, I must point out that a student's successes in the quotidian tasks of first grade are not how student success is ultimately measured in their school experience, even in first grade. First grade is preparation for the rest of students' academic years and therefore the teachers' and school's definition of success in first grade is not limited to a student's daily performance in the first grade

classroom but on how that performance is likely to play out in the exponentially less-scaffolded and more challenging grade levels that will follow year after year. Hector's particular strengths in math and music, in tasks according to Ms. Breen "where you don't have to read" are not enough to ultimately identify him as a successful student in the eyes of his teachers and the school and district administration. In first grade, successful students were those whose performance and ability to completely literacy tasks in first grade not only with success, but with a high degree of independence, indicated that they would continue to do well in academic years to come.

As Ms. Francis noted, "Reading is a struggle for Hector. Reading and writing is a struggle for him." Given Hector's ongoing need for scaffolding and support with reading and writing tasks, Ms. Breen expressed concern that "He's just going to fall, fall on his face" in his next years in school and he will "be swept under the carpet unless…the teachers are really aware of what's going on,", adding "I worry about little Hector." Because success in first grade must be defined by how students' current performance may predict their future achievement, Hector, despite his strengths, is not identified as successful in the larger school context. It is not enough to be successful in the safe context of the first grade classroom, which is replete with scaffolds and resources, success must be independent and predictive of future success in contexts with fewer resources and scaffolds.

On the other hand, Alejandro is identified as successful by his teachers because as Ms. Francis says, "You name it, he's got it – reading, writing, math, science." Alejandro is the renaissance man of first grade. According to Ms. Breen, his

only "drawback" is his sociability and its interference with his on-task behavior. For Ms. Francis, Alejandro's only weakness is his overconfidence. Reading and writing are not difficult for Alejandro. If his achievement in first grade continues into future school experiences, as Ms. Breen notes, "This one will be fine." Alejandro's predictive success in future grades and independent reading and writing tasks identifies him by his teachers and school as a first grade success.

Even in first grade, students' literacy trajectories may be considered and projected. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Juel (1988) found that many first graders who found reading challenging still had difficulties with reading tasks in fourth grade. Alejandro's ability to complete academic literacy tasks successfully with a high degree of independence and Hector's regular use of scaffolding and his need for explicit support for the teacher potentially place them on different paths for literacy achievement even as they are developing their literate identities. In the safe and supportive environment of Ms. Breen's classroom, where positive positioning flourishes and success is a scaffold away, Alejandro and Hector are developing strong literate identities that bridge home and school. However, as the first grade teachers pointed out, such rich scaffolds will probably not be available to students as they move through the grade levels of school.

What does this portend for Hector in second, third, fourth grade, if he continues to benefit from scaffolds to reach success in literacy tasks but resources such as the Help Folder or positive positioning from his teachers hand-in-hand with explicit support are not available? Given the limited data collection period for this study, I was not able to follow Hector and Alejandro over the course of their school

experience. However, my fourth grade discoveries and findings have implications that may shed light on how ELLs' experiences with academic literacy and their positioning in academic literacy events may differ as students move through elementary school.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my first grade participants, Hector and Alejandro, and shared their academic literacy experiences through vignettes, analyzing those literacy events through positioning. I also examined the ways that students' literate identities mediated their positioning during literacy events, using insights gathered from student and teacher interviews. Both Hector and Alejandro bring a variety of strengths to the classroom and are successful using a variety of strategies and resources, including their home language of Spanish. However, success in first grade is inextricably linked to the ways that students' first grade performance, reliance upon supports, and challenges may predict performance in the future when academic literacy tasks are more difficult and resources and scaffolds are fewer. In the next chapter, I introduce my fourth grade participants, share their literacy experiences through vignettes, and consider ways that their literate identities inform their positioning and engagement in literacy events and in turn may be re-constructed by their positioning.

Chapter 5 : Reading Is Everything in Fourth Grade

"Reading is everything, whatever you want to do, you have to read." (Mrs. Greene speaking to her class, Field Notes, May 25, 2010)

"And now we have to read this." (Antonio, fourth-grader)

"You have to find it in books or magazines." (Sebastian, fourth-grader)

Introduction to Fourth Grade

In this chapter, we move to the fourth grade classroom of Mrs. Greene. Within the physical space of Walnut Springs Elementary School, this classroom was far from the first grade classroom of Ms. Breen. Whereas Alejandro and Hector spent the majority of their instructional day in a ground floor room with windows open to a generally sunny courtyard, my fourth grade participants, Sebastian and Antonio, could be found at the opposite end of the school on the second floor. Fourth grade at Walnut Springs was departmentalized, that is, students travelled to different teachers for reading/language arts, mathematics, and social studies. The three fourth grade classrooms were next to each other and all three classes of fourth graders cycled through Mrs. Greene's classroom for reading/language arts.

Upon entering Mrs. Greene's classroom, the first thing one noticed is that it was dimmer than the first grade classroom because the blinds were generally closed to outside distractions. Like the first grade classroom, the walls and bulletin boards were rich with charts and resources to help students, including information on genres of text, text features, and content vocabulary. Unlike the first grade classroom, when I began my observations in Mrs. Greene's room most of these charts were covered with newspapers. Mrs. Greene explained that the window between mandated standardized

testing periods was small and that most of the charts were required to be covered during district and state testing situations. Because the testing sessions were scheduled close together, she found that it would be a waste of time to remove the newspapers from the charts only to have to put them up again. Four days of testing in the intermediate grades took place during my third week at Walnut Springs, after which I helped Mrs. Greene take down the newspapers for the final time of that school year. As I shared in Chapter 3, testing and the pressure of testing was part of the larger discourse of the school, with its effects strongly felt in the priorities and concerns of the fourth and sixth grade teachers of my study, as well as by my fourth and sixth grade students.

Testing and test scores were constantly on the mind of teachers and students at the third grade level and above, as well as administrators, at Walnut Springs. The culture of testing was palpable during my walks down the fourth grade hallway, where the sixth grade classrooms were also located. During transitions between classrooms and before and after the instructional day, I overheard conversations that seemed to always include discussions of previous and upcoming tests, and scores that had been reported and considered as well as scores that had not yet been released. The pressure of testing was not limited to the teachers. As I will discuss later in this chapter, students received their standardized test scores and were asked to make informal action plans to improve their scores the next time. In my interview with her, Mrs. Greene expressed concern that "The kids might get testing fatigue, especially in the last part of the school year" when the state assessment to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind was administered, followed by the Scholastic Reading

Inventory (SRI) and a benchmark quarterly test aligned with the state assessment. When she introduced students to their content topic for the day, she often explained the topic's importance in connection to its likelihood of appearing on an upcoming test.

For this study, an additional difference between first grade and fourth grade was that my participants were in different fourth grade classes. Although they both had Mrs. Greene for this study, they were in her room at different times of the day. Whereas in Chapter 5 many of my literacy event vignettes included both participants, my fourth grade participants appear "solo" in their literacy events. For the purposes of organization and clarity in this chapter, I share and discuss the literacy experiences of each participant separately, first sharing the case of Sebastian, then the story of Antonio. I conclude this chapter with analyses that compare and contrast the literacy experiences of Sebastian and Antonio. However, before joining Sebastian's story, let us first discover more about Mrs. Greene's reading/language arts class.

Mrs. Greene's Fourth Grade Reading/Language Arts Classroom

Mrs. Greene ran her reading/language arts blocks on a very regular routine, with activities, transitions, and procedures that were well-established. Indeed, when I first saw her students transition to new activities without prompting from her, I was confused until I realized that every day she posted the tasks for each of the three reading groups in the reading block on the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. Students could look up at the board and see when their reading group would go to the carpet to meet with Mrs. Green, and which tasks they were expected to complete during the two rotations they were to work "independently." I highlight the word

independently because although students completed individual worksheets and individual reading logs, they frequently used their table group peers as resources in a variety of ways, as I show in this chapter. The table groups were configured when feasible according to reading group, although because there were four table groups and three reading groups, this was not always the case. However, both of my participants, Sebastian and Antonio, had their desks with a table group made up solely of members of their reading groups.

A typical instructional reading/language arts class in Mrs. Greene's room began with a whole group activity. During the period of my observations in May and June, Mrs. Greene always used her whole group time as an opportunity to model for students an activity that they were expected to transfer and complete independently using a text or document during their independent time. Examples of such models include completing a timeline and comparing and contrasting using a Venn Diagram. After whole group, Mrs. Greene called for her first scheduled reading group to come to the carpet and directed the other two groups to begin their independent tasks.

In all of my observations of my students in Mrs. Greene's reading groups, she followed the same routine of activities – a routine to which the students were all very clearly accustomed because they often prepared themselves and their materials for the next activity without prompting. I am sharing the details of this routine in order to make the vignettes from the reading groups more comprehensible. In reading group, Mrs. Greene sat at the edge of the carpet on a chair next to a whiteboard easel. First she and the students used cookie sheets on which were magnetic letters to make and break words. For example, she would make the word "jot," and then break it to create

"lot," "job," and "cot." Next, students picked up their pencils and notebooks and drew Elkonin boxes, were told to imagine pennies, and then sounded out words using their imaginary pennies. The next step in the Elkonin box activity was to write the sounds into the boxes. On a whiteboard, Mrs. Greene would write the word into the Elkonin boxes and the students used her model to score their work with a marker. Students who had completed their boxes correctly gave themselves a check with the marker. Students who had made errors revised their work with the marker. Finally, Mrs. Greene concluded the guided reading group by dictating several sentences. Once students had written the sentences, Mrs. Greene wrote a model on the whiteboard and the students either gave themselves a checkmark (for an error-free sentence) or edited their sentences with their marker. On days when I observed both Sebastian and Antonio in their respective guided reading groups, the words and dictations for both groups were the same. Mrs. Greene explained that the reading group activities came from a school initiative, noting that the activities were "needed" and helpful because there were "so many students so far below grade level."

<div align="center">Discovering the Experiences of Sebastian and Antonio</div>

In the next two sections of this chapter, I share and consider the literacy experiences of first Sebastian, then Antonio. This is be followed by a discussion that compares and contrasts their experiences via their positioning and literate identities. I first provide a literacy event that serves as an introduction to the participant. Next, I share vignettes of literacy events from each of the salient reading/language arts sections from Mrs. Greene, including whole group, reading group, and "independent" work because I wish to examine how participants' positioning may change according

to type of literacy event and context or how such positioning may be linked to the context and type of event. Additionally, I want to provide a snapshot of a typical reading/language arts experience for Sebastian and Antonio. A discussion of the participant's positioning and the affordances and constraints created by that positioning and which mediated that literacy event for them follows each vignette.

Sebastian: Rapt in Text

As I demonstrate through the following vignettes, Sebastian was a student enraptured by texts. During whole group, he spent about half the time absorbing whatever document Mrs. Greene had passed out and half the time quietly answering questions posed to him either when he raised his hand or when Mrs. Greene selected students without asking for raised hands. He consistently provided correct responses when he was following the discussion. Often, he was deeply engaged in reading whatever text had been passed out before the discussion and tuned out of the whole group discussion. However, he was frequently "caught" when he was tuned out by Mrs. Green, who was well aware of his "dreaming" as she called it and would choose him to answer a question to monitor whether or not he was reading or paying attention to the discussion. He often found independent work to be exciting because of the cogitations it led him to and he found an enthusiastic discussion partner in one of his table group members.

Sebastian's Experiences of Academic Literacy

Now I share with you an introductory vignette for Sebastian. It begins just as Sebastian's table group is transitioning from a whole class activity to an independent activity. As with first grade, I share the positioning names discussed in Chapter 3 in

154

each vignette, using "(R)" to indicate reflexive self-positioning and "(I)" to indicate

interactive "other"-positioning.

Table 5.1 : Fourth: Sebastian: Introduction

Literacy Event Vignette: Introduction to Sebastian	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Sebastian is sitting at his table group. His desk faces the cubbies, and unless he turns his chair nearly completely around during whole group discussion, he cannot see the teacher. This doesn't seem to bother him as he sits small and self-contained. He is petite for a fourth-grader and he cheerfully swings his legs back and forth as they dangle five inches above the floor. Mrs. Greene is giving the independent work instructions, "So your job today, you have two assignments, text features and then pick the four most important events [from a selection on the sinking of the Titanic in the textbook] and then put them in sequence in the order that they happened." After the teacher has called the first reading group to come and join her at the carpet, Sebastian opens his book and looks at the pictures in the Titanic selection as the other students at his table group engage in an intense discussion on the sixth graders field trip to the middle school they will be attending next year. *Jamie, who sits directly across from Sebastian and is one of his best friends, asks Sebastian, "What page is the Titanic?"* *Sebastian flips back through the book, "It's 83." Jamie returns to the middle school discussion and Sebastian returns to his reading, pausing at some of the larger words and touching them with his finger. He angles the book occasionally to get a fresh perspective on the illustrations.* *After a few minutes, Jamie opens his book and whispers to Sebastian, "I read this book like six times."* *"I have the movie," responds Sebastian.* *They are both perking up with enthusiasm for the topic, and Jamie continues, "I like the part where it sinks – wait – the one part of the ship gets totally wet. You know, the Titanic is real but it's fake when the ship is sinking like this." Jamie holds his hand at an angle.*	Reader (I) Reader (R) Knower (I) Knower (R) Reader (R) Knower (R)	

155

Sebastian disagrees, "It was straight."	Knower (R)	
Carrie on Sebastian's right comments, "They just made it, like, tilted."		
Mrs. Greene calls ominously from her chair on the carpet, "Jamie, who are you talking to?		Distracted (I)
Jamie responds, "Sebastian."		
"Do you have a book?"		
"Yes."		
"Does Sebastian have a book?"		Distracted (I)
"Yes."		
"Then you don't need to talk to each other."		
As soon as Mrs. Greene turns her attention back to the reading group, Sebastian repeats emphatically, "I have the movie."	Knower (R)	
Jamie defends his point, "It doesn't go all the way up when it's sinking; it goes up a little bit."		
Again, Mrs. Greene calls out ominously, "Sebastian, do you depend on Jamie to do your assignment?"		Distracted (I)
During his conversation with Jamie, Sebastian has put his arms on his open book, his chin in his hands. Now he sits up. After a minute, he remarks to Jamie, "It's too cold," referring to an illustration of the sinking ship with people in lifeboats and in the water.	Thinker (R)	
"I would put all my clothes on," replies Jamie, "because it is right now. How do they lower the boats?"	Thinker (I)	
"Like what do you mean?" asks Sebastian, looking back at the book.	Thinker (R)	
"The boats."		
"They already know it because here, like, look. They already lowered everything."	Reader (R)	
"But look, here," Jamie points to the illustration, "somebody's drowning right now, it got to the part where everybody's drowning."		
"No, Jamie." Sebastian is insistent. "In the movie the reason they made the boat sink was they hit an iceberg but they said it was unsinkable."	Knower (R)	
Unable to reach a consensus on the exact moment that the illustration is seeking to portray, they each return to silently reading their respective textbooks, and then onto their task of summarizing the text by listing four main events and an additional list of text features.		

In this vignette, Mrs. Greene positioned all of the students who would not be immediately joining her in reading group on the carpet as readers as she gave them their text-based assignment on the *Titanic* selection in their textbooks. Sebastian immediately took up this position of reader as he opened his book and dug in, even as his table group members began to chat off-topic. When Jamie was ready to enter the literacy event himself, he saw that Sebastian was already reading and used Sebastian's familiarity with the text to get the page number. Several minutes later, the compelling and familiar content of the text drew Jamie and Sebastian into conversation about it, since they were knew about the Titanic sinking through books and the blockbuster movie, which Sebastian owned.

From her perspective leading a reading group on the other side of the classroom, Mrs. Greene interpreted Jamie and Sebastian's conversation as off-task behavior and positioned them as distracted. Generally, "distracted" is a position that may constrain access to deeper engagement in the literacy event. Certainly, from Mrs. Greene's perspective and given her intention of this literacy event, to have students working independently on tasks related to the *Titanic* text, Sebastian and Jamie's conversation was preventing them from fulfilling the demands of the task as she had intended and as she desired. However, as we can see, Sebastian and Jamie's conversation was directly related to the content of the literacy event and their conversation served to clarify their own understanding of the events of the Titanic sinking, including the angle of the ship as it sank, the temperature of the water, and the means for lowering the lifeboats. Even though Mrs. Greene was positioning them as distracted, which constrained their access to the literacy event in the form that she

had intended it to take, their conversation and positions actually opened up their access to the literacy event by bringing them into deeper engagement in the task as they took on the positions of thinker, going beyond the text to imagine the awful reality of the Titanic sinking events, the coldness of the water, the challenge of lowering the lifeboats under difficult circumstances. During this conversation, Sebastian referred to the text and to his background knowledge of the sinking to bolster his assertions, and his positions of knower and reader served as gateways for his deeper engagement in the task.

Sebastian's positioning and engagement as a reader created the affordance for positions that facilitated his deeper engagement in the literacy event. The position I have named as knower, which generally involves the sharing of information via oral language, allowed Sebastian to connect his familiarity with the movie about the Titanic with the text he was encountering in reading/language arts. His previous positions of reader and knower supported his positioning as a thinker, as he considered what the reality of the situation must have been like for people struggling to survive the sinking of the Titanic. These positions unfold throughout his interaction with Jamie. Sebastian's conversations with Jamie during "independent" time typically created the space for positive positioning as the two boys talked their way through the text.

Sebastian's positioning of himself was in contrast to Mrs. Green's positioning of him as "distracted." From her perspective, since Sebastian can be seen to be in unsanctioned conversation with Jamie during time when he is supposed to be silently reading and completing his work, he clearly was not doing his work if he was being

social. Sebastian chose not to accept Mrs. Greene's positioning of him as distracted, as we see that he responded to her initial reprimand by immediately returning to the position of knower with his repetition of the statement, "I have the movie" to Jamie. After Mrs. Greene's second reprimand, he accepted the position of "distracted" briefly through a minute of silence, but then was too enthusiastic about the topic of the sinking of the Titanic to keep his thoughts to himself, commenting to Jamie, "it's too cold" as he referred to the water of the North Atlantic the night of the Titanic sinking. Depending upon the purposes of the literacy event, Sebastian's positions as thinker and knower might be argued to be either affording or constraining access. From her vantage point of her chair in front of her reading group, Mrs. Greene saw his conversation as a constraint to the goal of reading the text and moving immediately into summarizing it and identifying text features. Although I saw that Sebastian was not doing the work of the literacy task as Mrs. Greene had intended him to, I also observed how his side conversations to Jamie were connected to the text and provided a space for him to consider information from the text and think it over.

I selected the previous vignette because it highlights many of the positions that Sebastian frequently took on during my observations of him during his reading/language arts class. His unsanctioned conversation with Jamie about the content of the texts they were assigned to read was typical, as was Mrs. Greene's ongoing positioning of the two students as distracted during time that was intended for silent independent work. The enthusiasm for reading that Sebastian demonstrated during his time with the *Titanic* text was also typical of Sebastian's experience with

reading, both at school and at home. I will share more details about this enthusiasm throughout my discussion of Sebastian's story.

In the next vignette, we see a characteristic example of Ms. Greene's whole group activity. This was always the first literacy event in her reading/language arts routine and she used it to model the activities that students were expected to complete alone during their independent work time.

During this event, we see that in addition to the theoretical positioning that serves as a lens of analysis for this study, Sebastian's *physical* positioning serves to constrain or afford him deeper access to the literacy event. As noted in the previous vignette, Sebastian's desk faced away from the center of the room and toward the cubbies, so that when he was sitting in his chair facing straight ahead, he could not see Mrs. Greene or the majority of his classmates save for three of his table group members. In order to see Mrs. Greene and most of his classmates, Sebastian had to push his chair out of his desk and turn sideways. Because Mrs. Greene often reminded him to sit "properly" his access to engagement in whole class activities was often constrained by not being able to look at Mrs. Greene and the majority of his classmates. This inability to see his teacher and peers seemed to make the texts on his desk, which he could see, even more tantalizing and allowed him to take up the position of reader frequently, even when he was supposed to be paying attention to whole group activities. While the position of reader is generally a positive one, it served to further limit his engagement in the whole group activity unfolding behind him and opened up opportunities for Mrs. Greene to position him as "distracted" and off-task from the whole class activity.

Table 5.2: Fourth: Sebastian: Whole Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Sebastian during Whole Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Sebastian is sitting at his desk as reading/language arts begins. His feet don't touch the floor when he sits in his chair, and he is swinging his feet back and forth.		
Mrs. Greene begins the lesson, asking students questions about the text features of the Scholastic News magazine she has passed out to each student in the class. Sebastian is not looking at the magazine but admiring a handful of exquisitely sharpened pencils. Mrs. Greene notices this and asks,		Personal (R)
"Sebastian, do you have a magazine. Are you looking at it?" Sebastian reluctantly puts his pencils in his desk and takes up the magazine. "Where can I go to find information? Sebastian?"	Reader (I)	Distracted (I)
Sebastian hesitates for a few seconds, then responds, "go to the table of contents."	Reader (R)	
"Go to the table of contents," repeats Mrs. Greene, approvingly. "Now I want everybody to go ahead on page 3."	Reader (I)	
Sebastian turns to page 3 and moves his chair to face sideways so that he can see Mrs. Greene and most of the students in the class. Mrs. Greene continues to ask questions about the text features and information contained in the article. Sebastian does not raise his hand to respond to any of the questions. At first, he watches the other students who are responding to them, but soon he becomes absorbed in the text, head down and lips moving.	Reader (R) Reader (R)	
After several more minutes, Mrs. Greene notices the lack of participation, "Are you reading Sebastian? Are you reading Jamie? What was the question?" Both boys are silent, heads down. "What was the question, Sebastian?" Mrs. Greene's voice is soft and warm, but a weary tone creeps into it.		Distracted (I) Not-Knower (R) Distracted (I)
Sebastian remains silent, head down.		Distracted (I)
"Sebastian, I want you to repeat the question." Silence.		Distracted (I)
"Carrie, can you help him?" Carrie reads the question. After this, Sebastian picks up his pencils again and admires them.		Distracted (I) Personal (R)
Mrs. Greene notices, "Turn around,		

Sebastian, and face forward. Sit properly. You really don't need all those pencils. Can you pick one and put the rest away, cause that's a distraction right there." She gives these instructions in a calm, businesslike voice, not raising it above her normal conversational tone.		Distracted (I)
Sebastian turns his seat into his desk, which means that he now faces the cubbies and is unable to see Mrs. Greene and the rest of the students. Mrs. Greene passes out a new document, which includes a competition schedule for the winter Olympic Games. Sebastian looks over the document and becomes absorbed in reading it. Mrs. Greene directs the students to read the schedule.	Reader (R)	
She notices that Sebastian is intently reading a different page, "Sebastian, you are not even on the right chart. I want you to go ahead and read everything on that chart."	Reader (R)	Distracted (I)
Sebastian begins to read quietly aloud. "No, Sebastian," chides Mrs. Greene softly, leaning over him, "just read it to yourself."	Reader (R/I)	

In this literacy event, we see that Sebastian was engaged in two literacy events simultaneously: a discussion on text features directed by Mrs. Greene and an unsanctioned independent reading of the two documents. Sebastian's positioning in this episode was fluid not only because he was bouncing back and forth between the two literacy events but because his reflexive positioning of himself as a reader during his maverick literacy event was in opposition to Mrs. Greene's simultaneous positioning of him as distracted. This episode contains the literacy event of Sebastian's independent reading nested within Mrs. Green's lesson literacy event of analyzing documents for their text features. During the sanctioned literacy event of text feature analysis, Sebastian positioned himself as a reader by correctly identifying a number of text features. This positive positioning created an affordance, as did Sebastian's physical positioning as he moved his chair to face sideways so that he

was able to see Mrs. Greene and the rest of his class, rather than only Jamie and the cubbies, which was his view when he was seated at his desk.

When the activity began, Sebastian was absorbed in admiring his pencils. Mrs. Greene, aware of Sebastian's tendency to slip into text or to daydream, positioned him as a reader to check on his attention as well as to check his understanding of text features. However, Sebastian soon drifted into the text and began to engage in a "private" literacy event that was at odds with the whole class discussion. Mrs. Greene noticed that his attention had slipped and positioned him as distracted. He was unable to answer her question and was positioned as distracted again by Mrs. Greene as she encouraged him to put his pencils away and sit properly in his seat. She also called in the assistance of Carrie in to "help him." I saw Mrs. Greene use this strategy several times when Sebastian was pulled into the text during whole group discussions and he and Carrie seemed to be quite used to the pattern. Later, Mrs. Greene instructed the class to read part of the Olympic Games document independently but Sebastian had not been paying attention to the oral instructions and began to read the wrong chart, but was set right by Mrs. Greene who noticed that he was reading, but was reading the "wrong" text.

Sebastian seemed to have an almost overpowering urge to immediately read any text that was given to him, including texts that Mrs. Greene intended for whole class discussion. He frequently engaged in "private" literacy events during whole class activities, constraining his access to the whole group discussion around the text. Additionally, his access to whole group literacy events was constrained by his *physical* positioning at his desk and seat. When he was sitting "properly" as directed

by Mrs. Greene, the only student he had a clear view of was Jamie. Given that he was inevitably drawn to any text on his desk, having Sebastian sit in a physical position that precluded him from looking at Mrs. Greene and his classmates and which made the documents on his desk his default panorama created a context that constrained gives him from participation in the whole class literacy event and which made his participation in a "personal" literacy event essentially a foregone conclusion.

In my conversations with Mrs. Greene, I found that her perceptions of Sebastian were mediated by the credibility he had built across the school year with his class work performance. She identified him as a "very focused, self-motivated" successful student. Although Mrs. Greene noted that Sebastian's biggest challenge in reading/language arts was his tendency to be "easily distracted," she added that the fact that his distraction was reading was positive. Describing a whole group lesson, she explained, "I have to come over [to Sebastian] and say, 'Did I say to read now?' but that is a good sign [that he is reading independently, even if it is an inappropriate times]." For Sebastian, his frequent positioning during whole group literacy events may have constrained his access to that event, but it was balanced with access opened to another type of literacy event. Although Sebastian may not always have been engaging in whole group activity, he was continually engaged in some sort of literacy event and while unsanctioned, his alternative engagement did not affect his identity as a successful fourth grader from the perspective of Mrs. Greene. Because Sebastian's off-task, unsanctioned behavior was usually linked to his engagement in a "private" literacy event in which he positioned himself as a reader, in a fourth grade class

where "reading is everything," as Mrs. Greene once told the class, his behavior was

not considered egregious.

In the next literacy event, we see Sebastian in his reading group on the carpet.

As I described earlier, the reading group routine that Mrs. Greene followed was part

of a school-wide movement to support developing literacy.

Table 5.3: Fourth: Sebastian: Reading Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Sebastian in Reading Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Sebastian is sitting with his reading group on the carpet in front of Mrs. Greene, who is sitting in her chair, next to a whiteboard easel. She is holding a cookie tray on which magnetic letters line the sides. Mrs. Greene moves "q" and "u" to the center and then makes a series of words that begin with "q." As she makes each word and then "breaks" it to make another word beginning with "qu" the students chorally read each word, and then write it in their notebooks. Sebastian writes his list in a long column and repeats the words so quietly that Mrs. Greene asks him to speak up. After "making and breaking" a stream of words, including quite, quack, quick, quit, ax, sax, tax, wax, max, mix, fix, zap, and yap, Mrs. Greene instructs the class, "Alright, sound boxes."	Knower (R) Knower (I)	
* All of the students create Elkonin boxes, three boxes linked horizontally, in their notebooks. "Pencils down, ready, listen," declares Mrs. Greene. "Quick. Show our pennies." Sebastian uses his finger to move imaginary pennies into his boxes in quick scrubbing motions, about five times for each sound /qu/, /i/, /ck/. Then Mrs. Green pauses while the students write the sounds into the boxes. Sebastian writes:*	Knower (R) Knower (R)	
<table><tr><td>q</td><td>u</td><td>ick</td></tr></table>		
"I need to hear that," declares Mrs. Greene. Sebastian pushes harder, finger sliding up the pages, saying "/qu/," "/i/," "/ck/." Mrs. Greene asks, "What sound did you hear first?" Sebastian raises his hand and is called upon. "How does it sound?" asks Mrs. Green.	Knower (R) Knower (I)	
* "/qu/."*	Knower (R)	
* "How do you write it?"*	Knower (I)	
* "Q-U."*	Knower (R)	

Mrs. Greene provides a correct model of the Elkonin boxes on her whiteboard: 	qu | i | ck
The students each choose a brightly colored marker from a pile in the center of the carpet. Their regular routine is to make any necessary corrections on their work in the marker. If their work matches the correct model provided after each exercise by the teacher they may give themselves a check. Despite his work not matching the model, Sebastian gives himself a big blue check next to his boxes.	Knower (R)
The teacher repeats the exercise with the word "yip"; Sebastian completes it successfully, rewarding himself with a blue check. His next several sets of boxes all meet the model and he frequently volunteers to answer questions about sounds and spellings. After working through Elkonin boxes exercise for about five minutes, the teacher gives a dictation, "Jack is quick," which Sebastian writes successfully and which matches the model provided on the whiteboard after the students have completed their writing. However, he is less accurate on his next dictation.	Knower(R) Knower (R) Knower (R)

Sebastian's work:	Did rags yip the cat?
Teacher's model:	Did Rags yip at the cat?

Again, however, Sebastian doesn't use his blue marker to write the corrections in on top of his errors. In contrast to the student next to him, who has also failed to capitalize "Rags" and who is frantically writing a massive red "R" on top of her lowercase "r," Sebastian gives himself a big blue checkmark, although he does this furtively, holding his notebook tucked into the fold of his crisscrossed legs and hidden from the view of Mrs. Greene.	Knower (R)
Having finished the guided reading group exercises for the day, Mrs. Greene declares, "Raise your hand if you got everything right!" Sebastian raises his hand and then writes in big blue letters at the top of his notebook page, "100%" and "A++" and "-0."	Knower (R)

As we see in the vignette on Sebastian's reading group literacy event, he consistently positioned himself as a knower throughout this activity, even when he has not written the correct answer, and his position was validated by Mrs. Greene when he provided correct answers both orally and in his notebook. I identified the positioning throughout this literacy event as knower because although the activities involved reading and writing, there was a high level of oral language taking place with every response. Also, "text" of the event was not complex and limited to single words, as well as a few brief sentences at the end.

When I discussed these activities with Sebastian during my visit to him home, he shared with me that the routine of activities in his reading group had become very rote and not very interesting. He admitted some frustration with it, describing "writing words in the sandbox" (as he referred to the Elkonin boxes) as too easy and wishing that the working in reading class would be "more harder." This attitude toward to the rote routine of reading group was helpful in interpreting his positioning as knower even when his work was clearly not correct when compared with Mrs. Greene's model.

Sebastian typically found the work of reading group very easy, and we see him successfully answering lots of Mrs. Greene's questions and getting most of his work correct. Even when Sebastian made a mistake with "quick" in his Elkonin boxes and with one of his dictation sentences, he surreptitiously marked both of those responses as correct with a happy big blue checkmark and did not follow the procedure of editing his mistakes with his marker. He continued to position himself as a knower even when he had clearly made some errors. He was also careful to tilt his

notebook away from Mrs. Greene so that she would not notice this, as she was usually quite quick to catch students who did not edit their errors. His insistence at his own "knowing" was reflective of the strong literate identity and resultant confident beliefs in his ability to succeed with reading and writing tasks. This strong literate identity and confidence were revealed through my interview with him, which I share later. Sebastian found the exercises of small group routine too easy. Minor mistakes in a dictation exercise were not enough of a reason to move him from his position as knower, no matter how temporary such a change in positioning would be. This was further supported by Sebastian's positioning of himself as a knower when he raised his hand as a student who "got everything right" (as Mrs. Greene asked) and topped off his reading work page for that day with "100%   A++   -0."

In my final vignette from Sebastian's reading/language arts experiences, we see him working "independently" at his desk. Again, we see him engaging in an unsanctioned conversation with table group members, especially Jamie, which focuses on the content of the text they are reading and analyzing for Mrs. Greene.

Table 5.4: Fourth: Sebastian: "Independent" Time

Literacy Event Vignette: Sebastian during "Independent" Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Greene has just given Sebastian's table group the instructions to read pages 3, 6, and 7 from their Scholastic News magazines and compare and contrast two articles, including one about the possibility of banning junk food advertisements during children's television shows. They are also supposed to complete a worksheet with information about the solar system and questions about that text. Sebastian, who spent much of the whole group activity that introduced the magazine reading it and discreetly pointing out juicy elements to his table mates, excitedly shows them crossword puzzle as the group erupts into an enthusiastic discussion of the planets.	Reader (R)	

Carrie is clarifying a point about differences in years across the planets, "Oh, when he was 50, right now he will be 95."		
Sebastian clarifies, "It was Saturn."	Reader (R)	
This reminds Jamie, who says a little forlornly, "We don't have rings."		
Sebastian agrees, "Earth doesn't have rings."	Knower (R)	
Solomon at the end of the table group, farthest from Sebastian and Jamie, tries to get into the conversation, "If we lived on Pluto…," but Jamie has turned to Sebastian, "What's the first planet?"	Reader (I)	
"Venus."	Reader (R)	
Jamie checks the paper and corrects his friend, "Mercury, we would have hot…"	Learner (I)	
Sebastian talks over him, "The only planet we could have reached to is Earth and Mars."	Thinker (R)	
"Yeah."		
"If we go to Jupiter?"	Thinker (R)	
Jamie examines the paper and comments, "Is the moon a planet? They said they found a planet."	Thinker (I)	
Sebastian has also gone back to his paper and finds an item on the calendar that sends him shooting straight up in his chair, "We should do this. Jamie! Jamie! June 30 it will be a meteor watch day – a meteor shower!"	Thinker (R)	
Jamie is only mildly impressed. "I want a pass to go to the bathroom," he remarks.		
They both turn back to their magazines, after a moment, Sebastian comments, "On Mars there is a mountain that is 29,000 feet."	Reader (R)	
"Mars has big mountains," notes Jamie, slightly more impressed. They both return to their work.		
Later, Sebastian looks up from his magazine, "Do you think they can change that?" he asks, pointing to the advertisement article.	Thinker (R)	
"No," responds Jamie, "They would have to change everything, all the kid's books? That would take money."	Thinker (I)	
"The world is rich," argues Sebastian.	Thinker (R)	
"Not everybody is rich. Nobody's gonna pay somebody to go, like, find food."	Thinker (I)	
Having reached a respectful impasse, they return to their reading.	Reader (R)	
Later, Carrie comments to Sebastian. "There's only 1% oxygen."		
Sebastian looks up, "On Earth? On Mars. One		

percent. You could only breathe for like three seconds on Mars."	Thinker (R)
"Humans would die," adds Jamie. "They would last three seconds."	
Sebastian, "Three seconds! Like you'd have to..." He sucks in a huge breath and then holding his breath, begins to count on his fingers.	Thinker (R)
Carrie comments, "You'd turn into a balloon."	
Sebastian lets his breath out and draws a compare/contrast graphic organizer in his notebook, labeling one side "compare" and one side "contrast."	Reader (R)
Then he holds his breath again and begins to make tally marks on his notebook paper, one mark for every second, 26 marks in total. Jamie notices this and they hold their breath at the same time, start coughing from laughter, and go again for several more rounds.	Thinker (R)
Sebastian returns to his work on items that require him to interpret charts on the planets. He "place holds" each item with the index finger of his left hand, while he uses his right hand to point to the relevant	Reader (R)
information in the chart. Jamie interrupts him with a question about how to do item three.	Reader (I)
"I already figured that one out. You're supposed to subtract 142 million miles minus 93 million miles."	Reader (R)
Jamie considers this, then as he is working on item three, Sebastian declares, "Number five is hard."	Learner (R)
"What?"	
"Número cinco is hard!" he repeats, more emphatically.	Learner (R)
A few minutes later, Jamie asks, "What did you get on number four?"	Knower (I)
"Forty-nine million."	Knower (R)
"I got 42," responds Jamie.	
Sebastian pauses then reworks the problem, outlining the math in his notebook, and doing the calculations softly aloud in Spanish. When he finishes, he	Learner (R)
comments, "A million is almost all of space – it's bigger than space, it's bigger than Earth. When all the planets come together it's still not bigger than that."	Thinker (R)
Jamie is more practical, "I'm just saying that 45 miles from our school here is Springfield"	
But Sebastian is musing aloud, "Because a million is a lot, you have to go tens hundreds thousand ten thousand a hundred thousand a million. I tried to get to ten thousand, but I was so tired I only got to nine thousand."	Thinker (R)

Jamie, "I got lost in my head." *Sebastian, "It takes you like thirteen minutes to think that."*	Thinker (R)	
They again return to their reading, Sebastian begins to systematically work his way through an item that requires him to order the listed moons of Saturn according to diameter from smallest to largest. He mutters to himself with excitement, "You know, I know all the moons of Saturn!"	Reader (R)	
Jamie asks, "Doesn't this sound funny? Mimas?" Then adds, "What's the smallest?"	Reader (I)	
"Pho-Bee," answers Sebastian [for Phoebe]. The teacher tells the students it's time for lunch and they rush to get into line, even as Sebastian still sits at his desk, quietly considering the moons of Saturn.	Reader (R)	

As demonstrated through the introductory vignette of Sebastian, "independent" work time, when he was dealing with a text and a task on an individual basis but in a context that affords access to his table group peers, was the section of the reading/language arts block about which Sebastian was most enthusiastic. As we saw in Sebastian's introductory vignette, his positioning during "independent" literacy events generally afforded him deep access to engagement in the literacy event and this engagement was furthered through his discussions with his peers, especially Jamie. This pattern is repeated in the final vignette I have provided about Sebastian in which all of his positioning afforded him greater access to the literacy event, although not at all as Mrs. Greene had intended it.

Again we see that Sebastian positioned himself as a reader as he was absorbed by the text during much of his independent time (and had been during the previous whole group activity on the day that the field notes for this vignette were recorded). He also occasionally positioned himself as a knower in comments to his table mates and as a reader when his comments came directly from his understanding of the text

and was validated by them as a knower and a reader in their acceptance of his comments, with an occasional exception. Jamie and Sebastian positioned themselves and each other as thinker as they talked to and over each other about the planets and the solar system, taking up the information from the worksheet and thinking about what it might mean for astronauts, such as Sebastian's comment that only Earth and Mars were reachable via space travel.

This vignette illustrates Sebastian and Jamie's habit of checking in with each other regarding their thoughts about and interpretations of the text, as when Sebastian asked Jamie if eliminating junk food advertisements from children's television shows would be feasible. This pattern was repeated when the students held their breaths to simulate trying to survive in the low oxygen environment of Mars. In these check-ins, Sebastian and Jamie positioned themselves and each other as knowers and thinkers, applying the information of the text in practical ways that made the text more meaningful to them. They serve as scaffolds for each other, not just to complete the task, but to take their understanding of the text to higher levels.

Another scaffold that was demonstrated in this vignette was Sebastian's use (with Jamie) of Spanish as a resource. When Jamie either didn't hear or didn't get Sebastian's comment that "Number five is hard," Sebastian clarified with "*Número cinco* is hard!" Code-switching to Spanish in his side-conversations with Jamie was a strategy that Sebastian often drew upon when immediate clarity and understanding didn't come after assertions or questions in English. As demonstrated in the vignette above, Sebastian also used Spanish as a resource in his private speech, such as when he was working out calculations.

During their discussion of item 3 on their worksheet, Jamie positioned Sebastian as a knower by asking him for advice on how to complete that item. Sebastian accepted that interactive positioning by claiming himself as a knower in his answer "You're supposed to subtract 142 million miles minus 93 million miles." Sebastian also positioned himself as a learner when he comments on the difficulty of item 5. Jamie's divergent answer instigated Sebastian to position himself again as a learner by reworking the problem to check his answer and make sure that he either already had the correct answer or would be able to include the correct answer on his worksheet. Working this calculation again then inspired Sebastian to be a thinker as he pondered the dimensions of the distances he is considering and the vast immensity of such calculations, "A million is almost all of space – it's bigger than space, it's bigger than Earth. When all the planets come together it's still not bigger than that." He finished the lesson delighted as a knower of the moons of Saturn, serving as a resource for Jamie on the smallest moon of Saturn, continuing as a reader even when the other students put away their work and were rushing to get into line for lunch.

In this vignette, we see that the independent/table group context within reading/language arts created the possibility for Sebastian to position himself in a variety of ways that afforded him access to deeper engagement with the literacy event - reader, knower, thinker, and learner. He thrived in this context. Although such a high level of social interaction during "independent" work was not the intention of Mrs. Greene, the students took advantage of their unmonitored freedom during independent work times when Mrs. Greene was engaged on the carpet with a reading group to freely use each other as resources, scaffolds, and sounding boards for their

ideas. The on-topic nature of the conversations described in the above vignette was typical of Sebastian's table group. Although the students occasionally had an off-topic conversation about a social or personal event, the majority of their discussions were related to the text and topic of the lesson.

Finally, it is important to point out Sebastian's use of Spanish in the above vignette. Although Sebastian made most of his verbal remarks in English during my observations of him, he (and Jamie) used Spanish as a resource when a remark in English (by each other, a peer, or Mrs. Greene) wasn't immediately understood. We see this in the above vignette, when Jamie did not comprehend Sebastian's declaration that "number five is hard," Sebastian repeated himself in Spanish. During whole group discussions, Sebastian and Jamie also often had whispered conversations in Spanish about the text or the topic. Additionally, as in the above vignette, Sebastian used Spanish as a resource in private speech, such as when working through mathematics calculations.

Sebastian at Home

Although the Sebastian I met when I visited his house was very much the same as the Sebastian I knew from my observations next to his desk at school, which was not the case for all of my focal students, visiting him at home opened up my picture of him to include a broader panorama. He was still quiet and thoughtful. However, every time I saw him at school he was using either a book, or a document, or a pencil. The first time I saw him at home he was holding a football and broke up the game on his quiet street when he saw me and my interpreter emerging from our cars. Visiting him at home offered me an immediate and fruitful opportunity to

discover more about his out-of-school identities. Carrying his football, he followed us into his house after we had been greeted by his mother, who described herself as a homemaker, and invited into the family living room. His father, a block-layer, had not yet come home from work. When I asked him about books at home, he gestured to a cabinet on the living room floor and his mother informed us that it was "full of books" and he said that he probably had around fifty books in the cabinet alone.

Sebastian had a couple of suggestions for positive change at school that included "more harder" work and books to read and "more minutes in recess." He was most animated in his assertion that for recess, "They just give us like five minutes" and argued his point with his mother in Spanish when she asserted to me, "They like to play so much it must just seem like a shorter time." He insisted quietly that this was not the case, "But when I got out, it was already over. And I wasn't late." Clearly although Sebastian was skilled at being able to sit still and quietly, carefully contained within himself, like other fourth graders he needed to move and play. Indeed, his major frustration with school, next to the rote easiness of some of the activities, was the lack of opportunity to physically move and play. Perhaps his "breathing on Mars" activity with Jamie had been as much of a release valve as an applied consideration of man's inability to survive on Mars.

Sebastian also enjoyed school, especially the opportunity to read and to see his friends. In my member-check with him, he asked me to be sure to note that he enjoyed school sometimes, not absolutely all of the time. Here is his picture of working at school:

Figure 5.1: Self-Portrait: Sebastian at School

As we see in Figure 5.1, Sebastian chose to label the important elements of the

picture, including himself [with his pseudonym inserted by me] as well as the activity

he was doing in the picture, "Writing." When he handed the finished picture to me, he

was careful to point out the smiley face at the top of the picture that showed the he

did enjoy writing at school. In his self-portrait in Figure 5.1 we can see him smiling

after he has completed creating a text, as he sits back in his chair and considers his

accomplishment.

According to Sebastian and his mother, his strong literate identity and skill as a reader extended back to his early childhood, when his mother, who had a beginning proficiency in English, read to him in Spanish. His mother said that when he entered first grade, he was able to read in Spanish and Sebastian added that he was still able to read some Spanish. In describing Sebastian in first grade, his mother said, "When he entered first grade and they gave him the words of frequency, he would just read them three times and get it," adding, "Thank god, they learn quickly, my kids." For Sebastian, reading and achieving in school was a skill that he had been comfortable with from his earlier recollections. His love of reading helped, as demonstrated by his assertion that "when you read the books" school is "easy." Sebastian noted that reading "the books" was not difficult for him, so school itself was not difficult for him. Indeed, in one of his side comments to Jamie one day, Sebastian had shared the information that "I keep putting money in" for a college fund. Sebastian was confident in his strong literate identity and his confidence and ease with school tasks made school "easy" for him and paved the way for his regular positive positioning during academic literacy events, even at times when he was interactively positioned as "distracted" by his teacher.

Both Mrs. Greene and his ESOL teacher, Mrs. Hood, also identified Sebastian as a strong reader and writer. When I first observed Sebastian, Mrs. Greene was eager to hear my interpretations of his engagement in the lesson because she wanted to see if I would be distracted from his strengths by *his* distractedness. As briefly described in my discussion of Sebastian's whole group literacy event, although Mrs. Greene wanted Sebastian to pay more attention to whole group work, she was not

overly concerned about his off-task behavior because it involved reading. As she described it, "What you see from Sebastian, is not actually what is real…sometimes it is like he is dreaming, but then he is a hard worker. And you can see that on his test results."

Sebastian was a reader, he saw himself as a reader and my observations of him and his almost addictive engagement with text aligned with how Mrs. Greene and Mrs. Hood saw him. I opened this chapter with Mrs. Greene's comment that in fourth grade, "reading is everything." Sebastian's abilities and independence as a reader made him, in the eyes of Mrs. Greene and Mrs. Hood, a successful student. Sebastian's test results, as described by Mrs. Greene, made him a successful student in the eyes of the school and the school system.

Sebastian was very quiet in my conversation with him, but very clear about what he did and did not like to do. Although he had a remarkable ability for stillness in the classroom, this was balanced by a rich life of football, soccer, and wrestling in his neighborhood. He informed me (politely) that if he had not promised to talk to me, he'd be out playing football with his friends rather than indoors talking to me on a balmy May night. His love for football is illustrated in his carefully drawn self-portrait of himself at play:

Figure 5.2: Self-Portrait: Sebastian at Play

In Figure 5.2, we can see that he has again carefully labeled the important elements of the drawing, including himself, his brother, and the "NFL" name on the football. I deleted his name and wrote his pseudonym in its place to maintain his original intention for the drawing. He drew himself and his brother in identical uniforms. He spent substantially more time on this drawing, taking care to make the uniforms match in color and to add landscape details of the sun and grass to his drawing. His father came home from work as he was completing this drawing and teased him gently about the attention he was paying to it. However, Sebastian ignored the teasing and focused carefully on his work, wanting to share with me the importance of football to him (and perhaps to remind me of what he was missing by giving part of his evening to me).

Antonio: School as Performance

When you meet Antonio through the following vignettes and discussion, you see that he was full of appeal and eager to please. He was delighted to be a participant in my study and was anxious to show me how hard he worked and how good he could be. Although at first I was concerned that his attitude was because of having the novelty of a "personal researcher," this behavior remained consistent across the six weeks I spent at his school, popping in and out of his reading/language arts classroom. He was a charming, lithe boy who always greeted me with a huge, irrepressible grin and insisted on carrying my chair for me when I shadowed him around Mrs. Greene's room over the course of the reading/language arts block.

Antonio's Experiences of Academic Literacy

Antonio did not find reading and writing to be easy tasks and he approached each activity as something to be gotten through with as little pain and as much speed as possible. His natural curiosity in the information contained in the texts seemed to be submerged under the need to complete the task in a nominal way that would be satisfactory to Mrs. Greene. Among Antonio's salient qualities in his reading/language arts class was his regular need for movement. He regularly took "breaks" to fidget, reach, and point. Indeed, it seemed not so much to me that he *wanted* to move but that he had a regular physical *need* to move that often seemed to connect to his level of interest in and the difficulty of the task he needed to complete. He was not a student who could easily handle hours of sitting quietly at a desk, which unfortunately for him was how fourth grade worked. I use this first vignette to

introduce Antonio. In it, we see him focusing on the appearance of getting through

the literacy task and completing his work.

Table 5.5: Fourth Antonio: Introduction

Literacy Event Vignette: Introduction to Antonio	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Greene has just given the students the task of reading two articles from a Scholastic News magazine and then creating a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the texts. Antonio is sitting with his table group. Very slowly and carefully he copies word-for-word a Venn Diagram comparing Pluto and Earth that the class has just created as a whole group with Mrs. Greene serving as scribe, although copying this information is not essential to the students' assigned independent work. The other students at Antonio's table group have taken out their magazines and have begun to read.		Doer (R)
Yesenia, sitting next to Antonio stage whispers, "Tony! She said we had to read."		Reluctant Reader (I)
Antonio ignores him and finishes copying the text from the Venn Diagram. He turns to me with a smile, "I've put all that there," gesturing to his almost completely filled graphic organizer. Then he waves frantically at the paraprofessional who is standing in front of the board blocking his view, "Ms. Madison! Ms. Madison." After copying everything from the diagram on the board, Antonio picks up his magazine and turns back to me, pointing to the magazine, "And now we have to read this." The other students at his table group have been reading for several minutes.	Reader (R)	Doer (R)
As Antonio reads the article, a feature on the WNBA star Katie Smith titled, "Top of Her Game," he murmurs some of the words out loud. In a few minutes, Antonio looks up and says, "I finished it! The whole thing."	Reader (R)	Doer (R)
I suggest that he read another article, pointing out that the teacher said they are supposed to read two. Jeff, sitting across from Antonio says, "You have to read Make Your Move" [an article about Michelle Obama's efforts to get kids to be physically active and to eat healthily].	Reader (I)	
"All of it?" asks Antonio, looking slightly aghast. "Yep, the whole thing." "This and this?" asks Antonio, running his hand		Reluctant Reader (R) Reluctant

		Reader (R)
over the pages.		
"Yep."		
Antonio picks up the magazine again and begins	Reader (R)	
to read softly and rapidly, running his fingers over the		
sentences and sliding them quickly down the page. After		
a minute he looks up at Jeff "Where are you? Yo – Jeff,		Doer (R)
where are you?" he asks, gesturing to the page.		
Jeff pointing to a paragraph near the end of the		
article, "I already read that."		
Antonio turns to Tania on his left, "Where are		Doer (R)
you right now?" She points to a paragraph about		
halfway through the text.		
"Dang!" says Antonio with feeling, "And I'm		Doer (R)
right here!" he exclaims as he points triumphantly to a		
sentence near the end of the article then looks up at me		
with a grin. In a moment, he slides his finger to the end of	Reader (R)	
the final paragraph. "Whoa! I've never read that much."		
He turns to Tania, "Do your eyes hurt? My eyes hurt.		Doer (R)
I've never read that much."		

As we see in the vignette that introduces Antonio, he was eager to

demonstrate to the other members of his table group, as well as Ms. Madison the

paraprofessional, that he was progressing diligently through all of the tasks assigned

by Mrs. Greene. He was eager to please me, an adult sitting just behind him, by

demonstrating how hard he was working at each of his tasks. Although his position as

reader during the times when he was attending to the text afforded him access into the

literacy event of reading and comparing and contrasting two articles, his engagement

in the literacy event was mediated more often by the positions of performance as a

"doer" that he took up when completing academic tasks. For each task, his objective

was to get it completed as quickly as possible and to make certain that the people

around him were well aware that he was working hard at such tasks and that he had

managed to complete them. This way of being in school served to help Antonio to

succeed in getting through the workday of school by nominally doing his work but it precluded him from thoughtful and deep engagement in academic literacy events.

I use the position of "doer" to identify the stance that Antonio took on of demonstrating that he was *doing* the work or that he has *done* the work. I have chosen this word not only because it highlights what Antonio had come to view as essential to getting through the school day – the "doing" of work, but also because Antonio's experience of literacy events as a performance of doing mirrors some of the findings of Pope (2001), whose work on successful high school students found that they were "doing school," that is "going through the correct motions [rather than] …learning and engaging with the curriculum" (p. 4). Although Pope's work focused on "doing school" as a way of attaining high grades and maintaining exemplary academic achievement, we can extend the concept of "doing school" to the case of Antonio and other ELLs [or students] for whom another type of "doing school" is about surviving academically.

As we see in the vignette, Antonio positioned himself as a doer to a wide audience of peers and adults. Anxious to please me, he turned to me several times to keep me informed of how much he has done, as when he showed me what he has copied from the board, "I've put all that there" and when he got close to finishing the first article with, "And I'm right here!" Clearly, Antonio wanted to be seen as a hard-working student by his table group peers and the adults near him and can be seen engaging in ongoing competition with his peers to complete readings and tasks as quickly, if not more quickly, than they do. He frequently checked in with others to see where they were in completing a task and he concluded this episode by dramatically

sharing how much work he has done, with the declaration, "My eyes hurt. I've never read that much!"

As I mentioned earlier, Antonio seemed to have a need to physically move that connected to his level of interest in and engagement with a task. Many of his gestures and motions may be interpreted in his introductory vignette as outlets for that need as well as means of avoiding or postponing the necessary tasks ahead of him. He postponed the task of reading until well after his table group members had begun to read the required texts and he often took up the position of reluctant reader before figuring out a way to get through literacy tasks, as shown by his horror at realizing that he has to read *two* articles from the Scholastic News magazine, not just *one*.

In the next vignette, I provide a snapshot of Antonio during whole group activity in Mrs. Greene's reading/language arts class. Again we see that Antonio has difficulty sitting still. During whole group activities that involved Mrs. Greene asking lots of questions of students and inviting their answers, Antonio typically did well. He seemed to enjoy participating in discussions and took on stronger positions during teacher-led activities with lower reading and writing demands and more opportunities for oral discussion than independent work. His gregarious personality was suited to academic literacy events that called for oral language and plenty of discussion driven by student responses.

Table 5.6: Fourth: Antonio: Whole Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Antonio in Whole Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Greene has gathered all of the students in the class on the carpet in order to do a read-aloud of a variation on the story of the turtle and the hare. "*What do you think this story is going to be about?*" *Antonio raises his hand and Mrs. Greene gives him the nod to respond.*	Knower (R) Knower (I)	

"I think the story is going to be about the rabbit and the turtle." He is speaking very softly and Mrs. Greene gestures for him to speak more loudly, which he does. "And he's going to be asleep and he tells everything."	Knower (R)	
Antonio settles back on his haunches and Mrs. Greene commences the read aloud. As Mrs. Greene reads aloud, Antonio begins to play with a pencil. The boy in front of him reaches back and tugs on the pencil. "Stop that!" he whispers fiercely to the boy. Mrs. Greene is busy gathering predictions about the next part of the story from other students. After a few minutes, Antonio pokes the tip of the pencil into the back of the boy in front of him. He turns around and the two boys engage in a silent game of pushing each other for the next five minutes as Mrs. Greene continues reading aloud and asking questions of students.	Social (R) Social (R)	
Eventually, she calls on Antonio, "What happened when Turtle tried to do the knee bend, Antonio?"	Knower (R)	
Antonio is silent, just looking back at Mrs. Greene.		Not-Knower (R)
Another student responds, "Disappeared."		
"That's right, disappeared," acknowledges Mrs. Greene. She looks pointedly at Antonio, "That's how I can tell that you are listening."		Distracted (I)
A moment later, Antonio is tapping the boy in front of him to show how he can balance his pencil on his shoe. When the boy is clearly not impressed by this, Antonio becomes absorbed in digging the point of his pencil into the calluses on his palm to see if he can get the pencil to dangle from his hand if he lodges it deeply enough into the hard skin of his palm.		Social (R)
In another five minutes, a timer that Mrs. Greene has set goes off, and she shifts the lesson into a different focus, moving into a discussion of vocabulary words that are related to the story. "What does it mean to frown at someone?"		
Antonio raises his hand, but another student is called upon. The other student doesn't succeed in providing the answer, so Mrs. Greene looks for a second student to respond to the question.	Knower (R)	
Antonio puts his hand back up and is chosen. "Frowning is when somebody's looking at you very	Knower (R/I) Knower (R)	

mad," he declares.		
"Frowning is when somebody's looking at you very mad or angry," replies Mrs. Greene, acknowledging the correctness of Antonio's answer. "Why do you think all the other animals are frowning at Hare?"	Knower (I)	
Antonio raises his hand again.	Reader (R)	
"Antonio, what do you think?"	Reader (I)	
"I think the animals are frowning at him because they think hare might be making another trick on the turtle," he responds.	Reader (R)	
Mrs. Greene continues to lesson and Antonio raises his hand frequently, sometimes being invited again to respond. As the lesson continues, Antonio seems to grow more physically uncomfortable though. He shifts into a crisscross position, then a few minutes later sits back on his haunches, a few minutes later, he is up on his knees. Eventually he stands up just as the teacher asks, "Who can show me how to scan the classroom for their textbook?"	Knower (R) Knower (I)	Personal (R)
He is the only student standing, and Mrs. Greene appears to take his stance as a gesture to answer the question and calls his name.	Knower (I)	
He looks dumbfounded, "Oh? Who me?"		Not-Knower (R)
"I want you to scan the classroom looking for a lost textbook." Antonio looks lost himself, and glances around briefly. "You are showing 'scan' just by standing there?" asks Mrs. Greene, a little disgruntled. Antonio sits down and another student, chosen by the teacher, demonstrates "scan" by running around the classroom, looking in desks for her textbook.	Knower (I)	Not-Knower (I)

As we can see in Antonio's experience of whole group discussion, which took place on the carpet with all the members of the class sitting on the carpet, he frequently positioned himself as a knower. This positive positioning was validated by Mrs. Greene's interactive positioning of him when she called on him and when she repeated his answer, accepting it as the correct one. In a context that offered scaffolded access to text through Mrs. Greene's read-aloud of the turtle and hare variation as well as plenty of speaking opportunities, Antonio engaged in the

academic literacy event eagerly and successfully, often positioning himself as a knower and having that position affirmed through his correct answers and validation by Mrs. Greene. For Antonio, the scaffolded whole group reading experience itself served as an affordance that opens up his opportunities to develop academic literacy because it played to his strengths as a student who enjoyed and was successful at oral discussion, supporting his reflexive positioning in positive ways.

Unfortunately, we also see that Antonio's need to move led to his positioning as distracted. His patterns of positioning reveal that he was not engaged in the discussion for long periods of time as he played with his pencil and his peers. His engagement with the literacy event came in waves. During a wave of "tuning-out," Mrs. Greene deliberately called on Antonio to ask him about Turtle because she noticed his off-task behavior and positioned him as distracted. Antonio's inability to answer the question affirmed her positioning of him, and she emphasized this positioning when she *spoke* to the student who successfully answered the question while *looking* at Antonio, "That's how I can tell that you are listening." However, this implicit scolding did not encourage Antonio to reposition himself positively as a knower at this time, although he did so shortly afterward. Indeed, his positive reflexive positioning as knower seemed inextricably linked during this vignette to his moments of being able to sit still. This inability led him to a difficult moment at the end of this episode. Unable to take being seated on the carpet any more, Antonio stood up just as Mrs. Greene asks for a volunteer to act out the meaning of "scan." Antonio had been focused on his personal need to move and had not been paying attention. Antonio's shock at being asked to respond to a question he had not heard

led to his positioning as a not-knower. Mrs. Greene interpreted his lost look as a poor demonstration of "scan" and positioned him as not-knower as the activity ended.

In my next vignette with Antonio, I share an episode from his reading group with Mrs. Greene. This event took place the same day as the reading group literacy event for Sebastian and as shown, the content of the reading event is the same. As with the whole group literacy event, Antonio takes on stronger positions in this teacher-led activity that also calls for plenty of oral participation by students.

Table 5.7: Fourth: Antonio: Reading Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Antonio in Reading Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
As Mrs. Greene makes and breaks words on the cookie tray with the magnetic letters, Antonio writes down each word, pausing occasionally to fidget or rock in place and chiming in with choral responses of repeating each word aloud. When Mrs. Greene creates "zap," Antonio repeats it and punches the air in front of him for emphasis. Instead of writing the words in a long list as Sebastian did in the previous vignette, he organizes them in columns so that they appear like this on his notebook page: 	quack	sax
quick	tax
quit	fax
	max | | mix	zap
fix	yap | *After the making and breaking words activity is complete, Antonio draws his Elkonin boxes in his notebook. Under his drawing of the boxes, he makes illustrations of his imaginary pennies below each box. When prompted with "quick", he completes the boxes this way:* | q	ui	ck		Knower (R) Knower (R) Thinker (R) Knower (R)	

188

Mrs. Greene provides the model:

qu	i	ck

		Knower (R)

Antonio gives himself a generous check with a bright green marker but Mrs. Greene notices his error. "No, that is incorrect, Antonio. Fix that. What do you have in the first box? Does that make the sound? No. Fix it."

Knower (R)

Learner (I)

Antonio takes his marker and fixes the error in alignment with class procedure, by marking out his errors and writing the correct form with his marker:

Learner (R)

q*u*	ui	~~i~~ck

As Mrs. Greene leads the class through the activity, Antonio occasionally volunteers to report the sound and letter and is called upon several times, reporting correct answers each time. Occasionally he tosses his marker into the air, catching it quickly. On the word "quit," Antonio writes the letters into his boxes without first sliding his imaginary pennies. Mrs. Greene notices and reminds him, "I didn't hear you say anything, Antonio, and you are beginning to write. Push your pennies. I want to hear you." At the reminder, Antonio pushes imaginary pennies into the boxes, saying the sounds aloud and then raising his hand to report both the middle and ending sounds, providing the correct answer when Mrs. Greene calls on him to report the middle sound.

Knower (R)

Knower (R)

Learner (I)

Learner (R)
Knower (R)
Knower (I/R)

During dictation, Antonio is successful with the sentence "Jack is quick." However, he is not as successful with "Did Rags yip at the cat?"

Knower (R)

Antonio's work:	*Did fax yip at the cat.*
Teacher's model:	*Did Rags yip at the cat?*

Antonio acknowledges his error by editing his sentence according to Mrs. Greene's model:

Rags *Did* ~~rags~~ *yip the cat*~~?~~*,*

Learner (R)

He then puts both a checkmark and a minus sign next to his sentence. Mrs. Greene peers at his paper. "Oh, I see

Knower (R)/Learner

189

two green marks on your paper. And you missed punctuation and that is so important. Did you hear how I raised my voice at the end? That is a question."	(R) Learner (I)	
After completing the final sentence of the dictation, "Will Dan quit?" Antonio is so confident in his success that he claps his hands in excitement and shouts "Yes!" in excitement. However, when Mrs. Greene writes up the model on the whiteboard, he moans, "Awwww bleeeeehhh!" as he notices one difference between the two:	Knower (R) Learner (R)	
Mrs. Greene looks over at Antonio's paper, "Did you put a question mark this time, Antonio?"	Learner (I)	
"Yes."	Learner (R)	
"I'm glad that you learned from your mistake."	Learner (I)	

Antonio's work:	Will dan quit?
Teacher's model:	Will Dan quit?

As we saw in Antonio's experience of whole group activity and we see again in this vignette of his reading group experience, the context of a scaffolded interactive activity with opportunities for oral responses supported Antonio's positioning of himself in ways that deepened his engagement in the literacy event, such as knower, thinker, and learner. Being on the carpet seemed to provide him a freedom of movement as he can fidget and "celebrate" successes, such as punching the air on "zap." When I later visited him at his home, Antonio shared with me that this reading group activity was one that he found helpful. He was able to experience many small successes throughout this literacy event. His creativity showed itself during the event, when he positioned himself as a "thinker" by organizing the words into a chart according to their ending sounds or beginning sounds, something I did not observe any other student doing in either his or Sebastian's class. He also brought to life the

"imaginary pennies" for sliding into the Elkonin boxes by drawing them in his notebook.

Unlike Sebastian, who successfully managed to hide his errors from Mrs. Greene and reward himself with "correct answer" checkmarks, Antonio was caught by Mrs. Greene when he marked his Elkonin box analysis of "quick" as correct. This may be due to the credibility that Sebastian had developed in the class as a "successful" student while Antonio was identified by Mrs. Greene as a student about which she had academic concerns. She may have been more aware of Antonio's errors during the reading group than Sebastian's.

In this episode, Antonio frequently positioned himself as knower and was interactively positioned by Mrs. Greene as a knower when he raised his hand and provided correct responses. After he was caught failing to edit his initial error, he acknowledged his other errors, positioning himself as a learner but also rewarding himself a checkmark as a knower simultaneously, giving himself credit for the words he wrote in that dictation which did not contain errors.

In my final literacy event vignette of Antonio, I go back to an episode from his independent work. Although he took on positions such as reader and knower that afford deeper access into the literacy event, just as frequently he positioned himself in ways such as doer and personal that constrained his engagement to a shallow level in which he skimmed the surface of the literacy activity without engaging deeply. This helped him to get through the academic literacy task and meet its demands as quickly as possible.

Table 5.8: Fourth: Antonio: "Independent" Time

Literacy Event Vignette: Antonio during "Independent" Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Greene has just passed out vocabulary worksheets to the students at Antonio's table group for them to complete during independent work time. She has just finished reviewing vocabulary words with the whole class, including an activity of holding up 8 ½ by 11 inch picture cards that illustrate the meaning of the words. She has also provided a paper that includes a list of the words and their definitions.		
As Mrs. Greene calls the first reading group to the carpet, Antonio snatches a pink bracelet from Yesenia on his right, and teases her for half a minute, dangling it just out of her reach. Then he gives it back and looks over at Jeff. "What are we supposed to do right there?"	Reader (R)	Social (R)
Jeff touches the words and boxes on the paper with his pencil, "We're supposed to find the words that go in the boxes." On the worksheet are sheep labeled with the vocabulary words and several synonyms for each of them and boxes that each contain blank lines to include each vocabulary word and its synonyms.		
Antonio begins to write words in the boxes, crossing the words out on the sheep as he puts them in and glancing frequently at Tania's paper on his left. When Tania pauses in her work, he leans over, "That word is naughty." He points to a box where it matches other words, "Do you see?"	Reader (R) Reader (R)	Doer (R)
She finishes the activity before he does, and turns her paper over, aware of his copious glances at her work. He comments, "You finished the back." He turns his paper over and begins the next activity, labeling pictures that illustrate the vocabulary words.	Reader (R)	Doer (R)
Jeff challenges Antonio, "Heads up on number two that you can guess what it is."	Reader (I)	
Antonio reads out loud the caption from under picture number two on the paper, "'He says, 'I'm sorry.'" Antonio pauses then writes "apology" quickly next to the picture. After mulling over the next item, he turns to Yesenia, "Can I see your eraser?" She gives it to him.	Reader (R)	Strategic Borrower (R)
Yesenia asks him, "What is sly?" *"What?" asks Antonio.*	Reader (I)	

192

"Sly?" *"I don't know."* *"But you put it there," Yesenia says gesturing to his paper. It is one of the answers that he evidently borrowed from Tania who is working silently and folding each answer out of sight as she completes it.*	Reader (I)	Not-Knower (R)
Antonio again asks "to see" Yesenia's eraser, and returns it quickly, with "Thanks." He turns to me showing his work, "I finished this and I need this one and this one!" He says this with excitement, demonstrating that he just has part of the back of the paper to complete.		Strategic Borrower (R) Doer (R)
Ms. Madison, the paraprofessional is checking in on students and helping them by holding up a book that shows the same pictures that were on the picture cards and which are labeled with the corresponding vocabulary word. Antonio cranes his neck to see, and exclaims in frustration, "We cannot see! Uhhh!"	Learner (I) Learner (R)	
He borrows a purple pencil sharpener from Yesenia to sharpen one of his several pencils. When she gets stuck on an item, he offers his paper for her to examine. In a few minutes, he again borrows the pencil sharpener. Eventually, he is on the last section of the paper and he asks Jeff, "Hey, did you do this?" He is peering to see where Jeff is on his paper, having noticed that Tania is already finished.		Strategic Borrower (R) Strategic Borrower (R) Doer (R)
Ms. Madison passes out chapter books that are in Ziploc bags, each labeled with the name of a student and containing several books. Mrs. Greene instructs Antonio's table group to move onto reading their books and completing an entry in their reading log. Antonio selects the book <u>*Lightning: It's Electrifying*</u> *by Jennifer A. Dussling, illustrated by Lori Osiecki. He opens his notebook to a fresh page and writes the title of the book at the top, asks Yesenia to borrow her eraser again, and writes, "By Lori Osieki" underneath the title. He opens the book, flips through it for about twenty seconds, then puts it down and begins to write his summary, again asking Yesenia for her eraser. He completes his summary, which reads, "The story is about lightning that makes every were in the world but in the end the world go's back how it's got to be." Finished and satisfied with his work, he relaxes back into his chair.*	Reader (I) Reader (I) Reader (R) Reader (R) Reader (R) Reader (R)	Strategic Borrower (R) Doer (R) Strategic Borrower (R) Doer (R)

In this literacy event, we see that Antonio frequently positioned himself as a doer and as a strategic borrower. Despite having an array of pencils (all equipped with erasers), he borrowed pencil sharpeners and erasers frequently. His regular borrowing seemed to serve as a survival strategy that gave him an opportunity to postpone work and have some physical release. Although he also took on positions of reader and knower, as well as thinker when he used the scaffolding pictures held up by Ms. Madison, his engagement in the literacy event remained at a surface level as he put much of his focus to attending to how quickly he was moving through the assignment and how quickly others were moving through the assignment.

He surreptitiously copied from Tania when he could get a glimpse of her written responses. His position of doer and his shallow engagement in the literacy event are best illustrated through his twenty-second "reading" of the lightning chapter book and his cursory summary of it. He used the position of doer to show that he was working hard and completing his assignments while avoiding the challenge and difficulty that a deeper engagement in the literacy event would require. As shown in this literacy event, Antonio was strategic in his approach to difficulty literacy tasks. His strategies of looking at Tania's paper, frequently borrowing supplies from his table mates, and making a performance of his hard work all helped him to get through the literacy event task in a respectable way that allowed him to nominally meet the demands of the task while avoiding the frustration of doing work that he perceived as being difficult and burdensome.

Antonio at Home

When I met Antonio at his home, he was as charming as he was at school, but much more at ease, confident, happy and eager. He was not fidgety or wiggly as he was at school, although I sat with him at his kitchen table for over an hour. We sat with my interpreter, Antonio's father, and his little brother at a large table in the airy kitchen that he had helped his father, a construction worker, renovate. His mother, a cleaner, was away at work when I visited. I observed very little of the need for physical movement that seemed to be crucial for him during the reading/language arts block.

Whereas the Sebastian that I met at home was very similar to the Sebastian of school, Antonio demonstrated a home literate identity that was in dissonance with his school literate identity. When I asked him to describe the experience of reading, he paused and then said, "a little fun," adding, "I like some that are, that have pictures in it. And I like some that are, that are chapter books." When I asked him to explain why he said a "little" fun, he clarified that he meant books that "has a lot of words in it" so "it's hard to read like that; it has difficult words that I don't know and very hard." He also spoke of moments when the teacher called on him and he had not raised his hand, describing, "It's kind of difficult because I still don't know what. I still have to think what I have to say. I get embarrassed." Through his conversations with me and through the insights his conversations provided for my interpretations of his positioning, Antonio revealed the school literate identity of a striving reader. He had some strengths that supported him during academic literacy tasks, but he also found many difficulties in reading and writing tasks at school. He wanted to continue to

195

grow as a reader and a writer, but he had also developed an aversion to the types of activities at school that always felt hard and unpleasant for him.

On the other hand, when I asked him about reading at home, he described reading about 30 minutes a day to fulfill the task of the reading log, and showed me books that he got on weekly visits to the public library with his mother. These were the books that he read for the reading log, including *Goosebumps* chapter books and several books from a series called *My Weird School*, including *Mrs. Cooney is Loony*. Also, when I administered the reading interest survey, sitting next to him at the table, he frequently read ahead on items, reading them aloud and then answering them enthusiastically. The only other participant who read ahead of me during the reading interest survey was Rosa Maria, a sixth grade participant whose story is shared in Chapter 6. In his home context, Antonio did not avoid opportunities to read, but jumped on them, such as reading the items from the survey to me and picking out choice rhymes from some of his library books to read to me. In discussing the books that he read at home and for pleasure, Antonio sparkled, talking about *Scooby Doo* mysteries and enthusiastically describing the books on drawing that he was using to extend his skills as an artist. He was delighted to be asked to draw two self-portraits for me. His self-portrait of "Antonio at School" can be seen below:

Figure 5.3: Self-Portrait: Antonio at School

In Figure 5.3, we can see Antonio's artistic flair in his sweeping hair that he was careful to include. He chose to show himself reading a book at school and explained his smile by reporting that the book he was reading was his "favorite" book, a *Goosebumps* book, sharing that this is why he was happy to be reading a book at school.

When the reading survey item asked if he was interested in books on art, he responded, "Oh, yeah!" and explained to me that he viewed himself as an artist, describing, "I like to draw and I try to draw everyday and every time I draw I get better and better." I was surprised at this, never having seen him draw anything at school, not even a doodle. However, none of the activities I had observed him working in had ever included drawing as an element, and he always made his goal a correct completion of each literacy task at school. He fidgeted, avoided work,

borrowed numerous items from his table mates across the span of minutes, but he never got so far off-task as to doodle or draw. His home literate identity and his identity as an artist were linked, as he used books from the library to further his skill with drawing.

His identity as an artist emerged across the course of our conversation and was evident when he politely chastised me as I continued to talk to him even as he was working on his second picture, a playground scene that included him playing the left side of the picture as his friends played in the center and on the right. I was remarking on his work as he was concentrating on adding details to his picture and he chided me gently but earnestly, "If you want to be a artist you've got to be concentrating." Here is the picture that he created:

Figure 5.4: Self-Portrait: Antonio at Play

In Figure 5.4 we see Antonio playing on the left. He explained that he is on a device at the park that spins. The sweeping hair that we saw on Antonio in Figure 5.3 is included here, as Antonio and all of his friends share the characteristic playful coiffure. Antonio spent much more time working on this drawing and as I mentioned above, even chided me gently when I continued to talk to him as he was drawing this picture because I was interrupting his concentration as an artist. Unlike his school self-portrait shown in Figure 5.3, this picture includes lots of additional details beyond Antonio himself, including friends, elements of the playground, and the landscape details of clouds and sun that demonstrate Antonio's joy when he was at play.

Although I never observed Antonio using Spanish at school, he code-switched frequently during my conversation with him at his home, especially when he wanted to be clear on a point or describe an element of his home life, such as learning to make tortillas from his mother. He and his father also shared that they sometimes read Spanish together, with Antonio explaining, "I try to [read in Spanish]." Antonio and his little brother also shared that sometimes Antonio read to his little brother on request.

Antonio's reluctance to read at school was interpreted by Mrs. Greene as "not trying enough." She said that he had only turned in one reading log during the school year, so it may be possible that Antonio's assertion to me that he read for 30 minutes every day was another example of his desire to please me, although he did have a substantial pile of library books at his house that gave credibility to his side of the story. Mrs. Greene also said that Antonio was "very capable. He just lacks that

motivation." Mrs. Greene was aware that Antonio "does better during small groups – he responds very well." She described him as doing "high level thinking" during oral discussions "but when you ask him to put it into writing, he's not going to do that," and she added, "When you read the beginning [of something he has started] you're hungry for more, because you can see the good thinking process."

Mrs. Hood interpreted Antonio's reluctance to read and avoidance of deep engagement in literacy tasks as a symptom of not being concerned about school. "He doesn't care," she said. "He doesn't read; he will just mark [on the paper]." She found it difficult to identify his strengths.

Both of Antonio's teachers seem to have regularly positioned him as distracted, and have interpreted his interactions and behavior at school as a lack of motivation and concern for school. They did not see his perspective that reading and writing were difficult painful tasks. Mrs. Greene described a situation when she worked to "scaffold and brainstorm" with him, but noted, "at the end of the day he could really do that by himself but maybe it's the easy way out." Given my observations of Antonio during literacy events, I would assert that his shallow engagement and completion of literacy tasks as performance provided an easier way over the obstacles of reading and creating text than the difficulties he would have to face if he tried to read and write at a deeper level. For Antonio, his shallow engagement in literacy events had become a strategy to get through the school day. For his teachers, it was a sign of his lack of motivation and care about being successful in school.

Disparate Literate Identities

Through their conversations with me at their homes, Sebastian and Antonio provided insights into their literate identities. Sebastian was sure of his capabilities as a reader and writer at school and at home, with a strong literate identity that bridged both contexts. His strong literate identity provided him with the confidence to take on positive positions that afforded opportunities for deeper engagement in literacy events. He was not afraid or avoidant of literacy tasks and his natural curiosity led him into positions of learner and thinker. Sebastian's frequent success with literacy events in turn informed his literate identity, validating and strengthening it. Sebastian's teachers also constructed a strong literate identity of him. His off-task behavior of reading ahead or on a different text during whole class literacy events was easily pardoned by Mrs. Greene because although the behavior itself was unsanctioned and out of sync with the intended literacy event, the behavior itself is the positive one of reading, the most important skill that a fourth-grader needs to have.

On the other hand, Antonio described the difficulties of reading at school and tried to articulate the experience of reading and writing at school for me in a way that would be true without displeasing me, noting that it was a "little" fun, providing an insight into a striving school identity. His positioning during literacy events at school served as strategies for getting through literacy tasks with minimal difficulty and frustration. However, his home literacy practices included regular visits to the library during which he checked out books that were fun and not full of difficult words. He also sometimes read with his father in Spanish at home and occasionally read to his

little brother, a pre-kindergarten student. In opposition to his avoidance of reading at school, Antonio cheerfully read ahead of me when I was administering the reading interest survey to him. He positioned himself as a reader frequently during our conversation, not only during the reading interest survey, but when he gathered his library books to show them to me and read interesting snippets to me. At home it seemed that he experienced success and some pleasure with reading tasks because he was careful to select texts that were entertaining, relevant to his interests, and well-within his reading level, as well as because he was not competing with other students for approbation or approval by his teachers and because each text reading was not accompanied by a writing response task.

<div align="center">The Role of Scaffolding</div>

As with first grade, scaffolding played a vital role in creating contexts for my fourth grade participants to position themselves in positive ways that afforded them deeper access into literacy events. Scaffolding in fourth grade was much more limited than in first grade, which aligns with the increased expectations for students regarding reading and writing abilities and their independence in successfully completing literacy tasks. As noted by Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), "In first grade, the challenge for children is to learn how to read. In fourth grade, and up, it is taken for granted that they are capable – independently and productively – of reading to learn." (p. 207). However, scaffolding was present in the fourth grade classroom of Mrs. Greene, but it was definitely more prevalent in teacher-facilitated activities such as whole group instruction and reading group activities than in the independent reading and writing activities in which students were expected to be able to work on their

own. As demonstrated through the vignettes, Antonio regularly took on more positive positions during these more scaffolded activities, which also included discussion and oral interaction, playing to his strengths as a student. During "independent" literacy events, Sebastian used his conversations with Jamie as a scaffolding resource that provided him with the opportunity to informally assess his answers, as when he was calculating distances between the planets; to consider assertions and facts from texts more deeply, as when they considered the lifeboats and water temperature in the sinking of the Titanic; and as a sounding-board for his own thoughts and contemplations.

<center>Strategic Approaches</center>

As shown through literacy event vignettes that illustrate their experiences, both of my fourth grade participants were strategic in their approaches to completing literacy tasks. Sebastian's strategies included the check-ins with Jamie that he used as scaffolding. The unsanctioned conversations were carefully quiet and often managed to either remain overlooked by Mrs. Greene or softly resumed after they had been noticed and reprimanded. Sebastian was also strategic in maintaining his position of knower throughout reading group activities on the carpet as he carefully hid the errors in his notebook from the view of Mrs. Greene and gave himself credit for perfect answers.

Antonio also used a variety of strategies during reading/language arts. However, whereas Sebastian's strategies served to either help him take on strong positions that led to deeper engagement in literacy events or validate his strong literate identity, Antonio's strategies generally helped him to get through and survive

<center>203</center>

literacy tasks by enabling him to nominally complete them. Antonio's fidgeting, gesturing, and off-task playing gave him an outlet for his physical energy and also gave him opportunities to procrastinate on engagement in literacy tasks. When he did engage in literacy tasks that focused solely on reading and writing and did not include a space for discussion, he was strategic in copying information from Tania, in demonstrating his hard work to his peers and to adults in the classroom, and in limiting his time-on-task by frequently borrowing and making use of his table mates' supplies such as pencil sharpeners and erasers. Antonio's positions of doer and his frequent personal positioning constrained the possibilities for deeper engagement in academic literacy events, especially during "independent" time. He completed tasks of reading and writing as a performance to demonstrate his hard work as a student while managing to avoid the frustration and obstacles that he would encounter in deeper engagement with the literacy event.

Antonio and Sebastian's different approaches to reading mirror previous findings that "successful and 'unsuccessful' ELL readers/writers employ different strategies" (Riches & Genesee, 2006, p. 79). In fact, Jiménez, García, and Pearson (1996) might have been describing Antonio and Sebastian when they wrote that some readers

> seemed to view finish the task as more important than comprehension as the goal for reading. Two of the three less successful Latina/o readers, Celina and Catalina, consistently exclaimed, "I'm done" after reading the last word of a text. In contrast, the successful Latina/o readers continued to question their

comprehension or to mull over their understanding after their first pass

through a text. (p. 104)

Like Celina and Catalina of the Jiménez et al. study, Antonio focused on task

completion more than comprehension. The position of doer that he often took on

engaged him at a surface level of the task. This is in contrast to Sebastian, who like

the "successful" participants of the Jiménez et al. study lingered over text to "mull" it

over.

<div align="center">Spanish as a Resource</div>

As with the first-grade participants in this study, both Sebastian and Antonio

used Spanish as a resource. Sebastian used Spanish as a resource when he was having

difficulty understanding a topic and wanted to check in with Jamie or when he was

having difficulty making information clear to Jamie. Although I did not observe

Antonio using Spanish at school, he made the most use of Spanish out of all of my

participants during my conversation with him at his home, code-switching frequently

as he shared his perspectives with me, my interpreter, his father, and little brother. He

code-switched most frequently when he wanted to be especially clear in describing

something. He also described reading with his father in Spanish at home.

In contrast to the students' particular uses of Spanish as a resource, Spanish

was not used at all as a resource by the teacher. In fact, their bilingualism and

classification as English Language Learners was not a factor in their classroom

instruction beyond their pull-out English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

instruction from Mrs. Hood at a different time of day than the reading/language arts

block. Mrs. Greene shared success stories of previous ESOL students that she had

had, some of whom clearly could be described as newcomers. However, Antonio and Sebastian's high oral levels of proficiency seemed to mask any additional needs for explicit attention to language or scaffolding that they might have as English Language Learners. They blended into the class as regular students who sounded like proficient English speakers.

<div align="center">Defining Success in Fourth Grade</div>

In fourth grade as in first grade, academic literacy was also the primary litmus test for success, as Mrs. Greene has reminded us. However, other factors came into play, especially the need for students to test at a proficient level on the annual state assessment. Teachers felt this need most acutely, and this pressure trickled down to the students. After the results had been released on the final benchmark assessment of the year, Mrs. Greene had all of her students write an action plan on how they would do better on the test next time. Sebastian wrote,

> Test plans: I got proficient because I didn't use lots of my brain or knowledge because I needed to sleep and because I was tired. I plan to study and sleep well so I cannot be tired and sleepy. I will try harder next year.

Although he performed well on the test, Mrs. Greene encouraged him to do even better next time. He attributed his imperfect performance to his sleepiness the day of the test. On the other hand, Antonio wrote,

> What should I do to get Smarter is to study more so I can get idvance 100% and so I can go to the fith Grade and Middel school and high school and I will be a Artest and then I will draw Picher's to my mother and to people so they

can buy my drawing's and I will buy my mother a big house and a car and I

will buy a car to My father too.

Rather than considering ways to do better on the test, he reverted to a description of his strongest skill – drawing. In creating his action plan for future success on the test, Antonio avoided any mention of the reading and writing tasks that were so painful to him and went right to his future plans for success as an artist, a success that he hoped would lead to being able to create a comfortable lifestyle for his parents.

As Mrs. Greene announced to her class and which I quote at the beginning of this chapter, reading, specifically independent reading, was of primary importance in fourth grade. To do well on the test in both math and reading, students had to be able to read independently. Sebastian was successful in the eyes of his teachers and from the perspective of the school and school system because he demonstrated a combination of successful reading and writing in independent unscaffolded situations. Because Sebastian's addiction to text was one that supported his continued development as a reader, his off-task reading was easily pardoned even when it interfered with teacher-directed activities because his off-task behavior was one that could positively influence his continued achievement in academic literacy and on assessments. According to Mrs. Greene, Sebastian was a "hard worker and you can see that on his test results." Despite the fact that Sebastian "doesn't always complete all of his assignments, at least he does try." From Mrs. Greene's perspective, Sebastian's love of reading combined with his effort have constructed his identity as a successful student. His consistent effort and focus have built his credibility as a student with Mrs. Greene and supported her identification of him as a successful

student a strong literate identity. His abstraction and disorganization, off-task behavior, and sometimes spotty completion rate on assignments were minor concerns for Mrs. Greene because "he has shown a lot of progress" in academic literacy. Comparing him to Antonio, she added, "[Sebastian] reads more. He completes more assignments. He responds well to motivation."

Sebastian's identification as a successful student with a positive literate identity was further described Mrs. Hood, his ESOL teacher. She asserted that despite his daydreaming, "He answers all the questions. He gets good grades. He will tell you everything that you expect him to say." Sebastian fit the ideal of a successful student. Mrs. Hoods added, "Sebastian is a quiet boy and a decent boy." For Mrs. Hood, Sebastian had also built credibility as a successful student across the school year so that even though the quality of his work "fluctuate[d]" and he sometimes wrote responses "that [made] no sense" such events are forgivable in light of his identity as an academically literate, motivated, and independent student.

Unfortunately for Antonio, his frequent position of "doer" had not served him to build credibility as a successful student even though he often took up this position during independent reading and writing tasks in order to demonstrate his diligence in attending to the task. According to Mrs. Greene, in contrast to Sebastian, Antonio "just lacks that motivation." Antonio's strategy of just "doing" assignments was recognized by Mrs. Greene who noted, "He is not working at his full potential. [On tests] instead of reading the full passage he will just guess." Mrs. Greene recognized the possibilities in Antonio, "He will tell me things that really make sense and you can see high level thinking" but "when you ask him to put it into writing he's not

going to do that." Antonio's abilities were not in question for Mrs. Greene. "You can tell that he knows what he's talking about. He's good at reasoning," she commented. In fourth grade, academic literacy was a prerequisite for success but motivation, which was not a factor in the first grade context of this study because all students demonstrated motivation regularly, was also a necessity, as was good on-task behavior or relevant off-task behavior. Like the definition of success in first grade, Sebastian can also be described as a successful student in the context of the school because given his current performance, Mrs. Greene believed he "will be okay in fifth grade." However, "Antonio, I worry about him in fifth grade, not because of his work, but because he's not trying. If he was trying he will be *successful.*"

Unfortunately for Antonio, rather than building credibility as a successful student in his pull-out class with Mrs. Hood, his constant position of "doer" and his interactions with other students led to the construction of a striving academic identity. Although I did not observe Mrs. Hood's pull-out ESOL class, she described his test-taking as he "just didn't pay attention and bubbled what he felt like," and noted that he had a similar approach to everyday tasks. Antonio's position of "doer" was interpreted by Mrs. Hood to mean that "he doesn't care" about doing well in school and that he is "lazy" in his approach to work. As Mrs. Hood notes, "He wants to have all the fun but he doesn't want to work." For Mrs. Hood, motivation was also key to success in the fourth grade. According to her, "To this day Antonio hasn't done anything to prove that he's trying" and his strengths were "probably hiding in there."

In fourth grade, like first grade, independent reading and writing abilities as well as student's likely success going forward into upper grade levels are criteria for

determining current success. Students' strengths beyond reading and writing, such as Antonio's skill for drawing or Sebastian's abilities with football, were not useful in the fourth grade nor were they connected to students' learning and academic literacy development. The pressure of quickly getting students to a proficient and independent level of reading and writing was the main force behind the curriculum and Mrs. Greene's implementation of it. The need to be independent readers and writers with limited scaffolding supplied in the instruction pushed Antonio to have a literate identity that was split between a striving school literate identity and a strong home literate identity and to use survival strategies that could help him get through the challenging reading and writing tasks of school. Sebastian's strong literate identity that bridged home and school and gave him confidence to position himself in ways that engaged him more deeply in literacy events and fed his natural curiosity also fed and was fed by his experiences with daily success in all of the literacy events in Mrs. Greene's classroom.

Five years into their schooling experiences, Antonio and Sebastian already seem to be on very different literacy trajectories. Sebastian's strong literate identity that bridges home and school supports him in taking on positive positions during academic literacy tasks. In turn, his regular success with those tasks validate his literate identity. Additionally, Sebastian has built a credibility with his teachers through his efforts and his love of reading. He has entered a cycle of reading engagement that can be described as "reading various materials, enjoyment of reading, and [the] use of various learning strategies" that has been shown to both be a consequence as well as a cause of higher reading skills (Cummins, 2011, p. 8).

On the other hand, although Antonio reads at home for personal pleasure, he would avoid academic literacy tasks at school that demand reading and writing work. His conversation and his positioning reveal a striving literate identity. Because he wants to avoid the pain of difficult literacy tasks, he positions himself in ways that lead to shallow engagement but support getting through the task as quickly and easily as possible. As I spent time with Antonio, I thought of Hector in first grade, wondering and worrying that Hector's future experiences with academic literacy tasks and the increasingly limited scaffolding he would encounter would push him to develop strategies that took him through literacy events without leading him into them. As my time with Antonio came to a close, I wondered about the possibilities that his patterns of positioning, his striving literate identity, and the literacy trajectory he seemed to be on could shift and be re-constructed. As I will discuss in Chapter 6, my experiences in sixth grade gave me hope for the adjustment of academic literacy trajectories that seemed to be on a path of concern.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my fourth grade participants, Sebastian and Antonio, and shared their literacy experiences through vignettes, analyzing those literacy experiences through positioning. I also examined the ways that students' literate identities informed their positioning during literacy events and mediated their levels of engagement within those literacy events. Although Sebastian had a literate identity that bridged home and school contexts, Antonio's school and home literate identities were dissonant. His conversations with me and my observations of him shed light on a striving school literate identity where many of his positions were taken

up to strategically get him through the work of school. On the other hand, Antonio had a positive home literate identity where his identity of an artist could be developed through resource books and where he could select books relevant to his interests and his reading level without having to complete accompanying written tasks. Additionally, I found that success in fourth grade was linked to students' abilities to complete reading and writing tasks independently, the ways in which their current performance predicted future academic success, their perceived motivational level, and their behavior. In Chapter 6, I introduce my sixth grade participants, share their literacy experiences through vignettes as well, and continue to consider ways that students' literate identities may inform their positioning and engagement in academic literacy events.

Chapter 6 : Being Who You Are Is Important in Sixth Grade

> "I want to reach all of them; you want to reach all of them, but it's unfortunate that it takes everything you have. And I still want to give everything. I still think I have more to give." (Mr. Snyder, sixth grade reading/language arts teacher)

> "I just be myself. I don't really know, cause actually I just be myself." (Ingrid, sixth grade student)

> "I be shy to be saying things. There's a lot of kids staring at me." (Rosa Maria, sixth grade student)

> "She doesn't know that she's actually capable of doing better if there isn't a teacher stimulating and challenging her." (Mrs. Bennett, sixth grade ESOL co-teacher)

Introduction to Sixth Grade

In this chapter, we move from fourth grade across the hall to the sixth grade classroom of Mr. Snyder. Mr. Snyder's classroom was a sunny room where, as in my two previous focal classrooms, students sat in table groups. Like the fourth grade classroom of Mrs. Greene, Mr. Snyder's classroom was located on a second floor hallway that was often the location of information conversation about upcoming and previous tests. Also, my sixth grade students experienced departmentalized teaching, moving along the hallway to different classrooms for math, social studies, and to Mr. Snyder's room for reading/language arts.

Mr. Snyder's Sixth Grade Reading/Language Arts Classroom

Mr. Snyder was the reading/language arts teacher for all of the sixth grade students. In his class, there was always a full agenda of activities for his students, and during my time in his classroom he and his students were working on reading/writing projects that built upon each other. The two instructional units I observed in his

classroom in May and June began with read-alouds by the teacher, transitioned into group or independent readings by students, moved into graphic organizer creation by the students, and then into final extended writing projects by the students. One of the instructional units I observed was the *Three Little Pigs* Book of the Month project that was going on school-wide and that has been mentioned throughout Chapters3, 4 and 5. I also saw several days of a Multicultural Cinderella unit that culminated in students authoring their own Cinderella tales.

Mr. Snyder's classroom was unique among my focal classrooms because rather than receiving pull-out English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services as Alejandro and Hector did with Ms. Francis in first grade and Sebastian and Antonio did with Ms. Hood in fourth grade, the sixth grade English Language Learners (ELLs) received their ESOL services through a co-teaching model. Mrs. Bennett, who also served as the ESOL department chairperson for Walnut Springs Elementary School, worked closely with Mr. Snyder when possible to provide a shared co-teaching instructional model for all three sections of sixth grade reading/language arts. I say "when possible" because Mrs. Bennett was frequently "pulled" from her ESOL time in order to provide other support throughout the school. During my time in Mr. Snyder's room, Mrs. Bennett was frequently out of the classroom giving make-up exams for the fourth quarter assessments to students who had missed one or more days of the multi-day standardized fourth quarter assessment. However, when Mrs. Bennett was present, she and Mr. Snyder shared the floor equally in the classroom, often switching off to lead activities, and frequently even jumping in when the other was leading. The jumping in seemed coordinated – Mrs.

Bennett and Mr. Snyder had been co-teaching for the entire year and seemed to be able to read each other's body language about when to step-in and step-out of leading the class

For all of my time in Mr. Snyder's classroom, the reading/language arts block generally began with a whole group teacher led activity, and then usually segued into activities that students completed as table group members. Frequently, this was followed by activities students were to complete independently. Occasionally, when the students had embarked on their final writing project, the whole group activity transitioned immediately into independent work so that they could continue to work on a writing project begun on a previous day. Although guided reading groups were not being implemented during my time in sixth grade, I had observed them earlier in the year during my piloting observations. According to Mrs. Bennett, they were discontinued after the state assessment administration in the spring, during the final push to the end of the year and sixth grade promotion to middle school.

In the next part of this chapter, I provide and analyze the literacy experiences of my focal students by highlighting literacy events from activities that were typical to Mr. Snyder's reading/language arts block. These literacy events were from different days, but their chronology is representative of how such events unfolded across the class time in Mr. Snyder's room. Also, I am providing a window into literacy events through the vignettes not simply to provide a chronology of normal events, but because my focal students' positioning of themselves was often consistent across contexts, i.e. the types of literacy events.

Discovering the Experiences of Rosa Maria and Ingrid

In the next two sections of this chapter, I share and consider the literacy experiences of first Ingrid, then Rosa Maria. This is be followed by a discussion that compares and contrasts their experiences via their positioning and literate identities. I share vignettes of literacy events from each of the salient reading/language arts sections from Mrs. Greene, including whole group, table group, and "independent" work because I wish to examine how participants' positioning may differ according to type of literacy event and context or how such positioning may be linked to the context and type of event. A discussion of each focal student's positioning and the affordances and constraints for access to the academic literacy event and engagement in that event created by that positioning and which mediated that literacy event for them follows each vignette. In the case of Rosa Maria, I have included two additional vignettes because they provided significant windows into her developing story.

Ingrid: Being Herself Is Who She Is

Ingrid had Mr. Snyder as her homeroom teacher as well as her reading/language arts teacher. She began her day with him in homeroom, then transitioned into reading/language arts with him before moving down the hallway for math, and then social studies with the other sixth grade teachers. Ingrid was a quiet student with delicate features and long dark hair, which she often tucked back behind her ears before entering into a literacy task. She wore purple-framed glasses, which gave her a quirkily studious look, and she spent most of the reading/language arts block tranquilly tucked into her chair, small black-booted feet tucked under her.

Ingrid's Experiences of Academic Literacy

In my first literacy event vignette with Ingrid, we see her in her typical stillness of whole group. She was generally very quiet during whole group activities, participating only with her eyes and her body language. As I discuss, her conversation with me at home was essential in discovering how to identify her self-positioning during such episodes of stillness.

Table 6.1: Sixth: Ingrid: Whole Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Ingrid during Whole Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Bennett is standing next to a whiteboard easel on which she has written a paragraph about tomorrow's sixth grade field trip to an amusement park. The paragraph contains many errors in spelling and writing conventions. *Mrs. Bennett announces, "We need to edit this. We'll have people go up and fix some of those mistakes." Students raise their hand to volunteer to go up to the whiteboard and make changes to fix the "mistakes" in the paragraph.* *Ingrid sits quietly at her desk, with her hands crossed on her chest. She is watching the activity, but does not raise her hand at all. A few minutes later, her stillness is broken only when she moves her hands to her lap. Twenty-five minutes later, Mr. Snyder brings the activity to a close and transitions into the next phase of the lesson.*	Writer (I) Learner (R)	

Ingrid did not participate orally in whole group activities. Although she chose not to raise her hand during this literacy event, she did not position herself as disinterested. She sat very quietly, as shown in the above vignette, always watching the teacher, her eyes following each turn in the discussion, not fidgeting, writing notes, or rummaging in her desk. She had a quality of silence and serenity about her. In this vignette, Mrs. Bennett positioned the class as a whole as writers, inviting students to volunteer to edit "mistakes" in the paragraph she had written ahead of

217

time on the whiteboard easel. Through her focused attention on the activity, watching closely, although not orally participating, Ingrid positioned herself as a learner, eyes not straying away from the teacher. She preferred to remain silent, but her eye contact with the teacher and her air of focused attention showed that she was engaged in the lesson, however silently. Given the fact that Ingrid did not speak at all during this literacy event, I asked her about her silence during whole group activities during my conversation with her at her home. She shared that she learned from watching the whole group activity but simply preferred not to participate, nor did she feel any pressure to do so. It is because of her response that I was confident in interpreting her positioning as that of a learner.

This watchful tranquility was so typical of Ingrid in whole group activities that it was remarked upon by Mrs. Bennett in my conversation with her. Speaking of Ingrid's demeanor during whole group discussion and teacher lectures, she noted, "You don't know if she's bored to death or not, because she will not show. But she certainly can stay with you, no matter what, even though it's the most boring thing. Probably she has this sense of 'That's what you do in school and I'll do it.' And it's paying off. I mean, she's staying with you in the sense that she's really following, she's really listening, it's not just like she's pretending to listen." In her description of Ingrid, Mrs. Bennett interpreted Ingrid's lack of oral participation in whole group activities not as a lack of engagement or interest, but simply as part of how Ingrid approached school. She described Ingrid as attentive and engaged in the activity through her body language, which spoke of focus and attention.

As we see throughout this chapter, both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett point out the ways that Ingrid personifies the picture of an ideal student. Ingrid's position of the "good" student is validated frequently by Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett through both their positioning of her during classroom activities, such as when Mr. Snyder sees her as a student capable of taking up a challenge. The literate identity of Ingrid constructed by her reading/language arts teachers is that of a successful student, an identity which is regularly validated by Ingrid's positive positioning and success with literacy tasks.

In the next literacy event vignette, we see a snapshot of Ingrid during table group work. The literacy task of the students is to continue to work on and complete a graphic organizer comparing and contrasting the *Pigs* books by referring directly to the text of the books. As the students encountered and re-encountered each of the four *Pigs* books across the course of the Book of the Month activities, they added to their graphic organizers. In this vignette, the section of the graphic organizer which Ingrid first addresses is the topic of "repeated lines" that are found throughout the text, such as "Not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin" from the traditional tale of *The Three Little Pigs*.

Table 6.2: Sixth: Ingrid: Table Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Ingrid during Table Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Sixth: LE 2: Ingrid: Table Group Work *It is 9 a.m. and the classroom still holds the fresh morning sleepiness of 26 sixth-graders. Ingrid sits at a desk that is at the bottom of a cluster of five, her desk faces the front of the room, in front of her desk, three pairs of desks face each other. Mr. Snyder comes by Ingrid's desk as she is getting out her nearly filled graphic organizer. "Do*		

me a favor,” he says, “you have the repeated lines. However, remember we are going to use quotation marks, exactly how they did in the book.” He is referring to one row of the graphic organizer in which students are to write repeated lines from the book.	Learner (I)	
Ingrid responds to his reminder with an “Oh!” as she realizes what he is talking about.	Learner (R)	
“Find it in the book and cite it exactly, the quotation marks,” continues Mr. Snyder.	Learner (I)	
“Okay,” replies Ingrid. Four girls from the desks near Ingrid bring their chairs so that they can sit beside her. They huddle together, but she is the only one seated at a desk. Alana asks Ingrid what Mr. Snyder was saying and Ingrid points to the row on the chart.	Learner (R)	
“Oh, quotation marks,” mutters Alana, but she sounds uncertain.		
“It’s right there. Haven’t you read the book?” asks Ingrid, not unkindly.	Knower (R)	
She takes <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u> from Alana and opens up to the page with “Little wolves, little wolves, let me come in!” and reads the quoted part aloud.	Reader (R)	
Ingrid pushes her purple wire rimmed glasses up onto the bridge of her delicate nose, tucks her long dark hair back behind her ears, then goes to write on her graphic organizer but notices that she has already filled that section of her chart without the quotation marks.	Reader (R)	
She turns to Sara, “can you give me your eraser?” Sara willingly hands over the eraser and Ingrid erases what she has written, not looking up from the page, rewriting it again with quotation marks included. As the other girls begin to take turns reading the book aloud, Ingrid slides her forefinger back and forth across her chart, checking it.	Task Borrower (R) Learner (R)	
Mr. Snyder comes by the table again, saying, “Okay, Ingrid, you’re doing a really nice job but I want to challenge you on differentiating between the different main characters. With the conflicts, write down the characters that are involved in the conflict. Does that make sense?”	Learner (I)	
Ingrid nods her head and immediately takes her graphic organizer and in the row labeled “Conflicts” she begins to specify. She has previously written “between characters” in each of the boxes	Learner (R)	

dedicated to one of the previously read three books.		
She returns to each box and adds "Javelinas vs. coyotes" in one box, "pigs vs. wolve" in another box, "pigs vs. wolve" in third box, and writes "wolves pig" into the fourth box, which relates to the book currently being read by her group. Throughout the reading, she frequently reaches across her desk to borrow Sara's eraser, as she makes modifications to her graphic organizer, but this doesn't affect her flow of writing.	Reader (R) Task Borrower (R) Learner (R)	
She also takes her turn at reading aloud.	Reader (R)	
About 20 minutes into the activity, Ingrid gets stuck on a word and looks up to Alana, who offers "certainly" as the word. "Certainly" reads Ingrid, and continues.		Passive Appealer (R)
Later, Ingrid runs into "pneumatic," and pauses in confusion. In a moment, she tries to pronounce it several different ways. The other girls begin to giggle at her attempts and Ingrid begins to giggle too.	Reader (R)	
"Mr. Snyder!" she calls, waving her hand. Mr. Snyder is leaning into the huddle of a different table group and calls back, "Just a minute!" Ingrid pauses, and then continues to read, skipping the word. The girls continue to read, taking turns at the end of each page. They finish the book.	Strategic Appealer (R) Reader (R)	
Ingrid picks up a copy of <u>The True Story of the Three Little Pigs</u> and begins to read. She reads very fluently and clearly.	Reader (R)	
Alana, noticing that Ingrid has read more than one page, interrupts, "Can I read?"		
Ingrid continues to read.	Reader (R)	
After about 30 seconds, Alana repeats her request and Ingrid allows her to take the book, but leans over her shoulder to read along silently.	Reader (R)	
After Alana reads two pages, Ingrid takes the book back.	Reader (R)	
Mr. Snyder comes by and notices that they have moved on to another book, "Are you rereading the books to refresh your diagram?" Ingrid and Sara nod their heads.	Reader (I)	
With this book, Ingrid takes control. Rather than participating in turn-taking at the end of every page, the only time she lets the book out of her hands is when Alana asks, "Can I read the next page?" This happens about every four pages.	Reader (R)	

When the book is finished, she bends to her chart, referring back to the book occasionally, sometimes talking half to herself, half to the girls around her. "They both include three pigs and a wolf – no they don't," she comments at one point.	Reader (R)	
	Thinker (R)	
Alana responds, "The big bad wolf becomes the big bad pig and the three pigs become the three wolves."		
To that, Ingrid replies, "They both made a – oh, wait!" She opens up the Three Wolves book and flips through.	Thinker (R)	
Alana comments to the group, "You know the oldest was the smartest."		
Guadalupe chimes in, "That's not true."		
Alana defends her assertion, "In the <u>True Story of the Three Little Pigs</u>."		
Ingrid ignores this conversation. She has found the information she wanted in the book and is bent over her graphic organizer, writing quickly, but with small neat letters.	Reader (R)	

In this vignette, we see Ingrid being positioned as a learner by Mr. Snyder as he reminded her to use quotation marks when citing repeated lines from the text. Ingrid took up this position of learner, revising her work on the graphic organizer to include quotation marks where she quoted text directly from the book. When he positioned Ingrid as a learner, Mr. Snyder explicitly noted that he was challenging her as a learner. Her positioning as a learner was not just of a student who was perceived as capable of fulfilling the demands of the task, which was to list the conflicts in each *Pigs* book, but as a student who was capable of being detailed and specific in describing the conflicts. Ingrid willingly took up this position, revising her graphic organizer further, efficiently erasing old text and inserting more specific answers. In this case, I named her position when she borrowed the eraser as task borrower

because Ingrid barely looked up from her work each time she reached over the desk to borrow Sara's eraser.

Although in this vignette, Ingrid took up the position of passive appealer once, when she got stuck on the word "certainly" when reading aloud and looked to Alana for a give-away, Ingrid later took up a more positive position when encountering an unknown word later in the literacy event. When she first encountered "pneumatic," she positioned herself as a reader by attempting to pronounce it several ways. When her strategy of trying to sound out the word didn't work, she took up the position of strategic appealer, seeking Mr. Snyder's help only after she had attempted to work through the word herself. However, when Mr. Snyder remained busy addressing the questions of another table group, Ingrid re-positioned herself as a reader, not letting the unknown word serve as an obstacle, but skipping it and continuing with the text. These positions served to continue to afford her access to deeper engagement in the literacy event as she used a variety of strategies to successfully deal with the unknown word.

Ingrid's frequent and insistent positioning as a reader throughout this vignette provided a window into the strong literate identity that lay beneath her quiet demeanor during whole group activity. In the context of her familiar table group, working with several girls who were her regular peers in table group activities, Ingrid regularly positioned herself as a reader. Indeed, her positioning as a reader was so strong that she occasionally ignored the appeals of her other group members as they demanded access to the text. Additionally, as Ingrid read the text, she also frequently looked for ways to update and enrich her graphic organizer, positioning herself as a

thinker as she thought through differences of the *Pigs* book she was currently reading and the ones she had read on previous occasions. Throughout this literacy event, Ingrid regularly took up positions that opened access into deeper engagement with the literacy event and revealed her strong literate identity and scholarly focus.

When Ingrid's attempts to pronounce a difficult word did not work, she did not look to other students for assistance, but went to the highest source available in the classroom, Mr. Snyder. Even when Mr. Snyder was unavailable, Ingrid did not give up, but skipped the word, not letting it interfere with either her role as a reader or with her comprehension of the story and her general fluency in reading it aloud to the other members of her group. Rather than finding her difficulty in decoding the word to be embarrassing or frustrating as Rosa Maria would, as we see later in this chapter, Ingrid and her group members found the strange word "pneumatic" to be entertaining in its very incomprehensibility. The obstacle was one that led to bemusement rather than frustration. Finally, Ingrid positioned herself very clearly as a reader, and as a reader with absolute rights to the book, and the affordances it offered her. She was utterly unafraid to claim those rights as was demonstrated through her interactions with Alana. She was absorbed in her own reading and is impervious to Alana's requests. She was at first unwilling, and then reluctant, to relinquish the book, and the affordances it offered, to Alana.

Finally, we saw Ingrid when she was immune to the distraction of her table group's conversations at the end of the vignette. This is something that was typical of her throughout all of my observations. When she had independent work she wanted to complete, she had the ability to shut out all distractions and work quietly and

indefatigably to the end of the class period, sometimes without looking up from her desk at all, positioning herself not only as a learner, but as a reader and a writer who could not be imposed upon by the incidental and ongoing activity of her classroom.

In this next literacy vignette, we see Ingrid engaged in independent work. Her focus, independence, and strong literate identity are revealed through the consistent and positive positions she takes on and into which she is interactively positioned by Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett. As with the other literacy vignettes I have shared with Ingrid, this one provides a snapshot of her typical positions within the context and type of literacy event.

Table 6.3: Sixth: Ingrid: Independent Time

Literacy Event Vignette: Ingrid during Independent Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mr. Snyder is giving the students instructions for their independent work. Yesterday, they wrote the first drafts of their Cinderella stories. Holding up an editing checklist, he tells them, "As you read your own Cinderella tale today, you're going to go through the checklist and ensure that you don't have any of these mistakes. You're going to edit your own paper."	Writer (I)	
Mrs. Bennett chimes in, "And if we have time, you can do some peer editing. First you will do it independently, and then you can switch your paper with the person sitting next to you."	Writer (I)	
Coming up to Ingrid's desk, Mr. Snyder gives her the editing checklist, "Ingrid, see this section 'editing' here – use this as a guide." He points to the relevant section on the handout.	Writer (I)	
Ingrid reads over her story quickly, the tip of her pen running over the words line by line. Her story fills up a page and a half of notepaper with dense lines of small neat print. As she slides her pen over the paper, she pauses to scratch out words and make changes. Once she has gone over the entire story, she takes out a fresh piece of notebook paper and immediately begins to write.	Writer (I)	
Mrs. Bennett notices that Ingrid has begun her rewrite without indenting the first paragraph, and standing two desks away, declares to the class as a whole,		

225

but looking at Ingrid, "Remember your indentation! Remember to indent!"	Learner (I)
Ingrid does not look up at this, she is utterly absorbed in recopying her story.	Writer (R)
Mrs. Bennett looks at me, smiles and shrugs.	Writer (I)
Only two minutes into the activity and Ingrid is completely taken into her task. She writes very quickly, small neat letters flying out from her pen. At a nearby table group, three girls are chatting enthusiastically but Ingrid is oblivious to distractions. Ten minutes into her writing, she is still copying from her edited text. She has placed the new copy of her story on top of the old, so that she can see the lines she is copying, and slides the new copy down with each line as she finishes, so that she can reveal the line she must copy next. Twenty minutes into her rewrite, Ingrid looks up briefly, surveys the classroom, and returns to her task. Thirty minutes after she begins to write, class ends.	Writer (R)
As students begin to gather their things to move on to their next class, Ingrid looks up, sighs deeply, puts her pen down, gathers all of her papers into her folder and stands up. When I ask her jokingly if her hand hurts, she looks at me very earnestly and so, in the softest of whispers, "no."	Writer (R)

In this vignette, Ingrid consistently positioned herself in positive ways that supported access to her engagement in literacy events and was positioned by both of her reading/language arts teachers in positive ways. The entire class was positioned as writers by both teachers as they introduced the editing checklist, then Ingrid was positioned by Mr. Snyder as a writer as he reminded her to use the editing checklist, then by Mrs. Bennett as a learner, as the ESOL co-teacher reminded her to indent. However, when Mrs. Bennett reminded Ingrid (and the rest of the class) to indent, Ingrid was so focused on her work and so strongly positioned as a writer that she did not hear the reminder. Mrs. Bennett's smile and shrug in my direction noted that Ingrid was a strong writer and that Ingrid's failure to indent would not have a large

negative impact on the quality of her work. Ingrid took on the role of writer, dedicating herself to independently editing her story without additional support or feedback and then rewriting it for the entire class period.

Ingrid's ability to complete literacy tasks independently and successfully was described by Mr. Snyder, who noted, "[Ingrid is] self-motivated. I mean, Ingrid's one of those students – I could give her direction and she'll just run with it." Ingrid's ability to successfully attend to and complete a literacy task independently was acknowledged by Mrs. Bennett during the course of the literacy event. When Ingrid failed to pick up Mrs. Bennett's hint about the need to indent, Mrs. Bennett validated Ingrid's reflexive positioning as a writer by not following up on the reminder when Ingrid did not acknowledge it by her smile and shrug at me. Because Ingrid was so single-mindedly on-task and had a consistent history of living up to her literate identity as a successful student, this mild incident of failing to indent could be overlooked by Mrs. Bennett.

As I have noted, Ingrid was exceptional in her focus and on task-behavior throughout all of my observations. Even when things did not go well, Ingrid did not lose her tranquility. On the day that students were to type their Cinderella stories on computers, Ingrid's story was missing. At first, she looked through her desk, then she went through her cubby, then she returned to her desk and went through it methodically. After going through her binder three times, she paused, looking stuck. Later, I found out that a group of unknown students had thrown a folder away from Mr. Snyder's desk when the classroom was empty, and that Ingrid's story was one of the victims. However, in the moment of initial loss, Ingrid was not stressed out. When

he realized that Ingrid no longer had her story, Mr. Snyder said, "I know you have a good memory. Do you think you can write your story again?" I thought this might upset Ingrid as I recalled a class observation period when I watched Ingrid first write her story from scratch, then another of watching her edit and rewrite it painstakingly but efficiently (described in the previous vignette). However, Ingrid simply nodded yes to Mr. Snyder and spent the duration of the class independently writing her story over from memory. In this incident, Mr. Snyder positioned Ingrid as a writer who was up to the challenge of rewriting her story from scratch. Again, without hesitation, Ingrid took up this challenge and took up the position of writer. The missing story, which might have been a devastating loss for some students, became an affordance as she used this rewrite as an opportunity to bring in new and fresh details that had not been present in her original text.

Ingrid at Home

When I visited Ingrid at home, she was waiting for me outside, playing with her brothers. She greeted me with a serious countenance, took me inside to meet her parents and her ridiculously adorable baby sister, who spent the morning being dangled on her father's knee, and then sat down at the table in the "Ingrid" quiet focused way of her manner at school, ready to take on my questions like another challenging homework assignment. Our interview was much like our occasional conversations at school, a soft, reflective conversation punctuated by Ingrid's soft laughter as she admitted to singing in the shower and being annoyed by what she regarded as the appalling short recess granted to the sixth grade. As I have mentioned previously, the Ingrid of home was the Ingrid of school. Although my conversation

with her hinted at other social identities – sister who can "hold [her] own" with two brothers, athletic cyclist and skateboarder, beloved family member – her literate self at home, which she revealed through her talk of the books she had at home, her feelings about homework and school, and her personal writings, was bridged with her literate self of school, interested and determined, with a whimsical sense of humor.

At home, Ingrid shared some of the books that she had at home – she was reading her way through the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series and talked about the stories that she wrote at school for Mr. Snyder and the stories that she wrote at home. She described the way that her mother had read to her in Spanish before she herself had learned to read. Although she noted that she knew more English than Spanish, she added that she liked read Spanish, "so I can, like, learn it" and that one of the things she was looking forward to most in middle school was the opportunity to take a Spanish for Native Speakers class "to be able to read and write Spanish." Despite her strong literate identity and her confidence in participating in daily classroom activities, she added that she got stressed out by the standardized testing, declaring, "It's hard because I get nervous because I think I'm going to fail." Clearly, the pressure to achieve high test results was not limited to the teachers of sixth grade.

Ingrid's strong literate identity that supported her in taking up positions of learner and knower, even when given academic challenges by Mr. Snyder or demands for materials by other students, was consistent across school and home contexts. When I asked her across her kitchen table how she saw herself as a student, she replied that she saw herself as a good student, aligning her literate identity with the

identity given her by Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett. When I asked her, "What are some things you do that make you a good student?" she looked at me, puzzled.

"I don't…" she said, hesitating, "I just be myself." When I asked her what she meant, she smiled and said, "I don't really know, cause actually I just be myself." As I spent time with her at school and on my visit to her, I saw that the literate self of Ingrid was always the literate self of Ingrid. Her positioning of herself as a learner and a knower was her enactment of her identity and her regular successes with academic literacy tasks affirmed her strong literate identity. The Ingrid I knew from school was the same Ingrid I met at her house. This did not seem unusual to me, until I visited Rosa Maria at home, as I will discuss later, and until I visited Antonio, discussed in Chapter 5, at home. When I asked her to draw a picture of herself reading or writing at school, she drew this:
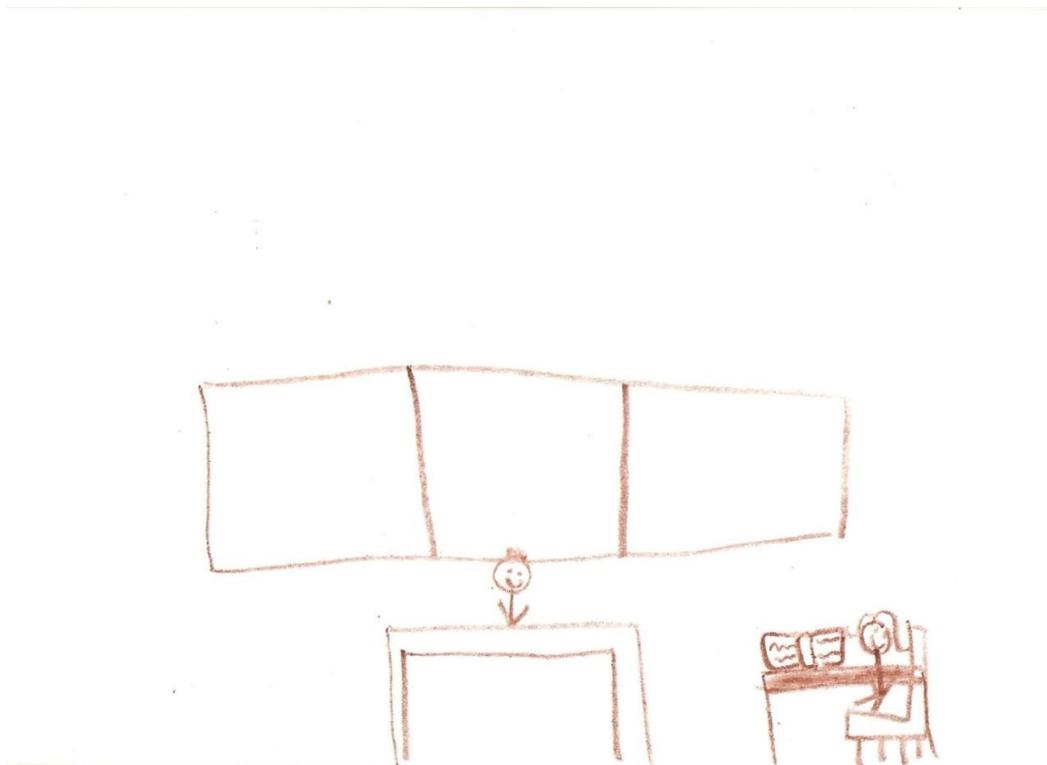
Figure 6.1: Self-Portrait: Ingrid at School

When she completed this self-portrait, Figure 6.1, Ingrid explained that it showed her reading at school with Mr. Snyder in the front of the room leading the class. Ingrid was at first self-conscious at the thought of drawing pictures for me, but then relaxed as she actually got into the rhythm of creating the drawing. I found it interesting that she was the only participant in my study to include the teacher in her drawing of school. In Figure 6.1, she has shown herself reading a book as she sits at her desk smiling. She has added details of the classroom, including the large whiteboard at the front of the room and Mr. Snyder's desk, as well as Mr. Snyder himself. He is smiling back at her as he teaches from the front of the room. Ingrid's contentment with reading at school and her respect and like for Mr. Snyder shine through in her school self-portrait.

To show herself doing something fun outside of school, Ingrid drew this picture that illustrated her playing with her skateboard:
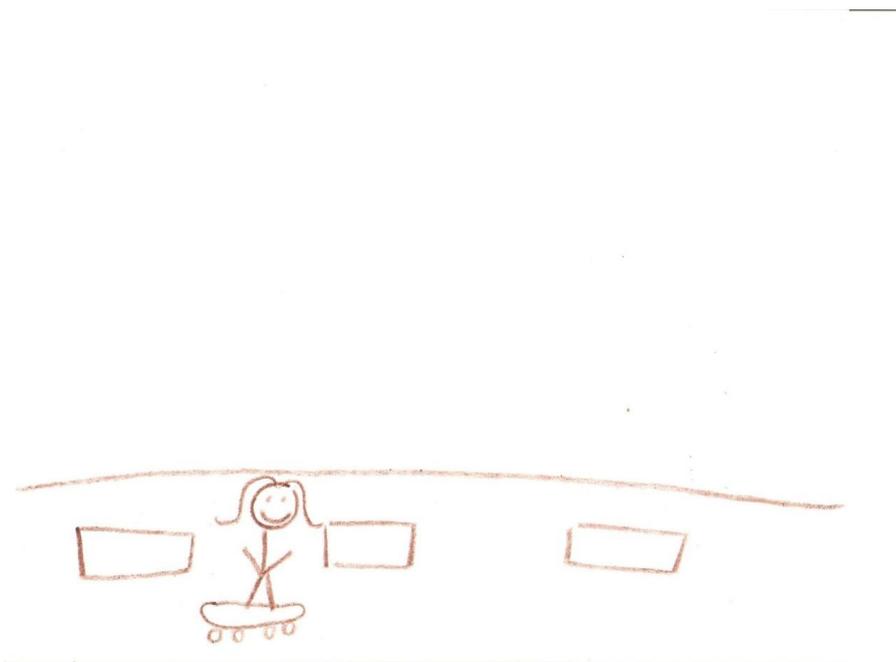
Figure 6.2: Self-Portrait: Ingrid at Play

In this picture, Figure 6.2, we see Ingrid happily navigating her skateboard down the street (note the broken white line in the middle of the road). This side of Ingrid became apparent to me in my visit to her home. As my interpreter and I walked up the sidewalk to her apartment, we saw Ingrid rollerblading with her brothers. As we approached, she took off her roller blades and tucked them into a niche by the front door where I could also see the skateboard shown in Figure 6.2, as well as several bicycles and a scooter. Ingrid's joy in her active play at home is apparent in Figure 6.2.

Ingrid was confident in herself across the locations I knew her in and in my conversation with her she provided an explanation to the stubbornness that occasionally revealed itself, such as when she refused to share the book with Alana in her table group literacy event. This stubbornness was described by Mrs. Bennett, "She's the kind of person who needs time to reflect, time to take her time to do whatever she has to do. You cannot hurry her. You cannot drag her into a conversation she doesn't want to be, to participate in." When I went to visit Ingrid, she was rollerblading with two boys, later introducing them as her brothers, one older and one younger. "I can hold my own," she said, describing herself as a sister who successfully stood her ground in a home with two active brothers. Despite her stillness and delicate features, she identified herself as someone to be reckoned with, both at school and at home. She described her silence during whole group discussion as a choice, saying "Sometimes I know the answers but I don't raise my hand." As noted previously by Mrs. Bennett, Ingrid did not need to raise her hand during whole group activities in order to demonstrate that she was engaged and understanding the

material. Her body language and focus on the teacher were enough to position herself as a learner and be positioned by her teachers as a learner.

Mr. Snyder provided further support for Ingrid's choice to opt out of whole group discussions, declaring, "She's shy in the crowd of students and I actually can't even say that's a challenge. The reason I can't say that's a challenge is because a lot of the students that are quiet and shy tend to succeed." Not only did Mr. Snyder agree with Ingrid that her choice to not raise her hand and participate orally in whole group discussions is not problematic, but he went so far as to point out that it was the quiet students who may often be the ones who do well academically. Indeed, Ingrid's quietness has contributed to her teacher-constructed identity as a successful student. Mr. Snyder described Ingrid as "not disrespectful, [didn't] break any of the class norms, and [did] her work." In a classroom of sixth graders at the end of their elementary school careers and more than ready for summer, Ingrid's consistently excellent behavior made her stand out as a good and successful student even beyond her academic engagement.

Mrs. Bennett also cited Ingrid's calmness as one of her strengths, "She's very quiet. So she's not a talker, but she focuses. She's a good listener, a very good listener, and that spills, you know, that translates into her being a good reader and a good writer." For Mrs. Bennett, it was Ingrid's calmness that was one of the keys to her success in the print elements of academic literacy. Because Ingrid was successful in many other aspects of school, her teachers did not consider her lack of whole group participation to be an issue, rather, her very quietness may have been one of the keys to her ongoing academic achievement, current success, and predicted future success.

Rosa Maria: A Tale of Two Literate Identities

My second focal student in sixth grade was Rosa Maria, a tall girl with long, dark brown hair that fell to her waist. Although she did not have Mr. Snyder as a homeroom teacher, she came to him in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon (the schedule varied) for reading/language arts. When I began shadowing Rosa Maria in her classroom she was very shy but very interested in what I was doing. When she became bold enough to make eye contact with me, she sparkled, but for my first few observations I had difficulty in discovering whether or not Rosa Maria was engaged in literacy events, especially whole group activities.

Rosa Maria's Experiences of Academic Literacy

As I describe, both my perspective on Rosa Maria and her engagement in literacy events changed dramatically over the course of my time with her. In my first literacy event vignette with Rosa Maria, we see her at the beginning of my data collection period listening to one of the read-alouds that kicked off the Multicultural Cinderella unit.

Table 6.4: Sixth: Rosa Maria: Whole Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Rosa Maria in Whole Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
As Mrs. Bennett reads aloud to the class from a traditional French version of the Cinderella story, Rosa Maria sits at her desk holding a pink mechanical pencil. Her desk, in its table group configuration, faces the side of the room where the cubbies are. *Rosa Maria has not pulled her chair away from the desk so that she can face Mrs. Bennett during the read aloud, instead she sits facing the wall, fidgeting with a pink mechanical pencil she holds in her hands. Occasionally she turns her head to look up at Mrs. Bennett, but more often she is staring down at her desk, smiling at one of her table mates in wordless communication.*	Reader (R)	Personal (R) Social (R)

234

Towards the end of the story, she swivels in her chair to look at Mrs. Bennett as she reads aloud, but she doesn't raise her hand to answer any of the questions that Mrs. Bennett asks throughout the read-aloud. As the tale comes to an end, Rosa Maria applauds along with the rest of her class then turns to whisper something into Lisa's ear.	Reader (R) Reader (R)	 Social (R)
Mrs. Bennett holds up a Venn diagram on an 8 ½ by 11 inch paper and begins to explain the next activity to the students. Rosa Maria has turned away from Mrs. Bennett and is now facing the wall again. I am not sure if she is paying attention to any of the instructions as they are given.		Personal (R)

I created this vignette from the field notes of my very first observation of Rosa Maria. Her positioning changed from personal to reader to social across the course of the read-aloud, although I wasn't certain sometimes if she was truly "elsewhere" or if she was listening to Mrs. Bennett while looking elsewhere. I also did not know if her comments to Lisa were related to the academic literacy event. During my early days with her, I could not tell if Rosa Maria was daydreaming or paying attention during whole group activities. Indeed, I confess that in my first observations of Rosa Maria I often positioned her as distracted myself until I began to know her and to ask her about her positioning choices. She never raised her hand to respond to teacher questions and she spent much of the time that teachers were reading aloud, giving information, or providing instructions looking away, playing with a notebook or a pencil, or whispering or gesturing to a peer at her table group. Later in the chapter, I will show how this changed over the course of my time in her classroom.

One of the factors that contributed to Rosa Maria's seeming distractibility may have been the way that her particular location in the table group had her facing away from the center of the classroom towards the cubbies, like Sebastian in Chapter

5. Her focus on whole group activities increased when she physically turned her chair or turned in her chair to face the teacher. Later in my observation period with Rosa Maria, she turned her desk direction according to whether the activity was whole group and she needed to attend to one of her teachers or to whether the activity was table group and she needed to attend to her peers.

In my next vignette with Rosa Maria, we see her working with her table group peers. Although she positions herself sometimes as a reader, she also positions herself in ways that constrain her access to engagement in the literacy event and keep her at a level of shallow engagement in the task. Within her table group, she and her peers have clearly gotten into a routine way of completing tasks that enables them to get through the task efficiently.

Table 6.5: Sixth: Rosa Maria: Table Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Rosa Maria during Table Group Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
It's a quarter to noon and the sixth grade classroom is getting warm and a little stuffy. It's nearly the end of May and the air conditioning unit in the classroom has become unreliable, but Rosa Maria, sitting at a cluster of desks with four other students, doesn't seem to mind. The students in the table group are working to read <u>The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig</u> to complete a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer is a chart comparing four versions of the <u>Three Little Pigs</u>. Three of the columns on each chart have been filled in, and the students are using this time with the text to complete the fourth column, dedicated to the book they are currently reading.		
Ana finishes reading a sentence from the book aloud and passes it to Rosa Maria, saying, "your turn." Rosa Maria begins to read where Ana left off, but stumbles on the word, "fetched." Ana looks at the page, and tells Rosa Maria, "fetched."	Reader (I) Reader (R)	
Rosa Maria continues, but gets stuck again, repeating, "man-, man" and Ana looks at the page and says, "managed." This continues for about two minutes.	Reader (R)	Passive Appealer (I/R) Passive Appealer (R/I)

236

Every time Rosa Maria encounters a word she doesn't know, she either looks up from the page to Ana to summon assistance or Ana provides the word before Rosa Maria makes a verbal or non-verbal appeal for help.		Passive Appealer (R/I)
Then Ana takes the book back and reads quickly and fluently for a few minutes while the rest of the group looks on. Lisa takes a turn on the book, then Rosa Maria takes it back, declaring, "My turn." She pauses again on encountering the word "pneumatic" and points at it. Lisa looks at the word and shakes her head, then they both turn to Ana. Ana looks at the word, shakes her head, and turns to me, "What is that?" I explain the pronunciation and meaning of the word and Ana continues to read from there.	Reader (R)	Passive Appealer (R)
The other two students in the table group are boys, both new to the United States from Central America. They both defer to the girls in participating in the reading, but offer plenty of comments on the contents of the story in Spanish. When one student in this table group is reading aloud, the others listen attentively and quietly, occasionally making notes on his or her graphic organizer. When a turn in reader is negotiated, the break is filled with commentary and questions. At one point, Jose asks in Spanish, "What does that mean – 'chinny chin chin'?" Everyone is silent, and then looks at Ana.	Reader (R)	
Ana says, "I don't know." There is a perplexed pause, then I lean in and offer an explanation of the phrase, which occurs in several of the <u>Pigs</u> texts the students have been reading.	Learner (R)	
The rest of the class is also sitting in clusters of desks. There is a light buzz of conversation rising from the table groups and Mr. Snyder moves between the groups. Partway through the class, the reading coach stops by and Mr. Snyder moves into the doorway to talk to him.		
The buzz of the classroom escalates precipitously with this sudden loss of proximity to Mr. Snyder and Rosa Maria stands up in frustration, being unable to hear Ana as she reads. She is tall, and when she stands up straight, she is a beautiful and imposing presence, with thick dark brown hair that falls down her back as she tosses her head	Reader (R)	
in annoyance, her silver hoop earrings swinging. She turns toward the center of the room and hushes the class with a fierce, "SSSSHHHHHH." The buzz wilts immediately and Rosa Maria plops back in her seat with quiet triumph, turning to face Lisa, who has just begun her turn.	Reader (R)	

Towards the end of the book, Lisa finishes her turn and Rosa Maria reaches out to take the book for her turn, but it is snatched away by Ana. *When the book is finished, Ana quickly completes her graphic organizer, which is a chart comparing and contrasting the four versions of the Three Little Pigs. When she has finished the newest section on the Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig, she passes her graphic organizer to Rosa Maria who quickly and efficiently copies the information from Ana's graphic organizer. Rosa Maria copies the work of Ana, Jose copies the work of Rosa Maria, and Jorge, sitting farthest from Ana, takes his information from the work of Jose. Lisa crowds her paper onto Rosa Maria's desk and works from both Ana's and Rosa Maria's papers.*	Reader (R)	Not-Reader (I) Doer (I) Doer (R)

In this vignette, Rosa Maria and the other members of her table group collaborated in a variety of ways to complete their assignment, which in this case was to finish up a chart comparing four versions of the *Three Little Pigs* stories. The interactions that Rosa Maria and the members of her table group demonstrated in this vignette are typical in that they frequently worked together, although their contributions to task completions are not equal. Rosa Maria wanted to participate successfully in literacy events and initially took on the positive position of reader.

However, her striving school literate identity, which she described to me in my visit with her at home, was informed in part by her assertion that she was a student who "struggled" when she had to read something. She had gotten into the routine of positioning herself as a passive appealer when reading aloud in her table group, seeking the immediate assistance of Ana every time she encountered an unknown word without using any other strategies to either deal with or skip the word, as we saw Ingrid do in the second literacy event vignette in this chapter. Rosa Maria's lack of confidence in her own abilities led to her deference to Ana, although as we

saw in this episode, she also sought to claim a position as reader by demanding a quieter atmosphere in the classroom. Her boldness on this occasion was atypical for Rosa Maria and she was very proud of that moment, referring back to it during my visit to her home, including how her "shushing" was successful and caused her classmates to quiet down. This triumph carried back into the table group activity when Rosa Maria tried to take the book for her turn, positioning herself again as a reader. However, her positioning was over-ridden by Ana who snatched the book away, re-positioning Rosa Maria as a not-reader against her will. The position that I have named not-reader was not one that I observed in any other context during my time at Walnut Springs Elementary School. For this reason, it only appears here and is not included in my analytic framework.

By taking on and accepting positions that allowed her to complete the task but which also led to a detour to potential learning, Rosa Maria deferred the right to learn to others and only occasionally claimed that right for herself. This is demonstrated through Ana's interactive positioning of Rosa Maria and the others of her table group as doer as she passed her work to Rosa Maria to copy and share with the others. Rosa Maria routinely took up the position of doer in this way, for when the table group configuration included Ana, she took the responsibility of completing the work for the group and then sharing it with them to copy.

Rosa Maria was generally very shy and quiet in reading /language arts class except when working with her table group. She felt very comfortable with her table group members and had friendly relationships with all the members of her table group, so she was comfortable appealing for help. Rosa Maria, like all of the

members of her table group except for Ana, relied on others to help her complete her academic tasks. Ana alone in this group was confident working independently and seemed to relish her role as the de facto group leader and expert.

The Power of Cultural and Linguistic Connections

One of the many factors that influenced Rosa Maria's positioning in her table group was also which other students were present in her table group. Because of adjustments to the sixth grade schedule, I observed Rosa Maria in two different table group configurations, both of which were primarily populated by current and exited ELLs. Although Rosa Maria liked working with the table group that included Ana and she explicitly told me in our conversation at her home that Ana was helpful to her when she was challenged by difficult assignments, Rosa Maria also took on stronger positions when she was in the table group that did not include Ana. I am including an additional vignette that highlights table group work with Rosa Maria because it demonstrates the way that her positioning was different when she worked with different students. This vignette is also remarkable because it illustrates the affordances that were created when the teacher provided a link to students' cultural and linguistic knowledges.

Table 6.6: Sixth: Rosa Maria: Second Table Group: The Mexican Cinderella

Literacy Event Vignette: Rosa Maria's Table Group and the Mexican Cinderella	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mr. Snyder passes a copy of a different Cinderella text to each table group, including Egyptian, Persian, Korean, and Mexican. There is only one copy of each text, enough so that each table group had a different book. *When Mr. Snyder gives the Mexican Cinderella story to a different table group, Rosa Maria and five of her table group members, including three Latino boys and three Latino girls, roar respectfully but insistently in*	Knower (R)	

240

protest until Mr. Snyder gives <u>them</u> the Mexican version.		
To read the book, the students crowd around it in excitement but the reading goes haltingly as the students crowd over each other and gently argue over who has the right to hold the book.	Reader (R)	
A paraprofessional, witnessing the slow progress, takes the book and begins to read it aloud to the group, but falters on the many Spanish words and phrases in the text.		
Rosa Maria and her friends call out to correct her pronunciation.	Knower (R)	
However, having lost ownership of their book, several members of the table group disengage from the reading activity and begin to have social conversations among themselves. Rosa Maria points to words in the book, which is now held by the paraprofessional, as she tries to read along.	Reader (R)	
Commenting to the students, "Since you are talking—,"the paraprofessional gives up providing assistance and gives the book back to the students, who once again crowd in behind the book.	Reader (R)	Distracted (I)
Two of the boys are newcomers from Central America and do not participate in reading the English words, but chime in loudly and confidently on the Spanish phrases since a student near the book always has a finger on the text to show where the group is in the read-aloud.		
The next day, the groups are told to construct their own new version of Cinderella. Rosa Maria's table group wants to do Mexican Cinderella, but at first Mrs. Bennett is reluctant to approve, "We already have a Mexican Cinderella. So what's another culture you know a lot about?"	Knower (R)	
"Chinese?" asks one of the students dubiously.		
"Do you know a lot about Chinese culture?" asks Mrs. Bennett, and the students are silent.		
Recognizing the enthusiasm of the students for their Mexican Cinderella, Mrs. Bennett responds, "Why don't you do a Mexican Cinderella but make it different from the book?" The students decide to do a modern day Mexican-American Cinderella set in the middle school that they would attend in seventh grade.	Knower (I)	
Rosa Maria is so excited about the task that she volunteers to present the group's story to the class as a whole.	Writer (R)	

The power of connecting to students' cultural and linguistic knowledge is revealed in this episode, as not only Rosa Maria but the rest of her table group members took on stronger positions because of their insider knowledge of the text. Ana was not part of this table group configuration and the power relations within the group were more equitable in this vignette than in the previous table group vignette as the students worked together in a disorganized but enthusiastic manner. Commenting during my visit to her home, Rosa Maria described the way that she liked to work with her table group and how it could be effective working with her peers, "We talk about stuff and when we say stuff we get all our brains and we write it down." For Rosa Maria, being able to work with her table group peers was essential and helpful; the more brains that contributed to a task, the better the students could do with the task.

In this vignette, the students, including Rosa Maria, positioned themselves as knowers and protested loudly until they received the Mexican Cinderella book, which was *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story* by Tomie dePaola and which included Spanish phrases on nearly every page, Spanish character names, and explicit references to Mexico and Mexican culture. With the book in their possession, the students, again including Rosa Maria, positioned themselves as readers as they crowded around the book. Seeing that the reading within the group was very disorganized and being used to helping out the reading group that Rosa Maria was a part of, the paraprofessional stepped in and began to read the book to the students. When their ownership of the book was taken away, the students first tried to correct the Spanish pronunciation of the paraprofessional, positioning themselves again as

knowers, before several of them disengaged entirely from the activity. Rosa Maria, enthusiastic about the book, continued to position herself as a reader, trying to stay involved in the reading event. However, realizing that many of the students had disengaged from the activity, the paraprofessional became frustrated with the students and gave the book back to them. With the book back under their control, all of the students, including Rosa Maria, re-positioned themselves as readers and participated in the read-aloud, including two newcomers from Central American who were able to chime in on all of the Spanish phrases.

The content of the book and the home language resources contained within the book allowed all of the students in Rosa Maria's table group to take on positions of access and power that linked to their expertise in language and culture. Of all of my observations of Rosa Maria and her table group, this observation was remarkable in the high level of engagement of all of the students. The energy at that table that day was intense and delightful.

I continued this vignette into the following day because the activity that day connected directly back to the students' reading of *Adelita*. Having read a Cinderella text, the students were to now create their own Cinderella tale. Their excitement about the Mexican Cinderella had carried over from the previous day and they were eager to continue to be experts on the topic. However, Mrs. Bennett reminded them of the purpose of the assignment, which was to construct a fresh multicultural tale. When one of the students dubiously suggested a Chinese version, Mrs. Bennett realized the enthusiasm the students had for constructing a story based on elements in which they were experts. She suggested a compromise, a Mexican Cinderella tale

different from dePaola's text. The students ran with this suggestion, adjusting it to a Mexican-American tale taking place in the middle school they would attend next year, positioning themselves as knowers and drawing upon their personal expertise. Rosa Maria was so excited by this that she took the unprecedented step of volunteering to present the story they would construct to the class, positioning herself as a writer.

In the next vignette that I share, we see Rosa Maria during independent work time. She is preparing to write her own individual Cinderella story, now that she has encountered several versions of Cinderella stories as well as constructed a Mexican-American Cinderella story with her table group. As in the previous vignette, Rosa Maria's linguistic and cultural knowledge support her in taking on stronger positions, thus opening up her access to engagement in the literacy event.

Table 6.7: Sixth: Rosa Maria: Independent Time

Literacy Event Vignette: Rosa Maria during Independent Time	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mr. Snyder is explaining to the class that now that the students have heard one Cinderella tale (the French version) as a read-aloud, read another version in their table groups, compared and contrasted the two, and written a story with their table groups, they will now individually write their own Cinderella stories. Rosa Maria has begun to write her Cinderella story, but is stuck in deciding what name to give to her heroine.	Writer (I) Writer (R)	
Mr. Snyder leans over her desk. He has given her the book with the French version of Cinderella and is asking her to find the part in the book where the origin of Cinderella's name is explained. Rosa Maria reads aloud, "Cinderella sleeps near the ashes. Cinders is another name for ashes."	Learner (I) Reader (I) Reader (R)	
Connecting this, Rosa Maria and Lisa bring up the heroine's name from the Mexican version they read in their table group. Explaining to Mr. Snyder, they tell him that in that version Cinderella's name was "Adelita" and that she was named for her mother "Adela," being	Thinker (R) Knower (R)	

244

called "little Adela," translating the Spanish for him. ___*Later, I catch a glimpse of the beginning of Rosa Maria's story. She has written, "Once upon a time a gril named Lisa She had a terrible time because her stepmother was a bad person she be torture from her stepmother and her stepsisters and that she want going to the ball but her stepsisters her Lisa talking to her friend"*	Writer (R)	

In this vignette, we saw Mr. Snyder positioning Rosa Maria as a learner as he scaffolded her in developing her understanding of the meaning of the name "Cinderella." As a learner, Rosa Maria was positioned as a student capable of success in understanding a new concept with the help of guiding questions and a return to the text. Mr. Snyder also positioned Rosa Maria as a reader, giving her a section of the text to read aloud to him. Rosa Maria thrived on this individual attention, took up the position of reader, and extended her new understanding of the meaning of "Cinderella" to synthesize it, in the position of thinker, with her insider understanding of the name of Adelita, the Mexican Cinderella. She and Lisa took on the position of knower as they shared their insider knowledge with Mr. Snyder. When Rosa Maria positioned herself as a writer, she extended the trend of building on cultural and linguistic knowledge by naming her Cinderella "Lisa" after her friend and peer, later bringing in other personal details from her background knowledge to enrich her story. All of these positions created affordances for deeper engagement in the literacy event, as Rosa Maria gathered insight about the origin of the name "Cinderella," building on that to "teach" Mr. Snyder a bit of Spanish, then went on to construct her own Cinderella tale on a foundation of prior knowledge.

Another Kind of Quiet

Rosa Maria, like Ingrid, was identified by both of her teachers as a quiet student, but the qualities that she did not share with Ingrid made her a very different kind of quiet student. Because they knew that Rosa Maria had a difficult time doing grade level work independently, Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett also worried about her low verbal engagement in whole group discussion, a concern they did not have for Ingrid. Mrs. Bennett described how she once looked at Rosa Maria's paper during class, saw that she had a correct answer, and called on her during whole group discussion to answer the same question aloud. "And she made a face," said Mrs. Bennett, grimacing to model Rosa Maria's expression.

Whereas Ingrid's status as a good student was not affected by her choice not to raise her hand even when she knew the answer, Rosa Maria's refusal to raise her hand even when she knew the answer was a source of concern for her teachers. Based on my conversations with both students, I found that Ingrid's positive literate identity was so secure that she did not feel the need to provide correct answers in whole group discussion. However, as I show, Rosa Maria wanted to participate more in class discussions, but her lack of belief in her own abilities and her striving literate identity precluded her engagement to the level that *she* wanted. Rosa Maria's striving literate identity impacted her positioning during whole group activities in a way that had become a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy of her beliefs about herself as a student and constrained her opportunities for learning. Like Antonio in fourth grade, she often took on positions that would allow her to get *through* the academic literacy event without engaging deeply *in* the literacy event. Of essential importance though, was

the growing implication throughout my time with Rosa Maria that Rosa Maria's patterns of positioning and striving school literate identity could be re-constructed with teacher support and activities that connected to her personal areas of expertise, as hinted at through two previous Multicultural Cinderella literacy events vignettes.

Mrs. Bennett also described the ways in which Rosa Maria's quietness might have been a hindrance, in direct contrast with Ingrid's silence. "She tends to hide away, to fade into the background a little bit and that's a problem." Whereas Ingrid's silence was of one who was content to take in the whole group activity and learn from it without explicit oral participation, Rosa Maria's silence during whole group activities was one of wanting to not be noticed, as she shared with me during my visit with her at her home.

Rosa Maria at Home: The Other Twin

The Rosa Maria of my school experience was a silent girl who looked at me occasionally with a shy smile but always quickly looked away. She sometimes seemed to huddle away from the action of the classroom, but came alive in the comfort of her table group, when students were talking over each other to come to an answer or an agreement or to settle a point. When I arrived at the house where Rosa Maria lived in an apartment with her mother, and two of her brothers, she came to the door and greeted me with a huge beautiful grin. She seemed taller here than she did at school, where she slouched under sweatshirts even on warm days. Immediately she offered a cold drink to me and my interpreter, and inquired about finding a snack for my interpreter's young son. She led us into the living room, settled us on a couch and sat next to me, waiting expectantly.

When I brought out the reading interest survey, which served as a warm-up and icebreaker for all of my interviews, she frequently read ahead in the list of categories and questions, offering an answer before I had formulated a question, much as Antonio did in Chapter 5. I found this to be surprising, as she rarely read independently at school until prompted by the teacher or unless she was feeling comfortable in her table group. At her home, not only did she read ahead on items on the survey, noting the categories aloud and then noting her response to them, but she laughed loudly and frequently and spoke to me with a blunt honesty that revealed a person I'd never met, and wished I had known all along. Not long into the interview, I remarked in obvious shock, "You never talk this much at school!"

"I know," admitted Rosa Maria, sheepishly.

"Why don't you talk this much in school?"

Rosa Maria, "Because I be shy to be saying things. There's a lot of kids staring at me."

In our conversation, Rosa Maria discarded her shyness like a coat on a summer day and shared assertions and experiences that revealed two dissonant literate identities, a strong home literate identity and a striving school literate identity. When I asked her about reading and writing at home, she brought out a pile of *Goosebumps* books that she had read and reread, explaining that she got them from friends. She also described how she liked to write poetry at home. The poems were about her life, and although she was comfortable sharing them with her mother, she would share them with no one else. She added that she liked to read poetry, "It's kind of cool reading. It's like you can make it into like a song." In contrast to Rosa Maria's

striving literate identity at school, at home she had the literate identity of a confident and engaged reader. She read books by choice for entertainment in her free time and wrote poetry without the constraints of a school assignment. Even beyond Rosa Maria's strong home literate identity that revealed her home positioning as a reader and writer was her absolute change in all aspects from the school context – Rosa Maria's school self was a completely different person from her home self and it was an epiphany for me to discover Rosa Maria's twin self, her out-of-school identity. At home, Rosa Maria constructed her own literacy events and engaged in them without shyness or shame. She created her own affordances.

During my conversation with Rosa Maria she was pleased to talk about her books and poetry. However, when I asked her what was easy about Mr. Snyder's class, she looked at me clearly and explained, "Nothing's easy for me. I get kind of confused and I can't understand." Although I reminded her of the times I'd seen her accomplish a literacy task at school with success, she chided me gently, "That's *sometimes*. If not, I get – I struggle." In describing when she had to read something in Mr. Snyder's class, she declared, "I try to do it but it's really…*hard* for me." In contrast to her positive literate identity of home, Rosa Maria had a striving school literate identity of a student who experienced some successes but who was also still working to develop her academic literacy skills and strategies. Her frequent positioning of herself as a passive appealer who deferred to students such as Ana was the enactment of her striving literate identity within the confines of Walnut Springs Elementary School. As we saw in the excerpt from our conversation, Rosa Maria wanted me to be aware of just how hard school *always* was for her.

Rosa Maria's school literate identity aligned with that identity constructed of her by Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett. They identified her as a student challenged by academic literacy tasks and a student whose current and future levels of academic achievement concerned them. They expressed worry about Rosa Maria's literacy trajectory. According to Mr. Snyder, Rosa Maria's difficulty with school arose primarily from her below grade level reading skills. "She's not a very fluent reader," he explained. Mrs. Bennett agreed that Rosa Maria's ongoing challenges with reading were the obstacle to her academic success in school.

Rosa Maria's teachers also noted that they believed part of Rosa Maria's struggles with school came from her own beliefs about her abilities and her lack of self-efficacy. Mrs. Bennett described Rosa Maria as "her own worst enemy. She is making that difficult for herself because she is not self-confident enough."

Mirroring Rosa Maria's own assertion that she did not like to participate because she was afraid of the reactions of other students, Mr. Snyder declared, "She's probably been embarrassed enough times by the other students that she doesn't feel confident." Although I certainly cannot draw a direct connection between the experiences of my focal first graders and fourth graders, the years of difficulty in succeeding with academic literacy tasks seemed to have a cumulative effective on Rosa Maria's school literate identity construction and her patterns of positioning. Given her moments of sparkle and delight, I can only picture her as an eager and enthusiastic first-grader and I wonder at the possible negative experiences that Rosa Maria may have encountered in the years between first-grade and sixth grade that

likely led to the development of her patterns of positioning, her striving literate identity, and her current literacy trajectory.

Both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett were well aware of the types of positioning and interactions that were typical for Rosa Maria and were described in the first table group literacy event, when she and her peers completed the great part of their task for the day by riding on the willing coattails of Ana. "Sometimes she takes advantage of others, not in a mean way," Mrs. Bennett added, to clarify. "She uses them as crutches, and if she can, she tries to have the teacher help her more than she actually needs. I guess it all stems from her lack of self-confidence." Mrs. Bennett saw Rosa Maria as a student who appealed for help even at times she may have been capable of success without the help because Rosa Maria didn't believe herself capable of that success.

Rosa Maria's strengths were not lost on her teachers. Both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett saw the potential that lurked under her shy countenance. In describing Rosa Maria, Mr. Snyder said, "One of her strengths is that she's very respectful to teachers and to her peers, and she's willing to listen. That means she wants to improve so there is motivation inside, so I believe that she is motivated to learn."

Mrs. Bennett also thought that Rosa Maria had untapped potential, noting, "If she were more self-assured, more self-confident, and she were more of a risk-taker, she would be able to make, I think, much more progress." Mrs. Bennett saw the possibility within Rosa Maria, the hope of success. Mrs. Bennett added, "She doesn't know that she's actually capable of doing better if there isn't a teacher stimulating and challenging her." This comment from Mrs. Bennett came to foreshadow the

change in Rosa Maria that marked the final third of my time with her at Walnut Springs Elementary School and which I share later in this chapter.

When I asked Rosa Maria to draw a picture of herself reading or writing at school, she created this:

Figure 6.3: Self-Portrait: Rosa Maria at School

In her school self-portrait, Figure 6.3, Rosa Maria is alone at her desk. After she completed the picture, she explained that it showed her just as she had finished writing. When I asked her if she was happy in the picture, pointing out the ambivalent smile on her face, she looked concerned and reached for the picture and marker to adjust her facial expression, but I asked her not to change it, adding that I wanted her picture to show a true reflection of how she felt reading or writing at school.

In contrast to Rosa Maria's school self-portrait is self-portrait of herself at play:

Figure 6.4: Self-Portrait: Rosa Maria at Play

In this picture, Figure 6.4, we see Rosa Maria at the community pool in the summertime with her friends. As she was drawing this picture, she very carefully labeled herself and her friends[4], as well as the pool and the sun. She spent much more time on this picture than on the school self-portrait shown in Figure 6.3, adding details and working hard to capture the scene exactly as she wanted to share it, including the various hairstyles of her friends. I found it interesting that although she did not write any text on the picture that showed her constructing text, she was careful to include several text labels to a scene far from the context of school.

During my visit with Rosa Maria, I moved the conversation back to Rosa Maria's literacy experiences at home by referring back to the *Goosebumps* books

---

[4] I have replaced Rosa Maria's original labels of her friends with pseudonyms.

which she read at home by choice, asking, "So what's it like to read a *Goosebumps* book?"

At my question, Rosa Maria's face took on a different expression, one of contentment, and she looked intently at me, "It feel more like, like free, freedom," then she laughed.

"What do you mean by freedom?"

"I don't really get to read that much at school."

"What do you mean?"

"I have to do work, and I have to do this, and I don't really have time to read."

For Rosa Maria, engaging with text at school was not an experience of reading, but of work. She saw no relationship between the reading she did for pleasure at home and the "work" of school. At home she was a reader engaging with books and text for entertainment and reflection, as with the poetry she wrote; at school she was a worker "struggling," as she said, to get through each job. For Rosa Maria, she can be a reader only at home; school is akin to a factory where she is "working" at a frustrating, increasingly difficult job without compensation.

Knowing from having looked over her shoulder for days that Rosa Maria often knew the answers to questions asked by the teacher but did not participate, I asked her what made her decide to raise her hand during class discussions. "Sometimes I raise my hand. Sometimes I don't. Sometimes I don't raise my hand because I really don't know if it's the right answer." As I mentioned earlier, although Ingrid was very secure in her strong literate identity and felt absolutely no need to raise her hand and find validation through providing the correct answer to the

teachers and class, Rosa Maria wanted to be a student who raised her hand with the right answer. Her choice to not position herself as a knower during whole group activities was mediated by the striving school identity that had been constructed through her previous school experiences.

Meeting the Other Rosa Maria

In my visit with Rosa Maria at her home, I had the feeling that a band-aid had been ripped away or that Rosa Maria had spent her time in school in a cloud of self-imposed silence, but now she was eager, anxious to explain herself to someone. I pursue the question of handraising with Rosa Maria further in our conversation because I felt from her intensity in her answers that this was a topic she cared deeply about, unlike Ingrid, for whom handraising was of minimal to no importance. I asked this girl that I felt I had just met, although I've been sitting behind her right shoulder off and on for weeks, why she did not choose to raise her hand very often. "Is it because you don't want to raise your hand and give the wrong answer?"

"Yes."

"Would that be so terrible?"

"Yes!"

"Why?"

"*Why*? Because I don't want these kids – and they're going to stare at me and start saying stuff."

There was a long silence as we looked at each other. Then I said, "I think you know the answer more often than you raise your hand."

"Yeah."

Rosa Maria feared inadvertently positioning herself as a not-knower in front of her peers, even when she believed that she knew the answer. The positions that she took on during whole group activities constrained her engagement in the activities because she was trying to avoid embarrassment and shame in front of her peers.

At the end of my visit with Rosa Maria, she walked me to the door, her beautiful huge grin lighting up her face. I was reluctant to leave because I wondered if I would ever have a chance to talk with the Rosa Maria of this visit. Just before I went, I queried her, "Who will I see tomorrow?"

"What?" she asked, confused.

"Will it be the Rosa Maria of school or her twin the Rosa Maria I met this evening?" She twinkled at me and followed me out to the sidewalk, waving as I got into my car, her brothers behind her, hanging upside-down in the tree.

Invitations to the Other Twin

In the days after our conversation at Rosa Maria's home, my relationship with her shifted on the spectrum of participant-observer. I had begun my time in Mr. Snyder's classroom as a participant-OBSERVER. Although I had been welcome in both first grade and fourth grade to participate as well, with Ms. Breen inviting me in as a scorekeeper during games and with Mrs. Greene supportive of any ways that I could address students' questions and concerns when she was engaged with a reading group, Mr. Snyder explicitly invited me to participate in his classroom by often talking through parts of his lessons with me and asking for my insights or feedback. Mr. Snyder reflected regularly on his lessons and he was open to and interested in new ideas or strategies that I might suggest. He explained to me that he was a fourth

year teacher and declared, "I have a lot of work that needs to be done before I'd consider myself someone that belongs in a classroom…I want to have more solid lessons." During the time of my data collection, Mr. Snyder was taking a course on teaching English learners, with an emphasis on the Shelter Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. He was pleased to be sharing his classroom with Mrs. Bennett that year, as much as for what he could learn from her as from the ways that a co-teaching model could support his students. Mr. Snyder of all of my participating teachers was the most interested in seeing my field notes, not just to consider my early interpretations of interactions, but to examine his own teaching as well as episodes of student interactions in his classroom that were unfolding around him.

Given the welcoming atmosphere of Mr. Snyder's classroom and my new knowledge of Rosa Maria, my role during my shadowing of her began to shift to one where I was equally a participant-observer as well as to occasions when I was a PARTICIPANT-observer. Rosa Maria saw me as a trusted adult and a teacher, and my conversations with Mrs. Bennett and Mr. Snyder only served to bolster my status as a supplemental teacher. My role as a "teacher" became important in light of the invitations I began to extend to the "Other" Rosa Maria.

Knowing more of her and of her self-doubt which seemed far too massive in light of what I believed she was capable of doing, I engaged actively with Rosa Maria more during my last observations of her and later informal visits back to her classroom. While I still maintained my observer status, sitting by her left shoulder, typing furiously on my laptop, my role of participant grew, especially when Mr. Snyder or Mrs. Bennett asked questions to the whole group and Rosa Maria looked at

me with a sideways glance that said, "I know the answer to this." I began to make faces at her, rolling my eyes, scowling at her, or tapping her paper when one of her teachers asked for a student to answer a question or volunteer for an activity. I began to position Rosa Maria regularly and frequently as a knower, reader, and writer, harassing her until she took up the position that I was interactively putting her into.

When I reviewed my field notes after my observations during those weeks, I was at first horrified to see the effect that I, as a researcher, was having on my own data. However, by the time I saw the changes in Rosa Maria's positioning patterns, especially during whole group activities, only a brief amount of time was left in the school year. Additionally, Rosa Maria, Mr. Snyder, and Mrs. Bennett were all so delighted in the changes in Rosa Maria's positioning patterns that I forgave myself. Additional consideration of my field notes from that time confirms that I had taken on more of a tutorial role in both of the reading/language arts periods I spent with Mr. Snyder, so my impact was that of a teacher as much, if not more, than a researcher.

In the following vignette, I describe one literacy event in which I urged Rosa Maria to participate in contributing to a whole group activity when she clearly knew the answers that the teacher was seeking. Because the activity is one focused on editing [the same activity from a different class period is described in Ingrid's whole group literacy event vignette] the positioning is frequently that of writer, because the task is focused on editing a large paragraph of text for standard writing conventions, including spelling and capitalization, as well as grammar.

Table 6.8: Sixth: Rosa Maria: New Pattern of Positioning in Whole Group

Literacy Event Vignette: Rosa Maria and a New Pattern of Positioning in Whole Group	Position Affords Access	Position Constrains Access
Mrs. Bennett is leading the editing of a paragraph written on the whiteboard easel. Mrs. Bennett has deliberately written the paragraph about tomorrow's field trip with lots of errors. To begin the activity, Mrs. Bennett has instructed students to rewrite the paragraph correctly in their notebooks. Now that they have finished this, she is facilitating the editing of the paragraph on the easel by asking students to volunteer to come up and fix the errors. From my seat behind her left shoulder, I can see that Rosa Maria has corrected most of the errors of the paragraph in her rewrite.	Writer (R)	
When Mrs. Bennett asks for students to volunteer to address the errors, Rosa Maria looks at me sideways and I whisper very quietly, "You can do this!" Rosa Maria raises her hand.	Writer (I) Writer (I) Writer (R)	
Immediately, Mrs. Bennett looks at Rosa Maria, "What else is wrong with 'tomorow'?" she asks, referring to the word on the whiteboard easel. Rosa Maria immediately puts down her hand and gapes in panic at Mrs. Bennett during a long pause. I give Rosa Maria an encouraging look and I pause in typing my notes in order to tap on her paper where she has correctly spelled "tomorrow."	Writer (I) Writer (I)	Stymied (R)
Rosa Maria takes a big breath and looks back at Mrs. Bennett. "It's spelled wrong."	Writer (R)	
"How do you spell it?" asks Mrs. Bennett. Rosa Maria spells "t-o-m-o-r-r-o-w" aloud and then walks up to the easel to rewrite it.	Writer (I) Writer (R)	
A few minutes later, Rosa Maria again raises her hand again to offer a correction. She has been following along with the edits made by other students and has seen how many of the errors she has caught and fixed in her notebook draft. She is again called upon by Mrs. Bennett, who looked surprised that Rosa Maria has not once, but twice raised her hand and voluntarily contributed to a whole group activity. "What is else is wrong?" asks Mrs. Bennett.	Writer (R) Writer (I) Writer (I)	
"Teachers names need to be capitalized," says Rosa Maria very softly.	Writer (R)	
"You need to speak up a little," said Mrs.		

Bennett.		
"'mr.' needs to be capitalized!"	Writer (R)	
"Why does it need to be capitalized?"	Writer (I)	
"It's a name."	Writer (R)	
"Okay, Rosa Maria, come over here and show	Writer (I)	
us." Rosa Maria goes up to the whiteboard easel and	Writer (R)	
writes a capital "M."		
Mrs. Bennett tells her, "Make it even bigger	Writer (I)	
because it's a capital letter." Rosa Maria wipes away		
the first "M" and replaces it with a bigger "M."	Writer(R)	
"Anything else?" Mrs. Bennett asks Rosa Maria.	Writer	
Rosa Maria nods her head yes. "Step aside just one	(I/R)	
moment," says Mrs. Bennett, and reminds the class that		
capital letters need to be clearly bigger and taller than		
lowercase letters. Meanwhile, Rosa Maria stands next to		
her, hunched over, looking mortified. Mrs. Bennett turns		
back to her. "Okay, anything else?" Rosa Maria fixes	Writer (I)	
another capital letter in the same sentence. "Okay, good	Writer (R)	
job!" says Mrs. Bennett, sending Rosa Maria back to	Writer (I)	
her desk.		
When she comes back to her seat and slumps		
into it gratefully, I ask her, "Was that fun?"		
"No!" she whispers decidedly.		Reluctant
"Why?"		Writer (R)
"Because I made a mistake, I wrote a little 'm'."		Not-Knower
However, Rosa Maria recovered from that	Writer (R)	(R)
shame and went on to raise her hand and be called on		
one more time by a pleasantly surprised Mrs. Bennett,	Writer (I)	
who seemed to be taking advantage of the suddenly		
highly participatory Rosa Maria. Coming back to her		
desk from her third conquest, Rosa Maria looked at me		
with a huge smile, "I've been up three times!"	Writer (R)	
"Is that a record?" I ask.		
"Yes!" She turns her notebook with her edited version	Writer (R)	
of the whiteboard paragraph around so that Lisa can		
see her answers. Rosa Maria points to a word that she	Writer (R)	
has corrected but which is still incorrect on the easel		
whiteboard and gestures to Lisa, whispering to her,		
"Get up!"		

In this final literacy event for Rosa Maria, I positioned her as a writer and

Rosa Maria took up this position. Surprised and pleased to see Rosa Maria raise her

hand, Mrs. Bennett also positioned Rosa Maria as a writer and invited her to share the

correct spelling of "tomorrow." Rosa Maria momentarily panicked and positioned herself as stymied, but Mrs. Bennett waited patiently, continuing to position Rosa Maria as a writer with my encouraging look reinforcing this positioning. Rosa Maria successfully claimed the position of writer by correctly editing "tomorrow" on the easel whiteboard. Her success in this positive positioning gave her the confidence to continue to position herself as a writer by raising her hand. Although she was mortified by the need to stand next to Mrs. Bennett in front of the class for a moment and then further discomfited by Mrs. Bennett's request to for her to make a bigger "m," temporarily positioning herself as a *reluctant* writer, Rosa Maria's pleasure and success inspired her to position herself several more times as a writer. At the end of the literacy vignette, Rosa Maria was so confident in her positioning and so delighted with the feeling of success that she wanted to share the feeling of success with Lisa, using her own work in a manner that somewhat paralleled Ana's sharing of work in an effort to mentor Lisa towards success.

The new positioning that Rosa Maria tried on during whole group activity provided her with the opportunity to discover what it felt like to successfully position herself and be positioned in a positive way throughout the activity. Her positions deepened her engagement in the literacy event and demonstrated to herself, to Mrs. Bennett, and to her peers that she was capable of successfully taking on the role of writer during editing activities. In the following paragraph, I add the conclusion to this literacy vignette, a conversation that Rosa Maria and I had that day at the end of class:

At the end of this class, both Rosa Maria and I are packing up our things. As we walk toward the door with the rest of her class, she turns to me and smiles shyly, "I want to take her."

"Take who?" I ask.

"My twin."

"Where would you take her?"

"I want to take her here," she says wistfully, looking around at the classroom before she walks down the hallway to lunch.

In this conversation, Rosa Maria shared the possibilities that she believed she could have with success if only she had the courage to bring her "twin," her strong home literate identity, to school. Given the marvelously successful and blooming Rosa Maria that I witnessed in the literacy event, I wondered if Rosa Maria had deliberately brought her home literate identity into school to begin to re-construct her striving school literate identity, and that this could account for her changing patterns of positioning. Given Rosa Maria's assertive identification of herself as a "struggling" student in our conversation, it was uncertain this brief joy in positioning herself as a "writer" and being affirmed in this would be enough to re-construct a literate identity as a knowledgeable and successful student.

Although as I have discussed earlier in this study, identity is fluid, one concern with students who repeatedly find themselves unsuccessful within academic contexts is that their identities as striving students will be reified, both institutionally and by themselves. Given the literature on Long-Term English Learners that I discussed in Chapter 1, as well as some of the studies that I referred to in Chapter 2, it

seems that many students may be in literacy trajectories of striving students and may experience increasingly limited opportunities for literate identity re-construction. The possibility that the brief appearance of the "home" Rosa Maria was a temporary, although brilliant, event was made even more likely by her brief conversation with me after this lesson. In asserting that she would like to bring the "home" Rosa Maria to school but in sadly implying that she could not, Rosa Maria hinted at the difficulty of repeating such success as she has had in this whole group activity consistently in the future. As the participant-observer who played a role in compelling Rosa Maria to participate, I wonder at what might be possible if I were to become her constant shadow in school even as I admit the impossibility of such a venture.

However, Rosa Maria's positionings during all literacy events, especially whole group, were consistently stronger during the remainder of my time in her classroom. She took more risks, participated more in whole group activities, and took on more leadership roles in table group work. Her stronger positioning and blossoming confidence in the last few weeks of the school year did not go unnoticed by her teachers. Mr. Snyder commented to me, "While you're in the classroom with Rosa Maria, when you're in the classroom she's raising her hand a lot." I was embarrassed by this, worried that I had overstepped my boundaries as a researcher. Both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett took advantage of Rosa Maria's positive positioning, calling on her nearly every time she raised her hand, inviting her active participation, and creating spontaneous opportunities for her to be successful.

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Snyder was taking a course in SIOP at this time and he brought new ideas and strategies into his instruction. Both he and I could

witness the effect that the strategies he was trying out had on Rosa Maria, who seemed bolstered by my stolid presence behind her left shoulder. On a day when he linked vocabulary words about elements of fiction to pictures, Rosa Maria raised her hand several times, including one particularly enthusiastic wave, and answered all of the questions for which she was chosen. The last time she raised her hand, Mr. Snyder said, "I want to pick someone who hasn't been up to the board yet" so Rosa Maria pointed to Jose in her table group, trying to get him involved with success as well. Rosa Maria was growing more comfortable positioning herself as a knower, reader, and writer, perhaps she was also growing more comfortable trying on a new literate identity well. For Rosa Maria, so much an intricate member of her table group, being in the position of knower not only meant that she was able to share her knowledge with members of the class as a whole, but that she also had the role of bringing her table-group peers into the forum of success as well.

Despite my concerns about what would happen with Rosa Maria's new pattern of positioning, she gave me hope during my member-checking conversation with her. When I shared a brief narrative with her that provided an overview of how I would present her in my report, she corrected my assertion that "At school, she knows more than she shows because she doesn't want to speak out or raise her hand and then end up having the wrong answer." According to Rosa Maria, that description of her was no longer accurate because "I'm not that shy any more. I realized that I am that smart and it doesn't matter if you raise your hand and get it wrong." She also mentioned that she would now like to go to college, especially after a field trip to a local university that was organized by some of her middle school teachers. Although I

264

did not follow Rosa Maria into middle school to observe her experiences there, her assertion of confidence and strength hints at the possibilities of identity re-construction, of the power of re-positioning held by teachers, and the importance of inviting the "home" identities of students into the classroom to support them in negotiating positions of strength.

Literate Identities and the Mediation of Positioning

As with my focal participants in Chapter 5, when we first met my sixth grade participants they had very different school literate identities that mediated their positioning during literacy events in ways that guided their level of engagement within those literacy events. Ingrid's positive literate identity that bridged home and school contexts mediated her positive positioning during table group and independent literacy events. Her literate identity also supported her in engaging quietly in whole group activities, but in a way that neither she nor her teachers believed necessitated oral participation. She engaged deeply in all three literacy event contexts, with her strong literate identity leading to her independently to take on positions and find success in those positions of knower, reader, and writer. Her strong literate identity also supported her in actively negotiating for positive positioning, as we saw in the table group literacy event when she refused to give up her right as a reader with the *Pigs* book.

On the other hand, when we first met Rosa Maria, she had a strong home literate identity that mediated her positioning at home as a reader, with the *Goosebumps* books, and as a writer of poetry. By sixth grade, she and her teachers had constructed a striving school literate identity in which Rosa Maria saw herself as

265

a struggling reader and therefore took on positions that deferred to other students, constrained her engagement in literacy events, and gave her limited opportunities for success with literacy.

Identity Re-Construction

When I began my observation time with Rosa Maria, she was nearing the end of her sixth grade year, on the cusp of middle school, and strongly identified herself as a "struggling" reader for whom school was a painful place of difficult work. In my conversation at her home, she had shared with me that school was hard "cause you do a lot of work and you're stressed. Your hands hurt, writing and writing and writing. And it hurts your brain when you read and you have to think."

Although I did not know Rosa Maria when she was in first grade, I wonder if like my focal participants and the other first graders whom I witnessed, Rosa Maria had begun her schooling experiences full of curiosity, hope, and optimism. Given the twinkles that sparkled from her throughout my time with her, I rather think she did. However, in the years between first grade and sixth grade Rosa Maria experienced enough failure and embarrassment that school had become an aversive place, and the school day had become a time that was simply to be gotten through in order to return to the sanctuary of home and her neighborhood. Despite the risk of reification into a striving identity that is hinted at by Rosa Maria's experience, and of even more importance, is the possibility that she shared with us. In sixth grade, and in secondary school, where Rosa Maria was when she shared her changes in engagement since my time with her, students can be supported in re-positioning themselves in positive and successful ways by their teachers, and through such re-positioning, have an

266

opportunity to-reconstruct their school literate identities in positive ways, which Hawkins (2005) states allow students to "gain increasing access to the discourses of school" (p. 80)

The Role of the Teacher

Given the sea-change that Rosa Maria described to me in my member-checking conversation with her, I also believe that such positive re-positioning can support identity re-construction by students and by their teachers. Even years into a students' schooling experience, teachers have the power to support students in re-negotiating their identities and in finding pathways to success with academic literacy and with school. Positive positioning of the students by the teacher encourages students to take on stronger positions, as when Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett took advantage of nearly every time Rosa Maria volunteered to participate in whole group activity. Also, small instructional choices, such as Mr. Snyder's choice to rethink his assigning of the multicultural Cinderella tales and give Rosa Maria's table group the Mexican Cinderella story, went a long way in supporting students' positive positioning and deeper engagement. The power of making culturally relevant instructional choices for students has been described by Yoon (2008) who asserted, "When [the teacher] employed multicultural and globalized activities and accommodated the ELLs' cultural differences, the students felt more at home, experienced a sense of belonging, and participated in an active manner" (p. 517). The importance of employing multicultural resources with culturally and linguistically diverse students is also argued by Ladson-Billings (1995), Villegas and Lucas (2002), and others.

Mr. Snyder, Mrs. Bennett, and I did not bring in a new curriculum or create substantial changes within the sixth grade classroom of Rosa Maria. For Mr. Snyder the opportunity to co-teach with a certified ESOL teacher and his coursework in supporting ELLs, coupled with his reflective nature as a teacher, led him to try new ways of sheltering content and accommodating students' needs. This helped him to avoid the perspective that "teaching ELLs is…a matter of applying 'just good teaching' practices" (de Jong & Harper, 2005, p. 102). Through the simple acts of strong positioning, of actively seeking opportunities for Rosa Maria to experience success, of looking beyond immediate assumptions about limited engagement, and of trying out new strategies suggested by SIOP that would support the academic development of ELLs, the sixth grader teachers seem to have set Rosa Maria on a new literacy trajectory. If such literacy trajectories can be reset for Rosa Maria, then the possibilities for the other students struggling with school and academic literacy development are multiple and achievable.

Strategies and Resources

As with my previous participants, Ingrid and Rosa Maria used a variety of strategies and resources in approaching literacy events. Like fourth grade, sixth grade was substantially less scaffolded than first grade. As with fourth grade, part of a student's success was measured by his or her ability to complete literacy tasks independently and without scaffolding. However, with the insights provided by his SIOP training and the conversations and feedback he gathered from Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Snyder was cognizant of the need for scaffolds for ELLs, including Rosa Maria. In my conversation with him, he shared the way that he began to modify his

vocabulary quizzes based on input about appropriate accommodations for ELLs from Mrs. Bennett with the result that the ELLs in his class, including Rosa Maria, began to demonstrate progress on their vocabulary assessments.

The Importance of Peers

Both students used their peers for resources. Ingrid was popular among several girls in the room as a group member because of her ease in comprehending and analyzing text, as well as her subtle sense of humor. When Mr. Snyder asked students to pair up, girls from Ingrid's table group would seek her out. Additionally, Ingrid often checked in with her peers for suggestions or to bounce ideas off of them when she was writing, although she was always very good at tuning out her peers when she wanted to focus and work alone.

Peer support and interaction was even more important for Rosa Maria. As she described earlier, completing literacy tasks was easier when she and her table group members were able to get their "brains" together. Although sometimes she used peer support in a way that constrained her engagement in the literacy event, as when she copied from Ana or passively appealed to Ana during read-alouds, she also positioned herself with peers and was positioned in ways that deepened her engagement in the literacy event, as during the enthusiastic read-aloud of the *Adelita* and the shared story writing that followed. As Mr. Snyder recognized, Rosa Maria was "more apt to work and to complete assignments" when she was cooperating with peers. She and her peers served as scaffolds and resources to each other, sometimes as effective ways of entering more deeply into the assignment and sometimes as ways of getting through an assignment. In order to support peer interactions that lead to strong

positioning for all students, rather than the positions of constraint that Rosa Maria and her peers sometimes took on when working with a student such as Ana, Lensmire (1994) suggests that teachers learn to recognize the social relations within their classrooms and take steps to create and sustain learning communities in which all students can contribute valued voices.

Spanish as a Resource

Like the other participants in this study, both of my sixth grade focal students used Spanish as a resource although both of them described themselves as being English-dominant. Rosa Maria's mother had spent several decades in Texas and her family was bilingual at home, code-switching regularly. Ingrid spoke primarily Spanish at home and her earliest literacy experiences had been in Spanish as her mother read to her. At the time of my conversation with her, she had hopes of learning to read in Spanish herself and was planning to take a Spanish for Native Speakers course in middle school. Spanish served as a resource for Rosa Maria when working with her table group peers. Because the configuration of her table group often included two Spanish-speaking newcomers, the conversation in her table group was bilingual as well, with plenty of code-switching, which Mellom (2008) found was used by students as a resource and a type of peer scaffolding. As demonstrated through the multicultural Cinderella table group work vignette, the use of a text that included plenty of Spanish phrases and references to Mexican culture was not only extraordinarily motivating and interesting for Rosa Maria and her peers, but also allowed them to use their expertise in comprehending the text and made them cultural insiders in understanding the text, and sharing it with others, including Mr. Snyder.

Defining Success in Sixth Grade

Being a successful student in the upper elementary grades, including fourth and sixth grades, includes being a well-behaved and diligent student, being motivated, as well as being able to have success with independent academic literacy tasks. Being a quiet student alone does not mean that one's teacher will identify a student as successful, as we see very clearly in the case of Rosa Maria described above. Success in sixth grade not only means being well-behaved, which Rosa Maria and Ingrid both are in the eyes of Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett, but it also means being able to complete literacy tasks with a high degree of independence, as Ingrid did.

In a way that also parallels my discoveries from Antonio and Sebastian in fourth grade, I found that even as Ingrid, the student initially identified as "successful" by her teachers demonstrated a literate identity that was consistent across the contexts of home and school, Rosa Maria, a student known by herself and her teachers to be challenged by academic literacy tasks, demonstrated dissonant literate identities across school and home contexts, at least in during most of my time with her. However, Rosa Maria's story demonstrates the possibilities for identity-reconstruction and student re-positioning patterns in academic literacy events.

Mr. Snyder's insights into Rosa Maria's experiences allowed him to see past Rosa Maria's positions of constraint and her sometimes shallow engagement into literacy events into the strong literate identity she wanted to claim. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Mr. Snyder realized that Rosa Maria wanted to continue to develop academically. He did not interpret her positions of constraint as signs of her lack of motivation but focused instead on the moments when Rosa Maria showed

271

enthusiasm or took risks. Mrs. Bennett was also was able to see past Rosa Maria's frequent positions of constraint to believe that she was not unmotivated, but rather that she had a "lack of self-confidence." Both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett described Rosa Maria and Ingrid as well-behaved students, meaning that Rosa Maria could claim two of the three sixth grade criteria for success. Indeed, Rosa Maria's only missing criteria was her inability to complete reading and writing tasks with independence.

My own positioning of Rosa Maria changed as my awareness of her multiple identities increased. I think back to my first observation of her, watching her stare into space during whole group discussions or playing with her pink mechanical pencil. How thin my interpretation of her experiences would be if I had limited myself to knowing her and talking with her only at school, at that alien place full of days that she worked her way through, painfully, "struggling" in her own words, managing by relying on friends and taking on positions that supported her in getting through academic literacy tasks. How thin also if my visit to her at home had not been coupled with an extended amount of time in her classroom, long enough to watch her identity as a literate student in whole group activities begin to shift and change.

I find it both frightening and powerful that my gently harassing presence behind her left shoulder played a role in facilitating Rosa Maria to put down her mechanical pencil and find whole group discussions a place with possibilities of triumphant success, where she was the student with the answers. I find it hopeful that Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett were so quick to see the subtle changes in Rosa Maria and tap the possibilities for success within her. One of the most important

implications of this study is the powerful role that teachers can play in re-positioning students and in tapping their possibilities. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett did not change their classroom or their instruction in massive time-consuming ways to invite Rosa Maria into new patterns of positioning and possibly a re-constructed literate identity; rather, they re-positioned her during literacy events, created the types of activities known to support ELLs, and took advantage of Rosa Maria's growing willingness to take risks.

After I had finished my observations in sixth grade, I returned to Walnut Springs Elementary School to continue my work in the other grade levels as well as to see Rosa Maria and Ingrid one final time before summer. I attended their ceremony for sixth grade promotion, where the keynote speech was given by their future middle principal. Although I had never seen them together, since they were in separate sixth grade classes, it felt fitting that my last glimpse was of the two of them in the main atrium of the school, holding hands as their high-heeled shoes clattered on the floor and their long fancy dresses fluttered out behind them as they skipped into their futures.

Chapter 7 : Cross-Case Comparisons and Analyses

Introduction

Having introduced and shared my interpretations of the experiences, positioning, and literate identities of each of my student informants through grade level chapters, I will now compare and contrast findings across grade levels to discover what my informants may teach me and other members of the field about the academic literacy experiences of elementary English Language Learners (ELLs). First, I discuss the academic literacy experiences of my students as interpreted through the theoretical lenses of positioning and identity, going on to consider the ways that students may become reified into certain literate identities and ways that may be precluded. Next I will share my findings on how "success" is determined across each of the three grade levels according to narrow definitions as well as the complex role that scaffolding plays in ranking "success." This chapter will also include the crucial role that peer interaction plays in students' positioning and engagement in literacy events. Finally, I will conclude this chapter with an examination of the "shallow" and "deep" engagement mediated by students' positioning during literacy events and the possibilities for supporting all students to take on positions that foster deep engagement and academic literacy development.

Before I begin my comparisons and analyses, I revisit the theories of positioning and identity and the ways that those theories may offer insight into ELLs' academic literacy experiences. Positioning theory, which was developed in the field of social psychology, is used in fine-grained analysis of "mediated interactions

between people" and a "starting point for reflecting upon the many different aspects of social life" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 1, 9-10). As articulated by Norton, positioning examines singular moments in space and time (personal communication, December 2, 2010). Within a single interaction, one may take on a variety of positions (reflexively) and have a variety of positions imposed upon oneself by others (interactively).

On the other hand, identity theory comes from the field of cultural studies and can be described as "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person'" from the perspective of self and others (Gee, 2000-2001, p. 99). Like positions, one's identities may also be fluid and multiple. However, Rampton (2007) asserted that identity as an analytic concept works best as a second or third order analytic lens, especially when complemented with another concept to support the moment-to-moment analysis of interactional data. Identity then can help the analysis to bridge back to larger conversations in the research community on issues of social justice and equity.

An expanding body of research is beginning to use both positioning and identity theory to provide fruitful analyses into participants' experiences and narratives because of the complementary insights they can provide (Kamada, 2010; Nasir & Saxe, 2003; Vetter, 2010). In order to review how the two theories complement each other in this study, I refer to Rosa Maria. As discussed in Chapter 6, Rosa Maria's school literate identity and home literate identity are in dissonance with each other. Within both of those identities, Rosa Maria takes on the position of reader within specific micro-interactions. However, as I discuss later in this chapter, the patterns of positive positioning that Rosa Maria tried on during literacy events more frequently

towards the end of my study may support her school literate identity re-construction from that of a striving reader to that of a strong and successful student, with the support of effective teachers who continue to position her in positive ways and facilitate her success in academic literacy events with appropriately scaffolded instruction.

Students' Experiences of Academic Literacy Events

The purpose of this study was to investigate elementary ELLs' experiences of academic literacy events using positioning and identity theory to gather insights about factors that may influence students' acquisition of academic English in mainstream classrooms. As shown in the previous three chapters, students positioned themselves and were positioned in ways that directly impacted their experiences of literacy events and either afforded access or constrained access to engagement in those literacy events. We saw in several cases that even when the literacy events were the same, synchronously in the cases of Alejandro and Hector in first grade, and asynchronously in the cases of Sebastian/Antonio, Rosa Maria/Ingrid, students' positioning in the events was frequently very different and mediated their possibilities for academic literacy engagement in a variety of ways.

Introduced in Chapter 1, the concept of affordance is useful in this study in considering the effects that students' positionings have on their access to and level of engagement in academic literacy events. Van Lier (2000) illustrates the concept of affordance by comparing it to a leaf, which "can offer very different affordances to different organisms" (p. 252). The same leaf is infused with an infinite variety of possibilities depending upon which insects or animals approach the leaf and how they

choose to employ it. In the same way, each literacy event provided by the teacher is a leaf rich with possibilities but the ways that students position themselves and are positioned within the literacy event mediate how rich the literacy event is with opportunities for literacy development. As demonstrated throughout this paper, access to an academic literacy event is not enough to guarantee that the literacy event will provide an opportunity for students to learn. To extend van Lier's metaphor, I assert that teachers must do more than provide the leaf. We must be aware of how our students employ the leaf and what future steps we may take to make the leaf juicier, more appealing, or to help students to get a good grip on it. We must think of instruction not just as constructing and providing high-quality activities for our students, but as the follow-through of facilitating the type of positioning of students that will afford them meaningful engagement in the literacy event and provide the scaffolding that will facilitate their success in their positive positioning.

Through vignettes and analyses, I have demonstrated that how students position themselves and are positioned by others mediates their engagement in literacy events. As shown through the stories of the six student informants in this study, students' quotidian positioning was itself mediated by their literate identities. In first grade, both Alejandro and Hector had strong literate identities that led to their taking on such positions such as knower, learner, and thinker. Ms. Breen played a crucial role in interactive positioning that consistently placed students into those stances and in constructing a classroom rich with scaffolds that gave Alejandro and Hector daily opportunities for success. For very young students still acclimating to the *culture of school*, Mrs. Breen's classroom was an ideal environment for literate

277

identity construction. She deliberately developed literacy events, scaffolding, and questions to play to students' individual strengths and which positioned all members of the class as learners. Frequent positive positioning and experiences of success supported Hector and Alejandro in developing strong literate identities.

As seen in the stories of Sebastian and Ingrid, both students had strong literate identities and embraced books and reading as a source of play and intellectual engagement in and out of the classroom. They identified themselves as readers and their literate identities bridged home and school. For them, each literacy event was a welcome challenge and their intellectual curiosity and confidence in their own abilities to engage with, interpret, and construct text supported them in consistently taking on the positive positions of reader, writer, knower, learner, and thinker. Even though Sebastian declared that the small group reading routine was boring and too easy, he took competitive pleasure in "beating the model" during the activities. Their strong literate identities mediated their positive positioning during academic literacy events, in turn opening up their access to deep engagement with those literacy events.

On the other hand, Antonio and Rosa Maria shared markedly different and dissonant literate identities between home and school. In contrast to the other students' literate identities that were consistent across school and home contexts. Antonio and Rosa Maria each had distinct school literate identities and home literate identities. Both had strong home literate identities – Rosa Maria read books for fun and wrote poetry for a select audience. Antonio went to the library regularly with his mother and read books on drawing to support his development as an artist. Their home literate identities spilled over into their interactions with me at their homes as

they both took the lead in reading and responding to the reading interest survey even as I had just begun to read it to them. Rosa Maria was thoughtful, confident, articulate, and insightful in contrast to her shy and hesitant school self. Although always charming and happy at school, at home Antonio was clearly more comfortable and confident. His need for physical movement seemed to have disappeared and he was clearly delighted to be sitting at his own kitchen table, sharing with me the details of a world that was physically only a few miles but which might have been a universe away. In drawing their pictures to share with me, both Rosa Maria and Antonio labored over their work for long minutes, pausing occasionally to add details and refinement. In contrast to "doing" the work of school in ways to just get through the activity, they took the opportunity of drawing for me as a way to demonstrate their multiple selves to me with skill and creativity.

In contrast to the strong literate identities and other multiple identities that I had the privilege to begin to know in my home visits of Antonio and Rosa Maria were their school literate identities as striving readers. As shown in Chapter 6, despite reading and writing for fun and pleasure at home, Rosa Maria described her literate life at school as one where "Nothing's easy for me. I get kind of confused and I can't understand," adding, "I struggle." There is a clear dichotomy between the literate identity of Rosa Maria at home and the Rosa Maria at school demonstrated through her differentiation between the reading of home life and the work of school life. Antonio was not so explicit in revealing his split literate identity between school and home, but it is demonstrated through his slow and careful responses to my questions and the balance he found in the interview between being honest and trying to please

me, couching his thoughts about school with hedges such as liking to read "a *little* bit" but then becoming enthusiastic and describing reading as "a *little* fun." He clarified by explaining that he liked the books that had pictures in them and some chapter books and by rushing into his living room to show me the silly poetry books that he recently brought home from the library, reading selections to me.

A major contributing factor to Rosa Maria's and Antonio's striving school literate identities was their mutual nervousness about losing face and shaming themselves in front of their classmates. Both students shared their horror being called up or raising their hand to participate and then providing a wrong answer. As a sixth grader and as a fourth grader, Rosa Maria and Antonio both have years of history in a reading/language arts classroom. If the positive literate identities of Alejandro and Hector can provide insight into how school literate identities are constructed, revealing that for both of those students their school and home literate identities are shared and strong, it is more than likely that both Rosa Maria and Alejandro entered into their schooling experiences with confident literate identities under construction, bringing their home literate identities into the classroom. What has happened, then, that a few years later they have both come to see school as a daily chore that must be gotten through, and they have developed separate school literate identities designed to help them to survive rather than thrive?

In Chapter 6, Mr. Snyder asserted that Rosa Maria's reluctance to take risks in class it was probably due to the cumulative pain of being embarrassed too many times in academic activities. Also, given Rosa Maria's use of the word "struggle" to describe what reading was like for her, it seems very likely that she was re-voicing a

280

word she had heard one or more of her teachers use in a conversation with another adult to describe a "struggling" reader. At home, Rosa Maria and Antonio were confident and enthusiastic in sharing their personal literacy interests. It is likely that they did not show up at school reluctant and nervous about reading and writing tasks. Along their journey to the end of sixth and fourth grade, something, or some things happened to them in their literate identity construction to cause them both to develop separate home and school literate identities as an act of strategic self-preservation. Taking risks and failing or being embarrassed were untenable situations, so they adjusted.

The Risk of Reification

It may be possible even if Rosa Maria and Antonio both had strong school literate identities comparable to those revealed by Alejandro and Hector that they ended first grade on literacy trajectories that caused concern to their teachers. As we saw in first grade, even then, Ms. Breen and Ms. Francis noted that Alejandro and Hector were on markedly different literacy trajectories, with Alejandro's high level of independence in academic literacy events predicting success for him and Hector's continued need for scaffolding portending difficulties as he progressed through the grade levels.

This study has demonstrated that the fluid positioning that takes place during literacy events may offer opportunities for students to try on new roles as well as create contexts where teachers and peers can position students in positive or constraining ways. I have shown in this study how students' literate identities may mediate their positioning. I also assert, as did Vetter (2010) that how students are

positioned during literacy events and by their teachers contributes to the construction of their school literate identities. "Struggle" as taken up by Rosa Maria sounds as though it was plucked from an adult conversation about herself or another student reader and taken up by her because it had been directly applied to her, or because it captured the daily toil of her school life so well. Antonio was anxious to please adults, and wanted to demonstrate that he was doing work, but he wanted to manage this without the considerable effort of reading and writing about texts that he found too difficult. His way of "doing" assignments and rushing through them had come to be interpreted by his teachers as laziness and a lack of motivation.

From Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) to the present day (van den Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010) studies show that teacher expectations of students directly influence their work with them. McDermott (1993) found that a student could be institutionalized into an identity in such a way that it is others' perceptions of the student's performance, rather than the student's actual performance, that may guide a student's interactive positioning and ongoing identity construction by others. My concern is that Rosa Maria and Antonio, or other students with striving literate identities are becoming reified into those identities. Given the literature on Long-Term English Learners and the fact that those are students who have spent more than seven years in English language support programs without achieving the academic literacy level that will allow them to exit the program, it seems likely that students may become stuck in patterns of positioning that aid them in getting through and surviving difficult literacy tasks without effectively supporting their academic literacy development. If students enter into a cycle of positioning such

as that demonstrated by Antonio, what are the possibilities, then, for literate identity re-construction?

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, students' school literate identities work to mediate and be mediated by the reflexive and interactive positioning that is taken up and negotiated during academic literacy events. When students have constructed striving school literate identities that mediate positions of constraint, the possibilities that fluid positioning may hold diminish as patterns of positioning are repeated across years of academic literacy experiences.

Linking to Home

Flashes of moments throughout my observations of my six informants offer possibilities for ways that teachers may actively support students in constructing positive school literate identities that bridge to and even build upon students' home literate identities. In addition to creating a classroom culture where all participants frequently take on the role of learners, as demonstrated in Ms. Breen's classroom, teachers can actively invite students' home identities, literate and other, into the classroom. Another contribution to the strong literate identities of Alejandro and Hector was the way that Ms. Breen created moments where students explicitly brought their home lives into school. As shown in my first grade vignettes, Ms. Breen began each day by having students share stories from their lives. Ms. Breen used this activity to learn more about her students and to create a warm and welcoming classroom atmosphere.

All of my informants in this study spoke Spanish at home. The school-wide "Book of the Month" activity at Walnut Springs Elementary School sought to link to

the Spanish-speaking students by including the English-Spanish bilingual *The Three Little Javelinas/Los Tres Pequenos Jabalíes.* When one of the activities of the book club included having students choose their two favorite of the four books, I noticed that most of the Latino students in the classrooms where I was observing, not just my informants, included the bilingual book in their list. While the inclusion of this bilingual book was intentional by the school in linking to the home language of 54% of its students, I also witnessed the unintentional success of including an additional Spanish-rich text in my sixth grade observations.

As described in Chapter 6, Rosa Maria, along with her table group members, bubbled with enthusiasm for the two days they were working on reading and then writing a Mexican Cinderella story. Rosa Maria was so excited about the topic and proud of her insider knowledge that she positioned herself as a thinker, writer, and a knower by volunteering without hesitation to present the group's Mexican-American story to the class. Although it was unintentional, Mr. Snyder's provision of a Mexican Cinderella text to Rosa Maria and her table group members created opportunities for Rosa Maria and her peers to construct links between their school and home literate identities. In a time when teachers are overburdened with paperwork, student load, and increasingly limited planning time, it is important to point out that meeting the needs of ELLs such as Rosa Maria does not always have to include extensive time and modifications. Through the simple decision of which book to provide from a pile of available books, Mr. Snyder turned the "work" of a daily activity into an engaging meaningful activity rich with possibility for success through the text's connection to students' linguistic and cultural expertise.

Reaching a Definition of Success

When I was designing the plan for this study, I knew that I would ask teachers to identify two very different students for participation in the hopes of discovering some of the differences in positioning between students. Part of my study design also included a look at three different grade levels in order to capture some of the differences across academic literacy events and students' experiences in them across grade levels. It was my hope that including different types of students across three grade levels would invite complexity into my developing understandings of students' experiences. Among many discoveries that I made was, unsurprisingly, that all the students were very successful and skilled in a variety of areas. However, as articulated by Mrs. Greene in fourth grade, "reading is everything" that is -- the only success that really matters in school is the ability to read at or above grade level and the ability to write at or above grade level in response to what one has read with high levels of independence.

Alejandro, Sebastian, and Ingrid were all identified by their teachers as successful students. However, it is vital to look past the face value of what "successful" means to revisit and compare the definitions of success as constructed in each of the three focal grade levels and discussed in their respective chapters. These definitions of success were constructed within the school system context by teachers and administrators and were part of the school culture, which itself was heavily influenced by the pressure to do well on annual assessments of reading and math. In Table 7.1 I provide an overview of the definitions of success that I discovered across grade levels.

Table 7.1: School Definitions of Success Across Grade Levels

Grade Level	Criteria for Success
First	*Student completes reading and writing tasks with limited scaffolding *Independent reading and writing skills increase the likelihood of success in future academic years
Fourth	*Student completes reading and writing tasks with a high degree of independence *Motivation *"Good" behavior (On task behavior OR Off task behavior that links to academic literacy)
Sixth	*Student completes reading and writing tasks with a high degree of independence * Motivation *Good behavior

As demonstrated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the participating students in this study brought a variety of strengths, insights, and experiences into their classroom. However, students' *school* literate identities informed the way that they positioned themselves during literacy events, and in the cases of Antonio and Rosa Maria not only constrained their access to deep engagement in the literacy event but hid many of their strengths from their teachers. In the case of Antonio, his frequent position of "doer" was interpreted by both his mainstream classroom teacher and his pull-out English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher as a lack of motivation. Rosa Maria's position of doer might have been interpreted by her teachers as a lack of motivation except that her fluid positioning in small group activities and peer assignments also sometimes included knower, reader, and writer. Mr. Snyder's insights about Rosa Maria allowed him to see past Rosa Maria's doer position into the strong literate identity she wanted to claim and which was hinted in her moments of deep engagement and enthusiasm. Mrs. Bennett also was able to see past Rosa Maria's frequent positioning of doer to believe that she was not unmotivated, but

rather that she had a "lack of self-confidence." Both Mr. Snyder and Mrs. Bennett described Rosa Maria and Ingrid as well-behaved students, meaning that Rosa Maria could claim two of the three sixth grade criteria for success. Indeed, Rosa Maria's only missing criteria was her inability to complete reading and writing tasks with independence.

The Complex Function of Scaffolding

The ongoing need for scaffolding was one of the criteria that excluded some of my informants from meeting the teachers' and schools definitions of success. Indeed, although scaffolding was consistently and expertly provided in first grade, it was less ubiquitous in fourth and sixth. Additionally, in the upper grades, scaffolding seemed to be something that teachers assumed students did not need. Unfortunately, the positions of "doing" frequently taken up by Antonio and Rosa Maria were sometimes interpreted by teachers not as times when students needed scaffolding, but as moments when students were not trying very hard or were unmotivated.

When scaffolding was used in the upper grades, it served to position the students positively as learners, affording them deeper access to engagement in the literacy event. Mrs. Greene's reading group routine of providing the correct model of each item for students served as a scaffold for Antonio, who found this academic literacy event to be one of the best parts of reading/language arts. Antonio was always quick to take advantage of other scaffolds that were offered in fourth grade, such as the vocabulary pictures that the paraprofessional held up to support students when they were doing their vocabulary worksheets in his "independent" work literacy vignette.

When Mr. Snyder worked with Rosa Maria one-on-one to scaffold her understanding of the meaning of the name Cinderella, she took on a position of learner and then claimed the position of thinker, then knower, as she used her insider knowledge of Spanish to explain the meaning of *Adelita* to him. In one of my conversations with him, Mr. Snyder described how scaffolding earlier in the year helped Rosa Maria to become successful on vocabulary quizzes. "She was having a hard time taking a vocabulary quiz each day…[but] once we had more visuals involved in the quizzes, not just fill-ins, you know…she started to progress with vocabulary." When Mr. Snyder began to modify vocabulary quizzes by integrating visual components into the previously text-only assessments, Rosa Maria was able to move into the positions of knower, she began to achieve at a literacy event had previously lacked the scaffolding to invite her in to success.

Unfortunately, as I have shared, scaffolding was much more limited in the upper grades than in first grade. Most of the time, students were expected to complete their independent work without scaffolding, although as we saw in the previous chapters and as I discuss more later in this chapter, students frequently used their peers as scaffolding when completing independent work. One of the reasons that scaffolding was limited in the upper grades as reported by Mr. Snyder was the pressure to move through the curriculum at a high pace in order to meet the demands of the test as well as large class sizes, which limited the time teachers could spend working on individual student needs.

However, I believe that one of the other reasons that scaffolding was observed less frequently in the upper grades was that students' need for scaffolding was

confused by teachers with a lack of motivation as we saw in the case of Antonio in fourth grade. Mrs. Bennett insightfully realized that Rosa Maria's school literate identity and lack of self-confidence was one of the reasons that she avoided taking risks and trying on tasks. From my conversations and observations with Rosa Maria it was apparent to me that Rosa Maria regularly underestimated what she herself was capable of and avoided trying through a fear of failure and embarrassment. On the other hand, as we observed in her Cinderella interaction with Mr. Snyder, scaffolding provided the opportunity for Rosa Maria to position herself in positive ways. Positioning and success in other literacy events was also affected often by the scaffolding and intellectual challenges present in the literacy event. Students who received scaffolding were able to take up positions of knower, learner, and thinker. Unfortunately, in all grade levels, a regular need for scaffolding precluded some students from meeting the criteria for success.

Finally, although research on the effective support of ELLs points to the importance of scaffolding (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Gersten & Baker, 2000; Hill & Flynn, 2006) with the exception of several episodes in Mr. Snyder's classroom, my focal students did not receive scaffolding that was directed specifically to their needs as language learners. Mr. Snyder's relationship with his ESOL co-teacher and his on-going professional development in the support of ELLs had made him aware of the specific needs of ELLs. However, the students in my study had had all of their schooling in English and demonstrated a high level of oral fluency in social and in some academic conversations. To the teachers in my study, these students "sounded" like proficient English speakers, with phonologies that were

minimally influenced by their Spanish home language. Unlike the newcomers that were present in Rosa Maria's class, these students' outward comfort with the culture of the school and their English language oral proficiencies masked their ongoing development as ELLs.

I Get by With a Little Help From my Friends

As demonstrated in the three previous chapters and touched upon briefly already in this chapter, students' interactions with their peers played a vital and remarkable role in their positioning during literacy events. Hector and Alejandro both thrived during peer work, taking on positions of readers, writers, knowers, and thinkers. Sebastian's interactions with his table group peers, especially Jamie, often traveled into the realm of thoughtful and intellectual conversations on topics rising from the texts in which both interlocutors took on and negotiated positive positions.

Antonio's table group peers served as resources for materials and information about task completion and instruction, as well as answers. However, Antonio's striving school literate identity and his intention to get through academic literacy tasks as painlessly as possible led to his frequent reflexive positioning as a doer so that many of his interactions with his table group peers did not move past the "doer" level. Also, Antonio's regular interactions with his table group peers likely served to meet his need for movement.

On the other hand, Rosa Maria usually blossomed when working with her table group peers, and flashes of possibility were revealed when she bloomed through the excitement of positioning herself as a learner, reader, knower, and thinker within the safe and supportive context of her reading group, although like Antonio, there

290

were plenty of moments when Rosa Maria's desire to get through academic literacy tasks quickly and without difficulty and she took on positions of constraint that used her peers as resources in ways that subverted her deep engagement in the literacy task, such as when she copied from Ana. Finally, although Ingrid, so comfortable and centered within herself, may seem to have had less of a need for the resources of her peers, she also clearly benefitted from the rich conversations and fun intellectual engagements she shared with the equally engaged members of her table group.

<div align="center">Deep Versus Shallow Engagement</div>

All of these considerations of home versus school literate identity and the disparate experiences of my informants during literacy events serve to highlight an underlying thread that connects all of my student informants and is mediated by their literate identities, positioning, and scaffolding. As shown throughout this study, student positions that afford deeper access to literacy events have been contrasted with student positions that constrain deeper access to literacy events, resulting in either deep or shallow engagement and respective possibilities for academic literacy development.

As shown, the position of doer is one that leads to a nominal participation in the literacy event. Students taking on the position of doer are focused on the task of copying letter for letter, or word for word, the responses of another student without considering the meaning of such responses, as we saw in the case of Antonio who had copied "shy" onto his worksheet, but without any understanding of what the word meant. Another example of "doer" can be seen again in the case of Antonio, who undertook to "read" a chapter book in about 20 seconds in order to meet the

mandatory task of reading a book, listing its title and author, then writing a summary of it. Rosa Maria also engaged in doing as a means of getting through a task. This was very clearly seen in the vignette in which the well-established routine of using Ana's paper as a template for every group member's graphic organizer. Ana created the responses and Rosa Maria and her peers copied Ana's responses word for word because there was less personal risk and less time pressure than doing the difficult and unscaffolded work of completing the graphic organizer themselves. In my interpretations of my participants' experiences and of my conversations with them and their teachers, I have discovered that the position of doing is not one of laziness or a lack of motivation. For students such as Rosa Maria and Antonio, for whom academic literacy tasks are a struggle and painful work, the shallow engagement that comes through doing has become a means of surviving the school day.

Deep engagement, one in which students are positioned as learners and thinkers, was seen consistently in the experiences of Alejandro, Hector, Sebastian, and Ingrid, occasionally in the experiences of Rosa Maria, and sometimes in the experiences of Antonio during academic literacy events that made use of oral language. In first grade, where Mrs. Breen constructed and supported planned and unplanned opportunities for learning, deep engagement in literacy events generally overlapped with a high level of fun and playfulness during academic literacy events. When Alejandro questioned the veracity of the sentence he and his partner had constructed about *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, Mrs. Breen positioned him as a learner by giving him and his partner access to the text and additional time to consider their answer. Her leading questions during whole group

math events supported Hector in thinking through difficult calculations, usually with success.

Although unsanctioned, Sebastian engaged deeply with texts and worksheets through his ongoing conversations with Jamie during independent work literacy events. They supported each other in constructing positions of learning and thinking. Antonio deepened his level of engagement in his small group reading literacy event beyond Mrs. Greene's intentions by independently sorting and classifying the words of the activity in his notebook and during whole group activities when he responded to questions in the discussion.

As discussed previously, Rosa Maria's striving school literate identity often precluded her from positioning herself in ways that afforded deeper engagement in literacy events, but when inspired by the cultural and linguistic connections offered by the Mexican Cinderella or later in my observation period when I sat at her side, silently urging her on, Rosa Maria took up the positions of learner and thinker that lead to deep engagement. Ingrid, as shown in Chapter 6, spent most of her reading/language arts time in the positions of learner and thinker, reader and writer, deeply engaged in the texts and discussions at hand.

Importance of Context

I constructed the three previous chapters in this study according to a chronological unfolding of the literacy events that were a part of each grade's reading/language arts routine in order to demonstrate the importance of context in student's positioning. As shown across the vignettes, my focal students experienced a variety of literacy event contexts that ranged from whole group read-alouds and

discussions around a single text, to teacher-facilitated reading groups, to unstructured

group learning situations, and to "independent" and independent student tasks. Each

type of literacy event within grade levels provided a different context that offered a

variety of levels of scaffolding through resources, teacher support and peer support.

My informants thrived and engaged in deep engagement in ways that were linked to

the type of literacy event in which they were participating and the context of

supportive interaction and positioning that was available. As already discussed,

literacy events that involved peer cooperation and support, sanctioned in Ms. Breen's

and Mr. Snyder's classroom and generally unsanctioned in Mrs. Greene's, served

well as a forum for deep literacy engagement. Mrs. Greene and I both recognized that

Antonio thrived and demonstrated patterns of positive positioning most in literacy

events that offered plenty of opportunities for oral language use and which minimized

students' unscaffolded work in reading and writing tasks. Contexts that included the

provision of scaffolding by either teachers or peers also served to support deep

engagement of students.

Work and Play

Some literacy events included contexts that lent themselves to play, generally

through a combination of intrinsically motivating materials and the availability of

peers to serve as resources, sounding boards, and intellectual playmates. Deep

engagement was often found in literacy events that became forums of play, rather

than work, but a type of play that arose from intellectual curiosity. When I first

noticed Sebastian and Jamie engaged in a breath-holding contest rather than

completing their worksheets on the planets, I assumed that they were completely off-

task and fooling around. Upon closer inspection to their activity, I realized that they were using the information on the oxygen content of Mars to determine what their survival chances were in a low oxygen environment.

The day after they read the Mexican Cinderella tale, Rosa Maria and her table group were assigned the task of constructing their own Cinderella story. This writing task became an opportunity for deep engagement and creative literate play as they co-constructed a story of a Mexican-American Cinderella attending their future middle school, naming characters after themselves, their friends and family, and their teachers. Ingrid also had the same experience with her individual Cinderella tale, laughing to herself quietly as she developed ways to bring her rich humor into the story, setting it in the 1970s with the ball being replaced by a disco dance and the prince being replaced by a security guard. For Hector and Alejandro, whose experience of reading/language arts was "all fun" there was no dichotomy between work and the deep engagement of creative and cognitive play.

Many of the vignettes and literacy events that I observed during my time at Walnut Springs Elementary School illustrate the ways that deep engagement in literacy events can be encouraged by constructing activities that are both playful and challenging. Although the experiences of Antonio and Rosa Maria might lead one to believe that school can only be work in a painful headache-inducing way for students who find academic literacy an ongoing challenge, meaningful literacy tasks that are simultaneously well-scaffolded and challenging can be interpreted and experienced by all students, including striving readers, as opportunities for intellectual and deeply engaging play.

Survival Strategies

The students in this study used a variety of strategies to address the academic literacy tasks they encountered. As discussed previously, students frequently used peers as resources in a variety of ways. When students engaged deeply, they also used effective strategies, as in the literacy event where Ingrid, stuck on a word, first sounded it out, then appealed to Mr. Snyder, and then moved on, because she figured that the word was not vital to her comprehension of the story. When Sebastian was unsure of the correctness of a calculation, his strategy was to rework the problem, talking himself through the math using Spanish as an additional resource.

However, I found that the positions leading to shallow engagement in the literacy event were generally taken on as survival strategies, as the position of doer that constrained access to engagement in the academic literacy event was one that students took on to deal with the literacy event with as little additional stress as possible. Copying the work from their peers was a strategy used by both Antonio and Rosa Maria when they were in the position of doer. Rosa Maria took on the position of passive appealer during read-alouds in her group to "get" words from her peer resources to deal with the difficult task of decoding. Because of Antonio's need for physical movement, I often interpreted the position of "strategic borrower" and frequent requests for erasers and pencil sharpeners, often within a minute of each other, as a strategy that gave him a chance to wiggle. Additionally, Antonio's fidgeting and physical play on the carpet during the whole group activity I described in his vignette and his subsequent standing up out of turn after it to be another strategy to help his need to move.

Tapping the Possibilities

My ultimate finding in this study is of the abundant possibilities for academic literacy success that could be found in all of my participants, just waiting to be tapped. All of my informants shared their rich literate selves with me. For Hector, Alejandro, Sebastian, and Ingrid, it was easy for me to find their strong literate identities at school. Their personal strengths aligned with the skills and abilities that are valued most in the K-12 classroom. For Antonio and Rosa Maria, I had to take the additional step of finding them in their home environments, where they were most comfortable and confident with themselves. As I shared in Chapter 6, meeting Rosa Maria for the first time in her home was akin to meeting an entirely different person, the physical twin of the School Rosa Maria but her opposite in insight, confidence, and in her literate identity. I related in Chapter 6 that after I spent an evening with Rosa Maria at home, my interactions with her as a participant-observer changed markedly. She had shared with me her fear of being embarrassed at school and the ways that her desire to participate was overwhelmed by her unwillingness to take risks. I began to encourage her from my seat behind her and assure her that she knew the right answer. With me as a cheerleader and back-up, Rosa Maria began to participate more actively in whole group and small group literacy events. Her more frequent positioning of herself as knower, learner, and thinker and her interactive positioning by her teachers that affirmed those positive positions fed her self-confidence and her beliefs in her abilities as a student. She also showed signs of resiliency as in the vignette when she volunteered again to edit Mrs. Bennett's paragraph even after experiencing an acute moment of embarrassment. Rosa Maria's

increased engagement did not go unnoticed by either Mr. Snyder or Mrs. Bennett. As Rosa Maria reached out more frequently, they adjusted their positioning of her to encourage her increased participation, calling on her several times during a single whole class activity.

Unfortunately, this "new" student emerged into Mr. Snyder's classroom within a few weeks of the conclusion of the school year, so it was impossible to see whether Rosa Maria's "Other Twin" as we both called her would re-construct the bridge between home and school literate identity. Her comment to me during my member-checking conversation with her offers hope that she is re-constructing her school literate identity in ways that mediate more positive patterns of positioning during academic literacy events at school. The design and scope of this study precluded me from discovering if there was a "critical mass" in Rosa Maria's re-positioning that would unite her home and school literate selves. However, given the implications of this study that positioning and identity inform and co-construct each other, I conclude this study on a hopeful note. Even when students may have become reified into striving literate identities through years of negative school experiences and repeated patterns of positions of constraint, there can be opportunities to reshape and sculpt those identities into strong literate selves through the potential offered in re-positioning. What will it take to create contexts where this potential may be realized? For Rosa Maris it took academic literacy events that played to her cultural and linguistic resources, the resources of her peers, teachers sensitive to her desire to participate, and a curious teacher/researcher who spent some time at her house and sat near her desk regularly over a six-week period. If Rosa Maria, Mr. Snyder, Mrs.

298

Bennett, and I collaborated in her re-positioning in such a short span of time, one must imagine the power of a teacher who taps such possibilities over the course of a year. Given the burden of time, or lack of it, that teachers face it is important to assert that opportunities for such re-positioning can exist without visiting the home of every single student. The next step is to consider ways to invite the home identities of students into classrooms through activities and playful intellectual engagement that creates opportunities for students to try on new positions and take on fresh roles. Positioning in academic literacy events constructs students' academic experiences and function in the ongoing formation of their literate identities, for good or ill, so let it be for good.

In this chapter I compared and contrasted the cases of my six student informants, analyzing my findings to uncover insights that inform my interpretations of their stories and which hold implications for teachers and teacher educators, as well as future research. I revisited my theoretical framework in light of my findings and considered students' experiences of academic literacy across grade levels. Additionally, I used my findings across grade levels to consider the implications of patterns of positioning and students' literate identities as revealed through the data. Next, I examined the way that success is defined across grade levels. Finally, I shared the ways that students' positioning mediated their levels of engagement in academic literacy events and discussed the possibilities that teacher positioning of students may hold for tapping students' possibilities for success.

In the next and final chapter, I explicitly revisit and address the primary research questions that drove this study. Next, I discuss the contributions that this

study makes to the field of English Language Learner education and the implications that my findings hold for teachers and teacher educators. Finally, I consider future directions for research that may further the understandings constructed through this study.

Chapter 8 : Conclusions

Introduction

Academic literacy is a critical component of the education of all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), in K-12 settings (Cummins, 2000). Academic literacy stands as a gatekeeper to school success, future academic opportunities, economic opportunities, and power. A population of great concern within the English language education community is the group of students who seem to have achieved a high level of oral proficiency with English yet continue to have difficulties with academic English and literacy.

My study focuses on students who are classified as ELLs, have had all of their schooling in the United States, and who have a high oral social proficiency in English. My participating students were identified by their teachers as being at different points in their academic literacy development, some on track to meet grade level standards of reading and writing and some causing concern to the students' teachers because of the students' ongoing need for literacy support. Having come to this study concerned about the issue of Long-Term English Learners, I sought to investigate the academic literacy experiences of students on a variety of literacy trajectories. I hoped to shed light on how ELLs experience academic literacy across the elementary grades and to find implications for how we can address the needs of Long-Term English Learners before they become Long-Term English Learners.

As I discussed in Chapter 1, Long-Term English Learners are students who have been classified as ELLs for 7+ years and have not yet acquired the level of academic English literacy they need to exit from English language support programs

and succeed independently in the mainstream classroom. Freeman and Freeman (2002) attribute a variety of possible causes to the issue of Long-Term English Learners. Among the many reasons that students may be challenged by academic literacy throughout their schooling are a high mobility rate, which leads to a lack of consistency in their support, and extended periods of missed schooling. Although these issues may contribute to some students' ongoing challenges with academic English literacy, they are not useful when considering how to address students' academic literacy development within the classroom. It was my intention in my design and theoretical framework for this study to look for possible factors that are instructionally relevant, within the realm of the classroom, and under teacher control.

This study sought to develop an understanding of why students may be challenged by reading and writing in English throughout their schooling by taking a fine-grained look at students' interactions during academic literacy events. My research site was at the elementary level in order to discover the ways that students' literacy experiences may differ across grade levels, including the first grade level, where developmental literacy is of primary importance; the fourth grade level, where the demands of text increase substantially; and the sixth grade level, as students are being prepared for their transition to secondary school. I conclude this study with an explicit return to my research questions. Next, I discuss the contributions that this study makes to the field of English Language Learner education and the instructional implications for teachers and teacher developers. Finally, I consider future directions for research that may further the understandings constructed through this study.

A Return to the Research Questions

In this section, I revisit each research question to summarize the insight and findings to which it has led me. Because Research Questions 2 and 3 were developed to support Research Question 1 in different ways and from different angles, some of my findings address several research questions and so will be primarily addressed in the discussion around Research Question 1.

Research Question 1

1. How do the positionings of ELLs mediate their experiences of academic literacy events?

1.1 How may their positions afford or constrain their engagement in literacy events?

Using the theoretical lens of positioning to analyze interactions during academic literacy events, I found that students position themselves and were positioned dynamically throughout literacy events, but that students took up certain positions more often than others depending on the literacy context as well as their school literate identities, resulting in patterns of positioning that were generally consistent within the contexts of types of literacy events. The ways that students reflexively positioned themselves and were interactively positioned by others mediated how deeply they engaged in literacy events, with some positions leading to only surface engagement and others supporting deep and creative engagement with the task. The range and frequency of positions that students took up were linked to their school literate identities. Students' positionings during literacy events were often linked to their literate identities. Students with strong literate identities regularly

positioned themselves in positive ways. Students with striving literate identities positioned themselves in positive ways when they were able to play to their strengths and often positioned themselves in constraining ways when they encountered academic literacy tasks that they perceived as too difficult.

Positive positions that afforded opportunities for learning included knower, reader, and writer. These positions were generally linked directly to the type of literacy event and the interaction with others and text within it. The position of knower was one that involved demonstrating a correct answer via oral language, as to a teacher's question, or responding with expertise to another student. The position of reader was one in which students attended to text, read aloud, or responded orally or in writing to prompts that called for comprehension of the text. The position of writer could be seen when students took up their pencils to respond to a prompt that called for personal writing that extended beyond text comprehension. These three positions were aligned with teachers' expectations of positive student behavior and engagement in all grade levels. I also saw that these positions offered "gateways" to additional positive positions that supported richer experiences of literacy and deeper engagement with the literacy event.

In all three focal grade levels, I saw that the positions of knower, reader, and writer were taken up by students as gateways to the positions of learner and thinker, which took engagement to a deeper level in which students grappled with new ideas and concepts and worked to articulate them through speech, text-centered writing, and creative writing. The position of learner is one in which students are in the role of developing and actively extending their knowledge through the explicit facilitation of

a teacher or a peer. The position of thinker is one in which the student is considering and grappling with new ideas and concepts, generally without explicit facilitation. The content of the literacy event, the students' school literate identities, and teacher positioning of students all played a role in supporting students in moving to the positions of learners and thinkers. Literacy events that linked to students' interests and/or background knowledge were those most likely to afford the positions of learners and thinkers. Students with positive school literate identities who were confident and comfortable with their academic literacy skills took up those positions that opened access to deep more frequently than students who found academic literacy tasks to be painful obstacles to getting through the reading/language arts block.

For students whose experiences of literacy events were generally challenging and uncomfortable, positions such as doer, passive appealer, and social were usually taken up as coping strategies that offered ways to get through the literacy event while getting through the demands of tasks without embarrassment. In the position of doer, students skimmed the surface of the event by "skimming" a text they had been assigned to read and creating quick and nominal responses to prompts or copying the responses of their peers. This enabled them to meet the demands of the task without suffering. Passive appealer offered a way to get through a text read-aloud. Another position, social, often gave space for the student to postpone task work and to extend social time with peers. These positions were most often taken up by students with striving school literate identities. These students were also those identified by teachers as having difficulty with achieving success at school implying that positions

of shallow engagement played a role in constraining students from success in academic literacy.

Research Question 2

2. How are participants engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning during literacy events?

   2.1 How are students engaged in reflexive and interactive positioning?

   2.2 How do teachers interactively position ELLs?

As discussed in the previous section, students took up a range of positions that were informed by the context of the literacy event and their school literate identities. The types of positions served to mediate the experiences of students by supporting them in shallow or deep engagement with the text. Students' reflexive positioning was linked to their school literate identities, to the level of interest the literacy events held for them personally, and their comfort level with the context and type of literacy events.

Peers and Positioning

The positioning of my focal students by their peers was generally specific to each focal student and was linked to the relationships that each had with their peers. In first grade, students followed the teachers' lead of positive positioning for everyone and students often positioned each other as learners and thinkers. In fourth grade, Sebastian's most frequent peer interactions were with Jamie and they mutually supported each other in taking on and putting on positive positions that led to deep engagement in literacy events. An interesting element of this deep engagement is that it was unaligned with the teacher's intentions for the literacy event and the discourse

in which those positioning arose created an underscript to the discussion around the literacy event, as discussed in Chapter 5. Sebastian's frequent interactions with Jamie opened up opportunities for the two to position themselves and each other in positive ways and to consider texts deeply, despite going against the teacher's intention that such literacy tasks should be engaged in silently and independently.

Antonio's peer interactions were driven by the perceptions that seemed to have been developed by him and his table group peers that getting through each task quickly and nominally "doing" school to show task completion was the way to become a good student. He often engaged in academic literacy tasks as a performance of completing the task in a diligent manner. His frequent positions of doer and strategic borrower within his table group were validated by his peers when they also positioned themselves as doers or provided him with the provisions of pencils, erasers, and pencil sharpeners that he wanted.

In sixth grade, Rosa Maria and her peers sometimes supported each other in rising to the positions that afforded access to deep engagement when the literacy task's complexity was overwhelmed by its interest to them. However, Rosa Maria was also interactively positioned as a "not-reader" when Ana, the de facto leader of one of her table group configurations, decided to override Rosa Maria's right to the book as demonstrated in Rosa Maria's first table group work vignette. Finally, Ingrid was interactively positioned by her peers in positive ways that validated her own positive positions.

Teachers and Positioning

Teachers generally interactively positioned students in positive ways and they were swift to interactively support students' positive reflexive positioning, such as handraising during whole group discussions. Students positioning themselves as knowers by raising their hand were selected by their teachers to provide the answers and their positions of knower were validated by teachers when students provided the "correct" answers. Occasionally, students were unable to provide the correct answer and were re-positioned within the event as "stymied" when they were unable to come up with the correct answer. Sometimes, students were re-positioned as "learner" when teachers then tried to facilitate a students' arrival at the answer through leading questions and discussion. All of my focal students were interactively positioned by their teachers in positive ways during literacy events when they initiated positive reflexive positions. Clearly, all of my participating teachers were eager to support students' academic literacy development and took advantage of students' positive positioning as knower in class discussions to validate those positions when students were able to back-up their position of knowing with correct responses.

Teachers' abilities to position students in positive ways, especially when complemented by appropriate scaffolding, was powerful in creating access to deep engagement in academic literacy events. Ms. Breen's regular positive positioning of students supported both Hector's and Alejandro's development of strong literate identities. Mr. Snyder's choice to validate Rosa Maria and her table group's collective positioning of knower in claiming the right to the Mexican Cinderella story opened the doorway to a variety of positive positioning and deep engagement in the literacy

308

event by every student in the table group. Teachers generally positioned students in positive ways. During most occasions when teachers positioned a student as distracted, teachers sought to then bring the student's attention back to the literacy event.

Research Question 3

3: How do students' experiences of academic literacy work to construct and be constructed by their literate identities?

3.1 How do students' positionings in academic literacy events work to re-construct/constitute students' literate identities?

The literate identities were revealed through students' positioning in ways that aligned with students' assertions about themselves as reader and writers in my conversations with them. Students with strong literate identities that bridged home and school took on positive positions that created paths to deep engagement in literacy events. Students with dissonant literate identities between home and school, who were uncomfortable with academic literacy events in school, frequently positioned themselves in ways that worked as strategies to get through literacy tasks. However, this positioning was also mediated by the type of literacy event. Antonio thrived in small group reading, where the scaffolds provided by the teacher, the comfort of the routine, and the high oral level of the task supported him in successfully and frequently taking on positive positions.

The case of Rosa Maria offers a compelling answer to both Research Question 3 and Research Question 3.1. She strongly articulated her striving school literate identity and her desire to bring her home literate identity into school. It is possible

that through my explicit encouragement of her during her reading/language arts class that began after my home visit, Rosa Maria began to take up more positive positions more frequently. These patterns of positive positioning were interactively validated by her teachers and began to become more frequent as Rosa Maria's tentative leaps into positive positions were successful. Unfortunately, both the school year and my data collection period came to an end, preventing me from the opportunity to witness whether Rosa Maria's new ways of positioning herself could constructively inform her school literate identity. Given that Rosa Maria's previous positioning was mediated by her striving school literate identity, the possibility remains that continued strong positioning could support the re-visioning of her school literate identity into one of strength and increased confidence with academic literacy events, in turn influencing her level of engagement with academic literacy tasks. The potential literate identity re-construction revealed through Rosa Maria's new patterns of positioning and her new description of herself that she articulated during my member-checking with her hints at the power that teachers may have for offering opportunities for literate identity re-construction through consistent patterns of positive positioning and success.

Contributions to the Field

This study adds to the body of research on the academic literacy development of ELLs. I hope that my fine-grained approach to the ways that English learners experience mainstream academic literacy events will shed light on how students' literate identities and their positioning can mediate their access to engagement in literacy events. My findings demonstrate that students' identities inform their

310

positioning, and consequently, their levels of engagement and participation in academic literacy events. Also, I argue that students' experiences of positive positioning and success during academic literacy events may in turn serve to re-construct their literate identities in fruitful ways and support the development of robust literacy trajectories. Additionally, I show that this positioning is fluid and depends much upon the context and type of literacy event, ranging from its topic to the types of interactions and scaffolding it provides.

This study contributes to a growing body of research on the academic literacy experiences of elementary English learners (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Hawkins, 2005; Li, 2004; Toohey, 2000) that emphasizes students' perspectives and in-classroom experiences. However, in taking a cross-sectional approach that gathers data from three very different grades levels, first, fourth, and sixth grade, this study also offers implications of ways that students' school literate identities may develop and be re-constructed in response to the changing demands of academic language and tasks as students move up through the grade levels. Therefore, this study also contributes to research on Long-Term English Learners by showing the ways that students may become reified, from both their own and their teachers' perspectives, into striving school literate identities that may preclude students' from many opportunities for literacy development. The participants in this study revealed that students with striving school literate identities may frequently take up positions within literacy events that constrain them from meaningful and deep engagement in literacy work. Also, these positions were sometimes misinterpreted by teachers as a

lack of motivation and an uncaring attitude towards school when they were in fact survival strategies used by the students.

While much of the recent literature on academic literacy development for elementary ELLs emphasizes best practices and quality instruction (Bowman-Perrott, Herrera, & Murray, 2010; Ogle & Correa-Kovtun, 2010; Gersten et al., 2007; O'Day, 2009; Schulz, 2009), I argue that the provision of quality literacy events for ELLs is not enough. As I demonstrate in this study, teacher follow-through during the entire execution of the literacy event is as essential to effective instruction. Students' positioning *throughout* the literacy event mediates their level of engagement *in* the literacy event, although quality literacy events that include appropriate scaffolding and connect to students' strengths are more likely to invite students' positive positioning. Additionally, teachers who bring in scaffolding as needed can support students not only in taking up positive positions but in achieving success in those positions. As shown in the previous chapters, students' actual engagement with literacy tasks varied widely for a number of factors. Each literacy event created and implemented by the teacher "affords further action" (van Lier, 2000, p. 252). The context and content of the literacy event mattered to students' patterns of positioning, with individual students demonstrating different patterns of positioning depending on the relevance and interest level of the text, the accessibility of scaffolds, and the possibilities for playing to their other strengths, such as oral language.

Students with striving school literate identities or who have come to see school as a series of tasks to be gotten through may strategically skim the surface and address the affordances of literacy events with shallow engagement, constraining

their opportunity to learn. On the other hand, students with strong school literate identities took up the affordances of literacy events and engaged with them deeply, with teacher support at the primary grade level and independently and with peer support at the upper grades.

Spanish Language and Home Literacy Practices

This study also found that students challenged by academic literacy tasks at school had dissonant school and home literate identities. Although these students engaged in reading and writing literacy practices at home, these home literacy practices were not known to the teachers. Indeed, with the exception of the school-wide reading log mandate, home literacy practices were disconnected from school experiences. Even though a deep consideration of L1 literacy practices was beyond the scope of this study, I found that some participants and their parents read together in Spanish and that these participants' parents connected L1 literacy experience to academic English success at school. For example, Sebastian's mother felt strongly that his reading ability in Spanish before beginning schooling in English contributed to his early success as a reader. On the other hand, teachers did not consider or look into possible L1 literacy knowledge because of their singular focus on content development in English.

Although the policy and teachers at my research site did not frown on L1 use, neither did they overtly support it, except within the use of one of the "Book of the Month" selections during my time there. However, I observed upper-grade students tapping into their Spanish a strategic resource. In fourth grade, Sebastian used Spanish for clarification-seeking in his conversations with Jamie as well as in his

private speech when he worked through calculations. Additionally, the chance to work with the Mexican Cinderella text gave Rosa Maria and her table group members the opportunity not only to take advantage of their linguistic knowledge in two languages, but also to call upon their cultural expertise in interpreting the text and acting as a cultural informant to their teacher. This strategic use of linguistic and cultural knowledge was independent of the teacher and undertaken entirely with peer support. It is possible that the dearth of connection between students' school academic life and their cultural and linguistic expertise contributed to the dissonant school-home literate identities witnessed in Antonio and Rosa Maria.

The Cumulative Effects of Students' Academic Literacy Experiences

The students in my study who kept to a surface level engagement with literacy events were those who found academic literacy tasks to be arduous and painful. They reported concerns about embarrassing themselves in front of others and the ongoing difficulty of doing work at school. These students also revealed striving school literate identities that were in dissonance with their strong literate identities at home. This may be the result of the way in which the cumulative effects of difficulties with academic literacy tasks and inconsistent experiences with success can lead students to positioning themselves in ways that constrain their access to meaningful engagement in literacy events. On the other hand, students at the fourth and sixth grade levels who fit the grade's criteria for success had strong literate identities that bridged home and school.

The literature implies that some students may be reified into striving identities such as Long-Term English Learners by their teachers, by their institutions, and even

by themselves. Koyama (2004) asserts that the identities available "to ELLs across the United States are, more often than not, ones of 'failure' according to current policy" (p. 417). Although not referring specifically to ELLs, Anderson (2009) writes of how "failure" can "stick" to students'. However, my slip from participant-OBSERVER to PARTICIPANT-observer after meeting the "twin" Rosa Maria at her home and this twin's subsequent "awakening" at school points to an alternative to such reification if one can tap the possibilities in students who may be slipping into a track of striving literate identity. Research asserts the fluidity of students' school identities given individual agency and positive resistance by students (Harklau, 2000; Hawkins, 2005; Ros i Solé, 2007) especially in conjunction with teacher support (Yoon, 2007). Despite initial appearances that Rosa Maria may have become stuck into a striving school literate identity and her own insistence on this point, Rosa Maria used unfamiliar and positive positioning in whole group to try on how it might feel to have a strong school literate identity and found it to be a wonderful sensation. As I mentioned in Chapter 7, the termination of the school year and my data collection period precludes me from asserting that such a shift in positioning may have helped Rosa Maria to reconstruct her school literate identity, but her experiences demonstrate that the possibilities exist as long as one teacher is nearby to tap those possibilities.

Positioning and Identity

An additional contribution from this study is to the use of positioning and identity as complementary theoretical lenses. As I have discussed in previous chapters, positioning and identity have often been used separately in research and

more recently they are used in complementary ways. However, when researchers have typically used both concepts together, one has generally been subservient to the other, with only the dominant concept being operationalized. Examples of this include work by Kamada (2009) and Nasir and Saxe (2003). In this study, I have striven to operationalize both and explicitly articulate the ways in which positioning and identity theory, from two different fields, social psychology and cultural studies, may inform each other and help us to better understand students' experiences of school.

I have shown the way that positioning can support micro-grained analyses of interactions in ways that allow for comparisons across the fine-grained analyses offered by identity. Furthermore, I argue that students' identities inform the ways that they position themselves in different contexts. In turn, new positions offer the opportunity for students to try on new ways of engaging with literacy events and may in turn support the re-construction of identity in positive (and constraining) ways. I have worked to begin to name the positions that students may take on or be interactively positioned into through my analytic framework. Finally, I have linked students' positions to their levels of engagement and investigated the ways that students' moment-to-moment engagement during academic literacy events may wax and wane as the literacy event unfolds.

Educational Implications

The need for mainstream and content teachers to be prepared to effectively meet the needs of ELLs is well-documented. Lucas, Villegas, and Freedson-Gonzalez (2008) assert, "Most mainstream classroom teachers are not sufficiently prepared to

316

provide the types of assistance that ELLs need" to successfully meet the challenge of supporting academic English development (p. 361). Indeed, teachers often carry a variety of myths and misassumptions about second language acquisition and English language support (Harper & de Jong, 2004). This study has implications for both practicing teachers and teacher educators.

Implications for Teachers

Although I did not observe any egregious misunderstandings about second language acquisition and the effective instruction for ELLs, I did find that many of the resources that students brought to the classroom were not taken advantage of. I also found that the high pressure of test achievement that my fourth and sixth grade participating teachers were under meant that they were continually focused on moving through a fast-paced curriculum focused on tested skills that did not provide adequate space for scaffolding and individual student support. Except for sixth grade, where the teaching model included an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) co-teacher supporting the classroom teacher during the reading/language arts block, I did not observe explicit English language development support for the focal participants in my study.

However, it could be argued that in first grade, all students are being supported in the acquisition of academic English, so activities were highly contextualized and scaffolded for all students. As I mentioned in Chapter 7, one reason that explicit English language support did not seem to be part of the instruction was likely that all of my focal students "sounded" like proficient English speakers to their teachers. They had a high level of fluency in social English, only hesitating

when academic words were brought into the discussion, and their pronunciation held few to little hints of their Spanish home language. I argue that my focal students' strong oral skills masked their need for explicit English literacy support, allowing them to pass under the radar as students who could benefit from such support. Given the growing concerns around students with apparently strong oral proficiency but a need for academic literacy development, teachers must take care not to let this proficiency mask them to the need that ELLs who have spent years in U.S. school may still have for explicit instruction in academic English.

Although students took advantage of their linguistic and cultural resources when appropriate, teachers did not explicitly draw upon those resources. Research points to the efficacy of using L1 as a resource in a second language classroom (Gersten and Baker, 2000; Graves & Fitzgerald, 2003) as well as students' background and cultural resources (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) as a bridge to English language and content development. These resources were not widely tapped by teachers who already felt overwhelmed by their teaching schedule, curriculum demands, and testing pressure. When literacy events linked to students' Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), students took advantage of it, as in the Mexican Cinderella vignette. However, curriculum developers must support teachers in bringing such relevant texts and resources into the classroom. Given the value of using students' Funds of Knowledge, bridges to students' L1 and cultural knowledge should not and must not be incidental or left up to chance. Walnut Springs Elementary School's large Spanish-speaking population and diverse teaching staff supported students in being comfortable in using Spanish when speaking to each

318

other out of the whole group context. However, this may not be the case in other schools.

Peer interaction was integral to all of the participants in this study. Sometimes, though, students used each other as resources in ways that helped them to bypass deep engagement, as when they directly copied from another students' work because of the perceived or real difficulty of the task. Again, the value of cooperative learning is one that has been regularly stressed in the literature (Gersten & Baker, 2000). My analyses in this study supports the need for *structured*, *interdependent* cooperative learning activities that allow students to play to their strengths while learning from their peers and that facilitate deep engagement by all students. Although we saw some examples of planned cooperative learning events in the first grade classroom, peer interactions in fourth and sixth grade were unstructured. Students' access within their table groups to participation in the literacy event was mediated by the culture of the table group and the individuals' relationships with each other, as demonstrated through the table group work in sixth grade.

The role of scaffolding cannot be overemphasized for teachers of ELLs and their educators. Scaffolding has been stressed as an essential part of ELL classroom support (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). However, although I observed rich scaffolding in the first grade classroom, students in the intermediate grades were expected to be much more independent and scaffolding for literacy tasks, especially those that were intended to for table group or solo work, was limited. Again, I believe that because my focal students "sounded" like proficient English speakers, they blended into the student population within the

319

context of their mainstream reading/language arts classroom. My focal students did not display the signs that teachers who have not been educated in second language acquisition would attribute to ELLs, such as challenges in oral communication or English accented by home language.

I would like to argue that my findings as described in Chapter 7 point to the need for a broader definition of success that extends beyond independent reading and writing abilities supported by a high level of motivation. Unfortunately, given the current systemic emphasis on standardized testing that prioritizes academic reading and writing abilities above all other criteria and the gatekeeper role that academic English literacy plays in academic, economic, and social opportunities, I argue instead for the need for schools and classrooms to create spaces for the other skills and talents that students bring that may not be explicitly connected to academic literacy event tasks. Even though schools and current educational policy values a very specific skill, academic literacy, students' other skills and literacy abilities may play a vital role as a bridge to success with academic literacy as well as make academic literacy events and tasks more meaningful and relevant to students. Students' other strengths are part of their personal Funds of Knowledge and could not only be availed of as links to academic literacy development, but as opportunities for positive positioning and identity construction within the classroom. Consider the possibilities if Antonio's academic literacy tasks called for drawing or kinesthetic action. Would he still be viewed as unmotivated?

This consideration brings me to the next implication for educators that has arisen from this study. Students' positioning of shallow engagement of literacy events

was interpreted by their teachers as a lack of motivation or care about their future success in school. Teachers must be reflective about the identities they construct for students. For me, implementing this study has made salient the moral and ethical need to be aware of how I may consciously or unconsciously impose identity onto students. I did not know all of my participants in this study until I knew them at their homes. It is dangerous for students that teachers usually only know them from classroom contexts. Although given the burdens and demands of teachers it is impossible for them to visit students in their homes as I did, it is imperative that teachers look beyond assumptions they may make about their students and strive to know the students beyond their current reading and writing abilities, beyond the positions they may take on to cope with the work of school.

Implications for Teacher Educators

Given the findings of this study, teacher educators should consider ways to make their teacher candidates cognizant of the powerful role that interactions with students and student positioning, both interactive and reflexive, may play in students' engagement with academic literacy events and tasks as well as their literate identity construction. Such a recognition may come through including a focus on students' positioning during teacher candidates' field observations and their reflections on instruction during their student teaching internships. Future teachers may be introduced to the way that students' positionings may afford or constrain access to and engagement in academic literacy events through vignettes and case studies that can serve as opportunities for analysis and reflection.

The stories of the student participants that this study tells may be used as examples of the powerful ways that teacher choices may positively (and negatively) impact students' positioning, engagement, and enthusiasm in academic literacy tasks and school in general. Additionally, these stories may be used to illustrate the importance of connections to home language development and literacy as well as ways to support students' strategic use of home language, even if the teachers and teacher candidates themselves do not share that home language. Finally, the ways that teachers worked to engage and sometimes unconsciously disengage students may be used as examples for future educators to illustrate the importance of everything from the direction in which a students' desk and chair face to the vitality a teacher can bring into a lesson by positioning himself or herself as a learner alongside students.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limited scope of this study, both in regards to time and to number of participants, it is not my intention nor is it possible to make sweeping generalizations about the academic literacy experiences of elementary ELLs. However, it has been my hope that by engaging in a closer consideration of six Spanish-English bilingual ELLs who have had all of their schooling in the U.S. and who are still enrolled in an ESOL program, I would be able to shed light on some important issues and ideas that will help us to better serve the needs of this population in a way that would open up their access to academic English literacy development and the opportunities for academic, economic, and social success that may come with that access.

The site of my research was in a school where more than half of the student population was comprised of Spanish-English bilingual students who either were

currently or had been in an ESOL program. Students in schools with other demographics may experience academic literacy events very differently. Additionally, I hoped that this study would offer some clues to the support of students challenged by academic English literacy, including Long-Term English Learners. To really get at this heart of that issue, longitudinal studies that follow students through years of schooling are needed. However, this study does offer the implication that students' literacy experiences differ across grade levels and that their positioning and school literate identities may also change across grade levels. Longitudinal data are needed to consider these possibilities more deeply. An explicit consideration of home literacy practices and school literacy practices to find ways to link the two was beyond the scope of this study, but again, my findings suggest that this is an important line of research to develop.

In conclusion, my findings imply that most, if not all students, begin their school experiences with optimism and hope, and can develop strong school literate identities that can support them in positive positioning and deep engagement. My experiences and observations demonstrate that even if students have reached a place in their schooling where they despair at academic success and seek only to cope with the demands at school, possibilities remain that such students can be supported and scaffolded into re-constructing their identities and patterns of positioning into strength and success. If any of my findings serve in the future to inspire a teacher to tap the possibilities in a disheartened student, then this study has been a success.

Appendix A: Observation Protocol

PJH Reading/Language Arts Block Observation Protocol

1. Note beginning (and ending time of each literacy event[5])
2. Sketch/map of space, location/movement of participants
3. Describe the text of the literacy event (either ***in-print text provided*** by the teacher or ***student-generated text expected*** by the teacher)
4. Take notes ON, MN, TN
    a. ON: observational notes (see focal areas of observation listed below)
    b. MN: methodological notes (comments about data collection, i.e. on laptop, by hand, where researcher located in the classroom, current researcher location on participant-observer spectrum (Spradley, 1980)
    c. TN: theoretical notes (i.e., comments on emerging relationships and patterns, connections to theoretical framework)

Focal areas of observation:

1. The engagement of the participant with the task/activity and materials (verbal and non-verbal language, movement, location, actions). While ongoing observation of participant engagement will take place throughout the lesson and be ongoing, I will do an explicit noting of what the participant is doing at 5 to 10 minute intervals throughout the reading/language arts block.
2. Participant-teacher interaction (verbal and non-verbal language, movement, location, action)
3. Participant-peer interaction (verbal and non-verbal language, movement, location, action)
4. Type of literacy event (i.e. whole group, guided reading)
5. Materials of the literacy event
6. Activities of the literacy event
7. Components of the literacy event (See Appendix 2 for specific references. This list served as a guide for identifying components of the reading/language arts block)

Practice/Component
Instruction in the key components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension and Instructional balance among literacy activities
Instructional density – the integration of multiple goals into a single lesson
The extensive use of scaffolding to support students in achieving success with literacy tasks
The encouragement of self-regulation through the explicit instruction of strategies
Integration of reading and writing activities
High expectations for all students
Well-organized classrooms and lessons, and consistent routines
Consistent classroom management
Teachers' clear intentions and awareness of purpose for selecting literacy activities regarding specific instructional goals
Literacy instruction that includes a focus on extensive oral English development

---

[5] "The literacy event is a conceptual tool useful in examining within particular communities of modern society the actual forms and functions of oral and literate traditions and co-existing relationships between spoken and written language. A literacy event is any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (Heath, 1982, p. 93).

Cooperative Learning
Connect students' culture to new learning & Build upon students' L1

Appendix B: Components of the Reading/Language Arts Block

These descriptions of activities and components of literacy instruction facilitated my observations:

Whole Group Discussion: Everyone in the class has access to, reads, and discusses the same text (Cooper, 2000).

Whole Group Read-Aloud: As described by the Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998):
> Before reading the storybook aloud, the teachers initiated discussions about its author, central characters, and concepts; during story reading, they clarified vocabulary and engaged the students in making predictions and explaining motives and events; afterward they asked them to reflect on the meaning and message of the story (p. 180).

Games: Games can include simulation games, drama games, story games, and writing games (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

Pair Work: The teacher sets up an activity where students work together to complete a task (Cooper, 2000).

Reading Group comprised of "within-class grouping": The teacher separates students into smaller instructional groups within a particular class to address and accommodate differences in students' abilities (Alvermann, Phelps, & Gillis, 2010).

Independent Work: According to Cooper (2000), this includes "the least support possible" and should be "used when students have sufficient ability to read a piece of literature without any support from the teacher or peers or for rereading after students have received sufficient support through other modes of reading" (p. 35).

Practices and Components of Effective Literacy Instruction

Practice/Component	From L1 Literacy Research	From Multicultural/ELL Research
Instruction in the key components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension	Cooper (2000); National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000)	Au (2006); August & Shanahan (2006); Cummins (2005); Gersten et al., (2007)
Instructional balance among literacy activities	Cooper (2000); Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake (2008); Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, and Hampston (1998)	Au (2006); Cummins (2005); Gersten et al., (2007)
Instructional density – the integration of multiple goals into a single lesson	Cooper (2000); Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	
The extensive use of scaffolding to support students in achieving success with literacy tasks	Cooper (2000); Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	Au (2006); Graves & Fitzgerald (2005)
The encouragement of self-regulation through the explicit	Cooper (2000); Primeaux (2000); Slavin et al., (2008);	Au (2006)

instruction of strategies	Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	
Integration of reading and writing activities	Cooper (2000); Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	Au (2006); Graves & Fitzgerald (2005)
High expectations for all students	Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	Au (2006)
Well-organized classrooms and lessons, and consistent routines	Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	Au (2006)
Consistent classroom management	Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	
Teachers' clear intentions and awareness of purpose for selecting literacy activities regarding specific instructional goals	Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998)	
Literacy instruction that includes a focus on extensive oral English development		August & Shanahan (2006)
Cooperative Learning	Slavin et al. (2008)	Au (2006); Gersten et al., (2007)
Connect students' culture to new learning		Au (2006); George, Raphael, & Florio-Ruane (2005)
Build upon students' L1		Au (2006); García & Beltrán (2005); Krashen (2005)

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Students

What do you like about reading? Why?

What do you dislike about reading? Why?

What is fun and for you (regarding reading and writing)?

What is not fun for you (regarding reading and writing)?

How does your teacher help you to become a better reader/writer?

What are activities at school that you are good at?

If you could change anything about school, what would it be?

What activities outside of school are you good at?

What are some fun things you do with your family?

How do you like to spend your free time?

What questions do you have for me?

Appendix D: Reading Interest Survey

Reading Interest Survey[6]

1. Do you like to read?

2. How much time do you spend reading?

3. What are some of the books you have read lately?

4. Do you have a library card? How often do you use it?

5. Do you ever get books from the school library?

6. About how many books do you own?

7. What are some books you would like to own?

8. Which of the following topics would you like to read about?

_____history _____travel _____plays_____sports _____science fiction

_____adventure_____romance _____detective stories _____war stories_____poetry

 _____car stories _____novels_____biography _____supernatural stories

_____astrology_____humor _____folktales _____how-to-do-it books_____mysteries

_____art _____westerns

9. What are your favorite television programs?

10. What is your favorite magazine?

11. Do you have a hobby? If so, what is it?

12. What are the two best movies you have ever seen?

13. Who are your favorite entertainers and/or movie stars?

14. When you were little, did you enjoy having someone read aloud to you?

---

[6] Modified from "'But There's Nothing Good to Read' (In the Library Media Center)," by Denice Hildebrandt, *Media Spectrum: The Journal for Library Media Specialists in Michigan,* Fall 2001, p. 34–37.

Appendix E: Student Responses to Reading Interest Survey

Responses to Reading Interest Survey[78]

	Alejandro	Hector	Sebastian	Antonio	Ingrid	Rosa Maria
Do you like to read?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Um, *si un poco.* Yeah, a little bit.	Yes	Yes
How much time do you spend reading?	Four books a day for the reading log at school	NR	20 minutes a day	30 minutes (a day)	A little bit every day	30 minutes a day
What are some of the books you have read lately?	*Spiderman*	*Clifford*	*Spiderman*	Chapter books, like *Goosebumps*, also poetry books especially if they are funny	*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (several books from the series)	*Goosebumps: The Mummy* "I like scary stories."
Do you have a library card? How often do you use it?	No.	I haven't been to the library. But I just been one time. I went to play in the computer with my mom.	Mom has a card. Some Sundays.	Yes. Yeah, sometimes. Every week.	Yes. Not too often because her mother works the night shift and so she isn't able to go after school.	No.
Do you ever get books from the school library?	Yes, with Ms. Breen	NR	in third grade	Yep.	Yes	Yes.
About how many books do you own?	Some (showed me a pile of about seven, but there were more in other rooms)	NR	About 50 [pointed to large closed chest in living room – mom said that it was "full of books"]	A lot upstairs and…[later shows me some library books from a table in the living room]	A lot!	A bunch of *Goosebumps* books borrowed from friends

---

[7] Responses compiled from written notes on surveys as well as the portion of the interview transcripts covering the survey administration
[8] *NR* means no response to survey item.

What are some books that you would like to own?	NR	NR	NR	Diary of the Wimpy Kid	NR	Michael Jackson biography
Tell me which of the following books you like to read best.	I like to read about cars. Cars that were racing. Superheroes.		sports, poetry, mysteries, travel, science fiction, car stories, art, adventure, war stories, how-to-do-it books	history, sports, poetry: "It has rhythm too." mysteries "like Scooby Doo"; travel "a little bit"; science fiction "um, yep! Like space and reptiles"; folktales; art "like drawing and…"; adventure "treasure hunts"; war stories	poetry, art, books on drawing	history, poetry, biography , mysteries, art
What are your favorite television programs?	*Full House, Family Guy, Sponge Bob, Fairly Odd Parents*	*Sponge Bob Square-pants*	*Nickel-odeon, WWE (World Wrestling Entertain-ment)*	*Sponge Bob, Fairly Oddparents, Hannah Montana, The Wizards of Waverly Place*	*Hannah Montana, Man vs. Wild, anything on The Animal Channel*	*Disney Channel, The Wizards of Waverly Place*
What is your favorite magazine?	NR	NR	WWE	Doesn't read magazines	Doesn't read magazines	Magazines with articles about Justin Bieber
What are some of your hobbies?	Playing soccer with my brother. I like to play in front (striker – also plays in a league). I like to play tag.	Hide and Seek; baseball because when a boy throws the ball and somebody has to hit it with the bat	Wrestling, playing sports, football and soccer	Basketball and soccer	Skate-boarding, riding a bike	Soccer
What are two of the best movies you have ever seen?	*Scream* and The one I like is *Scary Movie*, the funny one.	*Alvin and the Chipmunks* because they sing	*King Kong*	*Alvin and the Chipmunks* "Because it's funny and how Alvin	*Night at the Museum, Alvin and the*	*Camp Rock, The Taken*

331

				talks”	*Chipmunks*	
Who are your favorite entertainers and/or movie stars?		NR	NR	Michael Jackson and Daddy Yankee [a Puerto Rican rap star]	“Not really” [a particular fan of anyone]	Justin Bieber, Michael Jackson
When you were little, did you enjoy having someone read aloud to you?	Dad (read in Spanish)	NR	My mom (read to him in Spanish)	NR	My mom (in Spanish)	No.

Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Teachers

What do you think is important in teaching reading and writing to English Language Learners?

What approaches to you take to teaching English Language Learners?

What do you see as Student X's strengths?

What do you see as Student X's challenges?

What steps do you take to support Student X?

What questions do you have for me?

References

Abedi, J. (2008). Classification system for English language learners: Issues and

    recommendations. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *27*(3), 17-

    31.

Afflerbach, P. (1996). Engaged assessment of engaged readers. In L. Baker, P.

    Afflerbach, and D. Reinking (Eds.). *Developing Engaged Readers in School*

    and Home Communities (pp. 191-214). Routledge: New York.

Almerigogna, J., Ost, J., Akehurst, L., & Fluck, M. (2008). How interviewers'

    nonverbal behaviors can affect children's perceptions and suggestibility.

    Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 100, 17-39.

Alvermann, D.E., Phelps, S.F., & Gillis, V.R. (2010). *Content area reading and*

    literacy: Succeeding in today's diverse classrooms (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn &

    Bacon.

Anderson, K.T. (2009). Applying positioning theory to the analysis of classroom

    interactions: Mediating micro-identities, macro-kinds and ideologies of

    knowing. *Linguistics and Education, 20*, 291-310.

Artiles**,** A. J., Rueda, R., Salazar, J. J., & Higareda, I. (2005). Within-group diversity

    in minority disproportionate representation: English language learners in

    urban school districts. *Exceptional Children, 71(3),* 283-300.

Au, K. (2006). *Multicultural issues and literacy achievement*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence

    Erlbaum Associates.

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Executive summary of Developing literacy*

    in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on

language-minority children and youth. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bailey, A.L., Huang, B.J., Shin, H.W., Farnsworth, T., & Butler, F.A. (2007). *Developing academic English proficiency prototypes for 5th grade reading: Psychometric and linguistic profiles of tasks*. (CSE Technical Report 727). Los Angeles: National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED498446)

Batt, E.G. (2008). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: Potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education, 15*(3), 39-43.

Becker, H.S. (1998). *Tricks of the trade: How to think about your research while you're doing it*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bernhard, J.K., Cummins, J., Campoy, F.I., Ada, A.F., Winsler, A., & Bleiker, C. (2006). Identity texts and literacy development among preschool English language learners: Enhancing learning opportunities for children at risk with learning disabilities. *Teachers College Record, 108*(11), 2380-2405.

Bogdan, R.C., & Biklen, S.K. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theories and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Bomer, R., & Laman, T. (2004). Positioning in a primary writing workshop: Joint action in the discursive production of writing sciences. *Research in the Teaching of English, 38*(4), 420-466.

Bowman-Perrott, L.J., Herrera, S., & Murry, K. (2010). Reading difficulties and grade retention: What's the connection for English Language Learners? *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 26*(1), 91-107.

Brenner, M. (2006). Interviewing in educational research. In J.L. Green, G. Camilli, and P.B. Elmore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 357-370). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Calderon, M.E. (2008, Fall). Teaching academic vocabulary and reading comprehension in grades 6-12. *AccELLerate: The quarterly newsletter of the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. Retrieved May 20, 2009 from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/accellerate/edition/1/

Cataldi, E.F., Laird, J., and KewalRamani, A. (2009). *High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2007*(NCES 2009-064). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC. Retrieved October 18, 2009, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2009064.

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE). (2002). *The five standards for effective pedagogy* [Online]. Retrieved January 20, 2011 from http://crede.berkeley.edu/

Chall, J.S., & Jacobs, V.A. (2003, Spring). Poor children's fourth-grade slump. *American Educator*, 1-4.

Chase, S.E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 651-679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Christian, B., & Bloome, D. (2004). Learning to read is who you are. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 20*, 365-384.

Collier, V.P. (1989). How long? A synthesis of research on academic achievement in a second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 23*(3), 509-531.

Collier, V.P. (1992). A synthesis of studies examining long-term language-minority student data on academic achievement. *Bilingual Research Journal, 16*(1&2), 187-212.

Connelly, F.M., & Clandinin, D.J. (2006). Narrative inquiry. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Moore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in educational research* (pp. 477-487). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cooper, J.D. (2000). *Literacy: Helping children construct meaning* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Cummins, J. (2000). Academic language learning, transformative pedagogy, and information technology: towards a critical balance. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(3), 537-548.

Cummins, J. (2005). Reading and the bilingual student: Fact and fiction. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 2-33). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Cummins, J. (2011). *Putting the evidence back into evidence-based policies for underachieving students*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved February 7, 2011 from http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/

Davies, B., & Harré, R. (1999). Positioning and personhood. In. R. Harré & L. van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of intentional action* (pp. 32-52). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

de Jong, E.J. & Harper, C.A. (2005). Preparing mainstream teachers for English language learners: Is being a good teacher good enough? *Teacher Education Quarterly, 32*(2), 101-124.

Dickey, M.D. (2011). The pragmatics of virtual worlds for K-12 educators: investigating the affordances and constraints of Active Worlds and Second Life with K-12 in-service teachers. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 59*(1), 1-20.

Echevarria, J., Short, D., & Powers, K. (2006). School reform and standards-based education: A model for English-language learners. *The Journal of Educational Research, 99* (4). 195-210.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D.J. (2004). *Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Finley, S. (2005). Arts-based inquiry: Performing revolutionary pedagogy. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 681-694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourses on language*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Freeman, Y.S. & Freeman, D.E., with Mercuri, S. (2002). *Closing the achievement gap: How to reach limited-formal-schooling and long-term English learners*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

García, G.G., & Beltrán, D. (2003). Revisioning the blueprint: Building for the academic success of English learners. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 197-225). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Garza, A.V., & Crawford, L. (2005). Hegemonic multiculturalism: English immersion, ideology, and subtractive schooling. *Bilingual Research Journal, 29*(3). 599-619.

Gebhard, M., & Willett, J. (2008). Social to academic: University-school district partnership helps teachers broaden students' language skills. *Journal of Staff Development, 29*(1), 41-45.

Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Gee, J.P. (2000-2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education, 25*, 99-125.

George, M., Raphael, T.E., & Florio-Ruane, S. (2003). Connecting children, culture, curriculum, and text. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 308-332). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Gersten, R., & Baker, S. (2000). What we know about effective instructional practices

    for English-language learners. *Exceptional Children, 66*(4), 454-470.

Gersten, R., Baker, S.K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella,

    R. (2007). *Effective literacy and English language instruction for English*

    learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide (NCEE 2007-4011).

    Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional

    Assistance, Institute of Educational Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

    Retrieved October 18, 2009, from http://ies.gov/ncee

Glaser, B. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded*

    theory. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Graves, M.F., & Fitzgerald, J. (2003). Scaffolding reading experiences for

    multilingual classrooms. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners:*

    Reaching the highest level of English literacy (pp. 96-124). Upper Saddle

    River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Greenleaf, C.L., & Hinchman, K. (2009). Reimagining our inexperienced adolescent

    readers: From struggling, striving, marginalized, and reluctant to thriving.

    Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 53(1), 4-13.

Guthrie, J. T. (with others). (1996). *Growth of literacy engagement: Changes in*

    motivation and strategies during concept-oriented reading instruction

    (Reading Research Report No. 53). Washington, DC: Office of Educational

    Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.

    ED395280)

Harklau, L. (2000). From the "good kids" to the "worst": Representations of English language learners across educational settings. *TESOL Quarterly, 34*(1), 35-67.

Harklau, L., Losey, K.M., & Siegal, M. (Eds.) (1999). *Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of ESL*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 42*(2). 152-162.

Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1991). Varieties of positioning. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour, 21,* 393-408.

Harré, R., & van Langenhove, L. (1999). The dynamics of social episodes. In. R. Harré & L. van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of intentional action* (pp. 1-13). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Harter, L.J., Scott, J.A., Novak, D.R., Leeman, M., & Morris, J.F. (2006). Freedom through flight: Performing a counter-narrative of disability. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 34*(1), 3-29.

Hawkins, M.R. (2004). Researching English language and literacy development in schools. *Educational Researcher, 33*(3), 14-25.

Hawkins, M.R. (2005). Becoming a student: Identity work and academic literacies in early schooling. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*(1), 59-82.

Heath, S.B. (1982). Protean shapes in literacy events: Ever-shifting oral and literate traditions. In D. Tannen (Ed.), *Spoken and written language: Exploring orality and literacy*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Hernández, A. (2003). Making content instruction accessible for English language learners. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 125-149). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Hildebrandt, D. (2001, Fall). "But there's nothing good to read" (In the library media center). *Media Spectrum: The Journal for Library Media Specialists in Michigan,* 34-37.

Hill, J.D., & Flynn, K.M., (2006). *Classroom instruction that works with English language learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hite, C.E., & Evans, L.S. (2006). Mainstream first-grade teachers' understanding of strategies for accommodating the needs of English language learners. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 33*(2), 89-110.

Jacobs, J. (2008). *The best of students, the worst of students*. Retrieved February 2, 2009 from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2008/09/10/03jacobs.h28.html

Jiménez, R.T. (2000). Literacy and the identity development of Latina/o students. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(4), 971-1000.

Jiménez, R.T., García, G.E., & Pearson, P.D. (1996). The reading strategies of bilingual Latina/o students who are successful English readers. Opportunities and obstacles. *Reading Research Quarterly, 31*(1), 90-112.

Juel, C. (1988). Learning to read and write. A longitudinal study of 54 children from first through fourth grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 80*(4), 437-447.

Kamada, L.D. (2010). *Hybrid identities and adolescent girls: Being 'half' in Japan*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Koyama, J.P. (2004). Appropriating policy: Constructing positions for English language learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 28*(3), 401-423.

Krashen, S. (2003). Three roles for reading for minority-language children. In G. García (Ed.), *English language learners: Reaching the highest level of English literacy* (pp. 55-70). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal, 32*, 465-491.

Lerkkanen, M., Rasku-Puttonen, H., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J. (2004). Reading performance and its developmental trajectories during the first and second grade. *Learning and Instruction, 4*(2), 111-130.

Lessa, I. (2005). Discursive struggles within social welfare: Restaging teen motherhood. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*, 283-298.

Li, G. (2004). Perspectives on struggling English language learners: Case studies of two Chinese-Canadian children. *Journal of Literacy Research, 36*(1). 31-72.

Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M., & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education: Preparing classroom teachers to teach English Language Learners. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(4), 361-373.

Mackey, A., & Gass, S.M. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Martin-Beltrán, M. (2010a). Positioning proficiency: How students and teachers

(de)construct language proficiency at school. *Linguistics and Education,*

21(4), 257-281.

Martin-Beltrán, M. (2010b). The two-way language bridge: Co-constructing

bilingual language learning opportunities. *The Modern Language Journal,*

94(2), 254-277.

Mazzeo, J., Carlson, J., Voelkl, K., & Lutkus, A. (2000). Increasing the Participation

of Special Needs Students in NAEP: A Report on 1996 NAEP Research

Activities. *Education Statistics Quarterly*, *2*(1), 157-61.

McDermott, R.P. (1993). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S.

Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity*

and context (pp. 269-305). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

McDonald, T., Thornley, C., Staley, R., Moore, D.W. (2009). The San Diego Striving

Readers' Project: Building academic success for adolescent readers. *Journal*

of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 52(8), 720-722.

Mellom, P. (2008, June 30). *New portraits of competence: Uses of L1/L2 resources*

and peer scaffolding in the classroom. Paper presented at College of

Education, University of George, Athens, GA.

Menken, K., Kleyn, T., & Chae, N. (2009, April). *When change is the only*

consistency: The case of long-term English language learners in secondary

schools. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research

Association, San Diego, CA.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis* (2nd ed.).

    Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Moll, L., Amanti, C. A., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for

    teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms.

    Theory into Practice, 31(2), 132-141.

Moody, A.K., Justice, L.M., and Cabell, S.Q. (2010). Electronic versus traditional

    storybooks: Relative influence on preschool children's engagement and

    communication. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 10*(3), 294-313.

Moss, B. (2005). Making a case and a place for effective content literacy instruction

    in the elementary grades. *The Reading Teacher, 59*(1), 46-55.

Murphy, E., & Coffin, G. (2003). Synchronous communication in a Web-based senior

    high school course: Maximizing affordances and minimizing constraints of

    the tool. *The American Journal of Distance Education, 17*(4), 235-246.

Nasir, N.S., & Saxe, G.B. (2003). Ethnic and academic identities. A cultural practice

    perspective on emerging tensions and their management in the lives of

    minority students. *Educational Researcher, 32*(5), 14-18.

National Center for Education Statistics (1995). *Event, status, and cohort dropout*

    rates. Retrieved May 20, 2009, from

    http://nces.ed.gov/pubs/dp95/97473-2.asp

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2009). Retrieved May 21,

    2009 from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/accountability/

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2010). Retrieved January 15, 2011 from

http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/files/uploads/9/growingLEP_0708.pdf

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Newmann, F. M., Wehlage, G. G., & Lamborn, S. D. (1992). The significance and sources of student engagement. In F.M. Newman (Ed.), *Student Engagement and Achievement in American Secondary Schools* (pp.11-39). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Nieto, S. (2002). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives for a new century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Norton Peirce, B. (1995). Social identity, investment, and language learning. *TESOL Quarterly, 29*(1), 9-31.

O'Day, J. (2009). Good instruction is good for everyone – Or is it? English language learners in a balanced literacy approach. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14*(1), 97-119.

Ogle, D., & Correa-Kovtun, A. (2010). Supporting English-language learners and struggling readers in content literacy with the "Partner reading and content, too" routine. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(7), 532-542.

Olsen, L., & Jaramillo, A. (1999). *Turning the tides of exclusion: A guide for educators and advocates for immigrant students*. Oakland, CA: California Tomorrow.

Ostrosky, M.M., Gaffney, J.S., & Thomas, D.V. (2006). The interplay between literacy and relationships in early childhood settings. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 22*. 173-191.

Ovando, C.J., Combs, M.C., & Collier, V.P. (2006). *Bilingual & ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J.P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp. 155-177). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Peregoy, S.F., & Boyle, O.F. with Cadiero-Kaplan, K. (2008). *Reading, writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for teaching K-12 English learners* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Pianta, R.C., Belsky, J., Vandergrift, N., Houts, R., & Morrison, F.J. (2008). Classroom effects on children's achievement trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(2), 365-397.

Pope, D.C. (2001). "*Doing school" How we are creating a generation of stressed out, materialistic, and miseducated students*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Rampton, B. (2007). Linguistic ethnography and the study of identities. *Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies*. Retrieved January 18, 2011 from http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/education/research/groups/llg/wpull41.html

Riches, C., & Genesee, F. (2006). Literacy: Crosslinguistic and crossmodal issues. In F. Genesee, K. Lindholm-Leary, W.M. Saunders, & D. Christian (Eds.). *Educating English language learners: A synthesis of research evidence* (pp. 64-108). NewYork: Cambridge University Press.

Ros i Solé, C. (2007). Language learners' sociocultural positions in the L2: A narrative approach. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 7*(3), 203-216.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Scarcella, R.C. (2003a). *Accelerating academic English: A focus on the English learner*. Oakland, CA: Regents of the University of California.

Scarcella, R.C. (2003b). *Academic English: A conceptual framework*. (Tech. Rep. No. 2003-1). Irvine: The University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Scarcella, R.C. (2009, November). *Entrenched English language learners: Characteristics and effective instructional strategies and teaching practices*. Plenary address presented at the annual meeting of the Maryland Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages, Hyattsville, MD.

Scarcella, R., & Rumberger, R.W. (2000, Summer). Academic English key to long

    term success in school. *University of California Linguistic Minority Research*

    Institute Newsletter, 9(4), 1-2.

Schulz, M.M. (2009). Effective writing assessment and instruction for young English

    language learners. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37*(1), 57-62.

Slavin, R.E., Cheung, A., Groff, C., & Lake, C. (2008). Effective reading programs

    for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research*

    Quarterly, 43(3), 290-322.

Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties*

    in young children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Stake, R.E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.),

    The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research (3rd ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Thomas, W., & Collier, V. (1997). *School effectiveness for language minority*

    students. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse of Bilingual Education.

Tomlinson, C.A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all*

    learners. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum

    Development.

Toohey, K. (1998). "Breaking them up, taking them away": ESL students in grade 1.

    TESOL Quarterly, 32(1) 61-84.

Toohey, K. (2000). *Learning English at school: Identity, social relations, and*

    classroom practice. Tonawanda, NY: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

van den Bergh, L., Denessen, E., Hornstra, L., Voeten, M., & Holland, R.W. (2010). The implicit prejudiced attitudes of teachers: Relations to teacher expectations and the ethnic achievement gap. *American Education Research Journal, 47*(2), 497-527.

van Langenhove, L., & Harré, R. (1999). Introducing positioning theory. In. R. Harré & L. van Langenhove (Eds.), *Positioning theory: Moral contexts of intentional action* (pp. 14-31). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

van Lier, L. (2000). From input to affordance: social-interactive learning from an ecological perspective. In J. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (pp. 245-259). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vetter, A. (2010). Positioning students as readers and writers through talk in a high school English classroom. *English Education, 43*(1), 33-64.

Villalva, K.E. (2006). Hidden literacies and inquiry approaches of bilingual high school writers. *Written Communication, 23*(1), 91-129.

Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Wharton-McDonald, R., Pressley, M., Hampston, J.M. (1998). Literacy instruction in nine first-grade classrooms: Teacher characteristics and student achievement. *The Elementary School Journal, 99*(2). 101-128.

Wiersma, W. (2000). *Research methods in education: An introduction* (7th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Wong Fillmore, L., & Snow, C.E. (2000). *What teachers need to know about language*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482994)

Yang, J., Urrabazo, & Murray, W. (2001). *How did multiple years (7+) in a BE/ESL program affect the English acquisition and academic achievement of secondary LEP students?* Dallas, TX: Dallas Independent School District. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED452709)

Yin, R. K. (2006). Case study methods. In J. L. Green, G. Camilli, & P. B. Moore (Eds.), *Handbook of complementary methods in educational research* (pp. 279-298). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Yoon, B. (2007). Classroom teachers' understanding of the needs of English-language learners and the influence on the students' identities. *The New Educator*, *3*, 221-240.

Yoon, B. (2008). Uninvited guests: The influence of teachers' roles and pedagogies on the positioning of English language learners in the regular classroom. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(2), 495-522.

Zehr, M.A. (2008). *Learning the language*. Retrieved February 2, 2009 from http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning-the-language/2008/09/how_long_have_your_students_be.html